



2012 JET-MIP ESSAY

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A FREE MONTHLY E-NEWSLETTER FOR FRIENDS OF JAPAN & TEACHERS OF JAPANESE

KAYLA LINDSEY

OREGON

SHERIDAN JAPANESE SCHOOL

I remember the first day that I found out I was going to Japan. Coming from a small town, growing up with a small family, and going to a small school, I never thought I would be given the chance to go to Japan. Not a chance like this, at least. When I applied, I thought my chances were slim. When I found out how many applicants there were, I was shocked, yet still excited about having a chance to go. Going to Japanese class is always fantastic, but I remember that day when my teacher was especially happy. He gave me the news, and I was thrilled, but the type of excitement was nowhere near the type I felt when I was actually in Japan. I remember thinking, "I have been studying Japanese for nine years, and now the chance to finally experience it first hand is here!"

From the moment I took my first step off the plane, and on to the airport in Japan, I felt a rush. I heard Japanese everywhere. The airport was a great experience, but taking a bus to the institute kept all of us on our toes, because we were so anxious. Arriving at the Kansai Institute is possibly one of my favorite memories of the Japan trip this past summer. Walking towards the entrance with my heavy luggage, I felt like I was opening a new chapter in my life; one that was especially far away and different than home. Greeting in Japanese was just another reminder every morning that I was in Japan, but of course I did not need that reminder. Every morning, the second that I opened my eyes, I woke up to a beautiful view outside of my window. I would get up, walk over to my window, look at the water, the bridge, and the city, take a deep breath and get ready for a new day in Japan. The happiness that I was filled with was different than any I have ever felt before.

Of course the first day in Japan is going to be most memorable, but everyday had something different in it, whether it was making a new friend, exploring a different part of the city, or trying new food. Exploring Rinku Town was especially popular among the group of students I went with. Going through the mall was especially fun because we were able to integrate our Japanese ability into shopping! Also, interacting with the students at Kansai Institute was interesting especially because they come from different parts of the world, but we were all unified by Japanese. It was so nice to all be different and come from different parts of the world, yet speak a mutual language!

One of the things that I really appreciated out of the trip was having a host family. I wish I could have a couple more days with them, but I am still thankful to have had them for two days and one night. I went to a lot of temples, museums, and restaurants with my host family. It was so nice to feel like I had a

there for me even when I was far away from home. I got to know them pretty well, especially my host sister. I enjoyed every second with my host family, and I will never forget them. I hope to return to Japan one day and visit them again!

Overall, the trip to Japan is one of the greatest memories I have ever had. Not only will I remember every single student that I went with, but I will remember every person that I met in Japan as well. I am so thankful for the JET Memorial Invitation Program, and especially the Japan Foundation for organizing all of this and giving 32 students an amazing experience. I look forward to hearing about the next group of Jet Mippers!

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5700 Wilshire blvd, Suite 100
Los Angeles, CA 90036
P. 323.761.7510

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