

JCAL (Japanese Culture and Language) Japan Camp, 2015

JCAL (Japanese Culture and Language) is a student initiated club at the University of Otago focused solely on learning about the Japanese culture and language through hands on experience right here in NZ. The overall aim of the club is to provide events, entertainment, and opportunities for anyone interested in Japanese culture to participate and learn through experience. Participants interact with one another to improve their language, deepen their cultural knowledge, make new friends, and enjoy the awesome experiences that Japan has to offer right here in NZ! JCAL's second "Japan Camp" was held on May 16th-17th, 2015, at Waiora Scout Camp in Dunedin, New Zealand. The two-day experience involved a range of Japanese culture and language related activities, incorporating those that were done last year, as well as newly introduced games and activities, and provided participants with a chance to meet others with similar interests in Japan and explore the exciting culture and language together.

With 38 participants this year (compared to last year's 25), Japan Camp 2015 was set on a much larger scale than ever before. We all arrived at campsite at 9am on Saturday, May 16th, participants quickly set about deciding their bunk rooms for the night, before being assigned to a team in which they would complete the day's activities. After some time getting to know one another, all 6 teams battled it out in a range of team-bonding challenges where they were awarded points to determine the overall winners and prize-takers. The first activity, a group obstacle race (障害物競走), involved such aspects as a sack race, a net crawl, an egg & spoon race, balloon balancing, ame-kui (飴食い= hunting for a lollie in a bowl of flour), and pan-kui kyōsō (パン食い競走= biting bread off a hanging rope), in which one member of each team was assigned to a specific race section. Teams then went on to engage in a kibasen challenge (騎馬戦), before a break for a sausage-sizzle lunch. They were quickly back in to it, however, challenging one another at tug of war (綱引き), jump-rope (縄跳び) and a 7-legged race (二人三脚). The overall team points were then tallied up, and the winning teams presented with Japanese snacks, and allowed to choose which of the Camp's meals they would most like to cook: Japanese curry & rice (Saturday night dinner), or Yakisoba, and Gyoza (Sunday lunch). With nightfall came the last of the day's activities, including a Japanese horror movie (The Grudge), the scary kimo-dameshi (肝試し= 'test of courage' ghost walk), as well as a camp fire with drinks, sparklers, snacks, and marshmallows.

The following day started fresh with a group session of rajio taisō (ラジオ体操= radio exercise) and a hearty 'Kiwi breakfast' before participants took part in the Cultural Workshop, which included karate, shodō (書道= calligraphy), origami, and traditional Japanese games (kendama, koma, fukuwarai, take-tonbo, daruma-otoshi, hyakku-nin isshu, etc.). The workshop ran on a rotational basis with groups spending 30 minutes at each station before moving on to the next. School games were also played indoors, including daruma-san ga koronda, musical chairs, hankachi-otoshi, team jump-rope, and sumo wrestling with padded suits. At the conclusion of the workshop, participants refuelled with a lunch of yakisoba and gyoza, tidied up what was left around the site, and headed home late Sunday afternoon, buzzing from the experience overall.

The initial idea for Japan camp came from our own desire to engage with the amazing and enjoyable experiences that Japan has to offer right here in NZ. We built Japan Camp 2015 on the basis of what we accomplished last year, altering what could have been better and adding more exciting activities to keep participants entertained and busy. The more we thought about ideas the more ideas began to come up, and before we knew it, we had another solid foundation upon which we would base the entire camp. The organisation process was undoubtedly time consuming, but following the plan made things easier and less stressful on the whole, and knowing that we would soon be able to share certain aspects of Japan's culture and language with other enthusiastic participants was a motivational drive that kept us going throughout. For those looking to hold something like Japan Camp themselves, I would certainly recommend giving the above mentioned

activities ago; majority of which can be purchased/built from materials here in NZ without the need to be in Japan. The team building activities on the first day was a great way to get participants interacting with one another at the same time as learning and experiencing some unique cultural aspects of Japan. Ensure that you have enough things to keep participants entertained during the 'down time' when you're busy setting up for the next activity (a lesson we learnt from last year!). This can easily be accomplished with packs or cards, board games, and books, and, if all else fails, the hope that participants take the initiative to entertain themselves.

The following link will take you to a Youtube video of what participants at Japan Camp experienced this year: <https://youtu.be/360mWzIY0FU>, and also last year in 2014: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gxG9zLHAD74>. For more information about what JCAL gets up to in Dunedin, please visit our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/JCAL2015>, or email me on jcalnewzealand@gmail.com.

