

Exchange program, Transcultural Studies

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I was accepted into the exchange program between my home university, Heidelberg University of Germany, and Kyoto University of Japan, where I was able to study and take classes in the School of Letters and from the Course on Asian and Transcultural Studies (CATS), a joint program with the institution that I belong to at Heidelberg University, the Cluster of Excellence: Asia and Europe. I took the program as a mobility semester and part of my master program, M.A. Transcultural Studies.

I was able to take classes in English at master-level from CATS, both for credits and as a continuation of the study of my major, and I also audited as many seminars and lectures as possible from School of Letters and Professor Takagi Hiroki's seminar from Institute for Research in Humanities, not only to acquire the contents but also to learn about the way of how Japanese scholars do research. After the semester, I then participated in the short term intensive lectures given by Dr. Michael Falser visiting from my home university, on the topic of Global Art History, the focus I have been taking for my major. The courses offered by CATS and Dr. Falser were highly relative to my own study, and with the methodologies that I have been familiar with. Therefore, I was able to fully understand the courses contents while applying such theories and research methods to my own study during the stay in Japan. During the program, I also took advantages of the Japanese language classes offered at Yoshida International House to better improve my language skills.

Thanks to Professor Takagi Hiroshi, who visited Heidelberg University and gave lectures in the last semester, I was able to participate in a symposium on East Asian history and the many field works in Kyoto and Nara area on the ancient history of the Kofun period of Japan. During these excursions, I was able to visit the actual sites, see the actual objects, and thus experience what I have been learning only in books to have more concrete understandings of the subjects. With the kind helps and advices by Prof. Takagi, I was able to formulate my research direction for the future and collected a large amount of important materials for my master thesis, which is certainly my biggest achievement during the program.

During the program, I made one of the most important decisions in my life, to continue my academic pursuits in the future. Of course, the exchange study in Kyoto would contribute to my master degree at the home university as part of the program. Under the influence of the friends I made at Kyoto University, and not to mention the generous advices given by Prof. Takagi and Professor Björn-Ole Kamm, I developed more interests in doing research and even in taking a doctor program in the future. I also collected many copies of the primary sources and academic materials for my future studies. Besides all that, the special experience of living in Japanese society itself trained me with good qualities necessary for my future traveling and studying around the globe.