

## Summer exchange in Japan - Lions Summer Exchange Camp

Participant: Narin Deldar

Duration: 23 July – 9 August 2024

Destinations: Geto Ski Resort, Yamagata (Mamurogawa), Tokyo

Host family: Takahashi

First of all, I would like to express my deep gratitude to Lions for the opportunity to participate in this wonderful summer exchange in Japan. The trip has been an incredibly educational and enriching experience, where I got to explore a new culture, meet many new people, and participate in activities that have given me memories for a lifetime.

### **The host family experience in Yamagata, Mamurogawa**

My journey started with being welcomed by my host family in Yamagata. I got to live in a house with both mother, father, younger siblings and grandparents, who created a lot of life and love throughout the day. I'm used to living with just my mum so it was a drastic change, which I enjoyed experiencing. I always felt safe and welcome when I was with my host family. My host parents took good care of me and made sure I always enjoyed my time there. My host siblings were also very sweet and nice, they made me laugh extremely hard throughout the trip. Even though the weather was drastic and unimaginably dangerous, we found ways to enjoy ourselves at home. We ate and cooked a lot of food, which I miss so much to this day, I try to make it myself at home, but it doesn't taste the same as it did at the host family. The host family showed me around and entertained me with several activities and experiences.



I got to join in trading, picking up and delivering children to school and kindergarten, Japanese school, festival and exploring around the neighborhood. When I saw what a Japanese school is like, I realized that they have more discipline than what I am used to seeing here in Norway. The festival itself was so much fun with my host sister and her friends. I saw the parade and several food stalls.



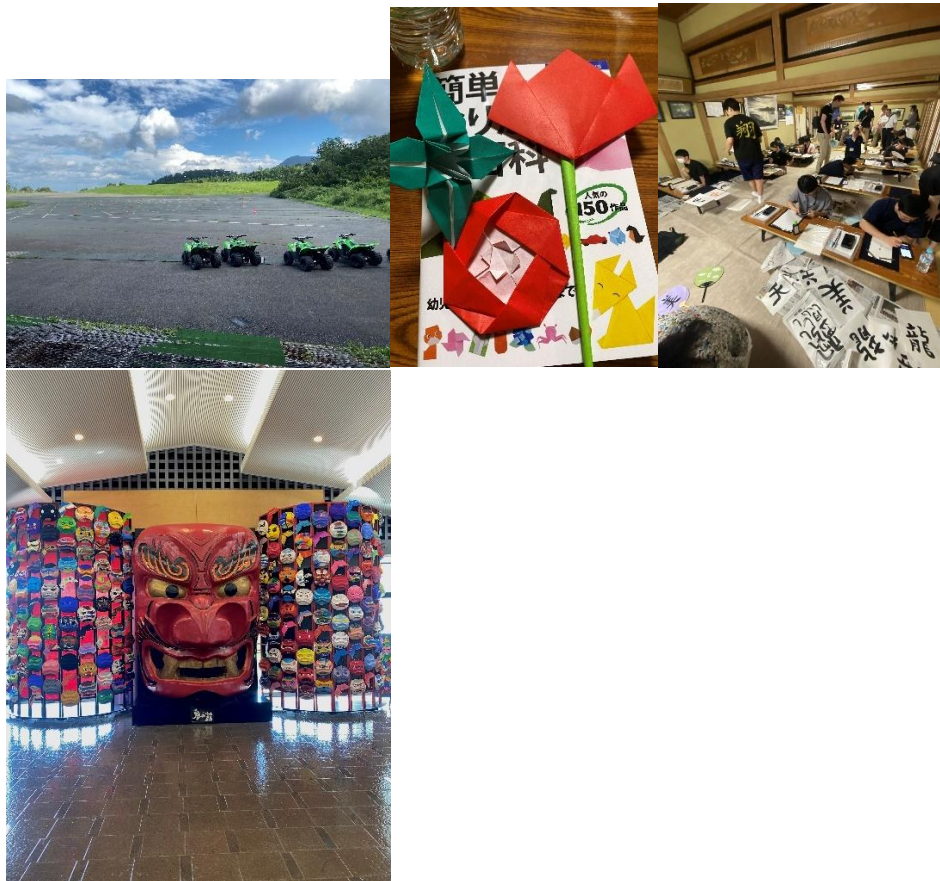
They taught me origami and Japanese cooking as well as manners. They took me to temples and several historical sites, and I got to learn pottery and make lots of it. I think the host family will send the things I made in a few months when they are finished. Learning about their culture was so educational and fun! I have learned about their habits, daily life and history, which has made me 100% sure that I will return one day.



### **Lions Summer Exchange Camp in Geto Ski Resort**

I then attended the Lions Summer Exchange Camp held at the Geto Ski Resort. This was an exciting part of the journey where I got to meet other young people from Japan and one from the USA. We got to know each other and introductions and after that we went out to drive four-wheelers which made us all get to know each other better. I think the BBQ party we had that day was the best of the

whole trip. We sat on long benches with food to be grilled. At my table me and Tara sat with other Japanese guys, then they grilled the food for us which really impressed us. We sang, danced laughed and talked through the barbecue, learned to play Japanese games. I felt such an incredibly cozy atmosphere that I miss. We learned a lot about Japanese culture such as syodo, Zazen and origami. I got to see a traditional dance called "Waga daijo kagura" and was bitten by a dragon doll, I thought it was very funny to be honest. On the last day we visited the "Demon's palace of Kitakami-City", which surprised me quite a bit. I didn't show that Japan was so into demons, but it's just fun. The funniest part of the evening was going to the hot spring with all the girls, that was where we all bonded the most and laughed the most. We ended the tour with presentations and goodbyes which broke me to pieces when I saw people crying through their speech. Missing everything and everyone from camp.



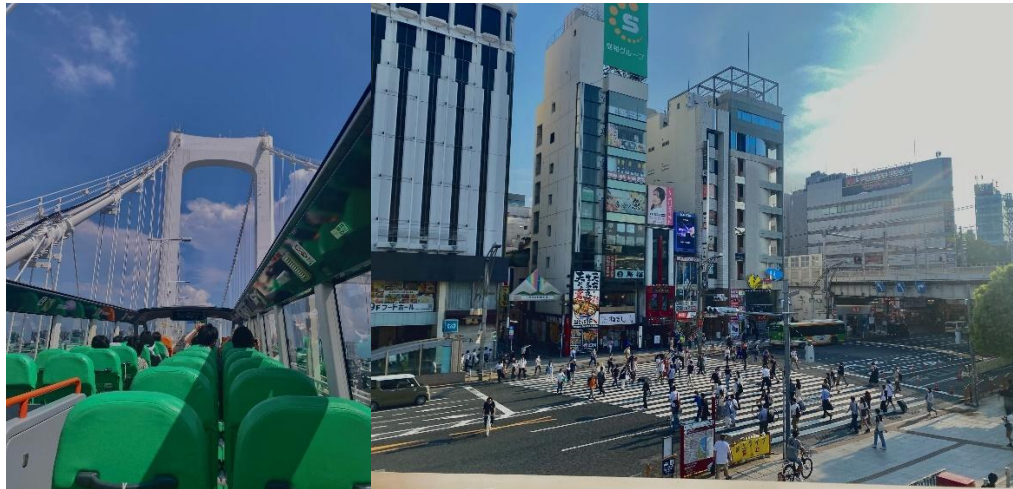
**Activities:** Workshop, Quadricycle, BBQ Party, Hot Spring, Keisyo-ji Temple, Zazen, Syodo, Origami, Waga daijo kagura, Demon's palace of Kitakami-City, Experience hall of Kitakami-City.



- **Meetings with other participants:** I learned a lot about how Japanese young people feel and what they like to do. I thought it was very interesting to see how shy they are, because that is how their "beauty standard" is. Everyone was welcoming and incredibly funny.

### **Visit to Tokyo**

I got to visit Tokyo twice during my stay in Japan, the first time with my host family and the second time on the last day before my return journey, a city that combines modern technology with traditional Japanese culture. I see why Tokyo is so famous in the world, but you have to be there for a while to be able to see and experience all of Tokyo.



- **Sightseeing:** Tokyo tower, temples, Sushi, Bullet train, Tokyo Zoo, Tour bus and shopping

### **Closing and gratitude**

I would like to end this report by thanking the Lions Summer Exchange Program and everyone involved for making this trip possible. This trip has given me a deeper understanding of Japan and its culture, as well as priceless memories and friendships that I will take with me for the rest of my life.

Thanks again to Lions for this unforgettable experience.

Sincerely,

Narin Deldar