



Vol. 3

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## With our Deepest Appreciation and Gratitude



Thirty years ago, I had the privilege of traveling to Japan as an exchange student to Saitama-ken from my undergraduate university in Oregon. At my Japanese host university, I received daily Japanese classes in the morning, subject-based courses in English in the afternoon, and I became a member of the Shorinji Kenpo club. These activities were all an integral part of my initial learning experience about daily life as well as life as a student in Japan. Equally important and one of the more lasting impressions of my exchange program was my home stay experience with the Murakami Family from Tokorozawa, Saitama. The memories of my home stay family have resonated through me the past thirty years.

My home stay experience changed my life and allowed me to have a bird's eye view of what daily life in Japan offered. Using the daily expressions of "tadaima" and "itte kimasu," simply observing the family order of events of taking a furo, and learning how a family could live in such small quarters was all so interesting and educational for me. I enjoyed spending time with my host family very much. Noriko, my host mother, took me to watch Kabuki. I played catch with Daisuke, the 8-year old son. The 6-year old daughter, Kazuko, helped me study my Japanese homework. Yuka, the eldest daughter, was always smiling and friendly, and at 10 years old was already studying English. My host mother spoke English well and explained various things about Japan to me. The Grandmother who enjoyed listening to sumo on the

radio also lived with them and sat at my left side during dinner. At the dinner table, my host father Jiro and I often enjoyed drinking beer together. Using his broken English and simple Japanese words, together we discussed topics such as politics and running marathons, my family and world travel. Our nightly dinner tradition was to end each evening sipping on ocha (green tea) and sometimes I listened to his rendition of "Sayonara" written by the famed folk group, "Off Course." Thirty years later, all of these fond memories still nest strongly within me; I can picture all of their faces as if it were just yesterday. Throughout the years, I continued to visit them when I traveled through Tokyo. The children have all grown up, gotten married and have had children of their own. Jiro and Noriko came to visit my family and I in the US, when I was living in Alaska and Hawaii. Even thirty years later, my home stay family and I remain friends.....we are friends for life.

My home stay experience influenced me in very positive ways. It helped create the strong desire for me to return to Japan after graduation. As a result of my return, my life would never be the same. Never in my wildest dreams could I have imagined that I would someday be the Director of the International Center at a Japanese university. There is no actual way to measure the influence and positive effects of a home stay experience, but for many of the incoming OGU international students, the home stay experience may be the most impressionistic part of their Japan experience. Through the review of the student evaluations and speaking to the international students, clearly the home stay experience is one of the best ways for the international students to understand the Japanese people, their customs, values and ways of thinking.

Naturally, hosting an international student is not easy. There are differences in ways of thinking, likes and dis-

likes, lifestyles and personalities, which can all be very challenging and difficult at times. OGU host families do not offer home stay to earn the money, as we often hear about in other countries. In fact, the monthly stipend they receive does not come close to covering the various costs of hosting an international student. OGU host families open their homes to students for a variety of reasons. There are those with children who often wish to expose their children to foreigners. There are others whose children are grown up, and they want to share their home and teach foreigners about Japan. Some families simply enjoy spending time talking to foreign students and participate in the home stay program as a sense of goodwill or as their contribution to a better world, and in a larger sense, world peace.

We at the International Center extend our deepest appreciation and gratitude to the OGU host families for all they do. Many thanks to both the past and present families, for opening up your hearts and welcoming the international students into your home.

*International Center Director*  
*Mike Matsuno*

### A Request from the International Center

If your family knows of other families who might also be interested in hosting an international student from OGU, please contact the International Center. We are always looking for additional host families as our one-month, one semester, and one-year programs continue to successfully grow! Thank you very much!

## “한국에서 이루어진 꿈 (My Dream Came True in Korea)” Hidenori Matsutani (A junior majoring in Foreign Languages)

처음 뵙겠습니다. 저는 마즈타니 히데노리 입니다.  
How do you do? I am Hidenori Matsutani.

I studied at Soon Chun Hyang University, located in Korea, during September, 2008 to June 2009. Before my journey began, my impression of Korea was very simple. I imagined it to be a country similar to Japan with good food. I was looking very forward to my departure! However, I had never studied Korean before, so I did not have confidence to live alright in Korea. I finally left Japan with a lot of excitement and anxiety. Other people might say that if you worry that much, why don't you study Korean before you leave? But I like to challenge anything that comes to me.

Upon my arrival in Korea, the Incheon Airport, which is much bigger than the Kansai International Airport, awaited me. I was completely surrounded by the Korean language, which made me even more nervous to travel to Korea. In my first two months there, I communicated with students and staff using only limited English. I felt frustrated that my Korean did not improve as much as I would have wanted it to during the first part of my stay. On the other hand, I didn't have much trouble during my one-year stay, with the one exception, of losing my wallet and credit card. To problem solve, I had to go to the police station to submit a report, apply to the credit card company for a new card and apply for a new ATM card at the bank. Things I could do with confidence in my home country; became a challenge in a foreign country. Yet, in hindsight, it was

a lesson to myself that I could do just about anything if I really put my mind to it! Events like this presented many learning opportunities for me during my time in Korea.

I, one who loves to take risks, made my dream come true in Korea! I was chosen to play on an international student soccer team for Soon Chun Hyang University. I have been playing soccer since I was an elementary student and my dream was to play for an international soccer team. Looking back, it seemed an impossible dream to reach; but I actually did it. Soccer is a well-known sport all over the world, and many international students practiced soccer almost everyday on the campus. However, we could only practice and not play official games because we were not an “organized team”. Therefore, I decided to make our team official. Of course it was not an easy task. We needed uniforms and it was a challenge for all of the team members to communicate since we all spoke different languages. It was a slow process and there were many barriers we had to overcome. However, when we finally made it happen, after many discussions in both Korean and English, it was very exciting! The team was made up of members from Korea, America, Turkey, China, Thailand, Vietnam, Mexico, Switzerland, Canada and Japan. We name ourselves the “Global FC.” Even the smallest details about forming a team worried me. Did we



Hidenori with other Global FC members

have enough students interested in forming an official soccer team? How would we get uniforms? In the end, once I decided to push forward and conquer any fears I had, one of my life's dreams became a reality and I was finally a member of an official international soccer team!

As a result of my study abroad experience, I learned I would never know “what could be” if I didn't take a risk and try new things. Taking risks and accepting a challenge is very important in life. Regrets only mount for those who sit by and watch others get involved and refrain from jumping in themselves. Try new things and don't worry. Take a reasonable risk or two in your college life! Don't sit this one out. Don't be afraid!

## “My Life in South Africa” Sho Saito (A senior majoring in Economics)

A partner agreement between Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU) and Osaka Gakuin University (OGU) was signed in March of 2009. Sho Saito, a senior majoring in Economics is the first exchange student to attend NMMU from OGU. NMMU is located about an hour by air from Johannesburg on the beautiful oceanfront of Port Elizabeth. Although today we often hear about South Africa, it will be interesting to hear Sho's first hand impressions and stories about his new experiences in the months ahead. The following is his tale about his first month's adventure living and studying at our new partner University in South Africa!

Nearly a month has passed since I arrived at NMMU to settle in for my semester-long study abroad experience. It is unbelievable how quickly time flies! Remarkably, I am the very first Japanese exchange student to study at this university. Happily, I will share with you events of this past month, as well as some insights into my host university.

I am now living in Port Elizabeth located in South Africa, a small coastal community known as the “windy city.” The

scenery here is beautiful. Some of my favorite sites include the quaint coastal streets and their majestic ocean views. One might think Africa would be a challenging place to live, but rather, South Africa is a very comfortable and convenient location to stay. In fact, daily necessities are easily accessible in several supermarkets nearby my apartment. There is also a shopping mall in the city center. Regarding daily living, my life is not so much different from that in Japan. Modes



BBQ with other international students

of transportation include van taxis and buses. Taxis are very inexpensive and many people take a taxi wherever they travel. A fare costs only 6 Rand, which is equal to approximately 70 yen! Inside the taxis, there are both a driver and an announcer who shouts at potential passengers along the streets... “Taxi! Taxi!” The taxi van makes stops from time to time

picking up over 20 people who pile in the taxi and sit together very closely on the seats. At first, I wasn't familiar with the taxi system, yet once I learned how easy and convenient it was, I began to use them more often.

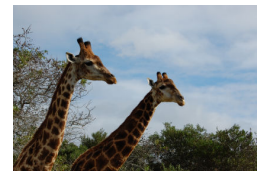
Other popular activities available to me in Port Elizabeth include surfing, scuba diving, camping, whale watching and much more. In fact, one of my new friends is a surfer and has invited me to go surfing with him this afternoon!

My host university, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU) is named after Nelson Mandela, a most significant black leader in South Africa who became a strong symbol of resistance for the anti-apartheid movement. He later became the president of South Africa. NMMU has a rich multifaceted international atmosphere. For example, my class consists of

eight students from Cameroon, Congo, France, Sweden, Pakistan and China. I study in the English language program and my teachers provide a comprehensive, slow paced learning environment where students feel comfortable and welcome to ask questions. My classmates and I often discuss diversified topics during our time together outside of class.

One recent class event included a visit to Kragga Kamma Game Park, which is home to variety of safari animals such as cheetahs, giraffes, and rhinos. The guide drove us around the park in a specialized viewing car. It was exciting to see the large animals first-hand in the vast African wilderness. I had previously only witnessed this type of thing on T.V. Each month we will visit a different site and I can hardly wait to find out where we will visit next!

Certainly, during the next four months I will experience a few challenges with my English studies. However undoubtedly, I will also enjoy many new experiences, which will build fond and unforgettable memories to treasure for the rest of my life!



Kragga Kamma Game Park

## Data for the 2009-10 International Exchange Program!

Fifty-one students from thirteen countries all over the world will arrive at OGU the first week of September! The number of students attending the OGU International Exchange Program has increased dramatically each year since 2006. Back in 2005, the program had only 9 students total; today enrollment has increased to an incredible 51 students. Their presence on campus has become an important source of internationalization campus wide (graph #1). This year the number of students participating from Asia, Europe and America present a more

distinct balance (graph #2). Diversification in student national origin represent America, Mexico, Austria, The Netherlands, Germany, Finland, France, Thailand, Philippines, China, Taiwan and Korea. Osaka Gakuin University proves to be a global center of knowledge, not only for international students, but for OGU students as well.

With the support of the International Center and the mission statement: "to provide international exchange students with a "life-changing," authentic Japanese experience. A personalized experience that they will be able to reflect on and build upon after leaving OGU, where their lives and their future will never be the same", the international students will participate in the Japanese language and culture courses, live in a local home stay family, dormitory or apartment.

Essential to the continued success of the OGU international programs is the support of the local community, OGU faculty, staff, and students. This year, more than thirty host families will open their homes to incoming international

students, which will provide them a unique opportunity to learn Japanese language and culture as a result of their daily lives spent in Japan.

Additional support for international students includes involvement by a student volunteer group known as the International Student Support Team (ISST). The role of this team, mainly consisting of students, is to support new incoming international students during their time at OGU. The main ISST mission welcomes the international students as part of the "OGU family", by greeting them upon their arrival at the airport, helping them apply for their alien registration cards and planning fun events to celebrate their upcoming school year.

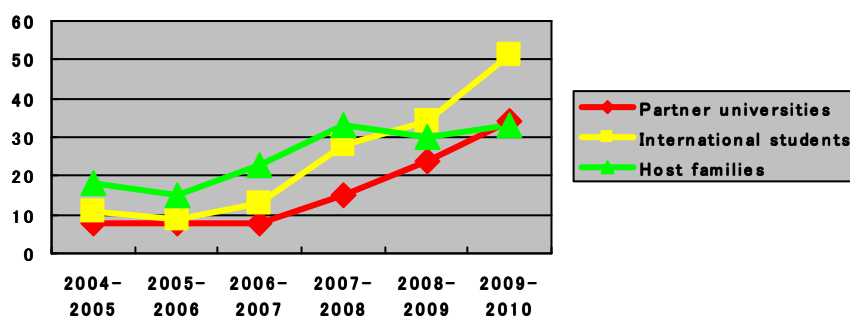
Without a doubt, success of any program depends heavily upon the support of others. The OGU International Program is no exception. With great appreciation the faculty and staff at the International Center thank you for your ongoing support for the OGU exchange program.

(T.K.)

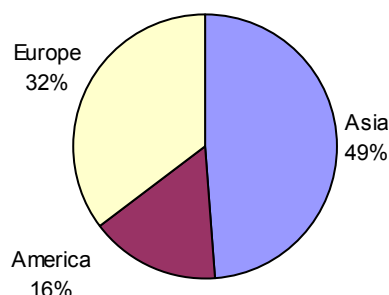


New international students at the orientation

#1: Number of partner universities, international students and host families.



#2: Percentage data for 2009-10





## Tips for a Host Family—Part 1 by Yuko Teramura

The International Center is interested in bringing awareness to OGU's home stay programs and extending information for current and potential host families. This article is the first in a VII part series featuring first hand information, stories, and hints for families who open their home to our students. Our first family, the Teramura's, began hosting international students in their home in 1996. They have hosted approximately thirty-five students from America, Germany, France, The Netherlands and Taiwan.



Teramura Family with Johanna (An International Student at OGU in 2008-2009)

### "Comparisons of long-term programs - vs- short-term programs" By: Yuko Teramura

I have often read information about the conventional host family experiences and various tips such as: "we took our student here and there and enjoyed doing this and that". I have always felt there was very limited useful information available for potential host families. Living with someone you never met before is not an easy thing to do. Host families yearn for practical tips they can learn and put

to use right away. For example: how to avoid conflicts with an international student or guidelines for problem solving if indeed any conflicts occur.

My experience hosting the thirty-five students has given me much practical insight over the years. Here, I will share my experiences as a host mother, those of other host families and my friends. I hope my tips will be helpful to others.

I would first like to talk about the comparisons of long-term programs and short-term programs. Personally, I believe hosting a student for a longer period of time is much easier. When a home stay visit is limited to only one week, students often leave Japan before getting used to living in a home comfortably. As a result, they miss out on the opportunity to learn how to do anything for themselves in the home. The student's role becomes more of a guest and often times they expect the host family to take them around to see the sites in Japan, which can become far more costly for the host family. Regardless, if you are a host family with only limited time, it may be beneficial for you to host a student for a short period.

Osaka Gakuin University offers a long-term program for international students with the option to home stay with a local family. The students' goal is to study in a language program at the university. Host family duties, for a long-term student, differ. In this situation a host family offers an authentic living environment in which students can learn about the life and culture of Japanese people. In contrast to the short-term program, the host family does not treat them as a guest, but rather as a member of the family assuring them full

immersion into the culture. Since the student and the family build a strong relationship over time, it is much more natural for host families to tell them what to do. Likewise, the students are far more receptive to learning and respecting the family rules and boundaries. Additionally, these students often have a general knowledge of Japanese life and some can speak a little Nihongo and are capable of commuting to school on the train independently. Other advantages of a long-term student include their ability to be at home without you when your family works late. They have less of an expectation that you will take them around for sightseeing and they often plan outings with their friends during the weekend. Of course if there is a day both of you are free, you may go sightseeing with them. However, I cannot emphasize enough the importance of confirming with them that sightseeing is something they want to do before making plans to take them. Never assume anything; ask them first because they are attending OGU to study Japanese and often have other commitments such as homework and exams. Most importantly, although they are only university age, they are young adults and should be treated as such. For example: remember to avoid making any plan for them prior to inquiring about their plans first. A common mistake for host families is to take the student out according to the family's plan only and later expect appreciation for the gesture. This is a lack of consideration for the student's schedule and is definitely a no-no.

(Coming soon in the next edition  
~"Friendly Rules")

## Introduction: Japanese Instructor Ms. Misa Fukui

Two full-time and two part-time educators teach Japanese at Osaka Gakuin University. In this issue, we would like to introduce Ms. Masaka Fukui.

Joining us in April of 2003, Fukui sensei has been educating students at the International Center the longest of the four teachers. Prior to her time at OGU, she was a Japanese instructor for four years in



Ms. Fukui with international students

Latvia, one of three Baltic countries. There, she taught in a K-12 continuous education school system as well as in a Latvian University. Why Latvia you may wonder? When she was studying Russian while working at a Japanese

company, her teacher mentioned a possible upcoming teaching position opening in Latvia. That was the beginning of her journey. Not in her wildest dreams could she have imagined her life

would take such a turn! It was a great experience for her!

Known as a seasoned teacher, Fukui sensei has a gift of successfully reaching and teaching students from countries all over the world each year. Clearly, her students respect her very much. She skillfully fosters community and builds trust with them, which cultivates life long bonds for everyone in her class. An example of this teaching spirit was evident when she traveled to Seoul, Korea last July on a personal trip. On her own time, she stopped to check on some former students who studied the previous year at OGU. These students enjoyed her so much. They even took her sightseeing! Many international students fondly remember their time in her classes and treasure memories of her as a teacher long after their return to their home countries.

When asked her impressions of the OGU international students, she replied, "They study hard and play hard." Fukui sensei, is known as the teacher who has high expectations for all students and requires they do their best and study hard all the time!

Her final words of wisdom: "Time flies by quickly in this program. For one to be successful, they must try their very best in everything they do".

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