

Packing

I packed only what was absolutely necessary. The temperature in Kyoto does not cool down until late October, so a couple layers of jackets should suffice. Additionally, prepare comfortable walking shoes because Kyoto requires a lot of walking.

Social and Extracurricular Activities

I joined the SKP buddy program and mingled with the other exchange students. It is a program that helps exchange students integrate into campus life and Japanese culture by hosting activities such as sightseeing, matcha-making experiences, Halloween parties, and so on. I felt it was a wonderful opportunity to meet individuals from all backgrounds and learn about Japan in ways other than via hands-on physical experiences. We went to several of Kyoto's most popular tourist attractions, including Fushimi Inari Temple and Byodoin.

Reflection & Tips

Reflection

The last few months of living in Japan as an exchange student have been incredible. I had the pleasure of meeting individuals from all around the world, not only Japan. As I connected with everyone I met, I was able to learn a lot about their culture.

Most Valuable Aspects of This Experience

If I were to describe my exchange experience in one word, it would be adventurous, whether alone or with a group of friends. I had the opportunity to learn a lot about Japan, and I do not even think I would have had a greater chance to do so in the future, especially at my age. I got to learn about myself too, and understanding various cultures and meeting individuals from all backgrounds was eye-opening for me. When I toured different towns and learnt about their histories, historical sites brought classroom information to life. Furthermore, living in the international student dorm could not be more ideal. It seems like a little family, and everyone is connected to one another because it is small yet friendly.

Connection to Academic Studies or Career Goals

Although being an RCE track student, I was periodically exposed to Japanese students and language, and I was fortunate to have the opportunity to acquire a little bit of Japanese, which gave me a sense of achievement and belonging. The communication in one of my classes, which had approximately the same ratio of Japanese and international students, was intriguing since we do not understand one other's languages very well, but the communication barrier was broken down as we discovered out methods to overcome it. Despite the language barrier, I became friends with everyone in the class.

Advice for Future Students

Throughout my stay here, I believe I have developed important connections in terms of academics and personal growth. I am grateful for the opportunity to see Kyoto, Ritsumeikan University, and International House Utano in Japan, and I would recommend it to everyone. Kyoto now feels like another home to me; I felt welcomed, and my bond grew stronger with each passing day. Living abroad would undoubtedly be a life-changing experience.

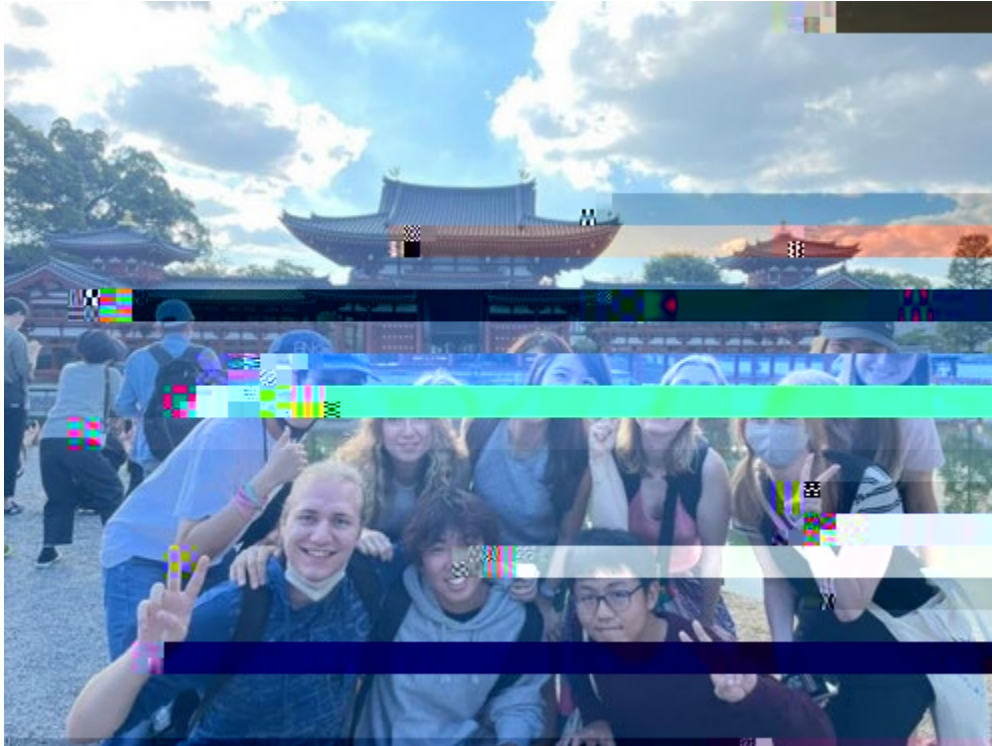
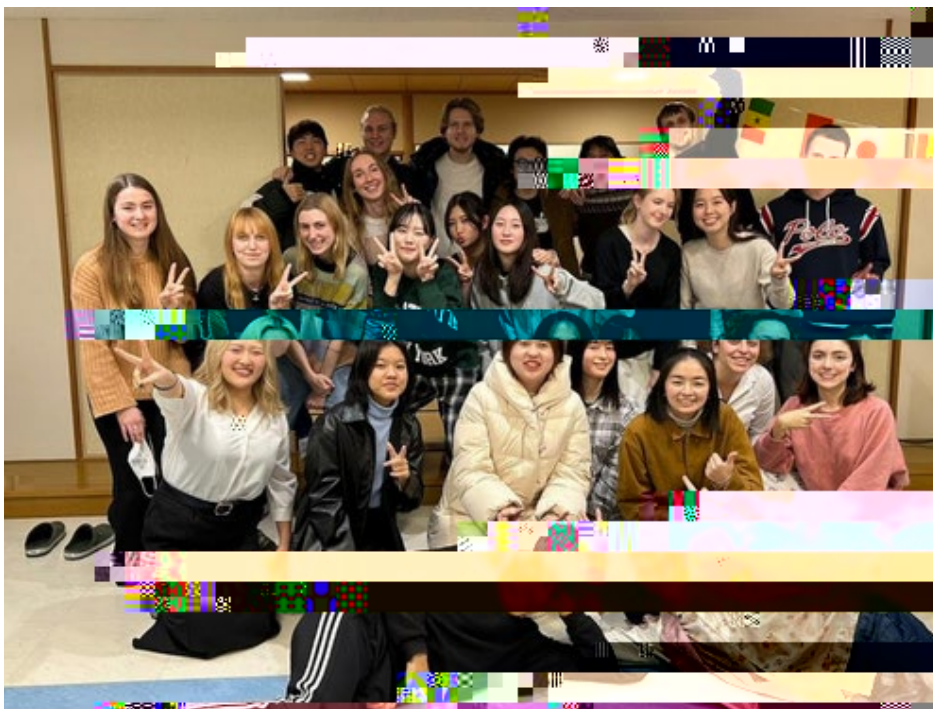


Photo from a trip to Byodoin in Uji. The 10 yen coin in Japan features an image of the Phoenix Hall of Byodoin. We also walked around the city, exploring Japanese history and culture.



Living in the dorms can be an exciting and sometimes challenging experience, but the friendships I made will endure and make it worthwhile.



Kinugasa campus is stunning and has many facilities, such as cafeterias with affordable Japanese meals, a huge library, a well-equipped gym and so on.



Kinkakuji, also known as the Temple of the Golden Pavilion, is one of the closest tourist spots in Kyoto and is only 2 bus stops away from Ritsumeikan University. I visited twice, once during the fall and again when it was fully covered in snow.