



MEJIRO
GAKUEN

VOL.52

Mejiro Exchange

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

Mejiro Gakuen
4-31-1 Nakaochiai, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo, 161-8522 JAPAN
Tel. 03-5996-3131 <http://mk.mejiro.ac.jp/>

DEC 2015

Takapuna Students Visit Mejiro Kenshin

We thoroughly enjoyed our visit to Mejiro Kenshin Senior High School! When we arrived, we were greeted warmly by our friends that were previously in our Japanese class as exchange students. It was great catching up with them. Shortly after, we were given a tour of the school campus. The campus is very beautiful and spacious. Inside, the classes were very interesting and lively – especially the games we played when we were included in the English classes. The students were very friendly and wanted to see us. We felt like celebrities at the school! We then attended a tea ceremony where we listened to traditional music skillfully played on a *koto*. The music was fascinating. We tried eating sweet *mochi*, followed by drinking freshly-brewed tea the traditional way. Afterwards, we were once again greeted by our friends, where they introduced us to their friends and we took pictures together. They were very shy but warmed up to us shortly. Overall, the school visit was extremely enjoyable and we would love to come back again for a longer period of time!

*Cameron Burton and Lucy Worsnop
Takapuna Grammar School*



Group photo taken outside the school

Mejiro Kenshin Welcomes Harvard Students

Three Harvard University students joined a class of senior English students for a cultural exchange on June 24th, welcomed by Mr. Ken Ip, Ms. Haruko Morimoto, and several other members of staff. The students shared stories about their lives in America and at Harvard University with Mejiro students, and described how their experiences in Japan both differed

and were similar to their lives at Harvard. The Harvard and Mejiro students also shared personal stories and got to know one another, such as sharing music tastes, talking about their lives growing up and how they were alike and different, and so on and so forth.

Mejiro and Harvard students were interested in how their school and college system differed from that of the other, especially with regard to work ethic, extracurricular activities, and particularly how school systems and college admissions processes differed from one country to the other. Several Mejiro students also expressed their desire to enter Harvard University as well, to which the Harvard students conveyed hopes that the Mejiro students would join them. The Harvard students also explained to the students what they were

doing in Japan and what they thought of and loved about Japan. As a result, students from both schools gained a greater understanding of each other's culture and formed new friendships. After getting to know one another, Mejiro students proceeded to give presentations on various aspects of Japanese culture, encompassing sports, food, and more. They exhibited great skill in their English speech, and their presentations were quite interesting! After the presentations, the students bade each other farewell, and the Harvard students were taken on a brief tour of the school and were treated to lunch in the cafeteria!

The Harvard students would like to express their thanks to Ms. Morimoto, Mr. Ip, Mr. Brown, and of course all the school staff and the Mejiro students for making their visit a wonderful, enjoyable, and interesting experience of Japanese life and culture, and will value their trip to Mejiro Kenshin in the future for many years to come.

*Larry Zhang
Harvard University*



Larry participating in a group discussion with Mejiro students

The Toyosai Festival

I'm very lucky to have had the opportunity to come to Japan. It was a great experience overall and I've met many great people here, and learnt some more Japanese! Something that really stood out to me at Mejiro Kenshin was the school festival. Back home in Canada, we don't have anything like it. It was great seeing all the different things you could do, like little cafés, games and events that were all put on by the students. I helped my homeroom set up activities that small children could do. I also got to walk around and eat some crepes, and try some candy kebab! The food was very good. I also gave some presentations about my life back home in Canada. It was very difficult speaking in Japanese at first, but it got better after a while.

While the school festival was great, I think the truly wonderful thing about being an exchange student here is what I am able to take back with me. I've learnt more Japanese, made new friends, am more culturally aware, and have plenty of stories to tell once I go home to Vancouver. Japan is a country that I will most definitely come back to!

Megan Rees
Rockridge Secondary School



Megan giving her presentation at the festival

The Towasai Festival

This year we, Team "next" and exchange students took part in the Towasai festival together as usual.

We separated into two teams, Korea and China, and each team made preparations, cooked, and sold food from their home countries.

Some of the exchange students had only been in Japan for two months,

so this Towasai festival was the first event in which we joined forces. We thought about what we should do to make this festival great, and worked together to achieve that goal. Thanks to that, we could feel a sense of accomplishment when the festival finished. That was the best memory.

We want to try more new and fun things and continue making wonderful memories.



Team "next" and exchange students working at their booths

Chisaki Harayama
4th Year, Department of Child Studies
Mejiro University

Junior 3 School Trip (Vancouver)

I went to Canada on a school trip with my classmates and teachers for ten days. I spent the first day with my host family. They were very kind. We went downtown together.

We learned English from Canadian teachers at West Vancouver Secondary School and went on excursions. We went to Lynn Canyon, Stanley Park, Gastown and Granville Island. Canada was a beautiful country. I especially liked the forest. It felt good to be in nature. Canadian food was very delicious. I liked the pizza.

My best memory was shopping in Gastown. I bought souvenirs for my family. I enjoyed my school trip very much. I want to visit Canada again in the near future.

Rio Sakuma
Junior 3



Rio (second from right) with classmates

Junior 3 SEC Study Tour (Delta)

This summer I went to Canada to study English with my SEC (Super English Course) classmates. This was a good experience for me because not everyone can go and study abroad. We joined a summer school program on our language study tour. I learned many things there, like how to write a paragraph, work in groups, make presentations and read and understand long texts. At first, I could only understand a little bit of what the teacher said and had a little difficulty writing paragraphs. The girl who sat beside me taught me how. I learned how to write them, and made a new friend. Because I was separated from my SEC classmates I tried to talk to other students. I felt a little nervous, but everyone felt the same as I. I talked with my Chinese friends a lot and we told each other about our cultures. One thing that I look back on and regret is not speaking as much as I wanted to for fear of making mistakes. However, I learned the most important thing is to talk to many students



Mone (second from right, front row) with her classmates

and not to worry about mistakes. On this study tour, I was able to learn about the cultures of other countries and speak English more than before. I will always value the friends who I met there and keep studying hard.

Mone Yamazaki
Junior 3

Senior 2 Kyushu Trip

The most exciting part of my Kyushu trip was the hands-on learning program. There were several programs: sea kayaking, Karatsu ware, mountain-stream fishing and so on. I picked surf fishing because not only could I learn how to catch fish, but also how to fillet and debone them. At first I was scared to do it, but I realized that the fish I eat has to be prepared by someone. I love to eat fish, so I stopped being scared and did my best. I wasn't very good at it, but it was a really great opportunity to learn that people consume precious lives.

Sayaka Hanyu
Senior 2



Sayaka (left) during the school trip

U.S. Embassy Visits Mejiro Kenshin

On September 1st, the first day back after summer vacation, my class attended Mr. Dana Barnhill's presentation after school. It was about why Japanese students should study English abroad.

First, he introduced himself, and then he talked about the different states in the U.S. I liked how he took the time to explain about each state using easy English so that it was easy for us to understand. I talked with Mr. Barnhill personally after the presentation, and he told me that getting to know



Mr. Barnhill giving his presentation

other countries means getting to know people from those countries. I realized from his words that understanding people from other countries is not only important, but a step towards real peace. I thought we learned something very important and I want to thank Mr. Barnhill for taking the time to talk to us.

*Ikumi Okamoto
Senior 1*

Canadian Embassy Visits Mejiro Kenshin



Mr. Husband presenting to the Junior 2 students

On October 15th, the Junior 2 students attended a special presentation by Mr. Cael Husband, Second Secretary-Public Affairs, from the Canadian Embassy in Japan. Mr. Husband gave a presentation on the advantages of studying in Canada.

This was perfect timing for our students as they are preparing for their trip to Vancouver next year. Results from a questionnaire given after the presentation show that the students are more excited than ever about going next year. Both the students and teachers would like to thank Mr. Husband for taking the time to visit our school.

*Ken Ip
International Education Department*

Studying Abroad in Australia



Haruka (right) with friends at Somerville House

I studied abroad from July to September in Australia. I went to Somerville House. This school has many students. At Somerville House, I could make many friends, and I studied English, biology, music, math, Japanese, history, P.E. and Christianity. All the classes were difficult for me, but my host sister helped me, so I could understand. I especially liked biology. Sometimes, my host sister, friends and I went to South Bank. We ate ice cream, and we talked about everything. I enjoyed every day after school. My host family was very kind and funny! They took me to many places. When I went to Dream World, I held a koala. The koala was so cute! I took a picture. I also went to an Aboriginal site. I studied about Australian culture and Aborigines. After every dinner, we talked about school. This experience was very important to me because I could learn English. I will never forget it.

*Haruka Sawame
Senior 1*

Studying Abroad in Canada



Kotone (back row, second from right) with friends in Canada

I studied abroad in Vancouver, Canada for ten months. When I first went to Canada, I was nervous and got homesick, but as time passed, I got used to living there. Canada is a multicultural country, so there are a lot of people from different countries, such as China, the Philippines and Iran. I made many friends from different countries. I have a lot

of memories with my friends and host family. For example, I went on a picnic and held a party with my friend. Also, I played tennis after school and watched videos with my host family. What I was surprised by most was school. How the teachers teach and the role of schools are very different from my school in Japan. In Canada, they enjoy big events such as Halloween and talent shows.

I was impressed with the kindness of people in Canada. They accepted and understood me even though we have different cultures and ideas. They always taught me what I did not understand with kindness.

I was glad that I went to Canada and met wonderful people. I could learn a lot of things from them. I am proud of having great experiences that I could not do in Japan. I hope to use what I learned in Canada in positive ways in my life.

*Kotone Yamazaki
Senior 2*

Studying Abroad in New Zealand

I stayed in New Zealand for about three months to study English. I learned not only English, but also about lifestyle, culture, personality, food, geography and much more! For example, I learned that New Zealand's food culture was influenced by the British. In New Zealand history, Britain colonized New Zealand, so there are many kinds of British food, like fish and chips.

For culture, New Zealand's indigenous people are the Maori. They have an interesting culture. Their way of greeting is touching noses together. The most interesting Maori culture is the *haka*. It is a very powerful dance. I like it. I want to watch the *haka* again.

New Zealand is famous for rugby. The All Blacks is New Zealand's rugby team which is the strongest rugby team in the world. The All Blacks dance the *haka* before every rugby game.

I went to Takapuna Grammar School. You can choose each subject, so I chose math, music, geography, Japanese and two English classes.

Classes were very fun, but they are longer than classes in Japan. There was a twenty minute break before lunch and fifty minutes for lunch. I usually brought lunch, but sometimes bought sushi at the school shop.

The school was huge and had over 1000 students. I made many friends, so school was very fun.



Takaya (left) with fellow exchange student

My exchange was a very good experience. I want to say thank you to everyone who helped me. I want to go to New Zealand again.

*Takaya Kondo
Senior 1*

Power English

I went to Australia as part of the Power English Program for seven months. On weekdays, I went to language school. I often encountered difficult words and topics, so I had to study hard. Therefore, I was able to improve my English skills a lot.

Plus, I had heaps of great experiences throughout this program. For me, my best experience was making new friends. Australia is known for being a multinational country, so there are a lot of people who come from all over the world, like China, Columbia, Saudi Arabia and Italy. I studied with them, and also hung out with them. As a result, I could learn about their culture and habits. In addition, sharing knowledge and talking with foreign friends broadened my ideas about my plans for the future. At the language school I studied at, there were many people of all ages who are studying a second language to better themselves. Because of this I thought that it is not too late to start all the things I want to do. I felt that Japan is too restricted about age, but other countries are not, so I would like to do what I want no matter how old I am.

It was a dreamy and rewarding experience for me. Moreover, I think this wonderful time might be the best memory of my life.

Sho Asanuma

*3rd Year, Department of English Language Studies
Mejiro University*



Sho (back row, second from right) with friends in Australia

Cool Japan



Ben (right) with classmate participating in a senchado tea ceremony

Ever since I was young, I always wanted to visit Tokyo. I didn't know any other cities in Japan when I was younger, but I knew that everything cool, like video games, technology and Godzilla, came from Japan. As an adult, my friends always say "Why go to Tokyo when you can go to Kyoto, Nara, etc.," but I've always much preferred the big city than rural scenic areas. Areas like Kyoto may represent traditional Japanese culture, but I feel Tokyo is the centre of the cool new Japan, which is what I find much more interesting.

My studies at Mejiro University are perfect. I don't know if it's because I live in Japan and am constantly immersed in the language, or because of the teaching style, but I'm comfortably progressing with

Japanese and definitely seeing a vast improvement. When I got off the plane in September I could barely say a sentence, but after only three months I'm now able to have conversations in Japanese with friends.

As most of the exchange students are East Asian, they are all very used to the food, culture, climate, etc. Whereas this being my first time outside of Europe, this is all very new to me and every day I find new things. Suffice to say, I've managed to adapt. Three months ago I was hungry because I didn't know where or how to buy food, now I'm sitting with my fluffy pink blanket and chocolate milk typing this article like it was any other day.

Ben Walsh

University of Central Lancashire

My Dream of Studying in Japan

It all started with a work trip to Tokyo when I was a research assistant during my university days. That was when a love for Japan and its culture sprouted. Coming from a country with a short history, I was fascinated with Japan and its rich culture. It also hatched a dream of living and experiencing life in Japan. However, it wasn't until years later when that dream materialized.

In September 2015, I embarked on my new journey to Tokyo for a 1-year study at Mejiro University's Japanese Language Program (JALP). Time has flown and it's been nearly three months since I arrived. My awesome classmates helped make my life away from home easier. Classes were made interesting with the daily jokes and bantering. There are also the occasional trips after class to the game center. Let's just say that my talent does not

extend to UFO catchers.

Aside from the daily Japanese language classes, we also get to have hands-on experience at *ikebana* (traditional flower arrangement), *senchado* (traditional tea ceremony) and Japanese sweets making. Mejiro also offers a tutoring program in which I was given the opportunity to interact with a Japanese student on a weekly basis. Mai was the first Japanese friend that I made since coming here. I had fun talking about anything under the sun during our weekly meet-ups.

I am grateful for being given the chance to live and experience my dream. Every day is a wonderful learning experience.



Evelyn (right, front) with her classmates

Evelyn Ng

*Japanese Language Program (JALP)
Mejiro University*

Notice: We would like to announce that this will be the final print issue of the Mejiro Exchange. We will be moving to an online format and invite you to visit <http://mk.mejiro.ac.jp/> for future updates. We thank you for your support of Mejiro Gakuen and the Mejiro Exchange over the years.

VOL. 52 DEC 2015

Mejiro Exchange is published biannually by Mejiro Gakuen. Views expressed in the *ME* do not necessarily reflect those of Mejiro Gakuen. Comments and submissions invited.