

# LETTERS



Kumamoto University Magazine special issue



The Voice of  
International  
Students  
in Kumamoto  
University, JAPAN



# Welcome to Kumamoto University, Where Tradition Meets Progress

## Kumamoto: City of Forests, City of Water

From one of the largest volcanic calderas in the world atop Mt. Aso to the many large and small islands that make up Amakusa, abundant nature graces Kumamoto Prefecture. Historic Kumamoto City, the central city of the prefecture, is home to Kumamoto Castle, which has gazed out over the urban district for over 400 years. Kumamoto is also known as "the City of Water" for the groundwater that supplies all of the domestic water for 730,000 residents.

## Learning at the Downtown Campus

Kumamoto University has campuses in several areas, including in sections of bustling Kumamoto City and in areas bordering lush nature. In this rich environment, the University hosts about 500 international students from about 50 countries, who engage in daily studies and research together with Japanese students.

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This booklet introduces international students at Kumamoto University who have appeared in the University magazine “*Kumadai Tsushin*”. Through scenes depicting their active student life, readers will gain the opportunity to learn more about Kumamoto University. Esteeming tradition while embracing progress, Kumamoto University seeks students from around the world to ennoble one another and advance together toward the future.

## An Unparalleled History and Tradition in Japan

The history of Kumamoto University can be traced back to the establishment of Japan's first medical school by the Kumamoto feudal lord in 1756. The Fifth High School, the predecessor to today's University, was established in 1887. Now, over 120 years later, Kumamoto University boasts one of the longest histories of any university in Japan, and houses within its campuses four structures that have been awarded Important Cultural Property designation.

## Cutting-Edge Research and Human Resources Development

The University's history-steeped campuses are home to world-class research in a diversity of fields, from research into ancient documents on par with national treasures and development of next-generation magnesium alloys, to pulse power, AIDS research, and regenerative medicine. Through this, the University is fostering human resources who will be active on the global stage.



Kumamoto University Kurokami Campus  
(Main Campus)

## Through Rich Experiences in a Foreign Land—Study, Marriage, Childbirth Dreaming of Teaching in My Home Country Someday

Asep, Saepuloh

Doctoral Course in New Frontier Sciences, Graduate School of Science and Technology

Bayu, Alamsari

Doctoral Course in Advanced Technology, Graduate School of Science and Technology

It is not unusual to find students holding babies on university campuses in the US, China, or in many other countries around the world, since many students choose to marry while still studying. We also have an international student couple in Kumamoto University. We have interviewed this couple, Mr. Asep Saeploh and Ms. Bayu Alamsari, who are currently graduate students and raising their child away from their home country.



For Mr. Asep and Ms. Bayu, research and childcare are both important aspects of life. When their daughter was running a fever, Mr. Asep would take time off of research to take care of her. Mr. Asep and Ms. Bayu are supporting each other to fulfill their dreams.

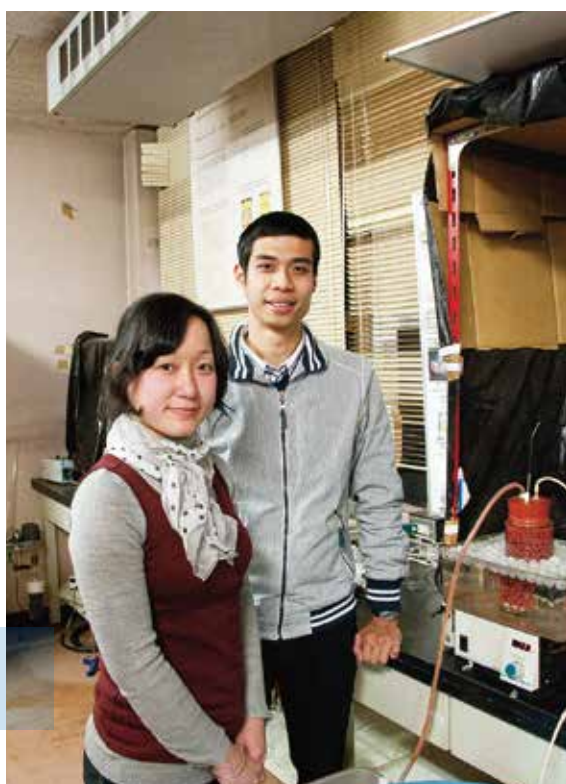
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## Saving the Water Environment of Vietnam with Technology Studied at Kumamoto University!

Lai, Quan Minh and Do, Khanh Phuong

Doctoral Course in New Frontier Sciences, Graduate School of Science and Technology

The goal for Mr. Lai Quan Minh and Ms. Do Khanh Phuong, doctoral students majoring in New Frontier Sciences at the Graduate School of Science and Technology, is to improve the water environment in their home country, Vietnam. In Kumamoto, a place well known for high quality natural water, Lai and Do are committed to the advanced study of sewage treatment technology.



Ms. Do Khanh Phuong (left) and Mr. Lai Quan Minh (right) during an experiment with anammox bacteria.

## ■ Aiming for their graduate degrees together

Asep and his wife, Bayu, are from Indonesia. Asep came to Kumamoto before his wife as a Japanese Government Scholarship Student in 2005. He began his days of study as a research student of New Frontier Sciences in the Graduate School of Science and Technology. He is researching volcanoes, and struggles every day with large amounts of data. He analyzes the data to study the history and mechanisms of volcanoes. Asep was unable to speak Japanese when he first arrived in Japan, but has become fluent enough in his time here to share his thoughts on life in Kumamoto: "Kumamoto is a very beautiful place. There are many volcanoes, which reminds me of my homeland. My laboratory is located on the 9th floor, and I always gaze out the window to look at Kumamoto Castle and Mt. Aso. I also enjoy the change of seasons, which we don't have in our country."

Bayu completed her master's degree in 2007, and subsequently moved to Kumamoto to start a new life with Asep. She has since been conducting theoretical analysis for finding the best conditions for steel refinement. At the time they both began working together at the laboratory, Bayu was pregnant.

## ■ University supported childcare

In June 2008, Bayu gave birth to the couple's first daughter. Three months later, Bayu was back in the laboratory.

"I was very anxious because my family was not with me. I wasn't able to go to the laboratory because I couldn't find anyone to take care of my baby." Despite this, Bayu continued her research

at the laboratory for even just two hours a day. By making arrangements with Asep to take care of the child together, she was able to juggle study and childcare.

Asep and Bayu are both aspiring to work as university professors when they return to Indonesia. They hope to share their knowledge from their research in Kumamoto with many people in Indonesia.

Their daughter is now 14 months old. "We are very thankful to our professors and friends who encouraged us to come to the laboratory, even with our child. Thanks to the support of so many people, we were able to engage in our research even while raising our child." They will never forget the kindness they received.

Excerpted from "Kumadai Tsushin" Vol. 34, 2009 Autumn  
This article is partly omitted from the original because of space.

熊本散歩

A Walk In Kumamoto  
information of Kumamoto

### Mt. Aso

A renowned volcano in Japan, Mt. Aso is famous for having one of the world's largest calderas. Visitors are able to get right up to the crater, which continues to emit smoke even now. Along with sights such as the most vast and majestic grassland in Japan, Mt. Aso makes Kumamoto a leading tourism destination that never stops enchanting visitors.



## ■ We want to study at Kumamoto University, the research frontrunner

Kumamoto University is well known in Japan and abroad for the research that makes use of anammox bacteria, which was discovered twelve years ago. Lai and Do learned of its research back when they were each studying at the Hanoi University of Civil Engineering and Vietnam National University in Hanoi, respectively, and decided to study at Kumamoto University.

"We don't have sewage treatment facilities in Hanoi, the capital of Vietnam. Sewage is dumped into rivers, which is causing environmental pollution," says Do. In the rapidly-developing Vietnam, infrastructure is being improved through construction of expressways and railways, but this development is also causing air and water pollution and other environmental issues which have become very serious. Nitrogen contained in high concentrations in runoff is difficult to eliminate by general sewage treatment technology and causes "eutrophication" of the sea and rivers, which leads to the death of marine animals and other environmental damage. Moreover, as drinking water is sourced from the groundwater in Hanoi, infiltration of nitrogen-polluted water into the soil also causes serious effects to drinking water.

Lai and Do focused on the method of eliminating nitrogen with anammox. "Anammox inexpensively and safely promotes the nitrogen cycle by exploiting the power of bacteria. It could be the savior for the water environment of Vietnam," says Lai.

## ■ Presentation of their studies back home

In December last year, 26 students from Kumamoto

University attended "The 8th Kumamoto University Forum, Hanoi, Vietnam," an academic exchange event held in Hanoi by Kumamoto University. There were presentations in English on six themes, including sewage treatment and medical radiology education.

Lai also made a presentation on sewage treatment technology using anammox, which is his own research theme. "I was happy I could make a presentation on the innovative sewage treatment technology to the researchers and students of my home country," Lai said with a smile. Do, who made a poster presentation, says "I received a lot of questions about my research and felt the awareness for the environment has increased."

"I hope to launch an academic field of water quality management and engineering and be engaged in research and education at a university in the future," says Lai. Do also talks about her goal; "I want to teach water environment preservation and also be involved in environmental businesses."

In May, their professor is hosting the First International Anammox Symposium 2011 at Kumamoto University. Lai and Do have been busy preparing for the symposium and summarizing their research results. "We have a lot to learn every day. But we are enjoying it thanks to the support from the professors and friends," they said in chorus.

Excerpted from "Kumadai Tsushin" Vol. 39, 2011 Winter  
This article is partly omitted from the original because of space.

## Historic School Building and Warm Friends Wishing to Become a Bridge between Japan and China

Zhao, Yue and Wang, Xiaobo

Master's Course in Modern Social Human Studies, Graduate School of Social and Cultural Sciences

Mr. Zhao Yue and Ms. Wang Xiaobo are Chinese students studying at East Asia Business Communication Course in the Graduate School of Social and Cultural Sciences. They say they want to work as a bridge between Japan and China by learning about Japanese culture and the differences in the business cultures of the two countries.



In front of the Memorial Museum of the Firth High School.

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## I Want to Contribute to the Growth of My Country! Appreciating the Perfect Learning Experience at Kumamoto University

Atufenua, Maui

Master's Course in Computer Science and Electrical Engineering, Graduate School of Science and Technology

Mr. Atufenua Maui graduated from university in Australia and worked in IT for the government of Tuvalu. He now studies cutting-edge computer techniques at Kumamoto University and looks forward to spreading and developing the use of computers back in his home country.



Mr. Maui lives with his wife and 3 children. "I like to eat natto-maki and udon (natto (fermented soybean) sushi roll and udon noodles)."

### ■ Tradition and history are our pride

In the East Asia Business Communication Course in the Graduate School of Social and Cultural Sciences, students from around Asia are studying the cultures of Japan and China, Japanese business, Japanese communication, and other subjects. Wang and Zhao are currently studying in this program.

Zhao came to Kumamoto after studying tourism management at Southwestern University of Finance and Economics in Sichuan Province. He now works part-time at a cell phone shop after school and assists customers using Japanese, Chinese, and English. The theme for Zhao's graduation thesis is "Business Management of Chinese Companies in Japan," and he proposes that Chinese companies will increase the number of branch offices in Japan as the Chinese economy grows. Zhao summarizes this phenomenon in his thesis.

On the other hand, Wang majored in Japanese at Dalian University of Technology (DUT) in Dalian, Liaoning Province, and came to Kumamoto University, which is DUT's partner university. The differences in values in the service industries of Japan and China seemed interesting to him. "For example, some shop clerk in Japan will apologize even when the customers is to blame, won't they? That is unimaginable in China. I think paying great care to other people to preserve peace is a cultural attribute particular to the Japanese."

They both say, "We learn, not only from school, but also through the people we meet, and every moment we spend in Kumamoto."

### ■ A perfect environment for international students

"The biggest issue when it comes to studying abroad is the accommodations. Kumamoto University has the International House, and I did not have to worry about expensive rent or needing to buy furniture when I came to Japan. Moreover, we have strong ties with other international students. We exchange information online when we have problems in our daily life. Kumamoto University is a truly wonderful environment for international students," say Wang and Zhao.

"Sometimes, I have communication problems in Japanese or struggle with my research. When I am troubled, I get help from my supervisor, and from my friends, who support me with positive thinking. I will value the support from my professors and friends my whole life," Zhao said, expressing his deep gratitude.



Excerpted from "Kumadai Tsushin" Vol. 40, 2011 Spring  
This article is partly omitted from the original because of space.

### ■ Studying about IT -the key to the development of my home country- at Kumamoto University

"In April last year, I came to Kumamoto University from Tuvalu, located about 1,000 kilometers north of the Fiji Islands. I study computer science in the laboratory. I specialize in computer-based teaching materials and an e-learning system to manage and analyze academic records. In my country Tuvalu, the percentage of households owning a computer is still low. IT competency is probably the most essential factor for the development of our country. In January this year, I developed e-learning teaching materials for students in Tuvalu. Following advice from my professor and sources from around the world, the learning system I developed is being used by students at Motufoua Secondary School in Tuvalu to learn online today."

### ■ Spending a happy academic life with good friends and in a good environment

"Even if I do encounter communication problems and difficulties in research, I have great support of my professor and Japanese friends in the laboratory, as well as other international students from Indonesia, Korea, Mongolia, Papua New Guinea, China, Tonga, and other countries. When I am tired at the laboratory at night and I look out the 12th floor window and gaze at the beautifully lit up Kumamoto Castle, I am reminded of my fortunate circumstances, and can focus again on my research."

"On weekends and after school, I play on a rugby team, and visit Fukuoka or Miyazaki for a game. Kumamoto has good food, sake, and nice people. I appreciate that I can study using

cutting-edge computer science technology in this blessed environment. I hope to absorb more knowledge to contribute to my home country."



Working up a sweat playing rugby. He met many great friends here too.

Excerpted from "Kumadai Tsushin" Vol. 41, 2011 Summer

熊本散歩

A Walk In Kumamoto  
Information of Kumamoto

### The Water of Kumamoto

Bubbling up from its source in Mt. Aso, the groundwater that supplies domestic water for over 700,000 residents makes Kumamoto City a "groundwater city" like few others in the world. Mineral water is available for drinking at the turn of a tap. Even baths and toilets in Kumamoto use mineral water!



## I Love the Academic Atmosphere of Kumamoto University!

Xu, Zijie  
Faculty of Law

Mr. Xu Zijie is an exchange student from Guangdong Province in China and currently studying law at Kumamoto University.

His future dream is to be engaged in trade business which connects China and Japan.



Mr. Xu checks the economic trends in the Nikkei newspaper at the library every day. "I was really moved when I saw snow for the first time in Kumamoto."

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## Studying Advanced Pharmacy for Intractable Diseases in Kumamoto, the City of Samurai

Piruzyan, Mariam Armen  
School of Pharmacy

Ms. Piruzyan Mariam Armen, from Armenia, has been studying at Kumamoto University since April 2011.

In the future, she wants to develop effective drugs for diseases which are hard to cure, such as Alzheimer's Disease.



With members of the swimming club, Ms. Mariam's shining smile tells how joyful her campus life is. (Ms. Mariam is in the 2nd row from the front, 4th from the right)



### ■ I think that Japanese laws pay great respect to human rights

"After I graduated from high school in Guangdong Province, I studied Japanese for two years at a language school in Kumamoto and am now a first-year student at the Faculty of Law at Kumamoto University. I read on the university's homepage that students at the Faculty of Law will learn to think independently, which was one of the reasons I chose to study at the Faculty of Law. Another reason was that I wanted to study business and trade law is because my father is involved in trade with Japanese companies."

"Though I have sometimes been confused by the terminology and difference in culture once I started studying here, I am very impressed by the laws of Japan because human rights are highly valued in Japan."

"I belong to the university swimming club and practice swimming from 6 am every weekday. Back stroke is my best stroke. I feel that there are no borders in the joy of playing sports when I swim with my friends and senior students."

### ■ Expecting better relationship between China and Kyushu in the future

"I work part-time on Saturday and Sunday at a logistics company. Everything to me is new and meaningful, like learning the names of food seasonings and what is selling best in Japan. I guess not only the studying at school but the experience in my part-time job is also going to give me hints for my own business."

"Kumamoto University has an ideal academic environment for studying and kind people on

campus. I read in the newspaper that many companies have tried to move their business bases from Tokyo to Kyushu after the Great East Japan Earthquake. I guess such a tendency will further enhance the exchanges between China and Kyushu. I think it is very meaningful for me to be a student here now."



Mr. Xu at the time, was a student at a Japanese language school. He took the Japanese Language Proficiency Test and passed N1, the highest level, and is now enjoying using his fluent Japanese at university.

Excerpted from "Kumadai Tsushin" Vol. 42, 2011 Autumn

### ■ Wishing to study both medicine and pharmacy for the future

"Longing to become a doctor like my father who is a medical doctor, I studied medicine back in Armenia. In the future, I want to master both medicine and pharmacy so I applied to the Ministry of Education for a scholarship to study at Kumamoto University, where Pharmacy studies are advanced. I visited Kumamoto Castle on my first day here. I was moved at seeing the remains of the age of the *samurai*, and I was excited when I realized that I would be living in this wonderful city from then on."

"There have been times I was surprised by the cultural differences between Japan and Armenia. For example, adults in Armenia never use bicycles as a form of transportation; they are only for kids. I was really surprised when I saw old people riding bicycles on the street."

### ■ Enjoying club activities which can't be found in the university of the home country

"Now I belong to the swimming club at the university. After class, I go straight to the club room. In my club, I was able to make friends with students of various departments, which would never have happened otherwise."

"I also enjoy other sports. There was a softball tournament among University swimming clubs, and we won! We don't have such activities at universities in Armenia. It is really fun to be able to make friends with many people through club activities."

"As for the classes, I am struggling with the terminology in pharmacy and need a lot of time to prepare for and review my classes. My friends

hold study meetings before exams, so I can ask them when I have questions."

"Since my childhood, I watched my father work hard for his patients with illnesses that are difficult to cure. I hope to become a medical professional like my father."

"I want to combine the knowledge of medicine I acquired in Armenia and the pharmaceutical knowledge I have studied here to conduct research that will help patients who have illnesses with no cure yet."

Excerpted from "Kumadai Tsushin" Vol. 43, 2012 Winter

熊本散歩

A Walk In Kumamoto  
information of Kumamoto

### Kumamoto Castle

Kumamoto University shares its home city with Kumamoto Castle, a soaring 400-year-old structure looking over the bustling center of Kumamoto City. One of Japan's most esteemed castles, Kumamoto Castle is always crowded with tourists, yet remains a favorite spot to relax among the locals.



# Campus Scenes



Chemical Laboratory of the Fifth High School\*



Central Library



Museum of Engineering Faculty\*



Faculty of Letters, Faculty of Education and Faculty of Law





Memorial Museum of the Fifth High School\*



General Medical Research Building



Cafeteria and Shop



100th Anniversary Memorial Hall and Faculty of Engineering



There are various buildings on campus from historic ones including four National Important Cultural Properties to state-of-the-art research facilities which support active education and research.

\*Designated as National Important Cultural Property



Red Gate ~AKAMON~\*

## Hoping to Contribute to Iran by Studying Earthquake Resistance Technology

Afzali, Hamid

Doctoral Course in Architectural and Civil Engineering, Graduate School of Science and Technology

Mr. Afzali Hamid, from Iran, researches earthquakes and earthquake resistant construction.

He says that in the future, he hopes to contribute to the society through constructing earthquake-resistant buildings and bridges.



"My favorite place in Kumamoto is Lake Ezu," Mr. Afzali says. He made a presentation about Lake Ezu in Japanese for a program hosted by the Kumamoto International Foundation. (Mr. Afzali is in the center)

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## I Want to Study the Kyushu Dialect and Young People's Speech and Get to Know the Current Japan!

Phung, Nguyet Thi

Master's Course in Cultural Sciences, Graduate School of Social and Cultural Sciences

Ms. Phung Nguyet Thi came from Vietnam to Kumamoto last October with a goal of becoming a teacher of Japanese.

She says she wants to study the language of young people and the dialect for a deeper understanding of Japan.



Ms. Phung says the people around her are very kind, which she really appreciates. "Unfortunately, people talk to me very politely when I want to hear more casual words from young people, since that is my research theme!"

### ■ A lot of things to be learned from the risk management in Japan

"I am greatly impressed by Japan's ability to recover after the Great East Japan Earthquake," says Afzali. Japan is a country that experiences earthquakes more often than many other countries. As his childhood dream was to become a researcher of earthquakes, he studied civil engineering and structural mechanics at university and graduate school in Iran, and then came to Japan to study at Kumamoto University. "If an earthquake of the same scale hits Japan and Iran, the aftermath damage would be by far greater in Iran. I hope I can contribute to disaster prevention in Iran after studying advanced structural mechanics here at Kumamoto University," says Afzali, expressing his initial motivation to come here to study. Moreover, Afzali also has great interest in the crisis management capabilities and the morality of the Japanese. "In Japan, I have learned not only the technology of earthquake resistance, but also preparation for emergencies, the teamwork seen at the time of the Great East Japan Earthquake, the attitude when facing difficulties and more."

### ■ Wishing to convey Japan's high quality culture to the people in my home country

At the laboratory, Afzali engages in research with his friends, including students from countries such as Indonesia and Turkey. "Our research is driven by cross-border teamwork," says Afzali. He appreciates the many people in town who kindly talk to him. "When I go to a department store, the staff gives me a very respectful bow, and kindly takes me to where I can find the items

I want. I think the key to Japan's economic development should be attributed not just to high technology, but also to the spirit of respect towards each customer which underlies all business activities."

Afzali will study in Kumamoto University until October 2014. "I want to engage in projects related to earthquake resistance and activities to share Japan's culture in Iran, based on what I have learned in my experience here at Kumamoto University," he says enthusiastically.



Mr. Afzali is currently studying Japanese. He hopes to learn the local dialect to achieve more meaningful communication.

Excerpted from "Kumadai Tsushin" Vol. 44, 2012 Spring

## 熊本散歩

### A Walk In Kumamoto information of Kumamoto

#### Hot Springs

Fiery Mt. Aso is the source of the natural hot springs that dot the prefecture and make Kumamoto a premier "hot spring kingdom" within Japan. Each hot spring is able to boast water with unique mineral properties. Surrounded by lush landscapes of ocean, mountains, and rivers, Kumamoto's hot springs also offer scenery in endless variety.



### ■ I came to Kumamoto University to study "Kyushu Dialect"

"Since my childhood, I have loved Japanese comics and TV shows. I was very impressed by the strong mentality of Oshin, the protagonist in a famous TV show, which motivated me to study the Japanese culture. I studied for one year at Osaka University as an exchange student when I was a student at the Department of Japanese Studies, Vietnam National University, Hanoi. My wish to study again in Japan grew, and I came to Kumamoto University after I graduated from university."

"I chose Kumamoto University because I wanted to study the dialect of Kyushu. My professor specializes in Kyushu dialect here at Kumamoto University. I contacted him from Vietnam and told him that I wanted to study the Kyushu dialect. Now I am studying about the cultures of not only Japan but other countries in East Asia from various perspectives. My favorite part of Kumamoto dialect is the expression *sekarashika* and the sound of *ken*, which locals add to the end of sentences. It is my dream to master the dialect by the time I leave Kumamoto."

### ■ Wanting to be a Japanese language teacher who can tell people various aspects of Japan

"I am also studying the language of young Japanese. The language of young people contains many abbreviated words. It may be convenient, but at the same time could ruin the beauty of the language, which has a very long history. Some words go in and out of fashion, and others become established in the Japanese vocabulary. I want to study about those words from various

perspectives and consider the cultural values and the language sensitivity of the Japanese. An increasing number of young Vietnamese, who are influenced by Japanese cartoons and animations, are now interested in Japanese culture. In the future, I want to become a Japanese language teacher who can convey various aspects of culture and thoughts of Japan based on what I have studied at Kumamoto University."



In February this year, a group of international students of Kumamoto University made a trip to the Unzen and Shimabara area. "We spent some time there learning about the history of Shimabara Castle and Mt. Fugen. I am really happy to have become friends with many students from other countries."

Excerpted from "Kumadai Tsushin" Vol. 45, 2012 Summer

## Aspiring to Study at an Advanced AIDS Research Facility and Contribute to My Home Country

Ramirez Valdez, Kristel Paola

Doctoral Course in Medical Sciences, Graduate School of Medical Sciences

Ms. Ramirez Valdez Kristel Paola came to Kumamoto from Guatemala in 2010 and is now studying HIV antibodies.

She says she wants to work to prevent HIV infection and for the psychological care of HIV patients in Guatemala in the future.



Extracting an antibody producing cell from the blood of HIV patients to study nurturing well conditioned antibodies. "I will continue this research for the development of a practical HIV vaccine," says Ms. Ramirez.

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## Dreaming the Revitalization of Laos at Kumamoto's Most Academic Place

Prathoumxay, Sousada

Master's Course in Public Policy Studies, Graduate School of Social and Cultural Sciences

Ms. Prathoumxay Sousada from Laos, came to Kumamoto in 2009. Studying and contemplating on the city planning of Japan in Yufuin, the area which resembles her home country, she wishes to make use of what she has learned here for the development of her home country.



Ms. Sousada in front of the Memorial Hall of the Fifth High School, her favorite place at Kumamoto University

## ■ Meeting with a mother with HIV/AIDS motivated me to become a researcher

“After finishing high school, I studied microbiology and biochemistry at University of San Carlos in Guatemala. I met a young HIV-positive mother when I was an intern at a hospital. This motivated me to study HIV. She had lost her husband to AIDS and was raising two kids on her own. She was worried more about the possibility that her kids might be socially alienated or abused, than about herself dying of AIDS. It is important to establish the prevention of and cure for AIDS, but it is also necessary to approach it in more social perspective in order to eliminate discrimination and various other problems accompanying the disease. I knew Kumamoto University had an independent research facility for HIV and AIDS, where various research is conducted, and decided to come here on a scholarship from the Ministry of Education.”

## ■ Learning something new every day at Kumamoto University, the frontier of HIV/AIDS research

“The Researcher Training Program for Suppression of AIDS, where I study, is designated as a Global COE Program\* of the Ministry of Education and allows advanced research in a favorable environment. What I usually do here is check AIDS antibodies in a cell under a microscope, discuss the latest papers on AIDS with colleagues, and listen to the stories from the professor, who is taking care of HIV patients as a doctor, among other things. Every day brings new things to study.”

“The professors and colleagues in my laboratory

share the same sense of purpose and are very friendly. Technical Specialist Ms. Yoko Kawanami is especially supportive. She not only helps us with research, but also with many other things from finding an apartment to needlework. She is like our mother in Kumamoto”.

“I want to build on what I’ve learned here and be engaged in the prevention and cure of AIDS as well as the psychological care of the patients suffering from the disease in Guatemala in the future.”

\* Global COE Program: One of the programs initiated by the Ministry of Education, to intensively support international facilities for research and education. Kumamoto University has received assistance through the program in the following categories: Global Education and Research Center Aiming at the Control of AIDS, Global Human Resource Training Unit for Cell-Fate Regulation Research, and Global Initiative Center for High-Rate Impulse-Energy Engineering.



Ms. Yoko Kawanami – whom Ms. Ramirez calls her mother in Kumamoto – says about Ms. Ramirez, “She is more polite than Japanese people and has a passionate heart!”

Excerpted from “Kumadai Tsushin” Vol. 46, 2012 Autumn

## ■ Entered the graduate school of Kumamoto University to study various aspects of Japan

“In high school, I received a scholarship from the Kumamoto–Laos Friendship Association and attended an educational and well-equipped high school in Vientiane. The chairman of the association was the former Ambassador to Laos and was originally from Kumamoto. When he asked me if I would like to learn about Japan in Kumamoto, I was motivated and decided to come to Kumamoto.”

“First, I studied Japanese at a language school, but I wanted to study not only the language but also Japan’s culture, economy, law and other subjects and decided to enter the Graduate School of Kumamoto University. My major is public policy, and I specifically focus on the city planning of Yufuin in my research.”

“Yufuin is a country area surrounded by rice fields and farms, which is similar to my hometown. I wondered why so many tourists, the annual number of whom is double the number of the local population, are attracted to this small town, and I started my research with the hope that I could learn some hints for the revitalization of Laos.”

“I investigate the city planning of Yufuin by interviewing people at the town office, hotels and inns, and also by reading the regulations on building and city development to examine successful outcomes and problems that arose.”

## ■ Inspired by the historic atmosphere of Kumamoto University

“When I first came to Kumamoto University, I was amazed by the historic atmosphere of the

Red Gate (Akamon) and the prominent Memorial Hall of the Fifth High School. This is a school where Natsume Soseki taught, and the current professors all have outstanding academic backgrounds. I remember I got excited to think I came to the most academic place in Kumamoto.”

“My favorite place in Kumamoto is Amakusa. Since Laos is located inland, the sea is a special place for everyone in the country. I had never eaten sashimi before coming here, but now I am so fond of it that I go to Kokai Shopping Street to buy konoshiro fish and clean and eat it at home.”

“In the future, I want to return to Laos and use the knowledge and Japanese ability I gained here to contribute to the development of Laos.”

Excerpted from “Kumadai Tsushin” Vol. 47, 2013 Winter

熊本散歩

A Walk In Kumamoto  
Information of Kumamoto

### Amakusa

A true “treasure island” encompassed on all sides by beautiful sea, Amakusa is a popular destination for boat tours that offer close-up viewing of the wild dolphins inhabiting coastal waters. The chance of encountering Amakusa’s dolphins is an amazing 98%! Fresh and delicious seafood is another of the area’s delights.



## I Want to Convey the Fun of English Communication to Children in My Country

Kulinaeva, Anna Vladimirovna

Teacher Trainee on Foreign Languages (English), Faculty of Education

Ms. Kulinaeva Anna Vladimirovna from Uzbekistan came to Kumamoto in 2011 to learn about English Education.

Her dream for the future is to become a high school teacher to share the fun of English communication with the students in her home country.



This photo was taken in front of the Faculty of Education building. As her time in Kumamoto draws to a close, Ms. Vladimirovna is more enthusiastic than ever about learning as many things as possible at Kumamoto University.

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## Feeling the Heart of Japan through Hanami and Appreciation for the Seasons

Rezano, Andri

Doctoral Course in Medical Sciences, Graduate School of Medical Sciences

Dr. Rezano Andri from Indonesia has been studying immunology in Kumamoto University since April 2010. A lecturer at Padjadjaran University and also a medical doctor back in his country, Dr. Rezano is currently studying cancer biology, particularly the mechanisms where cancerous cells undergo apoptosis (cell death), hoping to share his research with students back home.



Dr. Rezano (on the far right) enjoying *hanami* with his supervisor and other exchange students from Bangladesh and Thailand.



## English education in Japan helps brush up communication skills

"After graduating from university, I taught English at a secondary school in Uzbekistan. As I wanted to study more in order to improve their communication skills, I received a scholarship from the Ministry of Education, and entered Kumamoto University, whose Faculty of Education has a strong reputation. At Kumamoto University, I study how pair work and group work can help improve English communication skills."  
"Japan's English education is not only about teaching grammar and reading but has a sufficient curriculum to develop general communication skills, many elements of which I can introduce into the English education in Uzbekistan. Besides attending classes, I constantly search for effective approaches for English lessons by observing elementary, middle and high school classes, and also by participating in PIGATE, an English education research group organized for the purpose of exchanging information among English teachers by a professor of the Faculty of Education."



Observing a 5th grade class at Jonan Elementary School, Kumamoto City. "In Uzbekistan, there is no such thing as team-teaching. I hope to introduce this fantastic Japanese system into the education of my home country."

## One of the great things about Kumamoto is I can enjoy cuisines from countries around the world

"The campus of Kumamoto University is

surrounded by greenery, and has a cafeteria, medical center, library, and various other facilities. I like it very much because it is like a small academic town. Another thing I like is that, once I leave campus, I can enjoy many types of cuisine, including Italian and Korean, at reasonable prices. In Uzbekistan, foreign cuisine is too expensive to eat. Currently, I am busy every day preparing for a debrief session on the training program. I analyze the questionnaires returned by teachers in Uzbekistan and Japan for the purpose of utilizing the results for more effective communication education. I look forward to teaching English to students in Uzbekistan by utilizing what I learned about communication education at Kumamoto University."

Excerpted from "Kumadai Tsushin" Vol. 48, 2013 Spring

熊本散歩

A Walk In Kumamoto  
information of Kumamoto

## Comics and Cartoons

Japan's comics and cartoons, known widely as manga and anime, have become a representative part of Japan's culture. Kumamoto has produced a great number of persons involved in comics and cartoons that are popular even overseas, making the city a "comics and cartoons kingdom." With touches such as popular cartoon characters decorating trains, Kumamoto is a place where you'll feel close to these popular art forms.

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## Studying at Kumamoto University, a leader in immunologic research

"While in Indonesia, I was told by my former supervisor, who had previously visited, that the Kumamoto University School of Medicine is advanced in the study of immunology. It was then that I decided to study abroad with a government-sponsored scholarship, and came to Kumamoto University in 2010. Currently, my research is based on a high affinity antibody molecule called "GANP", which is an antigen-antibody reaction of immunology. "GANP" is reported to play a role in DNA repair when a cell is damaged, and by revealing its mechanism, I would like to make use of this research for potential cancer prevention and treatment."  
"I spend most of my time in the laboratory speaking English, but once I step out of the lab, I have a hard time communicating in Japanese. Because I am a Muslim, I don't eat pork. So the first Japanese sentence I learned was "Butaniku, haitteimasuka?" (Does this include pork?)" At the supermarket, this sentence comes in very handy."

## Impressed to see cherry blossoms and how Japanese people appreciate them

"What I was most surprised about in Japan is the custom of *hanami* (cherry blossom viewing). I was moved by the beauty of sakura cherry blossoms, which colored the bare brown trees with pale pink flowers in a matter of weeks. The Japanese wait for a year for this flower which only blooms for one week. Once it blooms, they enjoy it just like a festival. From this experience, I felt the perseverance of the Japanese and their

affection for the seasons."

"Next March, I will return back to Indonesia. I want to build up the basis of molecular mechanism research in my country based on what I learned in Kumamoto University, and contribute to the expansion of the medical field."

\*GANP: Cancer resistant molecule. Discovered at Kumamoto University.



"Cell culturing can be tough work," says Dr. Rezano. Cells are living objects. He constantly checks the temperature, growth of the cells, morphology and the presence of contamination.

Excerpted from "Kumadai Tsushin" Vol. 49, 2013 Summer

# The Kumamoto University Lifestyle

## Location

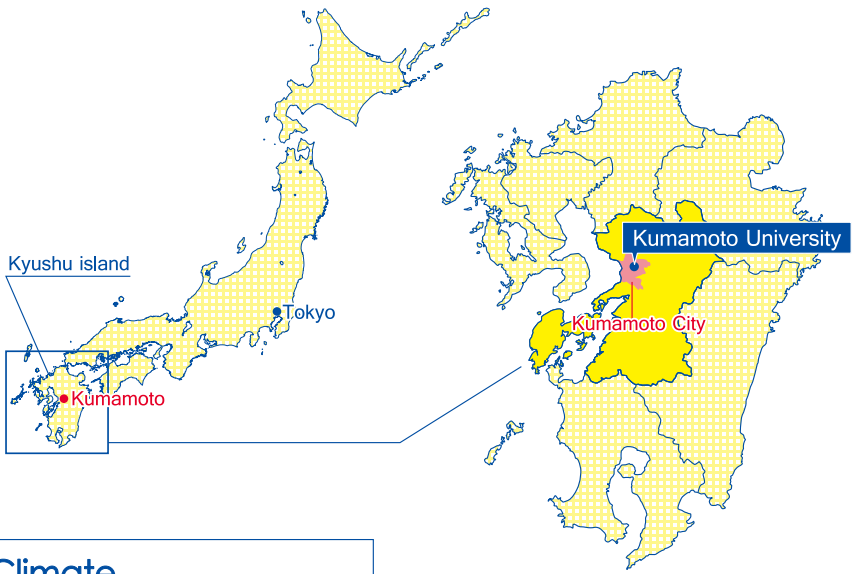
Kumamoto Prefecture is the heart of Kyushu, the island at the southwest part of the Japanese archipelago. Kumamoto City, the central city of the prefecture, is home to Kumamoto University. Located only 33 minutes away by Kyushu Shinkansen (bullet train) from Kyushu's premier commercial city of Fukuoka, Kumamoto City enjoys a natural environment graced with diverse landscapes of ocean, mountains, rivers, and plains.



## Around Kumamoto University

Kumamoto University is sited close to the central downtown district of Kumamoto City. Shopping arcades, cultural facilities such as museums and theaters, and public institutions such as city hall are all conveniently close at hand, yet residents are never far from surrounding greenery and lush nature. Even Mt. Aso, Kumamoto's most popular sightseeing destination, is an easy one-hour drive away.





## Climate

The annual average temperature of Kumamoto City is 16 to 17 degrees Celsius. Seasonal temperatures differ considerably; many summer days exceed 30 degrees Celsius, and winter days that reach the freezing point are not uncommon. As the temperatures change, an array of flowers bloom, trees put on new colors, and residents' fashions reveal rich variety as well. Kumamoto is a great place to enjoy the distinct transitions of the seasons.



Kumamoto is very comfortable place to live.  
Let's enjoy the Kumamoto life!!



## Dining in Kumamoto

Blessed with pure waters and varied landscapes, Kumamoto is one of Japan's leading agricultural prefectures and is renowned for the diversity of the agriculture, forestry and fishery products harvested locally. Local supermarkets offer a wealth of ingredients, yet at student-pleasing prices that are low compared to other prefectures.



## Housing Around Kumamoto University

Many students from abroad initially stay at Kumamoto University's international student dormitory, a place for these students to meet and exchange information. The many student-oriented apartments around the University further make residence easy to secure for students.



Kumamoto University International House

# LETTERS

Kumamoto  
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special issue

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