



Takarabako

たからばこ

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Publisher/Editor in Chief:
Nakano Kayoko

Editing and Translation:
Center for Intercultural
Communication

DTP:
Iino Noriko (The Japan Forum)

Shinjuku Dai-ichi Seimeい 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>

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Presentation at ICJLE

Held outside Asia for the first time at Columbia University in New York city, August 5-6, 2006, the International Conference on Japanese Language Education (ICJLE) brought together over 400 participants involved in Japanese language education from all over the world.

The Japan Forum's Director Nakano Kayoko made a presentation entitled "Resources for Classroom Instruction and Teacher Collaboration: Learning from the *Deai* Experience" as a panelist on one of the invited panels, "The Power of Instruction: The Triumvirate of Strategy, Context, and Application in Motivating Student Learning."

Nakano reported the results of a survey conducted in spring 2006 among teachers using the *Deai* teaching resource, and introduced specific ways *Deai* has been used and its effectiveness to over one hundred audience members. She pointed out that overall, teachers found that *Deai* captured students' interests and motivated them to learn, fostering a sense of reality and context for Japanese language study, and alerting students to the similarities and differences between

as well as diversity of cultures. Nakano believes that this was made possible because *Deai* was able to encourage students to relate to the seven *Deai* characters' personalities and everyday lives from photos and essays at personal level. She concluded by saying that TJF hopes to continue providing such resources in the future.

At the pre-conference held at the United Nations International School August 3-4, TJF conducted a workshop on providing forums for middle school and high school students from around the world to interact online. TJF hopes to incorporate participants' comments and requests in planning new programs.



New Projects: Forums for Interaction among Secondary School Students From Around the World

TJF's forums for international interaction include the *Deai* Photo Essay Cafe (<http://www.tjf.or.jp/photoessaycafe/>), for secondary school students from around the world. For next year, TJF plans to create a forum on its website where students can meet to engage in even better, more meaningful interchange. A multilingual forum is needed to realize multidirectional interaction in addition to two-way communication, so TJF plans to accommodate both reading and writing in four languages—Japanese, English, Chinese, and Korean. The registration method is used to protect the security of members, but we hope to create a community in which junior and senior high school students can freely exchange views on anything from their own lives to global is-

sues, using photos, voice clips, and video clips, in addition to written messages.

We anticipate that Japanese language learners will find that writing messages in Japanese and receiving responses to them will provide a realistic context for language use, thereby enhancing their motivation to pursue language study. Furthermore, by collecting the real voices of young people from different countries, we hope to provide an opportunity for students to understand the diverse state of society in which we are all connected to real people.

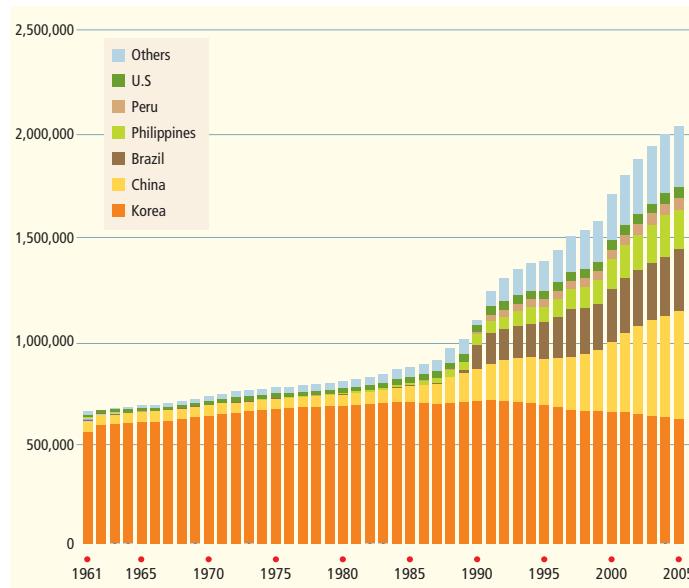
In combination with TJF's programs on the Web, we are conducting programs in which students meet each other in first person (see **Access This Page!**).

Seeking a Better Society for Children of Multicultural Backgrounds

The number of residents from overseas in Japan has risen sharply since 1990. The figure doubled in a period of about ten years, and as of the end of 2005 there were over two million persons of non-Japanese citizenship, making up 1.57 percent of the total population, residing in Japan. They represent 186 nationalities, and the top six are, in descending order, South/North Korean, Chinese, Brazilian, Filipino, Peruvian, and American. For most of the twentieth-century, the majority were Korean residents,¹ including those who had been living in Japan since the 1920s, but since the mid-1980s, the numbers of newly arrived Chinese, Filipino, Korean, and ethnic Japanese Brazilians² have increased rapidly. Some of the trends that have driven the rise in their numbers are globalization and a shortage of manual laborers resulting from the falling birthrate and the aging of the population in Japan.

■ Number of Persons Registered as Aliens in Japan

(Based on *Annual Report on Statistics on Legal Migrants*, Ministry of Justice, 1961-2005)



Issues for Children of Multicultural Backgrounds

In recent years, extended stays by persons of non-Japanese citizenship have led to a variety of new issues such as their education in the Japanese language, employment conditions, and human rights. As a result of the growing numbers of non-nationals who have come to Japan with their families as well as the increase in international marriages, there have arisen problems such as securing the right for children of non-Japanese citizenship to attend school, Japanese language education for non-native speakers, education to maintain the children's first languages, and maintaining children's identities. Responses to such issues

have not yet been sufficient, but steady efforts are being made to meet the needs that have emerged. In this issue of *Takarabako*, we take a look at the ways in which efforts are being made by schools, citizens, and government to resolve the problems facing children of multicultural backgrounds.³

At School: Okubo Elementary School Changes Came with Accepting Differences



Tokyo has the largest number of residents of overseas citizenship in the country, and within Tokyo, Shinjuku ward has the largest number, with approximately 30,000. This means that one in every ten Shinjuku ward residents holds overseas citizenship, from one of over 30 countries.

The Okubo area of Shinjuku ward boasts the largest Koreatown in the Kanto region, and it is a tourist spot with a variety of Asian restaurants and shops. Of the 159 students enrolled at Okubo Elementary School, approximately 60 percent are students who have close connections to other countries. Twelve countries, including Korea and China, are represented in the student body.

Many of these students struggle with the language barrier, having difficulty understanding their teachers and friends or not being able to express themselves adequately, and as a result, have had trouble with their studies and in other aspects of their school life.

Creating a Supportive Learning Environment

Okubo Elementary School has undertaken a number of programs to improve these students' Japanese language abilities.⁴ The Shinjuku ward board of education has placed bilingual teachers in the school to teach Japanese. Even after the students' period of Japanese language instruction is over, for two years, they may spend their Japanese-language (*kokugo*) class



The streets of Okubo are full of signs written in Hangul, Korean script.

and other class hours in a “Japanese as a second language (JSL)” class.

For these students to improve their Japanese language ability, however, steps also need to be taken in regular classes in addition to the special language teaching program. In schools where all the students are Japanese, teachers do not question the effectiveness of a single method in responding to students’ needs. However, in this school, where students hold a variety of values and worldviews, it was not so simple. Reexamining their teaching methods, the teachers tried to better understand their students’ circumstances and began to study, every day and every period, what they could improve upon.

As a result, the teachers reached the conclusion that for the students to improve their Japanese language ability and solve the various problems they faced, it was imperative to provide a more supportive environment for the children to learn, where they could gradually overcome the language and culture barriers. Teachers began to accommodate the needs of individual students by providing an atmosphere in which students and teachers make the effort to understand what the children are trying to say, encouraging them to communicate, no matter how broken their Japanese might be, to accept each other regardless of differences in views, and to experience the joy of understanding others and being understood.

Lessons in Difference

In a Japanese textbook for first graders, there is a text on the topic of “Snow.” However, students from Brazil have never seen snow nor do they know what it feels like. In the southern hemisphere, winter comes in the middle of the year and summer over the New Year, so students from Australia are accustomed to seasons that are the opposite in Japan. When teachers explain the climates and seasons of the world, they can capture the children’s interest by acknowledging how their cultural backgrounds and knowledge differ and the differences there are in what they know. Hearing the teacher talk about the countries of their parentage in class appears to be linked to heightened motivation and more positive attitudes among children from other backgrounds.

As efforts like this continued, students began asking each other about things they did not know and helping each other. There were times when the children from other backgrounds were the ones to teach their Japanese classmates. In lessons on international understanding conducted during integrated study (*sogo gakushu*) classes, Japanese students and students of other backgrounds chose countries that interested them, regardless of their native countries, and with the cooperation of university exchange students and parents in the community, they learned about the cultures and languages of those countries. Children of other backgrounds who had, until then, been in a position to be taught by Japanese students, were able to carve out a place for themselves by teaching others about their own countries, languages, and cultures. Last year, many Japanese students chose to learn about Korea because they “wanted to be able to speak their friends’ language,” or because they “wanted to be able to read the many Hangul signs around town.” At this school, other countries are not faraway lands, but rather the counties of their classmates.

Education for the Future

The scholastic performance of both Japanese and students of other backgrounds at Okubo Elementary School has improved in the last few years. However, the principal points out that the students at the school have achieved something even more important than better grades: they have a spirit of respect for others and the wonderful ability to think on their own. Students from other countries are nothing out-of-the-ordinary at this school; when a new student comes to school, they casually ask them, “What nationality are you?” The principal believes that students who have studied in this kind of school environment help to build bridges between cultures in a rapidly globalizing society as they grow up.



Okubo *daiko* drum performance at a local shrine. Okubo *daiko*, which the sixth graders at Okubo Elementary School practice and perform at local festivals every year, brings children of different backgrounds together. Before, the school was seen as “a foreigners’ school” due to the large number of children of other backgrounds. Now, however, the school, in cooperation with neighborhood associations, takes part in various community activities in an effort to forge closer ties with local citizens.

In the Community: Takatori Community Center

Enriching Society through Minority Voices



Takatori Community Center is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting the coexistence of various cultures within the community. In Nagata ward in the city of Kobe, where Takatori Community Center is located, nationals of other countries make up 10 percent of the population. After the 1995 Kobe earthquake,⁵ the forerunner of Takatori Community Center, Takatori Kyokai Kyuen Kichi (Takatori Church Aid Center), provided information about evacuation sites and relief supplies in multiple languages and served as headquarters for volunteer activities. Non-Japanese victims of the earthquake not only received aid; they rescued people from the rubble and prepared hot meals outdoors, giving each other emotional support. Once they began to obtain information, many used their language abilities and technical skills to the fullest in dealing with the crisis. After the disaster, the Community Center began efforts to provide a forum for the voices of non-Japanese residents—which are easily silenced in society—to be heard. Yoshitomi Shizuyo, director of the Community Center, says that such a forum gives confidence to minorities, and is healthy for Japanese as well, increasing opportunities to gain new perspectives and realize that diversity is something happy and enriching.

A Forum for Children to Express Themselves

Children's as well as adults' voices need to be heard. Children of other ethnic backgrounds are self-conscious about their Japanese language ability, and many have trouble understanding what is said in classes, in making friends, and building confidence in themselves. The Community Center provides an opportunity for children who have trouble communicating verbally to express their ideas using video or animation through a program called Re:C. Once every week, about fifteen children of other cultural backgrounds ranging from preschool age to junior high school gather at the Re:C salon. They make videos about their communities and themselves and hold screenings in the community and on the Internet.

Through these creative processes, children reflect upon their own thoughts and give shape to them, then present them to others. Receiving responses from those around them builds confidence, and they become motivated to create more videos.



Re:C not only aims to help children express themselves, but also to forge relationships with people in the community.

Changes in Ourselves and Those Around Us

When she arrived in Japan seven years ago, one third-generation Japanese Brazilian who is now a first-year student in high school suffered a crisis in self-confidence. She could not speak Japanese, and she could not do the things that most of the Japanese children around her could, such as flips on the horizontal bar, riding a unicycle, and vaulting in gym class. Not wanting to be seen as different, she tried to hide the fact that she was a foreigner. At Re:C, she says, she can believe in herself; it is a place where people support her, and where she can just be herself. She is making a video of the ocean and aquariums, which she says she finds "calming." She says that in the process, she's had experiences—such as listening to others' opinions and following through in spite of the mistakes she's made—that have helped to change her.

The activities at Re:C change not only the students making videos, but other people who have been



Videos made by children at Re: C can be viewed all over the world via the Internet.
<http://www.tcc117.org/rec>

involved with its program, such as the staff and those who see the children's video works. Japanese college student volunteers work with the children as coordinators to identify topics, create scripts, film, and edit on the computer. They keep watch as the children struggle over things, at times agonizing with them, finding that they also sometimes have to question and rethink their own identity. Their perspectives are broadened as they begin to see a Japan they had never seen before. After the experience of working with these children, some young people choose careers in education to find ways to enhance the education system.

In one of the videos created by the children, an aquarium staff member who was interviewed commented that he knew Brazilian fish very well but that he realized he didn't know anything about Brazil or Brazilians aside from scattered information from books and television. Young people who have seen the videos made at Re:C have said, "I, too, won't give up," and "I want to think more about the friends around me."

From Empathy for Each Other to a Multicultural Society

The feelings about family that one Japanese Brazilian student expressed in her work is something that can be shared by both Japanese and those from other countries. Murakami Keitaro, who is in charge of Re:C, says, "To realize a multicultural society, of course we have to change laws and institutions. But first, it is vital that individuals change themselves inside." He continues, "The willingness to move away from old habits of estrangement because you don't know people well to developing empathy for them as fellow human beings becomes the starting point from which you can understand the problems concerning people who live as minorities in a society and make changes in society."

In Towns and Cities: City of Ota, Gunma prefecture

Efforts to Relax Regulations



Ota is an industrial city in Gunma prefecture, where the main industry is auto manufacture. To resolve its labor shortage, the city actively recruited workers from overseas, particularly those of ethnic Japanese background, and by the end of 2005, the number of residents from overseas reached about 4 percent of the total population, or approximately 9,000 people, of which nearly half are second-generation and third-generation Japanese Brazilians. The number of students with non-Japanese citizen-



(left) Window of a shop is covered with flyers in Portuguese. (right) Shop selling Brazilian bread and prepared foods. Many Brazilians stop by on their way home from work.

ship enrolled in elementary and junior high schools in Ota is approximately 400, or about 2 percent of the total student population. Brazilian nationals make up 60 percent of this number.

Special District Educational Strategies

To respond to the growing numbers of children of non-Japanese parentage, in 1991 the city of Ota set up Japanese language instruction classes in the city's elementary schools, employing assistants who could speak the students' first languages to teach Japanese or interpret for the students. Even though they were academically capable, many of these students could not go on to senior high school or university because their Japanese language abilities were insufficient. Recognizing that assistants and interpreters were not enough, but that teachers were needed who could speak the students' first languages and could teach Japanese or other subjects in order to improve these students' abilities and to broaden their future options, the city applied for the status of "special district for education of foreign children and students for permanent residence," which was granted in March 2004. This allowed the employment, at the expense of the city, of people who may not be certified as teachers in Japan, but are certified in other countries.⁶ As a result, bilingual Japanese/Portuguese instructors with Brazilian teaching certificates were hired to teach Japanese and other subjects in cooperation with additional teachers and Japanese instruction assistants.

A bilingual elementary school teacher in the city, Suenaga Sandra Terumi, says that, along with the subject itself she teaches Japanese phrases that are important to know in any subject. (For example, in math class, she teaches sentences such as "The vertical line is longer than the horizontal line," or "The red ribbon is the longest.") Because she can use the students' first language to explain things they have a difficult time grasping, students are able to further their understanding. The strength of the bilingual teacher is this ability to conduct both Japanese language instruction and subject instruction at the same time.

Special District Status Applicable Nationwide

The recent increase in the number of students of non-Japanese ethnic background who go on to local high schools is considered to be the result of the aforementioned efforts. The special consideration extended to Ota city as a special district was



A class in the international studies room. Suenaga says that having someone who understands them, more than being able to understand Japanese or the subject matter, is reassuring to the students. When students fight with each other and can't express themselves to their homeroom teachers, or when they want to talk about something that's happened at home, they come to Suenaga to speak in Portuguese.

made available nationwide in April 2006. The "special district" program, part of the nation's structural reform, was designed to relax regulations in such districts so that once they were found to be workable the status would be applied all over the country. The precedent set by the city of Ota may still be in the process of blossoming to its full potential, but it is undoubtedly spreading all over Japan.

First Step toward a Better Society

Japanese society has long considered itself to be homogeneous. The society was unwilling to acknowledge those who were different and inclined to demand that everyone be the same. However, Japanese society has come to a point when citizenship, culture, and language alone cannot fully distinguish between "foreigners" and "Japanese." It is now home to growing ethnic and cultural diversity. If society as a whole responds to and accepts those differences, it will be a better place not only for people from other countries but also for the increasingly diverse Japanese themselves. There are still many problems and we have just only begun, but at least we have made the first step.

- 1 South Korean and North Korean residents of Japan: This includes people who were forced to come to Japan in the 1920s from the Korean peninsula, which was a Japanese colony at the time, and their descendants. After World War II they were stripped of their Japanese citizenship, reverting to Korean citizenship. Presently, approximately 450,000 Koreans are registered as special permanent residents (in addition, there are Korean residents of Japan who have become citizens or who have married non-Koreans). Foreigners who have come to Japan from the 1990s onward are called "newcomers," as opposed to the aforementioned "oldtimers."
- 2 Ethnic Japanese: Since the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act underwent revision in 1990, the immigration restrictions on people of Japanese ancestry were relaxed, resulting in a rise in ethnic Japanese from South America who have come to Japan accompanied by their families.
- 3 They are children of various national, cultural, linguistic, and ethnic backgrounds, including those with non-Japanese citizenship, those with non-Japanese citizenship whose first language is Japanese (because they came to Japan when they were young, etc.) and those with Japanese citizenship who require special Japanese language instruction for various reasons (born in Japan to non-Japanese parents, grew up overseas, etc.).
- 4 Beginning in 1992, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) has placed additional teachers in schools with children who require Japanese-as-a-second language (JSL) instruction. MEXT also produces Japanese teaching materials, sponsors training programs for teachers, and develops JSL curricula.
- 5 Kobe Earthquake: Early in the morning on January 17, 1995, a strong epicentral earthquake with a magnitude of 7.3 on the Richter scale hit Kobe and northern Awaji Island. It was the country's biggest earthquake disaster since the end of World War II, leaving 6,433 dead and 43,792 injured. Over 300,000 people were evacuated. The city center of Kobe was devastated. The number of volunteers who helped victims immediately after the earthquake is said to have reached, on average, over 20,000 people per day. The general public's recognition of volunteerism in disaster-stricken areas skyrocketed.
- 6 Generally, teachers in public elementary and middle school are hired by either the prefecture or ordinance-designated municipality.



My Family is the Source of My Strength

Hello, my name is Waris. I came to Japan from China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region to study archaeology.

Waris

18 years old, first-year university student,
Tokyo, Japan

Photos by Kaneko Satoshi

My hometown is Urumqi, in China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region.¹ In September 2004, I came to Japan with my mother and younger brother. Back home my mother was teaching Chinese and Uygur at a university when she befriended a Japanese exchange student, and that later led to our move here. My parents suggested that we move here, because they believed living and studying in Japan would benefit my brother and me in the future.

Japan is Heaven?

I didn't know anything about Japan, but I decided to come with the easygoing attitude that it might be fun to live in a foreign country. My first impression, after arriving in Japan and visiting places like Disneyland, was that Japan must be heaven. Once I actually took up residence, though, I realized that it's not such an easy place to live, and that not everything is fun and games.

The first problem I encountered was language. Since I had studied Chinese in Xinjiang for five years, I could read about 30 percent of written Japanese by following the kanji. But I couldn't understand anything that was being said or say anything myself. At the high school I entered as soon as I came to Japan, I couldn't understand a thing my friends or teachers were saying. My English isn't very good, and I had trouble understanding the accented English that Japanese people speak, so I had a lot of problems. Every day was a real struggle, but all of a sudden, about three or four months after getting here, I started understanding Japanese. In six months, I became able to express most of what I wanted to say in Japanese.

When I talk about the language problems I've had, Japanese people kindly say, "You must have felt really uneasy not understanding the language." But that wasn't the case at all. This may be an attitude typical of we Uygurs, but we think that God is with us wherever we go on earth, so nothing is really frightening and we don't really worry about what is going to happen tomorrow. As long as we are healthy, we can do anything, and things will work out somehow. Of course, I think about things that require deep thought, but with things that can't be helped no matter how much I think about them, or with things that I can't know about in the future, I don't worry.

Eating, however, is a problem for me everyday. When I go out to eat, I can't eat 90 percent of the things on the menus. I'm Muslim, so I don't eat pork, but a lot of Japanese food like ramen, curry rice, and hamburgers, have pork in them. There can be pork products even in pickled dishes and salad dressing. About the only thing I can eat for sure is gyudon.

In Xinjiang, we eat a lot of *nan* (a type of bread made primarily of wheat flour to which yeast is added to leaven the dough and then baked). We mix in nutritious ingredients like milk and eggs, so it's good for your health. But at home in Japan, we don't make Uygur food every day. We're very busy with studying and work, and we can't spend much time cooking. We make Uygur food about twice a week when we have the time, and eat as a family. Generally, though, we make noodle dishes or chicken or beef curries.



Praying at the mosque

Waris goes to a mosque in Yoyogi Uehara for the first time in a while. As a rule, Muslims pray five times a day, but with his busy schedule of study and part-time work, this is difficult.²



Family

Waris says, "As the first-born son, I have a responsibility to my family." In place of his father, who is working as an oil researcher in Xinjiang, he takes care of his mother and younger brother. His mother works as a translator in Japan.

Learning to Live in Japan

There are many things that I've incorporated into my life while living in Japan. One of them is saying "Arigato." In Xinjiang, we don't say thank you for small things. If someone saves your life, for example, or for things that are serious or that we are really very grateful for, we say "Rähmät," which is a word of some weight intended for such situations. But in Japan, people say "arigato" for the simplest things, and you end up saying it dozens of times a day. I've studied the timing and occasions when Japanese use "arigato," and try to use it that way myself.

Also, even when I have a question, I try not to ask too directly. Uygurs are very open people, so we don't hesitate to talk about our problems, concerns, and things we need help with. But I've found that Japanese people often don't express their feelings very candidly.

Neighbors interact with each other differently, too. In Xinjiang, if you've met once, you're acquaintances. If you've met twice, you're already friends. We call each other on the phone and invite each other to our homes. Neighbors love to go back and forth between each other's homes, eating and chatting and having a good time. Communities such as those in Tokyo, where neighbors don't interact with each other, would be unthinkable.

For example, if exchange students come to Xinjiang, we all gather to have a party in honor of them. Then we invite them to our homes, ask them if they've encountered any problems, and if they need anything, accompany them to go shopping, and basically take care of them. Here in Japan, we go to school by ourselves and go home by ourselves. When I started at high school, nobody offered to see me home or to teach me how to use the trains or buses. Now, I've become fairly accustomed to the way people interact, but it feels as if everyone's all alone here. That seems kind of sad.

Important Things I Would Not Change

Living in Japan, there are things in which I adopt the Japanese way, but there are things I don't want to change, too. I guess I would describe it as my "kokoro"—my inner self—the basic ways of feeling, thinking, and living. I am an Uygur, and my cul-



A Friend from His Hometown

At a Silk Road festival in Tokyo, Waris runs into a close friend he's known from his childhood, Nadir. Nadir is also studying in Japan, but this was the first time they met here. All smiles, they had a great day.

ture and ethnic background are different from that of Japan. No matter how hard I try, I can never become Japanese.

I think the most important thing in life is family. Uygurs believe that "men should protect their families." Our families are the source of our strength, after all. When I see my mother and brother's faces, all my worries and regrets disappear, no matter what has happened. For about an hour everyday, the three of us talk about what happened that day as we eat dinner.

Whenever we have Japanese friends to our house, they are all impressed that our family is so close. I had taken the closeness of my family for granted, so their reaction came as a surprise. There doesn't seem to be much time for families to eat meals together or talk in Japan. But I can talk about anything with my father and mother. There is nothing I can't talk about or that I'm embarrassed to talk about with them. I talk to them about the girls I like and I joke around with them, too. They're family, after all, the people with whom I was reared and to whom I feel closest. They're the most important people in my life. There have been incidents in Japan of children killing their parents or parents killing their children, but that would be unthinkable and impossible in Xinjiang.

Dreams of the Future

Currently, I'm studying cultural anthropology in the Department of Image Cultures in university. University is a place not where you're taught things, but where you go to learn yourself, so I think that you can't gain anything unless you take the initiative to study and research on your own. Right now, I'm reading up on archaeology and learning computer skills and information that will be useful in archaeological research.

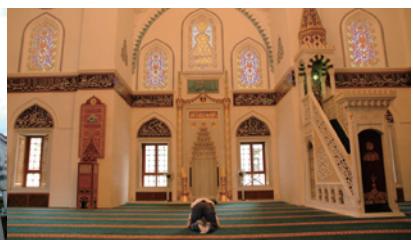
In the future I'd like to go on to graduate school, return to Xinjiang, and do research on the ruins in the Taklimakan desert. Xinjiang has a history that goes back approximately 7,000 years and mummies from about 4,000 years ago have been excavated. I would also like to be involved in research on Buddhist ruins from the Silk Road era.

Edited and translated by TJF on the basis of an interview

1. Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region: Located in the northwestern part of China, Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region covers an area of 1.6 million square meters equaling about one-sixth of China's territory, and is the largest region of the country. From ancient times, oasis cities on the edge of desert flourished as way stations on the Silk Road. In general, the area is very arid, with an average annual precipitation of 145 millimeters. Summers are extremely hot, and winters extremely cold. Ethnically, about 8.7 million Uygurs, who are of Turkic stock, comprise about half of the region's population, and the other half are of forty-seven other ethnic groups including Han people, Kazakhs, and Mongolians. Uygurs speak Uygur, a Turkic language, and most are Sunni Muslims. The provincial capital is Urumqi.



2. Mosque in Tokyo: Tokyo Camii was built on the site of the former Tokyo Islamic Institute in Oyama-cho, Shibuya Ward, demolished in 1986 because it was in disrepair. The new mosque opened in June 2000. It boasts a prayer hall with a capacity for 2,000 people, and provides opportunities for visits and cultural understanding classes for non-Muslims, serving as a center for disseminating information on Islamic and Turkish culture.



Access This Page!

Focus on Japan 2007 website invites participants

www.tjf.or.jp/focusonjapan/

TJF opened a new page on its website with information about the "Focus on Japan 2007" program and forms for applying for participation. Eight high school students from overseas will be invited to Japan to participate in a photo-essay project in collaboration with eight Japanese high school students in August 2007. Participants will visit one prefecture in Japan (either Miyagi, Tokyo, Osaka, or Hiroshima), meet and spend time with local high school students, interact with local people, and photographically portray them and their daily lives. They will then work with their Japanese teammates to compile a joint photographic account of the places they visited.



Application Guidelines

Please check the website for details of the program guidelines, information on eligibility, and schedule. For further information, please contact us at focusonjapan@tjf.or.jp.

Locations

You can get an idea of the areas to be visited by reading the text and captions and looking at the photos posted on the website by the high school photograph club for each of the four locations.



A screenshot of the Focus On Japan 2007 website's Locations section. The page title is "Focus On Japan 2007" and the URL is "http://www.tjf.or.jp/focusonjapan/en/location/index.html". The main content area has a green background and features four boxes, each containing a photograph and a caption: 1. "Our city, Shiogama, in Miyagi prefecture, is the oldest city in the Tohoku or northeastern region of Japan." (Miyagi photo) 2. "Our city, Tokyo, is a mosaic of people and places." (Tokyo photo) 3. "Our city of Osaka has a distinctive culture and ethos you won't find in other parts of Japan." (Osaka photo) 4. "Our town of Shobara is located in the north-eastern part of Hiroshima prefecture." (Hiroshima photo). A large orange box at the bottom right contains the text: "These are the places where the photo assignments will be conducted. The members of the high school photography clubs look forward to taking photos with you. Where would you like to go?"

Application Procedure

Persons wishing to take part in the program should fill out the application form and submit it together with the required photographs and consent form. In filling out the application form, applicants may write in either Japanese, English, Chinese, or Korean, and may use a combination of two or more of these languages if they prefer.

The application form is available on the TJF website. Applicants must access, fill in, and submit the form.

Successful applicants will be selected on the basis of screening of the following items to be included in and attached to the completed application form:

1. Ideas for a photography project
2. Essay and photographs about yourself and where you live
3. Commentary on a photo essay from either the website The Way We Are (photo essays by Japanese high school students about their peers) or the website Photo Essay Cafe (self-introductory photo essays by high school students from around the world)

A screenshot of the Focus On Japan 2007 website's Application Form section. The page title is "Focus On Japan 2007" and the URL is "http://www.tjf.or.jp/focusonjapan/en/form/index.html". The main content area shows the "Application Form" page with fields for personal information, application materials, and a consent form. A large red text overlay in the center right reads: "Application must arrive by Thursday, 1 February 2007 (Japan time)." The right side of the page contains a sidebar with the text: "The Japan Focus on Japan Project Consent Form Regarding Application and Participation of International Students". It includes instructions for applicants and a list of items to attach to the application form, such as "Save Data File" (PDF file - 307KB), "Consent Form" (PDF file - 116KB), and "Photo Materials" (PDF file - 307KB).