

International Center Newsletter

China Medical University Short-term Exchange Program - Trainees from Taiwan



From 27 January to 5 February, 10 students and 5 accompanying school staff from China Medical University (Taiwan) visited Kitami Institute of Technology on a short-term study tour. Coming to Japan for the first time, the students were full of expectations and excitement. The program included lectures on Japanese language and culture as well as bio-environment and SVBL (satellite venture business laboratory), visits to different laboratories and a variety of field trips to different facilities. The guests also participated at our Center's "International C Hour" where they had the chance to experience making "Maki-sushi" and enjoy their time with our international and Japanese students as well as Kitami citizens. One highlight for the guests was the winter of Kitami. Coming from Taiwan, most of the participants had never experienced snow.

They could do this in full at the winter festival "Discover the New Northern Continent! Attaka Abashiri" at Lake Abashiri, where they especially enjoyed sliding down an ice slide. To learn more about the nature of Hokkaido and the importance of the Okhotsk Sea, the students joined a drift ice cruise ("Aurora") at Abashiri. They also visited Iozan, a volcano spitting out yellow sulphurous jets, where they experienced the beautiful scenery and "very special" smells. After a farewell party with everyone enjoying Kitami BBQ, the participants left for Sapporo. During this study tour the students were able to experience the charm of Hokkaido and Kitami. We hope that exchange programs like this will encourage students to return to Kitami and participate in our study programs for international students.



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Study Tour to Germany



Kenta Arao
3rd year, Civil Engineering

The 3-week study tour to Germany had great influence on my ideals and values as well as my way of life. In Germany, I had to take care of daily things by myself, starting with life in the dormitory. Everything in Germany was new and very exciting, sometimes even a shock. For example, when I went to the supermarket, I found out that beer is cheaper than water and that bags with sweets and snacks are very big. So every trip to the supermarket was fun and exciting. And also the meals at the

restaurants were very different to Japan. First of all, the portions are huge. I was never able to finish the whole plate by myself. Secondly, we had to pay a tip to the waiter at every restaurant. However, I was never sure about how much to give as tip. The tip calculation each time in the restaurant gave me the most headaches. Although this rather short experience in Germany was totally different from my life in Japan, every day was very meaningful and fruitful. I have learned a lot during my stay in Germany – not only the language, but about the cultural differences and how to communicate with other people.

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Yuka Ota
1st year, Mechanical Engineering
I have never been abroad before. So when I entered university, I had the strong wish to experience another country and widen my horizon, which is why I participated in this study tour. The university offered tours to Germany, Canada and China. As I am interested in environmental research, I decided to choose Germany, which is famous for actively engaging in environmental issues. Before leaving for my first trip abroad I was worried about many things, but once I was in Germany, I met many other Japanese students who took part in the program at Freiburg University, so I felt much easier.

During this 3-week stay, I didn't only get the chance to practice German language outside of the classroom by going shopping or eating in a restaurant, but it was also a great opportunity to directly get in touch with German culture, the German way of living and their ideals and values. It helped me see and understand cultural and other differences between Germany and Japan. 3 weeks is only a short time in a whole life. But to me these 3 weeks were filled with valuable experiences I would have never had staying in Japan. And I believe that these experiences will be very useful for my future choices. If I get another opportunity to go abroad to learn something, I would definitely like to join again.

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Sachie Suginishi
1st year, Biotechnology, Environmental Chemistry and Materials
Already 8 months have passed since my trip to Germany. But I remember everything as if it were yesterday. And I realized that language is not something that you learn only in the classroom. Of course, it is important to learn the grammar. However, what I think is even more important is the joy you experience when you actually use the language and enjoy having conversations. You can have conversations in Japanese language with only 220 million people. But with English you can speak with people all around the world. During my stay in Germany, even when I understood the questions I was asked in German language, I often decided to reply in English to avoid misunderstandings due to my still very low German level. And this

is when I realized how great English language is. I have to admit that I am not very proud of my progress and improvement in German language during those 3 weeks. But I am very proud of the many experiences I was able to make. I was touched by the kindness of people, I was happy when I was able to have conversations and when I was understood, I met many new people, and even though sometimes I was missing words to express myself, it was amazing to see that we still could communicate somehow. I was very happy to have had the chance to visit Europe, a place where you cannot go anytime or that easily. I hope that I can go to Europe again some other time and have even more conversations in German and English with many people.

Nicht vergessen, bitte !

Kunihide Takahashi
1st year, Mechanical Engineering

The first thing I realized during my stay in Germany was how low my language skills were. Before arriving in Germany, I was sure that I would be able to somehow communicate at least in English. But, when arriving I realized that even after learning German in class, when trying to apply the language, words just wouldn't come out. And to be honest, it was even hard to form proper English sentences. Since not getting the chance to practice any other language regularly in daily life than Japan's official language Japanese, it was obvious that I would have problems when suddenly trying to speak another language. In comparison, Europeans travel a lot within Europe, so you can also hear for example Italian or French during your stay. With so many

people from different countries, it seemed to me that Europeans don't have trouble speaking more than one language. In Japan, the only opportunity to speak English for me was at school. With only a few times practice at school, it is no surprise that I wasn't able to communicate properly in Germany. As Germany has no earthquakes like Japan, there are many old historical buildings, which I very much enjoyed looking at. But everything that I could have enjoyed 100%, I was only able to enjoy about 50% because I couldn't read the signs or understand what people said. There were many moments during my stay where I repeatedly thought how much all my pleasure would have increased if I were able to understand more. For this reason I have decided to study even harder by myself to improve my language skills and be able to travel overseas on my own.



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Seiya Takeda
3rd year, Civil Engineering

During the study tour I had German language lessons in the mornings, and in the afternoons I sometimes did sightseeing on my own or I joined the recreation program organized by Freiburg University. On the weekends I took part in one-day trips to France and Switzerland.

We were 15 students in the language class, all Japanese. However, the lesson was performed in German language only, and the teachers made us actively participate using German language and reading a lot of texts. The class was very different to German language lessons in Japan and it was easier for me to learn the language. The townscape was very harmonious with the buildings showing a sense of unity in

color and shape, a very typical European atmosphere. It was very beautiful. There was also a little brook flowing through the city and children would be playing in the water. And even during the weekdays, the town was full of activity with many people going out or just taking a stroll. Unfortunately, I got sick during the stay and had to go to a doctor to receive medical treatment, which again was, let's say, valuable personal experience. In addition, I was able to get to know many people, eat a lot of German food, and enjoy many other new experiences in a totally new and different environment. And even though I was a little nervous at the beginning about my first trip abroad, it was a very successful study tour, which I will never forget.



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Kohei Fukunishi
3rd year, Materials Science

I participated in the study tour to Germany, because I have always been interested in European culture and life, and I was looking for some new challenges. This was my first time ever abroad, so everything was new to me and I was very anxious at the beginning. I will never forget the fast beating of my heart when I went shopping directly upon arrival at Frankfurt airport all by myself. But, as soon as I recognized that even with my poor English and German language abilities, I was able to somehow communicate, my worries were swiped away immediately - and my curiosity about this foreign culture was piqued. From then on I enjoyed every single day in Germany. And in the twinkling of an eye the 1-month study tour was over. The

trip stimulated me a lot and I made many new experiences. Experiencing the frustration of not being able to communicate properly with the local people because of my poor language abilities was one of the biggest. But this experience showed me the importance of languages and motivated me to improve my language abilities to be able to communicate. I am now considering studying abroad for a longer period. In addition to meeting many local people, I was also able to make friends with other Japanese students participating in the program from all over Japan. Being not the only Japanese makes this study tour very attractive for students who have never been abroad or don't feel confident with their language abilities. I recommend this tour for anyone who has interest in abroad or simply is bored of daily life and wants to try something new. You won't regret it!



International C Hour



On Tuesday, January 31st, the last International C Hour of the academic year 2011 was held. The topic this time was “Maki-sushi” in Japanese, which means “rolled sushi” in English. First, Japanese students from OFIC gave a presentation on the origins and types of Sushi as well as on how to make Sushi. Then Yuta Yoshida, a student working part-time at a sushi-go-round restaurant in Kitami city, performed how to make rolled sushi. The international students were very impressed by Yuta Yoshida’s quick movements preparing 1 rolled sushi within 30 seconds. After that it was the international students’ turn to make rolled sushi and there was a long line of students who wanted to give it a try. At the end everyone had a great time eating the various self-made rolled sushi and enjoying conversations with each other.



Course-Completion Ceremony for Short-term Students

On Thursday, 9 February, the International Center organized the Course-Completion Ceremony as Farewell Event for the 8 short-term students leaving in March. The participants included all 8 students as well as the staff of the International Center. Each student received a course completion certificate from Professor Takahashi, Director of the International Center before students and staff gave touching speeches. The Ceremony ended with a farewell photo slideshow including lots of memories of the whole year. The whole staff at the International Center wishes the students all the best and we hope to see you here in Kitami again someday.



Farewell Message from Yoko Aratani-Sensei



8 years passed in a flash...
Encouraged by international students with eyes sparkling of energy and joy, receiving power from Japanese students full of high aspirations, supported by so many kind people of this area, receiving help of my very skilled colleagues, and blessed with a kind boss, I was able to enjoy every day of my work. I will remember each single encounter and memories I have. Thank you very much!

Study Tour to Mombetsu City

Invited by Mombetsu City, 25 students participated at the annual study tour to Mombetsu City from 19 - 20 February. On the first day the students attended the Opening Ceremony of the 27th International Symposium on Okhotsk Sea & Sea Ice held at the Mombetsu City Meeting Hall. Here Cao Ying, doctoral student in medical engineering gave an opening address as representative of all international students. On the second day, the students joined the Academic Opening Ceremony and Special Lecture at Mombetsu City Culture Hall in the morning before visiting various city facilities in the afternoon. At the Okhotsk Sea Ice Museum of Hokkaido and

the Okhotsk Tower, the students were able to learn about drift ice, animals and plants in the Okhotsk Sea and experiencing -20 degrees Celsius. At the Okhotsk Tokkari Center the students then had the great chance to watch a seal performance and even touch the seals. And last but not least the students joined a drift ice cruise on the icebreaker "Garinko-go II", where they were lucky to see a lot of drift ice. While the international students had a pleasant time during the study tour, they were able to deepen their knowledge not only about the importance of the Okhotsk Sea, but also nature and life of Okhotsk area.



Farewell Message from Nobuo Murai, Section-Vice Chief

Dear International Students,
I will retire at the end of March. The first time I took charge of international affairs was from April 1997 to March 2000 as chief clerk for international students. The number of international students at that time was 27-33 students, and I was able to remember each single student's name and other information. On study tours by bus we always fitted on one bus. The second time I got assigned to international affairs was in January 2009 until today - for 3 years and 3 months. At that time the number of international students had al-

ready exceeded 100. During this whole time it was amazing to see the continuous development of the International Center and I am very proud that even with my limited skills I was able to be part of it and support it. From April though I will be reemployed and will be working at the Student Support Division. So, whenever you see me, please don't hesitate to speak to me. Thank you very much to all of you for your kindness and the wonderful memories!!



International Students Evening

On 5 March the International Center hosted its biggest annual event, the “International Students Evening” at the KIT Atrium. 90 guests from in and out of university gathered to celebrate the graduation and course completion of 11 international students this academic year. The official ceremony started with an opening speech by President Ayuta. Next, Mohamad Firdaus Bin Basrawi who just received his doctorate degree in Cold Regions, Environmental and Energy Engineering gave a speech on behalf of all graduating international students. Each student then was introduced and received a university souvenir from President Ayuta. After the official ceremony, the evening continued in a relaxed atmosphere with a photo slideshow showing the many memories of each graduating student. The rest of the evening included wonderful song performances of international and Japanese students as well as local citizens creating a harmonious atmosphere. The International Students Evening ended with a touching farewell photo slideshow of two departing staff members, Yoko Aratani and Nobuo Murai.

♪*Congratulations*♪

Undergraduate Course

Arif Hazwan Bin Ab Wahab

Mohamad Fadil Bin Ismail

Li Ao

Sun Shouqi

Zhang Chi

Geng Di

Geng Jin Tao

Li Shunyao

Master Course

Zhang Xhu

Doctoral Course

Okedu Kenneth L.

Mohamad Firdaus Bin Basrawi



Calendar

4/9 (Mo)	Tutor Guidance (Short-term Students)
4/9 (Mo)	Orientation (Short-term Students)
4/12 (Thu)	Tutor Guidance (Full-time Students)
4/12 (Thu)	Orientation (Full-time Students)
4/19 (Thu)	Information Session on Language Study Tours
4/27 (Fri)	International C Hour
5/30 (Wed)	Welcome Party for International Students