

INTERNATIONAL CENTER

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In March of this year, six KIT students stayed at Harbin Engineering University, one of our partner institutions in China, to study Chinese. For two of the students it was their second time to study at the university. Here, Nana Kajihara, one of the repeaters, writes about her 3 weeks' experience of studying with students from other countries.

Knowing Myself in China

Materials Science and Engineering
Kajiwara Nana

My second study tour to Harbin made me realize the importance of language skills even more than my first trip. It also made me feel what different attitudes toward language learning the students from other countries have, compared with those of Japanese students.

Last year, I was in Class A (the lowest level), which consisted of only fellow KIT students who had no experience of studying Chinese. Consequently, whether I was fortunate or not, I did not get to feel what they call a language barrier while in class. This year, however, I was in Class B, where there were only two Japanese students including myself, and all the rest were from various countries such as Thailand, Korea, Russia,

Ghana and so on. The only common language was our limited Chinese. I was first at a loss, and then worried. The class instruction was given exclusively in Chinese and I could not read or speak Chinese well enough to keep up with the class. After a tense 60 minutes I was often totally exhausted physically and almost numb mentally.

It was my fault; I could not continue to study the language in Japan after the previous year's program. It was therefore with a lot of hesitation and worries that I decided to take part in the program again this year. On the first day, I had to attend the class right after I received the textbooks. It meant that I had no

time to prepare in advance, which made my worries worse. I opened the textbooks, praying that it would not be too challenging, and was stunned. It was written all in Chinese characters! The learner-friendly, Class A textbooks had what is called "pinyin," phonetic alphabets that show the reading of each character. The Class B textbooks, on the other hand, had no such reading aids. I was willing to endure the shame of not being able to read, but could not help feeling very sorry for my partners when the teachers had us work in pairs, which happened quite often, unfortunately. When my partners saw me struggle, however, they were usually so kind and patient that they taught me how to



read, or wrote pinyin in my textbook. How wonderful to receive such kindness! It was actually these classmates that gave me the strange confidence that I would be able to survive the 3 weeks' program. Their textbooks were always full of notes. Seeing their eagerness to study, I became determined to study hard.

Maybe it is just my classmates back in Japan, but it seems to me that many Japanese students have lost their desire to study -to study not because of pressure or necessity but from sheer desire to study. What was, after all, our purpose of study, I wonder? It should not have been to enter college, to pass exams and earn credits. And what was our purpose of entering college? Certainly not to spend time at pachinko parlors! In reality, however, some of us have become unable to think deeply. We just let time pass by, telling ourselves that in the end it



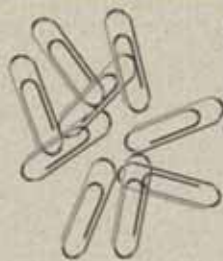
should be all right. When criticized, we become defensive and complain. I was ashamed that I had come to think nothing of such a reality for many college students. I felt totally inferior in both my attitudes toward study and the results that I had achieved. I found myself unable to proudly announce that I was a college student and that I had studied this and that.

But oh, how lucky I was to have had a chance to realize that! Now I am greedy - greedy in my study, my activities, hobbies, and in my life in general. From the second day on in Harbin, I reviewed my notes and studied in advance, and came to understand more and more. Speaking was hard till the end, but the classes were fun because of my energetic classmates.

One more thing that I noticed: My classmates were all very simple people. They study because they want to. They play when they want to. If they have opinions, they speak out; they do not hide it when they do not

understand. When someone understands something that she could not understand before, they are happy as if it were their own problem. They seem very free and lively. I think it is great because I often find myself thinking too much, becoming indecisive and unable to take action. As a college student, I am allowed opportunities to try various things! My classmates gave me a new desire to do what I want to do and enjoy it. I want to be simple and live simply.

Last but not the least, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all the people who helped and supported this program throughout our stay. Thank you, especially, my dear classmates with whom I studied for the wonderful three weeks.



International Flavor at KIT Festival

生け花集會

Sat, June 19th ~ Sun, June 20th, 2010

This year again, many international students were active at the KIT Festival, giving an international flavor to the event. In the square outside, several international booths were opened under the midsummer sunshine.



お茶会

The menus included Chinese dumplings, Korean pancakes and meat stew, Vietnamese noodles and spring rolls, and Taiwanese dessert. Inside the building, a Japanese-style tea was offered in cooperation with the tea ceremony club of a local high school. The room was nicely decorated with the flower arrangements that ten international students had arranged that morning in a class offered by local teachers. Among the participants were several international students dressed in kimono, who enjoyed their moments of being Japanese ladies.

Comments



Pham Xuanquyen
...from Vietnam

There are only three of us from Vietnam here, so we were a bit concerned about how we were going to do this. But with the kind helping hands of two Mongolian students and one Japanese student, we were able to manage our booth. Kitami is not so big but we were very happy to have many people come and try our food! I hope that receiving the special award meant that they all liked it!



Lee Yuri
...from Korea

It was hard working for two days without rest! I was very glad, though, that many people were interested in our cuisine. I enjoyed the food of other nationalities, too. It was also great to wear a kimono! I had long wanted to wear one since I saw one in a movie. The weather was a bit too warm to wear one, but it was great to have that chance.



Yang Liu
...from China

I love flowers. I love them so much that I once drew flowers on the wall of my room in China. So I enjoyed every single step of arranging flowers. And kimono! I have had a great interest in it and even searched for information on it on the internet before coming to Japan. I wanted to look more Japanese than anyone else... did I succeed?

《Report on Snow Sculpting Contest》

@Thursday, June 3rd

For the International "C" Hour in June, Takehiro Yuki, a graduate student in Materials Science, gave a presentation on his trip to Harbin Engineering University, China, where he participated in the International University Student Snow Sculpting Contest. Takehiro has participated in this event for 2 consecutive years. In the first half of the presentation, he showed pictures from the first time, when his team won the third prize. The latter half of the presentation was about their struggle of working in the record-breaking low temperature of almost minus 30°C even during the day. The attendants were impressed by the team's patient efforts of carving a solidly pressed huge snow block into a sculpture.



CALENDAR

August & September

- July 30 — August 6 Final exams
- August 6 International "C" Hour
- August 7 — September 23 Summer vacation
- September 24 — 29 Intensive classes & supplementary classes

- ☆ Study Trips during Summer Vacation ☆
- Tamkang University (Taipei)
August 8 — 28, 10 students
- Humber College (Toronto)
September 3 — 27, 6 students