



Web site gives glimpse of schools from around the world

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Like many people, Junji Kashiwagi said he used to want to be rich, but added that "such thinking changed thanks to South Africa."

A year after graduating from university, Kashiwagi left for the United States with the aim of getting a job. On his way there, he stopped off in South Africa for a visit, as one of his friends had recommended he do so. But Kashiwagi had no idea what an astonishing impression he would leave with.

Kashiwagi, 34, said he was astonished to see how people of different ethnic and racial backgrounds in South Africa were living different lives.

For Kashiwagi, it was love at first sight, and he found it difficult to leave the country.

But he decided to visit other African countries, and during his travels, Kashiwagi found himself fascinated by one specific thing--schools. In a remote village in Uganda, for example, a teacher who was born with physical disabilities taught English and math, using a stick of chalk between his toes with which to write.

Although the teacher made mistakes spelling simple English words, Kashiwagi felt the enthusiasm of the teacher and students, which made him think about the meaning of learning.

Since then, Kashiwagi has visited schools in many parts of the world, videotaping his experiences and editing them himself with his computer at his home in Yokohama. Some of these images can be seen on the Web site he has launched, named "The School of the World" (<http://jproductions.tv>; in Japanese and English).

Kashiwagi said he used a simple style to convey his message to visitors to the Web site, letting them watch the images with very little verbal or written explanation so as not to push his own viewpoints.

"Schools are a place to help children learn the basic skills necessary to survive," Kashiwagi said. "Therefore, if you take a look at schools around the world, you learn that values differ from place to place and our (Japanese) sense of values are not the only kind."

"The School of the World" is more than just a Web site showing classrooms. It is actually a "school" where visitors can learn something about themselves. Just

click to visit--it will give you a chance to reevaluate yourself.



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