

The shock list

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As a child I would look on the world map and point out countries that I wanted to go to when I was a “grown up”. Japan had always been a place that has fascinated me, mainly also because of its location. It is quite literally on the other side of the world in comparison to The Netherlands. I had



always dreamt about going to the other side of the world and seeing what life would be like there. What are people doing there right now? How do they spend their day? What is really happening there on the other side of the world? To be able to experience this country as an exchange student at a Japanese university in Tokyo feels like an absolute dream. As I am writing this I am thinking about the experiences and knowledge that I have gained in this short amount of time. These experiences have surprised me, changed my thinking, and broadened my perspective on the world. Here below is a shock list of things that have surprised me:

1. The organization of the university

Hosei university is an extremely organized and well-structured university. Especially the exchange students have been helped and guided throughout the whole exchange process. All the way from the beginning on with the buddy program until the registration of the courses, events, emails and anything related.

2. The attitude of the Japanese people towards foreigners

Even though the Japanese can seem quite shy and reserved they are always ready to help and kind. I have not met one Japanese that was not willing to help me or unfriendly. They are extremely helpful and try to help everyone as much as possible.

3. The behavior of the Japanese in public

In train stations, bus stops, restaurants, cafes, on the street or any other public space there are unspoken rules that everyone follows. Some of these rules being, waiting in line before the bus comes, waiting in line to get in the metro, greeting people when you make eye

contact or thanking them for everything. All these actions that the Japanese undertake within the society are carefully and respectfully undertaken. There is a culture in which everyone feels respected and valued.