

Dear friends,

Greetings. Here is the summary of our 2014. Bear with us, as we continue this personal tradition.

Yukiko in 2014

Yukiko is in her second year as the chair of the Japanese language education department. Hiroshima University is undergoing some major changes including adoption of a new quarter system, structural change within College of Education. The university has been designated to participate in a new government program called "Creation of Super Global Universities." Consequently, Yukiko has been involved in the central administration. (She feels bad about not being able to spend enough time with her students.)

She has also made a numerous business trips abroad. (Her flying miles have exceeded 10000 miles.) In June, she attended the ceremony to confer a decoration for Professor Makino in New York. She met old friends including Professors Tsutsui, Jacobsen, Nazikian, and Oka. She also attended other professional conferences in Sydney, London, and Arizona. As for her private life, her nephew, Katsu, got married in July. In September, she went to Vietnam with her college buddies for a mini reunion. Ha Long Bay (a world heritage site) was magnificent. Crossing a street filled with zooming scooters was life-threateningly adventurous.

From now to the end of March, she will be busy with reading students' papers and managing administrative work, but she will be on a sabbatical leave for the next year. She is enjoying her work as if she were preparing for a vacation.



Kazumi in 2014

Kazumi began his year in Tokyo and stayed on until the end of March. He continued the book project to write a Japanese language textbook with the main theme of Japanese food culture. Kazumi traveled heavily, too. In February, he visited Elizabethtown College in Pennsylvania with Ryute Saryu and Hayashiya Niraku for *rakugo* and *kamikiri* performance. (Prof. Nobu Takahashi worked hard on this event.) On our way back, we stopped at Purdue for a performance as well. (The preparation was done by graduate students, and they did a wonderful job. Thank you.) During the Japanese Golden Week in May, Yukiko and Kazumi visited Akiyoshidai, Hagi, Tsuwano, and an aquarium in Shimane. Learning about Yoshida Syoin, an influential figure in the Meiji Restoration, in Hagi was very interesting. Beluga whales in the aquarium were very popular. Kazumi made his third trip to Rikuzen-takata in May as well. (still long way to recover from Tsunami) During summer, he got back on duty as Director of Middlebury Japanese School in Vermont for eight weeks. There were seventy students and twenty teachers. Showing the spirit of hands-on approach, the school's coordinator made a mortar and a mallet to make rice cake. (Thank you, Wendy!) A famous lyricist, Wakako Kaku, visited the school as a guest, but she ended up writing a beautiful anthem for the school. (She wrote the lyrics for the main theme of Studio Ghibli's Spirited

Away.) This was quite a happy surprise for students and teachers. The song's URL is <http://youtu.be/EUZZPKPQTOA>. Rakugo week was again very successful. Master Yanagiya Sankyo received a prestigious award from the Japan Foundation. Middlebury played a significant role for this recognition. Kazumi came back to Purdue in August, and continues to write.

Kazumi had a sad event in October. Mr. Ishihara, a college basketball team mate, died after a battle against cancer. Kazumi was able to see and talk with him a few days before he passed away. It is hard to go through a friend's passing so young.

In November, he attended an ACTFL conference in Texas and met several Purdue graduates who are working in US. It was very gratifying to see them. (He also felt his age...)



Continuing our world heritage tour, we will be going to Angkor Wat in Christmas time. We wish you a very merry Christmas and a happy new year!

December, 2014

Kazumi & Yukiko



Miitaro: I had my coat too long and matted badly, so Megu in Chicago cut it short. (well, more like shaving..). I looked like a lion for a while, but now I look like a regular cat. I liked my coat being short since I don't swallow too much hair.

Chibitain: Chie took me to her vet and applied chiropractic maneuver. That miraculously cured my leg pain. I can run and jump without any problem. One concern is my favorite green treat seems to be out of production. That motivates me to go. Now I am not sure how I can make myself go.

Chibi II and Miitaro