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Level 4

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National Japan Bowl Reflection

Going to the National Japan Bowl was very intimidating as I was planning to go to it, however, in the end, it turned out to be one of the most fun events I've attended this year. The National Japan Bowl is held in D.C., which meant that me and my group were able to explore D.C. which, alongside the main event, was very fun. They split the event into two days, the first day we did two preliminary question rounds, totaling 50 questions. The questions they presented were very difficult questions, a lot harder than the Pacific Northwest Japan Bowl, however we got most of the questions right or somewhat right. After that we ate a quick dinner before exploring the different college curricula and Japanese programs, like the *JET Program*, in which people are sponsored to live in Japan and teach children English. After that was a Welcome Registration, what that actually means is: we hung out with other competitors. We met another really fun group and made friends with them. There also was really good food, arguably even better than the dinner, offered while we socialized. Throughout most of the competition we hung out with the Level 3 team, who also came from the Pacific Northwest Japan Bowl, and it was fun talking to them. The first thing we did the next morning was eat breakfast, [padding; served by japan bowl] the breakfast they had was really good; after breakfast we attended our 3rd and final Preliminary Round, which had 30 more questions. The questions in this final Preliminary Round were a lot harder, with a more dramatic emphasis on the language and listening than the questions from Pacific Northwest. After the 3rd round we went to do activities based on pre-assigned groups. I went to the games area and it was really fun. I played a lot of Shogi. After

that we were released for lunch, which coincided with the finalist list's release. Unfortunately, we didn't end up making the top five, but our sister team in Level 3 did, and so we celebrated with them. For lunch we were served Bento boxes, similar to the Northwest Regional meals, and the food inside of it tasted really good. All that remained after lunch was the Championship Round; the finals were really cool because there were so many hard questions, however, despite the difficulty's sharp rise, the competitors answered them with rapid precision. They ended the tournament with a final goodbye ceremony, in which they announced each level's champion teams before giving us the final send-off.

I want to thank the Pacific Northwest for this experience. I'm so thankful to have been given this opportunity; Japan Bowl has enabled my studies and interests in ways that I wouldn't ever be able to do on my own.