



Photos by DAVID CARLSON / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Some members of the Japanese exchange student group at Sasebo Minami High School perform traditional children's songs during a talent show on their last day at Vista Murrieta High School last month.

Students enjoy burgers, freedom

Japanese group at Vista Murrieta High learn about American schools

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MURRIETA — When a group of exchange students returned home to Japan from Murrieta last month, they likely told their friends all about their visits to Disneyland, Knott's Berry Farm and In-N-Out Burger.

Those were among the favorite things mentioned by some of the 38 students and two teachers from Sasebo Minami High School in Nagasaki who visited the area from March 4 to 19.

They were at Vista Murrieta High from March 13 to 17, and five students and two teachers from Vista Murrieta are visiting Sasebo Minami now.

Teachers Okunuki Fukuko and Ishibashi Shuichiro accompanied the freshman students to Murrieta. They pupils were part of a Global Course on their campus and paid for the trip by themselves.

The teachers took advantage of the trip to learn about the difference in how stu-



Mamiko Nakao, 16, was dressed in traditional garb for the talent

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— KUWAHARA HIRO
Japanese exchange student

dents are educated in the two countries.

The educators and students all noticed how much freedom American students have compared to those in Japan.

"The students in America are much more open to say

their opinions," Shuichiro said. "In Japan, the teachers require quiet all the time."

"This class is very free" said Oshima Airi, 16. "There is much freedom in class. Our school is very strict."

Kuwahara Hiro, who spent some time in Oregon when

his father worked there, echoed the comments of the others.

"Here, students have freedom, but (that comes with) responsibility," he said. "It looks free, but there are still rules."

The Japanese students wear uniforms to school, and the girls are not allowed to wear makeup. The students also have to clean their classroom at the end of the day.

Vista Murrieta is a larger school than Sasebo Minami, which has about 800 students. Shuichiro also marvelled at the sizes of the homes in Murrieta and the fact some have swimming pools.

"It was fun just watching the students compared to Japan," Fukuko said. "Maybe I can bring some good parts (from Murrieta) to Japan."

Mike Pattison, the activities director at Vista Murrieta who has made four trips to Japan, said students are pretty much the same everywhere.

"While they're from different schools, many times they're very alike," Pattison said.

And they like the same things. The Japanese students said they would miss Mexican food, pizza and

hamburgers.

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Michizoe Yuka, who said she enjoys studying languages, even picked up some American colloquialisms.

"Kind of" and "okey-dokey" were two of her favorites.

The students lived with host families in Murrieta and in a true exchange, the Vista Murrieta pupils are living in homes in Japan.

"I had a very good time. I

want to stay here for good," Hiro said.

Garrett Estrada is one of the Vista Murrieta students visiting Japan, and he was looking forward to the trip.

"Japan has always been a country I wanted to go to," said Estrada, who has been traveling the world since he was 10 and has visited Australia, New Zealand, France, Germany, Switzerland and Spain. "When I heard the Japanese kids were coming, I wanted to go to their school to visit there."

He said he was especially anxious to learn about Japanese pop culture.

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