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福岡県移住者子弟留学報告書

2012 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

財団法人福岡県国際交流センター

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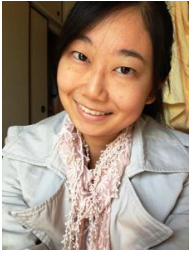
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Brazil Fukuoka Kenjinkai Carolina Eiko Hirayama

Introduction

This year passed so fast. When I realized, I was surprised. It was a really fun year. There are still many things that I want to do, but my time here is ending. I have 23 years old, and I am a third generation Japanese descendant. I was born in São Paulo capital, Brazil. In 2011, I graduated bachelor degree in physical therapy in Federal University of São Paulo (UNIFESP). After that I started my preparations to come to Japan.

Living in Fukuoka

When I arrived, it was the first moment I realized I was far from home. That feeling scared me a little bit. But little by little I learned to enjoy my life in Japan. Because this country has many different and amazing faces.

One thing that I would like to see again is the cherry blossom. Leaving the airport, still inside the car, the first thing I saw was the trees adorned with cherry blossom. It was a really beautiful view. The city really changes with the colors of the flowers. In the spring time, I could see different flowers that had never seen before. Like Tsutsuji and tulips. In Brazil, the city does not change much during this time, so it was a really beautiful time.

Brazil and Japan culture are really different from each other. For example, the train never late, and there is a timetable. The bus driver notifies the passengers for any operation, for example, when he will turn left, he always notified the passenger, on the microphone. And he always thanks to the passenger when they get off the bus. Plus, there are not many trash cans on the street, and even that there is not much garbage on the streets. The city is always clean.

Summer Vacation

Comparing to Brazil, I think that Japan's summer is hotter. And with the heat came the holiday period, the most awaited period. I bought the "Seishun 18 Kippu" and visited many cities by train. Tokyo, Yokohama, Hiroshima, Tottori, Okayama...different places, but with the same caring people. For a foreigner who does not speak the language perfectly, this was the moment I had to put into practice everything that I had learned in the first half of semester. At that time, children and their responsible leaders came from America and South America for a Program for Young Descendants of Immigrants from Fukuoka Prefecture. This was a moment that I felt a little bit closer to home. As always everyone was excited, it was really cool.

Study

Here in Fukuoka, I studied at International University of Health and Welfare, under the guidance of Professor Yoshinobu Goto. I was very lucky to find a teacher who helped me a lot. Despite being busy, he always had a time to answer my questions and take some time to talk with me. He always worried about my health and what I wanted to learn.

Thanks to him, I had the opportunity to have a little more contact with my profession. Go to three different hospitals and see how is physical therapy and the Japanese health care system was amazing. It was only a one day per week, but I had a lot of great experiences. The best one was going into surgery and be the link between a Brazilian patient and the Japanese doctors. Plus, I could see the physiotherapy in the area that I really like: the pediatrics. In research, I had opportunity to have more contact with a machine named "Magnetoencephalography".

In college, besides the physical therapy lessons, I had Japanese classes. Despite having a few

foreigners in this college, they were very nice to me. Actually, everybody. Teachers, the secretary staff, post-graduated and undergraduate students have always been very nice to me. In fact, everyone in Japan is very attentive. Especially, when you need some information.

Acknowledgement

Who really helped me were Mr. and Mrs. Mitsuyasu, responsible for the place where I lived. Whenever I had some problem, they always saved me. It really became my father and my mother in Japan.

But the coolest thing was the new friends I made. The 10 Kenpi Ryugakusei, in this short period, became family. They were very important in my journey. With them I could have a good laugh time and, in difficult time, I always had someone to talk to. Friendship is very important. And with these new friends I had one more opportunity to know this province who received me very well.

Japan really deserves to be considered a first world country. At one moment in this one year, I was asked how I felt: Am I Brazilian or Japanese? At that time I could not answer, but now I can say that I am a Brazilian girl, but I am proud to be a Japanese descent. I am proud to be a descendant of a nation who respects their rules, education and values. If I opportunity, I would like to come back to Japan someday. I am really grateful to the Prefecture of Fukuoka, Fukuoka International Exchange Foundation, Kazokukai, Brazil Fukuoka Kenjinkai who helped and took care of me and give me many memories that I will never forget. Back to Brazil, I want to help Brazil Fukuoka Kenjinkai and the Seinenkai. I hope others have the same opportunity that I had. Thank you for this wonderful experience.



International University of Health and Welfare
School of Rehabilitation Sciences
Professor, Tsuneo Nakanishi
(Teacher of Hirayama)

With time passing as quickly as it does, before I knew it Ms Hirayama's year as a student here had passed. As her supervisor, I am very pleased to see her finally get used to life in Japan, have regular clinical experience and compile her research results. On the other hand, there are also many areas in which I could not help her, and these reflections are included in my impressions of the year, described below.

The first I heard of her coming to study here was around January last year (2012). Until April, the only information I had was that she was "a physiotherapist from Brazil with an interest in brain function", so I was concerned about (1) ways to help her adjust to a new environment, and (2) my objectives as her instructor.

In general, international students only think about achieving their own goals, and experience emotional difficulties when they are unable to adapt to their new environment (different language, etc). Such times cause considerable worry for the hosts. In these areas, Ms Hirayama was a bright, cheerful and polite person, and did not seem to have a problem with language in her every day life. I wanted her to leave some achievements behind before going back home, and decided to have her research "concentration loss".

Until summer, she seemed to be struggling to get used to every day life and her university life. Seeing her gloomy expressions during this time, I became concerned and asked her to have a talk. From there, I learned of problems with her language study, and the fact that she was interested in having more clinical experience. With that, I decided to organize a practical class once a week at a hospital affiliated with our university. She seemed to enjoy these weekly practical classes, and gradually became more cheerful. In October, she compiled the results of her research on "concentration loss" and produced a draft of her paper, with visible results. The heavy yet pleasant responsibility of presenting this as an English paper was placed, not surprisingly, on me!

Looking back, I believe that I could have provided Ms Hirayama with a greater sense of accomplishment and satisfaction if I had understood her mindset completely from the beginning. Finally, I hope that this experience studying abroad remains a fond memory in her heart, and pray for her further growth as a medical professional.



Brazil Fukuoka Kenjinkai Michel Yuiti Higuchi

Introduction

It is so sad that I don't even wanted to think that this dreamlike time is going to end, but there's no option besides going forward. The world I could only stare in the internet until now, I got to see with my own eyes. Even though it is hard to put it in words, I need to write this report. Not only for myself, but for the ones who read this, I'll write with all my feelings.

Everything started to change when I parted from my family in the airport. The dream of coming to the country I have longed for came true. The long time inside the airplane was harsh, but was worth it. I finally came to Japan. To feel the spring's cold breeze, to view the blowing cherry trees, it was the proof that my dream started. Before school starts, I went here and there with the friends that came with me and the ones I met here, all the same as me, oversea students. It was an important moment to get used to this livelihood.

Spring

School starts, and then I focus on studying. It was the time I thought I came here only to learn Game Programming, and I couldn't see another way than continuing this in Japan and making this my life. To turn myself into a Game Creator, and thinking about working in Japan, I gave my all to study. But I was wrong. I am glad to the friends that made me realize this.

About the time the Short term program for young descendants of immigrants from Fukuoka prefecture was over, I won't forget the smiles on the children faces I met, but that time I was still thinking about game projects while keeping a look on them. Thanks to them also, I started changing. I learned that study and work is not everything. Wait, no, I should already know that. I was only too addicted working on the game. Half of my summer break was gone to the production of the game. It is good to try hard on something, but trying too hard is not. I was almost breaking my mind. When my friends supported me, I realized the importance of them, and tried to grab the sparks of happiness right around me. Without becoming chained to the past near future, I came to live the present.

Summer

In midst of the hot summer, I started walking with a new resolution. I went to a trip with my friends, buying the Seishun 18 ticket, we went to Tokyo. We stayed in Osaka and Kyoto, and did some tourism. Could not see much in only half a day, but since our goal was Tokyo, it didn't matter much. We had two days to tour around Tokyo. I have gone to the places I wanted, and met the person I wanted, I think I did all of it in the two days period. I am convinced I can't live in Tokyo. Thinking that the metropolitan high pace is a bomb of stress, the trip came to an end. We saw once more Japan through a train's window. It takes time, but having friends with you is delightful.

Back to school, my resolution swayed. What I should aim for, what I should do, everything was mixed inside my brain. I consulted the people at Fukuoka International Exchange Foundation, my friends and my school, but I couldn't see light. I want to apologize to everyone I caused problems. "I was an idiot and immature. I'm sorry." But now, there's no worry anymore. Wait, maybe there is, but I also know I have people I can rely on.

Autumn and Winter

And again, I was going to Tokyo. This time, alongside my schoolmates, I was going to the long waited Tokyo Game Show. To once again grasp tightly the passion for games, I went there. But

again, I was wrong. The passion was gone. But I could be certain of something. I love games. But I shouldn't make it my moneymaking profession. Game Production is a battlefield, where you put your life in risk. Not only games, but any entertainment related profession is like that. It's all about creating a hit or not. The way with too much instability. I had then realized, I would only take game creation as a hobby from here on.

Finally the disliked hot weather is over, and turns to be a good season. To myself, this year's autumn was special. I finally could finish the game I started making during the summer break. A bit late to the Moon View season, but "Moon View Rabbit" was finished. As a bonus, I was happy I also came back to Taiko drumming and Shinobue flute, things I started in Brazil long ago.

Suddenly, autumn turned into winter, and came the season of Christmas and New Year. Amidst this, I saw snow for the first time.

Acknowledgement

First, I must show my appreciation for the Association of Fukuoka Immigrants. For the opportunity to gain confidence and use Japanese language I studied so hard, I am truly grateful. For the new encounters and separations, that there are so many wonderful persons in this world, for giving me opportunity to acknowledge my own immaturity, for gaining all this knowledge. And I will give back this favor as possible. I want to do something for the next generations of oversea students. Giving advices or the knowledge I earned here to our juniors. As a first step is this report.

"Even at harsh times, even if you might want to die, don't forget what's really important to you. There will always be someone to help you when you need, so be honest with yourself at those times and just ask for help"



Kyushu Designer Gakuin
Department of Game Creator
Ryuta Matsuo
(Teacher of Higuchi)

With the curriculums for the “Design” and “Programming” majors at our Game Creator Department being completely different, we began with a 5-day introductory reproduction drawing course as a foundation for both majors. Even though programmers can get by without the skill, we prefer to have them learn to draw. It is important for designers and programmers to be able to convey, understand and have a shared recognition of each other’s ideas, and drawings (designs) are the best tool for conveying meaning in any field. Concentrating on drawing reproduction can also cultivate observational skills and trains the mind to see the bigger picture. In terms of programming, being unable to grasp the entire process makes it difficult to assemble different aspects together.

The basics principle of education at the Gaming Department is to make students think. They are given hints, but for the most part class policy is to allow them to learn through trial and error. Programming in particular is a culmination of logic – even a single contradiction does not give the desired results.

From the second week, classes were broken up into the separate majors and leaders were selected for each one. Mr. Higuchi put his hand up amongst the programmers and fulfilled the role of leader for the duration of the year. His programming teacher praised him as being in a different league to other students in his comprehension of class materials. This is evidence that his has truly mastered the foundations of logical thinking. His ability to utilize the internet and books to find information that would aid him in his understanding and generating of new ideas in his research was truly excellent. Also, as a leader, he supported his peers if they were slower to grasp the concepts.

In August and September, mid-way through the course, students in the Design and Programming majors formed teams to design a social game, the creation of which was accomplished through repeated presentation and review sessions. Given that it was only a few months after beginning the course some parts were lacking in quality, however it was very valuable to have created a product as a team in an environment that was almost identical to real game development.

I could also see that his Japanese improved through the classes. I was particularly surprised at his improvement in kanji. I know Mr. Higuchi has many aspirations and considerable doubts about the future, but I would like him to continue steadily one step at a time without rushing.



Brazil Fukuoka Kenjinkai Caroline Kimie Nakao

Introduction

Talking about the last year, I could say it was an extraordinary year. Being able to come to Japan through this exchange program, I could experience a lot of new things, and for me it was a year in which I've learned a lot.

For someone who was born and raised in São Paulo, Brazil, Fukuoka is such a calm, safe and easy to live city. It's a totally different place, and that is exactly because I've experienced a different way of life than the one I used to have that I think I've learned a lot.

Not only the landscape and the official language are different, but also the culture and the people from this place don't resemble the ones from São Paulo at all. Even so, I was raised in a Japanese descendent family, in which I had influence from my family to listen to Japanese music and watch Japanese dramas, and also studied the Japanese language for 4 years, which gave me a fairly good knowledge about the Japanese culture, but actually coming to live here was another level of experience. Seeing new stuff everyday, going to places I had never been before, doing things I could only see on the television made me feel like I'm inside a Japanese drama.

This was my first time leaving my country and my family for such a long period of time. Living with people from 6 different countries was also a first experience for me. Everyone had a different personality, and each one's previous life experiences and goals were varied. This wasn't a bad thing at all; on the contrary, I realized it was a really good thing. I've learned that when you get in touch with different worlds, you get to expand your own. That's because you learn things from these people, and you get to understand other points of view and opinions. That's one of the reasons why in this year, my wish to grow as a person got stronger. The 10 of us lived as a family, we shared stories, we laughed, we helped each other during this year. From the very beginning we were always together, and we learned that we were not alone here.

About my study

At university too, of course, I've learned a lot of things. Kyushu Sangyo University is close from the dormitory where we live, and it's used to receive foreigner exchange students, so it had a lot of facilities and made me feel glad for getting to study in such a wonderful place. My professor was really kind and in order to let me enjoy and learn a lot at the university, she gave me quite enough freedom to pick my classes, while she orientated my studies.

During my classes, I got to improve my knowledge of Japanese language and Japanese culture, and also in my club activities and talks to Japanese friends, I could learn more about Japanese habits and way of thinking. I had the opportunity to learn the traditional art of Japanese tea ceremony and study what I like the most – languages. Being in the same class with Japanese people in Chinese and French classes and participating in events from school gave me the opportunities to communicate and be friends with them. Being able to enter the “Japanese people's world” made me really happy and I got to feel another kind of experience. I think that for you to really know and understand Japan as a country, you have to fully enter this society.

Joining the Japanese tea ceremony club at school was probably the best thing that happened to me in this whole year. If I think about this exchange program, a lot of memories from the club activities come to my mind. After I joined the club, I've earned plenty of new things. I've learned

the manners and importance of traditional Japanese tea ceremony, made new friends, and concretely learned the meaning for the word “senior”, experiencing a harmonious happiness while I was there. Even now, I can still picture the colors of the tatami in the club room, the stare of the professor’s eyes, and the smell of green tea being made. Certainly, I’ve left a part of me in the Japanese tea ceremony club. It’s not a part of university life, but I’ve also learned a bit of how to play Japanese drums. Invited by a friend, I took a trial class and enjoyed it so much that decided to continue taking lessons.

Final Words

I only got to have such a rich life experience here because there were lots of people supporting me. In Brazil, I received this amazing opportunity from Brazil Fukuoka Association, and had support from them since then. Coming to Japan as a representative of my country, I got support from Fukuoka International Exchange Foundation and Kazokukai. They’ve supported and assisted me since the first day I got in Japan, so there is a countless number of things I want to thank them for. They have helped us in every way to make this a successful year. Especially the people from kazokukai, they’ve taken us to a lot of places and let us do stuff we had never done before. For example, we did rice planting and rice harvesting, we made mocha and other things we would rarely have the opportunity to do in our own countries. We also got to wear kimono, which turned into an unforgettable memory. It’s thanks to those people’s kindness that I got to know a bit about my family roots and enjoy my time in Japan.

Time goes by so fast it is scary, so I decided I want to live it to the fullest. I am so grateful about everything I had this year, and I want to do everything I can in my turn. When I go back to Brazil, I want to use everything I’ve learned here and cooperate with the Brazil Fukuoka Association. I want to share my experience here with other people and support this program for it to go on for more and more years. Personally, I want to use the life experience I had here to continue working hard in Brazil. I’m really thankful for being able to feel all the four seasons in Japan. I won’t forget the people I’ve met, the places I’ve gone to and the things I’ve done here. If I get to convey only this thankfulness and grateful feelings, I am happy. Thank you very much for this great year and great experience.



Kyushu Sangyo University
Faculty of International Studies of Culture
Professor, Yuko Kubota
(Teacher of Nakao)

In the first semester, Ms. Nakao was enrolled in Beginner Japanese A&C, Career Practicum C, Chinese 1&2, Japanese General Affairs and other classes. The second half of the year included Beginner Japanese B&D, Intermediate Japanese D, French 2, French Conversation, English, Chinese 1, Business Japanese, and Japanese Culture. Having recognized that her chosen profession of journalism in her home country requires knowledge of various foreign languages, Ms. Nakao continued her efforts in this area even during her study in Japan. Excluding the unavoidable absences due to exchange events, her attendance in classes was perfect. She participated actively and earnestly in the classes, understanding the content well and raising questions with the staff each time something was unclear. She is also taking the Japanese Language Proficiency Test, aiming to improve her Japanese.

On the other hand, in regards to learning about Japanese culture, throughout the year Ms. Nakao studied about and even participated in tea ceremonies. She also participated enthusiastically in all international exchange events, saw sumo wrestling and more.

Ms. Nakao is also seriously thinking about her future following her return home. She is considering utilizing her experience studying in Japan and to get back on the path she was taking before coming here, towards a career in journalism, as well as possibly studying abroad again in other countries. Outside of class she was proactive in increasing interaction with Japanese and foreigners alike, and made many friends through the exchange events. She also contributed to surveys done by Japanese students for their graduation papers.

Having instructed Ms. Nakao through her year of studying in Japan as explained above, her great passion for studying Japanese language and culture, as well as other foreign languages, and her proactive approach towards all she does left a very good impression. Her Japanese ability has also greatly improved. In addition, I praise her focus on her future career and determination to make the most of her time in Japan. Through her time here she deepened her understanding of Japanese culture, and I am sure she will continue to utilize and build on the things she has learned in Japan.



Tome-acu Fukuoka Kenjinkai Nadia Miho Inada

Introduction

Before I came to Japan, I was a bit worry about study abroad. However, I started living in Fukuoka, I don't have any regret now. One year has passed way very fast. Life in Fukuoka is very easy and fun. I had experience in dorm life. I lived in a dorm for five years in Brazil, and I was used to live alone. I have also good exchange students and my brother lived nearby too.

Thanks to everyone of Fukuoka Kenjinkai and Kazokukai, I was able to experience many things. For example, digging bamboo shoot, grape picking, rice planting, rice harvesting, Mochitsuki, experience in kimono, fireworks, and short term visit program for young descendants of immigrants from Fukuoka Prefecture. Everything was new experience for me.

I was saved because there are many friends and kind people in Fukuoka. When I lost on the way, it was always kindly helped by someone. I made many Japanese, Korean, Chinese and other exchange students' friends in Japan. One friend that I met in October, we used to go to church every Sunday enjoyed having lunch and chatting together. She was very friendly and took good care of me like a sister.

This year, there were a lot of important things and irreplaceable in my life. Among them, I met relative who have not seen for years, could meet some relatives for the first time, I was so happy. Furthermore, I could know roots about myself too, but it was strange feeling. I was so excited when I visited the place where my grandparents grew up.

I lived in the dorm Campus "Jikyougakusha" nearby Kasii station with other exchange students. Almost every day we spent together, ate together, went out shopping and always hung out to play together, it seemed totally like a family. In someone's birthday we celebrated together and did gift exchanges. Furthermore, when some of us got in trouble, we gather the power to support our friend. We always have been there to support each other. Together, we made a lot of good memories and deepen our strong friendship with each other.

There is no four seasons in Brazil where I live, so I was so happy to have an experience in the four seasons of Fukuoka. In the spring, I saw cherryblossoms that I love and many other beautiful flowers. Through the heat and humidity of summer, I rode in the bicycle to the beach for swimming but one day I was stung by a jellyfish, but it was fun. The fall, the landscape changes completely by colorful leaves, when I went hiking in the mountains, I took lots of photos. In winter, I had an experience of intense winter cold. I saw snow for the first time, I was so excited. I forgot to chill for excited and went outside to play. Also depending on the season, the scenery, landscape, foods, flowers, clothes to wear and the festival changed. It may be common thing to the Japanese, but for me all those things were first experience.

About University

I used to ride by bicycle to the campus of Kyushu University Hospital from my house. In the University I took the lesson and practical training as first and third grade nursing students. I learned about reproductive health, prepregnancy, pregnancy, care after pregnancy, growth of an unborn baby and changes in the mother's body by pregnancy, besides, healthy pregnancy, delivery, childbirth, childcare, and study for the health of the entire family.

I was studying nursing in Brazil, but compared to Japan, there were many differences. The new knowledge is about the tools and machines of study. As for the same knowledge with Brazil, re-checked it again and put it in my mind firmly. Professor, Mr. Kaku took charge of me, I used

to visit his research room once a week and talked about my life and study. Ms. Akari Yasunaga was one of my supporter, she was very supportive, so I could study without any difficulties. Also I have learned a lots of things from others teachers. Thank you so much for teaching me many things. I took Japanese classes at Hakozaki campus. I felt my conversation skills have improved, and want to keep studying Japanese now on.

Goal after returning home

Japanese Blood circulates in me, but I'm Brazilian. I feel it is the presence, as a bridge between Japan and Brazil. Therefore after going back to Brazil, I would like to cooperate with Fukuoka Tome-acu Kenjinkai. For example, report more on the student exchange program expensed by prefecture and teach the marvels of Japan and Fukuoka.

The goal of a year of me, almost been achieved. Thanks to Fukuoka Kenjinkai, Kazokukai, and everyone in Fukuoka, I could felt happiness many times this one year. It has also increased many good memories. My heart is full of gratitude and I can not express in words this feelings. My sincerely thanks to everyone who took care of us. Thank you!



Kyushu University
Faculty of Medical Sciences
Professor, Tsunehisa Kaku
(Teacher of Inada)

With her cheerful and open personality, Miho Inada was very friendly to everyone around her and created strong connections and deep relationships. She made personal connections with staff in our Developmental Nursing Course (Maternity, Pediatric Nursing and Tocology), the teachers and students at the Faculty of Medical Sciences, as well as many local residents. In the sense of international exchange, she achieved not only in her studies but also in cultural and lifestyle aspects.

Academically, Ms Inada had completed a nursing course at university in Brazil and wished to study obstetrics further at Kyushu University's Faculty of Medical Sciences, so she selected lectures from the Nursing major. As fundamental reproductive health theory, her studies included nutrition during pregnancy, support for breastfeeding, female psychology and stress during the prenatal period, gender, women's health and the Maternal and Child Health Act. She joined other students and expressed her opinions in group work. In addition, Ms Inada took classes in changes to the mother's body during pregnancy, fetal development, pre-childbirth consultation, and the process of pregnancy and delivery as part of Introduction to Tocology/Midwife Management. In the practical classes, dummies of the mother and fetus were used to understand the birthing process, and students practiced stretches and massages aimed at helping pregnant mothers to relax. Ms Inada also experienced assisting the delivery process using a dummy of the fetus. She also took practical and theoretical classes on preventing infection, dressings, medicines and injection treatments as part of Symptom Care Techniques. She was committed to her studies, also taking Japanese language classes for international students in order to improve her Japanese ability.

Ms. Inada helped to broaden the circle of exchange between Japan and Brazil, actively interacting with locals and participating in many events that increased her understanding of the country, including flower viewing (Ohori Park), digging bamboo shoots, BBQ, catching fireflies, rice planting and harvesting, fireworks, cycling, grape picking, Halloween, birthday parties and kimono wearing. She made many friends and travelled around to see Tokyo, Saitama, Nagasaki, Kurume, Kitakyushu and Yamakawa. She told me "I didn't have any trouble. When going to unknown places, I always got kind advice when I asked people for help."



Bolivia Fukuoka Kenjinkai Kazuyuki Kawanami

Introduction

First of all, I would like to appreciate to the International Center and to the members of Kazokukai. Thanks to them, I was able to study in Japan and make a good many memories. I really had good experiences. All those memories are unforgettable. I am very happy to be able to know a lot of Japanese culture. I believe I became like Japanese a bit now.

I had wonderful time since I came to Japan. I learned many things, met many people, visited many places and ate a lot of delicious food. However, the most impressive thing I felt among them is the kindness of the Japanese people. I faced many problems during my stay, but I always was kindly helped by many people. When I took the train, when I got lost, when I had difficulty of reading kanji, every time I felt the kindness of the Japanese

About my research

I lived in a dormitory of Fukuoka Agricultural University, and studied on animal husbandry at Fukuoka Agricultural Research Center Information. First, I took a little time to get used to the dorm life, but once I get used, it was comfortable and fun.

At the research center I did many practical training in many fields of study that was really good. Starting with Milk Cow, Pig, Food, Beef Cattle and Chicken.

In addition, I had the opportunity to study in strawberries in the course of vegetables. The study of strawberry cultivation was fruitful. In the Strawberry team, we grow from seedlings and I could see until harvest. My parents are doing poultry farming and eggs. As the flow of the course, I decided to continue the practice in the chicken. But I realized that there are things I want to study, apart from poultry farming (chicken) when I did strawberry practices. We used to grow strawberry until few years ago, but with the passing of time it was slowly disappearing. So, I decided when I go back to Bolivia, I'll grow again strawberry and work hard to make a delicious strawberry as I've eaten in Fukuoka.

Life in Japan

One of the things I've enjoyed in Japan was the Short-stay Program. This program is very interesting. Through this program, we visited many places in Fukuoka also we interacted with elementary students of Fukuoka. We met children of Fukuoka Kenjinkai from other countries too. In this program we have experienced and learned a lot of Japanese culture. I will never forget the memories with children and leaders of each Kenjinkai and those wonderful experiences we did.

In the summer I enjoyed fireworks display and going to the beach. It was my first experience swimming in the sea. I was so exciting because Bolivia does not have sea. I also visited my sister in Yokohama. I stayed at my sister's place. They took me out to many places around Tokyo and ate many good foods. I also enjoyed Bolivian food after the first time in a long time. I met my Bolivian friends, too. I visited again Yokohama for the winter vacation. This time I visited "the Sky Tree" where I wanted to go since I came to Japan. There is one thing I couldn't do during my stay, and that is skiing. I've never skied in my life. I was planning to go skiing during the winter, but I could not make it. I'm so regretful about what I have not gone for skiing.

At last

When I received the e-mail of my return date from Fukuoka, honestly felt sad. Time goes so fast.

Before concluding my stay, I decided to interact more with many people and make lots of memories the rest of my days in Japan. Not only memory but also make efforts in my work and learn as much as possible before returning to Bolivia.

At the end of February there was a training program for strawberries. I worked hard on it to get lots of knowledge and not regret when I return to my country.

First, I would appreciate to all those who gave me the opportunity to come to Japan to study at the Fukuoka Agricultural Research Center Information. I will never forget the things I learned in Japan and many interesting activities I participated. It was great to meet other fellows from Fukuoka Kenjinkai in overseas. We had super good time together and deepened our friendship. Having a good company is very encouraging and gives one great power. Friends who listen to my concerns, friends that I can consult for problems. I am very happy and grateful that I could meet good friends during my stay.

I have no word to express my thanks to all those who took care of us. Thank you very much.



Fukuoka Agricultural Research Center
Shigetaka Yamashita
(Teacher of Kawanami)

You were a little shy and not great with kanji-a fairly normal international student.

Work at the livestock department of our Fukuoka Agricultural Research Center, which you chose as your place for study, tends to involve a lot of specialized language in the field of stock raising that must have been very difficult for you to understand.

For the first half of the course, we decided that you would have a chance to experience a little from each department, including dairy and beef cattle, pigs, poultry, feed crops, and livestock environment and sanitation. Even though it took until around July to try your hand at all these things, I think you were able to have many different experiences. From there, according to your requests we focused the training on poultry.

With your father raising poultry, we had you doing all things from learning general poultry feed systems to assisting with testing and research at the center. You weren't very proactive in seeking communication with others, but you took your work seriously and earnestly asked questions about things you didn't understand.

After that, when we came into this year, you mentioned that you wanted to try growing strawberries when you returned to Bolivia, so we quickly organized for additional classes by a supervisor from the vegetable department.

I hope that you find technical training at a center like ours even a little beneficial to your work upon returning home to Bolivia. Yoshiki in Chikushino City, where the center is located, is in the middle of the mountains without much public transport, which I think made living here alone very difficult for you. However, I was relieved to see that you were able to connect with fellow international students on weekends. I hope you continue to value these connections with friends you made in Japan. I am sure they will help you in your life ahead.

Above all, you really persevered and did your best during the course this year. Thank you for your hard work. Adiós mi amigo.



Colombia Fukuoka Kenjinkai Keiko Omuku

Introduction

Before coming to Japan, I thought that I would have many problems because I was going to live with other people who are from different countries. As it was my first time that I was going to live alone, I thought that I would get depressed and the year was going to be long. I also thought that I would not get used to living in Fukuoka. But everything was very different. Life in Japan is very practical and safe. It also has many landscapes that are seen only in Japan. Living in Fukuoka is very quiet. People are very friendly and respectful. Although I didn't know Fukuoka, I never got lost thanks to the help and guidance of people. The city is very clean and everything is very well organized.

When I arrived in Fukuoka was spring and the first thing we did was going to Ohorikouen to see and eat under the cherry trees. That day, I took many pictures because maybe not enough to see them before returning to Colombia.

University

Then they took me to visit the university where I was studying and introduced me to my advisor. I was shocked to know that university is Christian and that most of the students are foreigners. I studied at Tanki Daigaku Aishin Orio. I received English classes, economy, trade, marketing, etc. I also received Japanese classes at the same university. All classes helped me to get an idea about the economic situation in Japan. I reviewed many topics that had already studied in Colombia but with a different methodology. I learned a little Japanese while I shared with my classmates who were from different countries. It was hilarious. I liked to study at this university because everyone were very kind explaining everything I needed to know.

Events

Then began the days that we had to introduce ourselves and welcome parties of the Kokusai Kouryuu Center and Kazokukai members. In those days I was very nervous because I had to do a presentation in Japanese and also met the Lieutenant Governor, Etsuko Ebii.

In May, I went with my friends to Nagasaki. We visited the museum of the atomic bomb, the statue of peace, etc.

Then, came the day that many of us waited with eagerness, the beginning of the children's program. In the children's program I had fun with my friends and children. Along with the children I met new places, I did a uchiwa of traditional way, I met the governor of Fukuoka, Hiroshi Ogawa. During the program, we were hosted in the Global Arena Hotel where, for the first time, I saw the Tanabata festival. I had so much fun with my friends and children that sometimes I forgot how old I am. When the day came that everyone had to return to his country, was a little sad but I left many good memories and very funny pictures.

A little before the children's program ended, the summer began and two weeks after the summer vacations began. Never in the life I had experienced so much heat. But despite the weather, I had a great time. In the summer, some members of the Kazokukai led us to Mojiko and Kokura. A few days later we were taken to buy the yukata. Then we went to hanabi festival at Ohorikouen and Kurume. As it was expected, the Kurume's hanabi was nicer than Ohorikouen. We also went as volunteers to the city of Yame to help take the land that was entered in a workshop after a landslide caused by rain. Although it was only half a day, I felt really good to help someone from the country of my grandparents.

As we were all on vacation, we went many times to Shikanoshima Beach and once to Hakata in bicycle.

Then I went to the city of Narita in Chiba Prefecture to visit my sister, my niece, my uncle, my cousins and my coworkers. I was so excited because for five years more or less I did not see them and I could finally meet the new members of the family. Also I could celebrate my sister's birthday with my family and talk to each one of them. As I was almost a month in the city of Narita, I visited Tokyo Skytree, went to Akihabara, Shibuya, Meguro, etc. I also went to Noda to look for teacher Hatsumi. Without fail I went to the Hard Rock Cafe in Ueno.

When I returned to Fukuoka, felt like I got back to my second home. Maybe because I was getting used, is it?

My classes began in September and days later we went to grow rice. I wished that my paternal grandfather, who was a farmer, had seen the pictures to see that although the granddaughter is not a farmer, had the experience of growing and harvesting rice. I would have liked to know what he had said.

In autumn I went to a park near Uminonakamichi to see an exhibition of flowers which was spectacular. The Park seemed to have several rugs of various types of flowers. I also loved watching the changing colors in the leaves of the trees. Momiji course was the protagonist of the season.

In November, I was so excited because for the first time I put a kimono. In addition, all of us went to a place of Ohori Park with a very Japanese style where we participated in a tea ceremony class. That day I felt more Japanese than Colombian. It was an unforgettable day. Then gradually the weather was cooling increasingly until began the winter along with bald trees. In December I felt a bit of nostalgia because it was the first time that my family was not close to me, but thanks to my friends I had a great time at Christmas and New Year. Besides, for the third time and after five years I saw snow. In New Year, I went with my friends to celebrate at karaoke and waited until the next day to see the first sunrise.

Acknowledgement

I feel very fortunate to have had the great and unique opportunity to visit and study in Japan totally free. First of all, I want to thank my family, the people of Fukuoka Kenjinkai of Colombia, Masako Sakamoto, Yoko Shiwa, Keiko Morimitsu, Juan Pablo Morimitsu, Angela Koga and Hugo Kuratomi for all the support that was offered from the start. Something prompted me to not give up, was to see that many people supported and helped me that everything would go well.

Second, I am very grateful to all the staff of Fukuoka International Exchange Foundation and kazokukai for helping us all this time. Thank you very much for receiving us with open arms, for taking a walk, for giving me the opportunity to participate in the unforgettable experiences as Kimono Taiken, Shitei shouhei program, grow rice, mochi making, attend various types of festivals, etc.

Thank you very much to Mr. and Mrs. Goto for everything, for being aware of each of us, for us Halloween, New Years, etc.

Professor Ishimatsu, thank you very much for agreeing to be my advisor and guide me during the school year.

My mission in Colombia Fukuoka Kenjinkai is to help everybody to give information about the opportunity that Fukuoka Kenjinkai gave to me to travel and study in Japan with a scholarship in order to attract more people to join the group, give advice and collaborate with future

students who would like to apply this scholarship, requisites and documents they need, telling them my experiences in Japan and my second opinion about how I felt this time I went to Japan, compared with five years ago. Simply put, I want to continue to work for the benefit of the group and obviously studying and applying what I learned in Japan.

Finally I want to thank all my ryuugakusei friends who helped me in this great and unique experience. Without them, I would not have been so happy and entertained. I am glad to have met you and I know that in the not too distant future we will meet again. Thank you very much to all of you and sorry for all my troubles.



Orio Aishin Junior College
Department of Economics
Professor, Tateo Ishimatsu
(Teacher of Omuku)

Keiko Omuku is a student with a warm personality and a strong desire to learn. She completed a course at our college over some 11 months, starting from April 2012.

The objective of the course was to improve on the level of Japanese she had learned back in her home country, and to acquire specialized knowledge in the field of economics. The course content was based on the assumption that she had the required Japanese ability to understand the lectures for the specialized subjects, and was focused on subjects within the department that Miss. Omuku wished to take, such as trade theory. However, her ability was not found to be of an appropriate level to understand the lectures, based on her performance in our Japanese proficiency test and Miss. Omuku's own comments during a consultation following the commencement of the course. As such, we reassessed her curriculum, with the first semester consisting mainly of a course aimed at increasing her Japanese ability in a separate department of our college as well as some of our specialized subjects. In the second semester, the curriculum was to return to the original plan focused on specialized subjects, while continuing additional language classes. However, the planned improvement was not seen in the first semester, which meant that we were forced to re-formulate a curriculum based on Japanese language classes in the second semester as well. As a result, I feel that Miss. Omuku may leave a little dissatisfied that she was unable to achieve her desired level.

I feel that her trouble in understanding the lecture content of the specialized subjects in Japanese, as well as her participation in exchange activities and occasional sickness may be the reason she was unable to complete all necessary 15 points. Despite this, Miss. Omuku was praised highly by her teachers, and I am certain that the things she learned here will be useful to her in many areas upon her return. With her bright personality and perseverance, I hope that she will work towards friendship between Colombia and Japan.



Argentina Fukuoka Kenjinkai Micaela Harada

Introduction

I believe that this could be one of the most fulfilling and fruitful year I have experienced in my life. I have realized that knowing oneself stems from knowing new things. It was a wonderful experience to leave our comfortable homes, travel to, literally, the other side of the world, to be surrounded by unknown people and to know more about ourselves and our Japanese roots.

About my study

As regards my studies, I was able to learn interesting material and meet very knowledgeable people in the Graduate School of Social and Cultural Studies Department. Nowadays, our world is faced by the inevitable process of globalization where people from different cultures have the opportunity to deepen their understanding of each other because of their differences. To mold the minds of the people who can encourage this kind of thinking is the objective of this Department. The objective of my research was to study and compare (in Spanish, Japanese and English) proverbs, which can be considered to mirror the cultures they come from.

My life in Fukuoka

As for my life here in Fukuoka, I have been through innumerable experiences. First, I would like to write about my daily life with the friends who I can call siblings. We have created a hopefully long-lasting bond with this year's *kenpiriyûgakusei*. Each of us has very distinct and unique personalities and I believe that some day we will be able to meet again in some part of the world. This year, we have been each other's support system and have made our stay less lonely while creating a comfortable and amicable environment.

Fukuoka people have a big heart and are always willing to give you kind words. People from the International Exchange Foundation always welcomed us with a warm smile. Even if it might be their job, we were always grateful for their assistance and patient explanations. Furthermore, the people from the *Kazokukai* were like real family and we greatly appreciated their support. Thanks to them we were able to experience traditional Japanese festivals and feel closer to our roots. It was also a great experience to make friends with young Japanese people. Whether they can or cannot understand you, they will always laugh along you and include you in their group as if you were old friends. I had heard people from Kyushu were considered to be warm, but experiencing it first hand was simply wonderful.

Kyudo

This year was an eventful one as regards kyudo, which I started practicing eight years ago in Buenos Aires. Before coming, practicing in a Japanese dojo was one of my objectives and my expectations were exceeded. I started practicing in the Fukuoka City's East Ward Civic Gym and was able to meet amazing people. I received guidance from great senseis (7^o dan Kyôshi, 6^o dan Kyôshi, 5^o dan Renshi, etc.) and advice from kind senpais. I was able to understand the "harsh kindness" that is so typical of the Japanese and to compare Western and Eastern teaching methods. I am amazed by the fact that even if we are not related by blood, I have gotten close to people who I can consider family. Thanks to kyudo I was able to experience several things: participate in numerous tournaments, win prices, receive a dan, appear in the newspaper and visit different parts in Fukuoka (Umi, Chikuzenmachi, Kuroda, Shikanoshima).

Acknowledgement

After going back to Argentina, I would like to attract younger people to participate in Fukuoka Kenjinkai events. Unfortunately, not many young people take part in them and, as times goes by, I feel the interest in Japan is diminishing. Furthermore, it seems less people are able to speak Japanese. Being *nikkêjin*, I would like to make them understand what a valuable asset speaking Japanese can be. I believe that if they know the greatness of Japan and specially Fukuoka, more young people would be willing to participate in *kenjinkai* events. Unlike Brazil, Argentina does not have a *kenpiryûgakusê* every year; and, being the most recent one, I would give advice to the future candidates. To do this, I would like to make use of Argentine Fukuoka Kenjinkai's Facebook page to enable a smoother and faster means of communication. If I can, I would also like to create a group with former *kenpiryûgakusê* so that prospective candidates can ask any question they want in a relaxed and more welcoming way. Finally, if there is any international event, I would like to participate in them and contribute in any way I can. I would be delighted and it would be a wonderful opportunity if I can meet the friends I have made during this past year and people from the Kazokukai and the International Exchange Foundation.

To everyone involved, thank you so much for this wonderful year.



Kyushu University
Graduate School of Social and Cultural Studies
Professor, Toshihiro Shimizu
(Teacher of Harada)

Micaela Harada began study in April 2012 as a research student in my department at the Kyushu University Graduate School of Social and Cultural Studies, majoring in Japanese society and culture. In addition to her native Spanish, Micaela has a good command of Japanese and English, and participated proactively in my “Japanese Language Education” classes aimed at master’s students, as well as combined seminar classes with master’s and doctoral course students. She also joined in our class parties, where her sociable and cheerful personality was welcomed by all.

Micaela’s strength lies not only in the multilingual ability (Spanish, English, Japanese) that I mentioned earlier, but also her knowledge of the cultures of both her home country of Argentina and of Japan, the country of her ancestors. She made the most of these strengths, presenting about Spanish, English and Japanese proverbs at the seminar classes. More specifically, Micaela discussed the influence of Cervantes’ “Don Quixote” and Shakespeare’s various works on Spanish and English proverbs respectively, comparing and contrasting them with corresponding Japanese proverbs. The way in which lingual and cultural differences are reflected in proverbs and, by extension, the way they influence our ideas, is a very interesting research theme and one that I would like her to continue in the future.

Having a good knowledge of the languages and cultures of Japan, Argentina and English-speaking countries, I am sure that Micaela will become not only a bridge between Japan and Argentina but a true international citizen. In your remaining time here, please learn as much as you can about Fukuoka and Japan to take back with you to Argentina. I hope one day you will return to Japan and contribute to strengthening the relationship between these two countries.



Peru Fukuoka Club Aldo Gutierrez Tanabe

Introduction

First of all, I want to express my gratitude to the Fukuoka International Exchange Foundation and Peru Fukuoka Club for allowing me to live this great experience of living and studying in Fukuoka for a year. Time has passed very fast, when I arrived to Japan in April 2012 I really missed my family and friends in Peru.

At first it was a little difficult to get used to Japanese transportation and food, but thanks to the support of everybody I was able to spend the best year of my life here in Fukuoka, I'm very glad about this.

During this year, one of the things of Fukuoka I liked the most was its beautiful natural landscapes combined with the modernity of the city is just amazing. I thought I would miss so much Peruvian food. Nevertheless, I realized that Fukuoka food is delicious. Quickly I became fan of Tonkotsu Ramen, Curry Rice and Katsudon. I will miss those dishes once I return to Peru since they were part of my daily routine.

I have to thank so much to the Association of Families of Fukuoka (Kazokukai) for always taking care of us and organizing events that helped us to learn a lot about Japanese culture. I was able to know many wonderful places in Fukuoka Prefecture and participate in activities as bamboo shoots digging (Takenoko-hori), Homestay, rice planting (Taue), rice reaping (Inekari), fireworks festivals (Hanabi-Taikai), grape picking (Budou-gari), and mochi pounding (Mochitsuki). One of the best moments for me was the Kimono Experience (Kimono Taiken). I was able to wear a traditional kimono and fulfill one of my dreams since I was a child. All of these experiences allowed me to learn more about my ancestors, Japanese culture and lifestyle.

Summer

My summer here in Fukuoka was the best in my life since I could make a lot of great memories with everybody. I helped in the Short Term Program for Young Descendants of the Immigrants from Fukuoka Prefecture and spent good times with the children and learned many things about Fukuoka with them. I also learned a lot of meaningful things about life from them. I hope they can become exchange students in the future as I did.

In summer vacations I decided to travel with other exchange students using the famous "Seishun 18 Kippu". This trip was very exhausting but travelling along Japan in train was like a 4 days adventure for me. I could stay for a short time in Osaka, Kyoto and Yokohama. In our final destination Tokyo I went to Akasaka, Ginza, Akihabara, Shinjuku and Shibuya. Also I was able to climb Sky Tree and Tokyo Tower. Thanks to this summer trip I realized that Japan has a lot of great tourist attractions and great landscapes everywhere.

University

As system engineer, taking the designer's role in this project was difficult. I learned that it requires a lot of constant inspiration to create Web contents. I was much harder than I thought because I had never done it before. I thought about quitting at a certain moment, but thanks to Professor Toh's advices I understood that the design process is not only about techniques and skills but also needs motivation, ideas and stimulus. It was a simple but a meaningful advice for me. By considering that, I want to work hard to improve my motivation and self-confidence in me as a professional. I may not be able to accomplish the whole research web system,

nevertheless once I return to Peru I want to develop this musicians web community with my friends. Thanks to all the knowledge I have acquired during this year I will definitely be able to develop more efficient and high quality software for Peruvian enterprises. I would like also to develop the Peru Fukuoka Club's institutional Web site.

As a research student in Kyushu University, I could share moments and experiences with Japanese and international students. I not only practiced my Japanese language, but also had the chance of talking in English and Portuguese. The most important lesson about my student life here in Fukuoka is that I realized I still have a lot of weak points that I must improve. This fact motivates me to continue working hard to become a better professional. I am very grateful to Professor Toh for all the support and advice she gave to me.

Acknowledgement

Through living one year in Fukuoka I think I have also grown a lot as a person. I know more about myself and have more confidence in my daily life. Also I am very glad to have had the chance of meeting a lot of people from different countries around the world. I also want to thank Mr. Masayoshi Yoshinaga for being my guarantor in Fukuoka and treating me like a member of his family.

Furthermore, I'm very thankful to each 2012 Fukuoka Kenpi Ryuugakusei. We became a special family of 10 people. For one year we shared together happy, sad and trouble moments, I learned with them the true meaning of friendship. We celebrated our birthdays, went to Karaoke, ate lunch together, saw fireflies and snow for the first time, contemplated Japan's four seasons, laughed and had fun like kids, gave and asked for advices. I will never forget their kindness and unconditional support. I'm really happy to be part of this family.

Thank you so much everybody for being part of the best year of my life, hope to see you soon!



Kyushu University
Graduate School of Design
Assistant Professor, Kiriko Toh
(Teacher of Tanabe)

Aldo Gutierrez Tanabe joined the Department of Visual Communication Design at the Graduate School of Design as a research student for the 2012 school year. A very earnest and diligent student, he participated enthusiastically in various classes, looking to add website planning and design to the web programming abilities he already had in order to gain a grasp of total website development.

In his seminar classes, Mr. Tanabe designed and set about creating an “online band performance system” based on his own experience, that allows users to find performance partners to play and create music together online, regardless of location. The system’s distinguishing feature, which sets it apart from existing online session sites, is that busy performers who cannot find a time to assemble are able to record and upload individual tracks in their own time and combine them together. Through the message board function, they can also prompt communication amongst band members. In addition, the site allows band members and the audience to enjoy the music together, with a ranking function based on comments and playback frequency.

While Mr. Tanabe was able to develop the program without problems, on occasion he had trouble with design, an area in which he was not experienced. However, I believe he was able to devise a suitable user-friendly interface design, from site composition to details such as logo development and navigation planning.

Through the classes and other events he was also able to interact with other students in the lab. Being able to view each others’ projects was a big motivation for all of the students, and they were able to deepen their understanding of each other’s cultures.

In February, we visited a web development company in Fukuoka, where Mr. Tanabe was able to experience Japanese web design firsthand. Having made the most of his time here, I believe Mr. Tanabe took home many great memories of his life in Japan.



Nanka Fukuoka Kenjinkai Mayumi Kelli Yamamoto

Introduction

This past year in Fukuoka has been everything I dreamed of and more. Living on the island of Kyushu, detached from the more well-known cities of Tokyo and the Kansai region which major cities consists Osaka and Kyoto, I have developed a new outlook on Japan. The people I have met here have showed me the utmost hospitality with such kindness and openness that at times I find myself in disbelief. Walking through the downtown areas of Hakata and Tenjin, I sometimes become awe stricken with the vast streets that are full of department stores, endless options of small food spots, clothing stores, and conveniently placed convenient stores that are on almost every block. Then, if I walk fifteen or twenty minutes on foot I end up at Ohori Lake or Suzaki Wharf. If I choose to take a bus I can reach Yahoo Dome in just fifteen minutes, which sits directly beside the ocean of Momochi seaside. The fact that I can be amongst a large number of people in the city and then escape to the ocean and be in silent bliss within twenty minutes or less, to me, is a luxurious gift. I have learned things here that I could only have learned through living here, the phenomena's one cannot learn from solely reading in a book alone.

Summer

During the summer, I bike rode to Shikanoshima four times with friends. We would leave in the afternoon around two or three, due to the almost unbearable humidity, stop by the convenient store, purchase drinks and food, and continue on to our destination, the beach. The bike ride there was enjoyable as well, and after over an hour of bike riding in the radiant sun, a dip in the ocean made everything worthwhile. In addition, other memorable moments for me were when I watched the Ohori Park fireworks and the Kurume fireworks show during the summer. They each lasted for approximately an hour and a half in duration and were the most stunning enormous fireworks I have ever seen. In Kurume there were two firework shows going off at the same time and since they were close in proximity to one another, I could see both shows from where I was sitting along the river. It was quite the sight to see. I will forever remember moments like those with my friends and our Kazokukai "family."

I am both grateful and glad to have our Kazokukai, for they have given us many opportunities that we would have had difficulty in carrying out and accomplishing on our own. I feel blessed to have people in Fukuoka here that have taken us in as if we were their own flesh and bones. For example, our "extended family" here showed us all the various regions of Fukuoka from the countryside in Kurume, to the ocean side of Itoshima, to the northern end of Kitakyushu, and I have enjoyed every minute of it. They have showed us traditional past times of Japan such as bamboo digging, rice planting and cropping, and took us to shrines and temples that are only reachable by car. They also introduced us to some of the local festivals such as the Hakata Gion Yamakasa Festival, and exposed us to the local cuisines of Fukuoka such as the freshest sashimi, raw squid, and grilled oysters.

Although I kept active in discovering Fukuoka's many treasures, I also attended Kyushu Sangyo University as well. Throughout the past year, I participated in nine classes' in total. Professor Szpilman, whom oversaw me for the school year, was extremely kind and helpful to me. If I had a question, I was able to contact him and meet with him in person, or via e-mail in a timely manner. The courses I took are as follows: Japanese at the Elementary level, Japanese at the Intermediate level, Japanese business, general conditions in Japan, and Japanese culture.

In my Japanese classes I learned more kanji than I ever imagined as well as various verb forms

and how to conjugate them. The purchase of my electronic dictionary was an excellent investment as it helped me through classes the entire year. Also thanks to Caroline Nakao, whom also attended the same courses with me, I was able to understand more than I would have ever on my own.

In my Japanese business class I learned formal Japanese that is useful in one's everyday life outside of their family and friends. I have learned how to introduce one's self in a business setting from where to sit when a person first enters a room to how to exchange business cards with one another. I felt the class was enjoyable from the beginning and will continue on until the end. I also learned modern pop culture as well such as: Japanese foods, Japanese fashion, and Japanese famous animated stories both old and modern. Lastly, in my Japanese culture class I learned about all of the traditional things to do in all of the major cities throughout Japan. I learned about the different festivals during each of the seasons and also month by month, traditional folklore stories, and various traditional foods of Japan. With all of the knowledge and experiences I have gained living here in Fukuoka, I will return back home to Los Angeles an improved version of myself with a fresh outlook on life.

Acknowledgement

Upon my return home, I will actively take part in the Los Angeles Nanka Fukuoka kenjinkai activities and related events. I would also like to attract new members to Nanka Fukuoka kenjinkai to help expand the association in Los Angeles.

I would like to thank the Kokusai International Exchange Center for this year, for granting me a year that was one of the best years of my life. It was fulfilling in every way imaginable, and I feel worlds closer to my heritage and where my roots lie. I am grateful beyond words and I truly have enjoyed every minute I have been here, the good and the bad. I will return back home a different person, for the better.

Hontou ni arigatou gozaimashita!!



Kyushu Sangyo University
Faculty of International Studies of Culture
Professor, Christopher W.A. Szpilman
(Teacher of Yamamoto)

Kelli Yamamoto studied Japanese language and culture at Kyushu Sangyo University as an international student from April of last year (2012).

More specifically, in the 'Elementary Japanese' class (Tuesdays) she studied Japanese grammar (verb usage, etc.) and *kanji*. The 'Japanese Culture' class (Fridays) focused on Japanese culture from an ethnological point of view, where Ms Yamamoto learned about Japanese traditional and folk stories, as well as festival traditions, their place in urban culture and connection with history. She also gained knowledge of Japanese food culture.

Ms. Yamamoto is a very keen student and has improved considerably in her Japanese since April, thanks to earnest efforts in her studies. At the same time, it can be seen that her knowledge of Japanese culture has also increased. Ms. Yamamoto has also made many friends thanks to her bright personality and very outgoing nature.

While Ms. Yamamoto did not take any of my classes, she came to me regularly for advice. At such times, I could confirm that her studies at Kyushu Sangyo University were proceeding smoothly. As such, I can speak highly of Ms Yamamoto's achievements during her studies at Kyushu Sangyo University.



San Francisco Fukuoka Kenjinkai Misao Tachibana

Introduction

Ichigo-ichie. Looking back at the past year, this Japanese phrase comes directly to mind. It literally means “one time, one encounter,” and signifies the importance of every single moment, for that same moment will never occur again. During this seemingly short yet lengthy year, my outlook on my life has drastically changed, and my thoughts scampered around in so many directions I can hardly remember. I spent many days in bliss, others in frustration, and experienced many moments of pure clarity during this past year. In retrospect, I realize that this ebb and flow of life is what actually brought me to be who I am today. Every emotion, conversation, and interaction I experienced since I moved to Fukuoka will never recur in my life, and I feel deep and profound gratitude for each, especially since I have been yearning to be back in Japan my entire life.

Living in Fukuoka

I had absolutely zero expectations before moving to Fukuoka—I didn’t have a clue. I felt great anticipation, paired with uneasiness, and I had no idea where I was going, who I would meet, and what I would be doing. This, however, changed immediately after I arrived, as I realized how livable Fukuoka was compared to America, my native land. The food quality easily surpasses America, public transportation is safe, and the people treated me with kindness. At home, the laughter of my fellow students echoed through the halls of our dorm and provided me with great comfort. Other than the harsh (and unexpected) fluctuations of the weather I experienced with the changing season, not a single thing about Fukuoka let me down. I did however enjoy the seasonal change as it brought on new physical sensations that I have never experienced in America.

My family bonds were also strengthened throughout my year in Fukuoka. I spent much needed time with my grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins for the first time since I emigrated from Japan when I was two. Whether it was getting coffee with my aunt or spending a few days at my grandparents’ house, these were all first time experiences, and I will cherish them for the rest of my life.

I made many new friends in Fukuoka. I still remember the day I met my fellow students at Jikyogakusha (our dorm). We were all complete strangers from all over the globe, and no one did a good job of hiding the uneasiness we all felt. In one short year, we became a ten person family. Despite cultural differences and language barriers, we found common ground through interests and humor. I also made some Japanese friends and I can’t wait to visit them when I return.

University

For academics, I spent a year at the Department of Clinical Neurophysiology at Kyushu University under the supervision of Professor Shozo Tobimatsu. Starting from scratch, I performed an experiment on second language acquisition using electroencephalography. I focused on an area on the brain called the visual word form area and observed the N170, a response which occurs 170 milliseconds after stimuli presentation. As this area responds to objects, faces, and words in humans, I spent this year observing responses to second language in those that learned Japanese as a first language and English as a second, and vice versa. I also took Japanese language classes at Kyushu University. I learned a great deal and hope I can extend my studies and new knowledge to my future ventures.

Many Events

During this year I was also able to continue my studies of the Japanese koto (zither, instrument). Luckily, I met a wonderful koto teacher who happened to be a friend's friend of my koto teacher in San Francisco. I practiced with her one or twice a month, as well as at my dorm. I also attended two koto performances this year. My love for the koto only grew during my stay in Japan, and I am ever grateful for that.

From July sixth to the seventeenth we participated in the short-term program for children of Fukuoka emigrants. Children with family roots in Fukuoka flew in from all over the world, and we spent those days chaperoning them. This period of time completely refreshed my mind and brought out my inner child. We played many games, went on various field trips around Fukuoka, and participated in countless numbers of activities together. Through this, I gained new knowledge about myself as well as Fukuoka. Cultural exchange programs such as this one are crucial in fostering the global person of tomorrow, to not only know, but to feel his/her roots, and to be able accommodate to a foreign environment. I will never forget those fourteen days, and I hope the children remember this exchange in the future.

Another force that had a great deal of influence on this year is the kazokukai, a group of incredible people in Fukuoka KenjinKai, most of them with family members that emigrated from Fukuoka to other countries. They treated us like family, and functioned as our support. I would not have been to a third of the places I went to without the guidance of the kazokukai. The Kurume kazokukai took us under their wing and allowed us to homestay at their residences. They also took us firefly viewing, hiking, mochi pounding, and to go see the grand spectacle that is the Kurume fireworks festival. The Kitakyushu kazokukai gave us a tour of Mojiko retro area and Yamaguchi Prefecture, and took us to a Maturi (festival). One can feel the intensity and power emanating from the floats, which are carried and pulled by men. The Itoshima kazokukai took us to Raizan Sennyoji Daihioin Temple, and to a pier in Itoshima where we ate oysters. Kazokukai events were not limited to those and aside from those, we were invited to many barbecues, a kimono/tea ceremony experience, and even participated in the rice planting process. We also volunteered with some of the kazokukai at Yame Prefecture after the flooding and landslides that devastated the land, as well as directly taking the lives of the people living there. This year would have been entirely different without the kazokukai, and I would like to thank them for this fulfilling year.

The Fukuoka International Exchange Center also took us in and helped us overcome every obstacle we encountered this year, whether it related to academics or social life. We also participated in enriching events at Fukuoka International Exchange Foundation such as the monthly Nihon-Bunkajuku, a two hour lecture given by a professional in a certain field. I gained many new insights and knowledge from these bunkajuku. Our group was also lucky enough to be a part of the memorial service for emigrants of Fukuoka, as it occurs every three years. The Fukuoka International Exchange Center helped me restore my roots in Fukuoka.

Acknowledgement

Upon my arrival in America, I will spread what I learned from this short year to those in my own country. Whether it be knowledge of Fukuoka's landmarks, food, history, or culture, I will make sure to tell it to those who cannot experience it for themselves. I think the most integral next step for Fukuoka Kenjinkai is to expand itself. I feel personally responsible for engaging interest in Fukuoka through events and social activities, hopefully attracting a younger generation of members that love Fukuoka as much as I do. Social media is also another outlet that can be utilized in attracting potential members and maintaining the connection between my country and Fukuoka.

This year has reaffirmed a fragment of my identity that was long lost to me. Thank you for guiding it back to me, and teaching me the way of *Ichigo-Ichie*.



Kyushu University
Faculty of Medical Sciences
Professor, Shozo Tobimatsu
(Teacher of Tachibana)

Ms. Tachibana joined our classroom for one year as a research student studying “Cognitive Neuroscience”. Being a Japanese-English bilingual, Ms. Tachibana chose to use brainwaves to analyze the brain function of bilinguals as the theme of her research. She chose this theme because it is well known that kanji and kana are handled by different parts of the brain in Japanese people.

For the experiments, Ms. Tachibana utilized 128-channel high density electroencephalography. She chose native English-speaking students with Japanese as a second language (JSL), and native Japanese-speaking Kyushu University students with English as a second language (ESL) as the subjects of her research. 4-6 letter English and hiragana words (upper elementary-middle school level) were used as visual stimuli, with JSL students asked for the meanings of hiragana and ESL students English words. In the stimuli, photographs of faces and objects were also used for comparison.

The latency and amplitude of N170, a response occurring approx. 170 milliseconds after stimuli presentation, were used as the index for analysis. As both groups consisted of only a few subjects, statistical comparison was not possible. However, an interesting point was that the JSL group showed high N170 latency and amplitude in response to both English and Japanese. The ESL group can easily read hiragana, however there is a possibility that, since they were shown words that are usually in kanji, the response took longer despite knowing the meaning. This is very interesting information, and I would like to have other students follow on from this research.

Ms. Tachibana has a background in psychology, but did not have any experience in measuring brain function using brain waves. She learned from scratch how to create and display visual stimuli, fit brain wave sensors and analyze the data. In that sense, it was an evaluation of her earnest approach. With a bright personality, she went about her research while collaborating with the staff and other students in the laboratory. While the year went by very quickly, I expect Ms. Tachibana will find it useful in her life ahead.