

[My Study Abroad Experience in Kyoto]

[Elizabeth Sun, Graduate School of Letters]
[Autumn 2016-2017]

My experience in Japan is one I will never trade. In addition to being a student at an acclaimed university in Japan, I was able to take advantage of the myriad of cultural and historical opportunities offered by Japan's old capital. In addition to immersing myself within the daily lives of Japanese and foreign students, I spent a considerable amount of time visiting the temples, shrines, and landscapes of the city. For a student interested in broadening his or her horizons, I would definitely recommend the city of Kyoto and Kyoto university. I can easily say that Kyoto has become one of my favorite cities. In Kyoto, I created invaluable memories and learned more about myself.

I took a total of four courses, affiliated with Courses on Asian and Transcultural Studies. These included Gender in Japan, co-taught by Jennifer Coates and Ito Kimio, Japan at Play: Cultural Orderings of Leisure and Asobi, taught by Björn-Ole Kamm, What is "Modern," "Japanese," "Literature?": Exploring Japan's Modernity through Literary Discourse, taught by Irina Holca, Cross-border Migration in Asia, taught by Wako Asato.

The courses I took were fruitful for my studies in different ways. For the class on Modern Japanese Literature, I also completed a poster presentation on Yoko Tawada, which I presented at Otemae University in Osaka. For the course on Japan at Play, I gave two presentations, in which I critically analyzed texts using the method of modes of ordering, a type of approach that will be valuable for my academic research. The courses on Cross-border Migration and Gender in Japan opened my eyes to the issues of gender discrimination and sexuality in Japan, a topic with which I previously was not as acquainted with. In all, the four courses offered both new knowledge towards my focus on Japanese culture and transculturality, in addition to encouraging me to analyze and critique my subject of study.

While I was a resident of Kyoto and a student at Kyoto University, I became acquainted with professors who formed as role models and gave me a more nuanced look into the academic life of teachers in Japanese universities. While at Kyoto, I was also encouraged to improve my Japanese speaking and reading abilities. I have registered to take the JLPT 2 exam in the coming July, with the goal to eventually pass the JLPT 1 exam.

I am truly grateful for having had the opportunity to study at Kyoto University. The memories and knowledge I acquired in Kyoto is something I am sure will be unmatched.

Elizabeth Sun