



今年も早いもので、2024 年もあと 1 週間を残すところとなりました。皆さんにとって今年はどうな 1 年でしたか？クリスマスやお正月など冬休みにはたくさんのイベントがありますが、それぞれが持つ「祈り」を感じながら、楽しい思い出を休み明けに教えてください。

そして年明けには、JICA の留学生をお招きしての異文化交流プログラム（2 学年）や、昨年度はマルタ大使をお招きした国際理解講座が実施されます。今年は一体どの国との交流が図れるでしょうか？続報をお楽しみに♪

＜Hannah's Column＞

To all Igusa students,

Christmas is almost upon us, and as I always tell you, I hope you are resting up and enjoying this festive season to its fullest! In the last month or two I have noticed many of you are unaware of the origins of this season, so in this newsletter I would like to tell you about them.



Christian Origin

The origin of Christmas dates back to the early Christian era. It commemorates the birth of Jesus Christ, believed to be the Son of God in Christian theology.

The story begins with the Annunciation, where the angel Gabriel tells Mary she will give birth to Jesus. Mary and her husband Joseph travel to Bethlehem, and Jesus is born in a humble stable because there is no room at the inn. Shepherds and three wise men, guided by a star, visit the newborn, bringing gifts; gold, frankincense, and myrrh, and worship the new born child.

Over centuries, Christmas evolved, incorporating various traditions like gift-giving, feasting, and decorating trees, blending Christian and pagan customs into the festive holiday celebrated worldwide today.

Santa Claus Origin

Santa Claus originates from St. Nicholas, a 4th-century bishop in Myra, now Turkey. Known for his generosity, he became the patron saint of children and sailors. His legend spread to Europe, where he was called Sinterklaas in Dutch. Dutch settlers brought Sinterklaas to America, where he evolved into Santa Claus. In the 19th century, writers and artists shaped his modern image: a jolly, bearded man in a red suit. Santa's story was popularized by Clement Clarke Moore's 1823 poem "A Visit from St. Nicholas" and Coca-Cola's 1930s advertisements, cementing his role as the beloved gift-bringer of Christmas. Let's not forget his 9 reindeers: Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner, Blitzen, and Rudolph. Rudolph is a red-nosed reindeer which lit the way on a foggy night.

In the UK on Christmas eve the children leave out milk and cookies for Santa and carrots for the reindeers. On Christmas morning the family wakes up to gifts, share a large meal and have festive fun together!

Merry Christmas Everyone, and a Happy New Year!



＜Sorem's Column＞

Dear Igusa students,

As we approach the holiday season, I hope this letter finds you all enjoying the festivities! With Christmas just around the corner, I wanted to take a moment to connect with you all. How are you doing? Are you excited for the holidays? I'd love to hear about your plans for Christmas this year!



I grew up in the Philippines, where Christmas is celebrated from September to January. Yes, it is such a long season. Let me share a bit about my experiences. I remember every Christmas Eve, our family would gather for "Noche Buena". It was always such a special night, filled with laughter and delicious food. I can still taste the lechon! We would stay up late, share stories, play fun games and sing. Those memories are some of my most cherished!

One of my fondest memories as a child was going caroling with friends. We'd walk from house to house, singing our hearts out, hoping for candies or little money

in return. I remember the thrill of running to the next house, our voices echoing the night, and the smiles that greeted us. It was a simple tradition, but one that brought so much happiness. And then there were the "Misa de Gallo", those nine early morning masses which we believe if you complete, your wishes will come true. As a child I would wake up before dawn, still sleepy but filled with excitement. There's something magical about attending mass with family and friends so early in the morning, surrounded by the festive spirit.



Now, as I spend Christmas in Japan, I celebrate a bit differently. Here, Christmas is a wonderful time, but it has a different vibe. This year, instead of lechon, I am eating KFC for Christmas. Instead of attending the morning masses, I am seeing the illuminations and Christmas markets. However, I've found joy in these new traditions. It's fascinating to see how different cultures celebrate this holiday.

I can see all the hard work you've put into your studies. This holiday, I hope you take the time to relax and enjoy quality moments with friends and family—you've earned it!

次世代リーダー道場生 帰国組による「成果報告会」が行われました！

12 月中旬、次世代リーダー道場 11 期・12 期生の帰国組 3 名による成果報告会が行われました。帰国組それぞれの自信に満ち満ちた発表に、来ていた生徒は多くの刺激を受けた様子でした。以下は感想の一部です。

楽しいだけじゃないこと、後悔していることなど、留学の楽しい面以外について学ぶことができました。（1 年）
海外での友達の作り方や、「英語でエッセイを書く練習はすべき」など学びがありました。（1 年）

I respect her for taking on her challenges. (2 年)
"All humans are the same." I think it's important too. (2 年)



Thank you for sharing your experiences!

❄️ 次世代リーダー道場生からのメール

✉️ 川田 さや さん 2年生 ニュージーランドから帰国しました！
〈October〉

Hi. I would like to share about my ninth month of studying abroad. This past month, Term 3 ended, and we had a two-week holiday. Term 4 starts tomorrow!!!!

The end of Term 3 was fun for me. I'd like to share some highlights. The last week of Term 3 featured exciting events. Monday was Culture Day, Tuesday was Colorful '80s Day, Wednesday was Wacky Hair Day, Thursday was House Quiz Day, and Friday was Winter Pajama Day. This week is known as Spirit Week. On Culture Day, we dressed in the traditional attire of our homelands. During lunchtime, there were a few cultural performances, such as Indian dance by the Indian students, Haka by the Māori students, and Nanchu-Soran by the Japanese students.

The last time I danced So-ran was about six years ago, so it was kind of hard, ha-ha. During Colorful '80s Day, students dressed in 1980s costumes. Unfortunately, I could not participate because I had a school trip for international students. We visited Taupo, which is 125 km away from this town, Morrinsville. We took a cruise on Lake Taupo and enjoyed the beautiful scenery. We also saw a large stone carving called Mine Bay Māori Rock Carvings, featuring Ngatoroirangi, an ancestor of the Māori, carved into it. It is 10 meters high. After that, we went to the Hukafalls Jet Boat Ride at the Waikato River. It was so much fun. The jet

boat raced down the river with lots of spins, and we approached a waterfall called Hukafalls. I've never felt winds that strong in my life. My clothes got completely soaked. It was even more enjoyable than I expected! I want to visit again, and I highly recommend it to everyone. It was a fantastic trip. On Wacky Hair Day, students donated their hair to people who have lost theirs due to cancer. Some students even got buzz cuts. That night, there was a music event called AMP'D. Students performed as a group or as a solo. I performed Lupin the Third as a group as well. Some of them performed the song which was written by themselves. All the performances were of high quality, and it made me excited. On house quiz, we held common sense quiz competition among classes. On Pajamas Day, we wore our winter pajamas. It was very comfortable, lol. One of the great aspects of Spirit Week was that teachers did not force students to participate. I think the events were organized by the Year 13 students. We could embrace our culture if we wanted, perform if we wanted, and donate if we wanted. It was good that students had the freedom to choose what we wanted to do. These days provided new experiences and were so much fun.

On 27th September, I moved to a new host house. It was hard to say goodbye to my last host family, even though we had trouble. Now, I have two host sisters who are 11 and 9 years old, and two cats. As the youngest in my Japanese family, I often wished I had younger siblings. My host sisters are very lovely, kind and cute, though sometimes they teach me that it can be challenging to have younger ones around. This is my first time seeing children being raised in a different culture. I often feel that parenting is difficult, but there is so much happiness in it. When I see my host family laughing and talking together, it reminds me of my own family and makes me miss them.

I have only 50 days left before I return to Japan. Additionally, I will only be attending school for 16 days because exams start in November, so I won't have school after that. I feel like I will be back in Japan soon. I want to enjoy New Zealand while cherishing the rest of my time here.



〈November〉

Hi. I would like to write about my wonderful experiences.

School ended on 30th October. The big exams started in November, but I didn't have to take them, so I got a long holiday. I planned almost every day. It's busy, but at the same time, I felt excited.

On the 2nd of November, there was a fireworks festival called Guy Fawkes Night. It's named after a person. In 1605, in the United Kingdom, Guy Fawkes tried to blow up the House of Parliament and kill the king and the nobility, but his plan failed. Since then, people have celebrated this day as the day the king was saved. Every year, people set off fireworks or light bonfires. The fireworks were much more gorgeous and beautiful than I expected. I think it was the first time I saw fireworks so close in my life. On the 7th, I volunteered at a second-hand clothing shop. All my colleagues were very friendly and kind. On the 8th was my birthday. In the morning, I found a letter from my host family in front of my room. They also gave me a few presents and a cake. I didn't expect it, so it made me happy. On the 11th, I went to a sightseeing spot called Hobbiton on a school trip. It was a filming location for The Hobbit. The houses have remained the same as in the movie. I'm not a fan of the movie, but I enjoyed seeing the unique scenery. The area is surrounded by a huge farm with vast green pastures and bright blue sky. I felt deeply connected to the beauty of nature.

On the 14th, I went to a mountain called Hakarimata. There were several trails, and we chose one that was 3.5 km long with 1,349 steps. The trail was surrounded by New Zealand native bush, and we saw many native birds. From the mountaintop, we had a view of the entire Waikato area. I made wonderful memories.

I have only two weeks left before I go back to Japan. I can't believe that the study abroad I've been dreaming of since I was an elementary student has finally come true, and now it's going to be over. I've had many opportunities to learn about different cultures, languages, values, biases, and even myself. Also, there were many encounters and farewells. It wasn't just kiwi students. International students from countries such as Cambodia and the Philippines, and study abroad students from China and Japan. I met 24 Japanese students in total. As everyone gradually returns to their home countries, there are now only four Japanese students left in this town. Students who were born and raised in different parts of Japan came to this small town in New Zealand with purpose and determination. They supported each other and struggled through many difficulties. To be honest, I didn't desire to be surrounded by many Japanese students at my host school. However, I think a precious bond was formed within the group, where we could share our pain and distress. Therefore, the farewell with them is hard and I had never had this feeling. All I can do now is look forward to the day when I can see them again. Now, I'm looking forward to seeing my family and friends, enjoying my mom's meals, taking a bath, and seeing my hometown again. I can't wait to go back to Japan.

On the other hand, saying farewell to my friends and host family, not being able to enjoy New Zealand's nature, and losing the relaxed atmosphere fill me with sadness. I also have lingering regrets and unfinished thoughts about my study abroad experience, doubts about whether I've truly grown, and anxiety about the amount of studying waiting for me back in Japan. I have the desire to go home, yet at the same time, I don't want to leave. These conflicting feelings leave me with a complex mix of emotions about returning home. These 10 months were filled with challenges and joys, new discoveries, and experiences. It was truly an amazing journey.

