

Life in Niigata

Department of Oral Biological Science,
Division of Orthodontics

Gary A. Estomaguio



My name is Gary A. Estomaguio, I came from the Philippines and I arrived here last April 4, 2001 as a recipient of the monbusho scholarship program. I am now in my second year as a graduate student in orthodontics at Niigata University.

Philippines is just 4 hours from Japan by air and maybe 7 days by ship. It has two seasons namely wet and dry. The wet season starts on early June and ends up approximately late December depending on the monsoons. It's true that almost all of the typhoons that hit Philippines will pass by Japan as its next target area. It is also like Japan because it is made up of three major islands.

The capital Manila is like Niigata because there is also a river and a seaport for local and international vessels. Jeepney is the basic means of transportation, which is very unique.

Being an international student is challenging because you must be prepared to live and study in a country with a different lifestyle from your own.

The difference in climate, customs and culture are things that will become a part of your life while you are in that country.

Communication is the biggest hindrance that I have encountered in my 2 years of stay here in Japan but it did not stop me from learning orthodontics and gain many Japanese friends. In fact I really tried to learn and speak the language.

Niigata is a very beautiful place with its parks full of gardens and trees, clean beaches and rivers, high rise buildings, clean streets, well disciplined motorists and pedestrians. It has a very prestigious University with three big campuses.

My life as a student in this great city is full of happiness and enthusiasm. Here I have made friends with the locals and students like me from various countries. I have learned and understand some of the Japanese ways and customs, which helped me a lot for my everyday life.

The training and system of education in Japan is quite different from what I had in the Philippines but I was able to adjust little by little and learned

their ways. Punctuality and diligence are always observed but excellence in treatment is what they always aspire. There are so many laboratory and technical works in my department that is why all of us are very busy.

Life outside the University is also interesting because there's a lot of place to go after school days such as malls, parks and other places outside Niigata city.

I enjoyed almost all the festivals they have here, but most especially the Hanabi.

I also enjoyed going to the market and seeing some foods, which are unique to Japan and amused by the staffs shouting about their products, but I don't enjoy the price of every stuff they have because everything is expensive.



Picture taken during the spring festival at the Shinano River bank (Yasuragitei).

Japan has got four seasons and with every season, there are fruits and vegetables that are in abundance and I am lucky to taste them especially those, which are not native to my country.

The change of season means a change in lifestyle too and also a change in the mood of the Japanese people but I was able to adjust to this change and I am getting used to it.

I am looking forward for summer to arrive because I love the beach very much especially the beach parties and sightseeing.

Two years from now, I will be going back to my country and for sure I will miss everything that I have experienced here as a student and as a local resident.



Summer holiday with my wife at the world famous beach called Boracay situated on the western part of the Philippines.