

The kakehashi program has done a wonderful job creating a positive, exciting experience for those that went on the trip to Japan. I was able to see first-hand the unique culture and politics within Japan. By taking part in activities such as Taiko drumming, walking through a Meiji Shrine, visiting the US Embassy, or visiting the princess, I was able to learn so much about the cultural and political aspects of Japan.

Not only did I experience Japanese culture and politics, but also their beautiful nature. We visited two main cities, Tokyo and Kanazawa, and through this, I was able to see the vast differences in landscape. While Tokyo is an urban metropolitan, with buildings everywhere you go, Kanazawa was a more traditional city, with fewer large buildings that you would see all around in Tokyo. In both cities, the landscape and nature was beautiful. I was very surprised to see so many trees in Tokyo, where in large cities in America, such as LA, trees are harder to find.

I also got to experience eating traditional Japanese food. For every meal, we ate Japanese dishes, where miso soup and tofu almost always found a way to be on the plate. I was a little worried at first, because I am a picky eater, but over time, I found myself enjoying Japanese food a lot. Food is an important aspect of Japanese culture, and being able to experience this first hand was very exciting.

Finally, the people that I met made this experience very worth-while. Whether it was other participants of this program, or random people on the street, everyone showed courteousness and kindness to me throughout the whole trip. I am very grateful to meet such wonderful people and I hope to keep in contact with some people that I met throughout the trip.

Again, I am very grateful that I was given this opportunity, and I hope future participants of the Japan Bowl program will also get to experience this opportunity.

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