

day to take his laundry out two or three times a week, but he said, "That's all right. Don't be worried about that." Every day I washed his towels and socks he had left in his room, but my son, who had stayed in Lismore, said to me, "Almost every family did the washing two or three times at most a week."

- My exchange student was very quick in taking a shower. He didn't take a bath, only a shower every day. He always went to bed very early at night. During his stay at my house, he kept his room at 19 degrees Celsius. The room was overly air-conditioned and I felt uncomfortably cold when I entered his room.
- My student easily went numb from sitting on the floor in a short time.
- My girl exchange student didn't always eat much and her stable food wasn't bread. She used fork and knife very well of course, but she couldn't use chopsticks very well.



Q3) What were you pleased about or delighted at in everyday life you spent with your exchange student?

- Our family had a little difficulty in making ourselves in English between our girl exchange student at first, but happily we gradually felt relaxed and could have a talk with her understanding each other. She talked to us about her family and also about her future life she was aiming at. We told her about our business and something she would be interested in. (I wonder if she could understand us, though.)
- Our family and some friends my daughter invited had hoped to have a 'takoyaki party' with my exchange student, so we spent a happy time relishing takoyaki with him. He also enjoyed playing 'kendama' with us, which our guest friends had brought. We saw him playing it many times until he succeeded in it. We could not help laughing at his serious trials. That was really a heart-warming scene for us. When we took him to a 100-yen shop, he bought 5 or 6 kendama-toys which could be got at 100 yen each. In addition, we were very delighted at his sensitive consideration for his family. He looked around for souvenir shops to buy a lot of Japanese traditional gifts suitable for each of his family and he bought something even for his cat. On top of that we were very happy that she didn't leave any Japanese food at every meal saying, "How delicious! Yummy, yum-yum!"
- Our exchange student was very mild-minded and easily became familiar with us sooner than we had expected, though we had been worried about how to treat an exchange student. Whenever we cooked meals and cleared the table, he asked us if he could help us. So we

thought that he must have helped his parents cook every meal at home. He merrily spent a lot of time with us watching DVD and making Australian cakes called Pavolova. Saying noisily about how to make them, we went shopping for the ingredients of them, which was a very happy time for us.

- Our exchange student brought from his hometown Lismore the ingredients (a kind of flour and canned fruits) for making the cakes called Pavolova, so we tried hard to make the cakes and enjoyed eating them, which tasted great.
- We, together with children in the neighborhood, talked very much about Japan and Australia. Our exchange student talked much about his country. We ate toast with that famous Australian Vegemite on, but almost all of us said it didn't taste so good. We had great fun with our exchange student strolling around the Namba area in Osaka, and doing the sights of Osaka Castle, Kinkaku-ji Temple, the Kyoto Nishiki marketplace with a variety of shops there and so on. One evening we enjoyed eating dinner which she cooked by herself. It was a dish, a kind of Greek food, and it looked like gratin. We happily spent the dinner time on that day talking about each other's country and city. We took a walk in the neighbourhood. We played some games and outdoors. She played the guitar very well, so we asked her to teach us how to play it.

Q4) Would you like to be a host family again if you have a chance?

- Yes. I think that our family could gain precious experience as a host family, though I was worried about the welcoming of an exchange student at first. The problem is, we have a few rooms in our house, so we are now wondering if we can be a good host family. I can say it's OK in case of a short term. To tell the truth, I caused some trouble to the company I work for, because sometimes I was late for the office or I had to leave it early. I do want to volunteer for a host family after my retirement in a few years ahead.
- Yes. I gained much knowledge through my experience this time about how to live a happy life. I changed my way of thinking about that, because through precious experience with the exchange student my children themselves have come to live their everyday life more positively and more vividly than before. My children as well as I could learn a lot through the life with an Australian exchange student. I would like to be a host family if I can get a chance.
- Yes, but now I can't say I want to, because I lead a busy life with no time to spare at present.
- Yes, I would. I do want to be a host family at any cost.



The Bamboo Shoots

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We do hope The Bamboo Shoots born out of the soil of Yamato-Takada will grow up and act as a go-between for the citizens in Lismore and in Yamato-Takada



Yamato Takada 2016 visit Questionnaire

Q1) What were your first impressions of Yamatotakada?

- I instantly noticed how kind and gentle the people were. Everyone was welcoming, helpful and understanding of the language barrier. I also noticed that the city was much less green than Lismore. There were a lot of tall buildings and the area was more urban and developed, in a way.
- It was a nice and friendly looking city, and I really liked the cleanliness of it all. It was very small and compacted.
- My first impression of Yamato Takada was great! The nature and friendly people was awesome. I could see from the start, I knew I was in for a great time.
- My first impression of Yamato Takada was that it was absolutely stunning, it was gorgeous and so well designed, I felt like I had stepped into a fantasy world.
- Yamatotakada was a very developed city. It was very clean and beautiful and the people I met were so friendly they almost were like family.

Q2) What differences were you surprised at in terms of culture/manners and customs?

- Compared to in Australia the people in Japan are much more humble. However, Australian culture is much more laid back and outgoing, where as I noticed many of the

Japanese students were extremely passionate about learning and constant study and leisure activities after school was very normal. The manners of the community made the transition from one culture to another much more relaxed. Again, the people were extremely welcoming and understanding.

- What surprised me the most was how kind and friendly everyone was. It was a highly respectful culture and I was blown away by it all.
- The thing I was surprised the most with the cultural/manners was the fact that the Japanese people were so courteous with everything and very generous.
- I was surprised at how quintet they were compared to Australian people and the food took a little while to get used to.
- I was very surprised at the culture and how we are very different to Japan. The way that Japanese people act around each other, how they treat one another with the most respect was quite fascinating.

Q3) What impressed you most with regard to your host family?

- The Fujisawa family were incredibly welcoming and I will forever be grateful. My host Mum, was very kind and loving, it was as if I had lived there forever. And my host father was very funny and genuinely kind. Nanami's

dedication to her studies and Track and Field practices, I thought, was the most impressive and inspiring thing in regards to my stay.

- I guess what impressed me the most with my host family was the lifestyle that they had. It was different to Australian lifestyles in the way that they seemed very distant, or far apart. It was weird to me because in Australia we have such close family's. I enjoyed it all the same.
- The one thing that impressed me most with my host family was the fact that they could take a stranger into their house and treat them like their own child.
- Everything about my host family impressed me, they were just the most beautiful and welcoming people I had ever met.
- My host family was very understanding they treated me like their own family. I loved how kind they were and how with the entire Kanjo family they took me to Kinkakuji.

Q4) What was your impression about Hiroshima?

- Visiting Hiroshima was a very moving. The Peace Memorial had a way of allowing me to grasp a sense of tragedy and live, in a way, vicariously through the people who suffered. It was very inspiring seeing the amount of people there, tourists and locals, interested in learning about the tragedy and show their sympathy with the origami cranes; that was something I was very grateful to be apart of.
 - Hiroshima was a very powerful experience. It was very sad for me because I did not know much about what had happened. But I came out of it knowing a lot more than I had before, so I think it was an amazing experience.
 - Hiroshima was the best experience ever... My impression at first was that it was really dull, but soon, after a bit of exploring the place really warmed up to me the place was amazing to high tech and definitely a place I would like to go back to.
 - I did enjoy myself in Hiroshima but became very emotional during the tour of the museum, I left feeling like a changed person. Hiroshima was a beautiful place but also very emotional.
 - Hiroshima was amazing. I enjoyed every moment of it. The next time I visit Japan I want to explore even more of Hiroshima and what it has to offer.
- Looking at all the scenery was very breath taking. It is very hard to imagine that this city was once bombed. Visiting the A-Bomb museum was very knowledgeable as I learned the stories of people who survived the terrifying event and the people who didn't. Hiroshima is a beautiful place and I love how they look for peace rather than revenge.

My Time in Yamato Takada

By Michella Wade

With five excited Lismore students in tow, I entered the waiting area of Kansai Airport to where Yoshiko and Kazuyoshi were waiting. Seeing their familiar faces made me feel so welcomed and I was so pleased to be back in Japan.

Seeing all the Japanese students that came to Lismore again and meeting their families was wonderful and I knew right away that my Australian students were all in good hands for the duration of our stay. I was also very happy to see my host 'Mum' Mayumi. After living in the Todoroki house last year, I was excited to be able to stay there again. I was also very happy to meet Mineko, who I had been conversing with over the months prior.

The next morning, we all arrived at the Community Centre to speak English with the Yamato Takada children. This is a lovely way to start the week in Japan. The Lismore students have so much fun with the Yamato Takada children and I hope that the children get just as much out of the experience as we do.

As always our meeting with Mayor Yoshida on Monday morning was warm and welcoming. Mayor Yoshida's gifts to the students were so generous; they all loved their fans.

The rest of the week was spent exploring Yamato Takada. I was afraid that I was not going to enjoy my time as much as it was my second time visiting but I was very happy that wasn't the case. The week was full of new experiences along with the revisiting of places that already had happy memories. The experience I loved the most was the visit to the Kindergarten. Meeting the pre-schoolers and playing and singing with them is one of my happiest memories that I will treasure forever.



Sadly, the week came to an end far too quickly. We were all very sad for the farewell dinner as we wished we could stay longer. I was very fortunate at the dinner to have been gifted a lovely Yukata. We were all very happy to be able to perform for those attending the dinner and the Yamato Takada students are so very talented. I was blown away by their beautiful performance.

I received a lovely surprise the next day when Kazuyoshi took me to a cat café. I have a cat here in Australia and by

this time I was really missing her. It was such a fun experience and if you like cats I would definitely recommend it!

On Sunday morning we were all at the train station to head to Hiroshima and it was a very sad occasion. After a week with our host families we did not want to leave them. It was hugs and tears all round and finally I had to drag a few Lismore students away from their host families so we could get on the train! As this was my second time in Hiroshima I was ready for how emotive the experience is but I was very moved to see that the students were touched also. They all came away with a sense of purpose to help stop atomic production and the need for peace in the world. My second time in Yamato Takada was just as wonderful as the first. I find the people of Yamato Takada to be kind and welcoming and I am so proud to be a part of the Sister City Student Exchange Program. As I have seen first-hand how much the students from both sides get out of these exchange experiences, my hope is that it continues on for many years to come.



Questionnaires to Host Families in 2016

The host families, who had accepted the exchange students from Lismore, Australia, for each, answered the questionnaires below. They stayed with them in Takada for two weeks. Most of the Japanese exchange students had already stayed with each of the Lismore exchange students for as many days as they did.

Q1) What kind of trouble or confusion did you have through living with your exchange student?

- What troubled me the most was about food. Before she arrived, I, as a host mother, had been worried about meals. I didn't know if she liked Japanese food. As I'd thought that I should serve her Japanese dishes in Japan, I decided that I should serve her Japanese food for dinner. She was a light eater and I needn't have worried about meals.
- No trouble or confusion, but when my son was out, I was

confused a little because of my poor English. We could have a good and friendly relationship with the exchange student, because my son had stayed with a Lismore family who were very kind to my son. So we could know about the way of taking care of an Australian student in advance, which was very lucky for us. My son and the exchange student were able to understand each other soon after he arrived here in Takada. If we had had no knowledge about Australians, we might have been troubled very much about daily life with the exchange student from Lismore.

- What troubled me most was about meals. She was a small eater, but she ate too much at dinner before she felt full. So she had no appetite at breakfast the next morning. Naturally I became worried about that very much. I was so sorry for that I prepared three items at breakfast, such as toasts, sweet rolls or cakes and rice, so that she could choose her favorite item among them. That was because I'd had no idea about what Japanese food was to her taste.
- I had no problems about food, because I had known that my student liked Japanese food in advance. He seemed to try to eat Japanese food of his own will, such as natto or fermented soybeans, every kind of miso soup and so on. I was very much touched by him and felt relieved so much as well.
- I felt a language barrier difficult to understand each other when we spoke English. I had a little difficulty in cooking meals as my student was kind of a picky eater. One day she got out of shape and I was very confused about that.

Q2) What kind of difference did you find in lifestyle and culture?

- My student took a shower almost every day, and that twice a day.
- Surprisingly my exchange student once put her shoes on her duvet futon at her first night in Japan.
- On my student's first day in Japan he entered my house with his sneakers on. We immediately explained the manners and customs in entering the house in Japan (thinking with a smile that it wasn't surprising for him to do that). From that day on he put his shoes away to the side at the front door without our suggestion and came on up. So we thought that he was far cooler than my son who never put his shoes aside neatly in entering the house. As I had heard about some cultural differences beforehand, I had some worries about his everyday life in Takada. But I was relieved to know that he knew very well about how to use chopsticks, how to use a Japanese-style toilet and also how to take a bath (though he always took a shower). So I didn't feel cultural differences between us in particular.
- It may depend on each individual, but my student didn't want to take out his clothes to wash. So I told him every

