

# International Center Newsletter Kitami Institute of Technology

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June 2014

## Welcome Party for International Students [Mon, 2 June]

### Welcome to KIT!

The 2014 1<sup>st</sup> semester welcome party for the newly arrived 26 international students was held again in its traditional BBQ style at hot temperatures of 30 degrees C. The 137 participants including international students, Japanese students, faculty and staff enjoyed the outside BBQ, eating, chatting, laughing and making new friends. The evening started with a welcome speech and a toast by the University President, Professor Takahashi, wishing the new international students all the best and success for their studies at KIT. The students enjoyed Hokkaido style BBQ grilling lamb meat and vegetables, which is called 'Genghis Khan'. In between, each newly arrived international student gave a brief self-introduction and a few participants gave performances. Mr. Tanaka, a new staff member of the International Center played a Japanese folk song called 'Ringo Bushi' on his shamisen, a three-stringed Japanese instrument. The wonderful performances of all those talented persons made this year's event again very entertaining. And the new students together with the other participants seemed to enjoy the party very much.



## Plant Study & Hiking Tour [Fri, 13 June]

### Getting in Touch with Nature at the "Bihoro Midori-no-mori (Green Village)" Forest Park Campsite in Bihoro Town

On 13 June Professor Yamagishi, former Director of the International Center, took a group of 28 students on a hiking tour to "Bihoro Midori-no-mori (Green Village)" Forest Park Campsite in Bihoro Town to learn about plants in this region. On the way to the Green Village Professor Yamagishi told the participants on the bus about the food self-support ratio of Japan and the world, forest industry in Bihoro and so on. But unfortunately it rained all morning that day, and the plant study tour outside in the morning was cancelled. Instead, the students visited the Bihoro museum also located in the Midori-no-mura and learned about the town's history and nature. They were impressed by the exhibits, such as dioramas of the Ainu people and models of various plants and animals near the waterside. After visiting the museum, everyone enjoyed the delicious Genghis Khan BBQ in a lodge. As it stopped raining in the afternoon, Professor Yamagishi conducted the plant study tour outside. Students learned about different plants, also those which they actually see in daily life, but just never pay close attention to. The trip was kindly supported by the Soroptimist International Kitami and we would like to express our gratitude here to the Organization.





## The KIT Festival [Sat, 21 June – Sun, 22 June]

### Japanese Tea Ceremony

At this year's KIT Festival, a Japanese tea ceremony was held over two days, which was organized in collaboration with the Tea Ceremony Club of Kitami Fuji Girls' Senior High School. More than 100 people visited the event and enjoyed the world of tea ceremony. Some international students were nervous and excited when experiencing this tradition for the very first time. The tea ceremony is one of Japan's traditional cultural practices, and it is deeply connected with the Zen, or Buddhism. Senno-Rikyu, who is considered the historical figure with the most profound influence on Japanese tea ceremony, explained four basic ideas and seven procedures regarding a traditional tea ceremony. One can say that throughout its long history, the tea ceremony has shaped the fundamental principle and way of life of Japanese people.

### Flower Arrangement Workshop

The International Center organizes an annual workshop for Japanese flower arrangement ('ikebana') at the first day of the KIT Festival especially for international students. First the students watched the teacher arrange the flowers and learned about the basics in flower arrangement. Then each of them chose plants and vases to create their own work of art using their imagination. At the end of the workshop all participants voted for their favorite flower arrangement. The first prize went to Ma Jiayou from China. She said she tried to arrange small and beautiful flowers in a lively way. She was very happy about getting the first prize.



### Kimono Wearing Class

On the second day of the KIT Festival, the students got the wonderful chance to experience another Japanese tradition, which was wearing a Japanese 'kimono'. In total 13 students enjoyed the experience of wearing a real kimono, walking around on campus in it and taking many photos. All students looked amazing in the traditional wear and attracted a lot of attention of other visitors. Choe Sojeong from Korea said she felt a little uncomfortable in kimono because the 'obi' belt was too tight and it was hard to walk. But she was very happy that everyone around her told her how beautiful she looked in the kimono.



## Gyeongsang National University Short-term Exchange Program – Trainees from Korea [Thu, 17 July – Thu, 24 July]



From 17 July (Thu) to 24 July (Thu), 10 students and 3 accompanying school staff, including the Dean, Professor Kim, from the College of Engineering, Gyeongsang National University (Korea) visited Kitami Institute of Technology on a short-term study tour. The guests joined a facility tour of the university, took lectures on Japanese language, culture and food and health. In addition, they did homestay in Kitami for 3 days. The students from GNU tried to actively communicate with Japanese students and Kitami citizens. Most students couldn't speak Japanese, but they communicated with the other students and participants in English and sometimes in Korean. Japanese students also didn't know how to talk to Korean students at first, but after loosening up and relaxing, sometimes with the help of alcohol, they got closer. In Korea, there is a custom of drinking a beer cocktail called 'boilermaker' (beer with a shot of 'shochu' liquor) at one gulp. It is easy to get drunk for persons who don't drink much, so it is necessary to be careful when drinking this cocktail.

But this time all students were careful and they enjoyed having a drink, singing, dancing and playing games together. This study tour provided also an opportunity for the faculty and staff of KIT to exchange views and ideas with the members of GNU. These days you can see political disputes between Japan and Korea, which is why it is very important to promote exchange programs like this where students and staff can deepen their mutual understanding and build new and strong friendships. This will lead to a new good relationship between Japan and Korea and can open a new era.



## Kitami Dance Parade 【Friday, 18 July】

On Friday, 18 July, the students of Gyeongsang National University participated together with university faculty, staff, Japanese students and international students of KIT as KIT team at the annual Dance Parade of Kitami city. It was raining before the parade, but when the parade was about to start, it stopped raining. The participants dance to the so-called 'Kitami-bayashi', a traditional folk song arranged with samba rhythm. The students of KIT and the students of GNU dressed in traditional 'yukata' and danced for hours experiencing a summer festival you can only experience here in Japan. The crowd cheered as the parade dancers passed, creating a wonderful and exciting atmosphere and developing a sense of unity between all. The students parted promising each other to meet again here next year.



## Course-Completion Ceremony for Short-term Exchange Students



【Wednesday, 30 July】

This semester, 10 short-term exchange students successfully completed their study period of 6-12 months at KIT. The ceremony started with the awarding of the completion certificates on stage to each single student by Dr. Natalie Konomi, Director of the International Center. Before coming on stage to receive their certificates, every student seemed very nervous, but once they accepted the certificate you could see big smiles on their faces. The awarding ceremony was followed by congratulation speeches of faculty and staff praising the hard work of the international students. Next, one representative student of each partner university gave a speech talking about their experiences during this exchange program. Wang Cijyun (Taiwan) said that he was very happy to come to KIT and that he was very lucky to make many new friends. The International Center wishes the students who will be leaving Japan soon, all the best and lots of success in their future.

### Study Abroad Experience in Poland 【June】

Takeru Hotta (4<sup>th</sup> year undergraduate student, Biotechnology and Environmental Chemistry) studied in Poland for 5 months, from September 25, 2013 to February 28, 2014. He said the most difficult thing was to give presentations in English in front of his classmates. But he did a good job and got all his necessary credits there. He told the audience how blessed he was being able to make many good friends and how much he enjoyed his time in Poland and other parts of Europe. After he came back to Japan, friends from Poland visited him immediately in Japan and he took them to Kyoto.

### International C Hour

### Flowing Noodles (Nagashi Somen) 【July】

This year again the annually event of "Flowing Noodles" (Nagashi Somen) was held in the courtyard of the international lounge. With 20 degrees C outside it was a little chilly for July, but the event attracted again many students and local citizens, especially with smaller children. The participants tried to "catch" the noodles flowing down a half-cut bamboo pipe, and when successful dipped them in a special sauce and enjoyed the taste. It was a lot of fun and an unforgettable day for everyone.

### University Calendar (August – September)

Thu, 31 July – Thu, 7 August	1 <sup>st</sup> semester examination period
Fri, 8 August – Tue, 23 September	Summer holidays
Sun, 10 August – Tue, 12 August	Youth of World 2014 (National Taisetsu Youth Friendship Center)

Fri, 8 August – Sun, 31 August	Short-Term Language Program in Germany (Albert-Ludwigs Universität Freiburg)
Sat, 23 August – Sun, 28 September	Short-Term Language Program in Australia (The University of Queensland, Brisbane)
Thu, 28 August – Sat, 13 September	English Study Tour in Australia (The University of Sydney, Center for English Teaching)

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