

# Enriching our life experience by connecting people inside and outside of campus

As of May 2016, there are 277 international students studying at TMDU. As one of the Top Global Universities, it is our priority to enhance the quality not only of education for international students, but also of their experiences at TMDU and in Japan. Their presence on campus, and our active involvement with them, enriches the experiences of all students, faculty, and staff by bringing new, culturally diverse perspectives; ultimately, it permits us to grow into a globally engaged university.

Kazuhiro Yonemoto

Assistant Professor,  
Institute of Global Affairs,  
TMDU

**THE INSTITUTE OF** Global Affairs (IGA), a pivotal driving force for globalization of TMDU, organizes and hosts a variety of events and activities with the understanding that being global means being able to be “connected and collaborate” with others across social, cultural, and linguistic borders. Throughout the year, both inside and outside the campus, we are making concrete efforts from lunchtime presentation sessions to visits to neighborhood schools. Among them, this volume describes two events that we held in the past year; namely, the exchange events with Juntendo University and visits to elementary and junior high schools in our neighborhood.

## Joint Events with Juntendo University

Since 2013, TMDU has had an agreement with Juntendo University, located just next door to our Yushima campus. This agreement is to col-

laborate and promote student exchange between the two universities, in particular for international students, by holding such programs as joint exchange events and offering Japanese language courses to each other. Every year, we have four events; two by TMDU and two by Juntendo University. Last year, TMDU organized the events for *setsubun* (celebration of the arrival of spring) in February and *tsukimi* (mid-autumn festival) in September. In these events, not only learning about *setsubun* and *tsukimi*, the participants also experienced making and eating *ehomaki* (roll sushi) and *dango* (rice dumpling), as well as visiting Kanda Myojin Shrine for their *setsubun* festival. Juntendo University held *ohanami* (cherry blossom viewing) in April and the International Student Exchange Conference in November. During *ohanami*, the participants enjoyed the Koishikawa Korakuen Gardens while talking and eating *sakuramochi* (pink-col-

Setsubun: Commemorative photograph



Setsubun: Making and eating sushi rolls



ored rice cake). At the Conference, they enjoyed eating, chatting, and singing together. In addition, as a special event, we went on a two-day study trip to Oga-ryo, our welfare facility in Chiba in 2015 while staying at Juntendo University’s welfare facility in Karuizawa in 2016.

In the TMDU events, Japanese students from the Students’ Society of International Activities (SSIA) participated and kindly explained about *setsubun* and *tsukimi* in English. Likewise, some international students actively took part in the events by serving as the bilingual master of ceremonies. These events were fun, yet at the same time a great opportunity for creating friendships not simply between TMDU and Juntendo University students, but also between international and Japanese students.

## Visits to Neighborhood Schools

Every year, international students visit two elementary schools and one junior high school near our two campuses. The purpose of these visits is to deepen our friendship with the school children in the local communities as well as providing international experiences for them. Upon the visit, the international students took the initiative in planning and delivering various activities like games and chatted in small groups. Some international students showed games from their childhood and others taught the songs of their home country. The elementary and junior high school children were sometimes a bit shy about communicating, especially in English. However, the international students did a great job of getting everyone to communicate.

The school teachers’ statement that the children looked and acted very different from their usual classes suggests that our visit could successfully offer them meaningful and engaging experiences. However, this is not only the case for the school children. This visit was also a very nice opportunity for international students in that

they could learn what Japanese schools were like. Chatting while eating *kyushoku* (school lunch) together and seeing children cleaning their classroom made their visit more memorable. Through this visit, by better understanding Japanese children and schools, the international students seemed to feel closer to and more familiar with the neighborhood communities and the people. This can be proven by the international students’ comments after the visit that they would like to visit the schools again. Although this visit is a significant part of our contribution to the community, this is definitely a mutually rewarding and beneficial activity for knowing and understanding each other.

Besides these activities, the IGA regularly organizes events and activities for the purpose of cultivating a global awareness and contributing to the understanding and value of diversity inside and outside the campus. It is our desire through enhancing and expanding communications, to achieve creating an inclusive environment for not only international students but also for everyone including our students, faculty, and staff. We are looking forward to seeing more people take part in our activities, learn more about each other, and consequently, enrich and expand their lives.

The school visits were partially funded by the Nakajima Foundation as well as by KAKENHI (16K21018) that has been awarded to the author.



1 Tsukimi: Greetings by Prof. Karasuyama, Institute of Global Affairs Director, emcees in background

2 Trip to Karuizawa: Enjoying a BBQ together

3 Elementary School Visit: Indian students explaining greetings in their language

Junior High School Visit: Chinese and Vietnamese students leading a small-group discussion