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



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People in the world need to communicate with one another in order to advance in prosperity and maintain peace. That is the reason why people need to travel to different places and experience foreign cultures in order to bring better understanding between the people and to strengthen the bond between them. That is why I believe that the experience provided by the Japan Foundation is a valuable factor in keeping peace and reducing the cultural gap between the U.S and Japan.

The program of staying two weeks in Japan was simply "Amazing." The food was great, view of Japan was great, and there was many things that I can do only in Japan! Above everything, the participants were great and felt like a big family. It was my best group traveling experience I ever had.

As a JET-MIP participant, we went to the Touhoku region in our first week in Japan. At that time it wasn't all fun and games. We visited areas that got hit by "the Great Earthquake" from last year, March 11th. I just went with a light thought of Japan already near finishing up the reconstruction from the damage, however the truth was much more grim than what I could have imagined. We rode a bus to our first place of stay (Rikuzentakata) and saw a vast view of emptiness and no sight of anything. The view was the definition of a ghost town where no people smiled or can be even seen. During the day we toured around the towns and got the explanation of the event from the tour guides. The view just made the most lively group to fall into the state of total silence. We walked, prayed, and fell into the realization of the harsh truth from reality. The knowledge we can gain from our little window of modern technology has failed to bring the "truth" of Japan.

During the afternoon, we rested our depression soaked minds and exhausted body from the hard schedule. We had plenty of enjoyment talking to one another to recover from the damage we received from the view of the embedded mark that mother nature has left for the people of Japan. And most

just went around outside our hotels and experiences Japanese culture. We would then return and visit the land of the dreams, wishing we wouldn't since the time in Japan went much faster than our everyday life.

We visited other places such as Kesennuma and Ishinomaki. In Kesennuma, we saw abnormalities that we would not see in our everyday life. We saw a gigantic ship that crushed the local train station, which appeared in news articles and on TV back in U.S. The locals are still debating whether to preserve the ship as a monument to the great force of nature or to dismantle it due to the negative memories that are associated by the local people. One of the most memorable views I saw was a clock, a clock that we saw inside of a gigantic gym for the local people to exercise. The clock was at the highest place of the gym and its time was frozen at 3:30, it was the time when the tsunami engulfed the numerous souls who were helpless against mother nature's scythe.

We met the owner of Hotel Boyo who told us his story at the time of the tsunami and the terror that the people had to experience right in front of their eyes. He told us that the people are standing up to aid in the reconstruction instead of being helpless and depressed. He told us that the people are willing to melt the ice of time that the tsunami has frozen for them. He told us that the people's greatest fear is being forgotten from the world. People desire support and the aid to stand up. People desires that tourists visit in order to recreate the beautiful town they once had. People desires to smile.

The purpose of JET-MIP, although I do feel late for writing this introduction, is to honor the two lost English teachers who were participating in the JET Program. Their names are Taylor Anderson and Monty Dickson. We met numerous people who had stories about the two. They impacted numerous people such as their friends, co-workers, and disciples. They worked hard in Japan but could not survive from the violent whim of the mother nature. However, they left so many marks of their lives to the people of Japan, so I hope their footstep to strengthen the relationship between the two nations will reach out to future generations.

For the other half of the trip, we came back to the Japan Foundation Japanese Language Institute Kansai where students from all over the world gather to further their studies in Japanese language and culture. We the JET MIPpers (our group nickname), walked around the town of Osaka, rode the train system in Japan, and had plenty of enjoyment out of viewing the culture where normal American can't even dream of. "Experience is the key to understanding," and this is what I believe in. Due to this experience, I will further my knowledge of Japanese language and culture. I hope to travel different places in Japan later. I loved everything about this trip. For example: the Institute in Osaka, the staff, the people I went with, food, people of Osaka, events . . . and the list goes on. I just loved everything about it.

NIPPON THROUGH MY EYES PHOTO SUBMISSION



"AVERAGE VIEW"

THIS WAS A PLACE WHERE MOST OF THE JET-MIP PARTICIPANT WENT AND LOVED DURING THE SECOND HALF OF OUR TRIP TO JAPAN. PLUS THE CAR THAT LOOKS LIKE LITTLE BOX CARS RUNNING AROUND EVERYWHERE AND PARKED SEEMED VERY UNUSUAL TO ALL OF US.

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Breeze #60



Breeze #59



2012 Japanese American Leadership Delegation

2012 JET-MIP Essay: Andrew Juarez

2012 JET-MIP Essay: Andrew Kim

2012 JET-MIP Essay: Anna Lee

2012 JET-MIP Essay: Anna Mai

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