

What Did They Experience There?

— A Report of the Samukawa Cross-Cultural Exchange Scheme for Students (SACCESS) 、‘05 —

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PREFACE

All the members of the Samukawa International Exchange Association(SIEA) were very pleased to hear that we could get home all right on Apr. 2 , completing eight-day-tour in America including the short-stay program in State College, PA .Our program was supported by the authorities of Samukawa-Town and the board of education. It was also sponsored by about two hundreds of townspeople who donated us for this project. We wish to express our deep appreciation for everyone who sincerely supported us.

Above all, we thank to the help of Mrs. Cora Lee Phillippi and her son, Mr. Jonathan Phillippi, who had served as an native English teacher for 8 years in Samukawa, and his wife, Mrs. Mari .P, for her sincere coordinating our home- stay program this year, too . Thanks to Phillippi’s family we could enjoy and enrich our short stay in State College .We would also like to say thanks to all the people who cordially accepted us in State College.

We also appreciate for two English teachers, Mr. Alexander Pole & Mr. Brinham Eisa, who are native -English teaching staff of the Samukawa Board of Education, and all the principals and English teachers of three junior high schools in this community for their very kind instruction for students and kind advice for us.

In conclusion we have to add our thanks that all the SIEA board-members, especially Mr. K. Sashizawa, a chairman of the SACCESS committee and the chief staff of this project contributed to this success. Without their cooperation and support we couldn’t get such a wonderful success of SACCESS’05.

1, State College – Peaceful University Town,

With Wonderful Educational Environment

This borough is a typical university town, where a great deal of the area is the campus of the Pen State University, and most of the residents are students and faculty members of the university. We are surprised to see the enormously wide-spread campus first of all, including two golf courses in the campus. All our students licked their lips full over free ice cream that were made here in this factory and their big farm here in the campus. They also enjoyed shopping in the smart shop that the students run, so they seemed to feel the campus was very attractive.

As soon as we arrived at the S. C. Airport, we were warmly welcomed by the Phillippi family and our host-families, stretching the welcome curtain at the station. Then Dr. Miller and his students of W&J College, who visited Samukawa for their home-stay in January this year, offered their hands to me, and we were very glad to see each other again. I hear they have just arrived here from Washington, PA. After taking pictures all together, we left for the hall for welcome party by every host family's car. In the assembly hall of Christian church, there were a various home-made dishes and beverages on the table prepared. The children from Samukawa seemed to become friendly soon with their host families without the barrier of communication with English, and enjoyed nice food with each other.

On Monday morning after three days, we visited the Mayor of this borough (Borough of State College) ,and he was very pleased when I read the message from our mayor Mr. Yamada, and gave our gifts,one of which was a souvenir of the Hakone Artistic Craft . Then we were invited to the municipal assembly by an assemblywoman who is one of only six members, though its population is about 40 thousands (in Samukawa, twenty-one members for almost the same population as ST), and she kindly explained about the parliamentary system of State College in detail. I think our high school students could get much precious knowledge of social study. Above all we were deeply impressed with the fact that the mayor, the top of administrators, are paid only \$8,500 per year, and assembly members are not paid as volunteerism, very different from Japan .

Dr. Miller is an internationally prominent professor of W&J College, whose major is juvenile psychology, especially juvenile crime and justice. He and his students visited Samukawa in January this year, and they'd stayed there for a few days. During their stay, Mr. Ito, a associate professor of Tokyo University of

Science ,visited here to have a session with Mr. Miller about the project of inter-college students exchange program between W&J and TUS ,and so Mr. Miller came to State College to exchange opinions about the project in details.

2, One – Day Visit to the Amish-School

We requested Mr. & Mrs. Phillippi that we would like to go to some different places from last year, and then they proposed us a wonderful plan to visit the Amish school (K-8). There is only one room school in the village, and have a nice exchange and lunch altogether with Amish school pupils morning to noon .As you know, this village is famous for its narrow and closed world, so we couldn't take any pictures in the village. We are maybe the first Japanese school visit in their history、 and also in Japan.

Generally speaking the Amish are a denomination of the Anabaptist related to the Mennonites, and Amish people originally moved to the New Continent from Europe when the United States of America was founded in 18th century. They began to live here and there all over the Northern American Continent based on PA, including Canada and Ohio. And now there are estimated to be about 140 to 150 thousands people. I was deeply attracted with the fact that they tenaciously defend their own religious belief and traditional culture, their own language mixed with Germany, and keep their own peculiar life style. They use① no car(traditionally use 'buggies')②no electricity (usually 'lump' at home) ,and they are ③ self-sufficient in food, and use most of daily necessities made for themselves ,and lead their peaceful lives in their own way, so I think they are religiously very pious and pure in belief.

Their small school, consisted of only two rooms (another room is for some handicapped children) and two teachers, is very unique in the peculiar school-uniform for the pupils. We were also moved at the start of the lesson when they sang several hymns with each special hymn-book written in Germany in chorus . Our students from Samukawa seemed to have been culturally shocked with their life styles, learning ways and so forth, because as we got home in State College, at the meeting after the trip it became one of the main topics of all the experiences in America. You will see many other stories in their own comments later.

3, A Public Middle School in the Typical Suburbs

We visited the Park Forest Middle School on Monday, and then we were invited to the special classroom for foreign students whose native language isn't English. The

Japanese student (2nd grade), Mr. Takahiro Mita guided us as a translator to other classes. There were more than ten students from foreign countries including Thai Land, Korea, and other Asian countries in this special class equipped under the state educational acts of PA. The two teachers of this class , who prepared special program for us and treated us all day were very kind .

We fortunately had the opportunities to visit several classrooms, a library, special classrooms for computer, art, music, home economics, and so on. All the students and teachers of every classroom were very open and frank when we visited; I felt it to be the 'American style'. I was particularly impressed to see a lot of computers very frequently used for instruction, and I think this school regard the Computer-Assisted-Instruction as very important. Our students from Samukawa might learn a variety of ethnic groups, race, religion, and culture in America to visit to two schools, which are in contrast with each other.

The mission of the SACCESS Program is for our students to learn something through cross-cultural experiences where they actually stay with an American family.

On the first Sunday, March 29, all the students had their own breakfast at every host-family's, and left them in the care of host's hands all day. One enjoyed driving to some places in the city, and the other spend the evening on home party with children near the home all together. Some of students went to church with their family on Sunday morning, and so they seem to have been quite satisfied with each family's Sunday life.

It's Easter Sunday on the 29th of March. It means the next day of the first full moon after the Vernal Equinox of the year, and very important annual religious event for all Christian nations, though it seems strange to some Japanese. In the show-windows of every shopping center you will find colorful and fantastic goods of eggs, rabbits, sheep, and turtles,all made of chocolate on display. In John's home, his son, Ray, prepared many colorful eggs for hunting known as Easter' Egg Hunting' and we enjoyed all together with his families, including Cora Lee and Chick in the morning.

By the way I would like to introduce the host family who I stayed with. They have a very big house in front of Mr. Jonathan Phillippi's , where only an old couple ,more than 70 years old, Mr. & Mrs. Beckwith were leading a peaceful life. Mr. Ellwood's hobby is bamboo craft particularly of various bags and his workshop was crowded with them for sale. His hand-made products were well-refined and designed. Their son lives in the same city, and called on us on Sunday, and had breakfast and dinner with us. In the afternoon I requested to go to the famous super-market for sight seeing. Though it's almost like that in Japan , a great deal of goods are displayed in the widespread space in the building like a big dome. I felt an American style at the scene. In the shopping center , I think it a very good idea to have a small restaurant where you can eat instantly after shopping.

5、 Let' s explore Washington D.C. !

After the five days ' home stay, we left State College for the Dulles Airport in Washington D.C. This is the capital of U.S.A .like Kasumigaseki in Japan, in which the Diet ,and many government agencies are situated. It's where White House, the Congress, federal government offices, large-scale parks, museums, galleries and any other buildings are concentrated in this community. Our hotel, the George Town Sweet Hotel, is near the Potomac far from the downtown of D.C.. This town is famous for the campus of the Georgetown University.

It seems to me that our students could put their plan into practice to some extent however they did sometimes lose their way in the street, but had done research beforehand on the spots to visit. Unfortunately the famous cherry blossoms hadn't come out , but a lot of magnolias were in full bloom everywhere in D.C., though it was in the season of cherry festival. On the riverside of the Potomac River. Smithsonian museums, the world's largest museum complex, consist of such large and various buildings and spaces as art museums, galleries, and famous parks where we can't visit all only in a day, so we made three groups of our students, and each group chose their favorite building, including the National Air and Space Museum, National Museum of Natural History, and American Art .

We made an on-the-spot inspection of other buildings such as U.S. Capitol, Arlington National Cemestery, Capitol Hill, the Lincoln Memorial, Washington Monument Memorial, Georgetown University, and so on. We visited the Library of Congress to have lunch according to the Congress woman in State College . It is a very large-scale and nice restaurant, so our students seemed to enjoy to their heart's content. I'd recommend you to read their comments about it, if you want to know morel.

EPILOGUE

Based on the last experience we SIEA members and Phillippi family who took us in could prepare this tour more effectively than last year, so I think we could have our program to stay in America more fruitful and challenging thanks to them.

Above all, my host family, Mr. & Mrs. Beckwith told me the story that Mr. and Mrs. Phillippi and their parents saw to it that we could enjoy the short stay there. They arranged the 'Welcome Party' and the 'Sayonara Party' , preparing hand-made food and drink cooked by every host family, and as souvenirs for each of us、 a T-shirt, many pamphlets for sight seeing, and nice bag designed by one of our host-families .

To tell the truth Mr. & Mrs. Phillippi prepared and delivered sheets of paper as manuals for all the host-families. There were written a list of our addresses, some advice for cross-cultural communication and cultural differences between America and Japan, total schedule of this program, and so on. We did learn how to welcome foreigners for home-stay.

On the other hand we thought that it was important to give some preliminary study and training for our students, so we had several English lessons for them, whose instructors we asked Mr. Paul and Mr. Eisa, native speakers who teach English in public schools of Samukawa, and Mr. Tokunaga who teaches English and International relations at college and he prepared an original English textbook for students. After several lessons their English conversation seemed to be improved and many host-families told me that they were very positive and cheerful.

It is grateful to us that their experiences of this cross-cultural exchange will contribute to brush up their open and broad points of view, or what and how to learn in the future.

In return for the favor of many American people we are going to welcome any foreigners who visit Samukawa and exchange each other.