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## Face to Face in Japan

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*Field Notes from Abroad: Face to Face: Japan*

I was surprised at how polite and reserved my friend was. Despite the fact that we were fairly good friends, she continued to use the polite form of speaking in Japanese, and held back her opinions and anything else she thought was overbearing. I am definitely used to most people speaking their minds, even in a polite manner, but the culture here is different; it is almost impossible to even politely say something that could be offensive or out of line.

Because I interviewed a girl who happens to be my age, we shared a lot of the same interests and outlooks. However, how we express them are vastly different; I think that people in America are able to more freely express their opinions, styles, and outlooks than people in Japan. Although this trend is starting to fade in Japan (the younger generation of Japanese people is much more loud and open than older generations), I was surprised to find we had same ideas on certain things that I wouldn't have guessed she would have agreed on.

My interview really helped open my eyes to the cultural differences and barriers between Japan and America. Because American culture is all about expression, it is assumed that other cultures have that same opportunity. However, once you are able to talk to a person and if you are lucky enough to have them open up and share their true personality, you come to realize that the idea of expression in Japan is extremely different, and much more subtle.

Kelli Brooks

Interviewee: Misato Ito, friend from school

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