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??? (Fall Break)

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Alyssa Kuwamoto
Yokohama, Japan
December 14, 2018

秋休み (Fall Break)



Friday-

I went to see the “Bohemian Rhapsody” movie in a theater nearby Kamiooka Station. To get tickets, you can pre-purchase them online ahead of time, then when you arrive at the theater you get the ticket out of a machine. For snacks they have the typical ones served at the movie theater except for popcorn; the only original flavor they have is shoyu-butter which was actually pretty tasty. As for the movie, I thought it was a great storyline with fantastic music. The one thing about movie theaters in Japan is that everyone stays until the credits have finished playing. It is because they are showing respect to the directors and producers who created the film. I found that pretty interesting since I never stay for the credits because they are somewhat boring. At least there was good music playing during that portion.

Thursday-

Even though there was no Thanksgiving in Japan, our Japanese Cultural Studies professor took us out to dinner at a sushi restaurant. Earlier, I didn't want to go because I was very tired, plus there were some personal issues I encountered recently. However, my professor encouraged me to go to experience a Thanksgiving in Japan. So, I went along with my classmates, and we got to have sushi with my professor along with her two daughters. The sushi was really good-including the flower that was part of the plating decorations. (In Japan, everything on the plate is made to be eatable so it was okay!) The one thing that was embarrassing/awkward about the dinner was when the head of the sushi restaurant pointed out and asked if we were foreigners. Then our professor told him where we all came from, enthusiastically. One little pet peeve that I adapted during studying abroad is when I am in a

place with few tourists, and someone points out if we are foreigners. They weren't acting racist or anything, but it just makes me feel a little awkward standing out as a 外国人 (foreigner).

Thursday- The next day I went to Yasaka Shrine which was also free and nearby was the Teramachi shopping district. It is where all the junior high school and high school students buy stuff to take home and many are affordable. Therefore, I did a little shopping in that area. After that, I was off to Hiroshima by bullet train which took about two hours. At Hiroshima, I saw the Atomic Bomb Dome, and the Children's Peace Monument, and Peace Memorial Park. The Atomic Bomb Dome looked so real with all the rubble remaining after the bomb dropped. For the Children's Peace Monument, I have a very special connection. In my senior year of high school, I held an origami crane drive where I encouraged the students at my high school to make origami cranes and donated them to the Children's Peace Monument. And here I am three years later at the place where all the cranes ended up! I also saw many elementary school groups come for school field trips where they donated cranes and prayed in front of the monument and sang a song. During the night, I stayed at a Japanese-style guesthouse which was around 39\$ USD a night. The gentleman who owned the place was really nice and even took me to the supermarket to get some food.

Friday- My time in Hiroshima continued the next day by going to the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum. I was very touched by the exhibits displaying the day that the atomic bomb dropped. It was also a little bit sad because there were many artifacts and pictures where people were injured very badly, and even burned. Because it was a little traumatic, it was hard for me to take a lot of pictures during my visit here. I even saw a peace "watch" tower that indicates the number of days since the A-bomb was dropped and the number of days since the last nuclear test. The last nuclear test was conducted a year ago in the United States and that made me feel sorry.

I am not a huge fan of politics, but I could tell that my country has taken a big step back with what has been happening recently. However, there is still hope that someday all nuclear weapons will be abolished. I even signed a petition at the museum about this act. Overall, it was one of my goals to visit Hiroshima during my time because I am familiar with the atomic bomb drop, the story of Sadako Sasaki and the origami cranes, and I am proud to say I achieved that goal. After visiting the museum, I ate Hiroshima-style okonomiyaki (Japanese savory pancake) at a place called okonomi-mura, a "theme park" where there are many okonomiyaki restaurants in the vicinity. Then, I returned to the Children's Peace Monument to donate two cranes that I made while I was here.

As I was on my way to the station, I stopped by this cool facility called the Hiroshima Orizuru Tower, named after the folded paper crane. From the rooftop observation deck, you

can see a view of city including the atomic bomb dome. There are also activities where you can learn about the art origami cranes such as making one and throwing it down the orizuru wall. It is a really cool place with a modern aspect, and I highly recommend it to anyone visiting Hiroshima. After that, I took the shinkansen back to Yokohama. The last two days was the first time I traveled by myself and I didn't really do a lot of planning, I just went by ear. But, I was able to get around safely without getting lost at all!