



Yamatotakada-Genki Week in action

The famous exhibitions called “Genki Week” took place everywhere in Yamatotakada city from November 7th to 15th and during the period various kinds of events were held as usual. On 14th and 15th a lot of people enjoyed seeing the stage show performed by the so-called ‘Yuru-Kyara’ or ‘Comforted Model Characters’ coming from all over Japan in the park on the east side of JR Takada station. There were some other popular events there, such as ‘Umaimon-ichi’ or ‘Delicious food Markets’, ‘Agricultural Fair’ and so on, so every event was crowded with a

lot of customers.

Some of the members belonging to ‘Yamato Takada Lismore Sister City Association’ sold the sweets ‘Lamington’ as usual. The exchange students who visited Lismore last year helped them sell the sweets earnestly. The 500 bags of Lamington prepared beforehand were all sold out before evening.



Mayor Jenny Dowell receives Commendation, Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The Minister of Foreign Affairs commendation in the year of 2015 was given to Mayor Jenny Dowell of Lismore City, Australia, which is in the relationship as sister cities with Yamatotakada city for a long time. This commendation is expected to be awarded to persons or organizations who have made a great contribution to the building-up friendship between Japan and other countries.

Mayor Dowell, who won her first election to



Mayor awarded by Mr. Masato Takaoka, Consul-General of Japan.

the Mayor of Lismore City in 2008, has cherished the friendship between Lismore and Yamatotakada since the conclusion of the agreement of the sister city relationship in 1963.

The two cities celebrated the 50th anniversary of Sister City Relationship in 2013 and since then both of the cities have encouraged each other to exchange friendship letters and also to promote further interaction on Skype in order to understand each other much better.

“I am very honoured to receive this award. I have a great love of Japan, particularly since visiting there myself, and the friendships I have developed with the Mayor of Yamatotakada and the people of the city are very special to me...This award affirms that Lismore City Council values that friendship as much today as when it started 52 years ago,” Mayor Dowell said.



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



“Eigo de asobo!” or “Let’s have fun playing in English!”

The event called “Eigo de asobo!” was opened at the Yu-u-yu-u Center on September 27th, 2015. This event was intended for the pupils from five-year-old kindergarten and nursery school children to 2nd year-grade elementary school children in order for them to become familiar with English through playing. Seven students from Lismore attended the event with the children.

In the center were displayed landscape photos of both of the cities, Lismore and

Yamatotakada, Australian books and clothes, aboriginal pictures, boomerangs and so on.

The tools for playing cricket are unfamiliar to the Japanese, so students from Lismore showed Japanese participants in the event how to play cricket using the tools.

The children who participated in the event had a good time singing and dancing with the Lismore students, saying “We would like to visit Australia someday, the climate of which is completely opposite to that of Japan.”



Australian students' answers to the questionnaires in 2015

Seven senior high school students and an attendant city officer of Lismore stayed in Yamatotakada city for 10 days from September 25th to October 4th in 2015. The party attended the event called "Eigo de asobo!" or "Have fun playing in English!" held in September 27th, paid a visit to Hiroshima to study "Peace", did the sightseeing tour at Todaiji Temple in Nara and experienced the school life in local sister elementary schools and Takada Commercial Senior High School.

Before the exchange students left for Lismore, they filled in the questionnaires about their stay in Yamatotakada.



1) What were your first impressions of Yamatotakada?

- How it is just so different from Lismore, the cars are much smaller and so are the roads, even so there are better drives in Yamatotakada.
- It was a lot of bigger and developed from what I had first anticipated. Also the beauty of both the suburbs and rice fields was an amazing thing to view.
- My first impression was it looked quite city-like, a little bit more than Lismore. But over the next few days, I saw all the fields of rice and sakura cotton beautifully contrasting with the buildings around it, and then wondered how big Yamatotakada really was. Another impression was that Yamatotakada would be quite a small place in comparison to Lismore or any other places.
- The city was so big. There were so many houses that just seemed to span on forever. I also think that your roads are so narrow and I think all Japanese drivers are amazing for being able to drive on them so well.
- Yamatotakada is very different from Lismore. The streets and housing are more dense, yet it is a very charming city. I have found that it is very easy to get around and this is a great asset to the city. Over the last 10 days, it has become "home" to me and holds a special place in my heart.
- An extremely beautiful and well-built city. Very nice and respectful people.

2) Did you enjoy yourself in Hiroshima?

What was your impression about Hiroshima?

- Yes, I enjoyed myself very much! My impression of Hiroshima is a place with a hard past that has managed to build itself back up into an amazing place again.

- Yes, it was a highly enjoyable experiences. It was filled with highly emotive historical information that was both shocking and unbelievable. It is seen to me as a place that will forever stay in remembrance with me.

- I enjoyed myself a lot in Hiroshima. My impression was that it had recovered well after 10 years since the A-bomb hit. It is a beautiful place, with a history we should all learn about, for if we do not learn about history, we are destined to repeat it.

- I thought that going to Hiroshima was a wonderful experience. We all should go there once in our lives to learn about the horrors that atomic weapons cause and to hopefully spread the need for peace in the world.

- I had a very good time in Hiroshima. It is a very beautiful, spacious city. It was a beautiful, bustling city. Visiting the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum was a very sad event. It was difficult to see the pain inflicted on innocent Japanese citizens.

- Hiroshima was an experience I'll never forget. I had a very good time in Hiroshima and someday I hope to go back.

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

* About living:

- That many families live in the grandparents' houses. The slippers also, it makes the house seem much cleaner. Before and after they eat they always thank for the food.

- The respect that all members had for the entire household.

- In Australia, it's not common to hear someone say "Thank you for the meal" at the beginning and at the end of any meal. In Japan, I was very surprised to find that they had a use for everything, and that they didn't do something without a reason for it.

- For me it was just how close all the houses are to each other they are all packed in with no yards-very different to Australia. Also the families seem to go to bed very late and wake up very early. This is very different in Australia. We like our sleepings!!

- The showers here are slightly different. Instead of being fixed to the wall, the shower head can be detached from the wall. I've also noticed from my own and the other students experiences that Japanese go to bed quite late (around 11-12 p.m.), whereas in Australia it would usually be around 8:30-10:30 p.m.

- The respectfulness in a family and how clean everything was. Japan has a very good lifestyle that I would like to live in for longer.

*About school life:

- School life is very interesting and the schools are very clean, there is no vandalism on the walls and the buildings are built up tall instead of long. The children are also extremely organized.

- The way in which each student was enthralled in their schooling.

- I was quite surprised to see how long the students stay at school, from arriving early in the morning to staying past 5 in the afternoon for club activities. Classes in Australia do not stand up from their desks and bow to their teacher whenever a class starts, and we do not wear slippers within the school grounds instead of our shoes that we wear to school.

- I enjoyed being in the schools. From the school lunch in the elementary school to the PE in the high school. There were a lot of differences. I am so happy that the Australian students could experience this.



- School life is very different in Japan. Instead of morning classrooms each period, the students stay in allocated classrooms. I also noticed that the students clean the school themselves, whereas in Australia students do not.

- I also thought the level of student participation of after school activities was very good. It is very easy to do clubs and activities after school in Japan.

- More formal and much better respectful students than Australia. I hope to take back to my school what I learnt at yours.

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

- Their kindness and how they greeted me with open arms and warm hearts, their great cooking and concern. Also the amount of effort they put into understanding me. Just about everything has made me very impressed.

- Their kind and warm nature and their capacity to exceed all expectations. The experience in Japan would not of had such an impact without my loving host family.

- That my host family were so kind and inviting, with a great amount of respect to me being in their home. I know I must've been a bit of trouble in terms of understanding communication between us, but Honoka knew a fair amount of English and eventually my host family could speak a basic level of English. I suppose I cannot pick one single thing that impressed me the most, because they did so many things that impressed me. I hold great respect for my host family, and I don't think I would've had the opportunity to do all the things I've done in Japan had it not been for them.

- My host family are very lovely people. They have opened up their home to me and looked after me. I was so grateful to be a part of their buddist memorial for their past grandfather. I will cherish that experience.

- My host family have been very, very kind. They have made me feel that I am a part of their family. They are incredibly generous and helpful, and they are always there for me. They never got annoyed at the language barrier, or when I failed at using chopsticks; they always would try their best to translate for me, and always applauded my chopstick skills, however bad they may be. I will never forget their kindness and their efforts to make me feel like I belonged.

- Everything. They were the greatest host family I could have ever asked for. Extremely generous and nice people that will remain in my heart forever.

- We are one big family now.

Host families' answers to the questionnaires in 2015

1) What were you confused about while living with your Australian students?

- Our Japanese used every day didn't work at all to her.
- We were always concerned about meals, because she ate nothing but cooked rice and water at meals.
- We were always wondering if we served her what she liked at meals or if she was forced to eat what she didn't like at all, because we hadn't known her likes or dislikes about meals or her favorite food in advance.
- We couldn't make ourselves understood in English, though she tried to catch us.
- We were worried about meals all the more because our student was a light eater.

2) What did you realize in terms of cultural differences or manners and customs?

- We really didn't realize any differences except for meals.
- We were very glad to see our Australian student use chopsticks very well.
- Our student didn't take a shower every day.
- Our student always went to bed early, before 9 o'clock every night.

3) What did you take pleasure in while living with Australian exchange students?

- We had a pleasant talk with her until late every night.
- On a holiday we went to Osaka and then our student showed great interest in getting on a ship there and also in climbing stairs up to the top of Osaka Castle without taking an escalator. Our student had a very happy day with us spending the day with satisfaction.
- Our student finished off a box meal using chopsticks very well.
- Our student tried to learn the Japanese language.
- We were happy with the Australian student all day long, talking loudly to each other with a cheerful laugh.
- We were very surprised to know that our student know very well about Japan.
- Our student showed us a lot of pictures about her family and Australia with good explanation about them.
- Happily our student called us her Japanese family. In addition she told us that she looked forward to coming to Japan someday. We were also very happy to hear that.

4) Would you like to be a host family again if you have another time or an opportunity?

- Yes, I would like to. I do want to be a host family.
- I'm sure to be a host family again if I have time.

