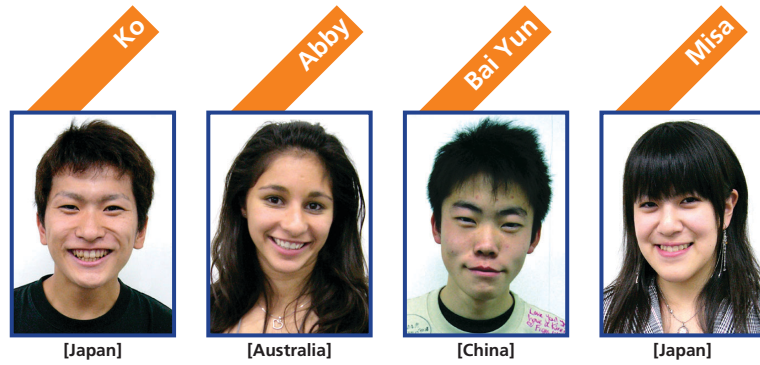


Group A

It's fun getting to know each other because we're all so different



Choosing a topic for our presentation

Naka Bokunen's talk about Okinawan graves and Okinawan attitudes towards death (see p. 4) left a strong impression on us, and we decided to make it our project topic. When we found out that even among just the members of our group, we had different attitudes towards death, we decided this would be an interesting topic to explore.



Naka Bokunen speaks in front of a grave.

Free research

☀ We asked Teru-san to show us his grave and give us an explanation. At Teru-san's uncle's house, we heard about their views about death, as well as about the traditions they observe for funerals and memorial services. Regarding the afterlife, Teru-san's aunt said, "When you die, that's the end."

☀ We interviewed a woman at a store near our inn. She said "In Okinawan culture, graves are considered more important than regular homes. There are a lot of people who spend lots of money maintaining their graves. The houses we live in now are temporary homes. Our graves will be our homes for eternity, so we make them big. Even after we die, I believe that we have families, and we work and lead normal lives in the afterlife."



This is what we discussed

Traditionally in Okinawa, it is believed that when people die, they do not end there. Rather, death is a stage that must be passed in order for people to go on to the next stage. It was the first time the four of us had heard such stories, and we realized that people have different beliefs depending on their environment. The four of us grew up in different environments, so we each have our own way of thinking about death.

Ko: I think that once you die, you don't feel anything or think anything. That is, you become nothing.

Misa: When I was younger, I believed as the Okinawan people do, that even after I died, I would live on in another world. However, at some point, I naturally let go of this belief. Listening to people's beliefs through this project, I am once again convinced that this is a wonderful way of thinking.

Abby: I believe that people end when they die. But I think the Okinawan belief that people do not end at death is very good.

Bai Yun: I think that death is liberation from a tiring life. This is because everyone has so many things they have to do, and every day is tough.



Abby

Because Bai Yun couldn't speak much English and I can't speak Chinese, I was forced to use my Japanese, which while hard was really good because it helped me improve a lot.



Misa

I communicated with Abby and Bai Yun by looking up terms in the dictionary, and lining them up, one after another. As I looked words up in the dictionary, I made a lot of discoveries about English expressions, so it was a great learning experience for me.



Ko

In the past, when I had trouble communicating because of the language barrier, I simply gave up since the foreign people I was interacting with were people I met only in passing. But in this program, we couldn't make progress unless we were able to understand each other, so I naturally felt the desire, at times excessive, to communicate, with a dictionary in one hand.

✦ Take a look at the project at http://www.tjf.or.jp/photoessaycafe/cafe_okinawa/izena_work/a/group_a.html.

✦ The presentations were given in Japanese.

Group A Project, Eternal House [excerpt]



沖縄の伝統的なお墓 (亀甲墓)
This is a traditional Okinawan grave. (kamekobai)
冲縄的传统的坟墓 (龟甲墓)

This shape symbolizes a mother's womb and the person that has passed away returning to the womb.

1



ウーとーとー: お祈りの言葉。
People come to pay respects to the dead by doing uootoutou (praying)
wu-do-do: 祭拜先人时的用语。

We were intrigued by the expression *uu-too-too*. It is a word used to summon the gods and buddhas, and is intoned during such events as *shimii* (an ancestral worshipping event held in the third lunar month).


2



ウーとーとー: お祈りの言葉。
People come to pay respects to the dead by doing uootoutou (praying)
wu-do-do: 祭拜先人时的用语。

We learned the kind of thinking at the base of these rituals from Terusan's uncle and aunt who cooperated with our project. During *shimii*, people make feasts as offerings, which is due to the belief that the dead are leading normal lives in another world.

3



紙巻銭
紙巻 (ウチカビ): お墓におまいりしたときに、先祖に供えるお金。一度に13枚を焼やして供える。
A special type of paper that people burn at the tombs to give their ancestors' money in their next life.
祖先へ焼く紙巻 一次焼13枚。

For example, for *shimii*, thirteen *uchikabi* (paper money) are burned as offerings, also due to the belief that the dead are leading lives in another world.

4

Our message

As you can see, it is intriguing to see that each one of us has a vastly different way of thinking about the same thing. There are many views. There are differences in thinking between the Japanese and foreign students and between the Japanese students themselves, and these differences are very interesting. They are what makes interaction between people meaningful and important. Our differences are what makes communication fun. This is what we feel most strongly from our interview and preparation process for our presentation.

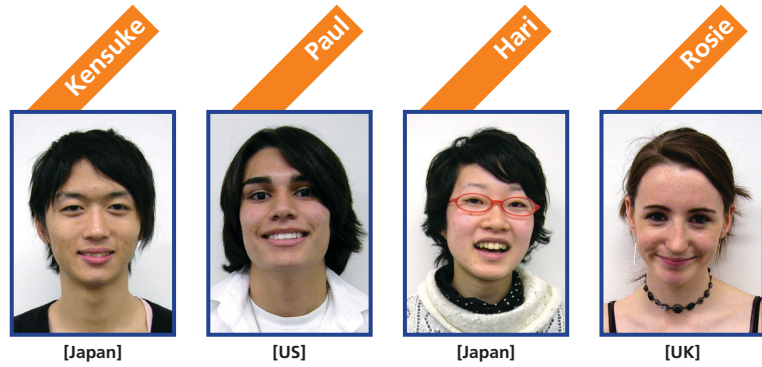


From Piao Jinqiu, tutor for Group A/ interpreter between Japanese and Chinese or Korean



The members of Group A were all relatively quiet, and I was concerned by the fact that even in our additional interviews, very few questions were asked. Along with members of the group, I kept track of the time, followed up on others' questions, had members translate for each other during discussions, and made sure to take photos when needed. When we met early in the morning to practice on the day of the presentation, everyone seemed to have thoroughly practiced their own parts, and they were all very well prepared. We ended up adding more to our presentation during our preparations, but because the four members did their best to cooperate, they were able to give a successful presentation. It made me really happy to stand in the back and listen to the presentation. As I listened, I was silently celebrating: "We all worked really hard these three days."

The garbage problem is not simple



Choosing a topic for our presentation

We chose the environment and the garbage problem as our topic after discovering trash washed up on the beach and cigarette stubs at the observation point during our study tour, as well as hearing Tamaki Shun'ichi talk about how he wrote a song about the changing landscape of the seashore.

Free research

☀ We went to pick up garbage on the beach. Since it was raining, we put on raincoats and nobody said anything. Within an hour, we had filled seven garbage bags.



☀ We asked the person in charge at the municipal government about its policies on garbage disposal. About two or three years ago, a law was enacted prohibiting the use of local incinerators because they were found to release dioxins. Now, the island spends 10 million yen per year to transport garbage to the main island for disposal in incinerators there. We realized there are complex issues involved, such as the fact that it will cost 800 million yen to build new incinerators that are up to current regulations, and that a lot of garbage washes up on the shores of Izena.



This is what we discussed

- The measures various countries are taking on trash
- Paul:** People are fined if they litter. Trash cans are of different colors for different kinds of trash. So we don't separate trash later, but at the time we throw it away.
- Rosie:** In Sheffield, we sort and reuse trash as much as possible.
- Kensuke:** There are some local governments that have laws prohibiting littering. Also, some local governments charge citizens fees for putting trash out by making them purchase designated garbage bags and using the fees for trash disposal.
- Rosie:** I wish the UK would implement that charge-by-the-bag trash fee system. Our family puts out less trash than other families, but we still have to pay the same amount in taxes, which I think is very unfair!
- Hari:** Why is it that in the US and the UK, garbage disposal and processing are standardized, but in Japan, which is a much smaller country, the regulations on trash are dependent on each local government?
- Rosie:** We have been told that construction works are contracted to create jobs; they should create jobs to help with the clean-up of Izena island!



Kensuke

The two Japanese students of our group ended up leading the others. When we were trying to choose a topic for our project, there were times that I, as group leader, dominated the process, and because I lack confidence in my English skills I turned to Hari, who speaks Japanese, for input. As a result, the foreign members participated, but it was as if they were taking part in something that the two of us had already planned out. As a group leader, I regret that I limited the range in which the overseas participants could take part.



Rosie

I think one difficulty might have been that everyone has different ways of communicating, some using their voices, and others using gestures, which I think is something which depends greatly upon where you are from. Another problem was sometimes understanding accents, particularly mine, as it is quite strong and from the north of England.

✦ Take a look at the project at http://www.tjf.or.jp/photoessaycafe/cafe_okinawa/izena_work/b/group_b.html.

✦ The presentations were given in Japanese.

Group B Project, Keep Izena Island Beautiful [excerpt]



Izena island is a beautiful place with sandy beaches and dense vegetation. It is a great place to live and visit. However, that beautiful environment is changing little by little.

キララの展望台でたくさんのタバコの吸殻やゴミを見つめました。

1



More visible garbage cans can help reduce the amount of trash. Also signs should be posted telling people not to litter.

ゴミ箱を目立つものにするこより、看板を立てて呼びかけることで捨てられているゴミを減らすことができるのではないのでしょうか。


2



Together we went out to pick up trash. We separated the rubbish that we collected into the different bags. The village's proceeds from selling designated trash bags are allotted for the cost of garbage disposal.

私たちは拾ったゴミを村指定のゴミ袋に分別していきまし。ちなみに、この村指定のゴミ袋の取扱は、村のゴミ処理にかかる費用に当てられています。

3



By working together to clear up the rubbish we can create an ever more beautiful Izena.

みんなで一緒にゴミ問題を解決することで、この伊豆名島はもっと美しい島になるでしょう!!

4

Our message

We realized the garbage problem is not a simple problem. Some people would think “picking up trash that’s already been discarded is a countermeasure but it’s not the solution to the problem,” but we believe people who know what a tough job picking up garbage and cleaning up the environment can be ought to never think of littering again. Our message is “let’s do what we can do” to make Izena Island an even more beautiful place!

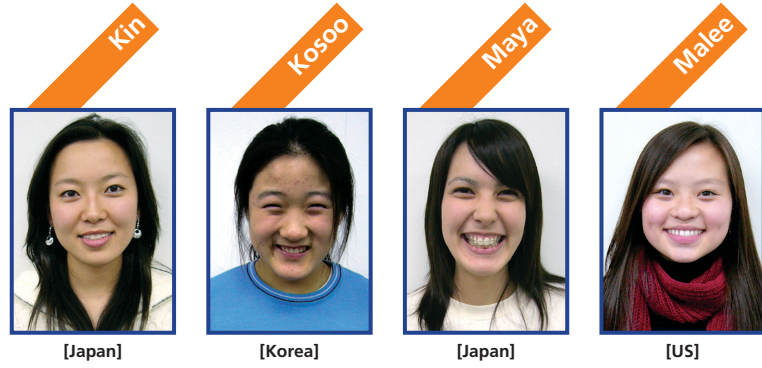


From Horie Asako, tutor for Group B



On the first and second day, perhaps due to fatigue, the Japanese students and the foreign students in the group didn’t seem to be communicating much with each other, to the extent that the staff members had a discussion about how to deal with the situation. But in the afternoon of the second day, the group members had grown friendly with each other, and I was relieved to find that there was nothing to worry about. From around the evening of the third day, communication within the group improved greatly, with Paul doing imitations of the Japanese comedian Razor Ramon, which he learned from Kensuke. Paul, who speaks American English, also joked around about Rosie’s British English pronunciation. We learned later that when Rosie fell asleep early, Hari, who was rooming with her, took her bath in another room so as not to wake Rosie. I believe Group B was able to become so close as a result of this thoughtfulness they showed towards each other.

Music has the power to connect people's hearts



Choosing a topic for our presentation

On the second day, when we were still feeling a bit lost on how to communicate with each other, we heard the Shoen Drum Troupe perform and tried performing the drums ourselves. This was the first time we were able to laugh and enjoy each other's company without worrying about language barriers. That was the moment when the distance between us began to shrink. We wanted to learn more about the influence of music on the people of Izena, so we decided to interview various people on this topic.



Free research

☀ We interviewed Toshikazu-san and his family, Shun'ichi-san, and Teru-san. (See our project)

This is what we discussed

During our interviews, people of different age, sex, nationality, and language were able to have a great time together, gaining firsthand experience of the "power of music," which we decided to use as the title of our presentation.



Everyone took responsibility for specific parts of the project. For example Mickey, Maya, and Yoshida-san worked together to write a script, Kin-chan and I were more involved with the construction of the webpage, Vicki and I were also photographers, and everyone took part in the interviews so the group as a whole had a general understanding of the material.



Malee

I liked the different opinions and perspectives everyone had to present. As a group I thought we were strong because we complimented each other and took all ideas to consideration. While making decisions we took votes and if the voting did not work we suggested other ideas to balance the problem.



Kin

As the group leader, it was difficult for me to figure out how to encourage a certain member of our group with what were really solid ideas to speak up in front of everyone else because she was embarrassed. However, the participant soon began to actively take part in the discussion perhaps because she realized that her views would be accepted, and that made me feel good. I think that being accepted by peers from different countries and cultures can give you a lot of confidence.



Kosoo

Communicating my own views was tough, since my Japanese isn't very good. To be honest, it made me lonely sometimes, but then other members of the group would speak to me and interject interpretations of what was being said, so it turned out all right.



Maya

I strongly felt that language is vital in communication. The few words we could communicate in addition to our gestures and our emotions were enough for us to get by in getting along, but when we tried to make decisions as a group, it wasn't that easy.

Mickey

Vicki



[Japan]



[New Zealand]

✦ Take a look at the project at http://www.tjf.or.jp/photoessaycafe/cafe_okinawa/izena_work/c/group_c.html.

✦ The presentations were given in Japanese.

Group C Project, Power of Music [excerpt]

尚円太鼓リーダー: としかずさん



- 尚円王に興味があって同じ名前である尚円太鼓をはじめる
- 太鼓をやっている時は家族を「家族」としてではなく「仲間」としてみている

First, we interviewed Toshikazu-san. He started playing the drums as a result of his interest in King Shoen. When he plays the drums with his family, he does not think of them as family, but rather, his buddies or comrades.

1

シンガー・ソング・ライター: しゅんいちさん



- 音楽をやっている時は本当の自分を出すことが出来る
- 「明日は今日より成長する!!!」
- 音楽が私の人生を変えた!
- 経験を活かした曲作り

Music is a valuable forum through which Shun'ichi-san expresses himself. He hopes that every day, he grows as a person, little by little. He told us that his life changed greatly since he discovered music. He writes music based on his life experiences.

2

ロックスター★テルさん



- お金のために音楽は存在しているんじゃない!
- 恋をして曲に気持ちを投入入れられるようになった
- 音楽をやっていなかったら自分は今頃...
- No MUSIC, No LIFE

Teru-san plays music not to make a living, but because it is his passion. He says that being in love has changed his view of music greatly. He can't imagine life without music.

3

ビッグハッピーファミリー♪♪



- 年齢や性別に関係なく皆仲良し☆なんでも話し合える仲!!!
- 演奏中はかけ声で心をひとつにする

The Shoen Drum Troupe members are all very close, like a family. Whenever anyone has a problem, they go to the other members for advice.

4

Our message

The Shoen Drum Troupe members met through music. Watching them, we can tell that music has the power to connect people's hearts, regardless of age or gender. The interviews were conducted only in a short time, but the troupe members welcomed us warmly as if we had become family. Music has the power to transcend national boundaries.



From Yoshida Yuri, tutor for Group C/ interpreter between Japanese and English



The group I accompanied, Group C, was made up of six girls. They were all very cheery and fun, at times boisterous, and got along really well. However, there was one participant who had a bit of trouble getting acquainted with the others because of the language barrier. The group members recognized this problem, and we heard that they had a discussion late into the night on how they could incorporate her more into the group. And what's most important, this participant changed greatly during the course of this project. She initially did not leave the interpreter's side, but during group meetings on the third and fourth days, she took notes herself, no longer depending on the interpreter. On our last night in Izena, in front of all the other students, this participant announced that she wanted to learn to be more outgoing, to which the other students responded with a round of applause. This was a most memorable moment.