



MEJIRO  
GAKUEN

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# Mejiro Exchange

Mejiro University (Undergraduate, Postgraduate)  
Mejiro University College  
Mejiro Kenshin Junior and Senior High School

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90<sup>th</sup>

新たな歴史のはじまりへ

MEJIRO KENSHIN  
JUNIOR AND  
SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

JUNE 2013

## Mejiro Kenshin Sports Day



**Kurumi giving the opening speech at Sports Day**

This Sports Day was special for me because it was my last sports festival at this school, and because it is our school's 90th anniversary. I was very happy that it was held at the Tokyo Budokan this year because it is such a big gym. The preparations for Sports Day were not easy. The other members of the student council and I were in charge of running it, so we had to plan everything out, including where to hang all the class flags. Because we were in charge, this experience was more precious than any other school event including the school festival and chorus contest. My thanks goes out to everyone who made Sports Day a complete success.

*Kurumi Hozaki*  
Senior 3



**All of the Junior and Senior High students warming up for the event**

This year was our first sports festival at the Tokyo Budokan. The junior and senior high school had Sports Day together. I was impressed by how fast the high school students ran. They were great. When I become a high school student, I want

to be like them. My class practiced for the relay race and jump rope event every day. Sometimes we argued with each other, but in the end we came together.

We also participated in the cheering battle. It was very fun for us.

This year is the 90th anniversary of Mejiro Kenshin. To celebrate, we all got very nice Mejiro towels. The teachers took photographs of all the students holding them. It was a great day for everyone and I have a lot of wonderful memories of it.



**Yui running the relay race with her class**

*Yui Nagasaki*  
Junior 3

## Internship Program

### Somerville House, Brisbane, Australia



**Satsuki (center) with Somerville House students**

I had dreams of becoming a Japanese teacher and that is why I decided to participate in this internship. However, my English level was not high enough so while in Australia I attended English language school. This experience gave me a lot of knowledge, emotional strength, adaptability and friends of all nationalities.

After returning to Japan, I became a Japanese teacher. Finally my dream was fulfilled. I am so busy because I have to study more but I am so happy. I will never forget all of the students and staff at Somerville House. If possible, someday I want to teach in a foreign country again.

*Satsuki Kikuchi*

### Takapuna Grammar School, Auckland, New Zealand

I was a Japanese teaching assistant at Takapuna Grammar School (TGS) in Auckland, New Zealand from April 2012 to April 2013. TGS is a 5-grade school; there are students from the 2nd grade of junior high school to the 3rd grade of high school. In addition to Japanese, the students can take Spanish, French, German and Maori

classes. There were also French and Spanish assistants there so I was not the only one. There were two teachers in charge of the Japanese language course and both of them were New Zealanders. I had no trouble communicating with the Japanese teachers because we spoke in Japanese, but communication with the students was much more difficult because I had to speak English.

In the Japanese classes the teacher would explain about grammar and word meanings. I would walk around the class and answer questions from students and fix mistakes. Sometimes I would read the textbook and help the students practice pronunciation. I also sometimes helped to watch over the class when the teacher was absent.

In the classes for students from Y11 to Y13 (from 1st to 3rd grade in Japanese high school) there were also Japanese exchange students so they



**Yuki (fourth from right) with students at the school ball**

did debates, group work and so on. Sometimes the Japanese exchange students made presentations about their hometowns and favorite things. On other occasions we went to a Japanese restaurant and had a picnic on the beach as extracurricular lessons. I was very surprised because the educational curriculum in New Zealand

is quite different from Japan. This was the first time for me to stay overseas for a long period of time so I was worried about it at first. However, my host family, as well as all the teachers and students were so kind and helpful and the lifestyle in New Zealand was very slow-paced, like my hometown, so life there was very easy and comfortable.

There are also many activities to do in New Zealand. During one school term holiday I went to Hobbiton, a famous spot used in the movie 'The Lord of the Rings', did bungee jumping and so on. I was able to have many precious experiences.

Someday I would like to visit New Zealand again and would like to teach Japanese there again if I have the chance.

I want to thank everyone for this great opportunity and all my precious experiences.

*Yuki Kon*

## Welcome Party for Haruka and Imy



**Imy (front row second from left) and Haruka (center) with the members of the International Culture Club**

The International Culture Club threw a welcome party for our exchange students, Imy and Haruka. Imy is from New Zealand and Haruka is from Canada. At first, we introduced ourselves to each other. Then we played some traditional Japanese games. It was a great opportunity for us to learn about our own culture. We had a really good time with Haruka and Imy and hope that they have a wonderful time in Japan.

*Kaya Murakami  
Senior 2*

## Former Exchange Students Visit Mejiro Kenshin

We were pleasantly surprised to have two of our former exchange students visit Mejiro Kenshin this past winter. Adele Ka from Sentinel Secondary School in Canada and Billie Watkins from Ogilvie High School in Australia both stopped by to visit the school and see some familiar faces. The staff and students were happy to see them again and wish them the best in the future.



**Adele Ka (third from right) and her host sister with the principal and Mejiro Kenshin staff**



**Billie Watkins (center) and her sister June (left) with Mejiro Kenshin students and teaching staff**

## Studying Abroad in Japan

In January 2013, I was given the opportunity to travel to Japan and study Japanese at our sister school, Mejiro Kenshin. I stayed with Hina and her family who looked after me, spent time with me and made my time in Japan absolutely amazing. During the week, Hina and I went to and from school together. In the mornings, my host mother would always cook me a wonderful breakfast before Hina and I rode our bikes to the train station, caught three trains then walked to get to school. At school everyone was so kind and happy and made me feel very welcomed. Everyone always made the effort to acknowledge us and sometimes try out their English. I took part in sport classes with my home group and often ate lunch with them. One weekend we went shopping together. I also took part in calligraphy, music, woodwork, Oral Communication and Japanese classes. On Wednesdays we went on excursions to explore Japan. These days were a lot of fun! Some of the places we visited were Tokyo Tower, the Ghibli museum and many beautiful temples. After school Hina often took me shopping. Sometimes for dinner my host family would take me to many different restaurants. It was amazing to try so many different foods, so different from Australia. On the weekends my host family took me to many places around Japan. I was very fortunate to be able to see and do so much. I went to Disney Sea, visited many temples, saw a sumo match and one weekend my host family even took me skiing, which was an experience I will never forget!! The time I spent in Japan was amazing and the cultural differences and the friendliness of everyone was incredible. I was so lucky to be part of this program and one day I will definitely return to Japan.



**Nina (center) at dinner with her host family and family friends**

*Nina Pretty  
Ogilvie High School, Australia*

I went to Mejiro Kenshin High School from January to March 2013. I had wanted to go to Japan ever since my older sister started learning Japanese, when I was 12.

In Japan, I lived in Toshima-ku, Tokyo. It is close to Ikebukuro which is an amazing place for shopping.

At school, I studied calligraphy, art, Japanese, OC, P.E, cooking and music. I also went to the tea ceremony, badminton, Japanese Archery and brass band clubs. All my teachers were very kind and patient if I couldn't understand. My homeroom class, 1-3, was very kind to me and I had a lot of fun in home group times, playing basketball or just talking with my friends. One of my favourite times of the school day was finding out what was in my Obentou! Classes in Japan are shorter, and easier to concentrate in, so I think I like them better.

There are 4 people in my host family: Papa, Mama, Seita, Ami and Towa (their tea-cup poodle). They were very welcoming and generous to me and took me to lots of different places in Japan, such as Himeji, Shizuoka, to see Mount Fuji and to a Ninja restaurant. In Himeji, I stayed with my host mother's family. They took me to Shoshazan (where 'The Last Samurai' was filmed), to an Onsen, and dressed me up in a Kimono. Food from Himeji was very interesting and yummy! These trips with my host family were some of the best times I had in Japan, they made me feel as if I was a real part of their family.

Tokyo is a very busy and bright city; it is just the way I imagined it to be, and more. I gained a lot of confidence and independence while in Japan, and learned so much about Japan's culture and customs as well as a lot about Australia too, in comparison with Japan. I will definitely come back to Japan one day, and I will never forget the time I spent there.



**June (right) with her host mother**



**June (left) with her host sister**

*June Watkins  
Ogilvie High School, Australia*

## Study Trip to Australia

I went to Australia for ten days during spring vacation, but when I arrived, I discovered the season was fall. The weather was great though, and I found everything very stimulating. Before I left, I was so anxious because doing a homestay was an entirely new experience for me, and I was worried that Australians would not be able to understand my English. When we arrived at the Adelaide Airport, several Australians came and talked to me. At first, I couldn't understand what they were saying because it was the first time that I had heard Australian English, but they kept repeating themselves until I finally understood. I felt relieved. My host mother was strict and her cooking was good. She gave me the opportunity to do things



Study trip closing ceremony

for myself. I thought it was a good chance for me to grow stronger and become more independent. I stayed positive and made the best of everything. If I had any trouble, I simply asked someone for help.

Everyone was very kind. While we were there, we visited St. Aloysius College twice. The students there were really friendly. We played some games together. Unfortunately, there was not much time to get to know them, but we had a really good time. This study trip was a very good experience for me. I grew stronger, became very independent and proved to myself that I can communicate in English. I recommend this trip to anyone who is interested in English and other cultures. It was a wonderful and unforgettable experience.

Yuki Ebihara  
Senior 3

## Studying Abroad in Canada

I studied abroad for about three months in Vancouver. It was my first time to study abroad so I was very afraid, but when I arrived in Vancouver, my feelings changed and I became very excited.

My host family consisted of four members: my host sister, host brother, host father and host mother. My host family was always kind to me and taught me what I did not know. For example, my host father sometimes taught me math. And, when I missed the bus from school one day, my host mother came and picked me up.

My host family took me to many places. We went to the theater every Sunday and watched many kinds of movies. On other days we often watched movies at home. It was very fun for me. We also went to Cirque du Soleil. It made a deep impression on us. It was awesome.

During my stay I went to Sentinel Secondary School. Sentinel is very different from Mejiro because the school events were so unique. For example, one day students went to school in pajamas. On Twin Day, students wore matching clothes. Every event was fun and I have good



A page from Kaho's scrapbook, skating trip with friends

memories of them all.

I like dance so I took a dance class. Dance class in Canada was different from Japan. We went to an elementary school once a month to teach dance. It was a lot of fun because I like children and it became an unforgettable and pleasant experience for me.

In school I became friends with elementary school students and many Sentinel students. I enjoyed my school life every day. After school and holidays my friends and I always went somewhere like the shopping mall or the beach. The beach

was the most beautiful that I have ever seen so I took many pictures with my friends there. When we went out I always talked with my friends about many things. Therefore I was able to learn English. Thanks to many people, I had a very nice time in Canada and it has become a lasting memory for me. From now, I will put my knowledge of English to use. I will study more and go back to Canada one day.

Kaho Matsumoto  
Senior 2

I went to Vancouver in Canada for ten weeks. When I arrived at my homestay, I could barely understand what my host family was saying because they were speaking English really fast. But, because they were kind and knew that I couldn't really speak English, they spoke slowly to me.

On the first day, I went cycling with the host family and they introduced me to a lot of places. We spent the first few days together. Then, on the fifth day, I went to school at West Vancouver Secondary School (WVSS). I felt relieved to see a few Japanese people there. I soon became friends with them and with people from other countries. All the people in my school were very kind and cheerful so I enjoyed school every day. P.E. lessons were especially exciting for me. Playing soccer with people from other countries felt a little weird, and everyone was so good! Every time I scored or made a great pass, everyone praised me and that felt great! Also when we were running, I remember taking a short cut with one of my friends and being shouted at by the teacher. They are all great memories now. Spending ten weeks in Canada went by quickly because every day felt like the best day of my life. Even now I want to go there again. It was a fabulous ten weeks that I'll never forget.

Hayato Murata  
Senior 2

## Studying Abroad in England

I studied abroad for about three months at Cobham Hall in the U.K. I learned a lot from the dormitory life and doing a homestay.

At school, I learned about art, mathematics, drama, P.E., TOK, EFL and English. It felt difficult because all my classes were in English, but it was a good experience for me. Also, on Saturdays, I went to the gym and enjoyed the trampoline and yoga.

One Sunday, I went to Olympic Park and a haunted house in London. It was really fun, and I have good memories of that day. In the dormitory, every day was fun and fulfilling. At my homestay, I made an original pumpkin with my host family and enjoyed Halloween. My host family took me to various places such as the sea, a big shopping mall, and France. From this experience, I learned not only English, but also about foreign culture. Someday I would like to visit England again. I had a really fantastic time.

Kaho Onoe  
Senior 2



Kaho (far left) and Yasuyo with friends

I went to England for about three months with Kaho. I was worried about talking with British people because I was not good at speaking English. At first, it was very difficult just as I expected, but gradually I was able to talk with people in England because I became used to English and everyone around me was very kind. They spoke slowly and used easy-to-understand English. I made many friends.

I stayed in the school dormitory with Fiona who was from Germany. She is fluent in English, and is very kind. She helped me a lot. We did many things together. We played lacrosse, made Christmas decorations and played card games. I talked with her about study, school, sports, friends, each of our countries and so on.

On holiday, I stayed at my host family's house. They were so kind and funny. I took the dog out for walks with my host father. My host mother taught me the piano. I was happy. And, they took me to France. France was as beautiful as England.

I'm so glad I was able to meet so many nice people in England. I made many good memories with them. I had a really lovely time in England. I will never forget the people I met and I hope to meet them again someday.

Yasuyo Matsuda  
Senior 2

## Another Sky



Shiori (far left) experiencing Halloween in Canada

I studied at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada for about four months. I was able to learn many things and grow a lot. Of course I studied English, but I want to tell you about three other things I learned while I was there. First, I learned about Canadian culture. My best experiences came from participating in some cultural events like eating turkey on Thanksgiving Day. It's a holiday when people give thanks for the harvest. They usually eat turkey and it was the first time for me to eat it. It was good. I also joined in the Halloween celebrations. Many people wore funny costumes. I wore a costume and went to a party. It was really fun. I can't experience these activities in Japan, so they were new for me.

Second, I learned about other cultures. There were many students from around the world at UBC, for example China, Korea, Saudi Arabia

and so on. I made friends with them and when we talked about our own countries I learned about many differences. The biggest difference from Japan is religion. My Saudi friend told me that because of their religion they can't drink alcohol and they have certain marriage customs. I was surprised to hear this because I didn't have much knowledge of religion. I've become interested in religion and other cultures since I heard my friend's stories.

Finally, I learned about myself. Before I went to Canada, I was shy and I never did anything on my own initiative. At

first I couldn't make friends with the other foreign students because I couldn't speak with them, and then I felt homesick. I found that it was because of my personality and that I needed to break out of my shell. I also found that if I don't begin to take action, nothing happens. Since I began to speak with others and try new things I gained more confidence.

Studying abroad was a valuable experience because it not only taught me English skills, but also about other cultures and the importance of taking initiative. I'm proud I had this chance to go to UBC and learn many things. Canada was a good environment for me to grow. That's why, for me, Canada is like having another sky.

Shiori Aoshima

3rd year, Department of English Language Studies  
Mejiro University

## My Dream of Studying in Japan



Stephanie (back row, third from right) with her classmates and teacher at Toshogu Shrine in Nikko

Since I was sixteen years old it was my dream to study Japanese and Japanese only some day for at least a year. This dream became true, after many years of more or less self-studying, this year in April with the acceptance from Mejiro University to enroll for the one year Japanese Language Program (JALP).

But it is not my first time in Japan. In 2011, I worked at the German Culture Center in Tokyo as a trainee. At that time I thought when living in Japan of course one would learn the language along the way. But due to work I had to speak more German than Japanese and even after a year of living in Tokyo my Japanese level improved only slowly. So I returned this year with high motivation and expectations.

As I am already used to life in Japan (I had my own tiny apartment before) I was pleasantly

surprised by dorm life. It's conveniently close to the university, very clean and very secure.

After orientation week I was placed in the N3 level class. The class schedule seemed too little in the beginning as I wanted to immerse myself in Japanese studies possibly eight hours a day. However with adding up homework, preparations for all kinds of classes (listening, reading, speaking) and small tests every day one has to keep up anyway and can't slack off even when class ends around noon. But I am sure that way by the end of the year I will be

able to reach my goal and pass the JLPT (Japanese Language Proficiency Test) at the N2 level.

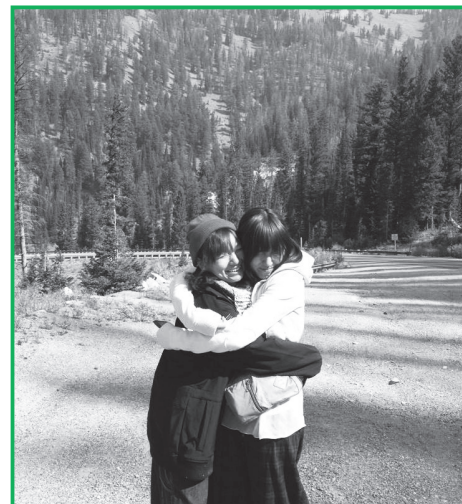
Besides all intensive studying, there are also cultural activities organized by the university. For instance, in the middle of May, all JALP students did a trip to Nikko, which was a lot of fun. And I am really looking forward to the tea ceremony in June and the visit to the Kabuki theater in July.

Everyone at Mejiro University, let it be teachers, NEXT (the Japanese student support team who helps us with many aspects of life in Japan) or the staff at the International Center, is very kind. I am grateful to be able to spend a whole year in this environment.

Stephanie Tiede

Japanese Language Program (JALP)  
Mejiro University

## My Most Important Lesson



Naoko with her friend, experiencing nature in Idaho

While I was thinking about this article, I looked at a lot of pictures from my study-abroad experience. The biggest thing I noticed was that most of the photos were of my smiling companions. It seems that the people I was with were more important than the beautiful scenes or special experiences that were so important in my life, and that if I didn't have good company, I wouldn't think things were so beautiful and my experiences wouldn't be so special. This realization made me decide to write about human relationships.

When I studied abroad for Power English I lived in the dormitory at Idaho State University (ISU) with my nine companions from Mejiro University and ISU students. During the first two weeks, the Mejiro University students were very close and good friends. But one day two students started to fight and the other students' opinions caused a separation. The fight lasted about one month. I want to call this period "the Dark Ages." After "the Dark Ages," we kept a good distance between each other and tried to make new friends. However, even though "the Dark Ages" were tiring, we learned that different people have different values and it made us stronger.

I wanted to speak English while I was there, so I grew tired of hanging out with my Japanese friend. But as I spent time with her in the wide-open nature in Idaho, I realized that the time we spent together was fun even though we had different values. Then we not only became better friends, but I was able to make other, new friends, as well. After that, the nature I was seeing and experiencing became even more beautiful.

That was my most valuable experience while I was studying abroad. I learned how to keep my relationships with friends in good condition and I learned how to make new friends. As I learned about different values, I could also learn about my own. Studying abroad is not only about learning English or about other cultures, but also for learning about the differences of values among people.

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