

Dear friends,

We are sorry that we could not send one last year, and we apologize to those who sent us warm greetings. This letter will summarize our life in 2015 and 2016. The letter will be sent electronically to those connected via e-mail.  
<Yukiko in 2015 and 2016>

I had hectic two years working. In the beginning of 2015, I was still department head, so I had to push papers a lot. That ended in March, and I was given a sabbatical leave. My colleague and I started research in phonology and pronunciation. I had to study quite a bit, but getting involved in research activities was very refreshing. In May, Kazumi and I went to Bali for the first time.

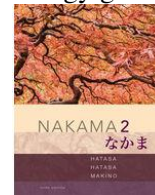
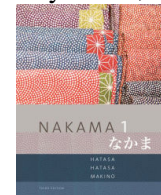
While a faculty member is on a sabbatical, my university still puts the person in charge of taking care of graduate students. I had quite a few of them, so I spent most of my time doing it. However, we managed to go to Thailand, and saw our good old friend, Pavinee, in Bangkok. We went through the same graduate program at U of Illinois in 1980s. She is now a professor of English at Chulalongkorn University (the leading university of Thailand). It has a beautiful campus in the middle of the city. We went to Phuket as well for Kazumi's diving.



Starting in April, the university changed its system to a quarter system. It is similar to an American system but classes are held only once a week for three hours. (ridiculous!) I have been busier this year with conference presentations and writing academic papers. My number of business trips has increased and I ended up flying over 120K miles. (Georgetown, Portland, Orland, Middlebury, Indiana, NY, Palermo, Venice, Kuala Lumpur) It was my first trip to Malaysia on business. Interacting with delegates from universities in ASEAN countries was very stimulating.

In June, our Purdue colleague, Becky, visited Hiroshima after Tokyo. I showed her around areas related to the A-bomb. I was impressed with her proactive attitude in traveling in a foreign country without being able to speak in Japanese.

In October, while I was in Indiana, good old friends from my time at University of Iowa, Judy and Sue, visited our house. Both just recently retired, but Judy was called back to service to help save her program. They have my utmost respect as wonderful people. Sue is enjoying her retirement. She was a director of the Language Media Center, so she had to be in the office much longer than regular faculty members. She enjoys having plenty of time to herself, drinking a cup of coffee and reading books without reporting to her office early in the morning. She has renewed energy to enjoy a new lifestyle with friends. Since I was emotionally down, her energy gave me a boost.



Over the last few months in Japan, a nice animated movie called "In This Corner of the World" has become enormously popular. It is a story about a girl in Hiroshima during WWII. Her innocent life was altered by powers beyond her control. The movie depicts it quietly. As this happened not long time ago, it made me think that I should not be complaining about being busy with work. When I get up, I tell myself "do your best." But it is undeniable that age factor is creeping in, so I must do my best without exhausting myself.

<Kazumi in 2015 and 2016>

In February 2015, Masters Sankyo and Kyonosuke came to Boston and Middlebury for performances. I flew to Boston to support them. Boston had a historical snow storm, but its scenery was that of snow country. In April, Master Niraku came to Earlham College and Purdue for his solo performance. This was well attended.



In May, I went back to Tokyo and met old friends from high school for drinking, eating and a little bit of golfing. Having finished the work at Middlebury, I visited Eugene in October for a presentation at University of Oregon. This was my first landing point in America back in 1979. I found my old apartment and enjoyed a time slip.

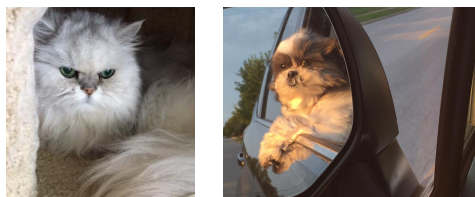
In Portland, I had a wonderful time with my host family and another friend, Steve.



In March of 2016, I went to Washington and Lee University for a presentation in Virginia. It is a pleasure to be invited by former students. In May, I met the president of a company that develops educational apps. We had an interesting meeting about developing some apps for learning Japanese (Kana Bimoji). I was impressed with the pace of a business person. In June, I was able to visit Rikuzen-takata in Iwate (one of the tsunami areas in 2011). The Kan'no family that I got to know through the documentary film finally has a piece of property for their new house. It will be built in a year. A few years ago, I set the goal of staying overnight in their new house, so it may come true the next time I visit them. That will be wonderful. I showed Becky (a colleague from Purdue) the deep side of Tokyo, including Tsukiji fish market and Asakusa. We sure ate a lot because that was literally the purpose of her trip. We had a wonderful group of students and teachers at Middlebury. Master Syozo Hayashiya joined in along with the rakugo team. I was nervous, but everything worked out fine. In the fall, we finished the editing process of Nakama 2 and in November, the third edition was published. Both Nakama1 and Nakama2 are now in their third editions, and we feel they are finally in stable condition. The Iino family came from NY for Thanksgiving.



We will be spending Christmas in Cebu in the Philippines. Have a wonderful holiday season!



Miitro (17 years old): Megumi in Chicago takes care of me while my master is away. I am not on any regular medications and still healthy, and I am as cool as ever.

Chibitan (10 years old): I am healthy like a horse. Interacting with many students at Middlebury is getting a bit difficult. must be getting a bit old.



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Happy New Year 2017

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