

* * * * * A Happy New Year 2010 * * * * *

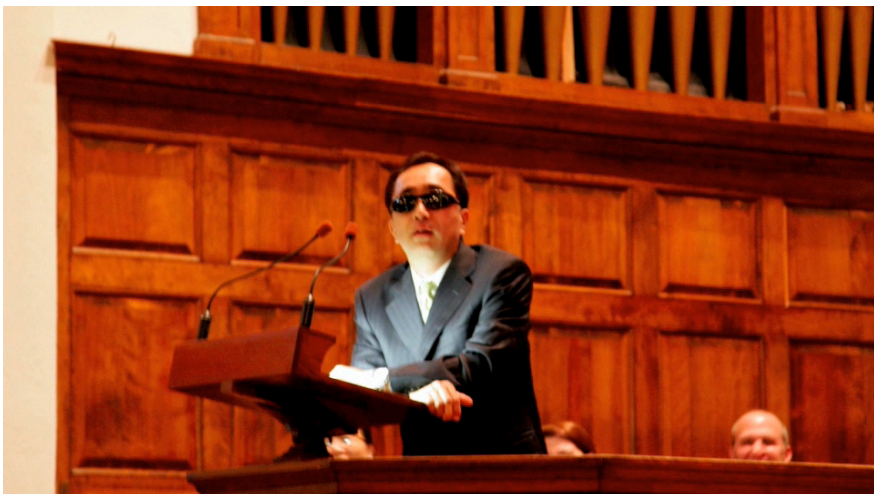
It is again the time of our annual letter. I hope you are enjoying new year holidays. We have been in the editing process of the second edition of Nakama 2 that is scheduled to be published in 2010.

Yukiko began her third year at Hiroshima University, and has gotten used to the life in Japan. Last year, she received national grants to help her research. She collected data in summer, and she is now transcribing the data and coding it. In February, she will start another book project, so she will keep herself busy as usual. As she is in charge of teaching practicum for her program, she had to rearrange student's schedules due to school closings caused by the new flu.



As for her private life, she went to hot springs in Nasu in May with her friends. She had a surgery on her eye rids to widen her field of vision. (She had narrower field of vision for fifty years, and she was not aware that this required a medical attention.) In October, Professor Kurasawa, who was her undergraduate academic advisor at Keiko University, passed away suddenly. She met many old friends whom she did not see for thirty years. This has lead them to have reunions in the future.

Kazumi continued activities with rakugo-ka. In March, he brought Sankyo-shisyo and Saryu-shisyo to Chicago for performace. (It brought about 300 people.) He came back to Japan in May, and left for Middlebury in June to direct his fifth summer session. The rakugo week at Middlebury is now a regular part of the Japanese School. The three shisyos came back to stay for a week. The school grew last year to have 100 students and 27 instructors. The session overall was another successful one. He continued his a-bomb-related activities including a talk by a survivor. He went on a research leave from Purdue for two semesters as he received a grant from Hakuho Foundation to continue his rakugo activities at Ochanomizu Women's University. He started his stay in Tokyo in October. He also is teaching one course in the graduate school of his



alma mater, Waseda University. In December, he directed a rakugo performance at Ochanomizu with a dozen of international students and the four professionals who came to Middlebury in the past. The event drew about 300 people (international students, Japanese language teaching professionals, and rakugo fans) and was a big success. In the middle of December, he visited Taiwan for the first time as his former students (Dr. Kazuaki Nakazawa) invited him for some lectures at a couple of universities. After the lectures, Kazuaki and his wife gave Kazumi wonderful tours of the Taipei area for two days. Because of their hospitality, Kazumi was able to experience Taiwan that the first time tourists can never have. Some

of the notables are: Taipei 101, National Palace Museum (tiny ivory carvings are amazing), night market, sho-ron-po, stinky tofu, deep-fried quail eggs, duck blood gelatin, Hakka cuisine, hot pot, woo long tea, foot massages. Hot pot is not ordinary spicy food. I do sweat when I eat something spicy, but by the time I finished eating this pot, I looked as if I took a shower. I felt “tired”, not “full”, when I finished eating. For the next twenty-four hours, the hot pot went through my body slowly insisting its power.



Chibitan and Mi-taro are in the good care of our friend, Sayuri, in Michigan.



We hope you will have a wonderful year!

Kazumi and Yukiko

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