

Ava Knecht (アヴァ)

千里の道も一歩から (A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step). This quote mentions how one journey, no matter how long it is, starts with just one action or step. I feel as if this perfectly describes my journey and time in Japan. I thought that two weeks was long, though now that I'm back in America, back to my normal routine, I think I must be mistaken. Japan felt like a fleeting dream, except that it was one I could remember so vividly. I love Japan so much to the point where I consider it one of my homes. I learn so much about Japanese culture and lifestyle to the point where I might adapt some of them into my lifestyle. It won't be as perfect as it was in Japan though I will try.

With the help of being in Japan and experiencing things first hand, I learn a few things. One thing I learned is vending machines do in fact tell you if a drink is hot or cold. Just look above the price slot. I was kinda surprised when I found out that was possible. In America, you can only get cold drinks. Even though I only got water from the vending machines, I could tell by just asking what the drinks were. Another thing I noticed was the storm drainers design. When scrolling through social media, I keep noticing that some storm drainer lids had unique designs on them. I thought that it was cool. Though I couldn't tell if they all had designs on them. After being in Japan I can safely say I have seen a couple of the lids with cool designs on them. I'm now wondering why we don't have unique designs for storm drains in America.

I think one of my favorite memories I had in Japan was the late after school hangouts me and my host sister, Hina, would have with other classmates at Kanoya High School. Imagine this; class 1-4 on the third floor of Kanoya High school, lights on in the class as if school is still going on. Most of the desks are empty though nested in place, students hanging out in one part of the classroom. Conversations going on as if time is standing still, with the sun finally setting and the moon rising. I still remember vividly about those times. We would talk about anything that comes to our mind. While I was clueless for half of the conversations (with my limited Japanese) I felt like being there was just enough. Hanging out with friends was what I just needed after long class periods ended. If I had the chance to experience it again. I would do it in a heartbeat. I hope they are all doing all right? I hope to visit them again. It might not be as soon as possible but I will try my best. I think what I'm trying to say is, it is best to spend your time with the people that make you happy. This is why I love people.

For the final question, what's next? I'm not really sure. I do plan to come back. This isn't a forever goodbye. Just a temporary "I see you later". I hope that I can come back before everyone in Kanoya High School class 1 level graduates. It would be very cool to show up at their graduation to support them. I want to see everyone before we all go chasing our dreams. As for my Japanese, I'm getting better. I already know おはようございます, いつてらつsじょやい、おかえり、おやすみ, and others which is a very good start. I keep learning Japanese so that I can meet even more people and have conversations fully in Japanese. I'm incredibly grateful to MNCC and everyone for making this dream come true. This could not have happened without the support of everyone. ありがとうございます 🙏. I realised that my time in Japan is something I shouldn't take for granted. Time can be so slow but can go by in blink of an eye. We got to be

mindful and take in everything we have in front of us because everything can quickly turn into a fleeting memory. I think this quote perfectly describe what time really is. Time is like a arrow. Once it shoots it flys by quick. Once and done. Like memories. 千里の道も一歩から (Time flies like an arrow). This was a wonderful chance that I could never have dreamed of.