

## Report on Participating Special Exchange Programme at Kyoto University

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To begin with, I would like to say thank you to all of the international affairs staff involved in arranging and making this exchange program possible, it has truly been a unique and unexpected experience of a lifetime. In this special opportunity of being accepted as part of the winter international exchange program student — various new perspectives were opened up for me as a student and as a person. Nevertheless, there are three main areas that stood out and I would like to emphasize during my study at Kyoto University, which are culture, the program course content, and its impact on my future interests.

First of all, I would like to discuss about how participating in this program had affected my motivation and international understanding as a whole. When I first arrived I felt a mixture of excitement and anxiousness, this is mainly because I do not understand the language and find that people are always on the move everywhere I went. However, later I came to understand the saying that 'Japanese is all about speed' this is because everywhere we go we can see that people are very efficient. For instance, going to ask for help at the university office or just going into a simple restaurant, I observed that the processes are very organised from customer service to interactions between the staffs. Therefore, this improved my international understanding that Japan is not all about speed; but rather 'precision and efficiency'. Hence, this culture of a very organized and tidy society had motivated me to rethink my way of living. This is because in comparison to Japan, Thailand has a very relaxed norm, with no set rules or a certain organised structured way of living. Being exposed to this unique culture has made me learn to adapt to a more structured lifestyle than that to which I was used to. When I first arrived I found it hard and slightly stressful. Nonetheless, my experiences in Kyoto University have opened my eyes and mind to the different process of life, which I found to be incredibly effective and more fulfilling in comparison to what I was used to.

Next, in term of the content of the program and its impact on my future plans; I was especially inspired by the cross-cultural management course content as the information taught in class was immediately relatable to me being in another country and surrounded by different cultures. For instance, the concept of multicultural competence that was described as 'a journey, not an end state' which included the ability to be aware of diversity, being able to accept contradiction, and rethink boundaries along with maintaining comfort levels during continual change. To boost, the environment of the class really inspired me since the structure of the course relies heavily on class discussion and case study activities, which in my opinion is an effective way to encourage students to apply what they learn into real life situations. Additionally, the international development assistance policy course was very eye opening as well. Many guest lecturers from various sectors of Japanese owned companies introduced us to their company's different approaches to developmental programs around the world.

To sum up, this winter exchange program had been an incredible experience — the two months here have given me the chance to really learn and connect with the culture and the people, which in turn gave me a better understanding of the extreme diversity within the society, but also allowed me to see how people from different backgrounds work past their differences and connect with each other on a human level.