



The Bamboo Shoots

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Contact:
Yamato Takada Lismore Sister City Association
TEL:0745-22-1101
<https://www.city.yamatotakada.nara.jp/lismore/>

We hope The Bamboo Shoots born out of the soil of Yamato Takada will grow up and act as a bridge between the citizens of Lismore and Yamato Takada



Lismore Exchange Students visit Yamato Takada (September 30~October 10, 2025)

This year, five students and one chaperone from Lismore, came to Yamatotakada. They visited local schools and a sock factory. They also participated in a peace study tour in Hiroshima. They experienced life and culture of Yamatotakada and Japan. They spent weekends with their host families and returned home after an 11-day stay here in Yamatotakada.

Reflections from Lismore Students

Q. What was your first impression of Yamato Takada?

•My first impression of Yamato Takada was that it was very well-developed and organized, balancing nature along with its buildings, monuments, and shops. I admired the way this city seemed to strike



Courtesy visit to the mayor

a balance between modern infrastructure and a warm, peaceful atmosphere. I felt like this city had a very similar atmosphere to Lismore. But I got very excited when I saw the name 'Yamato Takada' written on the highway signs – it wasn't just a name. It was a place that held so much meaning for me, and for my students to discover what it



would be. Therefore, it marked the beginning of an emotional connection with a place, one that was special beyond its appearance.

- When I arrived in Yamatotakada I found that it was very peaceful and that there was just a strong sense of calmness. Within this peaceful place I was able to discover its beauty. Along with this I found that Yamatotakada has such kind, warmhearted people. Everyone I had the opportunity to talk with on the very first day showed nothing but utter kindness
- My first impression of Yamatotakada was that it was so clean. The people were quiet, polite and so lively. I loved how different it was from Australia. I was in shock that I was actually in Japan just when I arrived.
- It was a very beautiful place. The streets were clean unlike here and everyone we met were very nice.

Q. While you were here in Japan, were there any differences in culture manners / customs that surprised you?

• While in Japan, I encountered many cultural differences, with one particularly memorable experience being my visit to the various schools. The students welcomed everyone warmly and got along well. However, one of the surprising differences was when we visited Takada Commercial High School and joined their physical education class. The dancing, the synchronized movements, and the teamwork in the jump rope demonstrated a level of discipline, memorization, and teamwork. Hence, I realized how deeply

teamwork, precision, respect and harmony are valued in Japanese culture, giving me a new appreciation and outlook.

- Personally, I did not know that such a peaceful and quiet place existed. Compared to where I live in Australia, in Yamatotakada the noise was very different. I was very grateful to be able to be shown some of Japan's culture. Everyone is very polite in Yamatotakada and even if you are complete strangers the people of Yamatotakada always show kindness and welcome you. When looking at the difference between Australia and Japan's manners it is very different but it was amazing to experience it.
- There were lots of differences in Japan, but I knew about some from watching anime. Everyone was so respectful and nice. The toilets were a bit different but I worked it out after a little bit. I loved the difference in food and everything I tried was so delicious.
- There were not so many difference, but I think the biggest difference was that the students clean the whole school

Q. What impressed you about your host family?

• I was impressed by their level of English, and how awesome they were in their own special ways. I had a great time learning Japanese from them and teaching them English in return. We'd read together in the evenings, with them showing me pictures and me helping them with their



pronunciation of English words. But what I loved the most was getting to spend time with my host family in various ways – playing and reading with the children, preparing food and cooking alongside with my host mother, and talking and looking at travelling photos with my host father. Though there was not much time to spend with them, it felt like my efforts were helping build and shape future efforts for friendship, peace and cultural exchange.

- Honestly, everything! I was honored to be able to stay with such a beautiful host family, they showed so much interest in me and we stayed up late most nights having the absolute best time just talking with each other. They gave me so many opportunities to try new things, from this I was able to enjoy and treasure so many memories. We went for walks together, visited temples, went to a candle night, visited a big mall and just enjoyed our time together. They welcomed me and made me feel at home instantly, I am so grateful for them.
- That they were so sweet. I was worried that speaking would be really hard but it wasn't bad. There were a couple times that google translate was needed but overall the speaking was fine. I was also surprised that they knew a lot about Australia and our culture.
- My host family was amazing. They were very caring and I loved having dinner with them and talking about our day. They were truly amazing and I am so grateful to them for having me and being so kind to me.

Q. What was your impression of Hiroshima ?

- Hiroshima felt like a very new city when we first arrived at the train station and visited Miyajima Island. Everyone was very friendly, but even on the tram travelling toward the Peace Memorial, you could already feel how heavy and serious this city was, like it was pressing down on your shoulders. You could feel how much we needed peace in the world, and Hiroshima served as a living, breathing memorial of why the sister-city relationship is an essential foundation for peace and harmony around our world. The knowledge shared there is something to remember always, to work toward peace.
- I felt very honored to be able to experience a visit to Hiroshima. It holds so much history that I had the opportunity to learn about. It was amazing to see that lots of people were learning about it whilst we were there too as it showed how important it is to learn about the history of this emotional event
- I loved visiting Hiroshima, it was surprising to see all the foreigners there, when in Yamatotakada it felt like we were the only foreigners that were there. It was much



The guide taught us a lot about the Atomic Bomb Dome.



more busy which made it a little more overwhelming but it was still very fun. Looking through the museum was such a sad but educational experience.

- It was a very beautiful place with a lot of history. It was very emotional after learning more about what happened and learning the stories of the people who died and survived it but it was still one of my favourite experiences of the trip and definitely one that will stay with me for a long time.

Q. What was your most enjoyable experience?

- The most enjoyable aspect was experiencing this journey with my students, sharing experiences and teaching them about the culture and language and learning from them in return. From the World Expo to our cultural activities to visiting the schools, spending time alongside each of them was the most enjoyable experience. However, even when supervising and guiding them, I learned a great deal about each of them, watching them flourish with their unique strengths and insights. Not only that, but when things got difficult, they managed to support each other, too, with companionship, laughter and camaraderie. Therefore, I was honoured to help them in their journeys, and hope that this experience will positively influence their



future paths, much like the exchange program did for me.

So, thank you, for allowing us to experience the culture, the manners and the customs of not just Japan, but the essence of Yamato Takada, and the community pride that comes from here.

- Within my trip it was incredible to be able to experience so many things and meet so many people. Being able to spend quality time with my host family was a beautiful experience, as well as being able to visit schools of all ages! I had an incredible time talking to students from Yamatotakada and made so many friends, which was amazing too. This trip overall was a beautiful experience and I am extremely grateful for everything I got to do and see. I am excited to come back again, hopefully soon!
- Every activity that we did was amazing and I loved being involved in everything. The most fun thing that we did was getting to walk around the cities and seeing all the different things that Japan has. I loved doing all the activities and visits, especially visiting the high school.
- It was really amazing getting to go to all the places with such an amazing group of people and getting to see Japan in a way that I don't think I would of if it was just a holiday. Getting to stay with a host family that let me live like a local was truly amazing.





Reflections from Host Family

Q. Were there any differences in culture / manners / customs that surprised you?

- He would say "Bless You" every time we sneezed. He would always take the time to say it when we sneezed.
- He didn't know the game Othello.
- He only seemed to brush his teeth at night.
- He always cleaned his ears after a bath.
- She came here because she loves Japan, and seemed to understand Japanese culture and customs, so even when I explained a little to her, she would often nod and listen, and I never had any problems.
- The difference in the perceived indoor temperature. The room temperature was comfortable enough for me to sleep, but she slept with the air conditioner on at 21°C all night. I wondered if she felt uncomfortable with the air temperature in the living room. When she took a shower in the morning, she left the hot water running at full power the whole time.
- The smell of fabric softener, which is unique to foreign countries, was a little strong. They would only use the shower, but since they had come to Japan, I thought it would have been good opportunity for them to try the bath as well.
- The sleeping hours were completely different. They would wake up early in the morning and go to bed very late, so I worried about their energy levels. Houses in Japan are smaller than those overseas, and many of them don't have dogs, so she

seemed to be lonely.

- They had a great understanding of Japanese culture, so there were no particular problems.

Q. What was your most enjoyable experience?

- It was fun the whole time. He was always smiling and looked me in the eye politely when answering me. He was a really good kid.
- He seemed interested in the process of cooking and asked me a lot of questions.
- He seemed to like the 'matcha flavor', so he bought lots of them when we went shopping together. He was surprised at how many different types of KitKat there were.
- They were interested in McDonalds in Japan because they had worked part-time at McDonalds. So when I took them there, they seemed to be very happy. They spoke about how the inside of the shop, uniform and overall atmosphere were completely different from those of Australia's McDonalds.
- We ate together (sushi, shabu-shabu, ramen, etc.) and talked about food. She showed me photos of her school life in Australia. We went to a sumo wrestling hall and took pictures wearing sumo wrestler costumes.
- After dinner, we talked a lot about differences in culture and eating habits. We played games such as Bozumekuri. (Japanese traditional cards). We watched music videos of songs we both knew on You



Tube and sang along. We took a leisurely walk in the park. She wore a yukata and played with fireworks. We were amazed at the size and shape of the radishes at the supermarket and also at the live crabs they sell. It was fun teaching each other some other kinds of differences about food sold at each supermarket.

- It was my son's birthday, so he held a small birthday celebration and prepared a present for my son.
- I was happy that I could go to my high school with her and that she would tell me about what happened every time when she had something new. We lit hand-held fireworks together and I learned more about things I didn't know about Australia. She was happy wherever we went, and I was glad that I was able to show her lots of things about Osaka and Nara. I also realized that my English skills have improved since I went Lismore. I cooked the food that she had always wanted to eat, and it looked like she had a lot of fun watching her favorite anime with my brother.
- We had fun shopping together at the 100-yen-shop and supermarket, and making Tsukimi (mooniewing) dumplings.
- They read picture books in English to children.
- It was also fun talking about various things over dinner.

Q. How did you feel about the students you hosted?

- I was grateful that they tried so hard to listen to our broken English.
- They were so genuine and seemed to enjoy being in Japan.
- They ate rice balls and miso soup every morning.
- I was impressed by how well they held their

chopsticks.

- I also realized that she was interested in daily Japanese culture, such as a kimono, which she wore in Australia, Ramune, Japanese soda, which she said she had had in Australia when she drank it together with us in Japan.
- She was earnest, honest, and very proactive in all aspects of cross-cultural exchange. We shared many common hobbies, sports, so I think we quickly became close. She was someone I would definitely like to meet again if I had the chance.
- We took him to some castles and Kyoto, but he showed almost no interest.

This exchange program was a very good experience for our family. My son has started studying for the Grade 2 English Proficiency Test, and my mother has started learning English using a smartphone app. Thank you very much!!

- Because I had experienced the exchange program in Lismore in August at the exchange student's house, who would stay at my place in Yamatotakada later, I did my best to communicate and asked her what she wanted to do in Japan during my stay in Lismore. For that reason I was very happy when I met her after two months. All the students were kind and easy to converse with in English.

Everyone said that their Japanese wasn't very good. However, they used phrases like "Arigato gozaimasu" and "Itadakimasu". The greetings from the students showed that they had been speaking every day and were studying hard. I am so happy that they all left loving Japan even more than they did before this exchange.

- I am truly grateful that my family and I were able to have such a valuable experience. I hope that we can meet again.

Bamboo English



The Yamato-Takada Lismore Sister-City Association creates an opportunity for children from age five through grade six from Yamato Takada city to engage with and experience English twice a month. During this program, which starts in April and ends in March next year, the kids express their curiosity for everyday things, such as animals, vegetables, fruits, colours, shapes, sports, and jobs, and enjoy exploring how these words are said in English.

They had a wonderful time with exchange students from Lismore, practicing simple

greetings in English, as well as playing paper sumo wrestling and cricket. Additionally, they enjoyed learning English through annual events, such as Halloween and Christmas.

Through Bamboo English, we hope children will develop an interest in English and, as they grow into high school students, go on to visit Lismore as exchange students. We hope these experiences will help them become a bridge between Yamatotakada City and Lismore City.



In memory of Father Paul Glynn

The "Bridge of Love" that has laid the foundation for the sister-city relationship



<< In Memoriam >>

On January 23, 2026, Father Paul Glynn passed away at the age of 97 in Sydney, Australia. During his 71 years as a priest, he established a sister-city relationship between Yamatotakada and Lismore, and dedicated his life to reconciliation and friendship between the two countries. We would like to express our deepest respect and gratitude, and offer our most sincere condolences.

© The beginning of the first Japan-Australia sister-city partnership

Father Glynn came to Japan in 1955 and was assigned to Takada Catholic Church the following year in 1956. Learning that Takada City lacked kindergartens at the time, he launched a fundraising campaign in both Japan and Australia, and completed the construction of Takada Catholic Kindergarten in 1957.

Later, the priest noticed that although there were many sister cities in Australia, there were no partnerships with any Japanese cities. He then came up with the idea of forming a partnership between his hometown of Lismore and Yamatotakada, and sent a letter in English to the mayor at the time, Senzo Nagura. Mayor Nagura, who was fluent in English, immediately agreed to the priest's proposal, and discussions progressed rapidly.

Then, on August 7, 1963, a historic sister city signing ceremony was held. This was the day after the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, and the ceremony reflected Father Glynn's strong desire to "pledge peace on the day after that sad day." Thus, was born the first sister city partnership between Japan and Australia.

© Achievements and recent activities

Father Glynn's activities are based on a strong belief that the hatred of war can be transformed into love. He lived in Japan for over 20 years and studied the Japanese language and culture in depth. In recognition of his achievements, he was awarded the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Rosette by the Japanese government, the Order of Australia (OAM) by the Australian government, and in 2010 he was awarded an honorary doctorate by Southern Cross University.

Even in his later years, he continued to watch over the exchange between the two cities, and after the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011, he organized fundraising drives in both Japan and Australia, making significant donations. At the 50th anniversary sister city forum in 2013, he spoke powerfully, saying, "Australia, with its short history, and Japan, with its ancient culture, must respect each other and create a better world with true love."

The covenant he led set out the lofty ideal that "this friendship will not be limited to the two cities, but will contribute to peace throughout the world." True to those words, the number of sister cities between Japan and Australia has now grown to over 100.

© An eternal farewell, and towards the future

The seeds of friendship planted by the priest have grown into large trees, and the next generation of young people are deepening their bonds through an exchange student program that has been in place since 1985. The "bridge of love" that Father Glynn left to our city is an irreplaceable treasure that we, the citizens, must pass on to the next generation. Yamatotakada City expresses its heartfelt respect for Father Paul Glynn's great achievements, and promises to continue to cherish and protect the bonds of friendship he built.

Rest in peace, Father Paul Glynn. We hold a deep and everlasting gratitude for your lifelong mission of fostering love and reconciliation between our two nations.