

Newsletter

NPO Nagoya Ryugakusei Net

No. **3**

February 2023

Conversations with Towey-san

Ms. Hamada, a supporting member of Nagoya Ryugakusei Net, provided Japanese language support to Ms. Towey (Wei Tang), a student from China. She wrote about her impressions of the support and the interactions.

Hearing that she had experience as a Japanese language teacher, I agreed to help her because I thought it would be a good opportunity to learn about the situation of Japanese language teachers in her home country.

Towey-san speaks fluent Japanese and expands on topics well. She is good at greetings and courtesies to the degree that even Japanese people cannot match. We had a pleasant conversation. I did not control my own vocabulary in any way. When she did not know the word, I typed it in kanji characters, using chat. Towey-san took notes on the spot and used them repeatedly in subsequent conversations in an effort to make them stick immediately. I was impressed by her daily efforts to maintain and improve her ability to speak Japanese in an environment where few opportunities exist during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The online format (using Zoom) allowed for sharing photos, audio, and video and exchanging more information quickly.

We exchanged information not only on research topics but also on a wide range of other topics such as Japanese language education, marriage, job hunting, and social media, comparing Japan and China. I learned a lot about China through Towey-san.

I checked her paper by correcting misuses that did not make sense and assisting her in listening to the conversational corpus in Japanese.

I thank Nagoya Ryugakusei Net for inviting me to this opportunity to meet Towey san. I appreciate the fun time and valuable opportunities for social interaction.

Hamada Yumi (NRN supporting member)

The Red Feather Grant Program selected Nagoya RyuNet Proposal

Last year, the Central Community Chest of Japan provided a grant to support welfare activities for a post-corona society. Nagoya RyuNet proposed to offer a program that would allow graduate students in the Nagoya area to effectively understand Japan and interact with professionals and community members during the COVID-19 pandemic. We sent the application with many attractive past event information posters. The proposal was accepted on October 28, 2022.

Using this fund, we held the Explore Japan: Year-end Mochi-tsuki event on December 30.

For 2023, we will offer one-day bus tours for international graduate students to know Japan better. Tours will include such visits to the Aerospace Museum (Kakamigahara, Gifu) and the Pollution and Future Environment Museum (Yokkaichi, Mie).

Matsuura Yoshiharu (NRN member)

Nagoya RyuNet submits the mid-term report to the Japan Foundation

One individual donated to our NPO. For effective use of this benevolence, we successfully applied for the Specific Donation Program of the Japan Foundation. With this fund from the Foundation, we offered the "Tokyo Seminar" and "Nagano Campus Seminar." In October 2022, we submitted the mid-term report to the Japan Foundation with the financial statement. The Japan Foundation has commented that it can see that the program is providing a valuable experience and is a good practice.

We are engaging in various activities and increasing the number of donors (supporting members) to qualify as a certified non-profit organization. We will use this program effectively to receive tax benefits for future donations from individuals until the certification is approved.

Kozaki Kazuko (NRN member)

Notice and Request

- * Nagoya Ryugakusei Net is planning to organize many more events in the future. Please let us know what you would like to do and where you would like to go.
- * We also look forward to your comments and suggestions on this newsletter.

See the last page for contact information.



The Red Feather Grant Program

新型コロナウイルス感染下における
外国にルーツがある人々への支援活動応援助成

A Wonderful Event of *Mochitsuki* (Rice Cake Making)

At the end of the year, every international student like us will be a little sad because of the feeling of homesickness and loneliness in a foreign country. Fortunately, instead of sticking behind the desk to gnaw on the sadness, we had the opportunity to participate in the Mochitsuki event with our wonderful Japanese friends. The event was hosted by Nagoya Ryugakusei Net (NRN) on December 30. On that day, we went to a small neighborhood town to make Mochi cakes ourselves to celebrate the New Year and enjoy grilled seafood and delicious beer, with the people living there. The Mochi cakes as a little gift from Japanese friends surprised and touched us very much. We also had the opportunity to "chitchat" with the friendly people in this neighborhood, including the elderly and young people, to learn more about Japanese daily life and their culture, which we cannot find in books. Thanks to this event, like other events hosted by NRN, I no longer feel alone at the end of the year and am more motivated for a new year filled with joy, happiness, and several helpful pieces of knowledge about Japan.

Finally, I would like to thank all NRN members for your organization and careful preparation for every great event. I hope you will always keep your enthusiasm to organize many wonderful events like this in the future.

Tran Thi Quyen (Grad. Sch. Law., Nagoya Univ.)

An Authentic Japanese Traditional Event

— Participating in *Mochitsuki* —

People place steamed rice in a mortar. They knead and then pound it with pestles. This dynamic and rhythmical action is the best part of rice cake pounding! The other charm of the event is to divide freshly pounded mochi into bite-sized pieces, roll them up, and serve them with kinako (soybean flour), anko (red bean paste), and other ingredients while chatting in a circle. It is truly a graceful and warm flow of activities.

The series of flow of people gathering and performing created a beautiful harmony at this event. Mochitsuki, festivals, Bon dances, and other traditional Japanese events are held in many places. The original meaning, the sense of awe that supported these events, the spirit of wishing for happiness, and the bonds of belonging to the family and the local community are slowly fading. This mochitsuki was, however, not mock but the real thing. I was completely delighted and enjoyed myself with the international students. I would like to express my sincere respect for the efforts of Matsuda Kensetsu and all others involved.

Nakamura Osamu (NRN member)



I made rice cakes for the first time !

Freshly pounded rice cakes, yummy!

My Recent Days in Mongolia

I studied in Japan for four years and returned to Mongolia last August (2022). Five months have already passed since then.

I work at the Constitutional Law Institute of the National University of Mongolia and the Faculty of Law. I got this job before my return to Mongolia. Interestingly, all three of the institute's current researchers, including myself, are former international students from Nagoya University.

I also teach seminars on "Human Rights Law" and "Constitutional Law" at the Faculty of Law as a part-time teacher.

Since I started working, the main tasks I have carried out include a study on the "right to privacy" submitted to the Constitutional Court, a translation of the compilation of the Venice Commission's reports on "Constitutional Justice", and an expert opinion on "the right to vote" submitted to the Parliamentary Legal Affairs Committee.

Perhaps characteristic of Mongolia, where researchers are few in number, researchers here are expected to work on a wide range of topics in

a short period of time, and on topics that they have not studied much before. In this case, I rely on the research skills I learned in Japan.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to Professor Yoshiharu Matsuura of the Nagoya Ryugakusei Net, who taught me so much.

I will continue to make the most of my studies and experience in Japan. I sincerely appreciate Japan.



Bat-Orshikh Sodgerel
(Constitutional Law Institute of the National University of Mongolia and the Faculty of Law)



Back row, from left:
Bat-Orshikh Sodgerel *
Lkhagvajargal Tumurbaatar

Front row, from left:
Dulguun Battulga
Munkhsaikhan Odonkhuu *
Enkhtsetseg Nergui *

* Former international student at Nagoya University

Walk and Talk

Walk & Talk is an occasion to learn more about the culture, history, and people of the region you live in. The best of all, you can become friends and talk with students learning in the Nagoya area.

Nagoya RyuNet regularly plans a program in which international graduate students spend three hours on a holiday morning walking, visiting places, and talking together.

A nice trip to *Miya-no-Watashi* and Shirotori Garden

On a beautiful sunny day on November 26th, I attended the event "Walk & Talk to Miya no Watashi" of NRN.

We all met at 9:30 at Nagoya University Station as scheduled. After about 30 minutes by train and on foot, we reached *Miya no Watashi*. Professors and members of NRN distributed materials about this place to us, and Professor Matsuura introduced its history. It is a trace of the largest station of the Tokaido Route joining Edo (current Tokyo) to Kyoto during the Edo period. During this visit, I saw the old Night Light Tower, which was rebuilt in 1955, and the "Bell of Time", which aimed to inform the time for residents in the past. Standing near the old Night Light Tower, I saw some antique houses lasting a long time. *Miya no Watashi* is an ideal place for visiting and exploring Japanese history.

Then, we continued to discover Shirotori Garden. It took about 15 minutes to go there from *Miya no Watashi* on a walk. Shirotori Garden is very pretty with red leaves, a unique feature in Fall in Japan. We took many beautiful pictures in this garden. I like our trip a lot.

I want to thank NRN for holding the great trip. I hope we can visit more places in NRN's future activities.

Dang Thi Luu (Grad. Sch. Law, Nagoya Univ.)

Higashiyama Botanical Garden on Oct 1st

Visitors, with a guide inside the botanical garden, enjoyed the autumn plants and traditional A-frame (gassho-zukuri) house.

Nagoya Castle on Oct 22nd

We heard a detailed explanation of the masonry. This is not something we usually pay attention to during our sightseeing. At the faithfully restored Honmaru Palace, we caught a glimpse of the samurai culture.

Miya no Watashi on Nov 26th



group photo at Shirotori Park

The Ferry from *Miya (Miya-no-Watashi)* is the Entrance to the Old Highway

The *Miya* was the entrance to the sea route portion of the Old Tokaido highway. The current ferry place of *Miya* strikes me as quite inland. The ferry port, now a part of the Nagoya Port, is located at the mouth of the Horikawa River, which runs through landfills.

It was also a fresh surprise to see the "Isekyu" (Niwa family residence), an inn from the end of the Edo period (19th century) that remains on the old highway being renovated into something new. A little further down the road, a group home uses a building from the Meiji era.

Then, we visited the Shirotori Garden. The international students might have found the autumn leaves, wooden bridges, and snow hangings on the pine trees in the garden more impressive than the reconstructed night lights and fire watchtowers, the ashes along the water's edge at the ferry site, and the war ruins along the Horikawa River.

"Tracing 400 years of Nagoya on Old Maps" No.1 Edo period [Network2010] is fun and informative about the history of the Nagoya area since the war of Okehazama (1560).
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4dyqqibnvLA>

Ishikawa Masaru (NRN member)

Year End Party

1st session Lunch 12:00~14:00

2nd session Afternoon Tea 14:30~16:30

3rd session Dinner 17:30~19:30



Lunch session

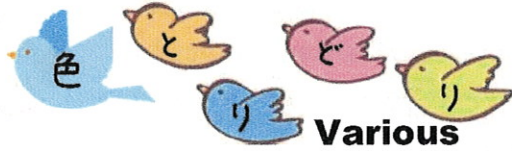
A Warm and Cozy Year-End Party of 2022

As an international student, I was delighted to participate in the 2022 Year-end Party held by NPO Nagoya RyuNet on December 23rd. The party was carefully prepared by members of Ryunet, with flexible times (lunch, afternoon tea, or dinner sessions) and great food. There were 15 international students, professors, and members of Ryunet attended the lunch session. The delicious roast chicken, fresh green salads, and sweet desserts attracted everyone. Best of all, we enjoyed talking during the party, which connected people from different countries and got to know each other better. Everyone was excited to hear participants sharing about New

Year's customs, famous dishes, or attractive travel destinations of their countries (Japan, Vietnam, Mongolia, and Myanmar). Besides, students could freely share their challenges in life or study in the past year and their wishes for the new year. After that, the participants, especially the professors, gave us valuable advice and encouragement. The party was full of pleasure with laughter!

I would like to express my sincere thanks to RyuNet for organizing many meaningful activities for international students. In particular, the cozy Year-end Party made me less homesick and gave me more energy for the new year.

Vu Thi Hien (Grad. Sch. Law, Nagoya Univ.)



In this column, we invite the supporters or the international students of Nagoya Ryugakusei Net to share their thoughts, opinions, and personalities with us. Each issue will be filled with a variety of colorful content. Please look forward to it. The No.3 features Mr Ito Kenji who was a supporter in the event of Walk & Talk to TCMIT.

Epic Journey in Europe in my 20s

Now in my 60s, looking back on my first overseas trip, it was during my summer vacation as a student at Nagoya University when I went on a trip around Europe. I was a backpacker in jeans and a T-shirt, carrying a guidebook "How to walk on the earth". Nowadays, with a smartphone, finding a hotel is a breeze, but back then, we had to first go to the information center at a train station to secure accommodations. After arriving at the hotel and dropping off my luggage, I was finally able to begin exploring the town.

This trip was the starting point of my 40-year career as an international businessman. As someone who was born and raised in Nagoya, Europe was an unknown world to me. I was like a frog in a well, unaware of the vastness of the world, and this trip changed me in a big way. At that time, there was the Cold War between East and West, Germany was a divided country, and the integration of currencies into the Euro was still a long way off. Each time I crossed a border and exchanged money for the local currency, I lost money. There was no tunnel across the English Channel back then, so I had to take a ferry. The world has changed dramatically in just a few decades.

The most important lesson I learned was the importance of "Genchi-genbutsu" or experiencing things firsthand. For example, I had heard that even if French people could speak English, they wouldn't because of their pride. So, in

front of the Louvre, I tried speaking in French, which I had just learned, to a French person around my age. But I couldn't communicate with him at all. I started to doubt whether he was even French, and then he asked me, "Do you speak English?" In the end, we spoke in English. I learned that French young people do speak English. I realized that I couldn't arrive at the truth without seeing things with my own eyes. This trip taught me the importance of "Genchi-genbutsu".

Ito Kenji (NRN supporting member)
Former Professor Nagoya University Graduate School of Law
Former General Manager Legal Department of Toyota Industries Corporation
Former Director of Sangetsu Corporation



in front of the Arc de Triomphe in Paris
author on the right

Activities 2022.9 to the present

◆ Management ◆

- 11/7 Ordinary General Meeting of the 3rd year
- 11/21 Submission of the 2nd year Business Report to Nagoya City
- 11/22 Submission of the Mid-term Report to the Japan Foundation
- 12/5 Registration of Alternation of the Board Members
- 12/6 Submission of the Notice of Alternation of the Board Members to Nagoya City

◆ Permanent Programs ◆

- Off-campus Supporters Program
Aug--Dec See article on page 1.
- Research Audience Program
Dec--Jan Introducing Japanese students to international students to help them learn Japanese

◆ Special Programs ◆

See articles on pages 2 and 3.

◆ Improvement of activity environment ◆

- 8/31 Successful Application for "the 25th Gift Program of Computer Peripheral Equipment" of the E-Parts, a certified NPO. A3 duplex colour printing MFPs was donated.
- 10/12 Successful Application for the "Nagoya City " Assistance Program for Becoming the Approved & Certified NPO" provided an expert (tax accountant) dispatch three times.
- 10/28 Successful Application for the Red Feather Chest Grant Program. See article on page 1.

Editor's Note

With your cooperation, we are pleased to publish our third issue. As you can see from the contents of this issue, Nagoya RyuNet's activities are getting on track. However, Nagoya RyuNet is still not well-known to international students who have just arrived in Japan. So, we are very much looking forward to meeting those new international students at our office soon.

Matsuura Itsuko, Shibata Yuki, Kozaki Kazuko

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● Access

7 minutes west along the Green Belt from Exit 1 of Nagoya University Subway Station on the Meijo Line.



● Map

