



Vol. 4

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Kishibe Festival on October 23 and 24, 2009

International Students and the Intentional Student Support Team (ISST)

Traditionally, each year towards the end of October, OGU celebrates autumn on campus as hosts of the Kishibe Festival. The festival enjoyed extra ordinarily nice fall weather this year. As the International Center welcomed fifty-one students from all over the world, this was the perfect opportunity for them to participate in a traditional school event! The International Student Support Team (ISST) and the international students quickly rallied together to plan a food booth. The name of the booth was “世界の屋台村” (World Food Booth) that featured diversified food from various countries. The following is an account of the events and how the international students and ISST members worked tirelessly, for approximately one month, to make the event a success. You would not believe what a highlight the booth was and how much attention it attracted throughout the festival!

Preparations for the festival began minus any blueprint from previous years and with many unknowns of how it might turn out. Matt Freel and Berenice Despres were selected as chair people of the two day event. There were language barriers between both the international students

and Japanese students, as well as among the international students themselves. Although at times communication was a challenge, the students were both resourceful and patient in their interactions with one another. During the planning stages, there were discussions held in Chinese, Korean, German, French, English and Japanese in small groups, and later other students would interpret the details discussed. Had this not have been such a multi-cultural group with high level multi-language skills, this event might have otherwise become an impossible undertaking!

Each student took on various planning roles, such as making posters, cooking food samples, food shopping, etc. Students' voices echoed through the halls of building #1 late at night as they worked diligently preparing to complete their tasks.

Items featured on the booth menu for the first day were dumplings, Kaiserschmarrn (an Austrian pancake) and Pearl Milk Tea. Some of the Chinese student helped others to make dumplings, and together over 500 dumplings were sold. At one point during the planning stages, the Kaiserschmarrn became a little worrisome to one committee, but in the end those students prepared them and pulled it off successfully! The Taiwanese students asked their families to mail tapioca to them in Japan. They later made Pearl Milk Tea which everyone enjoyed! On the following day, students made Kimuchi Jeon (Korean okonomiyaki with spicy pickles) and French crepes, and again Pearl Milk Tea. As you can imagine, the Korean students were quite the master chefs when making Korean Jeon as were the French for the crepes. The international booth sales doubled on the second day of the festival!

The Japanese students worked in harmony with the international students in various tasks on both days of the event. The international students also helped the I-Chat Café next door to their booth as



Student making Kaiserschmarrn



Students dancing the Macarena



International students at the booth

well as the Yo-Yo (water balloon) booth, which was sponsored by Professor Shirai's seminar class. A flood of international center teachers and host families also made appearances at the booth to show their support. Naturally, this added to the energy and the sheer enthusiasm of the event!

Despite the limited planning time for such a large scale event, together the international and Japanese students made it a huge success! Their enthusiastic presence at the Kishibe Festival will not soon be forgotten campus-wide. In fact, not only does it stand to further strengthened deeper bonds among themselves, but also helps to promote the internationalization of our campus. While the festival was only a small part of the big picture in intercultural exchange; it is the hope that the OGU International Exchange Program will continue to play a leading role in cultivating students' desires to “get involved”, gain confidence to try new adventures and perhaps become future global leaders.

Special Feature: The Kingdom of the Netherlands

The Netherlands is known for tulips and windmills. It borders Germany to the east and Belgium to the south. Japan and the Netherlands have shared a close relationship for many years. As you may already know, technology and research brought to Japan from the Netherlands is called "Rangaku" (Western studies). The year 2009 celebrates the 400th anniversary of the beginning of commercial relationship between the two countries! OGU currently has two partners in the Netherlands: HZ University of Applied Sciences and Fontys University of Applied Sciences. This section of the newsletter will highlight reports written by students who study, live, or work in the Netherlands.



"Three Weeks in Venlo"

by **Yuriko Nakanishi** (A junior majoring in International Studies)

Yuriko studied English at Fontys University of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands for three weeks during this year's OGU summer study program. She was the only Japanese student who attended. The following is a candid testimonial of her very interesting and educational experience.

This summer, I had the pleasure of living in Venlo in the Netherlands, a small community near the German border, for three wonderful weeks. Although I had traveled previously overseas, it was never alone. Early in my stay, I could not even imagine what it was going to feel like to be the sole Japanese student, studying among so many other foreign students.

During my first week in the Netherlands, Anne and Oliver, Fontys students now studying Japanese at OGU, showed me all around Venlo and nearby cities in Germany. We even visited the amusement park together. I shared time with Anne's friends and played cards and board games late into the night. They made my first week very enjoyable, although I did feel somewhat homesick at times. One evening, I phoned my family in Japan and just the sound of their voices made me want to go home. In the end, they encouraged me to make the best of my short time in Venlo. At that moment, I made my mind up to do my best and enjoy every single minute of the remainder of my stay.

On the second week, I joined the summer school at Fontys University to embark on my English language program. I was very surprised to learn that all of my classmates were Germany nationals and further, all of the classes were instructed in German. During the class break time, the students chatted in German. I had never studied German and could not speak English well enough, so at first, I did not understand any part of their conversations, which limited me from being involved in the group. Therefore, I kept to myself. After a few days, I realized, if I remained disengaged with my classmates, I would not benefit from my study abroad experience at all. Nor make new friends. Above all, I had a strong desire to make friends. The very next day, I decided to make a change! Despite the fact that I could not understand what my classmates were talking about at all, I gathered up enough courage to jump in and get involved in the group. Everyday, I set a small goal for myself. For example: "I will talk to one student today." Once I changed my attitude, I made new friends and felt much more at ease. Also, I learned that one of my classmates, whom I had previously thought was a little scary, was actually very nice and even a little funny. Another student shared with me some Japanese words he had learned. Finally, I became comfortable and felt part of the class. Although my classes were challenging, having nice classmates made life at



Yuriko with Anne (right) and her friend

Fontys much easier and very enjoyable.

I even went shopping alone and attempted to communicate with a waiter at cafe to test my English skills. I did okay and the experience was very good for me.

Through my study abroad experience, I met many new people. I also made good friends in class and really enjoyed my overall stay in Venlo. I not only learned more English, but most importantly, I learned to believe in myself even more. Although at first, I was a little concerned about what my study abroad experience would be like, in the end, making friends, living alone for the first time, meeting many new people and learning new things helped me feel independent and gain much more self confidence.

Today, more than ever, I am determined to study English more intensely and would like to return to the Netherlands and Germany in the near future!



"Life in the Netherlands – English Only!"

by **Hiroyuki Toma** (A sophomore majoring in Foreign Languages)

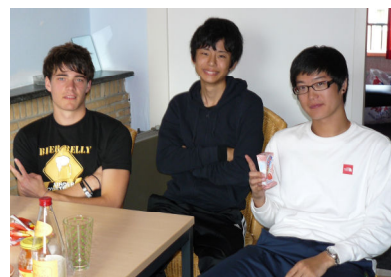
Hiroyuki has been studying at HZ University of Applied Science since August of this year. He was the first OGU student to study in the Netherlands. The following are some interesting stories about his student life!

It has been nearly six weeks since I began my studies at HZ University of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands. Today, I will share a bit about my University here and the remarkable experiences I have encountered so far.

As the first OGU student to attend HZ, I didn't have much prior information about the school before leaving Japan. The only thing I was sure of: I would be the only Japanese student enrolled here. I was on my own! I thought it would be a great place to study English, although I had no idea what a challenge it would be not to use any Japanese.

On my first three days here, I was a guest at the home of Sjoerd, the first Dutch exchange student to attend OGU. Although my journey is still in the early stages, I pledge to remain very positive about my future life here regardless of what struggles may come my way.

I live in a small ocean-side city with about 45,000 people in Vlissingen, Zeeland State. The sunsets in this area are spectacular! Huge trading ships are a common sight, as the trading industry is very strong in the southern region. There are few modern buildings, yet, many European style homes, with very colorful rooftops. People use bicycles as their main transportation and there are even road signs dedicated solely to the bicycle traffic. Too, I can hear citizens remind me in Dutch when I accidentally walk on the left side of the sidewalk traffic---



With other international students at HZ

"move to the right when you walk" they call out to me. As you can see, traffic of any kind is taken very seriously here and the people closely abide by the rules.

In this part of the Netherlands, the ground is below sea level and there are no mountains in sight. Although this country is well known for the beautiful tulips, one would see

far more windmills than tulips in the Netherlands. Lastly, literally everyone in this country speaks English!

What would you imagine a small town University of Applied Sciences to be like? Perhaps that it hosts many local students whom only study science-related subjects? In contrast, it is surprisingly quite different. In fact, this University hosts over 400 foreign students from all over Europe, for example: From France, Germany, Spain, Austria, Rumania, Bulgaria, and Switzerland, and also the U.S., Canada, Mexico, Australia, Kenya, Korea and China. All of the students mentioned study not only the sciences, but also International Business (IBMS) and trading. HZ is quite the internationalized university!

Once I moved to the dorm, my real stu-

dent life began. Honestly, dorm life was a challenge from the beginning. Since I am studying in Europe, naturally it is assumed that I am a fluent English speaker. While I wasn't worried about my limited English before my arrival, once people spoke to me directly in fluent English, I felt regrets that my English skills were so low. At the time, I couldn't understand a word people were saying to me. For example, various paperwork, regulations and rules were explained in English and there could have been big potential problems. Had this happened, I wouldn't have been capable of sorting them out due to my limited level of English. It was necessary for me to be independent and take care of everything by myself. I had a difficult time at first. Gradually, I became more accustomed to listening to

English and now I can occasionally attend parties with friends, have drinks out at the pub, and play soccer with local kids at the soccer grounds near the university on Saturdays.

At school, I have a lot of daily homework, yet now, I make more of an effort to improve my English level in hopes of taking regular IBMS courses next semester. In addition to the challenges of my everyday life here, I soon plan to take an even bigger risk and venture out to visit my friend who lives in Paris.

I realize time flies as fast as an arrow. For that reason, I want to make sure my study abroad experiences are the best they can be and will become unforgettable treasured lifelong memories. I intend to make that happen by studying hard and playing hard!

"My Fun Life in Japan" by Anne A. Van Overbrüggen

Anne attends Fontys University of Applied Sciences. Although she attends school in the Netherlands, she is a German national. Currently, four of our exchange students from Fontys University are German residents. Due to Fontys' close proximity to the German border, it is common for their enrollment to host students from both Germany and likewise throughout Europe. Both Anne, along with Oliver, who was mentioned earlier in Yuriko's article, were a great support to her during her stay at Fontys. Anne is a very kind and thoughtful young person and is most willing to try new things. She is currently diligently focusing her efforts on mastering Japanese!

Dear Fellow Ryugakusei,
Wow! It has been nearly eight weeks since our arrival in Japan. Eight weeks of fun, a little culture shock and a host of new friendships. My classmates and I, in the A-Class, already feel successful after mastering the basic survival skills for the Japanese language, "はい、そうです。" and "えきはどこですか?".

We have all studied a great deal in class and also spend extended time studying to-

gether well into the evenings. Photos, such as the one below, show us making memories together, bonding new friendships, and attending recreational study events near beautiful sites such as Osaka Castle, despite our cultural differences or any language barriers! Although much of our time is spent embarked on our study routine, we have also had time to familiarize ourselves with the cultural differences within ourselves and our fellow exchange students from other countries.

We have toured Kyoto, Nara and the exciting sites of Shinsaibashi. Interestingly, each city exposes a different face of Japan. For example, in Kyoto one can view ancient temples in the very heart of the city. In contrast, we meet Japanese students on the campus who represent an authentic modern Japan. In order to communicate with them, we must "Ganbaru" (make an extreme effort) in our Japanese language studies, as speaking even minimal Japanese is crucial for any level of communication in Japan.

Finally, whether our host families can speak only Japanese or English as well, does not affect their level of care for us. Endlessly, they support and mentor us about how to "live and survive" in Japan. For example, they help us with train directions, navigate us to campus, help us obtain our alien registration cards and even told us where to buy German bread. Perhaps the only thing that is impossible for them to save us from is influenza! This month, many students have been sick and absent from school. Even Yakult, Asahi beer and all other known protectors from the flu could not save everyone. However, the rest of us are げんきです (fine)!

So how about we take more cold medicine next weekend and meet again for a study

meeting at Osaka Castle?

Yours, Anne

Oliver Hamacher "Sizzling Hot Salsa/ HipHop" Dance Workshops

Oliver, an international student from Fontys University, is a professional dancer. His performances include a dance appearance in a famous American R & B artist's music video as well as T.V. commercial spots. His passion for dance and his innate desire to "give back," inspired him to lead the OGU cheerleaders in not one, but two of his "sizzling hot" Latin dance instructional workshops. Twice, the Cheer squad enjoyed training to ninety "jam packed" minutes of electrifying syncopated dance music, rhythms, and movement to the Salsa/Hip Hop beats. Although this was the first time the Cheerleaders had experienced such intense sensuous body movement training, they were very focused, trained rigorously and were quick to learn the professional choreography. Equally important, both the coaches and the Cheerleaders had fun and the workshops were a huge success!



Oliver at the Cheerleader workshop



"Study Meeting" at Osaka Castle



Anne with her host family –
photo: Shichigosan (The Seven-Five-
Three Festival)

Tips for a Host Family Part 2: Home Stay Expectations by Yuko Teramura

The structure of each Japanese family home varies. Likewise, does the dynamics of each family, and their lifestyles. Host families are diversified in characteristics and come from different regions in Japan. The OGU International Center Office offers a thorough orientation for international students, which highlight in advance, any potential problems regarding living in a different culture such as Japan. Students are made aware of each family's rules and expectations of them. Equally important, during the host family meetings, the IC advises host families to clearly inform their students, in advance, of their expectations, rules and their definitions. One example: how and when to use the Japanese bathtub.

It is fine for each household to have different rules and expectations. Provided the host family follows the basic requirements of the International Center, each family can decide independently upon their individual house rules. For example: Family "A" might make lunch for their student or Family "B" might not require a curfew. Hence, students might naturally compare home stay rules or question any inconsistencies between one home vs another. No need for a family to worry about how to reply. A simple answer such as, "each family lives differently and our family has our lifestyle that works best for us" might be all you need to share.

Purpose:

If students are expected to comply with a rule, it needs to be practical, reasonable and have a purpose. This not only helps to avoid feelings of resentment between students and family; it breeds good intercultural understanding and in the end good relationships. Otherwise, having a rule simply to have rules might make a student feel confined and uncomfortable. My family does not place an importance on enforcing students on our house rules, but instead, we try to explain why we have such rules in the first place and attempt to gain their understanding.

Essentially, it is all right for each host family to have varied house rules and expectations. Taking showers is a good example. Perhaps, as a rule, Family "C" expects a student to take a shower by 8:00 at night. The time isn't the important part of the rule, yet the purpose and expectation should be the emphasis.

Reason # 1:

"Our family usually takes a bath between 8:00-9:00 pm because our young children go to bed before 9:00 pm. The bathroom is close to kids' room, therefore we would like all showers finished by 8:00 pm."

Reason #2:

"Clothes needed for the next day are often hung to dry in the bathroom area every evening. Therefore, it is helpful if

you could take an early shower."

Giving an explanation for a rule is important. Students will understand if you explain why you have the rule in the first place. When they ask about the possibility of bending the rules a little, it is a good idea to say you will think about it and consider the request. Given, the request makes common sense and it will not make any future problems for your family. A gesture of some flexibility gives a student a voice, helps them feel heard and is positive for cross-cultural relationships.

At times, there may be a matter both you and the international student cannot agree upon. It could be a matter of differences in lifestyle and customs, which both parties can't compromise nor really understand. This is no one's fault. If you cannot solve the problem after discussing and seriously considering it, you can always consult with the International Center for support. An ideal problem solving setting is when all parties are involved in the process of compromising, consensus building and decision making. However, on rare occasions, simple chemistry is a factor and at times a student/family match cannot get along or live together. In this case, it is beyond your control and you should consult with the International Center on how to proceed.

(To be continued to "Home Stay Expectations 2")

Profile:

Mrs. Teramura first became a host family in 1996. Her family has hosted 35 students from America, Germany, France, the Netherlands and Taiwan.

Japanese Instructor Mr. Ryosuke Masuda

Masuda sensei began teaching part time at OGU in December of the year 2000. During his first year at OGU, only six international students were enrolled in the program. Can you imagine that? During his university years he majored in Sanskrit Language and Literature. Originally, Masuda sensei was an instructor of Sanskrit Literature, until he switched subject areas and became a Japanese teacher. However, both areas are language related!



At the present time, Masuda sensei teaches sixteen students in the advanced Japanese class. The ability level of this year's class is the highest of any other class he has had the privilege to

teach. As many as six out of the sixteen students have previously passed Level 1 of the Japanese Language Proficiency Test. Not only are the students fluent in Japanese, but also, extremely knowledgeable about Japan. For example, recently he learned about one student's love of castles. Masuda sensei lead a discussion about castles and was about to mention the four Japanese castles, registered as National Treasures, but that student was already familiar with each one as she had already visited all four castles! Unbelievable, because this student has never visited Japan and her home country is Finland! Can you name the four castles? They are Matsumoto Castle, Inuyama Castle, Hikone Castle, and Himeji Castle. Did you know the answers?

When asked about his fondest moments as a teacher, he replied

he is most happy when he can see growth in his students' learning. For example, this week, they can speak and write words, which was a challenge for them only a week before. He finds the most joy in teaching when he can see evidence of improvement in all the students do and learn in class.

His final words of wisdom to the international students: "Make the best of your stay in Japan. Since you are already here, make memories and find joy in many different things. Enjoy every moment of your stay here!"

Additional International Center News

2010-11 Outbound Exchange Students

Students who are interested in the exchange program for the 2010 academic year should begin planning ahead now. Those who are interested in studying abroad in English-speaking countries must meet language requirements by the end of 2009. These requirements vary for each study abroad location. For your information: The new exchange program guidelines are now available at the International Center!

Exchange Student Selection Schedule:

- ☐ Applications accepted between: Jan. 12 (Tue.)- Jan 25 (Mon.), 2010
- ☐ Written exam: Jan. 26 (Tue.) OR Jan 27 (Wed.), 2010
French, German, Chinese and Korean exams only.
- ☐ Interview: Feb. 1 (Mon.)-Feb. 5 (Fri.), 2010
- ☐ Selection results announcement: Early March, 2010
Names are posted on the bulletin board located near the International Center

 **OSAKA GAKUIN UNIVERSITY**

 **OSAKA GAKUIN JUNIOR COLLEGE**

International Center

2-36-1 Kishibe-Minami, Suita City, Osaka 564-8511, JAPAN

Tel: 06-6381-8434

Fax: 06-6381-8499

Email: inooffice@ogu.ac.jp

http://www.osaka-gu.ac.jp/int_exchange/main.html