



Chanelle Carnie (profiled by Megan Van, 2007)

In Years 7 and 8 Chanelle did a short compulsory Japanese language course at school, making origami figures and playing Jan Ken Pon (Paper Scissors Rock). However she was only ever interested in Manga, and this was as far as her knowledge went of Japan and the Japanese culture. Chanelle was an avid reader of manga, and it was while in Year 9 that she came across an Australian magazine advertising manga written in English. Unfortunately the bookstores in Invercargill where she lived didn't stock manga. However, a relative travelling to Australia was sent on a mission to get their hands on a manga while there, and much to Chanelle's delight, returned with several copies.

Chanelle found that these manga included sound effects written in curious symbols, which entertained her friends who were already studying Japanese and could read them. She grew keen to decode these symbols also and quickly set about learning Hiragana in her spare time. This soon led to her going a step further, asking a friend to tutor her in basic Japanese sentence structure.

A Japanese teacher at James Hargest was then persuaded by Chanelle to accept her into the Year 10 course half way through the academic year. Persistence and proof of her dedication to learn paid off, so Chanelle spent the two week school holiday speed learning Katakana, and perusing her father's 'tourist-speak' Japanese-for-Dummies type books. She succeeded in catching up with her peers rapidly in Term 4, thanks to her passion and huge desire to learn.

A year later Chanelle was convinced to join a school trip to Japan, to visit Invercargill's sister city of Kumagaya. Incredibly, she wasn't convinced that this might be the chance of a life time, but with her family's consent she decided to take the opportunity while it was there.

Upon landing, first impressions were of the immense size of Narita airport outside of Tokyo, and the overwhelming number of people commuting to and fro. She soaked up the atmosphere: the traditional and colourful sights of the Asakusa district, the every-night late-night shopping, and also the general struggle in

daily life of the people that she glimpsed from the bus window and time spent in train stations.

She attended school for a period while in Kumagaya, and even got the chance to sit in class during instruction time. Channelle was mostly impressed by the delicious food, including obentoo lunch boxes prepared by her host mother, and she liked the variety of uniforms to differentiate between student year groups at this particular school.

Today (2010) we find her studying in her first year at the University of Otago, towards a BA with a double major in Japanese and Psychology. She has plans to complete a Post Graduate teaching diploma later on and then to head to Japan to teach English. She eventually sees herself working in translation in the film or manga industries, or interpreting. To keep up her practical use of Japanese, Channelle converses with other Japanese language students in her Hall of Residence, and assists the odd Japanese tourist when they appear baffled by their map. She also listens to Japanese music and attends Japanese lectures most days. When asked where she sees herself in ten years' time, Channelle's answer is a resounding "Japan!"