

## TAKING OFF



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## 2011: BENCHMARK YEAR!



## International Center Director: Mike Matsuno

A very Happy New Year to all of you! 2011 will be a benchmark year for the International Center. Up until this last year, we were mainly focusing on new exchange partner agreements, language requirements, and partner programs; the so-called "pull" factors of the outbound study abroad experience. Beginning this year, we will concentrate on the "push" factors for our outbound students. Prior to departure, our students require hands-on, practical instruction and guidance in terms of social skills, interpersonal communication, and basics of how to interact/behave/participate with non-Japanese people

outside of Japan. Moreover, we will also focus on helping to complete the experience/individual, of students returning to Japan after a study abroad experience. We will work to create challenging courses and stimulating opportunities for them upon their return to OGU.

2011 will be an exciting, powerful year for the International Center, I-Chat Lounge, Japanese Studies Program, Shoin Teachers, and the ISST members. Please join us as we take the next big step to internationalize our students and campus-wide environment.

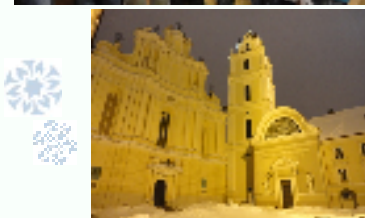
## Yusuke Tsuruoka (Foreign Language, Senior)

Lithuania is one of the countries Japanese do not know much about. History notes that the Japanese foreign ambassador, Mr. Chiune Sugihara, saved 6,000 Jewish people during the Second World War in Lithuania. There is a street named "Sugihara Street" in Kaunas City to honor his courage. OGU sent the first OGU student to study abroad in Lithuania last September. Let's take a look at his life in a European country where it is rare to spot Asian people.

I have been studying at Vilnius University in Lithuania since last September. Lithuania is one of the Baltic States located near Russia. Still a developing country, it only has a few modern buildings. The old urban area was designated as a World Heritage site, where you can find traces of medieval times and will rarely see any Asian people, much less Japanese citizens. This is a great place to enjoy European atmosphere and culture. Vilnius University is located in the capital of Lithuania and was founded in 1579, which makes it one of the oldest Eastern European universities. One can see remnants of some historical buildings spread out like mazes, and a huge cathedral at the rear of the campus. I really appreciate these sites, yet unfortunately, I study interna-

tional business in one of the newly renovated buildings. It is a shame I rarely have a chance to visit the old campus.

About four months ago, I arrived here in high spirits. Everything seemed to be so new and exciting. I was looking so forward to starting my brand new life in Lithuania. However, soon I found out it was only a dream. I was majoring in English at OGU yet, the program I participate in here is the international business program. It was a new field for me. At first, I had to become accustomed to a very different instructional style. Students here are the main players in the classroom. They are often expected to lead discussions and give presentations. I was continuously lost throughout class. Also, I encountered a huge language barrier. It was extremely difficult to learn



(Top) Dormitory student residents  
(Yusuke third from right)  
(Bottom) Vilnius University

the new field in English, and people often pointed out my low level of English. I didn't understand what others were saying and I could not explain what I wanted to say, so I had a very difficult time communicating with others. I was the only Japanese person in the entire dormitory.

I felt very lonely at times. Everything here was challenging for me: cooking, doing laundry that my mother always did for me, paper work, unusual weather conditions and much more. Looking back on my early experiences here; I can now see how the challenges naturally forced me to improve my English skills rapidly. I matured a lot. Now, as I reflect back, those experiences have become only good memories.

My message to those who aim to study abroad in the future: "Take risks yourself." I believe this is the most important tip for a successful study abroad experience. I have seen many international students who only spent time with students from their same home country and spoke in their language all the time. Unfortunately, those same students returned home without improving their foreign language skills at all. It is similar

here in Lithuania. Fortunately, I am the only Japanese person on campus and although I faced some adversities from time to time, I took risks and tried many new things and overcame many obstacles. As a result, I now really enjoy my life here. I hope you will also challenge yourself to try different things during your four-year university life. Even, if they seem too difficult in the beginning.

## Homare Masuoka (International Studies, Junior)

Unique to the University of Gävle in Sweden is a special program in Nordic Ecology. This program is offered at no other known university. After an absence of a few years, OGU sent one female student to participate in the special program instructed in English, and to learn the parallels of physical fitness and the connection it has to life skills.

**W**hy Sweden?" Everyone asked me. Many were curious as to the reason I hadn't selected an English-speaking country if I wanted to master the English language. Unlike others, I wanted to do something non-traditional if I have a chance to study overseas. When I saw the outdoor course in the exchange student guidebook, it definitely peaked my interest!

Even before leaving for Sweden, I encountered minor challenges. The University of Gävle does not have a dormitory, so I needed to find an apartment. It took me a long time to locate one and I barely secured the place shortly before my departure. That made me a little nervous! Even then, I wasn't able to move in upon my arrival and had to spend the first several days in Sweden at a youth hostel. I later found out that other international students ran across the same problem.

What did I learn in the Nordic Ecology course you might ask? I learned all about Biology! Although I was aware I would be taking biology, I never dreamed it was the majority of the course. I had never taken any biology courses at OGU, so it was challenging

to learn all the biology terms and understand the lectures in English. I was often lost throughout class. This course is also quite different from other courses at University of Gävle because classes were not held regularly. Each week, class times fluctuated from twice a week to four times a week. This prevented me from registering for other regular courses such as Swedish language. Yes, that was unfortunate, however my experience overall was very interesting and would have been impossible to get any other way. Class was often held in the outdoors away from campus. The classes included activities such as: camping and hiking, canoeing, visiting national parks, mines and many other interesting sites in the field. I was very lucky to be given the opportunity to visit places I would have otherwise never had the chance to see as a tourist in Sweden. Only a small group of students register for this course, so we developed strong bonds with one another. In fact, they helped me with my homework everyday.

A word to those interested in participating in this program in the future: you will study all about biology once in Sweden. Beforehand, it is crucial that you



With classmates

study English at OGU. I personally think that in order to ensure success in this program, a student will need English skills far above the required level on the exchange program application. A student in this program really should have the ability to use English effectively on a daily basis. This is a very challenging program; so if you want to do something unique and a little alternative, try this Nordic Ecology program. I am confident you have never experienced anything like it!

## Marta Aðalsteinsdóttir (University of Iceland)

We welcomed our first two students from Iceland this school this year. How many of you have been to Iceland before? In this article, you will learn about the culture in Iceland through the eyes of one of our international students; Marta.

**I**celand is an island in northern Europe, between the Greenland Sea and the North Atlantic Ocean. It is in total 103,000 km<sup>2</sup> and the population is about 320,000. The capital and the largest city is Reykjavík. Iceland is volcanically and geologically active because it is situated on top of a hot spot. Hot springs can be found scattered all over the island because of this hot spot. Despite all the heat in the earth a full 11 % of the island is buried

beneath ice caps. Iceland's largest glacier is larger than all of Europe's glaciers combined.

I came to Japan on the evening of September 2, 2010. I got a major culture shock; everything was very different from what I was used to in Iceland. I didn't understand anyone, it was extremely hot, and the city seemed humongous to me. I was so homesick that I did nothing but cry and wish that I could turn around and go back



home. Now I have been in Japan for almost 5 months and everyday I feel grateful that my wish of going home never came true.

I have come to love Japan and the life I have made for myself here. I would be lying if I said I didn't miss my family and friends in Iceland, but here I've also made friends, friends I can call family. My stay in Japan and the people I've met here have given many positive things for both my self confidence and independence. I feel much closer to knowing who I am and what I want from life due to my time in Japan. I have met so many wonderful people here I will never forget; people that have changed my life and way of thinking. My mind has changed and I have grown mentally.

I've had a wonderful time in Japan and I am very grateful that I get to stay for another semester. Many of my good friends, within the foreign exchange program, have returned back to their home country. I miss them terribly, but no good comes from wallowing in one's

own misery. I have decided to enjoy my time in Japan even more for those who could not stay longer.

The Japanese and Icelandic cultures are very different. I admit that some things in Japanese culture I don't understand and even find ridiculous at times. But I respect the culture and understand that even if one is raised with one mentality in mind it doesn't make a different one wrong. I am in no position to judge others, I came here not only to learn the language, but also to observe the culture and learn from it. Everyday I watch the Japanese to see what makes them so "Japanese".

I've done many things here in Japan that will make for good stories when I go home to Iceland. I patted a little shark at the Kaiyukan; went to the movies and understood surprisingly much; was interviewed by random Japanese students while eating at McDonald's; got lost on numerous occasions; helped a drunk Japanese man out of a ditch; got to experience Japanese hospitals and healthcare

system; had one of the best soba noodles in Japan on top of Mt. Hiezan; and so much more.

I've had a fantastic time in Japan but it hasn't been just all fun and games. I had to live alone which is something I have never done before. I have never lived in a foreign country before and have never spent this much time away from my family. I admit that sometimes I thought about going back to my little island because there life just seemed easier for me, since it's my own country. Yet, if life was that simple, then it wouldn't be any fun at all.



With Japanese Level 3 classmate and teacher (Marta second from the right)

## New Partner Universities!

In 2010 OGU partnered with five new universities. As a result, we now have a total of 46 partner universities located in 21 different countries throughout the world. For those students who have the desire and required dedication to study abroad, there are plenty of new opportunities!

### Metropolitan University Prague

What comes to mind when you think of Prague? A beautiful city featured in the movie "Nodame Cantabile Finale". Or, perhaps you enjoy Korean dramas, "Lovers in Prague". Or a city known for Moldau composed by Smetana. The city itself was created along with the Moldau river in the late 16th century. Prague is now the capital of the Czech Republic, which hosts a population of 1.2 million. An interesting fact is that 21,300 out of 1.2 million residents are students.

A relatively new Metropolitan University Prague, was founded in 2001. The total student body is about the same as OGU, yet they host about 350 international students on campus. Students study in a full immersion university set-

ting using Czech and English. Students study international relations and European studies.

OGU students will participate in the English or Czech language courses designed for the international students. Those with higher English levels may also take undergraduate courses. How about studying English in a city rich in both culture and history. How about Prague?

### Sookmyung Women's University

Conveniently located near the central train station in Seoul, Sookmyung Women's University was the first private women's university in Korea and was founded by the Empress Sunhen, the last emperor of Korean Dynasties, Gojong's wife in 1906. Empress Sunhen believed that women's education was critical for the nation's development. It was first named Myungsin Girl's School. Later in 1955, it was known as, Sookmyung Women's University. The university celebrated their

centennial in 2006.

The Korean Government started Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) targeting female university students last year.

ROTC is an educational system in which students receive



trainings to be officers as well as study university courses as regular students. Sixty female students were selected from 7 Korean universities, and among them, 30 students are from Sookmyung Women's University. Needless to say, they are the elite females in Korea!

Although the University name implies it only accepts female students, anyone can apply for the exchange program. In addition to Korean languages classes, there are also specialized courses offered in English. It is common for students to study to become trilingual in Korea. Why not consider studying in Korea?



## Internship Report: Antti Kunnas



### Lessons learned during my internship:

During the fall of 2010 and the early part of 2011, I had the privilege of serving as the first intern for the International Center at Osaka Gakuin University. As my first experience working in a Japanese office, I became familiar with office practices and captured a view of the International Center office I had not previously seen during my stay as an exchange student. I enjoyed the majority of my time in the office yet, at times, I felt frustrated. Not only did I dress differently from the average Japanese "office worker", but also, I spoke a different style of Japanese in the office. As an exchange student I never felt intimidated to speak the Japanese I had learned; yet in the office I often lacked confidence to speak Japanese naturally. I worried that I would use incorrect vocabulary or phrases while speaking. Gaining objective awareness about the language errors I made, and how to correct them, was one of the most impor-

tant lessons I learned from my internship.

### Observations of job hunting in Japan:

I worked in the office throughout the weekdays, with the exception of a few weekends when we sponsored special events. Throughout my internship, I was fortunate enough to participate in various job fairs in both Osaka and Tokyo. Although most job fairs were geared for Japanese nationals, others were useful for international students to attend. Surprisingly, more companies than I had expected were proactively pursuing the recruitment of foreign employees, although the actual number of foreigners in the Japanese work force today is not clear.

In June, I will graduate from my home university in Finland. If, at that time, I still want to be employed in Japan, it will be necessary for me to revisit the job hunting process again next year. It was discouraging to learn of the many road

blocks to employment and also that while some Japanese companies accepted interns, unlike western companies, the system was limited to short periods throughout a month, with no guarantee of a future full time position with that company thereafter.

### Advice for international students considering an internship in Japan:

Clearly, an internship is a great occasion for any international students to have a special experience and gain useful language skills as well as participate in the job hunting process. That said, if you do not explore every opportunity to grow within the opportunity, your experience will remain limited to the office. Take a risk and push yourself beyond your limits to discover who you really are and what you are truly capable of being.

During my internship, I not only thought of the present, I tried to imagine what I would like my career to be mirror in the future. This method helped me to extend myself through unknown territory seeking new experiences to formulate my future life. Most importantly, never waste a moment of your journey throughout your internship. If you are given the opportunity, don't waste it, treasure every encounter..... for you may only get one turn!

## KC News

### International Student Internship Symposium

In January, 3 international students started an internship in Japan. They will be interns at Fuji Xerox Osaka until May. Prior to that, the International Student Internship Symposium was held and received 160 attendees from companies, high schools and other universities. Dr. James Yellowlees, a representative of Canadian Education Alliance, gave the keynote speech. A variety of presentations were also given throughout the symposium. Among the featured presenters were Mr. Shiro Yoshimura, a consultant for the Global Recruiting Support Project of the Osaka Prefectural Government, Ms. Tomomi Kumai from the International Center, and Mr. Antti Kunnas, an intern at the International Center.

### OGU Short-term Japanese Program

The winter short-term Japanese program was held from January 17 to February 4, 2011, it welcomed 5 international students from Soonchunhyang University in Korea and 3 students from CQ University in Australia. They not only studied Japanese and Japanese culture, but visited Osaka, Kyoto, and Nara and other major parts of the Kansai area. OGU students hosted them as language partners and



Near Osaka Castle

supported them throughout their stay. We expect to welcome international students from the U.S., Canada, and Korea in the near future.

### Spring Semester Begins—International Exchange Program

The spring semester of the International Exchange Program began in January. Although, 35 of the 73 international students returned to their home countries, 4 new students came in their place. The international students can often be spotted spending time with their Japanese friends in the student lounge in building #1 and at the I-Chat lounge in building #13. Those fluent in Japanese may take regular undergraduate courses beginning in April, so someone sitting in your class may be a foreign student! Let's enjoy sharing language and cultures with them throughout the spring-time!