

Dear friends,

<Yukiko in 2017>



I attended AATJ/AAS/AAAL conferences in Toronto and Portland in March, and went to a conference on task-based language teaching in Barcelona in April. The city was charming and very lively. But the news about the terrorist attack in Barcelona in August made me feel very sad. I returned to West Lafayette in July, and went to Spain and Portugal for another conference with Kazumi. We visited art museums in Madrid and at last visited Al Ambala Palace in Granada. The conference was in Lisbon. The city was attractive and quality of life seemed very high. Portuguese people were very friendly and somewhat more laidback than Spanish people.



As for my work, two large research proposals were accepted by the National Science Research Foundation. (one by me and another one by my former student, Dr. Hanzawa of Yokohama National University) Both projects should produce useful information to improve teaching Japanese, but new challenges constantly come up. Having been in this profession so long, I still feel there are so many things we don't know about language, teaching and learners.

In October, my article was finally published in Language Assessment Quarterly. It took five years since the first submission. Readers gave me a number of valuable comments through this process. Consequently, I learned quite a bit. I'm going to publish a new book will be published in March, 2018 from Kurosio Publishing. I am going through first page proof with my editors. Their work has been very thorough and professional. I am very thankful to them. In September, I had an annual checkup of my medical condition, and to my surprise, I was told to lose some weight. It was a big shock to me, and I worked hard on it since then. I am now back at my weight three years ago. (sigh!) Thanks to this shock treatment, I feel better now. Thanks to the doc.

My highlight of the year came in December. I hit sixty. Since sixtieth birthday calls a big celebration in Japan, former students from University of Iowa sent a lovely flower arrangement and a card to my school address. Since it is unusual for a university's business office to receive such presents, office folks curiously watched me opening the package. It's been ten years since I left Iowa, so this gift made me very happy. Almost thirty former students of Hiroshima University threw me a party at a local restaurant. They came from different parts of Japan and I was able to see some unexpected faces. Other former students who could not join sent photo/video messages. This was a very gratifying and rewarding, yet humbling experience. They really are treasure of mine. A Big thanks to them.



< Kazumi in 2017 >

I taught advanced level Japanese course focusing Japanese culinary culture for the first time in spring term. There were a number of points to improve, but overall I enjoyed teaching the course. In February, Master Yanagiya Sankyo came to America for a month-long tour. He was selected for a cultural envoy by Ministry of Science and Education to promote rakugo outside Japan. His third disciple, Kyonosuke, came along. I arranged his activities for six locations Boston (Boston College, Harvard University), Toronto (Japan Foundation Toronto Office), Ann Arbor (University of Michigan), West Lafayette (Purdue), Los Angeles (UCLA, Japanese-American Cultural Center), Honolulu (University of Hawaii, Honganji High School). The tour was very successful in promoting rakugo outside Japan. I sincerely thank for everybody involved in this tour.



In May, two of high school buddies came to my place for golf and Indy 500. Three of us spent a week together playing rounds of golf and visiting Indy track to watch practice.



I spent from June to August in Vermont running my thirteenth season at Middlebury Japanese School. 2018 will be my last year as

director.



Right after Middlebury, Yukiko and I went to Spain and Portugal. We enjoyed both countries. I particularly liked Lisbon. It was a pretty city.



I took a sabbatical leave from Purdue for fall semester, and accepted three-week teaching assignment at Beijing Foreign Studies University. Students worked hard and I enjoyed teaching. My first experience in Beijing was very interesting.



We wish you a very happy new year!

Kazumi & Yukiko

Miitaro (born in 1999): I am spending winter break with Megumi in Chicago. I am not getting younger, but I am managing it.



Chibitan III (born in 2005): I am as healthy as I can be, but my veterinary expense is higher than my owner's medical expense. It's not my fault.

