

PII Internship report by Brendon Vetter
Hokkoku Shimbun

For my PII Internship, I interned at Hokkoku Shimbun, which is the largest prefectural newspaper for Ishikawa prefecture. I interned in the 社会部 (society section). Because Hokkoku Shimbun is a prefectural newspaper, it focuses on local events, and so I was able to gain an in-depth look at daily life in Kanazawa and also in Ishikawa prefecture. The internship also greatly strengthened all areas of my Japanese language ability, since it required me to write, listen, read, and speak every day.

Each day the newspaper had a list of events that would be covered for that day, and the editor for the society section would pick out two events (or one, if it was long or far away) for me to go to that day. I would then go to the events with a reporter and sometimes a cameraman and help with collecting data by observing the event, conducting short interviews with the attendees and taking photographs. Attending real events and talking with the people at them gave me an even better understanding of Kanazawa than I had obtained in my previous year at PII. While going to and from the events I also got to talk with the reporters, who were always kind, answered my questions and explained things I didn't understand. I got to visit all sorts of places, from schools to farms to various shops. I also got to attend unique events and meet with important people, such as athletes from Ishikawa prefecture that participated in the 2012 Olympics and some of Kanazawa's geishas.

At the end of each day I wrote a 感想文, where I recorded what I did that day and my thoughts about it. The editor would read over my 感想文 each day and give me comments, allowing me to continually strengthen my written Japanese. Moreover, about once a week my 感想文 would be published in the newspaper alongside the reporter's article about the event. From the 感想文 and from directly asking me my opinion of the events, the editor of the society section got to know what I enjoyed and what I did not, so after the first few weeks he was able to always pick out events that I would find interesting. Occasionally there would be a slow news day without any good events for me, so the editor would let me go to one of Kanazawa's many museums to learn more about the culture and history of the country and prefecture. The editor also let me cover events and go to places that I was interested in, so I was able to do things like visit the prefectural zoo and watch the proceedings of a murder trial.

Each day at Hokkoku Shimbun was a unique, interesting experience. All of the newspaper staff were incredibly friendly and helpful, as were the people I encountered while covering events. I thought I knew Kanazawa well after my first year of PII, but I realized over the course of this internship that it had only been the tip of the iceberg. This internship was definitely the most interesting summer of my life, and I highly recommend it to anyone looking to gain further understanding of daily Japanese life and culture.

