



Takarabako

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Feature

The Deai Photo Essay Cafe Japan Visitation Program

The *Deai*—Real Encounter—Brought by a Photo Resource

The “Deai Photo Essay Cafe” website, launched in October 2004, is a place where students from all over the world can communicate through photo essays they create themselves. The project is based on “Deai: The Lives of Seven Japanese High School Students,” a photo, video, and text resource, focusing on the lives and personalities of seven real Japanese high school students.



Deai: The Lives of Seven Japanese High School Students

The goal of this project is to have secondary school students who have studied using Deai reflect about themselves based on what they felt or thought about in connection with the stories and messages of the featured Japanese students. By publishing the entries via the Deai Photo Essay Cafe website, the project also seeks to give students using Deai a chance to get to know one another.



Deai Photo Essay Cafe website

By the deadline in March 2005 photo essays had been received from 157 junior and senior high school students in Australia, Canada, China, Korea, New Zealand, the U.K., the U.S., and Vietnam where the Deai Kit had been distributed.

In July 2005, with the cooperation of the high schools in Japan that have helped TJF with its programs related to English, Chinese, and Korean language teaching and international understanding education, TJF organized a Japanese reception team consisting of seven high school students. These students selected seven of the photo-essay contributors they wanted to meet in person. These seven students visited Japan November

17 through 27 and participated in a special program with the Japanese reception team. They went to Okinawa’s Izena Island, home of Deai student Tamaki Shun’ichi, where they worked on joint photo essay projects. Returning to Tokyo, the seven visitors stayed with the families of the Japanese students and attended classes at their high schools.

The Japan Visitation Program is a firsthand experience version of the Deai project. The participants visited Izena Island and met local people living there. They decided on a presentation theme and worked together to create a photo essay. Our hope was to provide an opportunity for each student, by taking part in activities with other participants, to reflect upon themselves and experience the process of adjustment to and interaction between different values and perspectives, as well as to learn other languages. In this issue, we will report on the people and lifestyles of Izena Island as the fourteen students found them, as well as the students’ projects, research process, and what they thought and reflected on in the process. Let us see how the fourteen students, transcending differences in language and culture, got to know one another and what they thought about through their encounters with an Okinawan island and its people.



The 14 participants from Australia, China, Korea, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Japan



Participants try out the drums along with the members of the Izena Shoan drum troupe

This issue is a special 20-page issue featuring the “Deai Photo Essay Cafe” invitation-to-Japan program carried out in November 2005.

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The Japan Forum
Shinjuku Dai-ichi Seimei Bldg. 26F
2-7-1 Nishishinjuku, Shinjuku-ku,
Tokyo 163-0726, JAPAN
Phone: 81-3-5322-5211
Fax: 81-3-5322-5215
E-mail: takarabako@tjf.or.jp
http://www.tjf.or.jp