

Hokkaido University of Education

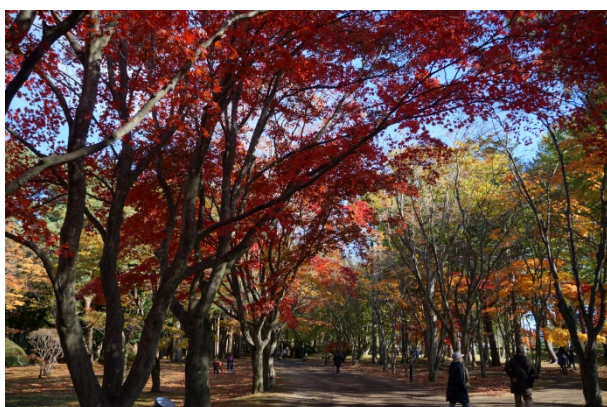


This is a report written by exchange students.

«A fun day in the «Kousetsu» Park.»

Hi everyone, we are a group of exchange students, our names are; Shiwon Yun (South Korea), Piao Haiyang (China), Sun Haiyu (China), Yan Gonshuen (Taiwan), Wu Mengchieh (Taiwan), Ant Chen (Australia), Simon Brovoll Henriksen (Norway) and Jan-Erik Samuelsen (Norway). We have been given the task to write a report of our experiences at the «Kousetsu» park, the «Yukura» temple and a «onsen» footbath. On a nice and sunny day, the ninth of November, 2013, we went by bus to see the autumn colored park. After we headed toward the old, but beautiful “Yukura” temple, and then on to the famous “onsen” footbath.

1. Kousetsu park's colors.



The Kousetsu park resides in the Miharu district in Hakodate. In Japanese it is written as 香雪園, which means “The parks snow smells of plums”. The park is very famous in Japan. The first thing that catches your eye upon arrival is the parks fiery red leaves combined with the blue sky, it seems as though you are looking at an oilpainting.

It was so beautiful here that we had to take a lot of various photos, I am sure they will be great memories in the future. When it comes to autumn, the red leaves can be commonly seen in Japan.



Red leaves viewing is one of the most popular activities in this season.

This picture was taken right before we ate our lunch. We had a great time sitting there eating, while enjoying the spectacular view.

2. A traditional house in the “Kousetsu” park



When you arrive at the middle of the park, a beautiful, traditional building catches your eye. It's surrounded by beautiful nature. Everyone thought that it was very beautiful.



The traditional Japanese building lays right by a small stream. The stream is crystal clear and you can see the fish swimming around. It was truly beautiful.



These are pictures from inside the building. There was also a tea room; it looked like a good place to enjoy a cup of tea.

3. Yukura temple



Since the weather was so nice that day, we took a bunch of pictures at the entrance. According to the legends there was a lumberjack that took a bath at a hot spring he found nearby and was miraculously cured. He was so happy that afterwards he built this temple near the hot spring. That is said to be the origin of the Onsen-Yunokawa district.



When we went into the temple grounds we had to wash our hands. This ritual comes from a Shinto religion that originally made you wash your body for impurities by a streaming, nearby river. As time passed they stopped going to the river and made a well on the temple grounds to purify yourself, as shown in the picture.



After wishing for something from the God of this temple, I shake a log looking object that has four bells attached to it. When the God hears these sounds, he supposedly grants the wishes.



There are two types of logs; the first that grants you your wish and with the small one you are supposed to gently rub your body with, and it supposedly heals you.

4. Yunokawa footbath



The Yunokawa hot spring that is located in the Yunokawa-district in Hakodate has a long history behind it. In 1653 Matsumae Takahiro, the fourth leader of the Matsumae-clan, became very sick. At that time he heard of a hot spring that has mystical healing powers. He went to this hot spring and bathed in it, and claimed that he was healed. This is said to be the first story of the Yunokawa hot spring.

Unfortunately we didn't have time to go to a real hot spring, but we went to a footbath hot spring, that is built right by the tram stop at Yunokawa. This hot spring opened in December 2007, it is free, and everyone can try it.

Of course all of us forgot towels, so we thought about dropping the whole thing, but luckily we decided to go for it. After a long day with lots of walking, it was incredibly soothing to just sit and bathe our feet in the hot water. It was a fantastic ending for our fantastic day.

It had been a fantastic day for us, we saw the beautiful autumn colors at the Kousetsu-park, we wished for different things at the Yukura temple and we took a footbath at the tram stop. For us exchange students this has been an excellent opportunity to experience the rich Japanese culture and traditions. If you ever have the chance of visiting Hakodate, we all strongly recommend going to these places. It will surely be a great experience that you will never forget!

