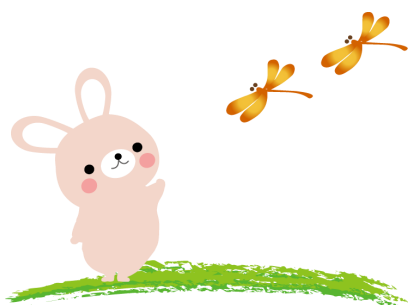




# TAKING OFF

Vol. 28 Fall, 2016



## 1. Hello from All Corners of the World!

This article was written by an OGU graduate, Mr. Takahiro Aoki, who was a good soccer player as well as a diligent student. He was also well liked by his juniors. He studied at Dowling College in New York as an exchange student. After graduating from OGU, he was involved in establishing a local soccer team. He now works at an automobile parts company in Tochigi Prefecture. He wishes to work in the same business field in the United States.

### Takahiro Aoki (Graduated in 2011, Foreign Languages Major)

I currently design automobile parts. I started this job not so long ago, so my seniors still help me design them on PC.

I majored in foreign languages at OGU. I still remember my teachers who taught us enthusiastically. Speaking of my university life, I took many different subjects that looked interesting to me: classes offered by the Hospitality Industry Center and classes to be a clinical psychotherapist. Among all my classes, an economics class taught by a professor from Cambridge University in the U.K. was one of the most interesting classes I took at OGU. When I did not have any classes, I always went to the I-Chat Lounge and had fun talking with native speakers of English.

Outside the campus, I had a very busy and fun life. I worked at a clothing shop part time, cycled around Lake Biwa with my friends, enjoyed karaoke near the campus, enjoyed driving around Awaji Island, had a BBQ party near my apartment, participated in a jazz festival in Takatsuki, did bouldering and surfing, and much more. I energetically did everything I was interested in and liked. This also means that, at the time, I could not imagine what my future would be like and I just did whatever my heart desired without thinking too much.

Along the way, I became interested in the airline business. Airline business requires you to have language skills, so I decided to study abroad and chose the United States to study English. I mainly took ESL classes at Dowling College, but also psychology, social studies, and personnel relations classes. At my host university, my classes started at a different time every day. All of my classes ended at 9:30 am two days a week, so after that, I



With a teacher at Dowling College in NY

jogged at the school field and studied and read books at the library. I had more free time than I had in Japan. On the weekends, I went downtown, surfed, and went to parties, and so on. I studied hard and played hard at the same time.

It was already the first semester in the senior year when I came back to Japan, so I was planning to apply for airline companies. Guess what? Something no one could have imagined happened: the bankruptcy of Lehman Brothers. Because of that, no airline companies hired new workers that year. I did not know what to do. Just before my graduation from OGU, someone told me about a new local soccer club. I got involved in establishing this club and stayed there for about six months. It was not a long time, but I learned the enjoyment of managing and operating soccer clubs. After I left the club, I went back to my hometown in Tochigi Prefecture. I almost ran out of money by then, so I quickly tried to find a job. My favorite coffee shop, Starbucks was looking for staff and I was hired soon by the company. Through this job, I met so many people and learned customer service, person-



Fun days at the I-Chat Lounge  
(Top: the second from right in the back row, Bottom: Right)

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**Uyuki Tanaka**



nel development, shop management, and so on. I had so much fun working there.

After four years of working at Starbucks, I still could not give up on being involved in soccer, so I quit Starbucks in March, 2015. I started looking for a job that required me to work only on weekdays in order to keep weekends free for soccer. However, the staff at Hello Work recommended me to the company that I now work for. I was surprised that the company actually hired me without any working experience in the field. I was always interested in cars, so I took the position and started working there in September, 2015. I decided to change my job because of soccer, but I am now more into developing and designing automobile parts.

I put soccer aside for a while.

When I got engrossed in this job, I received an opportunity to go on a one-month business trip to the States in February of this year. I was chosen to go because of my study abroad experience. I was nervous to go to the States for the first time in several years, but strangely my gratitude to all the people I met deepened even more. In the States, everything I did up to then was useful and my job there went smoothly. I also met many important people.

I am now back in Tochigi Prefecture, and still work on developing and designing automobile parts. My future plan is to work

in the States again and to find a workplace where my knowledge and experiences will be used to the fullest. In order to make this dream come true, I would like to deal with diversified jobs and accumulate more experiences here in Japan.

Finally, I have two things I would like to convey to all present OGU students. The first one is that if you have a dream or goal, just follow your heart and do what you need to do now. The second one is to ask yourself if you really want to do it. If you do, just do it. These are the things that I wanted to tell you and they are also my mottoes in my life. I hope this will be helpful and useful for you in some way. Thank you for reading.

## 2. Let's see the world through volunteer activities!

Students have become more and more interested in overseas volunteer activities in recent years. OGU students also participate in a two-week volunteer program conducted with students at Khon Kaen University in Thailand every spring. One of the OGU students, Ms. Riina Tsukamoto, joined a volunteer program at an orphanage in Cambodia during the spring vacation of this year. She experienced true richness of life through her volunteer work with orphans.

*\*Immediately after participating in this program, Ms. Tsukamoto went to Korea to study Korean language and culture for a semester at Baekseok University as an exchange student.*

### TeaSta: "Bright smiling faces I encountered in Cambodia"

#### Rina Tsukamoto (Senior, Hospitality Business Administration Major)



Orphans (Right in the second row)

My friend and I participated in a Cambodian orphanage volunteer tour from February 13 to 19 of this year through an NGO called TeaSta\*.

In Cambodia, we stayed with an orphanage owner, Mr. Sonton who could speak Japanese. Each room at his house was equipped with a shower and toilet, so our stay was comfortable, although there were a lot of flies and mosquitoes. During these five days, we played with the orphans, taught them Japanese and had lunch with them in the morning. In the afternoon, we went to a spa, visited Angkor Wat, a Night Market, Aki Ra Land Mine Museum, and so on. We planned a lot of fun things ourselves.

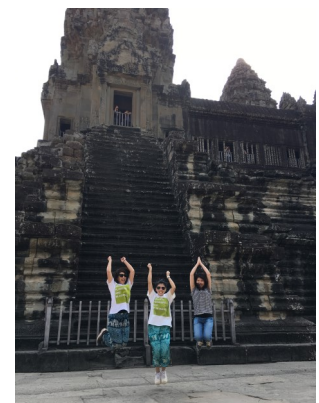
Volunteer tours at TeaSta can be created by participants. We didn't visit other orphanages. Instead, we did volunteer activities at one specific orphanage and planned what we wanted to teach the orphans. My friend and I decided to teach them how to introduce themselves in Japanese and ask them to write their dreams. We also did jumping rope and danced together.

Orphans have different backgrounds and have been living at the orphanage since they were little. Therefore, before going to Cambodia, I thought Japanese children were happier than them. However, the reality was totally different. Orphans always smiled and laughed innocently, studied hard, and spoke English without any difficulty. They also have clear future dreams. Since they are still small kids, they were mischievous and we chased them around all the time.

In addition to our volunteer activities, we had the chance to attend the wedding ceremony of Mr. Sonton's distant relative. We are majoring in hospitality business administration, so we were unexpectedly invited to the ceremony. To tell the truth, I had culture shock there. I was surprised to

see people throwing trash under the table and staff acting casually. However, this turned out to be a precious experience for me.

Five days in Cambodia passed by so quickly. When we said goodbye to the orphans, we could not stop crying. At the same time, we felt bad for the kids who always experience farewell with foreigners coming to the orphanage. I hope their experience with us will be a step for them



At Angkor Wat (Left)



to learn Japanese and motivate them to move forward in pursuing their dreams. This tour was a rare opportunity for us to see a different world, so I am truly glad I decided to participate in it.

\*TeaSta gives a learning opportunity (language learning and overseas experiences) to participants through teaching children in developing countries something new. (Excerpt from the website) <http://teasta.jp/>

OGU X Philippines started from an idea to give outbound exchange students a chance to see other parts of the world. An OGU graduate, Mr. Yo Okawa introduced me to Ruby, an elementary school teacher in the Philippines. The exchange students thought of what we can do for children from poor families and how we can make them happy through our communication with Ruby. The original plan unfortunately did not work well, but several students had success with the activity starting from the International Fair held in spring of this year. Now, we finally can send a package of goods to children in August. Ms. Hinano Murayama is one of the active members of OGU X Philippines and she wrote about the activity here. The latest activities are also posted on the Facebook page. Please check it out also.

## OGU X Philippines: “Our power is small, but not useless!”

### Hinano Murayama (Junior, International Studies Major)



First of all, do you know the country called the Philippines? Its size is about 80% of Japan, and it consists of 7,109 islands. The population is about 11 million, and the capital is Manila. The time difference between the Philippines and Japan is only an hour. We are an hour ahead of them. The official languages are Tagalog and English, so you can communicate with people in English at most places.

When I was a freshman, I studied English there for a month during spring vacation. I really wanted to improve my English skills, so I chose a school where I studied English from 8 am to 10 pm on weekdays. Before going to the Philippines, my senior at university introduced me to Ms. Rubilyn Cabardo Pastrano (Ruby), an elementary school teacher who also helped kids in a slum on weekends. She took me to the slum and I helped her ration meals and drinks to the kids, and observed the English class Ruby taught. I only knew about slums through TV programs, which somehow gave me an impression of people having a difficult time, but what I saw there was children wearing worn clothes who really enjoyed learning English. It was an impressive scene for me. Children told me, “My parents’ income is not stable, so I don’t have enough food to eat and cannot go to school.” And “I don’t have

a safe place to sleep.” If someone told you this, how would you feel? Feelings that I had never experienced before and could not really explain welled up in my heart. Furthermore, when I left the slum that day, children said to me ARIGATO while waving their hands. I often use this word in my everyday life. Until that day, I thought I would be happy if someone said that word to me. However, ARIGATO on that day did not make me happy at all because I knew I could not do anything for them to appreciate. Because of this experience, after I came back to Japan, I wanted to get involved with these children in some way, and I decided to join OGU X Philippines.

Currently, there are five members in OGU X Philippines. After the International Fair in April, we started calling for goods donation, placed a donation box on campus, and periodically published a newsletter. We plan to send a package of donated goods to Ruby in August and ask her to deliver them to children in the slum.

Our power is small, but not useless. I really believe this, so I would like to continue dealing with children through OGU X Philippines. I also will not end this activity here, but will continue with small world contribution. Through this, I would like to find a way to live and to contribute to the world myself.

If you have stationaries or goods for elementary students at home, please donate them in the box placed at the lounge on the first floor of Building #1. Your cooperation and help is greatly appreciated.



OGU X Philippines  
Facebook Page



Top: With Ruby  
Bottom: Children waving their hands at Hinano

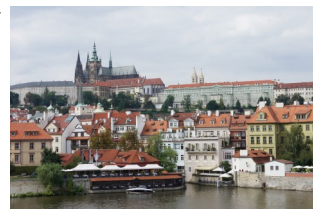
It took a long time, but we finally sent a package to the elementary school where Ruby works in early October. We thank you all for your help.





### My Favorite in Prague~Uyuki Tanaka

**M**y favorite thing in Prague, Czech Republic is strolling through the city. Prague has a long history and castles and museums dot the city. If you walk around, you can feel the history. The most famous sightseeing spot, Prague Castle is a must see. This castle is known as the oldest and largest castle in the world. Diverse architectural styles are used, so this castle is one of a kind. The castle overlooks the city with houses and buildings with orange brick roofs that look like a postcard. Major sightseeing spots are located in a small area, so you can basically visit them on foot. A romantic and beautiful city, Prague makes you think you are in a fairy tale. If you have a chance to come to Prague, please walk around the city!



(Sophomore, Foreign Languages Major, currently studying at Metropolitan University, Prague)



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