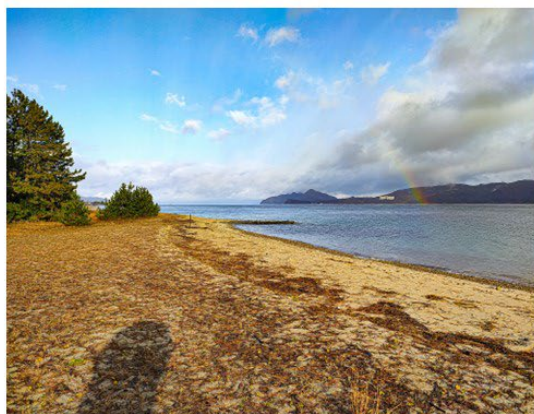


Eyes Wide Open: Discovering Japan, Discovering Myself"

Voices of **JOY** students

Exchange Semester Experience October 2024 ~ February 2025

VSB - Technical University of Ostrava Czech Republic



If I were to summarize the JOY program as briefly as I can, I would say it was EYE-OPENING. Not only did I get the chance to visit many places in Japan, which left my eyes wide open as I wanted to see as much as I could, but it also broadened my perspective on the vastly different cultures, religions and customs in this world. And on top of that, I was still able to pursue my academic education with the help of many interesting courses offered by the JOY program and Yokohama National University as a whole.

At first, I was in two minds about going on such student exchange program. On one hand I could finally visit Japan, but on the other hand I would need to step out of the comfort zone of my home. In the end, I decided to do so as it would definitely contribute to my personal growth and increase the chances of getting better employment. And thus, my adventures in Japan started.

Being born in a relatively small town and then suddenly one time landing into an agglomeration of tens of millions of people was like a punch in the face. The fact that it was my first experience of travelling alone also didn't help. However, I cannot emphasize enough how exceptionally well everything was organized. With everyone being very kind and helpful, I quickly found my way around and started a new semester at a completely different university.

There were many places I visited and many crazy things I did during my stay in Japan. To list a few, I will never forget climbing steep mountains during the colorful autumn season (especially mount Hiru), taking an abstract mathematics course entirely in Japanese or participating in a birthday party for two anime girls in Toyosato. I must say I enjoyed every single day there.

After the JOY program, I can safely say that it made me fall in love with Japan and I am actually thinking about going there for another semester even though it would require a complete change of plans at my home university. Nevertheless, I will definitely visit Japan again, either as a student or as a tourist. But anyway, I am already looking forward to it!