



TAKING OFF

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Hello from All Corners of the World!

The first person featured in this issue is Mr. JangSu Jeon who is currently studying at Dankook University in Korea. OGU concluded an agreement with Dankook University in September of 2012, so Mr. Jeon was the first exchange student from OGU. He was a well-liked student among his exchange program friends, but he obviously had a difficult time in Korea. We will see how he overcomes hardships while keeping our motto "Trouble is welcome" in mind.

JangSu Jeon (Junior, Business Administration)

It has been more than six months since I came to Korea. My experiences during this time made me change my way of thinking and my attitude toward things happening around me.

Before coming to Korea, I just spent time without thinking about anything too seriously. In my freshman year, I only studied and worked part time. In my sophomore year, I just went home after my classes. I decided to change my major from business administration to hospitality business just before my junior year started. In my junior year, I met new friends and prepared for my study abroad, but to be honest, I was worried about my future. I didn't have any vision or goal for my future. I asked myself, "Should I live like this?" and "When I start job hunting, do I have something I can talk about?" I even didn't know what I wanted to do or even what I was interested in at that time.

Having these worries in my mind, I started my study abroad life in September of 2013. In the first couple of weeks, I could not communicate well enough to live in Korea. I didn't have a single friend to have meals with in the first month. I ate rice balls and cup noodles alone everyday. However, as the time passed, I found a kind of new me, someone who could communicate with others without hesitation and became friendly to people around me. It changed

my life here completely. Right now, almost everyone at the Korean Language Institute at Dankook University knows me and thinks I am very talkative, cheerful and outgoing. Even those who don't know my name greet me at school. I was not like that at all when I was in Japan, so coming to Korea led to my true self coming out. I never expected living overseas to change me this much. I truly enjoy my life here now.

I also feel that my Korean language skills have dramatically improved. I can communicate with Koreans easily now. I always try to talk with university friends,



Peruvian roommate (left)



(Up) With friends at the Korean Language Institute (left)

(Bottom) International student soccer team (front right)



professors, and even people working near the university. Because of this, I learned how Koreans normally speak, and at the same time, I was able to broaden my view toward my future and various things in my life by talking to many people.

I feel that I have grown so much as a person, so I am really grateful to have come to Korea. All of my worries faded away, and I started making plans for my future. It is great to live together with foreigners. You can gain

confidence in yourself. I will fully enjoy the remaining two months in Korea and study as much as possible until the end.

The next person is Ms. Risa Tanimoto who worked at the OGU International Center as an intern until February of 2013. Ms. Tanimoto graduated from Kwansei Gakuin University. Making use of her excellent language skills and study abroad experience, she supported international students and OGU students in different aspects for about a year. During her internship, she applied to be an overseas dispatched representative and was selected as one of them among many applicants. She is now working at the Japanese Embassy in the Republic of Palau. We can learn how important it is to challenge anything in a proactive manner.

Risa Tanimoto (Former intern at the OGU International Center)



With colleagues at the Embassy
(Second right)

Before I entered university, I had already decided to study abroad. As I wished, I studied at Southern Methodist University in Texas, U.S.A. for a year from the Fall of my sophomore year. There were hardly any Japanese students at the university, so I became friends with students from many different countries and really enjoyed my overseas life. I still remember I sometimes stayed in the library until the morning and almost gave up on study because it was so hard to keep up with my classes. When I look back on those days, they still come back to me as good memories. After I studied abroad, I became very active and outgoing. I participated in various short-term study programs and international events, both within and outside school after I came back to Japan. Because of my study abroad experiences, I can say that I have no regret in my university life. I truly feel grateful I had a chance to study abroad.

When my fourth year started, I still had not decided what to do after graduation. I luckily had a chance to be an intern at the OGU International Center. I supported international students from all over the world as well as Japanese students who are interested in studying abroad, assisted a professor in a seminar class, and various other duties. OGU welcomes international students from many different countries and offers many different study abroad programs for OGU students. In addition to that, there are many places on campus where students can interact with international students like the I-Chat Lounge. I hope OGU students will make the most of these opportunities.

Through my internship experience, I learned basic knowledge for living as a member of society and gave many presentations in front of students and staff. I gained confidence in myself. Furthermore, this experience made me decide strongly to pursue work related to international exchange and education overseas. An internship is a good chance for you to find what you want to do or explore what you are interested in, so I hope you will try this as well before working full time.

I am currently working at the Japanese Embassy in Palau, one of the Pacific nations. Palau was recently featured on TV in Japan, so you

might know this, but Palau is famous for its beautiful blue ocean and diving. I often enjoy the beautiful nature and relaxing environment in Palau; however, my life in a country with a population of about 20,000 is sometimes inconvenient and this makes me homesick. My job at the embassy is to take care of visitors (arranging airport pickup and transportation and making hotel reservations), to interpret in meetings, to publicize Japan and Japanese culture (holding events related to Japan, recruiting and screening government-sponsored students, and updating website). It is sometimes hard to adjust myself with local culture and customs, and to communicate with people in English. It is great that I can use what I have learned at university and at OGU.

I found the job at the embassy acci-



(Left) Diving in the Palauan sea (left)

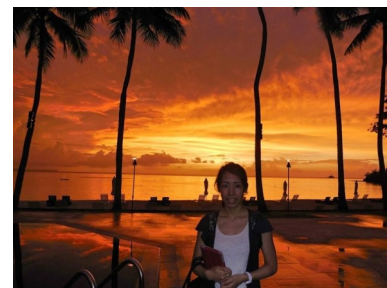
(Right) The World Heritage Site, Jellyfish Lake, which is famous for jellyfish



dently when I was working as an intern at OGU. I always think that a life is made up of accumulated challenges and experiences. Because I studied in the U.S., I could work at OGU. Because of my work experience at OGU, I was hired as a dispatched representative at the embassy. After my contract ended at the embassy, I am thinking to apply to graduate school. I have many more

things I want to do, so I will continuously challenge whatever lies in front of me.

At last, here are my words of wisdom to all OGU students. You probably have a lot of time being a student, so please try many things, overcome hardships, and grow as a human being. I sincerely hope you will have fulfilling years and live your life to the fullest at university.



Beautiful sunset in Palau

Home Visit Program

In the home visit program, international students living in an apartment are able to visit Japanese families on the weekend. Many of the international students that participated in the Exchange Program in 2013-2014 lived in an apartment. Therefore, the home visit program was offered to them with families both within OGU and outside OGU participating. Host families usually host students for a longer period, but home visit families usually meet them once or twice a month. Therefore, this is a program that interested families can join easily. Here is a message from one of the home visit families, Mrs. Yasuko Okayama.

Home Visit Family: Yasuko Okayama

About a half year ago, a profile of a Finnish female student was sent to us right after we had decided to become a home visit family. Her name was Mia Kolkkinen. I have met many people from different countries before, but I had not yet met anyone from Finland. My image of Finnish people was of someone with snow white skin and blond hair, and tall. As I imagined, Mia has white skin and straight long blond hair, but she was only as tall as me – and I'm short as a Japanese. It was a bit surprising to me that she was rather short and frail.

After her first visit to our house, we usually met once or twice a month and went to many places in Kyoto. She seemed to be well-mannered and studied hard at university. We sometimes invited our friends to join us. They often asked her the same questions, about Nokia, Moomin, white night, and so on, but she was kind enough to answer them sincerely without showing any displeasure.

She is not someone who shows emotions, but when my husband would greet her in Finnish using a translation software on his cell phone, she always gave a cute smile. We are used to living with three boys, so I am sure my husband was so happy that his dream of having a

daughter came true.

One of our friends also hosted a Korean female student at OGU as a home visit family, so we had a joint party at our house. We had so much fun together, so I think it may be a good idea to be a home visit family with your friends.

As you know the Winter Olympics was held in February this year. When I watched TV, I cheered not only for the Japanese athletes, but also for the Finnish athletes. Finland has unconsciously become someplace familiar to me. This tiny cross-cultural experience planted a seed for a new interest in my life and it has started to sprout out. It has truly been a great experience.



At the Okayama family's house (From left Yasuko, her son, and Mia)



Osaka tour with the Okayama family (From left Yasuko's husband, Jiro, Mia, and Yasuko)

I am really glad that I joined the Home Visit Program. I was able to get to know the Japanese culture better, and I met a wonderful family. Also, because I lived alone in an apartment, I really didn't know what the normal life in Japan was. But because I got to know the Okayama family, I was able to experience a little bit of that too. We visited different places around Kyoto and Osaka area together. I really had a lot fun and I am thankful for everything. It felt like I had parents in Japan that I would occasionally meet with and travel around. Just like I would do in Finland if I lived alone. Thank you for everything and let's stay in contact!



Mia Kolkkinen (Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences, Finland)



Flavor in New York ~Takako Kanazawa

When I think of New York, Broadway musicals are the first things that come to my mind. With the spectacular songs, energetic dances, and incredible performances, the various and glamorous stage productions have attracted even larger audiences in recent years. It is just like a dream world.



I would like to introduce another way to enjoy Broadway musicals. There is a door called "Stage Door" on the side of the theater building. After the show, the actors dressed in casual clothes come out from the door, and give autographs and shake hands with fans waiting for them outside. If you tell them, "Today's performance was fantastic!" in English, you can suddenly feel closer to the musical icons of Broadway! This is a great opportunity that you shouldn't miss. (International Center Staff)



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