

Education Abroad Returnees of the Month December 2017/January 2018

Myliyah Hanna

4th year Japanese and English major
UVA Exchange: Waseda University, Spring 2017

Most interesting class and why? Did you take classes in connection to your major or electives?

Yes, all of my classes were relating to my Japanese major. I really enjoyed my Modern Japanese Literature in Translation class because I learned a lot more about Japan from the Meiji era to about the middle of the Showa era. It was nice to learn about literature that wasn't so American or European.

How was education abroad different than anticipated?

I felt I had more space in my schedule to find the time to explore Japan and familiarize myself with the customs and the language. It meant a lot to me that I was able to leave Tokyo for a bit and see other parts of the country because even though I was experiencing Tokyo for the first time, I didn't want all of my time to be spent in Tokyo. I did, however, have to get used to being stared at, because being a Black foreigner is very different than being a white foreigner or an Asian foreigner.



Number one way the experience contributed to your growth

I feel a lot more comfortable in my Japanese language skills. I was able to live a day-to-day life rather comfortably, able to interact with all kinds of people of all ages. Just being able to communicate with others helped ease the burden of living in another country by myself because I knew I could rely on my language abilities to help me through it.



Favorite local hangout, and why?

I found a café called Freeman Café in Shibuya. The view looked out onto a street so it wasn't the most exciting, but the interior had a great 60s club feel that I really enjoyed, and the waiters/waitresses were really nice.

Most interesting/delicious cuisine tried

I found a chicken-based tsukemen restaurant! Tsukemen is dipping ramen (you get a bowl of ramen noodles, a bowl of broth, and you dip

the noodles into the broth) and it was absolutely delicious!

Most meaningful experience abroad

I went to Okinawa and Osaka during a week of vacation from classes and was able to see the lesser known but still quite beautiful parts of Japan. I was so grateful that I was given the opportunity to go because Okinawa and Osaka were beautiful in their own ways and those experiences definitely helped me shape my understanding of Japan. They were definitely influential in my decision to go back overseas and work in Japan for a few years.

Sum up the experience in three words

Worth my time

Mylihah also submitted blog posts during her semester abroad to the Hoos Abroad blog (<https://hoosabroad.wordpress.com/>). Below, read an excerpt from her pre-arrival post, and read her additional blog posts and others from Japan at <https://hoosabroad.wordpress.com/category/asia/japan/>.

In a few weeks, I'll be on a plane for nearly a day of travel to end up in Japan, where I'll spend a few months studying and exploring. Even now I can hardly believe it. Kids that come from my demographic—working class, minority, from the inner city—don't get much hope. You can't do it because society says you can't. My defiant nature wouldn't let me be another example for the naysayers, and here I am years later: attending an excellent university, studying abroad with a few scholarships under my belt. I don't want to use this as a chance to brag but rather as an opportunity to reveal that there is an entire vault of intelligent, bright kids and teenagers waiting for their chance but not always having access to the resources to get there. For that, I am blessed and privileged, and for them, I'll dedicate this blog.



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