

Week 2 in Japan: Monday, June 20 - Friday, June 24

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On Monday morning, we went to Prof. Ikuko Matsui's life stage nutrition practice class where we prepared a meal for pregnant and breastfeeding mothers. It is important to ensure that the meal for these women contains adequate nutrients, such as protein, iron, vitamins C & D, and folic acid. We prepared fish, rice with clams, mushrooms and green onions, a spinach dish with peanut butter and soy sauce, hot cocoa, orange slices, and a prune cake. In the afternoon, we went to Prof. Mizuka Ito's kimono making class where we observed and practiced traditional Japanese sewing. It was not easy to make a straight and neat line with our stitches, as it was our first time to sew! However, the Wayo students can make neat and intricate stitches quickly. We were asked to make a bag, which took us around an hour. We learned that kimonos are traditionally hand sewn, and were taught how to make simple stitches and how to tie the beginning and end knots. After that, we had a lesson in Ikebana (Moribana), the art of arranging flowers. We learned that it has a deep meaning and expresses the harmony between heaven, earth, and man. We arranged our own ikebana pieces, and with each unique branch and flower, we had to use our imagination to meaningfully arrange them. The Ikebana teacher is very patient and talented. She was able to change the look of our arrangements by adding or removing just a few branches. We also tried on Yukata, a light cotton version of the traditional Japanese kimono. It was very meaningful for us to learn about Japanese culture through traditional sewing and ikebana.

On Tuesday morning, we visited Doai Memorial Nursing Home with Prof. Suzuki. It was a very impressive facility with a small ratio of one worker per three patients and only four patients in one room. They have a day service, where patients are only at the nursing home for a few hours for their activities. The nursing home is located beside a hospital, so patients can easily be moved as needed. The patients here receive really great, attentive, and caring service. We also learned that in Japan, nursing home costs are almost fully covered by insurance, leaving only about 10-20% of the costs to be paid by the patient and their family. This is quite different from Canada, as it is mostly up to the patient's family to cover the costs. In the afternoon, we visited the Watanabe Diabetes Clinic where the registered dietitian told us about their practice. It is a small but busy private clinic with one doctor, three nurses, two clinical technologists, three clerks, and one registered dietitian. About 600 patients are seen every month, ranging in age from 20-80 years. Each patient is required to fill out a questionnaire about their eating habits prior to their first appointment for nutrition advice. The registered

dietitian reviews this information and evaluates the patient's weight, blood pressure, blood test, urinalysis and exercise situation, then consults with the patient about what is good, what needs refinement, and to decide a future goal. The registered dietitian emphasized that it is critical to build a mutual trusting relationship with the patient.

On Wednesday morning, we visited Futaba Nursery School located in Oyumino. The nursery school director first showed us the school's orchard and vegetable garden with orange & persimmon trees, mint, melon, "daikon" (Japanese radish), sweet potatoes, cucumbers and tomatoes. We were amazed that all the fruits and vegetables were planted by the nursery school children, as a means to assist them in liking fruits and vegetables. Having outdoor gardening activities can help children develop a sense of love towards fruits and vegetables, and treasure nature more. We learned that the older children are very involved in preparing meals, and children who are 3 years or older are allowed to feed themselves and choose their own serving sizes during lunch time. The nursery school emphasizes safety and healthy food, so no milk or egg products are used in the lunches due to allergy concerns and only organic ingredients are used. Another concern of the nursery school is communication with and approachability of parents, as they have a huge influence over their children's eating habits. The nursery school educates the parents and keeps in touch to make sure that the children receive appropriate energy at home. We were gifted with a beautiful handcraft board of Mt. Fuji prepared by the children. The children were very receptive and took pictures with us. We really enjoyed our visit and think that the school has a very good food and nutritional education program for the children and parents. This education is an important foundation for early childhood development and will benefit their adult life. In the afternoon, we attended Prof. Takehiko Kaneko's Anatomical Physiology class. We observed that the students in Wayo, in general, are more reserved and quiet; they ask questions individually after the lesson is done. At Brescia, students usually ask questions during the lesson and there could be a lot of discussion. It was an interesting experience to notice the differences.

On Thursday morning, we attended Prof. Kyoko Ohishi's cookery science practice lab. It was similar to our food science class at Brescia, as we performed different experiments and did a sensory analysis of vegetables such as potatoes and spinach and made a cake to find out what happens to the food's properties when microwaved, boiled, or baked. In the afternoon, we met up with Prof. Suzuki and Hiromi to visit the National Institute of Health and Nutrition in Tokyo to learn about Japan's national programs for health promotion. The health of Japanese citizens is a really important concern to the government. We learned that the Japanese recommendation for physical activity is to add another 10 minutes per day. The Japanese have an active lifestyle as many walk to work or to the train station every day, but there are still many who are unable to meet this recommendation. We were also very fascinated to see

their human metabolic chamber, which is used to measure energy expenditure in a controlled environment. The data collected is then used to help establish guidelines and recommendations for energy.

On Friday morning, we went to the Edo-Tokyo Museum, which displays the public life, economy, political life, transportation, tools, and fashion of the early, middle and late Edo culture. There are many displays about life during the Edo period, such as the life-size houses, buildings, and mannequins. There were also miniature models of early Edo buildings, like palaces and schools. We observed many school students visiting the museum that day completing assignments as they moved about. In the afternoon, we went to Prof. Nakajima's food processing and chemistry practice class, where we did a five basic tastes test. In the evening, we went to the National Noh Theatre to discover Noh and Kyogen. Noh and Kyogen are classical Japanese performances, which are similar to Kabuki in that they also combine the elements of dance, drama, music and poetry. The performance of Kyogen is mainly entertaining and makes people laugh while Noh is more like a traditional, spiritual and artistic performance. All of us really liked Kyogen as the story was hilarious, and the acting was very funny and easy to follow. With Noh, we were totally fascinated by the actors' performances and their costumes.

We had a lot of fun in our second week at Wayo and cannot believe that we only have one week left! We are excited to learn even more about Japanese culture!