

[Contemporary Social Challenges in East and South East Asia]

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The Kyoto exchange offered me many enriching experiences in terms of both personal and academic development. Through the available classes I was able to acquire more profound, region-specific knowledge as many of the instructors are experts in their respective fields; due to the simple fact that I was geographically closer to my field of interest and the issues that concerned me, I was able to conduct empirical research that would have otherwise been unfeasible back at y home university. As a result, firsthand experience has incited in me an even greater determination to focus my research so that it is as accurate a portrayal of the current situation as possible. On that note, not only did I obtain empirical data, etc., but also investigative skills that will no doubt assist me in my impending master's thesis; that is, the ability to reconsider topics and assumptions utilizing the variegated perspectives and also the capability to better compose both the format of my research outcomes and the manner in which I conduct the research itself - unbound by preconceptions and unwavering presumptions. Moreover, a lot of the secondary sources that I required are only available in Japanese and, consequently, challenging to procure outside of Japan, so having unhindered access to a library, literally, of sources was unsurpassably beneficial. As a direct consequence, I also gain considerable advances in terms of Japanese language proficiency. Beforehand, I was not well accustomed to perusing academic material written in Japanese; however, now I can both examine material in great depth or, if need be, swiftly mine for relevant information in a matter of minutes. Subsequently, this increase in proficiency was key in opening the way for empirical research – allowing me to acquire my own data by carrying out primary investigations independently without the apprehension of miscommunication or partial comprehension. The courses offer on the program were varied enough to meet the needs of students coming from diverse research backgrounds, as many of my associates mentioned; likewise, I was lucky to hear the opinions of professors directly working within the fields in which I am interested, who have kindly provided me with both possible further research directions and reference material that will be indispensable in reaching my final goal. Although it can't be said with absolute certainty, I am considering a career somewhere in the realm of both local (poverty-induced rural to urban, for example) and global human movement, the short-term obstacles faced and the medium- to long-term challenges that surge in the target destination with particular interest on psychological impact of the migrants, so any direct international experience of these issues and expertise from professionals is invaluable. In that vein, It has also planted the seed for a possible progression into further postgraduate study, perhaps at an institution closer to home or in Japan where contemporary social issues, in particular those pertaining to strained welfare due to an aging society and migration as a means of mitigation, are predicted to worsen over the next few decades rather than improve.