

TAKING OFF



Vol. 9

2010-2011 Exchange Students' Arrival

We welcomed 73 students from partner universities from all over the world this month, and the Japanese program started on September 9. We offer 5 different Japanese levels in the program, 6 subject courses instructed in English, 1 J-Bridge course, and 4 Japanese for Specific Purposes courses this year. The program has improved ever this year. This volume highlights the 3-day orientation.

On Sept 6th, OGU welcomed the 2010-2011 exchange students! This year, there are 73 international students who represent 15 countries/regions from around the world which include: Mexico, the United States, the Netherlands, Iceland, Finland, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, Austria, the Philippines, Korea, Taiwan, Thailand and China. The students represent very unique cultures from each individual country. Undoubtedly, the students' appearance will play a huge role in enriching the international atmosphere campus-wide. Students will study at OGU for either one semester or one school year. This opportunity gives them a chance to learn Japanese language and culture both on and off campus with other OGU students, their host families and in various Japanese communities.

During the second week of September, the International Center hosted a three-day orientation. This year's orientation incorpo-

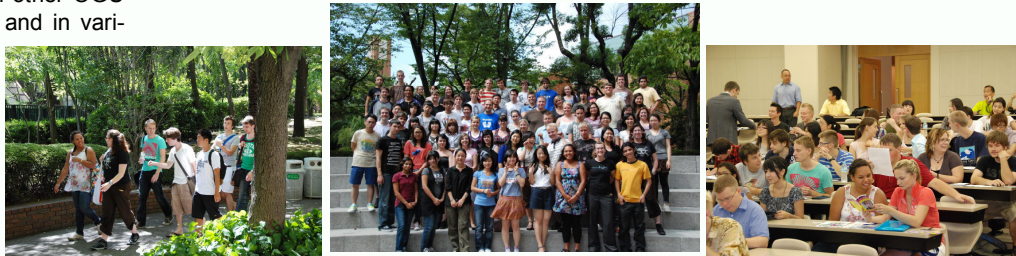
rated several changes to accommodate the wide variety of needs of the large number of international students.

Orientation highlights:

- Special on campus sessions were held for the students with staff from the bank, the hanko shop and the Internet and mobile companies. Staff traveled to campus to assist the students with their banking needs, their new mobile phones and their individual hanko needs.
- In an effort to assist students not yet proficient in Japanese feel more comfortable, language support in Japanese, English, Chinese, Korean and Finnish was provided by the International Center staff.

- The International Students Support Team (ISST) dedicated nearly a week of their summer holiday to assist the International Center staff and the international students. They provided airport pick up assistance, orientation assistance and serviced a full-time Help Desk to answer any questions students had regarding OGU and life in Japan.

Lastly, the campus has become a great place for all OGU students to interact and learn more about the world through the eyes of the 73 international students! We look forward to watching this dynamic develop during the upcoming Kishibe Festival during the month of October.



First Report from 2010-2011 Outbound Students

The remainder of 28 outbound students departed from Japan to begin their study abroad experience on Sept 7th. Several have already encountered unexpected events and faced tougher language barriers than they could have ever imagined. Although a few of them are experiencing challenges in some way or another, they continue to put their best foot forward to achieve their goals. This article features reports from America, Europe, and Asia.

Tomomi Ohta, Junior, Foreign Language Major

Marywood University (U.S.A.)

Only a short time has passed since I arrived in Scranton, Pennsylvania. Although Marywood University is nestled in a small town within a very calm and pristine environment, it is a bit inconvenient as there are limited city facilities and the nearest convenience store is nearly fif-

teen minutes away by car. It would be nearly impossible for me to walk to downtown Scranton due to the long distance and because public transportation runs so infrequently. It is difficult to live here without a car.

On campus, the university, students do not have a chance to meet Japanese people very often, so they always smile and talk to me. Disappointing, is the fact that there are not many international

students on campus, so I miss the opportunity to communicate with students from around the world. Having said all of that, I think this is an ideal location to master English. I rarely meet anyone who speaks Japanese or is even interested in Japan. Although I often see many mod-



Tomomi with classmates in the ESL program

els of Japanese cars driven around town, I don't think many people know that they are Japanese brands. Japan is known to be one of the most advanced countries, yet we still need to make an effort to be recognized in the world. I would like to not only aim to improve my English during my stay in America, but also make an effort to heighten the awareness, of my home country of Japan, for others during the next six months.

Keigo Yoshida, Junior, Economics Major Linnaeus University (Sweden)

Although I suspected my new life in Sweden would be difficult, I could have never imagined to what degree. One of the biggest challenges I experience is simply trying to understand the language during class. I am enrolled in regular department courses with the Swedish students and the lectures are instructed entirely in Swedish. The best I can do is concentrate to understand and get as much out of the lecture as possible.

By far, the most difficult challenge takes place off campus. Can you imagine all the signs in town, as well as on campus, written in a foreign language you can't even comprehend? In this case everything is written in Swedish. I often ask everyone questions wherever I go, yet not everyone speaks English. I feel bad asking so often and believe it is my responsibility to learn the language since I am living in Sweden. Grocery shopping everyday is a difficult task without the language skills. The packaging is written in Swedish, so it takes me a lot of time to figure out what each product actually is

before I decide to buy it. Once, although I studied the package and thought I knew what I was buying; I purchased something very different. What I thought was a can of mushroom sauce I was purchasing, turned out to be a can of whole mushrooms once I opened it at home. Undoubtedly, I will encounter even more mix-ups from here forward. However, I will continue to do my best, work hard to earn the class credits and focus on understanding the Swedish language.



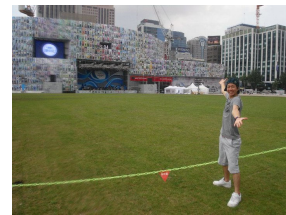
Keigo's Swedish host family

Shuhehi Shibata, Junior, Foreign Language Major Soonchunhyang University (Korea)

I came to Soonchunhyang University to accomplish two things: learn the Korean language and continue my English studies as a means to a bright future career. Likewise, my goal is to broaden my perspective on the world. Here, at Soonchunhyang University, there are not only Korean students, but also many international students from China, the U.S., Mexico, Australia, England, Indonesia, Cambodia and Columbia. Throughout the week, I communicate with international students living in the dorm in Eng-

lish as well as take subject courses in English. I also take Korean language classes each day. I am often disappointed at my lack of English skills.

Korean students drink a lot of alcohol in their private time, yet they also study for their classes when necessary. They spend a large amount of their time studying for their subjects. I believe first impressions are important and even though I cannot speak Korean, I always tried my best to approach other students and communicate with them the best I can and as often as I can. As a result, I made many friends. I also joined a soccer team. Although I still only speak simple phrases in Korean, I have a Korean roommate and he and my other friends study Japanese. I often teach them Japanese in exchange for Korean lessons. It seems as if time is flying by and now there are only four months left on my exchange. I will continue giving my best effort to communicate in Korea until the day I return to Japan!



(Top) Shuhehi in front of the City Hall in Seoul
(Bottom) Shuhehi and classmates in Korean class

A Cross-Cultural Encounter in Korea

Sakura Nitta (Foreign Languages, 3rd year student)

Before her adventure to Korea, Sakura was pretty unsatisfied and somewhat struggling in her daily life. She felt as if she needed a fresh start and decided to do something to change her situation. In March of this year she went on a four-month study abroad program to Baekseok University in Korea. After her return, Sakura showed such a significant transformation, that people on campus and the staff at the International Center said it was as if she became a totally different person. Below Sakura shares her story in hopes that it will inspire other OGU students to study abroad.

The main reason I chose to study abroad in Korea was to learn about things that could only be acquired outside of Japan as well as become familiar with Korean customs and cultures. However, the hard reality is that the beginning of my studies there were quite challenging. I found it was much harder than I had imagined. For example, on a tourist vacation, I could manage without understanding the language, yet for a more long-term situation my lack of ability to express myself was both sad and frustrating. Once I became used to my new environment, I was able to make some Korean friends, and became very close to them. Later, we even traveled together. When it came to daily living, by talking with Korean students every day, I was able to pick up some

words naturally after only a short three months. I could hold short conversations in Korean and was able to express myself a little. Even some of more simple



(Top) With friends and host mother
(Bottom) A typical Korean meal

things that were easily explained in Japanese become difficult to express in Korean. I was really happy the first time someone actually understood what I was trying to say. Through this humble experience, I came to truly know how important foreign languages are as a tool for communication.

After a semester at Baekseok, I was invited to spend a two-month home stay at a friend's home in Seoul. Here, I had an authentic experience living with a Korean family and felt the difference in customs and culture much more than during my time at the university.

As many of you may know, Korean

food is very red-hot and spicy. Spicy dishes were served practically everyday at my home stay. During my stay, I helped the family prepare kimchi. I was also surprised to learn that Korean households have a refrigerator specially to store kimchi. Some of the differences I learned about in everyday life include: Korean people do not have the custom of soaking in the bath tub like Japanese do; driving manners can be quite rough in comparison to Japan, transportation is significantly cheaper; and one can get complimentary dishes at dining places and even extra servings! I often compare Korea with Japan,

thinking if only Japan were more like Korea. Although Korea neighbors Japan and definitely shares some similarities, the differences are enormous! I was able to see these for myself firsthand. My world interests do not end with my Korean experience. I have now begun to take an interest in other countries and am considering learning more about the differences between Japan and those countries.

My message to everyone at OGU: Reach out and grab a hold of any chance to study abroad! Hurry!

CET Life Share Program: OGU students can expand their world-view through the eyes of an American university student!

This past January, Osaka Gakuin University signed an agreement with CET Academic Programs. CET is a study abroad agency, which is based in Washington D.C. Since its foundation in 1982, CET has been offering innovative independent study abroad programs for American university students to China, Czech, Italy, Spain, Syria, and Vietnam. After a competitive selection process, OGU was selected as their choice venue for their exclusive Japanese studies program.

CET students are eager to learn Japanese language and culture. OGU offers the CET Life Share Program in which CET and OGU students live together and grow accustomed to one another's perspectives and customs. The common language spoken between them is basically Japanese. However, an added benefit is that the OGU students have the opportunity to learn how American university students think and live. Each moment of the day offers learning opportunities for both parties. Together, they prepare meals, clean the apt, wash laundry, watch TV and spend free time on weekends together.

During an interview, Natsuko Imakita, a sophomore in the Foreign language Department, claimed "my room share and I cried many times during our final days together because we did not want the experience to end; we didn't want to live apart again". Natsuko lived with Rika Holtgraver from Pittsburgh University, during this year's CET summer program.

My image of an American:

Natsuko (N hereafter):

"When I first heard that I would room with an American, I imagined that she would resemble the celebrity Paris Hilton. However, she looked nothing like Paris, in fact, she had brown hair and brown eyes.

Daily life:

N: "I was the one to prepare the daily meal. I wanted Rika to experience Japanese food. I prepared rice and miso soup, teriyaki meat, and other typical Japanese dishes daily. Rika really enjoyed this, so I felt good about doing it."

Rika (R hereafter):

"I have lived with American roommates, but this was my first time to have a Japanese roommate. In the U.S., we speak in more direct terms and share our true opinion with others. In Japan, it is important to attempt to read others' thoughts and then act upon the situation. I learned much from watching Natsu. I tried to take the initiative to help her prepare meals, do the dishes, and clean our room!"

Bonding through illness:

N: "One day, Rika had a cold and a high fever. She couldn't even speak; she was so sick. I took care of her as much as I could. I did what I thought anyone would do. However, Rika was really touched by what I did for her, so I felt it was all very worthwhile."

R: "I felt extremely grateful to Natsu when she took care of me. I was nervous just thinking about going to a doctor or how I would take care of myself in a foreign country. Natsu was so helpful and even offered to take me to the clinic to get medical care. I was extremely grateful to her."

Words of wisdom for participants:

N: "The most important thing to remember is to communicate with your roommate. I enjoyed just talking with her. Please talk openly to your roommate."

R: "CET students should try to learn a little about how Japanese approach conflict or problems before coming to Japan. Doing this, can help them better understand the situation before worsening a



problem by being too direct or hurting anyone's feelings with harsh words."

Natsuko and Rika shared both good and bad times in their eight weeks living together. Rika mentioned that living with someone her own age was much different than living with a home stay family. The life share program turned out to be a very memorable experience. Natsuko claims the experience increased her motivation to learn more English. Both have a goal to become future teacher and on their last night together, they made a pledge to fulfill this goal.

The CET Life Share Program is a golden learning opportunity for both CET and OGU students. This program is held not only in summer, but also in the fall (August to December) and spring (January to May). If you are an OGU student interested in participating in the program, please contact the International Center at 06-6381-8434 or inofice@ogu.ac.jp.



Rika and Natsuko enjoying sightseeing in Kyoto together

Tips for a Host Family—Part VI by: Yuko Teramura

Visits by the students' family and friends:

In most home stay programs, international students are informed that inviting family and friends to stay over is prohibited, although this does not always prevent students from asking. In homes where it is not possible to have guests, the host families must be very clear to the exchange student from the beginning. If families are not clear from day one, they may find themselves in a challenging situation uncomfortable to get out of. For example, there was this one student who requested her family, who was visiting Japan for three days, permission to stay with her and her home stay family. Although the host family agreed to her first request for her family to visit, she later expected the boyfriend would be able to stay overnight. I've also heard about a case where the student invited over friends of the opposite sex while the host family was away. From a student's perspective, they may assume since they previously received permission for guests, having future guests would also

be fine. It is important that from the very beginning, host families give a definite NO to any requests they are unable to accommodate.

As a rule of thumb, when you are willing to accommodate a student's request, first be definite about the length of stay. It is best to discuss face-to-face with the family/friend how long they intend to stay and mark it on your calendar. If an extension is not possible, explain this detail clearly and firmly. You can avoid problems if both sides understand the boundaries of the visit prior to the visit.

In my situation, whenever we hosted additional guests of the student, we decided not to prepare dinner for them. Simply because they might want to try out restaurants they locate in their guide books and it might make it more challenging to enjoy sightseeing if they had to worry about being home in time for dinner.

Having said this, a visit of a family or friend is also an additional opportunity for international exchange. For example, during one visiting family's two-week

stay, a host family showed their hospitality by serving homemade Japanese cooking and inviting the guests out for dinner. Other host families have celebrated New Years with the visiting families enjoying toshikoshi soba noodles together on New Year's Eve and osechi on New Year's Day. There have also been cases where the host and visiting families went sightseeing together and the host families were able to guide the guests to shops and restaurants where foreigners would otherwise find it difficult to enter. Some families were very grateful to be able to go to an izakaya, a yakitori or a sushi place. Host families have also had a great time chatting with the visiting families over dessert discussing places they've visited, sharing pictures and stories about their adventures. Often, well after the guests leave, the exchange continues and the relationships deepen through the exchange of letters and presents back and forth. In my opinion, ultimately this is what international exchange is all about.

(To be continued)

KC News

International Center Intern!

Antti Kunnas, a former exchange student from Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences in Finland, recently became the International Center's first ever intern.

Message from Antti:

Greetings! I'm Antti Kunnas from Finland. I studied as an exchange student at OGU during September 2009 - July, 2010. I have had the privilege of working at the International Center as an intern since August and will continue this position through January. Many people think Finland and Japan are different, but I believe there are many similarities. I enjoy Japan and the Japanese language, and learning about Japan and Japanese is my favorite hobby. In the past I would watch many animated cartoons, however with my new internship, there is little time to do that. If any of you are interested in Europe, especially the Nordic Region, please feel free to ask me about it anytime.

Kind Regards,

Antti

Antti, is fluent in Japanese, English,

and Finnish and his multilingual skills will play an important role at the International Center. This year, 9 international students join us from Finland, and Antti will be a big help assisting with their needs as well as the many international students from all over the world. Please join us in welcoming Antti to OGU as one of our new staff persons, whenever you see him at the International Center!



Antti working in the office

Open Campus

OGU Open Campus, for high school students, was held five times throughout June, August, and September. Returning outbound students assisted staff at the International Center booth. They shared with students, who visited the booth, personal testimony about their own overseas experience. They promoted OGU's exchange programs and shared stories about their authentic experiences to high

school students who were very interested in listening to what they had to say!



Returnees helping the KC booth

International Center BLOG !

A new International Center blog was recently developed. Various topics that are not printed in the newsletter will be available on the blog. The blog can be accessed at

<http://inoffice.blog102.fc2.com/>

as well as from the official OGU website. Enjoy!