

Greetings from the President's Office

2018.11.26 NO.13

International Students Remake Themselves in Akita

All AIU students are required to study abroad at one of our partner institutions in 49 countries and regions at the late sophomore or early junior year as exchange students. Meanwhile at AIU, there are regularly a strong number of international exchange students on campus. Roughly speaking, the student body consists of freshmen, sophomore and senior students as regular students and international students in the junior year.

In addition to daily study at AIU, international students have many opportunities to experience local Japanese society and learn about people's daily life through local agriculture or industry. Taking this opportunity, I would like to introduce what they have learned, and how they have felt through their study and life in Akita from our AIU official website pages, "Student Voice."

Wasini from Thammasat University, Thailand, wrote about her experience of joining the AIU Kanto Team's *O-hayashi* (musicians) group and mentioned that it was not easy and needed to put a lot of effort into practice sessions. As a result, she gained not only friendship, but also learned the Japanese way to respect people, gained deeper insight into the culture, and grew to become a more responsible person. She also had an opportunity to participate in a two-day apple orchard stay in Yokote. She found that the best apples are from the result of every single detail that farmers put into the apple trees.

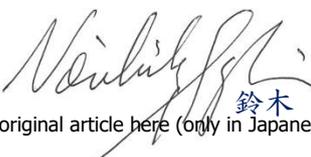
Chin-Wen from Fe Jen Catholic University, Taiwan, visited Yamada Foods Company in Misato Town, which is famous for its fermented soybeans, *natto*. The strong smell and slimy texture turned her away at first, however, after tasting it she was impressed with its taste, and other related products, such as *natto* salsa. In addition, she was astonished by the "*shokunin*" (craftsman) of the Wood Processing Marumatsu Meibokuten Company, by way of involvement of working to produce the best product and their mastery skills.

Pineyro a regular student enrolled from Mexico, is very outgoing and occasionally stops by the President's Office. He had never seen snow in his hometown and experienced it for the first time in Akita. He then started learning cross-country skiing, and strived to join the 2018 PyeongChang Winter Olympics. It was very unfortunate that he could not ensure a berth despite his hard work. He thereafter studied abroad in Russia, has returned to AIU and is currently training to qualify for the next Beijing Winter Olympics in 2022.

Meyer from University of Leeds, UK, got an opportunity to participate in a local wedding in Ugo Town during her homestay there in midwinter. She was fascinated by the fantasy-like scenery and of the bride and groom dressed in traditional attire while walking solemnly in the dark despite the cold and snow.

These descriptions were just a short summary of four international students' memories of Akita. Some students from abroad feel uneasy at the beginning of their life in Akita, however, through experiences in the local community, their apprehension disappeared. Gradually, they became aware that they can now start seeing the world through a different lens, and feel their own growth will benefit them further globally.

I trust that exchange students to AIU will return and share of Akita's charm to the world. These kinds of "experiences" are being carried out on our campus on a daily basis.



鈴木 典比古

This article was originally posted on Asahi Shimbun local version dated November 26th, 2018. Read the original article here (only in Japanese).
<http://www.asahi.com/area/akita/articles/MTW20181126051550001.html>

President Norihiko Suzuki, DBA