

One Year at Ochanomizu University

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Since October 2017 until now, I've spent a year in Japan as an exchange student. The study abroad in Japan was what I was most looking forward to in my university life, and so I feel a bit sad that such a wonderful experience has gone by so quickly. However, I've also made so many memories that I'll never forget. In this composition I've reflected a little on things I've felt, thought, and learnt throughout this year.

On the day I first came to Japan I was so happy that I felt like crying. I was of course a little worried about whether or not I could convey what I wanted to say in Japanese, but regardless of this I put this to one side and travelled all around Tokyo. I have never been to many foreign countries, so Japan felt so fresh to me and I quickly fell in love with it.

Especially, in winter, I went to beautiful Kanazawa which is surrounded by mountains, and it was not just the scenery that left an impression on me, but the fact I got to take photos for the Japanese coming-of-age ceremony. I also spent a wonderful new year's there.



When the winter term ended, I had the chance to go to many different places. I went to places like Hakone, Kyoto, Osaka and Nara. In particular, I like Japanese traditions, and so since I have come to Japan I have become very fond of collecting calligraphy and stamps from temples. So when I went to the place which has so many temples that you can barely count them all, Kyoto, I was incredibly happy, and as I walked around my first stamp book quickly filled up. In Hakone, I saw Japan's famous mountain Mount Fuji, and I was overwhelmed with emotion.

In spring, I started an internship at a kimono shop, and it was utterly fantastic. I went to the shop every week, and talked to the boss about Kimono and Japanese culture. The boss, her son and his wife taught me endless things about Japan, and I feel my understanding of Japanese culture has deepened thanks to them. Furthermore, one of the highlights of my study abroad was teaching Japanese people how to dress in yukata and tie the obi. To me, the days I spent at that internship are some of the most precious days I spent in Japan.

Summer was the period I was most looking forward to. Since I was a child I have always been in love with the image of Japan during summer festivals that I saw in photos and movies. This year, I got the chance to wear my own yukata to a bon-odori festival. I didn't know how to dance at the festival at all, but I tried my best and followed other people, and I fell in love with the atmosphere of the festival. With the time that I have left here I want to try and go to many other festivals.

In conclusion, this year has been the best. It's when I think about how my year abroad is almost over that I realise how much I still want to experience, and how many more places I want to visit. I really want to return to Japan in the future. Particularly, it was thanks to my teachers, classmates, and of course the university cats that this year went by so well.

