TOKYO, JAPAN

Tshirtdua Yang

Tshirtdua’s Major: Anthropology

Program: Sophia University Exchange, Academic Year

Academic Life: The classroom experience was very similar to that of UW-Madison campus, with minor differences. My courses consisted of mainly anthropology in addition to some history, literature, and Japanese language. The students in my classes were more or less an even split between international students and local bi-lingual students (because our courses were taught in English). Our professors were from different places in the world including Germany, Canada, U.S.A, and Japan.

Cultural Differences: If there is anything obviously different, its definitely the demeanor towards one another. People in Tokyo are much more space-conscious and space-respectful. Words are fashioned in particular means to show one’s respect toward one’s upperclassmen and/or elders. Quality is highly valued over quantity. Efficiency and safety is emphasized in most if not all parts of daily life via trains, relationships, crossing streets, eating at restaurants and more.

Most Memorable Moments: All moments were memorable to be honest, but one that does stick out is the memory of when I went with the fencing club to Nanzan University for the annual Sophia vs Nanzan Sports Festival. After the competition, our captain went around and asked for a few words from everyone. When it came my turn, I let out all of my feelings, including the tough moments in the beginning. From then on, I felt closer to the people whom I once considered all strangers. The upperclassmen who seemed to shy to talk to me, began to slowly warm up to me. Everything finally felt right, like it was always meant to be.

Tshirtdu in Tokyo’s Roppongi area during mid-town illumination.

“My patience has improved, in addition to my understanding of how differently the world can work.”