

I would like to extend my deepest sympathies regarding the Tohoku Earthquake disaster.

I am truly sorry for the many invaluable lives that were lost due to the Tohoku Earthquake and Tsunami disaster. I would also like to express my sympathy for both Japanese and foreign residents of Iwate Prefecture that have suffered from this catastrophe.

With Governor Takuya Tasso at the forefront, the prefecture is currently carrying out rescue and reconstruction efforts with the collective effort of the public and private sectors. The Iwate International Association has also been in communication with the prefectural departments in charge, and has taken the role of providing counseling, distribution of information and other rescue efforts to foreigners in the region.

There are currently around 6,000 foreign residents in Iwate Prefecture but some have left temporarily due to continuing aftershocks. I hope that the aftershocks will calm down soon so that everyone can gather together and return to their previous peaceful daily lives again.

It was predicted in recent years that there would be a 99% chance of an earthquake striking the Miyagi fault within 30 years. Even so, this earthquake was one of the largest in history and greatly surpassed our wildest predictions, with domestic observations recording it as a magnitude 9.0 and the Iwate coast receiving catastrophic amounts of damage. Recovery may take a very long time and a vast amount of money. But I think it might be worthwhile to remember the great conceptual ability of our Iwatean ancestor, Shinpei Goto. As former mayor of Tokyo, he left us the current-day Showa-dori Street in Tokyo, and in 1923 after the Great Kanto Earthquake, he contributed greatly to reconstruction efforts as both Home Minister and President of the Imperial Bureau of Reconstruction.

After the Great Hanshin Earthquake of 1995, the people of the world were amazed at the wonderful politeness of the Japanese people, and we have once again been praised for our response to the disaster. Helping hands have stretched across the globe to support us. I am very grateful for the world's help, and I think we must do our best to fulfill their expectations. The people of the Tohoku region of eastern Japan are a tenacious group, and the Iwate people are traditionally close-knit. Let us join together, united with our foreign residents, and bring our homeland back to its former glory.

The Iwate International Association staff and I can only make a small contribution to Iwate's reconstruction, but we will try our very hardest, working together with other related organizations. Thank you very much.

March 24, 2011

Iwate International Association
President Atsushi Ando



Clinton Fairbanks (Utah, U.S.A.)
Former Iwate Coordinator of International Relations

I could not believe it when I saw on the television how much damage my beloved Iwate Prefecture had taken from the tsunami. The news was full of scary reports, and the damage on the Iwate coast was particular great. I saw this and wept.

When I lived in Morioka, I often heard people say that the Iwate people are tenacious. I was impressed at how positive everyone is – Iwateans are very calm, and even if they are hurt themselves they never fail to reach out a helping hand to a person in need.

My employer has sent 100 million yen in donations through the Japanese Red Cross. However, I also think that volunteering is necessary, not just donations. If I am able to get permission from work, I would like to go to Iwate and volunteer.

I pray for you all everyday.



Geng Feixiang
(Shangxi Province, China)
Former Iwate Coordinator of International Relations

I extend my deepest sympathies for the Great East Japan Earthquake.

When I saw how great the damage from the March 11 earthquake was to Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima, I started thinking

about my year living and working in scenic Iwate Prefecture. I also thought of all my friends in Japan.

My heart ached and I wept as I watched the scenes of the disaster. I contacted Chinese friends that had once lived in Iwate and we shared information. Everyone feels the same way and we want to help Iwate recover, so we started to collect donations.

I was relieved once I was able to contact my friends, and I pray that Iwate recovers quickly.

日本加油！岩手加油！（日本頑張れ！岩手頑張れ！）
Ri ben jia you! Yan shou jia you! (Hang in there, Japan! Hang in there, Iwate!)



Iwate received a donation of 90 thousand yen and messages of support from the Korean Teachers Research Organization that visited our prefecture last year. (Starting from the left of the photo)

Bae Jang Ryeol

Please protect the beautiful prefecture of Iwate. Hang in there.

Shin Chun Hee (President)

I believe that the young students of Japan will rebuild from this tragedy. Fight on, Hanamaki Higashi High School!

Lee Eun Jeong

I am praying that Japan will return to its former glory. Fight on!!

Yeon Jae Hee

Hang in there, Iwate Prefecture.

Kim Kwang Ho

I truly believe that you will recover.

Jim Vopat

I am deeply saddened about the devastating consequences of the earthquake in Japan. I worry about the safety and well being of everyone and wish there were more I could do to help. I know your courage and community solidarity will outlast this disaster and rebuild the future. My heart is with you in this catastrophic time, and I hope for the brighter days to come.



Doug Ferrier (Illinois, U.S.A.)
Jet Program
1997-98 Morioka North High School

Almost 10 years have passed since we lived and worked along side of you. We remember those times and cherish our friendships. Have hope. Iwate will recover and become stronger.

Continue to reach out to those people who need help, and know that you are not alone.

Every day, friends in Central Illinois ask how they can help. We'll continue to do what we can and help tell your story. Know that even though an ocean lies between us, our hearts are with you.



Ton Nu Diem Thu (Vietnam)
Japanese Language Department Vice Chairperson
College of Foreign Languages

It has been very distressing to see the number of victims rising as we find out more and more of how much damage Iwate has received. However, Japan is not alone. The whole world is supporting you. Hang in there, my beloved Japan!

The teachers (including the entire Japanese Department staff) and students of Vietnam's Hue University are currently collection donations for Japan. We do not have very much power but we are praying for Japan from the bottom of our hearts.

I pray that the people of Japan quickly rise above this tragedy. Ganbare, Nippon! Ganbare, Nippon! (Hang in there, Japan!)



Li Yanqiao
(Shangdong Province, China)
Former Assistant Foreign Resident

For all those that were lost due to the Great East Japan Earthquake, I pray that you rest in peace. I would also like to express my condolences to the survivors.

I spent a rich and colorful three years in Iwate as an exchange student, and the kind people of Iwate always looked out for me.

It is devastating to look at the scenes of pure destruction from the earthquake and tsunami. I cannot hold back my respect and awe of the victims that are doing their best to overcome this tragedy. I pray that Iwate recovers quickly so that everyone can return to their peaceful lives.

I believe that the brave people of Iwate will rebuild this beautiful prefecture.

We have received many more messages and donations. Thank you so much for your heartfelt words and donations.

Please visit the Association homepage to view more messages.

Within the Ordinary Everyday

~ International Exchange and Multiculturalism in Iwate ~

There are over 6,200 foreign residents in Iwate Prefecture, and there are a growing amount of opportunities for Japanese to interact with foreign residents. In February 2010, the prefecture created the Iwate Prefecture Multicultural Society Promotion Plan. As people who live together in the same region, how do we come across these cultural differences? How do we get to a point where we all understand each other? We will be thinking about international exchange and multiculturalism while interacting and living with foreign-born residents within our region.

* The Iwate Prefecture Multicultural Society Promotion Plan was devised to bring about a multicultural society within Iwate. This will be a society where everyone understands each other's cultural backgrounds and ways of thinking while supporting their communities and living in harmony together, regardless of nationality or ethnicity. The plan will be in effect for five years until 2014, with three main policy directions of "Communication Support", "Daily Life Support," and "Creating a Multicultural Society."

Round-Table Discussion

Differences are Interesting!

Sometimes, even a small cultural difference will cause problems and misunderstandings. If we work towards educating ourselves about our differences, our understanding of each other will grow. We interviewed Munkhbat Lkhagvajav, a foreign student from Mongolia, Matsuyo Hodaka, a teacher of Japanese language in Hanamaki, and Yoko Matsuoka, associate professor at the Iwate University International Exchange Center. We asked them to share what they have experienced throughout their daily lives in Japan.



The Language Barrier

Yoko Matsuoka: I would like to ask about the support of Japanese language study. Hodaka-san, you teach Japanese. What kind of Japanese phrases do you think are necessary?

Matsuyo Hodaka: I think there are a lot of small Japanese phrases that we use in everyday life that never appear in textbooks. For example, I know a Korean woman who has been in Japan for 3 years, and she was told by her family to fill something up with water, but they used the word "kumu" as opposed to "ireru," which is a more common Japanese word for "fill." The Korean woman did not know the meaning of "kumu," but she did know "ireru." Lately, I have been trying to teach common Japanese words that do not show up in textbooks.

Munkhbat: I studied Japanese while in Mongolia, but once I came to Japan there were not a lot of people who spoke like they did in the textbooks. If I were to speak to my friends in polite, formal language (such as desu/masu forms), it would be strange and I would be creating social distance.

Matsuoka: Even on campus, foreign students talk to Japanese students in formal language forms, causing the Japanese students to create some distance because they are not feeling any sense of closeness. That's why some foreign students think of Japanese as cold people, and have a hard time making Japanese friends. Everyone has emotional barriers but it is a reality that there is also a language barrier between foreigners and Japanese.

Hodaka: I see that as a Japanese language teacher, I have to be careful about teaching the usage of formal Japanese because many languages do not have those distinctions. But Munkhbat-san, you basically only studied Japanese writing while in Mongolia, yet your Japanese usage is just fine.

Matsuoka: That's because Munkhbat-san is extroverted and tries his best to interact with Japanese.

Munkh: Well, I've come to all the way to Japan, so I want to make sure I interact with a lot of different people.

Matsuoka: Assertive, outgoing people memorize languages quickly, plus their circle of friends increases as their world grows. However, that does not necessarily mean that it's harder for introverts to learn languages. Multiculturalism and diversity also means including different personalities, and I think human society is interesting because of the various characters that populate it. I think it's fine as long as introverted people can figure out the best way to communicate for themselves. Munkhbat-san, do you have any worries or troubles about living in Japan? What do you do when friends come to you for advice?

Munkh: In Japan, I have people who will help me if I reach out, and there are also places to go for counseling and advice so right now I really don't have anything I'm worried about. When something bad happens, I try to forget about it so I don't dwell on it. Currently, there are eight Mongolian foreign students at Iwate University, but everyday we gather and talk about our daily lives and anything that may be troubling us.

Matsuoka: I suppose it is nice when you have a support group of friends who speak the same language and have the same culture. Sometimes, though, you might try to create such a group but members live too far away or there just aren't any fellow countrymen in your area. Or you may have completely different ways of thinking even if everyone is from the same country. Those kinds of situations are probably very difficult.

Hodaka: Well, I think that rather than creating a specific group or circle, it would be nice to just have a place where people can gather comfortably and speak with someone.

Cultural Differences

Hodaka: Munkhbat-san, have you ever been troubled by or had misunderstandings because of cultural differences?

Munkh: Well, rather than me being troubled, I have certainly troubled others many times. In the past, I would show up late when meeting my Japanese friends, and then they would be cold to me. Mongolians think that if you tell people to meet at 10, everyone will show up at around 11. So when I first came to Japan, I did not know Japanese and I had no idea why my friends were angry. Now I understand why my friends were upset. Mongolians and Japanese don't think about time in the same way.

Matsuoka: I think there are particularly large differences across regions regarding time and punctuality.

Hodaka: I really feel that as well. I was surprised at first at students in my Japanese class who would say they would attend, but not show up, or at students who would miss class but not give any contact. I only realized afterward that foreigners are living under a different concept of time.

Matsuoka: There seems to be a great amount of differences regarding what every culture finds offensive. For example, when a Chinese person meets someone new, he or she will talk about private topics in an effort to become close with you. However, a Japanese person will want to avoid talking about private matters as much as possible. Sometimes you end up offending someone even though you think you are doing a good thing.

Munkh: Speaking of cultural differences, it is common sense in Mongolia to not to make noises while eating. On the other hand, in Japan there is a custom of making slurping noises while eating soba or udon noodles. Also, Japanese people will touch other people's heads as a form of communication, but I don't really like that. I am pretty used to bowing to people now, but in Mongolia, bowing means that you have lost to someone, so we do not really do it often.

Matsuoka: There will be certain behaviors that just happen to mean one thing in one place and a completely different thing in another. For example, a Korean person once told me that the only people who sit in seiza style (Japanese-style sitting on top of your legs) are criminals. There are times when we try to assimilate to the culture around us, and then there are others



Munkhbat Lkhagvajav
(ЛХАГВАЖАВ МҮНХБАТ)

Iwate University, Social Science Graduate Department, Law and Economics Curriculum, 2nd year

Munkhbat came to Morioka two years ago from Mongolia. He is skilled at sports, such as Mongolian sumo wrestling and judo. In the future, he would like to do something that would leave his legacy, and create a trading company.



when we understand the differences but we still will not change. "When in Rome, do as the Romans do" is not always good advice. You can try to go along with things, but if it is impossible there is no reason why you cannot find a new solution. I think the most important thing is that you want to understand the differences in other people's ways of thinking.

Hodaka: In Japan, there seems to be a lot of people who think that if you live in Japan, you should live according to Japan's rules, but I think that is wrong. If I were to go to another country and someone told me to completely assimilate to that foreign culture, there are some things that I probably just could not do. There are always going to be times when we do not understand other people - I think it's also important to be able to convey what about that culture makes you uncomfortable.

Munkh: Japan is a country that does everything with a group mentality. If a foreign person comes here and demands to do things according to their own country's customs, then the group falls apart. I think you should behave like everyone else if you are going to be in Japan.

Matsuoka: Well, that certainly will make things easier. But I also wonder if it would be alright to change a little bit after you have created some human connections. Munkhbat-san, the Japanese people you became friends with probably seemed different before you got to know them as compared to now. Friendships with foreigners gives Japanese people a chance to reflect on themselves, and see a world outside their own.

Munkh: Recently a Japanese friend of mine said something like that. He said, "I have to look at the bigger picture, at the world. I want to go to Mongolia. I think it was fate that I met you." Even though he were half-joking it made me happy.

Matsuoka: There is a policy* that will increase foreign students in Japan from 100,000 people to 300,000 people in the future, but I think it's important to increase the number of



Matsuyo Hodaka

Representative of the Hanamaki Japanese Language Supporters group, "Step."

Her motto is "Enjoyably, energetically, perseveringly!" She teaches Japanese language and culture to foreign residents in Hanamaki and the surrounding area. She works to support foreign residents so they can live a good life while in Japan.

Contact: Hanamaki Japanese Language Supporters "Step"
〒025-0092 Hanamaki-shi, Odori 1-2-21, within the
Hanamaki International Exchange Center
TEL: 0198-22-7390 FAX: 0198-22-7399

Japanese who have the same global mindset. So far it has been acceptable to just stay in Iwate forever, but from now on people like foreign students are going to keep entering and influencing their surroundings here. Then the number of Japanese who go abroad will also increase.

(Footnote)

*"Plan for 300,000 Foreign Exchange Students" – This plan was presented by the Japanese government in 2008. As one of the facets of Japan's policies towards globalization, there are plans to increase the number of students studying abroad in Japan to 300,000 people.

The Necessity of Multiculturalism

Munkh: I think it's important that foreign students that come to Japan are taught at a slow pace until they can get used to things. People may rebel against Japanese who lay the law down that we must do things differently here. It was tough for me as well during my first three months in Japan, and I did have times when I wanted to go home. But I got over those hurdles and now it has become strange when I do want to go home. Sometimes I wish that Mongolia was more like Japan.

Matsuoka: For example?

Munkh: Things like being punctual, being respectful to one another, the group mentality. Saying "yoroshiku onegaishimasu (thanks for your help – a Japanese phrase used to aid social relations)." You cannot translate that into Mongolian.

Matsuoka: Perhaps "yoroshiku" is really hard to translate into other languages.

Hodaka: It is certainly not in English either.

Munkh: I think it would be great if we had a phrase like "yoroshiku" in Mongolian.

Matsuoka: Is there any part of Mongolian culture that you wish Japan would incorporate into its own culture?

Munkh: Mongolians tend to think everything will turn out fine. Japanese tend to worry a lot. I think if Japanese took their time to think through things and relax, they would have a better reputation.

Matsuoka: Japanese do tend to be very serious.

Hodaka: And you would not notice these things if you had only lived in Japan. It's not as if Japanese are living under the impression that they are unreasonably serious, it's just that this is the way they have always been. So it is important to interact

with people of different cultures in order to get to know yourself better as well.

Matsuoka: Tolerance is a necessity for a multicultural society. Being too rigid and close-minded is a recipe for bringing about fighting and antipathy, causing suffering on both sides. There are many times when you should just go with the flow – somehow it will work out. After all, we should enjoy our differences since we have the chance to live in a community full of people from different cultures. When there are many various people living together, in some sense the original culture will be destroyed. Nobody can determine whether that will be good or bad. Perhaps the only solution is for people to decide individually what they would like to keep and what they would like to change about their own cultures.

The First Step Towards Harmony

Matsuoka: So how do people live in harmony when they have language barriers and cultural differences?

Hodaka: When people think that their culture is always the best or correct, they cannot understand people from another culture. I think you have to start from a place of tolerance in order to understand other people.

Munkh: I think I'd like it if Japanese people would offer their opinions a little more. I feel like I get along better with people who say their opinions versus people who do not.

Matsuoka: Mutual understanding depends on whether two people have an interest in each other. Maybe cultural differences are not just limited to people of other countries. There are differences between generations, genders and customs. I think it would be good if people embrace those differences and decide to either adopt them or change them.

Hodaka: When I interact with a lot of different people, I feel like my sense of self broadens out a little bit. I mean, it's easy for us to say "understanding differences," but that is quite a difficult concept. We need to all work very hard in order to come to understand each other slowly without pushing each other. Someone who can never start conversations with others will never learn Japanese even if they live here for many years. That will make for a very tough life here in Japan. I think it is important for introverted people to really think about how to interact with the other people around them.



Yoko Matsuoka

Iwate University, International Exchange Center Associate Professor
Area of Expertise: Japanese language instruction, social sciences

Currently, she is overviewing the language policies for emigrants to Germany, France, Korea, Taiwan, and Japan. She is also researching the formation of a common language for societies accepting newcomers.

Understanding Others

Exuberant smiling faces talk about the “really fun” Japanese language homeroom teacher at Ueda Elementary School in Morioka, Mr. Masanori Aihara. This classroom, with numerous languages flying around, is an invaluable part of life for these children, with Mr. Aihara at its center.

A Place for the Children

“I’m looking out for you.” This is what I convey by being beside the children. In the long run, waiting is even more important than evaluating. I want to give these children a place where they can feel comfortable and free. Being able to experience many different cultures and see the expressions on the faces of the children is a very enjoyable thing.

It is important to not put undue stress on the children. It is also important to instill a sense of confidence in the students. What the children “don’t know” and what they “don’t understand” are two different things. I want to take away their anxiety and give them many experiences. Once children receive the power of knowledge, then they can in turn use this power. Their abilities should not be suppressed nor should one stop the cultivation of their individuality.

Little Japanese Ambassadors

I always ask the children, “What good things happened to you today?” After coming all the way to Japan, I want the children to like Japan. I want the children to have such a great time here that they will look fondly on their time in Japan and tell their friends and family back home. I want them to become “little Japanese Ambassadors” and promote Japan when they return home. That is why I want these children to experience all the good things about Japan.

A Connection from the Heart

The students at Ueda Elementary School are very friendly.



January 2011
Welcoming the new students from Afghanistan



Teacher
Masanori Aihara

To them, seeing people from abroad is not a rarity, but actually a normal, everyday event. Because the Japanese students are already used to interacting with international students, whenever a new student enrolls, they get very close with them in a flash. When a new child comes they shout “a new student!” with such enthusiasm. When foreign students return home, the Japanese students say sadly, “Have they already gone home?” They often ask, with their bright eyes shining, “When can they come back to the class?” This environment is very encouraging for our Japanese class, which was created in order to help foreign students acclimate to the school.

When teaching communication skills to children, it seems I have to rely on things besides just words. In contrast, the communication between foreign children is very good. Of course there are occasional fights, but the feelings and experiences that they share by being foreign children in Japan only strengthens their sense of community. To the children, nationality does not matter. The important thing is that they truly understand each other, from the heart.

From Now On

It is very important to understand the culture and rules of where you live.

Mutual understanding happens when one takes note of and understands the good aspects of a culture along with aspects that do not apply to them. I teach that in my classroom.

I give them a push. If they can learn to understand others, I think they will get along in life without much trouble.

The Japanese Class

at Ueda Elementary School in Morioka City

There is only one elementary school with a Japanese language class in Iwate Prefecture. The class was created in 1996 when a number of foreign students enrolled at Iwate University and brought their children with them. Currently, the class supports nine foreign children, and their attendance ranges from one week to four years. The class will take children from any country, and act as a bridge for intercultural communication. It is also focused on instruction suited to individual needs.

Morioka City Ueda Elementary School
(387 students, Principal Yukio Sakamoto)
〒020-0066 Morioka-shi, Ueda San-chome 16-45
TEL: 019-623-3428 FAX: 019-623-3429

Adolescents Learning Japanese

Shin Furuya took the chance to come from China to live in Shiwa Village when his mother got married. Through a few relatives that his mother knew, Tomohiro Hojo also came from outside the prefecture to live in Shiwa Village. In April 2007, these two boys enrolled in Shiwa Number Two Junior High School.

The Two Individuals

When the cheerful, joke-loving Furuya and the serious, diligent Hojo first came to Japan, the only Japanese Furuya knew was "What's this?" The only phrase Hojo knew was "I don't understand Japanese."

The two started their Japanese lessons with an extremely ambitious approach. Furuya tries to speak about anything even if he makes a mistake, while Hojo analyzes grammar and thinks hard before speaking.

Furuya actively goes out to make new friends and when he makes a mistake, he asks friends how to say it properly. Hojo is not really a talker but is interested in anime, television news and the newspaper and looks up words he does not know in the dictionary.

"These two became quite close to the school once they made friends," said Principal Iwaizumi, who looks over the boys.

School Days

The two joined the track and field club first, but then they joined the basketball team, which had only one other student from the same year. Furuya is now the team leader and Hojo has pushed himself to become a skilled member of the team.

Furuya makes those around him laugh with his impressions of the Club Activity Advisor, and Hojo practices his basketball skills while listening to his teammates' advice on how to shoot. They want to make friends and improve at basketball even though their Japanese is not so good. Their efforts are rewarded by getting to lead the team by giving the "run" and



(Left) Shin Furuya

(Right) Tomohiro Hojo

"pass the ball" instructions, and that shows that they can really be depended on. They also participate in rugby matches and have actively taken part in the game plan discussions.

While the two use Japanese that they already know, they are still working hard to learn new words and phrases to better convey nuance. At one point they worried about communicating with others, but they have overcome their hurdles with their natural cheerfulness and determination. They are very serious about their Japanese classes even though it racks their brains, just so they can express themselves better. Under the recommendation of his homeroom teacher, Furuya participated in the "My Assertion" Grand Debate, in hopes to use the Japanese he has learned so far.

Future Dreams

High school entrance exams are just around the corner. Furuya says, "I would like to challenge myself with sports other than hockey and basketball. In the future I want to become a liaison between Japan and China, like an interpreter." Hojo says, "I want to seriously study and become a game programmer in the future."

They have been confronted with many emotional periods and have encountered hardships due to the language barrier, but these two young men have steadily been learning Japanese and are now thinking about their future paths.

Shiwa Village Second Junior High School

(177 students, Principal Koki Iwaizumi)

In 2008, Chinese-born students moved into the school area, entered the school, and were instructed by a Japanese language teacher who had experience teaching Japanese in China. Until 2009, Shiwa's Board of Education appointed Chinese women living in the town as "school helpers" to support the new Chinese students with their studies and day-to-day life. There are now three Chinese students studying at the school. Two 3rd year students are now aiming to take high school entrance exams.

In other prefectures, there is a special entrance exam system for foreign students whose native language is not Japanese. However, within this prefecture there is no system for public or private high schools, and is done on an individual basis.

〒028-3312 Shiwa-gun, Shiwa-cho, Inuhoemori, Makisawa 70
TEL: 019-672-3480 FAX: 019-672-3383



Scenes from Japanese class

Life Nurtured Near Anikawa

Anikawa –a neighborhood of Hachimantai City. Chie Seki, who was born in Thailand, moved to Anikawa, her husband's hometown, when her son was about to enter elementary school. "Everyone is kind. That's why I can live here." Chie's daily life is marked by interaction with the people who live in this traditional-arts focused community.

Living in the Community

"There is nothing inconvenient about my life. Everyone helps me, and I've very thankful." One can really hear the gratitude emanating from Chie's words.

When Chie first moved to Iwate, she was anxious and confused as to whether she could get used to life here, and whether things would go smoothly. However, that uneasiness soon evaporated. The people of the community gently taught her about the differences in languages, dialects, culture and customs. Her neighbors would call out to her while she would walk through town, and even drive her back home in their cars. If she needs help with cutting the grass or other chores, friends gather and help her until the task is finished. They have great talks over homemade pickled vegetables and other dishes they have prepared.

"Everyone is like my family." People gather together like family in the region, so Chie wants it to remain this way forever, even if she does feel some uneasiness about the future.

Growing Our Horizons Using Food

Chie has prepared the traditional Thai food tom yum goong at local elementary schools, but she usually cooks Japanese food at home because Thai food is rather spicy. Occasionally, she has fun cooking Thai food with neighbors.

Chie enjoys going to collect wild mountain vegetables 4 or 5 times a year. There is a lot of nature in her home of Thailand but very few mountains, so she has fallen in love with the fairly mountainous Anikawa region. She has a wonderful time with her fellow community members through food – sharing fresh vegetables and homemade cooking with each other, and showing each other their hospitality. She also goes out to collect



(Left) Chie Seki, from Thailand

(Right) Hayato is a third-year in a local high school.

vegetables with her husband, and especially looks forward to going with her high school-aged son Hayato in the future.

Local Traditional Arts – Sakiharai Purification Dance

Chie enjoys her daily life in the region with the support of the community. On the other hand, her son Hayato is learning a traditional dance, and is carrying on the traditions of the local area.

"I dance with my friends so it's fun and I have never thought about wanting to quit. It is really fun to dance and chant with everyone in unison." When Hayato first started learning the purification dance on the suggestion of his friends and other community members, he did not know about the meaning and history behind the dance. Now, after being taught by community members, he has decided that he wants to continue dancing into the foreseeable future.

Chie started taking an interest in local traditional arts when Hayato started the Sakiharai Purification Dance. There are dances in Thailand as well, and both Japanese and Thai cultures express meaning through their traditional dances. She takes pride in her son who is so interested in traditional dancing.

Through living in Iwate, Chie has seen the kindness of the community and wants to fit in here. This is not a unique case – rather, this is natural for anyone who chooses to make Iwate their home.

Anikawa Sakiharai Purification Dance

The Sakiharai Purification Dance is a traditional art of the Anigawa Village, which is in the Tateichi District of Hachimantai City (formerly Ashiro Town). The dance originated from village festival processions when troupe members would purify the streets and paths where the parade of festival floats would travel. There are eight different dances, including the "Dendeko" and "Tachiguruma." The dance is said to have evolved from the Yamabushi Kagura dance, and originally was performed in almost all the villages of the Tayama District of former Ashiro Town. Today, the dance remains only in the villages of Anikawa, Magata, Tayama and Orikabe-Hidoro.

Every year on the third Sunday of July, there is a festival at Anikawa-Inari Shrine, with periodic performances of the Sakiharai Purification Dance.

Anikawa Sakiharai Purification Dance Preservation Society Office
TEL: 0195-73-2586



The premiere showing in Morioka on Saturday December 11th, 2010

To a Place that Connects People

On the corner of Hanamaki's Kami-cho shopping district, there is a store with red paper lanterns suspended under its eaves. It seems to be right out of a different country. Inside of this store is Ken Minamoto, chatting cheerfully around a table with people who live in the area. Minamoto has become such a part of the fabric of life here that it seems like he has been living in the region since he was a child.

Creating a Store in Hanamaki

Last year marked the 20th year since I arrived in Japan. I came to Japan to study architecture at a Japanese university, and then returned to China to study business administration and received an MBA at Shanghai's Fudan University.

Once I graduated, I got a job at a Japanese company, but then I created my own company in order to make use of my life experiences and studies. My first step was the Genji Shoten Chinese Goods Store. Hanamaki was the city where my wife was from, but it also had no Chinese imports stores and I wanted to make a place where anyone can shop comfortably. Public transportation is excellent, and Hanamaki is rich in nature. On top of that, Hanamaki just has more heart than some larger cities.

Interacting with Family and the Community

My family opposed the idea of starting the store at first. However, I was confident because of my previous experiences in business and management, working next to the president of my previous Japanese firm. Somehow I managed to persuade them. Nowadays my whole family cooperates and helps me – my father-in-law advertises the store, my mother-in-law babysits the children, and my wife waits on customers.

When I opened the store, a lot of people in the area were a great help to me. There were people at the city hall and chamber of commerce, and the landlord who leased the building to me. I am only here today because of those who supported me. My landlord let me use things he had, such as a showcase to place merchandise. I am so grateful to people that always helped me out.

A Meeting Place, The Start of Exchange

On the day I opened the store, there were customers who came from very faraway places like Morioka and Sendai because they had read about it in the newspaper. There was even a Japanese

“Genji Shoten” Chinese Goods Store

Genji Shoten carries Chinese goods that are not easily available throughout Iwate, such as jinzhencai daylilies, pidan century eggs, and seasonings like Shaoxing wine, Doubanjiang chili paste, black rice vinegar, and Sichuan pepper. The store also has Chinese beer, juice and tea leaves, and various Chinese newspapers for Chinese residents who want to stay up to date on their home country.

〒025-0087 Iwate-ken, Hanamaki-shi, Kami-cho 2-1
TEL/FAX 0198-22-2200
E-mail: genjishoji@hotmail.co.jp

The owner, Ken Minamoto, whose special charm brings a smile to the neighborhood.



husband and Chinese wife who showed up. The husband told me he thought his wife would want to see items from her homeland and was thoughtful enough to travel for four hours to come to Hanamaki. I was so touched at how much he cared about his wife. I am also in an international marriage, and of course there are times I clash heads with my wife because of differences in customs, thinking and values. However I think having a gentle, loving heart and mutual understanding is vital when being with other people. Our worlds only narrow when we refuse to be around people just because they have some bad qualities. I was born in Shanghai but because both of my parents worked, I was sent off to the faraway countryside to be raised by my grandparents. My grandparents' house was filled with family, and everyone treated me kindly. It was only natural that you would help the people close to you when they were in need. I feel like lately, a lot of people really only care about themselves.

Currently my store runs periodic classes on Chinese language, calligraphy and cooking. These classes are free and anyone can attend. I am still studying calligraphy, but I also learn through teaching other people. I want the Chinese and Japanese people who attend my classes to all become friends, and for this exchange to keep spreading rapidly. It is vital to meet others in this world. I myself have met so many people through my store.

Future Plans

In the past, the Chinese attached great importance to healing illnesses with food. There were special food medicinal workers who were thought of as more important than doctors when it came to curing illnesses and preventing disease. I talk about this Chinese cultural tradition when customers come to my store, and I sell special Chinese goods that promote bodily health, such as jinzhencai daylilies and gouqizi wolfberry. My future plans include being a counselor and interpreter for Chinese trainee workers who live in Hanamaki, and helping promote places like Hanamaki Hot Springs to Chinese tourists. I would like to introduce Iwate culture to China and vice versa, in order to facilitate exchange between the two regions.



Genji Shoten Chinese Goods Store, beloved by neighborhood residents who often call it “the origin of health, fun, and happiness.”
(The character, “gen” means “origin” in Japanese)

A Russian Living in Iwate

A 33-year-old hailing from Saint Petersburg, Dmitri Korobov completed Iwate University's social sciences graduate research program and is now working in Morioka as the planning operations chief of a translation company. Along with translation and interpretation, Dmitri also works as a Russian language teacher. Three years ago he married a Japanese woman who was his classmate at Iwate University. He is currently living as an Iwate resident, enjoying Iwate's rich natural environment, culture and history.



Dmitri Korobov

On the summit of Mt. Iwate

First Impressions of Iwate

I had been very interested in Japan since childhood, so I went to a university that offered Japanese classes. At the time, I only studied Japanese because I enjoyed it, and had no idea I would be able to go to Japan.

When I went to university, there was still not much information regarding Japan, especially current-day Japan. When I became a 4th year in university I was set to go to Iwate Prefecture, but I had never even heard of Iwate before.

I arrived in Iwate in October 1998. Iwate is a cold region by Japanese standards, but it was actually much warmer than Russia. I had lived in Saint Petersburg, which is a large city with a population of over 4.5 million people, so I felt like I had come to a small town when I first arrived. It was quiet, and it did not seem like there were many people.

At the time, Russia had fallen into an economic crisis, and was being crushed by strong inflation. Consumer prices had rapidly risen. When I came to Iwate, it really hit home that Japan was a systematic society where a wealth of items could be bought anywhere.

Culture Shock

Since I have come to Iwate, I have realized that almost everything is different from Russia – buildings in town, people's clothes and appearances, even behavior. I had some difficulty adjusting for the first couple years. Everyday conversation was especially hard - I did not know very much Japanese at all since what I had studied so far had only been focused on Japanese grammar.

What surprised me the most about Japanese conversation were the head nods. It was very strange to me that Japanese people would nod their heads while listening to someone speaking. Conversing in Russia is completely different. I realized that this was the unique Japanese rhythm for conversations, but in Russia we do not nod while someone is speaking. Russians speak while looking into each other's eyes, and we do not make movements to indicate confirmation like the Japanese do.

For about 5-6 years, I consciously mimicked this. Now I automatically nod while speaking, and it is enough for people to tell me I seem more Japanese than Russian.

The first couple years were difficult because of the food. I could not read most kanji characters, and I had no idea what to buy at the store. So I would just buy based on what the packages looked

like. Once, I bought a packet of soba noodles since it looked edible. I thought it would be like spaghetti, but I failed quite magnificently once I tried to make it.

I was also intimidated by sushi. We do not eat anything raw in Russia – we boil, simmer and grill our food. So I found sushi to be terribly off-putting. It was a really big culture shock. Now, I eat everything. I even like tofu and mochi.

Working in Iwate

I started working for a company in Iwate in 2005. I started learning the meanings of words more precisely once I started working. However, traditions and ways of thinking regarding work are different from Russia so I also felt some stress. I felt that Japan was unique in that workers often work late and cannot take long periods of time off. But I have largely gotten used to this.

What was odd to me was the relationship hierarchy in business. The sempai-kohai (senior and junior workers) relationship system was strange. You have to use different language forms with colleagues senior to your position. However, in Russia you use the same language with everyone, regardless of differences in age.

I commute to work using a bicycle or bus. On weekends and holidays, I enjoy Iwate's magnificent natural environment. Iwate is surrounded by mountains, so I enjoy climbing mountains like Mount Iwate and Mount Himekami. I also like running along the side of the river.

I really enjoy Iwate and Morioka's traditional culture and old-style neighborhoods. I really want that culture to stay around forever. My lifestyle has gotten more Japanese-style, more Iwate-style since I have gotten married. Every style has a different culture and value system, and I have realized how interesting and vital it is to understand these other worlds.

Kuzumaki Kogen International Association

The Wine That Brings Us Together

Kuzumaki is a town of wine, milk and clean energy. The town used their wine connection to form an international exchange relationship with Bad Dürkheim, a town in the German state of Rheinland-Pfalz renowned for its wine and hot springs. We talked with Michiru Urushimakka and Takafumi Sekimura at their headquarters about the exchange.



The interviewees, Takafumi Sekimura (left) and Michiru Urushimakka

Exchange with Bad Dürkheim

Observation trips to Europe began in 1997, and in 1998 the trips were called "Journey of Wine and Milk," with participants visiting wineries in mainly Germany and dairy farms in other European countries. Subsequently, Iwate Prefecture introduced Kuzumaki to Bad Dürkheim, a town in Germany searching for a Japanese municipality to form a friendly relationship based on either wine or hot springs. International exchange soon began.

Bad Dürkheim is in the center of the German Wine Route of Rheinland-Pfalz, and produces many of Germany's wines. Its population is around 20,000 people, and every September it holds the biggest wine festival in the world, the Wurstmarkt. In September 2005, Mayor Lutz and 14 other workers, students and citizen volunteers came to Kuzumaki. They participated in the town's Autumn Festival parade, and were able to learn about Japanese cultural traditions such as wearing kimono and tea ceremony. The students attended local high school clubs such as judo and kendo, and enjoyed interacting with Kuzumaki residents.



The organization from Bad Dürkheim participated in the Kuzumaki Autumn Festival Parade in 2005.

Kuzumaki Kogen International Association Office

〒028-540 Iwate-ken, Iwate-gun, Kuzumaki-cho, Ekari 1-95-55
 Inside the Kuzumaki Kogen Food Processing Corporation
 TEL: 0195-66-3111 FAX:0195-66-3112

Efforts Toward Human Development

Every year, 4 or 5 local students participate in a research trip involving a visit to Bad Dürkheim schools and teaching origami and other Japanese traditional arts. They participate in homestays at the houses of volunteers of the exchange organization. They also perform in the parade of the largest wine fair in the world, the Wurstmarkt – they stand at the front of the parade with a big sign and wear their yukata summer kimonos while dancing.

The Japanese students are often surprised at how actively German students participate in class, and difficulties with the language barrier, food and daily traditions cause problems during their homestay. However, they get to see the charming town and surrounding nature, and even if there is a language barrier, homestay families and German schools always accept the Japanese students warmly. The students experience the kindness of the German people, and seem to slowly get used to things.

"I wish I could have spoken more. I want to learn to speak more German and English," say the returning Japanese students, smiles on their faces. Their families cannot hide their surprise – the students had gone their whole lives relying on their parents, but now, to their delight, their children have grown up to be active and helpful.

In the Future

Along with activities focusing on the exchange of wine culture such as European observation trips and studying with specialists, the Kuzumaki Kogen International Association is also interested in inviting over high school students from Bad Dürkheim.

One can really see the effects of exchange with Bad Dürkheim – decorative hanging baskets and charming street lamps hang within the Kuzumaki town center. There are also plans to construct a building with its design based on the largest barrel in the world, a famous artifact of Bad Dürkheim.

* 2010/2011 marks the 150th year of exchange between Japan and Germany

Keith Wyss

Iwate From Behind the Camera

Keith Wyss, a photographer from Sweden, is 21 years old. With his base in Ichinoseki, Keith travels around Iwate and Japan taking pictures of people and scenery. In November 2010, he held his first photo exhibition in Iwate entitled, "Travel Report from Europe," at the Aina International Exchange Center.

Keith Wyss' Homepage Right Light GmbH
<http://www.right-light.jp> (Japanese), <http://www.right-light.ch>



Taking Pictures

I have been taking pictures since I was around six years old. My subjects were mainly nature, animals, and plants, and when I turned 14, I received my own personal camera. It was a Nikon, which is a very expensive camera. However, I had not studied photography techniques formally. I practiced photography while attending an IT school and studying business management and economic structures.

Encountering Iwate

In 2010, after traveling within Japan, I decided that I would like to live here. I also thought that if I come here again I would like to visit Hiraizumi. I had friends I met in Ichinoseki who helped me, so I decided to live in Ichinoseki. Ichinoseki is not only close to Hiraizumi, but also a useful location for getting around the entire Tohoku region. It is also convenient because you can get to Tokyo within a few hours.

Everyday I face the difficulty of the Japanese language, but some of my friends introduced me to Japanese language lessons. Those lessons are really supporting my understanding of the language. I have a lot of classes where we mainly study vocabulary, so I hope I will be able to study various communication methods and that I can convey my feelings and thoughts better in the future.

An Unforgettable Photo



I have taken a lot of different photos throughout my life but I cannot decide which one is my best shot. However, the pictures I took of

Chusonji Temple's Yamayuri flowers in bloom were beautiful and I will never forget the impression they left on me. This is a very memorable picture. This flower displays a still and quiet grace, and I feel that it shows how precious the concept of peace is.

Outside of my Japanese classes, I am learning Japanese archery, judo, kendo, and calligraphy. I am especially interested in calligraphy because I get to study new Japanese kanji characters while also learning how to write them.

I would not be able to live here if not for my friends in Ichinoseki and Iwate. The connections I have made through traveling and photography have become even stronger.

I Love Iwate

I have been practicing photography with Hiraizumi as a base. While I am fascinated by the beautiful world of Chusonji Temple and Hiraizumi, the scenery of Mount Iwate and the islands of Miyako are gorgeous. I also have taken pictures of Morioka's Sansa Odori parade and other traditional arts, but the deep snowy season is especially wonderful. This place is great for winter sports. I enjoy the winter season while snowboarding.

I also love people, and "human emotion". The people here are very kind. I feel like there is no need to hold myself back.

I only found this out while visiting Hiraizumi, but I was surprised that there was Hiraizumi kaiseki, or Japanese traditional, cuisine. I love seafood like amadai horse-head fish, so I thought Hiraizumi food was delicious. I also think that they came up with various ideas to make the presentation of the food better.

Urban areas have their charms, but I think I really do love Iwate.

My Future Plans

I want to keep honing my photography skills in Iwate. I started a company so I want to showcase my pictures on the internet. I am thinking about making photos printable, and various ways of sending my pictures out. Aside from photography, I would also like to sell Swiss-made chocolate. It is different from Japanese chocolate, and has a softness to it. It is very tasty and you can enjoy the various flavors inside. I also plan to visit the many tourist spots and beautiful scenery that I have not been to yet. I am interested in going to Tono in Iwate, because I am curious about the kappa water spirits said to exist there.

2010 One World Festa in Iwate

Taking a Journey Around the World --- A Great Adventure at the "Mini Expo!"

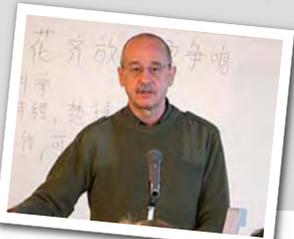
●UNICEF Sugoroku (Cooperation with: UNICEF Japan, Iwate Branch)

Learn about the problems of children within developing countries while playing sugoroku, a Japanese board game.



●10th Iwate Glocal College

"Japanese Studies from a Foreign Perspective"
~Japan and China's Comparative Cultures~
Lecturer: Uwe Richter
(Professor of Iwate Prefectural University)



● Exchange Party ~Autumn Prom~

Enjoy Dance, Food, and Exchange From All Over the World!

Participants wore colors that represented autumn, or traditional clothing.

□Dance

- Dance Show
(Hula dancing by a Japanese group, Uighur traditional dancing, Columbian La Pollera Colora dancing)
- World Dance Lessons
(Mexican and UK folk dancing, SouthAmerican Reggaeton)
- Freestyle with DJ Time
- At the end, everyone performed Morioka's Sansa Odori dance.

□Food : Food from all over the world was prepared, including the winner of the November 3rd "Fair Trade Cooking Contest," the spicy ground beef recipe using fair trade spices.

□Everyone had fun interacting with each other while dancing and eating great food.



The "Mini Expo" is a miniature version of the Shanghai 2010 Expo.

Date: November 28th, 2010
Place : Aiina 4th&5th Floor

The 5th "One World Festa in Iwate" was a cultural exchange event between foreign residents and Japanese residents of Iwate. It was also an opportunity to think about international exchange and multiculturalism. This time, many foreign residents of the region and volunteers cooperated with international exchange organizations to hold the event.

Program

- From Foreign Residents of Iwate "Booths of 20 Foreign Countries"
- Display of International Exchange Organizations
- 128th Cultural Exchange with Foreigners Event - ChatLand "A Foreign Perspective! Iwate is □*□..."
- Japanese Traditional Experience Corner
- International Understanding Workshop
- Kid's Land
~Playing With Toys From All Over the World
- Fair Trade Café
~Snacks from All Over the World!
- Iwate Glocal College
- Exchange Party "Autumn Prom"

●Fair Trade Cafe (Cooperation with: Fair Trade Iwate)



●Foreign Country Booths ~World Land~

Travel around the world, and fill out your stamp books!



● Japanese Traditional Experience Corner

- Calligraphy (Freestyle)
(Instructor: Yasuko Ito)
Enjoy calligraphy
- no instructions needed.
- Tea Ceremony
(Cooperation with:
Japanese Language Class,
Iwate "Wa/ Harmony")
- Origami



●Kid's Land

Children enjoyed foreign picture book readings and "World Toys and Crafts."



Thank you so much
for coming to the festa.

Editor's Notes

- ▶ I covered junior high school with Chinese foreign students, and the high school research trips to Germany, and I was deeply moved by how much more popular international exchange is now compared to when I was in school. (E)
- ▶ Once I gathered up my courage and dived into a new situation, there was a world full of hope awaiting me. These days we know of the word "sympathy" but we have forgotten what it means. It just may be the keyword for solving almost all of our problems. (non)
- ▶ When I went as a cameraman to cover the story, I met the two Chinese foreign students in junior high school and I was very nostalgic. It was also fun to hear about the differences between Japanese and Chinese schools. (Sei Ching)
- ▶ I was able to meet a lot of wonderful people and experience Iwate's many charms. I was able to reflect on things as well, and I would like to use these experiences in my future interests and pursuits. (KE)
- ▶ I realized the joys and hurdles in creating articles about people and interactions. I was completely absorbed in writing these stories. I want to always remember how much I enjoyed this experience. (Toyama)
- ▶ When I heard Dmitri's story, I felt like I had found the key for understanding what is happening in the world right now. A man who truly understands multiculturalism. I'm grateful for having met him in Iwate. I'm also grateful for getting to write a story on a young person. (Mori)
- ▶ When you have a community of people who all have different cultures and ways of thinking, there probably is not one single method for everyone to be happy and friendly with each other. I think we need to navigate between acceptance and rejection, and between standing our ground and going with the flow. It would be nice to properly respect each other's boundaries and encourage a multicultural society. But it is tough. (Su)
- ▶ The earthquake struck right in the middle of proofreading this magazine, and I had to quickly change some parts of the original manuscript. I would like to express my condolences to the victims of the quake and tsunami. As we received messages and charity donations at the Association, I realized that everyone was in harmony in thinking of Iwate. Even if our cultures are different, we all live in Iwate. Let's work together to rebuild our prefecture. (Ta)

English

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from Morioka JR Station
 - 8 Minutes by car
from the Tohoku Expressway



Editor Iwate international Exchange editorial committee

Editor in Chief Atsuko Tanifuji

Editing Committee Sanae Endo, Fujio Omori, Rieko Komukai
Nobuko Sawadate, Izumi Suzuki, Sei Ching
Azusa Toyama, Yutaka Hayashi

Translation Amanda Crisp, Roly Callaghan

Publisher

財団法人 岩手県国際交流協会 Iwate International Association

Aiina 5F, 1-7-1Morioka Eki Nishi Dori, Morioka, Iwate 020-0045
020-0045 岩手県盛岡市盛岡西通1-7-1アイーナ5F

TEL:019-654-8900 FAX:019-654-8922

<http://www.iwate-ia.or.jp/> Email : kikanshi@iwate-ia.or.jp