

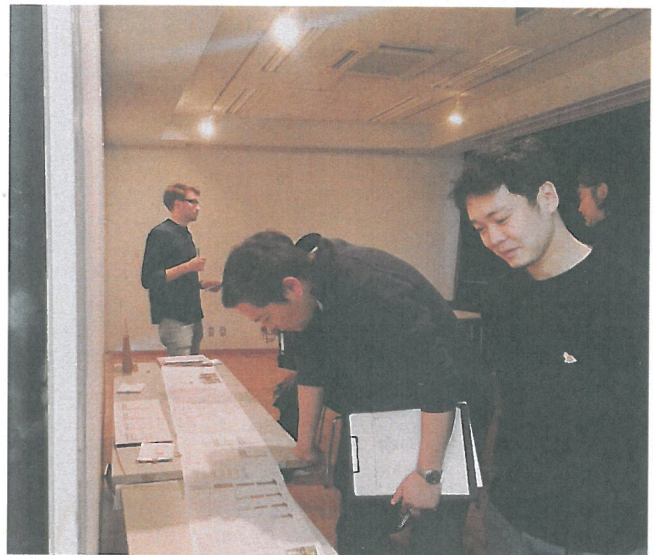
Exchange semester in Tokyo

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It is a great opportunity to go abroad to another country as part of your studies. In this semester I wanted to experience something new and different to what I know and what I was used to. That and the great architecture that I was sure to experience were the reasons for me to choose to spend this semester in Tokyo.

I arrived in Tokyo one week before University started, so I visited many places and explored the city in the first week. I saw some great architecture and experienced some of my first authentic Japanese food. Knowing only some Japanese words, living in Tokyo can be a bit difficult at times. Grocery shopping was a little difficult at first because all the products in the supermarkets are labeled in Japanese. Many people in Japan can't speak any English or are too shy to use it, so asking for help is also not that easy. But I got used to it and after a while it got easier.

At the beginning of the semester we had an orientation where we were told some important rules for living in Japan, they showed us the campus and introduced each of us architecture students to the Laboratory we were assigned to. The students in my Lab were already working on a group project so I was free to choose what I wanted to do for a project. I could do one of the Bachelor's projects or do something else. I found a competition I was interested in and decided to work on a project to submit there. The students in my lab met regularly with the professor to discuss their project. I joined their meetings too, but most of it was in Japanese, so I did not understand a lot. Sometimes I was lucky to get some of it translated by another student or by the professor. To discuss my project with my professor, I had to schedule meetings with him. At the end of the year some students of all the laboratories could present the work they did during the year. I could also present my project there.



When the students in my lab planned a trip for their new project, they asked me if I want to join them. We went to the island Shodoshima and to Osaka. Shodoshima is a very nice island, that is about the size of Liechtenstein. My professor showed us one of his Projects which is a public toilet at the harbour and, among other things, we visited a soy sauce brewery. In Osaka we met many people for talks and interviews to the topics of the new project. I asked my Japanese colleague to translate for me so I could understand some of it.



Besides the project, there was only one course that was held in English. It was a course about modern architecture for the Bachelor students. Although a lot of it was repetition for me it was one of the most interesting history courses I have ever had and I learned many new things. I also joined a Grasshopper course, which was held in Japanese, but with the help of a Japanese friend and by following the professor's instruction on the screen I was able to understand most of it. The university also offered a Japanese course for foreign students, which I joined. I enjoyed learning the language and saw benefits in my daily life. In Japanese class I also met many other foreign students with other majors.

The University also offered some cultural events for us foreign students. I went to a traditional Japanese music concert, joined a lesson where we learned how to do traditional Japanese theatre called N , and went to a tea ceremony.

At the end Of my stay I had some time to travel a bit. I Kyoto and also in Nara I experienced two places with their architecture that is much more traditional. In Osaka, Teshima and Naoshima I experienced the beauty of many of Tadao Andos Buildings.

This semester abroad was a great opportunity where I learn about a new culture and experienced its traditions as well as many of its great traditional and contemporary architecture. It was not always easy to communicate, but the Japanese people are very kind and helpful. I also experienced many great things and made many new friends. With this new experience I see my homeland Liechtenstein through new eyes.

