

* * * * * Merry Christmas 2011 * * * * *

Greetings. Thank you for keeping up with our life's updates. Japan had a very difficult year



We started 2011 on an island of Maldives in Indian Ocean. It is one of the dream destinations for scuba divers. The sea was indeed very powerful and Kazumi enjoyed diving for a few days. The small island (or atoll) we were on only had one resort. Yukiko, who does not dive, spent the time visiting a spa for a massage and drinking tea. She enjoyed the beautiful scenery and, most



importantly, she enjoyed the time without anything to do.

Kazumi continued his normal routine at Purdue. In February, Yukiko came for a surgery in her wrist. The surgery was successful. The earthquake happened during his spring break. He spent the week watching TV Japan. After the break, he was involved in fund raising effort. Later, he learned he lost a good friend with earthquake-related illness. When he went back to Japan, his friend Yoshida arranged a trip to Sendai to see how damaged areas were. Although it was a short trip, he learned how important to visit there to have a first-hand experience. This experience motivated him to give presentations for students at Middlebury Japanese School during the summer. He has been encouraging his friends and students to visit Tohoku. In April, Ms. Masuoka from Chicago visited Purude again to give her personal account of the A-bomb experience in Hiroshima. From June to August, he worked as the director of the Japanese School, but the school moved to California for the first time. He encountered various bumps and problems, but overall the school went fine. Sankyo-shisyo, Niraku-san, and Saryu-san also visited California for the first time. They seemed to have enjoyed it. California offers much more in Japanese culture than Vermont. We took advantage of some of those external resources readily available such as seafood and



Japan Town in San Francisco. Mr. and Mrs. Soda (Yukiko's College time pals), who live in San Francisco, helped Kazumi acquaint himself with the area. The Japanese School will be held in California in 2012. Kazumi visited Denver to attend a conference. He found the level of Japanese food in Denver to be quite high. This appears to be due to the city has a sizable Japanese-American population.



Yukiko was busy with her graduate students in January and February. Her memories of March are entirely those of the earthquake and tsunami. She visited Tokyo in March and April, the tremors were still continuing. She was shocked with the scene she saw when she went to Sendai for volunteer work. It will take years for those affected areas to recover.

She became assistant department head in April. Because of this change, she is now involved in high school relations. She used to do this type of work when she was at University of Iowa, so she enjoyed visiting high schools. In May, she accidentally poured hot water on her thigh and sustained rather severe burn. It has healed now. She had busy summer traveling; Middlebury Japanese school in California in July, Tianjin in China for a conference in August, Indiana in September. Since October on, she has been terribly busy in Hiroshima. An annual medical check-up revealed scars of ulcers in her stomach. But they are nothing to be concerned.

Yukiko is advising five doctoral students and six masters students. In addition, she is a committee member of twenty-six graduate students who are writing theses and dissertation. Thus, she is busy reading them. She is a bit frustrated due to the lack of time for her own studying. The students understand her situation and try not to overburden her. She feels very fortunate to have wonderful colleagues at Hiroshima University.



Chibitan and Miitaro are both healthy. Kazumi continues to play basketball up to three times a week. In December, Kazumi goes back to Tokyo and organizes another reunion of former Middlebury students in his neighborhood of Tokyo. We will be spending a few days in a hot spring and have a relatively quiet new year in Japan. We wish you the very best in your 2012.

Kazumi and Yukiko

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