

English Newsletter by Komaba Students

Welcome to our inaugural issue

Komaba Times is an English-language newsletter written by students at the University of Tokyo, Komaba Campus. Its goal is to create a place for students to voice their opinions and thoughts in English. While there may be some errors and slips in the English, we hope you enjoy reading it, and find it useful. Our hope is that this will be the first of many issues written collaboratively by international students and Japanese students. We look forward to hearing from our readers as well as future writers!



DISCOVER KOMABA

10 Things You Should Do While You're at Komaba

By Tairei Natsuki

April is the season when new students arrive, and a cohort of students leave Komaba to move on to the Hongo campus for the rest of their university studies. Looking back these two years, many UT students say they wish they have used the time wiser. For freshman, there still is one year left at Komaba. What are the things you should do while you are still at Komaba? Here is some wisdom from your seniors:

1. Build relationships

"College is all about building relationships, I think" says Tomoyo, an economics major. "During your Komaba years, you should participate in events and meet people. Use the resources the college provides. Once you go to Hongo, this will be difficult. Build relationships while you still have time."

Almost all of the 12 UT students interviewed said that building relationship is vital for Komaba students. "Make friends, get to know a professor and meet alumni. They will help you decide what you want to do in the future" comments Manae, a senior law major.

"Especially for law student, it is important that you make friends. Since most of your Hongo classes will be in huge classes, it is difficult to build relationships with new people. I suggest you find good friends while you are still at Komaba."

2. Travel

Traveling received just as many votes as building relationships. Charmine, a foreign student from Singapore commented, "Students should do more traveling during their university life and get different experiences simply because it's the last chance to do it. I have the impression that Japanese students are not very adventurous and many are hesitant to venture out of Japan for various reasons, but to live in this globalized world means that we should know more about the world. After university, most of us will probably settle into a job for the rest of our lives, so I would say university is the last chance at freedom to do whatever we like! Don't waste it!"

3. Learn a foreign language

About 60% of the UT students said that they wish they had spent more time

studying foreign languages. "One thing you definitely should do in Komaba is learn a language" says an International Relations major. "Foreign language classes are only available in Komaba. Of course, you have your second-foreign language class, but I suggest you try more. Take an intermediate English class,



Table of Contents

<i>Discover Komaba</i>	1
<i>People</i>	8
<i>Reports</i>	14
<i>Contributors</i>	16

or try a third-foreign language. It might be a lot of work, but you won't regret it."

4. Join a club activity

It seems that there is a rumor that more and more UT students are becoming "Circle-NEET", not joining any kind of club activities. But joining in a club gives you the opportunity to make friends and gain a skill. Yuki, a biology major says, "Club activity is indispensable for a college student. Whether it is an athletic or an academic circle, joining one will make your Komaba life more enjoyable. You can meet friends otherwise you would not have met. I recommend all the UT students join at least one club."

5. Study

This may seem like a surprising answer for many Komaba students since Komaba life is regarded as the time to "have fun" while Hongo life is the time to "study," but many sophomores, juniors, seniors and even alumni have agreed that "At least once in your Komaba life, you should make an effort to study." Charmine, a Japanese major says, "Komaba students have the privilege of having 2 years of the liberal arts system where they don't have to be concerned about choosing a major until a certain period, so they



should try to expand their knowledge in all fields and find out where their true interest lies. It'd be a waste to get a job unrelated to what they have studied in university in the future."

6. Work

Part-time job is also part of many Komaba students' life. About 90% of the UT students interviewed say they have worked at least once in their Komaba life. Most students prefer working at an afterschool academy, or tutoring since the pay is relatively high compared to other part-time jobs. Shutaro, a philosophy major says, "Working gives you a good experience to get to know society. You get to work with people who have completely different background, and I think this is something you can only do while you are a student."

7. Don't waste the summer vacation

UT students have two-month long summer vacations. Many students use the holiday to see family, do club activities, work part-time, hang out with friends and simply have a fun time. But on the other hand, looking back at their summers, many students also say that they had wasted their summer vacation. "It is so easy to end your summer doing nothing," says Shujiro, an education major. "I wish I had traveled or worked during the summer. If you plan nothing, though the holiday seems long in the beginning, it will pass away before you even know it."

8. Go on a date

Like any other university, getting a boyfriend or girlfriend seems to be a

concern for UT students. About one out of three UT students interviewed answered that they have a boyfriend or a girlfriend. One economics major commented this: "College life should not always be about studying. Have fun. Make friends. Ask a girl or boy out on a date. Boys, if you are not too confident about your looks, don't worry. After all, you are TODAI student!"

9. Get qualifications

Many UT students also suggest Komaba students to get qualifications. Minami, a junior major says, "It is not late to study for qualifications once you are at Hongo, but in reality, most students start studying in their freshman or sophomore year. For example, many law students start studying afterschool from their first-year. It is never too early to start." Another sophomore, Shujiro, comments, "You should definitely get a driver license while you are at Komaba. Or take the TOEIC. It's never too early to take."

10. Have fun

Despite all the things students raised above, all of them concluded that Komaba students should simply "have fun" during their first two years of college. "It does not matter what you do" says Ryo, a senior. "Just enjoy your college life and make sure that when you look back, you have no regrets."



Inside Komaba— Reform of the College of Arts and Sciences

By Takuma Yoshizawa

Tokyo – When you are asked to think about Komaba, most of you might associate it with the place for freshmen and sophomores. Yet, you should not forget the fact that quite a few junior and senior students study in the College of Arts and Sciences as well. It is exciting times for the College as it is changing at the moment. Here is a look at what is going on inside it.

Hatsumi Kurahashi is a freshman in Science Course II of the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of

Tokyo. She is eager to learn new Japanese culture like Kyudo, Judo and Kendo. "I want to become a tough girl," she says.

She is quite clear in her goal. Her interest is in biology, especially neurology. She is particularly interested in learning about neurological disorders and those who are unable to communicate with others smoothly and have difficulty in learning knowledge in the school. In fact, she has a friend who has such a disorder. She feels strongly that it is not his or his parents' fault. That's one of the reasons which drive her to become interested in it. She wonders if she could help such patients who have disorders by studying how they feel, see and hear. Making progress in such fields, she believes,



Hatsumi Kurahashi.

.....
leads to reducing pain and helping them live in a more comfortable man-

Lectures and Spare Periods: How Do You Shape Your Campus Life?

By Kazumori Mise

Busy students at Todai use their free time efficiently. Not only do we have free time before morning classes, after evening classes and during lunch breaks, but also most students have some spare periods. For example, if you have lectures in third and fifth period but not in fourth, your campus life is characterized by the fourth period. Some may spend this time studying at the library. Others may chat with friends. Still others may go out to Shibuya and do some shopping. Here are a couple of examples of Todai students' class timetables and their daily schedules (including free time), which will help you establish your own lifestyle on campus.

	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
1	Physical Movement Science	History I	Law I	Modern Biology I	Basic Seminar
2	International Relations I		German II		German I
Lunchtime					
3	Politics I	Physical Education	English I		Information
4	German Exercise	English II (Reading)		Symbolic Logic	
5	Modern Biology I				Seminar <i>Boshin War & Historical Materials</i>
Extra-Curricular Activity					
 Required Class Optional Class					

Table 1: Timetable of H.S. (freshman, Arts III), summer semester 2011

continued...

Table 1 shows the timetable of H.S., a freshman in Literature III, for his summer semester 2011. "I spent most of my free time in the library. I used to be a diligent student," he explains. He used to go to the library after fifth period and often studied there until 19:00 or 20:00. "But sometimes I studied in the dining cafe with my classmates," he continued. According to him, the library is a place to work long hours, so he chose the casual dining cafe for short study sessions. When the cafeteria was crowded, he strolled to the bookstore on campus to kill time. Interestingly, he has classes in the first period every day. He said this was because of "nothing more than a chance, as a result of faithfully obeying my academic interest." Some students tend to avoid taking first period classes for fear of oversleeping in the morning and being late, so this timetable may look slightly strange for them. But he did not have to worry about such things since he lived with his parents.

Then he moved on to what each class he took was like. What especially impressed him was the history class, which guided him to many historical books, some of which he continued reading even after the course finished. "In addition, the seminar was very meaningful for me," he said. This seminar on Friday 5th period was held at the Historiographical Institute on Hongo Campus, so his Friday 4th period was the time for

ner. These things are "steps forward for human beings," Hatsumi says.

From the junior year, she wants to study in the Department of Integrated Natural Science at the College of Arts and Sciences, focusing on researching the brain.

In fact, the very department which she mentioned is currently being developed. According to the Newspaper of the College of Arts and Sciences, the curriculum of the College of Arts and Sciences is going to be changed from April 2013. The change is to rearrange the whole academic units of the college into three departments; namely the Department of Arts and Sciences, the

Department of Interdisciplinarity, and the Department of Integrated Natural Science. This means that students who will experience *Shin-furi* (declaring majors in their third semester) from 2012.

Yasuki Endo, a professor in the Department of Basic Science and the head of the College's organizing committee, states that the College has aimed at nurturing students who have general knowledge over several disciplines and aspires to pave the way for new areas. At the same time, he emphasizes the traditional characteristics of the College. Since its establishment in 1951, this College in Komaba has carried out reforms quite a lot of times. For

instance, it is known for the creation of the International Relations major shortly after World War II. These changes have been made to respond to social demands and intellectual trends. In that sense, the curriculum change this time is not something special.

He says, "We are looking for students who are eager to blaze their ways through this new era with the latest curriculum." Whether this reform succeeds or not depends on students who will choose to do their junior and senior years at the College. For those who are interested in it, this is unquestionably a great opportunity to see Komaba in a new perspective.

moving from Komaba to Hongo. There he experienced the process of deciphering historical documents, which promoted his thirst for historical knowledge and research.

He finally gave some advice to the freshman students: "You should not have five classes in a day. On Mondays, I found it really hard to keep my concentration in the fifth period. I attended 17 lectures a week, and that was the proper amount for me."

Table 2 shows the timetable of T.S., a freshman in Science I, for his summer semester last year. Unlike the first student, T.S. does not go to the library very often. On the contrary, he has been there only a few times since April! Then, what was he doing in his free time? Actually, he does not like staying on the Komaba Campus. After the last class for the day, he would go straight back home, go to the cram school where he teaches math and chemistry or go to Shibuya with his friends. But how does he spend the free time between classes? "I sometimes do not eat lunch at lunchtime and instead eat off campus with my friends during my spare time." It is certainly difficult to eat off campus within the 50-minute lunch break, so it is an effective way of enjoying various kinds of food in other places than the cafeterias on campus. "I also used to work on my assignments in the Information Education Building," he continued. In the Information Education Building, PCs are available anytime

for free. Also, being the class leader for the school festival, he remembered that sometimes he prepared for the festival with his classmates.

One of his classmates, H.K. kindly joined the interview. He belonged to two futsal clubs and had a part time job tutoring at a cram school as well, so he intentionally did not take afternoon classes.

That is one possible style of campus life, too. Again T.S. reflects his summer semester; "At first it was hard for me to get by with this schedule. The classes are almost twice as long as in high school, but gradually I got used to. You do not have to keep a perfect concentration for all 90 minutes; just try not to miss the important part. You will soon get used to it, so do not worry."

	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
1	Biology		Basic Statistics		
2	Introduction to Nuclear Fusion	Dynamics	English I	English II (Reading)	
Lunchtime					
3	Mathematics II	Spanish I			Physical Education
4	Mathematics Exercise		Thermo-dynamics	Ecology	Spanish II
5	Information	Seminar Improving Intelligence through Igo	Mathematics I	Seminar Mathematical Physics	
	Part-time Job as a Cram School Teacher		Extra-Curricular Activity	Part-time Job as a Cram School Teacher	

Required Class
 Optional Class

Table 2: Timetable of T.S. (freshman, Science I), summer semester 2011

Be Confident in English Writing - From The Komaba Writers' Studio

By Yukiko Nagano

Tokyo -- In the University of Tokyo (UT), there is a required course for science students called ALESS: Active Learning of English for Science Students. The Komaba Writer's Studio (KWS) helps students with ALESS assignments, improving their written paper or presentation. There are kind teaching assistants (TA) that work at KWS for students through one-on-one discussion in Japanese. When the year's final ALESS presentations are drawing near, I got the opportunity to interview two TAs at the KWS to ask the meaning of English writing from the TAs' point of view.

Ms. BuYong Lee, who came to Japan as a Korean-native foreign exchange student to UT six years ago, started working as a Writing TA in 2010. While doing research on comparative literature in graduate school for a PhD, she also finds her job well worth doing. On the reasons how come she became a TA, she says, "I am interested in second language education and communicating

with students." Adding to this, she told me about one characteristic of KWS. "We TAs do not aim at making correction on their papers. Rather, we are glad to help them revise and develop papers for themselves by asking many questions." She said some students misunderstand the meaning of KWS, thinking that they only have to submit a paper and leaving it all to the TAs. This kind of perception

is what she finds tough about her job. What delights her, on the other hand, is that through tutorials, students find out their potential writing abilities they did not notice they had.

Ms. Kozue Uehara, another TA in KWS, also explained her job. She is a Ph.D. student doing research on the residents' movement in Okinawa. According to her, a TA's job is to help students organize and cultivate their own ideas and of course, practice presentations in public. "I find it difficult to read through papers and give them a proper help in the limited time (40mins each), but we enjoy seeing how they come to find answers by themselves." That way, students will gradually learn to see their research objectively. In addition, she emphasized that proper and objective

Eigo de Shabe Lunch

by Remi Hamanaka

Have you ever felt that you can't speak English although you have studied it very hard? It's one thing to read English and it's quite another to speak it. You have to practice speaking English to actively use it.

"Eigo de shabe lunch" provides you an ideal chance to brush up your English. It's held at lunchtime once a week in "the first-year activity center" next to the administration center. You can talk with students, professors and staff in English over lunch.

"Staff launched the project three years ago and it's now managed by students who are interested in it," said Kunimitsu Akai, a staff member of the Student Support Section. "The aim is to encourage students to interact with other students, staff and professors regardless of year, class, and club activities through English. You can talk about anything. When you speak English here, you don't feel shy about talking with people who you meet for the first time. So this program allows you not only to improve your English, but also to make connections."

Asuto Ito, current organizer of the lunch and a first-year student of the Literature

1 course, hoped that students will seize the opportunity to speak English outside the class after they take part in the project. Haruka Asakuma, co-organizer and a first-year Ph.D. student in the Faculty of Language and Information Sciences, hopes that students widened their community through English. Haruka is a peer adviser, who gives suggestions to students in the junior division.

If you're interested in the activity, all you have to do is to go to the "the first-year activity center" at lunchtime on Thursdays (subject to change each semester). Don't hesitate to join!



Photo by R. Hamanaka.

writing skills are essential in any language, not only in English or Japanese, in order to express our opinion. In second languages, we are surely supposed to look at that language and every translation process more carefully, which she thinks is one of the greatest parts about ALESS and KWS.

Lastly, they gave us, not only science students but also literature students, some tips and messages. Ms. Lee said, "Through English writing, we can learn creative thinking, how to interpret data, and communication skill. There will be a lot of errors in the process of developing your ideas, but just be confident! You can find out skills you have not yet found out." And from Ms. Uehara, "I hope English writing programs like ALESS will urge students to understand the

necessity of peer review in any language. I want you to be interested in others in many ways, for that is one effective way to start communicating in any language."

ALESS is for science students, but there will be a similar program all in English

for literature students too in the near future. We should actively try to use English practically by making the most of those opportunities with the big help from kind TAs. KWS is always there for you to help you cultivate your ideas and open a new perspective.



Kozue (left) and another TA at the KWS



Komaba Writers' Studio. Photo by Y. Nagano.

On Website Everyone Can Enjoy UT Courses: UT Open Course Ware

By Nanami Nakamura

Many universities such as Harvard and MIT have begun to broadcast their courses on YouTube. The University of Tokyo launched its project to open its courses to the public on the Internet, called "UT Open Course Ware."

On the UT Open Course Ware (OCW) webpage, people can enjoy some courses from the University of Tokyo for free. OCW started in 2005 as a part of a university strategy for "Knowledge Structuring." These days, research is progressing fast and the amount of knowledge is increasing dramatically and it is more difficult to grasp the whole body of knowledge. However, in order to make use of knowledge for advancement, understanding the body of knowledge is needed. "Knowledge Structuring" is a project connecting knowledge and making a knowledge system that contributes to the society.

On OCW, people can watch various video recordings of courses from faculties such as liberal arts, law, and medicine. The courses are usually 90 minutes, but the videos are divided into 15 minutes. The courses are delivered in Japanese and English. The videos can be played on RealPlayer, but some courses are also released as podcasts. They are free of charge, so people can download them and enjoy them on their iPods or iPhones. In addition to the videos, every course has a "notebook", a summary of the

course, written by the professors or teaching assistants. It can be very helpful to understand the course. Of course, these notebooks are also free. There are many courses, but people can search for the courses they want to see by faculty or professors.

The most popular series was "The Global Focus on Knowledge," which was held in 2005. In this course, the lecturers were Nobel laureate Mr. Masatoshi Koshihara, then president of the University of Tokyo Mr. Hiroshi Komiyama, Mr. Katsuhiko Sato, a Professor of Faculty of Science & Graduate School of Science and Mr. Yasuhiro Ie, a Professor at the Institute for Solid State Physics.

The theme was "Quantum Mechanics II," searching new scientific substances or analyzing them. The lectures were about substances from their various professional points of view so that the students could grasp the whole of "Quantum Mechanics II," reconfirm the importance of the first two years of liberal arts and get an outlook of their academic career.

This service is mainly for people outside of the University of Tokyo, but it can be useful for UT students as well.

Students can access courses offered

before they enter the University on OCW. They can take not only old courses, but they can also access courses which are held at the same class period as their courses.

Secondly, the "notebook" is edited so well that it helps students review their



courses they "really" take. Some teachers speak too fast to take notes so it can be of great help.

Thirdly, the videos of the interview with the graduates are available now, and the topic is not about the courses but "what it means to study at the University of Tokyo." Actually, this video is for high school students but it also gives hints to the University of Tokyo students.

The project team says they plan to add 10 courses every year. Stay tuned.

Komaba Model United Nations

By Takuma Yoshizawa

Tokyo – When you see international conferences, you might think that it is too distant from us. Actually it is. But quite a few people get interested in what has been discussed and how they discuss. There is an activity where you can experience both. That is the Model United Nations (UN).

The Model United Nations is an activity which simulates international conferences by assigning countries to each participant. Participants play the role of each country's delegate throughout the conference. This activity started at Harvard University in 1923, though there was no United Nations but the League

of Nations then. Now it has spread all over the world and has been known as one of the most common intellectual activities. Countries like the United States have introduced Model UN in the classrooms and many governments (mainly the ministries of foreign affairs) have supported it officially.

Here in Komaba, there is one organization which you can join with ease; Komaba Model United Nations. You can enjoy taking part in it and experience activities spread all over the world. Then what can you gain from taking part in the Model UN?

1. Knowledge

In order to fully enjoy the Model United Nations, you are encouraged to learn the situations of a country you represent and the problems which have been discussed in the conference so far. This very research leads to acquire

knowledge not only on the situation of each country and the power balances of international politics but also the way countries show their attitudes and try to conduct their diplomacy effectively.

2. Experience

It also gives you rare opportunities of participating in “model” international conferences. In the conference, you have to behave like a “real” diplomat or delegate. That means that careful speech and discussion should be made in accordance with the policies of each country. It is often the case that the policy of the country you represent contradicts with what you think is right.

Since the procedure of the debate is made similar to the actual conference, seeing the discussion as a viewer, it probably looks like a “real” conference. There are placards with countries’ names written and they have to be raised if delegates want to raise motion. You might regard it as an impertinent game which makes no sense. It can be the impression for those who encounter it for the first time and have never engaged in it themselves. Yet, once you

try it, you would be surprised at the fact that your perspective of global problems has become wider and you can feel a sense of accomplishment.

3. Opportunities

This activity can give participants great opportunities. One of the lures of MUN is that the activity itself is global. Many events are held on an international level. For example, if you belong to the Komaba Model United Nations, you have the opportunity to take part in the Cambridge Model United Nations, which 10 members from the University of Tokyo attended last year. At this Cambridge MUN, participants gathered from more than 20 countries and 60 universities. This is definitely a rare opportunity which you can hardly attain.

4. Friends

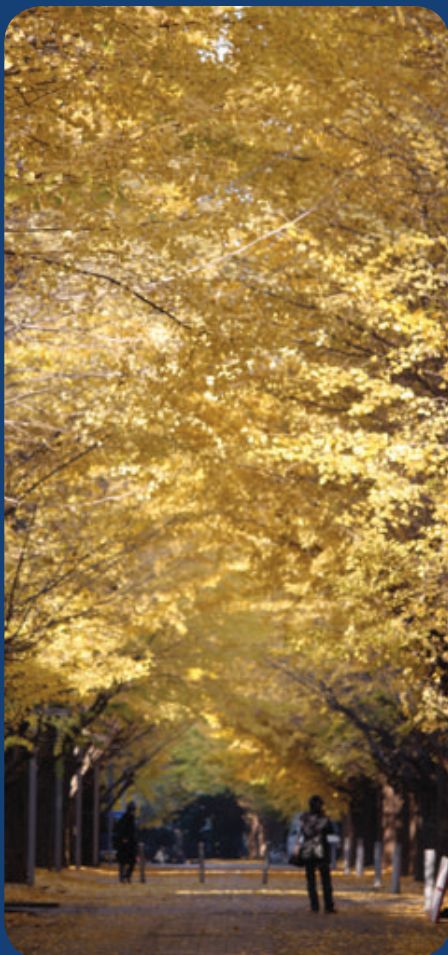
By committing yourself to Model United Nations, you can also make friends beyond the university. This is because students from many major universities have participated in this activity in Japan and the world. Considering the fact that the circle of friends tend to become something within the

university, the MUN activities provide you with a new perspective to look at the characteristics of the university.

5. Know Yourself

Interestingly, by negotiating with other people and reflecting what you have done for the conference, you can see clearly the things you are good at. Some people discover they are good at delivering speeches in front of the audience. Others feel that their ability to persuade others is poor and need to be strengthened. These things are difficult to discover by merely reading books or just making conversation. In this sense, MUN is a good tool to know one’s traits.

These are just a list of aspects about MUN and you can find other interesting points. It’s completely up to you to interpret the activities and take in what you think is fascinating. Understanding the façade is one thing, entering inside the building is another. Whether you have found the appearance nice or not, why not come and experience Model United Nations once?



All ginkgo photos by Y. Itatsu.

Delicious Ginkgo Avenue

By Nanami Nakamura

The ginkgo tree avenue in Komaba is not only beautiful but its nuts are delicious.

If you treat ginkgo nuts adequately, you can enjoy its rich “autumn” flavor.

The way to cook it is following.

1. Collect the ginkgo nuts and wash them in water
(Don't forget to use gloves. They smell and may make a rash from their skins' poisoning.)
2. Put them on a sheet and dry for a night
3. Break them with cooking scissors
4. Boil water and put them into it
5. Boil them rubbing them with a ladle
6. When the films are removed and they become transparent, pick them up and move into cold water

Then, they can be eaten with salt or used in steamed rice and salads and so on.

They might smell a bit but their little bitter taste is quite like autumn.

Since ginkgo nuts smell terribly, many people may not even imagine them can be eaten. However, the cause of the smell is the skin. They contain hydrocyanic acid and it can smell but it become better. One reason why they smell is that animals such as monkeys and badgers don't eat them.

When it comes to delicious autumn foods, there are pears, apples, chestnuts, persimmon and grapes. It takes from 4-7 years to harvest fruits from them. But ginkgo trees take 12 years and more to have fruits. In Japan, people say, “Ginkgo trees will be fruit in children or grandchildren generation.”

When you eat them, be careful not to eat too many. They contain hydrocyanic acid and if you eat too many you might be addicted. Children can eat up to 10 nuts a day.

Seeing Todai from the Eyes of Foreign Students

by Remi Hamanaka / Rin Ichino

Todai is now trying to increase the number of foreign students and already many students from abroad are studying on our campus. But why do they want to come to Todai? What do they think about Todai? What are the differences between Todai and their universities overseas?

We asked some AIKOM students their impressions and opinions about Todai and Japan, compared with their home colleges and countries.

We conducted an interview and found out how Todai looks like from the view of foreign students.

The Reason of Coming to Japan

Q: First, what made you decide to come to Japan?

H: At my university, I studied Japanese. It was an optional course of two hours a week, and I really enjoyed it. And there was an opportunity to study in Japan for a year, so I applied for this program.

D: My major is Japanese, so I thought I should probably go to Japan to get better at it. Um, results so far, I'm not sure about, but I'm enjoying it.

Ss: I don't major in Japanese, but one day an international officer came to my department, and they offered me a scholarship from JASSO to study at the University of Tokyo and I applied for it.

Sd: My major is Japanese, so I took the opportunity to come to Tokyo. I hope I'll improve my Japanese.

Q: So you two major in Japanese, but why did you want to major in Japanese?

Sd: I don't know exactly, but maybe it's a, um, big mistake!! (laugh) In my high school, we must study Chinese, so I wanted to continue Chinese in my university. My university, however, didn't have Chinese classes. So I took Japanese. After that, I watched Japanese drama and began to think that Japanese was cool. So I tried it, and now I like it very much.

Q: Oh, it started with just a mistake!

Sd: At the beginning, it was a mistake. When I had my first Japanese class, it

The Interviewees

Diana (D): from University of Michigan in USA, major in Asian Studies

Holly (H): from University of Warwick in UK, major in Sociology

Sandra (Sd): from University of Grenoble in France, major in English and Japanese Studies

Sasya (Ss): from Gadjah Mada University in Indonesia, major in International Relation

The Interviewers

Remi Hamanaka (Q): 3rd year of the International Relation faculty

Rin Ichino (Q): 3rd year of the Law faculty

was like falling in love with a language so beautiful, so I wanted to learn it.

Q: I see. How about you?

D: I actually started taking Japanese classes when I was in 7th grade. My school offered Spanish, French, German, and Japanese, and I was like "I'll go against the grain! I'll take Japanese!" And actually because I know some Chinese, I thought it would be easy! I was sure Japanese couldn't be harder than Chinese. I like Japanese so much.

About Tohoku Region Pacific Coast Earthquake

Q: The earthquake and nuclear power plant accidents occurred this year. Did it make you worried about being here?

H: I read in the newspaper about a wave of "Gaijin" who ran away to their countries. If something bad happen, then you abandon the country. I think it's a big shame. I had a lot of faith in Japan. I think Japan will come back from the earthquake strongly, so I was determined.

D: For me, if I could still come, I thought it was an opportunity. I just couldn't turn it down especially since I major in Japanese. My mum said that tragedies could happen everywhere, so it's not something that should keep you from living your life.

Ss: Well, at first I was worried about going to Japan, but after I heard opinions from my acquaintance, I began to believe that.

Japanese would recover from the earthquakes and everything would be OK. Moreover, Tokyo is not really close

to the nuclear reactor. So I think that Tokyo is safe, and it's OK to come to Japan.

Sd: For me, too, it was a big question. Like Diana's mum, my mum said tragic things could happen everywhere. She



also said, "You've got Todai, the best university. Take the opportunity."

Impressions about Todai

Q: What are your impressions about Todai, and its students?

H: To go to Todai, we have to be very clever. Outside of academic work, they have so many talents such as playing the piano, juggling, dancing, boxing...

D: Everyone is already good at speaking English

Sd: I'm really impressed and ashamed of myself, because "Oh, god, everyone has some talent of dancing, playing instruments... but I haven't done anything!! Why am I...at Todai!!"

Ss: All of the students have a critical opinion about everything.

Q: Are students of Todai different from your college?

H: Yeah, really different from the UK in two ways. First, if you're a very clever student in England, then you remain quiet and you stay in your room to study. But at Todai, even if they're clever, they're sociable, friendly. And second, a lot of students in UK like to drink a lot, to have a party. But at Todai, they're like adult.

D: At my university, the University of Michigan, clever people are just like "I don't need to study. Let's go party!" I mean, for the most part, everyone is a serious student and studies and tries to get good grades, but an important part

even if it's not true. Everyone pretends that they didn't do any work.

Ss: Everybody here enjoys studying very much.

H: They're proud of studying.

About Club Activities

Q: So I see that you have fun partying or drinking, but how about circles, or club activities?

Ss: There're a lot of circles in my universities like sports circles, dancing, theater, magazines or journalistic something. We can choose to join it or not. I was a member of student organizations at my school.

H: We have a lot of circles, I think there are 300 or so, and it's for anything, any topic. So we have a circle for dancing, eating cheese, reading books, knitting... I think that's one of the best things about our students.

D: At my university, we also have all sorts of activities. Maybe this is

Sd: Like studying, going to the theater or dancing, but there's no activity on the campus, so they have to pay for that. The fee is really expensive.

About Homework

Q: Do you have a lot of homework at your home college?

D: Oh yeah.

H: That's why Todai is so different for me. At Todai we have homework every day but in the UK it's completely different. In Todai your grades come from attendance and assignments you hand in every week. Whereas for my course in the UK, attendance doesn't count toward the grade and you don't get any assignments. You just have one essay. You hand in the essay once a term. That's all. And then we have an exam at the end of the year. That's everything your grade comes from.

Ss: Oh really! In my country we must usually hand in the review for the week. There are also classes with no assignment just like Holly's class in UK. You just need to come to the class, listen to the lecture and take the final exams. And we usually have a group presentation and write essays.

H: I think in the UK, if you take science, you'll have assignments.

Sd: In France we have much more homework than at Todai. In my English and Japanese class we have homework almost every week, plus presentations and it's just in my lecture of economics and law that I don't have homework.

D: I think America is similar to the UK. But it depends on your class and professor. I take a large lecture class where I have to send the assignment every week online. We've been making the movement to online assignments recently. I have classes where the only thing to do is to read. I think here you read but you are also expected to understand it all before you get to the class, but in America you read it, you try to understand as much as possible and you go and you ask questions, and the teacher answer. It's less you need to understand about the text.

About the Lectures

Q: I heard that you take the same lecture with Remi and other Japanese students. Have you felt any difference between Japanese students and AIKOM students in the class?

H: I think there's no difference

D: The only thing I think is in some of



of student culture is having fun with your friends. I feel that dormitory life is the most different. It's very quiet in Japan! When a few of us were chatting in a hallway, a girl knocked at her door from the inside, which was quite odd. It was like she was complaining about the noise. But I expected that she would come out to say something like "Hey, shut up!" not just stay inside.

H: In the UK, if you're clever, you don't talk about it because you're modest. You don't talk "Oh, I studied so much"

something just at my university, but we have a lot of ethnic groups. So we have groups that are very focused on culture specific things, such as Indian dance. We also have 400 "official" extracurricular groups, including non-sports activities.

H: We have quite an active Japan society. It's really fun. Also at Todai we've been to the international students' group.

Sd: At my school, there's no club activity. It's not good. Everyone, after classes, goes for their home activity.

Q: Home activity?

my classes the Japanese students are a little more reluctant to speak up.

Sd: Just because in every class we have to talk about our countries compared to Japan. The professor always wants to know the point of view of foreigners and their countries. So I think in some classes, we talk more than Japanese.

H: But I think it's because it's an English class. If we were in a Japanese class we would be very quiet!

Ss: I think the Japanese students are critical.

Living in Japan

Q: Do you have other problems in your college life, other than lectures or homework?

D: Well I think we all have Japanese problems.

H: I think the most difficult class is Japanese.

Ss: It's difficult, yup.

Sd: I'm ashamed of myself.

Ss: Yeah, I'm not confident enough to speak Japanese with Japanese people.

D: So I end up speaking in English.

Sd: For example, last Saturday I went to a post office to post my pictures to my country and the first question I had was "Do you speak English?" And the woman was so embarrassed so she said, "eeto, eeto" She couldn't say "No", because she wanted to help me. So I said, "OK, I'll try in Japanese", but in fact I can't speak Japanese. Then one of the staff said, "I can speak English." So I spoke English.

H: For me, when I speak English, I feel it's inadequate.

Ss: It's like "Sandra, you're in Japan, you must speak Japanese!"

D: I feel silly speaking English to Japanese people when I came here to learn Japanese, but when I speak Japanese I still feel silly.

Q: How about the support system of UT for exchange students?

H: It's been fantastic, amazing. We have a tutor and a mental supporter as well.

Ss: Todai is organizing everything for us very well.

PEAK Program

Q: Have you heard about the PEAK program?

Everyone: Yeah.

Q: Next fall a new department will be established where every lecture is taught in English. What do you think about it?

H: It sounds very interesting.

Q: Do you think the program will attract

foreigner students?

Ss: I think so. As long as it's Todai.

D: It's a 4-year program. It's not like a "study abroad program". They must apply directly in PEAK, and can say "I was a formal student of Todai!!" You have AIKOM students, PEAK students and international students. I think it might create a very interesting international community at Todai because you'll have obvious different levels. It'll be interesting to see how it works out.

International Students at Home Universities

Q: In your home college, do you have a lot of international students?

D: Yes. We have a lot of Chinese students. We have 3 Chinese students associations.

H: At my university we have thousands of international students as well. It's really nice. For discussions in the classroom, you can have students from 20 different countries.**Q:** So they take the

random Japanese housewives and we just had a chat for an hour.

Sd: There are a lot of Japanese students in my university. At lunchtime, we all gathered at the big table. There were Japanese and French students who studied Japanese. When we talked with Japanese students, they talked about their culture and country. For us it was the only time we spoke Japanese. The Japanese students didn't understand lectures because they took the same class as we took. So it was also the time when Japanese students came and asked questions about lectures and we answered because we know it's very difficult to learn French, to understand French.

Q: In your college, French is generally spoken in class.

Sd: Yeah. My Japanese class is taught in Japanese and my English class in English, but economics and law are taught in French and international students take these courses.**Q:** So your college



same classes with you.

Ss: We have a special class for international programs for foreign students, but some foreign students also take the regular courses.

D: I took an intensive language course. We have a conversational table twice a week. I talked with both Japanese students and non-Japanese students who had reached the fourth year Japanese level. That were actually university students, but sometimes there came

doesn't have a program like PEAK?

Sd: Yes. We have other programs like that. I don't know why, but most students prefer to take ordinary classes. In my university we take two languages. Most of the Japanese students take English and Japanese, because they say, "At least I can understand my Japanese class."

Ss: Foreign students who come to our university can't usually speak Indonesian, so they spend one year or several

months studying Indonesian first. Then they join the regular class because the regular course is taught in English and Indonesian. If you take a pure international program, the lectures are conducted in English, but when you take a regular class, lecture is conducted in Indonesian.

D: We don't have anything like that.

Ss: Of course!

D: Everything is taught in English. I think it's very impressive for international students to take courses, which sometimes I can't understand.

Messages to Freshmen

Q: Do you have any messages for next year's freshmen?

Ss: Oh! Today is awesome!

D: Good luck! Have a nice life!

H: I think when you come to university it's one of the good opportunities to be in an international community. So enjoy it and take advantage of your

opportunity. You can make friends with people from all over the world.

Sd: Yeah. It's a good opportunity to know more people and more culture.

D: I think it's a good time to find yourself and figure out where you're comfortable. I like you guys! AIKOM!

Sd: University is a big step in your life! You feel like an adult! The first time I came to my university, I felt like "Hey I'm an adult!"

Ss: When you're in the university, learn as much as possible! Murishinaide!

Q: Thank you for coming here today.



What is AIKOM?

The program, called AIKOM ("Abroad in Komaba"), is offered by the University's College of Arts and Sciences to the upper-division undergraduates. AIKOM students are selected from universities and colleges with which the University of Tokyo has a formal exchange agreement. The program currently accepts 18 students from all over the world. We also send approximately the same number of Komaba students to our partner schools each year. The courses are offered in English, and credit can be recognized by the students' home universities. Students whose Japanese is of a sufficiently high standard can take the courses offered to the regular students of the upper division at the College of Arts and Sciences, with the exception of science courses. AIKOM lectures have included topics such as: Aspects of Japanese Society, Dynamics of Japanese Cultural History, Reading Japanese Novels, Learning from Museum, The Government and Politics of Japan, Japan's External Relations.

What is PEAK?

Starting in October 2012, the University of Tokyo will offer two new undergraduate degrees focusing on 'International Program on Japan in East Asia' and 'International Program on Environmental Sciences' with English as the medium of instruction as part of the PEAK program. These courses are initially directed towards international students.



Global Outlook: Brush Up Your English

By Yukiko Nagano

Tokyo— Now that sophomores have decided which faculty to major in, it is a good time to think about what kind of future we UT students hope for ourselves. It is often said that we are now facing a tough period for getting jobs due to the global economic crisis. I interviewed a UT sophomore to find out his global outlook, his ideal future career and what he thinks is necessary to achieve his goals.

IPPEI KAWASE has decided to major in Faculty of Law. He belongs to a soccer circle and Model United Nations activity.

One of the most difficult parts about Model UN activity is communicating fluently in English. At the Model UN, he explained, students simulate an international conference. Each member is assigned one country as a delegate. They negotiate with other participants in English. Through this activity, he says he learned not only about the global society but also how to persuade others.

It was quite hard for Japanese students to join those English-native students because their English skills were not good enough. He points out that we should be given more chances to talk in English, comparing UT's English classes with other universities. He emphasized the necessity of being able to use English as a method of communication with various people around the world in order to actively participate in the global society. "I attended an

international conference in Singapore last March," he continues, "and people from Europe, USA and Australia were at the center of the conference."

"I hope to go study abroad after graduation and work for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the future." He adds, "My experience of participating in an exchange program and studying in the United States as a high school student was the start for me to become interested in international society."

His interest in international society has had an impact on his future career, he says, and now he wants to work both for international and Japanese societies as a bureaucrat. "Some complain liberal arts is only too superficial, but I think they are helpful directly to our major."

On the reason why he entered UT, he says the liberal arts curriculum and a high level environment. "I found it attractive that we do not have to choose what to specialize from the beginning."



Ippei Kawase

Then, he tells us how to spend the 3rd and 4th year in university. "In addition to so-called 'shukatsu' (job-hunting), I want to focus on law after these 2 years of learning a lot of areas. Also, I want to travel and read more."

Lastly, he gives us a message on UT life and future.

"I want you all to do what you like the most. I do not want you to limit your activity. You do not need to be too serious about 'shukatsu' or grades. Do not narrow your future!"

UT life is full of discoveries. Encounters with diverse people, many fields to learn. As a freshman, hopefully 4 years as a UT student will bring us great opportunities to grab our own future!!

How to Enjoy Ginkgo Leaves

By Nanami Nakamura

Bookmark Ancient Wisdom

The ginkgo leaves prevent pests from eating papers, so putting them between pages works and it's elegant. Because of their effect to guard things from harmful insects, some people put harvests in boxes with the leaves, too.

Autumn Leaves and Happy Memories

Mr. Ralph Rose, who was born and brought up in the US and now teaching at the University of Tokyo, says he enjoyed playing with leaves when he was a child.

First way is that collecting the fallen leaves and makes a pile. Then run and



Mr. Ralph Rose

jump into it. Clearing fallen leaves is tiring work but this was so fun for him that he doesn't have negative image about it.

Second, many American have houses with lawn garden, and usually it's impossible to draw lines on it. However, in autumn, there are a lot of leaves, so

they make a path like maze with leaves and play a tag inside it. Its name was "cat chase."

In Japan, going to the countryside or mountains and taking a walk through forests is a popular way to enjoy colored leaves, but few Americans do that, he says. However in his hometown—northern Michigan—elementary schools sometimes

exhibited the colored leaves the children collected. It is sometimes one of the class activities. They compare leaves and study about them, for example why leaves turn into red or golden.

There are various ways to enjoy ginkgo leaves and they depend on the circumstances in which people grow up. The image of leaves reflects their culture.

Three Episodes about Gingko Trees in Komaba

By Kazumori Mise



Episode 1 “Smells”

Autumn is the season when it smells worst here on Komaba Campus.

As usual, the ginkgo trees in Todai-Komaba Campus remind the students of the swift passage of seasons. Their leaves are gradually yellowing and will soon fall off. Also, some ginkgo nuts have fallen on the ground, which smells very bad. Some students say, “Why on earth are there so many ginkgo trees on campus? The nuts’ terrible smell spoils the campus environment.” Come to think of it, in the campuses of other universities, cherry trees are mainly planted, instead of ginkgo trees. What do students actually think of such problems? I asked 26 freshman students two questions: first, to what extent they felt bad about this smell, and second, which they think is appropriate to plant on campus, cherry trees or ginkgo trees.

The following pie chart represents the result of the first question:

This shows that nearly three quarters of the students are bothered to some extent by the smell. Then, is it really necessary to replant the ginkgo trees?

As for the second question, over 60 percent of the students said ginkgo trees were better. Some of them said that ginkgo trees seems more suitable to university than cherry trees. Furthermore, none of the other 40 percent students said they prefer cherry trees because ginkgo trees are bad; they just liked the beauty of cherry blossoms.

Even though ginkgo trees have a problem of smells, they will still be cherished as a part of the scenery of daily life on Komaba Campus.

Episode 2 “Symbol”

Todai’s symbol is the leaf of ginkgo tree. But why? It is so common and ordinary a thing that it does not seem to agree with the peculiarity of Todai. Actually, however, the symbol has an academic origin.

In 1896, Sakugoro Hirose, a professor of former Faculty of Science at Todai, found “sperms” from a ginkgo tree. While most plants do not produce any sperm, Ginkgo trees are exceptional in that they reproduce with sperms. He was the first person to discover this fact in the world, and thereby contributed a lot to Japanese and international botany.

The tree from which he first found sperms was transplanted to Koishikawa



Botanical Garden and is still alive. In honor of Hirose’s discovery, in 1948, the ginkgo-leaf-shaped button was devised by Shouichi Hoshino, a former emeritus of Todai. Though this design had been applied in various ways for quite a long time, Todai didn’t have any official unified logo. It wasn’t until 2004 that the current logo of Todai came into use.

Episode 3 “Rumors”

Now that the ginkgo leaves are turning yellow and falling off, female freshmen at Todai are intent to finding boyfriends. This trend is a product of the troublesome gossip, which starts like this: “if a female Todai freshman does not come to have a boyfriend by the time ginkgo leaves fall off completely, she cannot” While this gossip is famous in Todai, there are several ways to complete this gossip. Some say, “she will not have a boyfriend until she leaves Komaba.” Others say, “until they graduate.” Still others say, “she won’t get married all her life.”

These all may or may not be true, but where does this gossip come from? I asked 27 freshman students whether they knew of the rumor, where they first heard that gossip, and which of the three they believe.

Surprisingly, only 8 students of 27 answered they knew the rumor, and as for the rest two questions, there was no clear trend. The source of the rumor is still in the veil of mystery.

Only one thing can be safely said; the best way for female students to get a boyfriend is to be sensible enough to neglect such rumors, because the sensibility, calmness and intelligence can attract male students, who are no less intent on having a girlfriend.

Indian high school students visit Todai

By Rin Ichino

On November 28, 2011, about 150 high school students from India visited Komaba campus as the last event in their 9-day trip to Japan. They looked around the campus in small groups guided by Todai student volunteers, and had a workshop presentation in the 21 KOMCEE Lecture Hall in the evening.



Indian delegation at KOMCEE 21. Photo by R. Ichino.

This is a report on what they did and how they felt during their stay in Japan and Komaba, and what they look like from Todai students. I found out some interesting differences between us.

How and Why They Came to Japan

This project is conducted as a part of JENESYS program (Japan-East Asia Network of Exchange for Students and Youths) by JICE (Japan International Cooperation Center). The JENESYS program runs from 2007 to 2012, toward the aim of promoting mutual understanding and friendship between youths from overseas and Japanese counterparts and citizens. This time, about 150 students from various high schools in India were selected to visit Japan.

Japan in 9 days

The Indian students stayed in Japan for 9 days. It was the first visit to Japan for all of them. After participating in some common activities in Tokyo, students were divided into subgroups of about 20 youths, and each subgroup spread across Japan to visit different regions. The subgroups visited Hokkaido, Nagano, Gifu, Ishikawa, Hyogo, and Fukuoka. Group programs were mainly composed of school visits and home stays with the

goal exchanging first-hand experiences with Japanese students and local residents. And on the last day of their visit, they visited Todai and held a reporting session on the Komaba campus.

Impressions of Japan

I participated in the Final Presentation Ceremony by the Indian students, and interviewed two Indian students. Each subgroup had 5 minutes to give a report on their findings from visiting different prefectures. Most of the groups mentioned Japanese qualities they observed and found, such as punctuality, politeness, hospitality, preservation of traditional culture, and concern about environmental, political, and social well-being all over the world.

Some of them were interested in the Japanese education system, others in Japanese green technology. But it seemed that all of them tried to compare Japanese qualities with Indian counterparts, for instance in their reference to traffic accidents in Japan or Japanese attitudes towards nonnative languages. That is, Japan has well-organized road systems, whereas India suffers from heavy traffic jams. And Japanese try to learn English as a tool to take active part globally, while Indians need it as an official language to communicate across 22 local languages.

One student presented that people to people communications and relationships are the best way to bridge the gaps among different cultures, countries, and languages. What he meant must be meeting with others in person are helpful to understand them. He



Student presentations.

also argued that vital and multiple relationships between nations can be achieved more efficiently through such communications than technological or economical connections and investment.

Goswami, a 17-year-old male student, picked his homestay experience as the most memorable. He enjoyed his stay in Gifu Prefecture, experiencing tea ceremony and playing soccer with his host family. It was very interesting for him to sleep on a Japanese style bed on Tatami, or to eat Japanese style dinner. His host family was not so good at speaking in English, but he had no problem communicating with them because they used body language. Through his first-hand experience, he realized what is important is not what language one speaks but how much one cares about the person in front of them.

Diksa, a 16-year-old female student, also listed the homestay program as the most important experience for her. While shopping and rounds of snow-fights, she exchanged with her host family ideas and views of each country. Before coming to Japan she had images about Japan, but through her stay, she actually experienced what



Goswami

Japan was like, such as Japanese politeness, punctuality, and sincerity.

Some might have strengthened the same impressions as they had before coming, and others might have changed to some degree their perception about Japan. But even if their impressions did not change during their stay, it was an essential experience for Indian students to think again their perception towards Japan. It is not until they experience Japan personally that they can truly begin to think about Japan in comparison to their country, India. Through this interview, you can realize the need to experience places directly you haven't visited, but have preconceived notions of.

Todai Student Volunteers

Over 15 Todai students guided the Indian students as a volunteer. For about 40 minutes, they went around Komaba Campus and introduced the Indian students to highlighted places of our campus. Todai students also attended the Final Presentation Ceremony. Wondering what they found during their campus tour, I interviewed some of the Todai student volunteers.

Yuki, a sophomore of the Faculty of Law, described her experience as changing her conception of what an "English Speaker" is. She somehow regarded English speakers to always be confident and outgoing, but in reality, some of the Indian students were hesitate to ask questions to their Todai

tour guides. It was not until they asked to take photos with her at the end of their tour that she realized they actually had a lot of questions. Although she felt sorry for not having talked enough with the Indian students, she was happy to see the students' curiosity and motivation to absorb much about Japan and Todai.

Nanami, a sophomore of the Faculty of Law, was mostly impressed by their presentation. She could not believe they were all just high school student, the youngest student being only 13. She was astonished to see their confident presentations about their analysis of Japan. The presentations were well-arranged and their English was rather fluent. She was inspired by their speeches and determined to make more efforts to catch up with them.



Diksa

Judging from impressions of some Todai students, this program was really a precious chance for Japanese students to be aware of themselves as well as Indian students. If you have such a chance, I recommend you to take the opportunity and see for yourself!



Campus tour.

Student Committee Addresses Seat Shortage at Cafeteria

Tairei Natsuki

This summer, UT Coop Komaba Students Committee members and UT Coop staffs discussed the issue of overcrowded Komaba cafeteria. If you are a Komaba student and have ever been to the Cafeteria Wakaba and Dining Ginnan, the two cafeterias in Komaba campus, you probably for at least once have experienced having trouble getting your seat for lunch.

"The cafeteria is always crowded at lunch time," says a sophomore law major. "If my teacher decides to extend the class time for 5 minutes, I know I can't get lunch at the cafeteria today." In



Photo by T. Natsuki.

order to secure the seat, some students say they ask their friends to come earlier and get a seat for them. Some clubs even have their own unofficial seats reserved for their members.

It seems not only the cafeteria, but the campus itself does not have sufficient places to eat. Aside from the cafeteria, Komaba has only two restaurants, the Italian Tomato and the Lever son Verre.

Regrettably, these two restaurants are not often used by the students. One reason is the restaurants are often crowded with the local people. Second reason is its price. The lunch menu is around 1000 yen, about three times the lunch you could get at the university cafeteria. According to the survey done to 10 Komaba students in different majors, the average cost UT students spend for lunch is around 400 yen to 500 yen. For poor university students, such luxury is a bit too costly to try.

So, what could be done to this problem? UT Coop Komaba Students Committee took the initiative and arranged a meeting with the Komaba Coop staffs. UT Coop Komaba Students Committee is a student committee that publish the information of Komaba campus life in a booklet called Co-op Komaba Information Express (CKiEx). This booklet is published monthly, often covering the information about cafeteria menus and school buildings for students' daily use. As the representative of Komaba student body, the Committee decided to discuss with the Coop staffs regarding the cafeteria problem.

"The meeting was a good opportunity for students to voice their opinions" says, Remi Hamanaka, one of the UT Coop Komaba Students Committee

members who attended the meeting, "although we were not able to come up with a solution, it brought up some other problems about the cafeteria." As Remi says, the Komaba cafeteria's third floor was built for students to interact with teachers. However, the rooms are used only for events that take place few times a year. "Many of our members were surprised to hear that the third floor is not used at all, whereas the first and the second floors are always crowded with students."

The Committee also raised the problem of certain "reserved" seats by particular club members. "In order to create a better cafeteria environment, not only the university should find a new place for lunch, but also the students should cooperate. Taking more than enough seats, lingering at the table for hours after finishing lunch would prevent other students from getting their lunch. We should be more aware of other students' needs."

There were some interesting ideas from other students too. One female freshman says, "Instead of building another cafeteria, I think the university should get a student lounge. Since many students go to cafeteria not just for food but for time to chat with their school-mates, a lounge would serve

the place for them." It seems that the problem can be approached from multiple directions.

Now at lunchtime, Komaba cafeteria is still crowded with many students. However, with the UT Coop Komaba Students Committee taking the lead, if more students follow and take actions to solve the cafeteria problem, maybe it is not a far future that students could hear their lunch bell and not worry about getting their seats.



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