



**MEJIRO
GAKUEN**

VOL.50

Mejiro Exchange

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

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Embassy Visits

We are grateful to the staff from the Canadian Embassy and the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo to offer their time to our students. Here are brief descriptions of their visits to Mejiro Kenshin.



Students answer questions during the Canadian Embassy presentation



Students show prizes for answering questions during the U.S. Embassy presentation

Canadian Embassy Visit

On October 16th, the Junior 2 students and teachers were treated to a special presentation by the Canadian Embassy. This marks the sixth visit by the Canadian Embassy since 2009.

Mr. Alan Schroeder, Information and Education Promotion Officer, gave a power point presentation that taught the students about Canadian history, culture, geography, language and other interesting topics. This visit was the perfect opportunity for the students to learn more about Canada before their school trip to Vancouver next summer. The students especially enjoyed the photos and quiz from the presentation and learned that Canada is a multi-cultural country with people from different backgrounds. Their image of Canada became even better because they learned more about Canada. We are very grateful to Mr. Schroeder for his visit to our school.

U.S. Embassy Visit

We were very pleased to welcome speakers from the U.S. Embassy on July 10th to talk to the high school students and staff. Ms. Fumiko Mochizuki from the Bureau of Consular Affairs spoke about many ways to study in the United States and how to get information from the Education USA Center. Ms. Elizabeth Lee, Vice Council, Department of State gave a power point presentation on the merits of studying in the United States. She also provided valuable advice to the high school students on making choices for their future based on her own experience. We are very grateful to the speakers for their visit to our school.

*Ms. Haruko Morimoto
Head, International Education Department*

Harvard Students Visit Mejiro

On June 23rd, a group of five Harvard college students visited Mejiro Kenshin Junior and Senior High school to join a senior English class and participate in a cultural exchange. Kindly welcomed by Ms. Haruko Morimoto, the students also had the opportunity to meet a number of other teachers who shared their unique experiences as Americans living in Japan. During the classroom session, the Harvard students introduced themselves to the Mejiro Kenshin students, answered questions the Mejiro students had about the American college experience, and showed pictures from their lives at Harvard. In particular, the Mejiro Kenshin students were curious about the work ethic required of students at Harvard and had the opportunity to ask various questions about study habits. Additionally, they were interested in the American students' reasons for coming to Japan and their favorite aspects of the country. The question and answer session provided the opportunity for

the students from both schools to connect on a personal level and form nascent friendships—in fact, some Mejiro Kenshin students intend to visit the American students at some point in the future. In the meantime, they hope to be able to reconnect in Japan.

After the question and answer session, groups of Mejiro Kenshin students presented to the Harvard students on various aspects of Japanese life and culture such as fashion, food, and security. The Harvard students, most of whom had never before visited Japan, found the presentations interesting and informative; they were also quite impressed by the facility with which the Mejiro Kenshin students were able to speak English. The Harvard students cordially thank Ms. Morimoto, the school staff, and of course the Mejiro Kenshin students for being so warm and hospitable and for providing a unique and unforgettable opportunity for cultural exchange and international connection.



Mejiro Kenshin students presenting in small groups to the Harvard students

*Grace E. Huckins and Lauren A. Stone
Class of 2016, Harvard University*

The Toyosai Festival



Tomoki (fourth from left) at the festival with the Principal, fellow exchange students, and host siblings

My experience taking part in the school festival was great! It's an event most schools hold and it's a day for the school to have fun. It was really an experience unique to Japan. It was very fascinating to see all the students work so hard and cooperatively in order to prepare for this big event. So many people worked hard even after school in order to make this day as good as it gets. The day of the actual event was lots of fun, getting to work for my class and getting to see what all the other classes were doing. Our class was doing a small Japanese style cultural festival. Other classes sold food, one turned their class into a haunted house, and clubs presented themselves to show what their club was all about. One of the best experiences for me was getting to work for my class. Learning polite Japanese to take care of customers and communicate with them was really great because most of the Japanese I had used was for talking to friends and family or as a customer myself. My classmates were really helpful, teaching me how to do things and letting me try many things. Everything was really fascinating and was really fun.

*Tomoki Kaneko
Sentinel Secondary School*

The Towasai Festival



Visitors line up to purchase food from the international students and team "next"

I am a member of team "next" which helps the international students who come to Mejiro University to adjust to life in Japan and university. From October 18th to 19th, there was an event, named Towasai, which team "next" and international students participated in and worked together at. We prepared for it from the day before. We cut vegetables that could serve up to 300 people. I also made a sign for team "next" and decorated it. We cooked three dishes from three countries: Korea, China, and Japan. We made Korean food, soojebi, Chinese food, roubing, and Japanese food, "kimochi ball" which is similar to takoyaki, but with kimchi and cheese. Last year, we were not able to sell much because it rained a lot. However, this year the weather was so nice. Not only the students but also the people who live nearby came to the festival. Many people enjoyed our dishes. During the lunch hours, there were many people waiting in line to order our food. Although it was really busy, I was really pleased because our food was so popular and sold out. The international students also enjoyed the university festival in Japan. This was my last festival in university, so I was really happy and pleased to have a great time with the international students and I will not forget these two days.

*Kaho Ishida
4th Year, Department of Child Studies
Mejiro University*

Junior 3 School Trip (Vancouver)



Saki (left) with her host mother and classmate

I had a special time in Canada. I was very nervous because it was my first time to go abroad. I experienced a lot of things, for example, making yakisoba for my host

family, going to the sea, sightseeing and so on. I cooked yakisoba with my friend. We brought noodles from Japan, but we bought vegetables and meat in Canada. My host sister helped us. My host family said it was delicious. We were very happy. When I went to the sea, the weather was fine so the view was very beautiful. I had a very good time. Some other places I went to were Lynn Canyon and Park Royal. I also went to a university, an aquarium, and saw fireworks. The place I enjoyed the most was the supermarket. It was huge so I was excited, but all the places that I visited were very good. I really want to go to Canada again.

*Saki Yoshitome
Junior 3*

Junior 3 SEC Study Tour (Delta)



Yukiha (center) with her classmates

This summer I went to Canada to study English with my SEC classmates. I think this was a good experience for me. Before I left, I was very nervous because I thought my English skill was not good enough. So I talked with my family and said, "I don't want to go to Canada." I had hoped they would cheer me up, but they said, "If you don't go to Canada, you won't be a good English speaker. And if you can't speak English well, you can't be a global person." They were very strict with me.

So I went to Canada. At first, I didn't enjoy life there because everything was new to me. I was really confused. However, I gradually started to enjoy it. There are two reasons for that. One reason is my host family was really kind to me. For example, when I wanted to wash my clothes, I was nervous to ask them, but they asked me first. So I felt very happy.

The second reason is my classmates talked to me and they were so friendly. Actually, I am very shy so I thought I wouldn't be able to talk to anyone in my class. But my classmates weren't shy, so I could communicate with them. I realized that friendly people can speak English very well. I think it is because friendly people have a lot of speaking opportunities in English. That is what my parents were trying to tell me. I should speak English a lot. If I get a lot of speaking opportunities in English, I can be a global person. I realized my parents were right after all.

Because of my time in Canada, I can catch what people say in English a lot easier than before. I am still shy, but I want to be a friendly person. I have many problems to overcome, but I think this experience made me grow because I became more interested in English. So I want to keep studying English hard.

*Yukiha Fujinaga
Junior 3*

Senior 2 Kyushu Trip

From October 13th to 17th, we visited Fukuoka, Saga, Kumamoto, and Nagasaki prefectures on our school trip. On this trip, I made a lot of good memories and experienced a lot of valuable things with my friends. For instance, I saw some historic buildings such as Kumamoto Castle, the Yoshinogari site, Dejima, and others. However, my favorite place was Kumamoto Castle because I like the period when it was built.

Kumamoto Castle was built in the 16th century by Kiyomasa Kato, a famous warlord who was an expert at building castles. Kumamoto Castle was really huge, especially the stone walls. I wondered how they made those stone walls.

Other things on this trip were also wonderful. The hotels that we stayed at were

really good. I ate a lot of local food and everything was very delicious. Everything that I did, learned and experienced made me so happy because it was my first time going to Kyushu. I will never forget this fantastic school trip, and if I have the chance, I want to visit Kyushu again. During these four days I was able to learn many new things about my friends so I will treasure the memories I made on this trip.



*Gen Shoda
Senior 2*

Gen (left) with his classmates in Nagasaki

Studying Abroad in Japan



Victor (center) with his homeroom class

My exchange in Japan was overall a great experience. A big part of the great experience was spending time with my homeroom. I spent my mornings, lunch breaks and a few classes with Class 1-6. They always made me laugh and smile and most importantly they made me feel welcomed. I made many memories there and also met many friendly people. I will never forget Mejiro and room 1-6 will always be a part of me.

*Victor Uemura
Sentinel Secondary School*

Studying Abroad in New Zealand

I went to New Zealand for 10 weeks. I learned many things while studying abroad.

First, it was very difficult to speak only English and say my own opinion clearly. Sometimes I couldn't communicate what I wanted to say because I had no confidence in my English grammar. And, I didn't know many English words so I was scared to say anything. But, I didn't have to worry about it. My host family, teachers and friends were very nice to me. Talking with feeling and not being shy are very important things when speaking in English.

Second, I gained a newfound gratitude for my family and Japan. While staying in New Zealand, I thought about my family and wanted to see them. I now feel grateful, even for the small things, my family does for me.

Studying abroad was one of my dreams since I was a junior high school student so I was glad to go to New Zealand. I made a lot of sweet

friends there. It was a great opportunity. I'd like to go to New Zealand again. I'll never forget this experience.

*Megumi Iwashita
Senior 1*



Megumi (left) with fellow Mejiro students at Takapuna Grammar School

Studying Abroad in Australia



Maria on her way to school

I went to Tasmania, Australia for two months from June 28th to September 7th. I had a wonderful and worthwhile time surrounded by nature and lots of nice people. As soon as I arrived there, winter vacation had started. During winter vacation I went on a trip with my host family. We travelled to many famous places in Tasmania: Anvers Chocolate Factory, Ashgrove Cheese Factory, the beach called Blowhole in Bicheno, Tasmazia, which is a huge maze that looks like the one in Harry Potter, and a museum called MONA. We went to MONA by ferry and it was great.

My host family loved food. I learnt that there are so many kinds of pastas and olives from going to a lot of Italian shops. My host father is British. He used to work as a tour guide so he knows a lot about Tasmania. He always told me about Tasmania. I really liked the time I spent with him because it was very fun and valuable. My host mother is a nurse. She is from the Philippines so she can speak Tagalog. She is a heartwarming person who was very nice to me. Christina, my host sister, is one year younger than I, but she's a reliable person. She was really sweet and I can't wait to see her again.

At Ogilvie I made many friends and I had an extraordinary time. Every teacher treated me like every other student, which made me happy. I took math, science, English, Japanese, cooking, art, and P.E/health study. My favorite was art because each student was able to use many kinds of materials. It was a great opportunity for me.

In many of the classes, students watched movies then had a discussion or wrote a report about what they thought about the movie. Through these

classes I discovered that students can learn different ways of thinking and gain a wider view of the world. During the time I spent in Japanese class, I found out that there are many students who have an interest in Japan. I felt very happy to know that.

I really appreciate this program because it gave me a chance to think in a different perspective and also make many special friends. I don't want to waste this experience so I'll study harder and try to become a bridge to peace.

*Maria Hirabayashi
Senior 2*

I was shy in Japan and did not readily talk with the exchange students at Mejiro. Now that I have studied abroad, I am very glad when they talk to me. Surely, I think that other foreign students think so, too. I feel that it is really important to talk to various foreign students and I want to have a good relationship with them in the future.

I will never forget my time in Brisbane.

*Megumi Hanabusa
Senior 2*



Megumi (second from right) with fellow Mejiro student and host sisters

I went to Brisbane for two months. At first I was very worried about studying abroad, but my host family talked to me with a smile so my worries soon disappeared. I found something new every day which made my time there very fulfilling. It was winter in Brisbane although it was summer in Japan. I thought Brisbane was going to be very cold, but it has a mild climate so sometimes I felt it was hot in the afternoon. I was very surprised by this.

My host family was very kind. When I talked with them, they tried hard to understand my English. It made me very happy. My host sister was a very good girl. She always helped me.

When I started school, I was very nervous about talking with the other students, but everyone was very kind to me and I made friends. They were very interested in Japan. I was very happy. I felt being interested in other countries is very important. I was very happy to be accepted by everyone.

I studied abroad in Australia. There were some differences between Australia and Japan. I was surprised that students eat lunch outside and move from classroom to classroom.

I participated in St. Aloysius's sports day. I did the discus and triple jump. I got fifth and eighth place so I got a ribbon. It was very exciting. I went to Adelaide Show with my friend. We rode many carnival rides. They looked very dangerous, but they were very fun. And we watched a 9D movie. Many soap bubbles and water came flying at us. It was very exciting.

My school is a Christian school so they pray every day. I didn't know the words, so I couldn't say the prayers but I participated in Christian meetings. Students and teachers prayed and sang songs. I had not participated in a Christian meeting before so it was interesting.

I went to a big shopping mall called Rundle mall. I bought clothes and food there. I drank Chinese bubble tea many times. The bubble tea shop was very popular so it was always crowded. It was very good.

Living abroad was a challenge, but I learned a lot of English. I had a great time.



Rikako (right) enjoying a drink with fellow Mejiro student

*Rikako Kasai
Senior 1*

Power English

I went to University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada for Power English last year. I recommend going to UBC for three reasons. First, Canadian food is tasty and you can get any kind of food you like, for example, fish and chips, seafood, or steak. You can even eat Japanese food in Canada if you like. We ate sushi, ramen, miso soup and so on. I think they have almost the same taste as in Japan. The servings of all food there are voluminous and you will absolutely be satisfied with them. Second, Vancouver has some great sightseeing spots. We went to Inukshuk, Grouse Mountain, the Capilano Suspension Bridge, and much more. I recommend going to the Capilano Suspension Bridge because it is surrounded by nature and you can see an awesome view. Third, we got to experience some fun and interesting events,

for instance, a Halloween party and shopping on Black Friday. We enjoyed both of them. We wore costumes to the Halloween party and were surprised that everyone, even the teachers wore a costume. In conclusion, Canada has nice food, great sightseeing places and interesting events.

Shogo Saito
3rd year, Department of English Language Studies
Mejiro University



**The Capilano
Suspension Bridge**

Wonderful Days



Ryo (front left) with friends in California

I had a really great experience in California. I went to the U.S. during summer vacation with other classmates. I was worried before I went, but everyone was friendly and kind. I felt comfortable when I arrived in California because it was less humid there than in Japan. Also, it didn't rain at all. I stayed in a dormitory for a month. There

I was able to learn about English grammar that I didn't know in class. Furthermore, my speaking improved because I had a lot of opportunities to speak English outside of class. The school assistants took us to fun places such as Hollywood and Santa Monica. Watching a Dodgers game was impressive. It was my first time to see a baseball game. We wore uniforms and cheered for the players.

Finally, I felt sad parting with them on my return date. I thought that one month was too short. When I came back to Japan, I felt lonely because I'm an only child and my roommates were like brothers to me. Through my experience studying abroad, I learned to cherish my connections with others. I'll never forget my life in California. It was an irreplaceable experience for me.

were many Korean students. All of the Korean students were older than me, so I was able to make a lot of big brothers there. We treated them to Japanese food, such as curry and okonomiyaki. I was so sad at their farewell ceremony because I wanted to be with them more. To my joy one of them gave me a present.

Ryo Sato
3rd year, Department of English Language Studies
Mejiro University

University Life in Japan



**Clementine (front left) with
her classmates and teacher**

When I chose Japanese as my major at university in France, my wish was to study abroad in Japan for at least a semester or year. So after my graduation in June 2014, I made the decision to study abroad, as I had wished, for one year and I was accepted by Mejiro University and started my studies in JALP (Japanese Language Program) in September 2014.

It was not hard for me to adapt myself to the Japanese lifestyle because it's my fourth time in Japan but it's my first time to stay more than two months.

After the placement test I was placed in the N3 level class. Since I graduated university in Japanese language and culture in France, class isn't too difficult for me. My favorite class is "Understanding Japan", where we study about Japanese culture. It's really interesting because I learn a lot of things and the class is held entirely in Japanese so we can improve our comprehension.

I chose to study in a university because I wanted to be able to meet Japanese students. At Mejiro University you have two ways to meet people. First, you can hang around in the "Terrace" where everyone eats. There are always people who will talk to you, and thanks to them you can meet even more people. Second, with the international center you can have a partner for a tutorial session. For one hour a week you can talk with your partner who wants to learn your mother language and you will learn Japanese. We talk about each other's culture, travel and language. It's a good way to make Japanese friends and improve your Japanese skills. For me the most important thing is to have a student life. It means that you need to make Japanese friends, and to speak Japanese when you're not in class. In my opinion, this is the better way to progress because you can hear natural Japanese that you can use in conversation. It's only been two months that I have been studying in Japan and I want to meet even more people during my year here. I hope I will be able to make a lot of good memories at Mejiro University.

Clementine Harle
Japanese Language Program (JALP)
Mejiro University

My Experiences in Japan



**Gahui (middle row, second from left)
with friends from the Department of
Korean Language Studies**

I came to Japan in March to study Japanese, but this wasn't my first time to come to Japan. I first traveled to Japan for one week in 2011. My next visit was quite long. I worked in a hotel in Nagano for 8 months. I could learn a lot about hotel affairs. Now I am in Japan again! Actually, my major is not Japanese, it is English.

At the beginning of my first semester at Mejiro University, I met a teacher who belongs to the Department of Korean Language Studies. She wanted me to be an assistant in her class. I was lucky because I could make Japanese friends there and get a chance to hang around with other students. They were so kind to me and helped me study Japanese. In addition, I could make friends in my department, not only my classmates but also other students from my whole year.

By the middle of the semester I began to get busy. I had almost 3 or 4 presentations a week, and sometimes even in one day. Also, I had other homework. I didn't have much time to play or look around Tokyo and I couldn't participate in a school club. This is the one thing which is sad about my life at Mejiro University.

Not everyone has the same schedule as me. I heard that I am the first duel degree student to major in the Department of English Language Studies, so I don't want to disappoint anyone. Most of all, I want to study hard for myself and I want to make my time at Mejiro University worthwhile.

Jo Gahui
3rd Year, Department of English Language Studies, Mejiro University
Duel Degree Program, Honam University

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