

On Thursday, February 2nd, we had a powhiri at school.

It is a Maori welcoming ceremony, and new students and staff were welcomed to the school by existing students. The latter sang Maori songs for the incoming students, and the school rector gave a speech. After that, we did the hongi, which is a Maori custom too. We pressed our noses together, and then we ate kai, which means “food” in Maori. We had a powhiri because the native people of New Zealand are Maori. I felt awkward because I didn’t know what was going on.

In Japan, we don’t have a traditional ceremony like powhiri, so it was a new experience for me. In Japan, when we meet people for the first time, we exchange business cards with each other and say, “Nice to meet you.” That is the only thing we do, but in New Zealand, people press their noses together and have lunch with people they just met. I think that this is because of the people’s character. Japanese people are shy, but New Zealanders are outgoing and cheerful.