



INTERNATIONAL  
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REWARD

Thank you for all your support  
for the Mosaic this year.

Who Will Be the Next ?

By Ryoutarou Inoue  
From Japan

## Discovery of My Second Youth

I am an older student. For Japanese, it's a rare case to study abroad at my age, since normally people who are my age are working energetically in companies already. Instead, I am taking a different route. I have been studying at Highline for a year and half and my decision to study abroad has been without any kind of regret except sometimes when I feel the "age" shock.

"Your Zodiac is the same as mine." one Asian student at Highline who chatted with me just two minutes ago told me with happy grin. Zodiacs are symbols that were created according to 12 different animals about 3500 years ago. The zodiac signs were introduced in Japan in the sixth century as they express age, time and directions. "I was born 1976, the year of Dragon Zodiac. So it means that you were born 1988, weren't you?" I answered back to the student as I realized that I am twelve years older than my schoolmate. It

was the first time that I felt the generation gap.

"Are you 'KY' ?" one Japanese girl asked me suspiciously. KY—the initial of Kukiga Yomenai means a person who cannot read between the lines. But at that time I didn't know the meaning of KY.

"What is KY?" I replied a long pause. "Are you serious?" As her answer followed, I realized again the generation gap.

Each country has some slang and most of them are made by young people. I remember when I was around 20 years old I always teased older people who didn't know any slang. And I never imagined that I would someday be the one who would get teased. Since then I've been looking up Japanese slang desperately in order to keep up with the trends.

The generation gap happened another time in my management class. The class teaches a lot of things such as how to plan, organize, lead,

and control in managing a company. Sometimes we do a role-play activity about conflict resolutions and the role play is divided into two positions: the boss and the subordinate. I had a boss in my company when I was working, so I realize that the role-playing is a very practical activity. "I don't like role-playing. I don't feel that it's useful for me." one of my classmates told me with tiredness. As I always do role-playing by imagining the actual situations I had from my earlier experiences, role playing excites me. However, for some non-experienced students, it might be boring.

From now on, maybe I will still constantly encounter more of the generation gap. And there is going to be many more new experiences which I've never been into before but I am sure I that will enjoy the gap as I am now experiencing my second youth in life.

## Seeking Identity



By Masaru Moromisato  
From Japan

Differences are what make one unique. And my uniqueness is not obvious but deeply rooted in me. Some of those who are reading this article might have not realized until now that I have a very attention-grabbing family background.

My great grandparents moved from Okinawa (Japan) to Lima (Peru). Okinawa is an island located in the most southwestern region of Japan which has a subtropical climate like Florida and warm, a clear ocean which enable you to see deep-ocean 50 meters deep with just the naked eye because of the breathtakingly high visibility of its seawater. They moved to Lima because of their own Japanese restaurant business about 75 years ago. My grandpa, Seiko, was still in his early teen years at the time. He met my grandma Setsuko, who also moved from Okinawa. They decided to spend the rest of their life together in the land of Peru to start a family.

When I was three years old my parents decided to move back to Japan at the peak of economic prosperity in 1989. Since my parents grew up with the Spanish language,

went to Spanish schools and worked in Peru, Spanish is, of course, their first language. However, I wasn't aware of the "specialty" that was caused by these differences from the general Japanese until a certain age.

My close friends from elementary school who visited my house asked me questions full of curiosity, "Why do your parents have weird accents in Japanese?" "What's the language you speak in your family?" "Are your parents Japanese?" "Are you Japanese?" All these questions made me realize my family and my background is different from others. Since then the word spread and more and more of these similar questions were asked over and over again. The different family background, fortunately, did not cause bullying but I started to wonder which one of them is closer to my identity: Japanese or Peruvian. I, myself, a Peruvian-born Japanese who came back to Japan with Spanish native speaking parents and all of us holding Peruvian passports, I got confused many times. It was in the borderline between elementary and junior high school, as I was being a very capricious kid, I felt that these questions started to annoy me. I started to extinguish every detail of my Spanish and Peruvian background in order to conceal it and I started introducing myself as if I am from Okinawa, Japan for the rest of junior and high school life.

Soon after, I instinctively felt strange about owning a Peruvian passport but thinking of myself as Japanese. I started to hate people talking



When Masaru was only two and half years old in Peru.

about nationalities and origins in any sense since I was confused about mine. I soon pestered my parents to apply for Japanese citizenship because being Japanese would make me feel much more comfortable and allow me to feel that I actually belonged somewhere. However, the application processes drove my family insane. The Ministry of Justice suspected my eligibility of getting the Japanese citizenship more carefully than a full foreigner. I felt the law was immoral as it disgraced my identity. The judicial inspection took more than two years due to the complexity of my family tree. Collecting all the required documents and certificates from Lima and Okinawa became extraordinarily hard. By overcoming all the hardships from it, confusion of identity changed into a strong conviction. Even though my close friends often still categorize me as being closer to a Latino than being Japanese, I now gladly admit that as it was a part of developing my personality by being raised in my unique background.

The confusion of my identity didn't completely end

until I went to Australia after high school. After six months in Australia, I became more open-minded to expose my background because of Spanish. Spanish brought others' curiosity and led me to get to know more people. And they seemed to enjoy listening to my family history. Looking back to when I was hiding my background, I now can clearly identify myself as genuine Japanese and consider Spanish and Latino background as a lucky advantage.

I assure you that experiences in Australia let me learn how to be open-minded. And here I feel honored to share my distinctive family background through Eleven Liu's last issue of the Mosaic Newsletter and appreciate the great opportunity the Mosaic has given me to convey it.

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## Danielle in Wonderland



By Danielle Hagan  
From U.S.A.

"...and Samantha, there are tons of Asians at my school!" I said excitedly. "Oh you're so lucky! Maybe some will be able to help you on your math homework and teach us their amazingness!" Samantha exclaimed.

Yes, as ridiculous as this looks, this was a common

conversation between me and my good friends expressing the stereotypes that we used to believe. My first experience with any international students happened two quarters ago. I have never even seen exchange students in my high school or talked to them before in my three years of attending Highline Community College. You could say I jumped on the band wagon quickly, for now I'm in a committed relationship with Takuya from Japan and hang out with people from ten different countries more than my American friends.

After being led to ISP (which I didn't even know existed) I was amazed and drawn in by the differences from the other clubs and school organizations that I was used to. Everyone had their own jobs to fulfill but

still worked as a team flawlessly bringing their extreme differences together. Takuya seemed the most outgoing and friendly towards me so going straight to him in the ISP became a habit. Moving into this new territory was very life changing and motivational. The biggest, most emotional, cultural shock I faced was how determined all these students around me were in putting all of their effort and passion into their future. I have never seen this before. This is why I placed myself beside Takuya. I needed this atmosphere to find myself and to explore the true options of my future.

Takuya and I saw each other often from chemistry to Taiko. However it took me a week alone to remember and find out how to pronounce his name. After that the battle of getting over his accent almost defeated me. Now that we are

dating, we have faced some unexpected obstacles. These were mostly the cultural differences between us. I am used to showing affection, holding hands in public and speaking what's on my mind. International students call me direct. The arguments that we have gone through were mainly because of my inability to pick up on social cues. "Why don't you just tell me what's bothering you" was very common from me in the beginning of our relationship. After realizing that Takuya was from a high context culture it improved our relationship and that of my friends from ISP.

It's amazing how much I changed as a person. Also how flexible anyone can be with change. I'm excited to learn more about other cultures and to try to improve Samantha's outlook on Asians.

## Traveling to the Land-Down-Under



By Jennifer Banh  
From U.S.A/Vietnam

Every other year during the summer, my relatives from Australia would come visit us. Each time they visited, they would bring along with them a plethora of stories of their life from the land down under. This summer, I had the chance of a lifetime, and packed my bags and left for Australia. So many things

were different in Australia; crossing signs, unlike in the USA, commonly feature kangaroos and koalas instead of deer. There wasn't even a single Starbucks in sight unless you go to the larger cities, but even then you'd still have to hunt for them. People drive on the left side, and at 18 it was legal to drink, gamble, and smoke. Out of all the extraordinary new things I had the chance to experience; Australian Football was imprinted in my mind the most vividly.

One day my cousin rushed home proclaiming he had met the coach of the Melbourne Port Adelaides at work, and got tickets to meet the team during the upcoming footy game. My Australian family was so ecstatic because the Port Adelaides were their home team, and eagerly invited us to come and watch

the game as well though we couldn't meet the team. When the day of the game finally came, my uncle and cousin both got dressed up in their team colors of teal, silver, black, and white. Once we reached the stadium I was astonished at how large it was. My cousin suggested I try an Australian meat pie and chips since it was customary, but the food line was so long I decided against it. I was so surprised when I found out my Australian family had bought tickets to watch from the VIP room, I had never been in any stadium's VIP room and this one completely lived up to its name. There were tons of businessmen in suits sitting around us and I couldn't have felt more out of place.

I had never been to a football game but Australian Footy was so radically differ-

ent. The field was a circle instead of a rectangle, none the players wore any protection and there were eight goal posts on the field while American Football had four. About 90% of the people there were rooting for our rival team the North Melbourne Kangaroos since the stadium we were at was their home stadium. It was so fun rooting for the opposite team because we would be the only one cheering every time the Adelaides made a score, as the other part of the room with all the business people swore and got angry. The game ended with the Port Adelaides thrashing the Kangaroos by more than double their score. Till this day I still can remember how my Uncle and cousin left grinning like mad men as the people around us were still steamed from the major loss.

## A Retrospect of HCC Life



By Selina Chan  
From Hong-Kong

Excitement and anxiety. These are the feelings I have because I am transferring to university. These contradicting feelings mainly come from a new environment approaching me. As an international student coming from Hong Kong to the U.S., it

should not be a new experience. However, this time is more exciting than frightening.

Life is like a journey by a travelling train. We are the passengers on this life train. In every station, some people will get off and some other people will get on the train. Now, I need to get off and transfer to another train so as to reach my destination. However, for each stage I move to, it is inevitable for me to have a brief retrospect.

I will miss the friends I met at Highline the most. They are the panacea that give me mental and physical support whereas my parents give me financial support. Without them, I cannot imagine how I can survive in this 2-year college life. One day I asked my friends to be my audience about my presentation for my

Honor Project. They not only came to the meeting venue on time, but also gave sincere and funny responses to my presentation. Unfortunately, since my laptop was out of batteries, they had to come back to take the video in another day. What they did was in vain but I really appreciated them.

Besides friends, the instructors at Highline are very nice and helpful. Many of them are responsible for their students by being well prepared for every class and willing to help you even outside the class. I remember when I sought help from Professor James Peyton, asking about economic problems in his office. The first time, he explained it to me verbally. However, I could not get it. Then, he picked up a paper and pen and explained to me again by drawing graphs. Yet, I still wasn't getting it. Third, he tried to explain to me again

with adding a simple example. You can see how patient he is. They show their passion about teaching students.

I feel the luckiest because I got a great advisor, Jeff Ward. He helped me when I first came to Highline until my graduation. From planning classes every quarter to questions about transferring, he takes every effort to help me. Even when he could not answer some of my questions, he would ask some other people who may know the answer and gave me the reply as soon as possible. I can say that I can successfully transfer to the University of Washington and part of the reason are because of him.

Lots of opportunities are provided or hidden in Highline. The point is whether you are involved and take advantage of them or not.

## Sisters From Different Mothers



By Ha Truong  
From Vietnam

Even now, I cannot believe a phone call could link us all together and help me get through my two years at Highline easier.

Coming back to Vietnam after a year as an exchange student in Kansas, I went to ask my study abroad agency for a list of new students coming to Highline. Still being a pretty shy girl, I felt extremely nervous talking on

the phone, especially with strangers. However, I had already known that studying in college and living alone would not be

easy and, I should make a move. I decided to call everybody on the list and ask for a chance to meet up and become friends before all of us went to Highline.

My phone calls were worth it. From those calls I was able to meet and make many new friends: Diem, Chau, Trang, and Tuyet. We all came to Highline at the same time and were planning to rent a house and stay there together. After three days running around,

we moved out from the dormitory and started our life living together under the same roof.

Our first year at Highline passed quickly with many memories shared. Unfortunately, one of us, Chau, had to move to Texas, while the other four of us decided to continue our journey at Highline. We moved to a bigger house and marked that turning point with a backpacking trip to California in late summer 2008. Through the trip, we learned how to take care of each other and tried many new things, including sleeping in the airport, and taking all forms of transportation, such as biking cluelessly and so much more...

One special thing about our friendship is that we are not only linked to each other, but our own families are also connected. If one of us gets sick, it's a normal thing for one of us to receive a phone call in a few short hours from

our parents, which contain lots of advice about how to care for ourselves and our sick friends. Once one of us tells the other, all the four families will know right away. Once, we even gathered together to sing a birthday song to a parent on their birthday. And now, we are waiting for eight parents and one brother to attend our graduation this June. Once our parents and brother come, I'll be excited to stay in a house with a total of seventeen people.

My two year journey at Highline is almost coming to an end. All of us will transfer to universities after this summer quarter. I am not sure if we will be able to stay together for the next two years, but I will remember all the memories we share and this sisterhood I gained. Also, I will treasure all the moments we can have together in our last three months in Highline.

## Waking Up In Seattle



By Cyril Mak  
From Macau

“Tick, tick, tick..” The clock reminds me of the fact that I’m still awake at 2 in the morning. I find myself lying and tossing on my bed, keeping my eyes closed in order to get myself to sleep, as I know that there will be a long day for me tomorrow. As I’m listening to the second hand swirling, my mind is wander-

ing through all of my memories of my life here in America.

The wonderful imaginative scene of my American life had already come up to my mind during summer vacation last year. I expected my life in the U.S. to be amazing, colorful and a lot more than I could imagine! Carrying these feelings I board on the plane heading to the land of freedom—America; I could not have been more excited.

Soon after that, I started school in Fall of 2008 and I adapted to the life here as well. For me, it wasn’t just the differences between cultures and languages that made it hard to adjust but also between high school and college. In fall, however, I encountered many difficulties that depressed me most of the time such as culture shock,

classes, language proficiency, and even the upsetting weather. I hated this place, but I realized that I still had a while longer to stay until winter break when I could return back to Macao for a little while, so I endured the depression and waited as the time passed.

To get through the depression, I dedicated my time to my studies and participation of some ISP activities. These helped me to get out from the darkness that I always thought I was in. The most important thing that allowed me to be able to survive here is that I started making more and more friends and I finally found my way to live life here.

Unfortunately, I soon found out that I couldn’t stay here for long because of the problem with my major. Before I

say I pretty much have wasted a year here, I would say it’s worth it. Even though at the beginning I wasn’t happy, and still without a diploma to take back home, I have learned English, how to make friends, how to be independent and a lot more things than I can buy with that money.

In retrospect, in the days I have spent here each of them felt different. I remember when I was excited to explore the new place. I remember when I was tired and scared of being here. I remember I swore I would leave and not come back any more. And now, as the clock is telling me the time, I am reluctantly counting how many days I can still stay. But before I can figure it out, I’d rather keep my eyes closed and be thankful that I can still see America the next time I open them.

## Six Friends Make a Perfect Team



By Eleven (Kuan-Hung) Liu  
From Taiwan

As I am now graduating and leaving Highline in less than ten days, the times I spent at Highline are like slideshows bursting through my memories vividly.

The afternoon of May 25, 2008, I was screaming loudly with tears in my eyes through the phone in front of the first Starbucks on Pike Place; I was offered a position in the International Leadership Student Council (ILSC). After

arriving home and realizing that this year ILSC was going to consist of another 5 of my friends, I was already excited to get the year started.

Six of us—Tay, Ha, Jerry, Olivia, Takuya, and me—began full of energy with the excitement of meeting new people, planning fun events and with a whole bunch of ideas in mind: Recycling, Paintball, a Masquerade Ball, etc. The summer training session was the happiest time ever. We visited the Wenatchee Leadership Conference with a couple other school leaders, and all of us were expecting a great year to happen!

However, when the six of us began to work in the office together, problems started to occur. Since all of us wanted to contribute in helping with every events, we started to step on each other’s little

bubble-like territory. We often had different opinions on working on projects; we started to challenge each other, debating and arguing to prove who was right. Starting to wonder why we all began to act so differently compared when we were just friends, I even worried whether the relationship among us would just end. Our friendship has always been our strongest backup; however, I’d never thought that the friendship we had prior to working together could possibly become part of the problem.

The “Love Fest” we had at our advisor Ameer Moon’s house was the turning point. As we learned the difference between each other, and found one another’s strong points, we began to clarify what the ILSC job meant to us and our friendship. We continued to work hard but also

tried hard from then on to bond with each other as a group.

Global Fest is the best proof of our effort. We worked as a team from preparing for decoration and reception, to recruiting people for the culture booth, arranging performances and a fashion show, to our MC live show that showed our humor and unity. We not only entertained everybody on that day, but we demonstrated that six friends can make a perfect team.

As Ameer has said, “Ten years later, you may not remember what GPA you had, but you will always remember this year in the ILSC.” I now can leave Highline with no regrets that I’ve dedicated my tears and sweat to being in this perfect team that the six of us have created—the ILSC 2008.

# Past Events Highlight!!



*Highline Students having great time on the Boat Cruise '09 held by Student Programs (Upper Left). Highline Volunteer Association Members helping out in the YWCA (Upper Right). Students participating in the Ultimate Paintball Trip held by the ILSC (Middle Left) Summit students attending one of the largest events of the year before they return home. (Lower Left). Students having fun on the UW Adventure Tour held by the ILSC (Lower Right).*

