

International Exchange

## Round-Table Talk by International Students Studying Japan at Kumamoto University (KU)

### Thanks to KU Students, We Can Pursue Our Interests

More than 500 overseas students are enrolled at Kumamoto University. Along with degree programs, a short-term exchange program and other special programs are also available for international students from partner universities and institutions. The following is an excerpt from a conversation between four students studying in the Japanese Studies Program.



#### Friends and Senior Students Said, "It's great in Kumamoto."

**Xenia:** When I was studying in Osaka, I thought of Kumamoto as my second destination. Spanish people usually travel to Tokyo and the Kansai region when they visit Japan, but I wanted to know how people live in Kyushu. Then a Japanese friend of mine in Fukuoka recommended I study at KU.

**Brandon:** I had never been to Kyushu, either, and had wanted to come here to know more about it. I decided to study in Kumamoto, because KU offers great programs. In the future, I want to get a job and work in Japan.

**Phonenapha:** A senior student who studied at KU told me that KU teachers are very good, and kind.

**Paulina:** I came to Kumamoto because my teacher at Warsaw University told me that people in Kyushu were very nice. Kumamoto City is not too big, not too small. It's just right. Actually it's small enough I can go anywhere by bike. Besides, living here is very convenient because technology makes almost everything possible. Japanese vending machines offer hot drinks!

**Phonenapha:** Vegetables and fruits in Kumamoto are very good, too.

**Xenia:** When I first came from Osaka, I couldn't believe that



Standing in front of the national flag of the student's home country at an event held by the International Students Circle

I was in Japan, because it wasn't busy at all and it's rich in nature here, completely different from Osaka. People in big cities are too busy to enjoy chatting with a sales clerk when shopping.

**Brandon:** My university is in the city of Paris. Not much greenery there. The KU campus is very comfortable with lots of trees and flowers. I feel so lucky studying in such beautiful surroundings.

#### Magrzyk, Paulina Maria

From Poland. Major: Japanese religion at Warsaw University, Faculty of Oriental Studies, Chair of Japanese Studies. Immediate Aim: to pass JLPT, the Japanese Language Proficiency Test. Will come back to Japan after graduating from Warsaw University.



### Easy to Find Places Where Domestic and International Students Can Talk and Exchange Ideas

**Phonenapha:** The KU library is awesome. It has so many books in different fields and we can make free photocopies of material we need for our research. It's great! The KU students also study very hard in the library.

**Brandon:** I agree. KU students are very serious. And, they help us a lot!

**Xenia:** When I started to practice Kendo at KU, senior students passed down their Men (mask) and other Kendo equipment to me. KU students make my dreams come true.

**Paulina:** The program I'm working in allows me to take classes both for Japanese and international students. Learning about the different ways of thinking of the students in international classes and understanding Japanese modern culture better in domestic classes is a very beneficial experience for me.



#### Xenia Fernandez Fragine

From Spain. Major: Japanese Culture at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB). Aim: to study the Japanese culture further in a graduate school in Japan, after finishing at UAB.

### Studying Abroad Affords Us a Great Opportunity to Learn about Different Ways of Thinking

**Phonenapha:** A university is where you encounter all types of people and different points of view. It's great to interact with people from different countries.



Domestic and international students from different countries get together at the International Exchange Lounge in the College of Cross-Cultural and Multidisciplinary Studies.



#### Testa Brandon, Eric, Robert

From France. Studied Japanese Economy at Université Paris Diderot 7. Going back to France on finishing the KU program, and coming back again soon, hopefully to work in Japan.

**Brandon:** Bravely stepping forward to a new world and seeing it with your own eyes opens up great opportunities. Ninety percent of the students in France prefer studying abroad.

**Paulina:** I major in Japanese religion at Warsaw University. In Poland, Christianity is very important. Living in Japan, I have learned that people can live without religion. Though there are advantages and disadvantages about that, becoming familiar with different traditions and cultural practices is valuable.

**Xenia:** I believe understanding different traditions and ways of thinking makes the world more peaceful. I want Japanese students to get a chance to study abroad, too.

#### Phonenapha Keothavong

From Laos. Major: Japanese language at the National University of Laos. Immediate Aim: to pass the JLPT, the Japanese Language Proficiency Test Level 1. Will start working on her thesis after going back to Laos.



#### Japanese Studies Program

The Japanese Studies Program is a program in which overseas students majoring in Japanese language or Japanese studies are accepted as government-sponsored international students for one year. Enrolled in the Department of Literature, the students acquire knowledge and skills necessary for academic research in specialized fields regarding Japanese language and culture. Ten students are chosen yearly and more than 200 students have studied in the program so far.