

Greetings.

Here is our summary of 2020. The highlight was our trip in March (just before travel restriction began) to Yellowknife, Canada to watch aurora borealis. A midnight bus tour in thirty degrees below zero was hard, but the lights were fantastic.

<Yukiko in 2020>

In January, she traveled to Noto Peninsula to visit her friend at Kanazawa University. She visited lacquer ware studios in Wajima, hot springs and sake brewery. In February, she and her friend, Yuko, from U Penn visited Kyoto and Arima. Both places were very empty because of the absence of foreign visitors. Like everybody else, Covid19 changed her work style in March although she managed to squeeze the trip to Yellowknife in time. A conference in the US scheduled in March was cancelled.

After a two-week quarantine, she worked remotely until July. She became proficient with Zoom and Teams for her teaching. Remote work still continues to this day. Some students show signs of fatigue and motivation levels have declined. In September, Japanese government started "Go To Travel" campaign to stimulate economy. Yukiko took advantage of it and started traveling. She



visited Kyoto, Uji, and Kinokasa in September. There weren't many travelers and towns were struggling. She



has been trying to visit locations where Covid19 was not as prevalent. She visited Tottori Sand Dunes and coast line by taking advantage of Tottori Prefecture's campaign to offer three-hour taxi ride for 1000 yen. In Kyusyu, she visited Yoshinogari Ruins of Yayoi period, Yanagawa city, and famous potteries of Saga Prefecture such as Arita, Imari, and Karatsu. As the number of Covid19 cases

continues to rise in November and December, Go To Travel campaign seems to continue until next June.

Vaccinations are around the corner. It's good news.

< Kazumi in 2020 >



In February, our house underwent renovation. Our bathroom was renewed and the carpet for the whole house was replaced. Now it's in good shape. The cherry blossomed beautifully this year, but too bad, we could not have anybody to appreciate them. Playing basketball became impossible in March. He started swimming instead. Zoom became a popular word. In late March, he started thinking about doing online rakugo events for students of Japanese through Zoom. In April and May,

Kazumi, Saryu-shisyo, Kazuhiro and Noriko organized five online rakugo events for Europe, Asia, Australia, and the Americas. Master Sankyo and Master Niraku also participated in some of the events.

In July, Kazumi managed to flew back to Tokyo. He and Yukiko visited Wakayama Prefecture. The new semester in fall was conducted in a combination of online and classroom instruction. Spreading



with a mask on was difficult. Aside from teaching, Kazumi managed to organize five presentations by Shigeiko Sasamori, an eighty-eight-year-old Hiroshima A-bomb survivor. Shigeiko handled Zoom beautifully by herself. In November, Japan Foundation's London office hosted a workshop to introduce students to kobanashi performance. The workshop was very successful, and students are now learning kobanashi in Japanese from their teachers. If the Tokyo Olympic games are to be held, Kazumi plans to work as a volunteer.

< Chibitan in 2020 >

Well, this is the last greeting from me. Thank you for sixteen years of full life. On December 9, I crossed the bridge of rainbow where Mitaroo awaits me. Every summer, students and teachers of Middlebury played with me a lot. I hope I was able to give them some comforting times. Thank you everybody for loving me. Thank you for those who took care of me while my dad was away. As long as you remember me, I will live in your heart.



Please post your messages and photos for Chibi at the following URL.

<https://padlet.com/khatasa1/2ey35rt8oen3vyq>

Kazumi, Yukiko, and Chibitan

\*\*\*\*\*

Wishing 2021 to be a calmer year

\*\*\*\*\*