

A Report by the Exchange Students of Hokkaido University of

Education, Hakodate Campus:

Goryokaku Park



This is the Goryokaku Park team. We went to Goryokaku Park to experience a Hanami (flower viewing). The members of this team from the left are: Wang Chunlan (Binzhou, China), Wang Xiaohui (Zibo, China), Ant Chen (Australia), Zhang Tingting (Qingdao, China), and Victor Lai (Sydney, Australia) who is not pictured.

Sakura

1 Sakura viewing is an annual activity for Japanese, it is part of Japanese lifestyle during the season of Spring. The blossom of Sakura in Hokkaido begins in the early May. Unfortunately, the blossom of Sakura is a few days late due to the cold weather in Hokkaido this year. For foreigners like us, it is the first time to experience the viewing of Sakura blossom in Japan, therefore, we have been looking forward to see the full bloom of Sakura. We went to Goryokaku Park to check whether it is blooming almost everyday as we can not afford to lose any moment to see the blooming of Sakura. It is a precious experience that we will never forget, as the scene might be the same but we might not have any chance to view it together again in future. I think that is the reason why Japanese see the importance of Sakura viewing, which it bounds everyone together, enjoying and relaxing after a year of hard work. Finally, the Sakura has bloomed in return to our eagerness deep in our heart. Let us appreciate beautiful photos of the magnificent scene of Sakura blossom that we have taken.

2 Spring in Hakodate



If you ask the local residents where is the most recommend place to go for Sakura viewing, I think you will most likely to get this answer, “It has to be the Sakura in Goryokaku Park”. Therefore, we went to Goryoukaku Park on 10th of May to see the beautiful Sakura. At this point of time, you can feel the breeze of spring, see the clarity of blue sky, the warmth of the sun welcoming us to this place.



The Sakura which is closer to the sunny place seems to have forgotten the long cold winter season, blooming gracefully and peacefully. In fact, we have seen Sakura viewing being reported on television program but we can never understand the reason behind why it is so attractive to Japanese. It is the first time we felt the beauty of Sakura until the day we have actually experienced it by ourselves. Looking at those cherry blossoms putting in effort to bloom after that long cold winter, only blooming for a week or so, I doubt anyone will not be inspired by it.

3 Sakura viewing



The people sitting under the Sakura trees, barbecuing (Genghis Khan) with cherishing the Sakura is an unique scene in Hokkaido. Genghis Khan is a well known cuisine with lamb and vegetables in Hokkaido. Seasoned with garlicky, honey and grained apples, it is a sweet and spicy dish. Of course, there are some Japanese who do not like to enjoy Sakura viewing in this way, however, I think enjoying the barbecue with friends and family under the tree is a precious moment to treasure. You have to try it out, I am pretty sure that you will have the same feeling.

4 Goryoukaku Tower and Yozakura at night



Despite that the Sakura (cherry blossom) in the morning is beautiful, the Sakura viewing in the night is extremely charming. Hence we went for Sakura viewing at night, many people are still enjoying their barbecue, drinking alcohol and having a lot of fun. Laughter can still be heard everywhere at this point of time, the scenery shows a contrast between day and night.

5 Takeda Ayasaburo's statue



Ayasaburo's statue is crafted with his own photo.



One noteworthy point is that this head was shiny because it was touched by the tourists. The reason behind is that there is such a local legend: whoever touched his head will become smart. I certainly have touched it, hopefully I will become wiser as well.

The Hakodate Magistrate's Office

The Hakodate Magistrate's Office



Hakodate was one of the first ports opened in Japan, and the Magistrate's Office located there was responsible for both Japan's northern defence and foreign negotiations during the Bakumatsu period. However, it was demolished in 1871, two years after the battle of Hakodate.

140 years later, and after four years of construction, the Hakodate Magistrate's Office was rebuilt using the latest construction methods and opened to the public.

The Sakura and Snowy Mountain Views of May



The Wide Lawns Next to the Magistrate's Office



Next to the Magistrate's Office, tourists can experience the gentle May breeze, underneath blue skies, and with a view of the still snowy mountain tops, and the cute, light pink cherry blossoms in full bloom.

Next to the Magistrate's Office you will find large and wide lawns for public use. This space is largely used by both tourists and locals for "Hanami" (flower viewing). For "Hanami", people spread out wide picnic sheets and enjoy tea, cakes, and food underneath the cherry blossoms. Some people even start singing!

The "Hanami" is a special Japanese seasonal event that occurs when the cherry blossoms are in bloom. During this time, Goryokaku Park becomes a very lively place. But don't just take our word for it, please feel free to visit Hakodate and experience a piece of Japanese culture yourself!

Sakura cream



When the Sakura season comes to Hakodate, we definitely recommend holding Hanami and just try Goryoukaku Tower's soft serve icecream. While there are different flavours to try, during the Hanami season you must definitely try the seasonally limited Sakura flavour, the Sakura flavour soft serve icecream is the perfect dessert to go with any Hanami. It is sweet, but refreshing and you can feel the beauty of Sakura. You can find Goryoukaku Tower's soft serve icecreams in the first floor cafe.

Lucky Pierrot

Lucky Pierrot, called “Lappi” by the people of Hakodate, is a restaurant that Hakodate is famous for. Within Hakodate, there are 15 of them, each with a slightly different menu. Though different, the menus generally contain a wide variety of items. Of those items, the most famous are their collection of burgers and curry, but the menus also include hamburger steaks, omelette rice, bentou, katsu-don, spaghetti, pizza, okonomiyaki, and yakisoba (though some of these items are limited to only a few of the chain stores).

After looking at the menu and being overwhelmed by the sheer number of things to choose from, we decided to try the “Super Surprise Noppo Hamburger”. We choose this particular burger because it was the largest of Lucky Pierrot’s burgers – a combination of its three most popular burgers: the Chinese Chicken Burger, the Lucky Egg Burger, and the Pork Cutlet Burger.

We believe that Lucky Pierrot’s hamburgers are a combination of Western, Japanese and Chinese cuisine, and the “Super Surprise Noppo Hamburger” best represents this: the Chinese chicken clearly influenced by both Chinese and Japanese cuisine; the ton-katsu coming from Japanese cuisine; and the lucky egg layer borrowing from western cuisine. We believe that

this rare combination of flavours is what makes Lucky Pierrot and its food so famous and successful within Japan. In addition, with particular reference to the “Super Surprise Noppo Hamburger”, the combination of “fun” (derived from the challenge of conquering such a huge burger) and “taste” has made us all fans of Lucky Pierrot for life!



Huge!!! The “Super Surprise Noppo Hamburger”