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# My Diary in December, January, and February in Japan

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# My diary for December, January, and February in Japan

02/20/2013



*New Year's in Nagano with my friend Nodoka*

Wow, this is a late entry. Sorry, everybody. I got so lost in a large amount of paperwork and studying that I forgot to add an entry for December and January. So, to make up for that, here is a log describing my life in Japan during the time period between my last post and this current post.

In December, I found myself experiencing much colder nights than I would back at Linfield during the winter. As a result, I had one of two options: turn on the heater and add more to my electricity bill, or purchase an electric blanket. I found the blanket to be the cheaper route, since you only have to pay for buying it and using it when you do. Plus, you can take it with you, unlike a heater. As for my time during Winter Vacation, I met up with my friends James (a student from Linfield who was studying in Japan until sometime around the end of January) and Aki Hichikawa (who studied at Linfield two years ago for one semester) for Christmas, and I spent four days in Nagano with my old friend Nodoka, who lived with my family for one year and taught Japanese at my high school. During my time in Nagano, I stayed in her family's house and was treated as an actual member of the family. I got to experience what it was like to live in a Japanese home, and see how they interact with everyday life. I even went to a temple

and conducted an interview with a monk in order to retrieve information on my topic for my Japanese Society class. I was able to get said information thanks to Nodoka's mom asking the monk if I could conduct an interview with him sometime during my stay. I spoke mostly Japanese while I was there, and even went to a Shinto Shrine on New Year's Day, as well as the Zenkouji Temple on the 2nd of January. When I went back to my dorm, I decided to get back to studying and work on some of my final projects.

In January, I found myself in the midst of several assignments that had to be turned in before the 31st. Some of the assignments involved the use of Google Sites, which I had never used at all in the past. For the majority of January, I spent most of my time studying in the computer lounge and library. During the last two weeks of the semester is when things get tough, so any students that are thinking of studying abroad at Rikkyo in the future, do NOT slack off during this time; I recommend paying as much attention to the professor as possible, and also asking questions when necessary. I also had some free time when we had snow fall in Tokyo. I decided to make a snow Totoro and it ended up being one of the most popular snowmen at the university and being shown in the school's webpage. I honestly think that snow is an amazing stress-reliever.

Once February came around, I finally got the chance to relax because I had two-and-a-half months off from school. However, I had to get a new Japanese cell phone because my old one ended up going through the laundry machine. I have made it a habit of checking my pockets whenever I do my laundry ever since then. I also went to the Tokyo Philharmonic Symphony two weeks ago. I had never been to a concert like this one before, and I wanted to go. Thankfully, I received a ticket from a contest that the international office at Rikkyo held, and went there on the weekend that was specified on the ticket. Afterwards, I went to a fabulous Chinese restaurant and had Chinese food for the first time since I had been in Japan. On the 20th, I went to Yokohama's Chinatown district and walked around there for the day. As I passed through the various shops there, many of the people I passed tried to speak to me in English. When I spoke Japanese, they were shocked at how I was able to communicate to them so clearly. I also went to a Taoist temple for the first time and prayed there. However, I did not know how to conduct prayer there, and a nice gentleman who worked there helped explain it to me in English. Afterwards, I went back to Ikebukuro and headed back to my dorm. It was truly an interesting day.

This is Steven Crowder, signing off. Next time, I promise to be timelier with my diary entries, even if I have work that needs to get taken care of. Until next time, dear readers.