

JCU Sponsored Study Tour to

JAPAN 2012



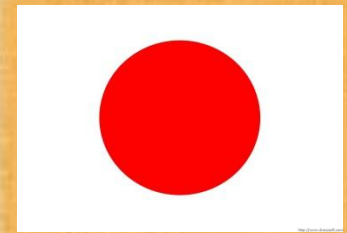
Professor Keiko Nakano



Dr. Susan Long



Dr. Malia McAndrew



The Japan flag, officially adopted on January 26, 1870, is also known as *Nisshiki* or *Hinomaru* which means "circle of the sun."

Study Tour to Japan, 2012

Professor Keiko Nakano (Classical & Modern Languages & Cultures) with **Dr. Susan Long** (Sociology) and **Dr. Malia McAndrew** (History) conducted the 5th study tour to Japan, May 21 to June 10, 2012. The first study tour, "Japanese Popular Culture in Japan," was held in 2004. Since then, the study tour to Japan has been held every other year.

This year's study tour was entitled, "Popular Culture in Times of Crisis: Japan 2012 Study Tour." Three faculty members and seven students participated. This year, tour participants were very fortunate to have a grant from the Center for Global Partnership. Students and faculty together engaged in the planning of the trip, inspired by the model of Japanese school trips, *shūgaku ryokō*.

The first week was spent in Kyoto and Osaka, where the group visited tourist sites of various temples and shrines, such as *Kinkakuji* (Golden Pavilion) and *Kiyomizu* temple, two castles, *Osaka Castle* and *Nijo Castle*, and *Gion Corner* (the theater for presentation of Japanese traditional performances in Kyoto), while thinking about tourism as part of popular culture and the portrayal of "traditional Japan" that is usually promoted. The group also visited sites that would be helpful in students' individual research projects, including the Old Farmhouse Museum, the *Nishijin* Textile Center, the *Manga* Museum, and the Transportation Museum, all of which

provided an introduction to a broad range of Japanese cultural topics.



The group also spent a fascinating day in *Ohmi-Hachiman* City, hosted by a local family, who gave them a tour in order to learn about the city's history. Participants were also invited to the family home, where they pounded *mochi* (a kind of rice cake), learned an *Ohmi* merchant folk dance in *yukata* (cotton kimono), and were treated to a homemade feast for dinner.

Photos from week 1 (by Dr. Susan Long)



JCU students in *yukata* (cotton kimono) preparing to learn a folk dance: **Rebecca Secula, Brionna Thomas, Daniel Gonzalez, Alex Peterson, Bonnie Taylor, Peter McNamara, Gemma Lascio**



In *Ohmi*, returning from a boat ride on the canal



East Asian Studies major **Peter McNamara** pounding **mochi**; (= rice cakes is the usual translation but they are perhaps more like patties made of goeey rice dough); besides Japanese, Peter also studies French and Italian at JCU.



JCU students at the **Golden Pavilion**, in **Kyoto**:
[front]: Daniel Gonzalez, Rebecca Secula, Gemma Lascio,
[back]: Peter McNamara, Alex Peterson,
Bonnie Taylor, Brionna Thomas

The second week was spent in Tokyo, where the focus was more specifically on consumption and youth culture, considering how the earthquake/tsunami in Japan of 3/11 might have impacted these. The group toured a department store and spent time exploring the *Ginza*, *Harajuku*, *Tsukiji*, and *Akihabara*. They were also able to tour the *Toei Anime Studio* in Nerima.

While in Tokyo, students also had time to explore the city on their own and to follow up on research interests. They noted the "*mukokuseki* (= no border of nationalities)" cosmopolitan nature of Tokyo, a theme

highlighted in their study of popular culture while still on our JCU campus, as they chose various ethnic restaurants, visited the *Fuji* TV viewing area, and zipped around the city via subway. Attention was also paid to social class, as participants contrasted *Ginza* (more upscale) with *Asakusaka*, and also to gender as they observed "cos-play" and street fashion. ("Cos-play" means costume play. Some – and sometimes many young people wear costumes imitating clothing worn by characters in "*manga*" or animation.)

Photos from week 2 (by Dr. Susan Long)



JCU students & faculty enjoy **SUSHI** for breakfast!
(Peter McNamara, Gemma Lascio, Dr. McAndrew, Daniel Gonzalez)



At Toei Animation Studio: *[front]*: Professor Nakano, Daniel Gonzalez, Rebecca Secula; *[back]*: Brionna Thomas, Peter McNamara, Gemma Lascio, Alex Peterson, Bonnie Taylor, (*Keiko Ueno, Japanese host*), Dr. McAndrew



JCU student **Gemma Lascio** and **Bonnie Taylor** checking out street fashion in **Harajuku**



JCU students and faculty at site of **1964 Tokyo Olympics**: Gemma Lascio, Peter McNamara, Brionna Thomas, Rebecca Secula, Alex Peterson, Bonnie Taylor, Dr. McAndrew, Daniel Gonzalez

On June 4, the group left Tokyo for Tohoku (northeast area of Japan), where they joined Peaceboat's other volunteers. They spent two days in a fishing community helping residents who lost homes, fields, and loved ones, to reestablish sea squirt farming in the area by sorting oyster shells, drilling holes in them, and stringing them for "homes" for the growing sea squirts. The group learned that the industry, which had primarily exported its products to Korea, had been totally destroyed by the tsunami, and that there was concern that even after the reestablishment of the sea squirt farms in three years, there was no assurance the Koreans would again purchase them in the same quantities as in the past. With other volunteers the JCU study tour participants were shown several areas of severe damage and were able to view the progress in cleaning and reconstruction that has been made so far.

The third day of volunteering was spent in downtown Ishinomaki city itself, helping prepare for the opening of a new mini-mall made from temporary construction materials as a first step in revitalizing the destroyed downtown commercial district. The group also visited the newly opened Peaceboat Community Center and several small shops in the area which had started

up as new businesses in recent months. In addition to learning more about the effects of the disasters on the area, the Peaceboat experience was an immersion into Japanese culture by living with the Japanese volunteers and seeing how activities were set up in this Japanese organization.

Although the study tour participants had planned to spend an additional day doing volunteer work, the program does not utilize volunteers on Fridays. Instead they used the time to visit *Chūsonji* temple in *Hiraizumi*, a UN-designated World Heritage Site in the region. In addition to seeing more of the rural areas they passed through, and appreciating Japan's natural beauty, by this time they had the background to think about the promotion of tourism in Tohoku after the earthquake/tsunami of 3/11, to observe the travel customs of Japanese tourists, and to think about the significance of Japan's long history. They spent the night relaxing, learning about Japanese baths and their symbolism, and enjoying good Japanese food at an *onsen* (hot spring) hotel in Hiraizumi. The following morning they departed for Tokyo as the beginning of their journey back to the USA. [Travel journal written by: *Dr. Susan Long*.]

Photos from week 3 (by Dr. Susan Long)



Lunch of fresh scallops grilled for all the volunteers by people who had lost everything;

[L-R]: **Alex Peterson** and **Rebecca Secula**



Morning exercises for JCU student **Daniel Gonzalez**, who joins others at the **Peaceboat Volunteer Center, Ishinomaki**



Helping to prepare for the opening of a temporary mini-mall in tsunami-affected downtown Ishinomaki: **Bonnie Taylor, Daniel Gonzalez, Brionna Thomas, Gemma Lascio, Alex Peterson, Rebecca Secula, Professor Nakano, Dr. McAndrew**, with their Japanese host (center front)



JCU students and faculty with other Peaceboat volunteers: [front]: **Dr. McAndrew** (2nd from left), **Dr. Long** (2nd from right); [middle row]: **Brionna Taylor, Gemma Lascio, Prof. Nakano, Rebecca Secula, Bonnie Taylor**; [back row]: **Daniel Gonzalez** (4th from right)