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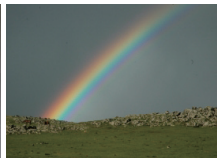
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## Land of the Blue Skies

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Teacher in the Senior High School



▲Central Mongolia

◀Chinggis Khaan

I enjoy traveling a lot, and like most travelers, I have a long list of countries I would like to visit in my lifetime. Interestingly enough, Mongolia was never at the top of the list. However, after going there this past summer, it is one of the countries that, given the chance, I would like to visit again. I have never felt more connected to the Earth and my surroundings than during the month I spent traveling in Mongolia. The Land of the Blue Skies is truly magical.

Summer is the best season to travel in Mongolia. I started my trip in Ulaan Baatar, the capital of Mongolia. I spent my time in UB exploring the city and visiting some famous places, such as Gandan Khuid, the most important Buddhist monastery in Mongolia. I also saw two musical performances, which included traditional dances, contortionists, and the famous throat-singing. Also, in the city center is a large statue of Chinggis Khaan.

I went on a seven-day trek through the Gobi Desert, and saw the most spectacular and dramatic scenery. Despite the fact that it's a desert, the Gobi doesn't look anything like a desert. For example, at one of our first stops, Baga Gazarin Chuluu, we came

across large granite rock formations amongst the steppe. At Bayanzag, famous for the discoveries of dinosaur bones and eggs, we saw red desert sands. At Yolyn Am, a gorge that in winter has an ice glacier ten meters thick, we were surrounded by rocky hills and rain! Along the way to these places, we saw herds of camels and goats roaming around freely. At Khongoryn Els, the largest sand dunes in Mongolia, we had the opportunity to ride a camel and climb the sand dunes.

For the second part of my trip, I went to Northern Mongolia, close to the Russian border, to a lake called Khovsgol Nuur. Here, I decided to go on an eight-day horseback trek. It was my first time riding a horse, let alone for so many days, but it was an exciting experience. We encountered hail, rainbows, snow, blue skies, and endless nature during our trek. It was the best way to see and appreciate the beauty of the Mongolian landscape.

During these treks, we were invited into different family gers and treated as family, even though we were only guests! Mongolians are known to welcome strangers into their ger and offer them the same kind of hospitality as they would to their own family members. The families always offered us something to eat and drink and the children always wanted to play with us. It was humbling to experience such giving kindness.

Mongolian food is delicious, but it can be hard to get used to for many people. Since the land is difficult to cultivate in most areas, Mongolians rely more on their animals for food and sustenance, so they eat a lot of meat. Their most important animals are camels, sheep, horses, yaks, and goats, and all provide some sort of food. You can find cheese, milk and yoghurt, but these can be bitterer than the kind we eat in Japan or other Western countries.

I also had the chance to try airag, which is fermented horse milk. It has a very strong and sour taste, so it was very hard to drink.



▲Northern Mongolia



◀Gobi Desert

Of course, I met many Mongolians and had lots of interesting conversations with them about their country and culture. Mongolians are very proud of their country and history, and are very eager to share it with foreigners. The only problem we had was not being able to communicate. Many Mongolians who live in UB can speak English, but once you get out to the countryside, few people do. Mongolians are friendly and helpful, so even if we couldn't speak each other's language, gestures and a kind smile helped a lot.

There are lots of things you can learn from traveling, and it can be one of the most enriching experiences you have in your life. Whether you travel for one month, five weeks, or even five days, you cannot escape the fact there is something special hiding in every country you visit. As the famous Mongolian saying goes, "Happiness is in the steppe." ☒



## A Year in Hungary

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(Japan/Hungary)  
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I spent a year in Hungary from April of 2008 until March of 2009. I lived with my aunt and uncle and their son and daughter. They live in Budapest, the beautiful capital of the country. Their son is fourteen and their daughter is much younger. I got along extremely well with their son, even though I am a few years older than him.

I am half-Hungarian, though I have been raised my whole life here in Japan. Still, my relatives and my family are very close and we visit one another often, so I was not entirely unfamiliar with Hungary. I went to Hungary for a year because I wanted



▲Friends

to learn the language and the culture better. I attended a regular school there where most of the classes are taught in Magyar, the national language. I got to be friends with an American who was teaching English at that school. He is a drama coach, and because I have been involved with the English Drama Club here at our school, we had a lot to talk about. Those conversations were a good way for me to keep up my English skills.

One of my goals while abroad was to learn how to get around by myself in Hungary—how to ride the buses and so forth. I am glad to say that I succeeded in reaching this goal.

I made a lot of friends in Hungary. In fact, I recently bought a Hungarian computer keyboard so that I can text message my friends there. While in Budapest, I joined an American football team and went to the gym every day to work out on the machines there. Because the food in Hungary was very fattening and I was training with weights, I got very big when I was there. I missed Japanese food, but otherwise did not feel homesick at all.

I had a chance to travel quite a bit in Europe during my year abroad. I went to France and Italy for sightseeing and I went to Switzerland and Austria to ski.

The Hungarian and Japanese cultures differ, of course, but I didn't have any trouble adjusting. One thing I noticed is that in Japan, we often go out to sing in a karaoke or to bowl with our friends, but we don't often have home parties. The Hungarians like home parties very much. Any occasion will do—birthdays, Christmas, you name it.



◀Budapest



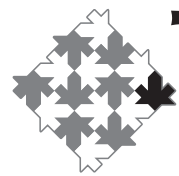
▲Roma

In any case, it was a meaningful and rich year for me. I have recently been accepted to University and will study English there. I'm excited by the prospect and thankful for my six years at our school. I wouldn't trade the experience for anything. ☒

## Swine Flu Pandemic



2009 will no doubt be remembered as the year of the swine flu pandemic. This strain of the flu has infected people from every country in the world and has caused over six thousand deaths worldwide. Schools and businesses have been closed to contain the virus. Brazil and the United States have been especially hard hit. We have not had to close our school, though some local schools have had to do so in order to protect their students. Scientists predict that the pandemic will peak around the end of January.



▲模擬国連会議を開催する国際生@WOC(中面特集)

## [ 第三の開国の時期 ]

日本がグローバル化の波に初めて直面したのは、1853年のマシュー・ペリー提督率いる黒船来航の時である。欧米列強の圧倒的な力の前にもはや開国は避けられないと幕府は判断し、約200年以上に渡った日本の鎖国政策を解除することになった。そして、約100年後の第二次世界大戦後の復興の時期に、世界市場へ積極的に進出し、輸出主導による経済復興が進められた。これらの2度の「半ば強いられた開国」の時期を変革の機会として捉え、日本はアジアにおける近代国家の象徴として発展し、先進国としての地位を築くことができたと言える。

敗戦後の数十年間、日本を取り巻く国内外の社会情勢は常に変遷してきた。日本の少子高齢化と予測される人口減少は、近い将来の経済や社会を衰退させる要因を含んでいる。国内需要に依存している多くの産業が、日本国内の限られた市場のみを対象に留まっていたは持続的な発展は見込めない。今こそグローバル化の

波に積極的に乗り込み、先人たちがかつて挑戦したように国内の市場を世界に開き、資金や労働力を受け入れる体制を整えるべきである。わが国が世界経済のダイナミズムを取り込み、ともに成長する経済システムを構築することができれば、人口減少のなかにあっても持続的な成長は必ず実現できる。日本は新しい世界へ自ら開国すべき時期を迎えているのである。

トーマス・フリードマンの「フラット化する世界」では、歴史上に見られるグローバル化の現象を3つに分類している。1つ目のGlobalization 1.0は、旧世界と新世界の間の貿易が始まった1492年から1800年頃までの『国家や腕力が主役の時代』である。2つ目のGlobalization 2.0は、1800年から2000年までの時代で、『多国籍企業が市場と労働力を求めることによって、世界がグローバル化したものである。そして、彼は現代のグローバル化の波をGlobalization 3.0と位置づけている。それは『個人や小集団』がグローバルに協力し合う、またはグロー

バルに競争を繰り広げるとい時代である。これを可能にしたのが「フラットな世界のプラットフォーム」であり、世界中の人々は、個人としてグローバル化する絶大な力を持っていることに気がついた。インターネットなどの情報技術の発達で、従来の通信機能を格段に高め、個人のコミュニケーションの幅を拡げることで、個人は世界経済に一体化し、同等な条件での競争を行うことが可能となったのである。つまり、3.0は1.0や2.0と異なり、欧米の国家や企業が牽引したのではなく、多様な価値観を持つ個人の集団によって生じているのが特徴である。

国外からの資金や労働力の流入を危惧する攘夷論者もいるだろう。しかし、Globalization 3.0における開国は決して日本の伝統を捨てることにはつながらない。多様な価値観の渦中にあるのは、むしろ日本独自のアイデンティティでしか国際競争の市場へ合流できない。開国に備えて洗練された日本の伝統を再認識する絶好の機会とすべきだろう。☒