Exchange Report- Tokyo, Japan, Meiji Gakuin University (2018 Fall)

Prior to leaving Canada, I had to say, I was quite nervous. There were a lot of documentation to be filled and mailed to the host institution. But the staffs from the international office at Simon Fraser University were all very willing to help and guided me through all the filling, which I am greatly thankful by it. Just a side note, when preparing for the documentation, it is always better to start them sooner rather than later.

When it comes to course selection, I didn’t spend much time on it while I was still in Canada, only when I arrived in Japan and started the exchange. I remember we had about 2 weeks to decide which courses you would be interested in taking. You are also allowed to visit each class and talked to individual professor in order to get familiar with the course and ultimately, you will know which courses you are looking for. So, don’t panic, you will be fine.

Packing was a little less enjoyable, but still exciting. My exchange consisted of summer and fall, so I had to prepare clothing for both seasons. Japan is a shopping paradise, so I regretted bringing piles of clothing on my own. Except for your personal belongings, I don’t think it’s necessary to bring too much things, because without doubt, it’s inevitable to not be attracted by the abundant of beautiful things in Japan. Moreover, transportation in Japan is indeed not a worry to contemplate about. Once you arrive in Japan and after the semester commences, staffs from the international centre at the host institution will explain and guide you and also your assigned buddies will be with you on how to register the commuter pass, bank accounts and others. I arrived in Japan on the 4th of September, it was humid. But after, the weather gradually became colder and then super cold when it began to hit in from December until late February. Unexpectedly, it started snowing in late February. (My friend took this for me after I left Japan. I didn’t get to feel the snow in Tokyo 😞)
There are plenty of places you can enjoy in Tokyo. Even if you want to be alone sometimes, there are various of adorable café you can spend your afternoon. However, if the day is shining brightly, you should definitely visit Happo-en park just right beside the Shirokanedai school campus. It will brighten up your day.

The atmosphere and nature will always be in my memory. It’s surely one of the most significant parks I’ve seen in Tokyo. When I was there, there would always be people shooting for marriage. Without doubt, it’s also a romantic place to connect with. Usually after school, I would stop by and sat at the patio, resting and contemplating. Ironically, I love this place and dislike this place at the same time, since there will be mosquitos kissing you every parts of your body! Therefore, if you are going during the summer, please be cautious and mindful of your blood 😞
This particular photo was at Tokyo Institute of Technology at Ōokayama Station, only 10 minutes walk from the dormitory. I personally think the institute is worth a stop by to sight for a bit. The building itself is also magnificent. Sadly, if you’re not a registered student at the institute, you cannot enter the institution.
The above photos were taken outside of the institute. Sometimes, I walked through the tiny bridge shown in the first photo and down to the path that connected to the road in the second photo and arrived back at the dormitory. According to the first photo, at the bridge you can watch the trains racing each other. In the afternoon, you may also see the sunset as well. The path was indeed beautiful and calming. But I don’t recommend walking alone at nights. It can be very dark after dawn.

The above photos were taken at a fantastic place called Enoshima, and it’s a must visit island in Tokyo. The night views, shrines, a well-known cave and its beaches were all eye-opening and valuable. I remember I bought a one-day pass for going to this place at Shinjuku station. The day pass was worthy because it allowed you to visit lots of places without spending extra dime.
During late January, I visited a place called Jigokudani Monkey Park in Nagano. I never imagined that I could see such pure snow in Japan. But if you are interested in visiting Nagano during the winter, please stock yourself with layers of warm socks and cover with layers of heattech. (you can buy them at Uniqlo) Nagano is a must step in during the cold winter of Japan season. I can assure you that you will not regret it!
Reflection After Exchange

When it comes to closing, I couldn’t describe how much I will miss Japan. It was really hard to think about leaving from all the roommates you’ve spent for a while and some special connection with certain people from worldwide. The exchange gave me the opportunity experiencing what it’s like living at the dormitory, cooking and sharing foods with one another from respectful countries. There were so many connection and happiness surrounded within each individual and just felt like a whole big family. After I stepped out from Japan, I was reassured that I will indeed come back to this memorable country in the future. Japan impacted me in different ways. Its culture, citizens, views, nature, design, atmosphere, transportation (indeed will be memorable if you’ve experienced it during rush hours) and more to the indescribable. Japan is a country that will haunt you in your dreams and days, stuck in its delicious foods and its breath directing your soul and blooming your curiosity to explore deeply. I am sincerely thankful in having the opportunity for this particular exchange to Japan, a place I’ve been longing to leave some footprints of my own. The exchange also broadened my perspective internationally and most importantly, I learned more about me being myself. I realized, exchanging to different countries allows students to not only gaining the academic knowledge, but also the precious experiences that the schools cannot provide to the students. Therefore, as being a student from Simon Fraser University in Canada, I am very honoured and appreciated to have attended Meiji Gakuin University in Japan. Thank you.

The photo was taken at the Ueno Zoo. I personally think the zoo was quite big and there were lots of adorable animals and weirdly looking insects. I recommend that you pick a nice weather to visit, the place won’t let you down 😊😊

I hope you will also enjoy your trip to Meiji Gakuin University 😊😊

Good Luck!