Jet Program
Marie Tan Ching Ee
Hello, I am Marie! I graduated from the Japanese Studies Department in 2003.

I went to Japan to work as an Assistant English Teacher under the JET Programme in August 2004.

I live in a farming town called KITANO which is in Fukuoka.
Kitano is a beautiful town which has more than 100 kinds of vegetables.

Because it is a farming town, there are crops of all kinds during the different seasons.

It is a wonderful feeling to walk along the road in the evening and enjoy the beautiful scenery.

There is nothing much in Kitano but the friendliness of the people and the scenery compensate the nothingness.
I go to the Junior High School in the town thrice a week and to the elementary schools twice a week.

Lessons in elementary schools are more activity based with more room for games.

However, lessons in junior high schools tend to be more formal with the use of textbooks.
Introduction (cont’d)

It can rather trying at times making the students understand what I am teaching.

But gestures and actions often do the trick!

Outside the classroom, I have organised a Christmas party for the children in my town, gone hiking with them etc.

It is a good way to interact with them.
This job allows me the freedom and time to travel.

I have gone for numerous trips with my colleagues over the last 9 months.

Most of them are Japanese. Even though my Japanese is not perfect, I can still communicate with them.
I think that the hardest thing is when they speak to me in their local dialect.

I have difficulty understand them at times because we learnt the standard Tokyo version in school.
August 2004: View from outside my bedroom window
Everything looks so nice and green in summer.
I live in a village so there are many rice paddies!
It is a refreshing change from cosmopolitan Singapore!
Feb 2005: Scene in winter
It was freezing cold! Japan is too cold for me!
More than half the year is cold!
Look at the beauty of nature! The sunset was so pretty against the sky and the green rice paddies. Kitano is a farming town so don't expect to see shopping centres. There are supermarkets and essential facilities like the post office etc though.
Kitano train station
The road which I always take when I cycle or walk to the train station.
This picture was taken in early May. The green plants are wheat.
My sister came to visit me again in May. By then, I had lost a little fats on my face! Have to work harder. I still cannot believe I gained 4-5kg since last Aug. Too much food and no exercise (and sweat) make one fat!
Oct 2004: Story Reading to elementary students

It is important to have lots of pictures for them to understand
Get the students involved!
Let them have the chance to speak some simple English!
The younger students tend to be more enthusiastic
Dec 2004: Making Christmas bookmarks with the elementary 2 students
This is a typical school lunch (called kyuushoku). We have lunch in school with the students. For a small sum of money, we get a lot of food. The typical menu is as follows: rice or bread, main dish, side dish and a bottle of full-cream milk. The menu is planned for growing children, so it tends to be SUPER HIGH in calories!
Nov 2004: It was my birthday and my friends celebrated it for me. We went to a nearby town where it is famous for their pink, purple and white cosmo flowers. There is also a KIRIN beer factory so we enjoyed some fresh beer too!
Jan 2005: My twin sister (Michelle) came to Japan to visit me and we went for a tea ceremony (Sado). It was winter and was really cold. By January, I had put on a lot of weight and my face become very bloated! Compare my sister's face and mine! What a big difference! (First person from bottom row: Michelle; 2nd person bottom row: Marie)
March 2005: Finally Spring came! I went for a spring ryokan trip with my colleagues from my Board of Education. It was wonderful to see the beautiful sakura.