



**MEJIRO  
GAKUEN**

**VOL.48**

# 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

**DEC 2013**

## Summer Faculty Exchange



**Ms. Morimoto with the Japanese Culture & Creativity Camp students**

In July, I had the opportunity to teach a Japanese Culture & Creativity Camp at West Vancouver Secondary School for 2 weeks. This program was part of the ongoing teacher exchange program between Mejiro Kenshin and the West Vancouver School District. I would like to thank the CEO of Mejiro Gakuen and my principal for allowing me to represent my school in this summer exchange.

Students learned about modern/pop and traditional Japanese culture. They participated in a range of activities such as Japanese games, origami and festivals. On the last day, they made rice balls and watched a Ghibli movie. I was very impressed by how enthusiastic students were in learning about Japan. I was also happy to hear that some students are planning to study Japanese and take part in the exchange in 10th grade.

I would like to thank the West Vancouver School Board, administrators and staff for hosting me and supporting me during my stay. The student/teacher exchange is an exemplary way to expand our horizons and promote understanding of different cultures. We are looking forward to continued opportunities to host teachers and students from West Vancouver at Mejiro Kenshin.

*Haruko Morimoto  
Head, International Education Department  
Mejiro Kenshin Junior & Senior High School*



**Group photo with the principal, PTA International Exchange Committee, exchange students and parents**

In July, I continued my participation with the faculty exchange program between Mejiro Kenshin and my home district of West Vancouver. This was my first trip back to Mejiro since 2011; it was a wonderful experience. I would like to thank the Mejiro administration and the staff of the international department for making my exchange so memorable. They gave me the opportunity to, once again, get acquainted with large segments of the student body. I taught mini lessons to prospective

Junior 1 students, made formal presentations to Junior and Senior Mejiro students, and led technology related workshops for school staff.

Prior to my departure to Japan, I had the pleasure of working with the Junior 3 class in West Vancouver, Canada. As a result, my trip to Japan afforded me the opportunity to debrief with the Junior 3s about their experience in Canada. As a logical extension, I was also given the opportunity to prepare the current Junior 2 class for the same trip next year.

The on-going teacher exchange has proven to be an excellent opportunity for me to expand my cultural horizons. I consider myself fortunate to have been given this opportunity. I would like to thank my Superintendent, Mr. Chris Kennedy, and the International Administrator, Ms. Maureen Smiley, for allowing me the privilege of being our district ambassador during this summer's short-term faculty exchange.

*Jordan Al-Assadi  
Teacher  
Sentinel Secondary School*

## Harvard Students Visit Mejiro



**With the principal, staff, and students from the Senior 2-3 class**

With the cordial invitation from Ms. Haruko Morimoto, the head of the international education department at Mejiro Kenshin Junior and Senior High School, the students from Harvard University visited the high school to participate in an interactive session that aimed to promote deeper understanding and interest about college life in the United States among the high school students.

After the Harvard students introduced themselves and explained what they were doing in Japan during this summer, the session proceeded into roundtable discussions, during which each of the Harvard students gave a little presentation to their group of high school students about the experience of studying at an American college. Then, it was followed by a Q & A session between the two sides. Common questions from the Mejiro students included how busy school work is in college in the U.S. and why the Harvard students became interested in Japan. Josh Speagle (class of 2015, astrophysics) reminisced, "Since I'm an astrophysics major and an East Asian studies minor, they were really curious about both fields. After I told them I was a big fan of Uchuu Kyoudai (a popular Japanese comic), many of them seemed to warm up to me." With satisfying smiles on the faces of both the Harvard students and the Mejiro students, group pictures were taken as the session came to an end. The Harvard students are very grateful for the hospitality they received from the Mejiro students and the Mejiro staff, and they agree that it is always a great experience to meet someone from a different place, especially from a place as culturally rich as Japan. Having the chance to not only meet, but sit down and interact, with these high school students was an incredible experience.

*Hao-Kai Pai  
Class of 2016, Economics, Harvard University*

## The Toyosai Festival



Commemorative flag displayed at the festival for the 90th anniversary

On both Saturday and Sunday of the 90th Toyosai Festival, there was a constant stream of people that came through our room. Principal Matsushita spent some time with us and listened to student speeches, and Mejiro teachers and students, alumni, and parents visited us too. There also were many elementary

and middle school students who are aiming to enter Mejiro Kenshin, and we were able to encourage them as they study for their entrance examinations.

In order to provide information about Mejiro Kenshin High School for our visitors, we decorated the room with posters, put out information sheets, and had people available to answer any questions. For the first time, Mr. Ken Ip had several of his students from the ESS club present speeches in English at various intervals during the weekend. These students made this year's Toyosai Festival very special as they showed people what Mejiro Kenshin High School is all about.

We always appreciate Ms. Haruko Morimoto's tireless efforts to help the International Exchange Student Committee and ESS members organize this room as it pays off every year when many are able to enjoy our activities and learn more about Mejiro Kenshin High School, and especially its English program.

*Lorna Sachie Asami*  
Chair, PTA International Exchange Committee



Axel (left) with teachers and PTA International Exchange Committee members

Since the first day I came to Japan I noticed a great sense of identity and union between everybody. The school festival was not an exception. I would say the greatness of the Japanese culture comes from the union and organization of the people.

The school festival is an event held every year, where each class organizes a kind of shop

or smaller attraction in their homeroom. The school uses this event to promote itself, too. The festival is organized by the student council and students who volunteer from each class. Teachers just supervise and help the students a little. I have studied in seven different schools in three different countries (Mejiro is the eighth), and I must say Mejiro is one of a kind. In all the schools I have been, there hasn't been one where students are as responsible, organized and kind.

Every day I spend in Japan I am more and more amazed by this fascinating culture, and the country has taught me so much about others and myself. The school festival was something new for me and it was definitely one of the big climaxes of my stay in the country of the rising sun.

*Axel Zarebski*  
West Vancouver Secondary School

## The Towasai Festival

I have been a student in the Mejiro University JALP program since the autumn of 2013 and am very excited with student life in Japan. Therefore when I heard of Towasai (the once-a-year school festival of Mejiro Gakuen) I was looking forward to it so much. All of the teachers and students had been planning and preparing for the festival for a long time. Foreign students in the JALP course divided into groups to make camps, selling food and drinks from their home countries. We Vietnamese people made "Nem ran - nem cuon" (Vietnamese spring rolls). In order to buy enough traditional ingredients, the leaders of the group went to many markets in Tokyo. The day came and from the morning the whole campus, from the main gate to the playground, was covered with coloured flags, pictures etc.. We arrived early, borrowing everything we needed at the International Exchange



Anh (right) with the Vietnamese students in front of their booth at the festival

Center. Teachers from the center even arrived to help us decorate the camp. What surprised us the most is that people were keen on our food and

we sold out on the first day. We also had a chance to try various foods, not only Japanese but also Korean, Taiwanese, and Chinese style foods and at the same time we enjoyed live music. Many students and faculty members attended till late night. The next day I visited the play area set up by the students in the Children Education Department with my friend's child. I was really impressed with both the scenery (anime characters, funny games for kids and colourful balloons) and the way the Japanese students took care of the children. Towasai will be one of my most memorable experiences in Japan and I am sure that everyone participating in the event had a great time as well.

*Nguyen Thi Duyen Anh*  
Japanese Language Program (JALP)  
Mejiro University

## Junior 3 Canada Trip



Junior 3 students during their trip

We went on a ten day trip to Vancouver. I stayed with the Cahill family. We ate many different kinds of Canadian food like pancakes, hamburgers, salmon and sandwiches. Everything was delicious, especially the banana ice cream. I

really liked it. We saw a parade and fireworks on Canada Day. They were very beautiful and fun to watch. We studied English with Canadian teachers. They were great! My best memory was going to Granville Island Market. I bought many souvenirs like maple syrup, some key rings, a reindeer doll and a pen case. I learned many things in Vancouver.

*Masaki Kawakami*  
Junior 3-1

My trip to Canada was wonderful. I stayed with the Evans family. We ate hamburgers, pizza and fish. We had a barbeque in the backyard. My best memory was going to the movies. I saw "World War Z." It was a good movie, but I thought the camera work could have been better. Our English teacher was Mr. Al-Assadi. He was a

very good teacher. I played basketball with him in the school gym. That was so much fun. I love Canada because everything is beautiful. I want to go to Canada again.

*Hirota Ikeda*  
Junior 3-2

My trip to Canada was great! I stayed with the Kodak family. We ate hamburgers, pasta and cereal. We went to Stanley Park. I experienced much Canadian culture. My best memory was going to Granville Island. I ate ice cream, and I bought a small book at Kids Market. I learned a lot of things about Canada. I love Canada! I want to go there again. Thank you, Canada.

*Yui Kamino*  
Junior 3-3

## Senior 2 Kyushu Trip



**Moe (center) enjoying Kyushu with her classmates**

I went to the Kyushu area on my school trip. My trip was absolutely wonderful. When I went to Kumamoto castle, I was impressed with its size.

I went to the atomic bomb museum in Nagasaki. At a glance the town appeared ordinary, but looking carefully reveals war scars scattered here and there. When I listened to the story of an atomic bomb victim, my heart ached. I have never experienced war so I don't know the true fear of war, but I understand that we must not repeat war. I think handing down stories like the one I heard is very important.

During my free activity time I went to many places and bought many souvenirs. Nagasaki is a beautiful city. I like it there. I experienced the kindness of others when I got lost and some local people helped me find my way.

I also had the opportunity to come into contact with nature. I live in Tokyo so it is not often that I can do this. It made me want to protect nature in Japan.

This trip gave me the chance to make many special memories. And, it also has changed the way I think about peace.

*Moe Arakawa  
Senior 2*

## Studying Abroad in Japan



**Imogen (far left) and Haruka (second from left) riding the train with their classmates**

If I were asked how this exchange with Mejiro was, I wouldn't be able to sum it up so simply. My experience was mind blowing and words such as "fun" and "exciting" don't do it justice. I always loved meeting new exchange students who came to my school and I couldn't believe that the same thing was happening to me! I

was going to a school in another country. When I first arrived in Tokyo I was immediately homesick. But the Mejiro students welcomed me with open arms. It made my day when students I didn't know in other grades tried to talk to me in the hallways. Out of the many classes I had, my favorites were calligraphy and PE. In calligraphy I got to practice simple kanji and though I struggled a lot at first I loved seeing my progress each class. During my time at Mejiro we had some school events such as Sports Day and Chorus Festival. It was amazing to experience Sports Day in Japan, which is completely different from the ones in Canada. During the weekends my host family took me to many tourist attractions such as Mt.Fuji, Odaiba, Asakusa, Akihabara, and Tokyo Skytree. I made many great memories with them. One of my highlights from this exchange was taking the train to and from school. Compared to my 10 min drive at home the complex train schedules and stations intimidated me, but I soon came to love the busy stations and taking the train with friends. I truly enjoyed my exchange with Mejiro and I wish I could have stayed much longer. I cannot wait to return to Tokyo one day and visit Mejiro.

*Haruka Noguchi  
West Vancouver Secondary School*

There was always something that fascinated me about Japan, Japanese culture, and learning the language.

When I first arrived in Japan there were things that I had been expecting and excited for and also many

things that surprised me. I still remember the drive from the airport when I first arrived. During the whole drive I was immersed in staring out the window, taking in the marvelous city. My host family, the Shimamuras, were the most welcoming, helpful and good humored people I could ask for and I got on great with my host sister, Sonoka.

During my time in Tokyo I experienced so many amazing things. On our first day, the school's international committee threw us a welcome party and we played Japanese games and also a Russian Roulette type game, with pancake balls and one with wasabi in the middle- which I lost every time! Getting into school life was quite different to in New Zealand, particularly in the way that students don't move classes, the teachers do. I did all of my classes with a Canadian girl who was also doing the same exchange and we became quite good friends. The thing that is probably the most stand out was the weekend that I spent with my host family in Kyoto. Kyoto is one of the ancient cities of Japan, and very beautiful and traditional. While there, Sonoka and I were dressed up and had our makeup done as Maiko dancers. Maiko dancers are traditional Japanese dancing girls who paint their face and neck white, wear kimonos and big wigs with special hair pieces and dance with fans. It took about three hours for them to complete the whole look on each of us and then we had a photo shoot. The whole look was so amazing, my family couldn't recognize me in the photos.

This whole exchange is something I will definitely remember for the rest of my life and be proud of. I know before I went to Japan, my language wasn't great but Japanese is my passion and I was determined enough that now it has improved by a long way. I think that if you really love something, you should go after it.

*Imogen Spray  
Takapuna Grammar School*

## My Valuable Experience

I went to Vancouver, Canada for about three months as an international student. The school that I went to was Sentinel Secondary School. There were a lot of foreign students at Sentinel so you could hear various languages spoken every day. Sentinel also has a lot of events, like Pajama Day, Mustache Day and Kindergarten Day. They were fun.

I took some ESL classes. The style of presentations and discussions in class were totally different from Japan with everyone participating actively. I tried very hard to join in, but it was difficult.

I spent a lot of time with my host sister, Linda. We went skiing, downtown and trick-or-treating. In addition, I went to various places with my host family and friends so I experienced many things for the first time during my stay.

I learned that it is not easy at all to live abroad, and that communication is very important. I believe that all of my experiences will help me in the future.

*Kotone Oshimi  
Senior 3*

My exchange at Mejiro Kenshin might have been the biggest decision I have ever made in my life but I am glad I went to Japan. During the exchange I made many new friends. Not only Japanese people, I also met two Australian girls who were also on exchange. I learned not only about Japanese culture but



**Linda (left) and Kotone (right) at Disney Sea**

Australian culture as well. I got to experience many things that I would never get to experience in Canada, such as Mejiro's club system.

I want to thank my homeroom teacher Mr. Yasui, my classmates, and all the other teachers and students I met. Because of them, my days in Japan became a valuable memory. I got to have a better sense of money management by being a homestay student and also got to use Japanese in daily life and practice to improve. I got to see many different sides of Japan because of the excursion program for exchange students. I learned to solve problems on my own and became more independent. It is hard to put in words how this experience affected my life so much. Without those awesome people I met at Mejiro, I would not be the same person I am today.

There were many interesting courses and I was able to participate in many different activities. I went to Disney Sea with my host sister and many places with my friends. I got to experience Japanese Girl Scouts and got to make even more friends there. I felt a sense of belonging in this school. People treated me very nicely and the support I received from everyone goes beyond anything I could ever try to fit into this article. It was a pleasure to meet everyone and I want to say thank you from the bottom of my heart.

*Linda Kuo  
Sentinel Secondary School*

## Studying Abroad in Australia



**Haruka (bottom right) with her classmates**

When I arrived in Adelaide, Australia I was very nervous because I went there all by myself, but I soon met my two best friends in St. Aloysius College, Georgana and Ngan.

Georgana is a very kind girl. She always smiles. Her warm smile kept me cheerful. When I played a song on the piano, I couldn't play it well, but she said, "You're a nice pianist." Her words made me happy. Ngan is a very nice friend and a good teacher. I couldn't always understand the class content, but she took the time to explain it clearly to me.

I thank the school's students because they accepted me. On the final day at the school they gave me presents. It made me happy! My host family consisted of four members: my host sister, host brother, host father, host mother, and a Chinese study abroad student.

I went to two places with my host family. First, I went to the beach with them. The weather was nice and so was the place. Second, I went to the wild life park with them. I enjoyed the nature there and held a koala.

One holiday I went to the Adelaide Show with my friend. The show has attractions like a haunted house, rollercoaster, and a very fast Ferris wheel. I tried the roller coaster, but I got dizzy. I wasn't able to walk well for a while. I also ate potato chips at lunch time that were spiral-cut. I had a very nice time. I want to be able to speak English well, and I want to visit Adelaide again in the future.

*Haruka Tanji  
Senior 1*

## Studying Abroad in New Zealand



**Madoka (center back) with friends after class**

friends, and they taught me words in their native languages. I miss them so much. I will never forget the memories that we shared.

While I was in New Zealand, I was always thinking that I wanted to stay longer. I still feel the same and I have a new dream that I will definitely go back to New Zealand again. By then, I'll have done my best to learn English so that I will be able to talk about my progress in English with my loving host family. I love New Zealand.

*Madoka Tanaka  
Senior 1*

I went to New Zealand to study. It was my first time to go to New Zealand. To be honest, I thought there would be a lot of fields and sheep because Auckland is in the countryside, but it was different from what I had imagined.

I went to Takapuna Grammar School. I made many friends there, but I became good friends with a French boy named Paul. We spent a lot of time together.

My host family consisted of five members: my host sister, two brothers, mother and father. My host mother was very kind, and my host sister likes Japanese culture so she will go to Japan for one year.

Every day, I rode the bus to school. School started at 9 o'clock. There were five lessons a day. I chose to take Japanese, math, PE, art, and two English classes. We had 2 one-hour lessons and then a 20-minute break. After that we had 2 more lessons and then lunch time. Finally we had our last class. One day, I went to Piha Beach with my host mother and father. It is very far away so you have to take a car to get there. It took 2 hours. It was very fun.

From this study abroad I learned a lot of things like I lack vocabulary so I need to learn more words. In the future, I want to go back to New Zealand to see my host family and friends again.

*Ryo Masuda  
Senior 2*



**Ryo (second from left) with other exchange students from around the world**

## Brand New World



**Sakura (left) with her classmates and teacher at Hancock University**

This was my second time to study abroad so I saved a lot of money because I didn't want to depend on my parents. In August I went to America by myself. I had no friends at that time so I was so scared and nervous before I went.

Fortunately, I could make some friends because I was staying at a dormitory. Their existence gave me great encouragement. I didn't become homesick. I was able to make a lot of Korean friends at Hancock University. My friends and the school assistants took me to some places; for instance, Korean restaurants, the sea, Universal Studios, Dodgers Stadium and so on. They were very kind, cheerful and friendly. Whenever I had problems, they always helped me kindly. They always made me happy. So, I was very sad when their farewell ceremony was held. They wore ceremony clothes and got certificates one by one. I cried so much and thought that I want to take more classes with them and hang out together. When they saw my crying face, they

were surprised and said "Don't cry, Sakura. We will meet again soon." Then, they hugged me. After I went back to Japan, I thought I had changed a lot. For example, I could say my own opinion without hesitating. I thought I want to go abroad more. I became more active than before. At last American life was very different from life in Japan. It was hard to eat fast food and take only showers every day. I felt culture shock but I could learn American styles. I had a very good time. I will never forget this study abroad in America. I want to express my appreciation to everyone who helped me.

*Sakura Nakamori  
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Mejiro University*

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