



BODS ABROAD

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Learning From Experience

By Heather Ramsdell

Kwansei Gakuin University - Fall 2012

Japan

As I'm sitting in the gardens of my host university wondering what to write, all the shocking aspects I've experienced during my first three weeks here come to mind. I knew many of the actions and cultural aspects of Japan before coming here, but actually experiencing it was nearly overwhelming at times to my country bumpkin Western ways.

I've studied Japanese for four years at Washburn University, although I took a year off to focus on my major before coming here, and let me tell you, that was not a good idea. Naito-sensei warned me in my third-year that even if one were to major and study Japanese intensively, they would still be at an intermediate level until a lengthy immersion in Japan. I understood this, but never truly grasped the gravity of it until I met my host mom who is an auctioneer. In my first three weeks here, she is the fastest Japanese speaker I've heard. In the first week, she used nothing but Kansai-ben – the dialect of the Osaka area. I didn't understand a word she said because of the speed and accent. Yes, communication between us in the first two weeks was interesting. But thanks to her speed-talk I can catch at least half of what's said on TV shows whereas before I came here I couldn't catch a word.



Despite the language barrier, I've already been able to go to a few historical places, namely Buddhist temples. Someone can learn all they want from a book, but the majority of information will just seep right out over time, as I've sadly noticed. There were many instances where I saw something and knew I should've remembered why it was the way it was, but couldn't. Yet, for example, I remembered exactly why aprons are tied around a few little Buddhist statues because I had seen it for myself and asked my host mom. Experiencing is a better teacher than just reading and seeing pretty pictures.

Fashion is also interesting here especially since I'm used to a relaxed clothing culture. Holey and old clothes are common back in Kansas. Here? Not really. Most of the girls wear high heels of some sort and my feet ache watching them climb or descend steep paved hills in them. Even the guys are nicely dressed. No baggy pants. No underwear showing. And everyone's hair is nicely styled with not a strand out of place. There are days I felt like I was walking around in just my underwear with my holey shorts and spaghetti strap (hey, it was humid and hot out). Another thing is that women favor umbrellas on sunny days. Why? I have yet to figure it out. But I've nearly poked my eye out many times on them when weaving through the crowd.

But every story isn't happy and perfect. One aspect I've been dealing with ever since arriving is what we foreign exchange have dubbed as the "gaijin bubble." *Gaijin* literally means foreigner. I'm given an extra wide berth, no one sits near me on the train even when all other seats are taken, and some store clerks who are handing out free items tend to ignore us. We're also stared at. A lot. But not everyone is cold. One of the Coldstone workers talks to me when I go there, and we have a broken Japanese and broken English conversation with laughter. When I went for a run this morning, a lady randomly stopped me and we talked. While the bubble exists, the people here have been extremely nice and helpful.

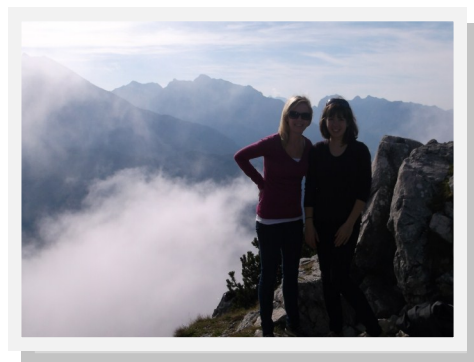
All of this has been in my first three weeks, and I've got another nearly four months to go. The majority of us who are staying for only a semester have long since realized that that is too short, but we're going to make the best of it however we can.

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Maastricht Experience
By Lauren Schulz
Maastricht University—Fall 2012
The Netherlands

It has been a wonderful experience thus far studying in Maastricht in The Netherlands. My classmates from Washburn and I have very much enjoyed the international experience and education we have received from both the professors and students that we have met from all over the world. Maastricht is a small town but large enough to get lost in for the first couple of weeks. I have personally enjoyed the two large squares in the center of Maastricht, called the Vrijthof and the Mrkt. There are many shops, restaurants, cafes and live entertainment around these two areas. In addition there is a food market in the Mrkt every Wednesday and Friday. Maastricht is located in the southern part of the Netherlands, so Germany and Belgium are very close. It has been a great experience to travel to multiple countries and experience new cultures. So far, I have been able to go to London, Luxembourg City, Munich, Brussels and Garmisch. I cannot wait to continue my travels and enjoy more of Europe's wonderful people and places. (Photographs submitted by Lauren Schulz)



experience new cultures. So far, I have been able to go to London, Luxembourg City, Munich, Brussels and Garmisch. I cannot wait to continue my travels and enjoy more of Europe's wonderful people and places. (Photographs submitted by Lauren Schulz)



Study Abroad Award Ceremony
December 7, 2012 / 3:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Memorial Union, Washburn Room A



Stepping Out
by John Rebein
University of Guanajuato - Fall 2012
Mexico

I am both proud and excited to be a part of the Bods Abroad program. I see the Study Abroad program as an integral part of understanding the world and its peoples. Only after we step outside of our own context can we fully understand each other. That is to say, your perspective changes when you are inside of a culture as opposed to viewing it from afar. I am coming to realize just how small our global community is and how interconnected we really are. During my travels abroad I have had the pleasure and good fortune to know a myriad of different people from all over the world. Part of the Study Abroad experience is meeting other international students and

sharing experiences and ideas. I attend class with people from Brazil, Korea, Japan, China, Norway and have friends from Costa Rica and Chile. If you are looking for a good way to see and experience the world there are few ways better than Study Abroad and there is no better way than as a Bod.

2012 PHOTO ESSAY CONTEST WINNERS

First Place Winner—Catelyn Kostbar
London Law Consortium, England
Spring 2012

Following My Heart and Falling in Love



The Love Locked Bridge in Paris, France.

I had set my sights to study abroad in order to allow myself the chance to see the world and open myself to all the experiences the universe had to offer. I was so grateful to have been accepted to study law in London, England. This was to be my first time traveling outside of the United States and, as cliché as it may sound, I had always felt in my heart that there was a vast amount of opportunities waiting for me beyond the boundaries of my home state. Studying abroad allowed me to follow my heart.

While studying in London I wanted to seize the opportunity to venture to other countries of Europe, since access to them was made simple by convenient means of public transportation. The first trip I made was to Paris, France for a short weekend in February. I hopped on The Chunnel, which is a directly rooted train from London to Paris. It was there that I stumbled upon a bridge that enchanted me and captured my imagination.

The bridge was laden with padlocks of all shapes, sizes, and colors. Some had names engraved into them, while others were just adorned with handwritten initials. The sight was captivating and whimsical. Upon this bridge were padlocks affixed by couples from all around the world to symbolize an everlasting, locked-love. It may have been the timing and place of this encounter, as I was visiting Paris on the weekend of Valentine's Day, but from this point on in my trav-

els I was utterly captured by the romance of where I was in the world. My heart knew I was where I was supposed to be and it was only a short month later that my heart was opened to another chance encounter.

My friends and I decided to head to Spain for a weekend at the end of March. We had not yet gotten very far in our travels when we met David. In fact, we were standing in line waiting for departure in the London airport. David was standing in the back of the line and when he heard us talking he turned around and introduced himself. He too was an American and was traveling to Spain to visit some friends. Our conversation continued on the airplane and I cannot exactly explain the instant connection I seemed to have with David, but we spent most of that weekend together.

His flight back to London was coordinated with ours and it was there that we talked about meeting up again once we were back in England. Two weeks later, I took a train two and half hours northeast of London to visit him. Our personal connection was strong and being with him was exciting. Truthfully, I did not expect that a chance encounter such as this could have fabricated into my own personal love story...

By the end of April, my study abroad experience was nearly at an end and I wanted to visit Italy before heading home. Italy had the allure of history, culture, and romance. David too was drawn to see the ancient Roman Coliseum and the Grand Canal of Venice. So, in following my heart, we booked a trip to Italy, setting out to see Venice and Rome. We spent a full day in Venice roaming around

the maze of pedestrian streets; drinking wine at a table sitting adjacent to the Grand Canal, and soaking up the romance of our setting. As I sat and watched the sunset cascade behind the stacks of buildings that lined the canal I reflected upon my experience in its entirety. My heart had led me along this wondrous adventure. I had visited eight countries in four months and had discovered that each place held a unique quality that captivated my senses of adventure, insight, and romance. I followed my heart and I fell in love...



Venice - Following my heart and falling in love.



Grand Canal, Venice-
Overlooking the Grand Canal and sunset.

Second Place Winner—Stefanie Stuever

Sports Traditions/History-Europe, Greece

Spring Break 2012

Encountering Art History



A view of the brightly colored city of Santorini.

Through Washburn's International Programs, I have had the opportunity to study abroad multiple times. This past March, I traveled to Greece over spring break with about thirty students from the Washburn Art and Kinesiology Departments. It was an incredible experience that differed from any of my previous experiences abroad. I not only encountered historically significant art, but also got to travel with other students and professors, instead of unaccompanied.

Our adventure began together when we landed in Athens, Greece. We spent the first couple of days exploring the city's market, tasting Greek foods, and visiting ancient ruins. My favorite thing though, was climbing the Acropolis to see the Pantheon and the city of Athens from one of its highest points. The Acropolis Museum had an unbelievable collection of art in their Archaic Gallery while their Pantheon Gallery displayed the sculptural decoration of the ancient monument. The reconstruction of the ancient Olympic stadium was also pretty impressive. It allowed us to imagine where the original Olympic games were held and what it looked like.

The next day we boarded a Crystal Cruise Ship and sailed off into the Aegean Sea. The cruise ship took us to the beautiful white washed city of Mykonos, the famous Biblical city of Ephesus, and the islands of Patmos, Rhodes, Crete and Santorini. In Mykonos, we wandered through the narrow streets, between bright colored doors and windows and gawked at the famous windmills. The day after, we sailed to Ephesus (present-day Turkey) and the island of Patmos. In Ephesus, we walked around the vast stretch of ruins that re-



Other students and I stand together

main in the once thriving port city, as well as visited the house of Mary, mother of Jesus. On Patmos we visited the cave where the Apostle John wrote the Book of



The beautiful whitewashed city of Mykonos with brightly colored doors and windows.

Revelation, and watched residents perform customary dances in traditional outfits. In Rhodes, we strolled down the stone streets, visited the Grand Master's Palace, and sat on the steps of the Temple of Apollo. On the island of Crete I finally got to see the Knossos Palace! I have read about the palace in art history classes and was blown away by the level of complexity and its' decorative frescos. On Santorini, we gazed at striking white churches with bright blue domes, got lost in a back alley, and left the island with several bottles of wonderfully sweet Grecian wine. Our adventure ended in Athens, where it began. We toured the modern Olympic stadium and tried to wrap our minds around an event that has been around for almost 2,800 years.



One of the temples found amongst the ruins in Ephesus.

This trip to Greece took me to so many different places! Ancient ruins, sculptures, frescos, and pottery were daily a part of my travel experience. I had the opportunity to physically encounter ancient art and ruins that I once thought I would only see in my textbooks.



The Grand Master's Palace on the island of Rhodes.

Third Place Winner—Anna Frantz Study Abroad in Belize, Central America Winter Break 2012

Saturday, January 7th, 2012: Ya Betta Belize It!
(A Journal Entry Expressing the Impact of Belize's Culture and People)

Living History: The Altun Ha Ruins

Though I went to Belize to better the lives of children, exploring the culture was one of the key wonders I took away from my ten transformational days abroad. The journey began by walking through vast, crisp greens golf resorts one could only dream of



At the Altun Ha Ruins

owning. Our tour guide showed off three bleached but impressive ruins that took shape and function for the Mayans as a compass rose. When we turned around to survey the area, we found ourselves gawking at the surprise main attraction! To our left was the most magnificent temple I had ever seen, and for a moment, I felt like I was walking through a geography textbook. The only thing cooler than viewing it was standing on its top, and near the edge of all places! It may have been scary, but it was worth it to see the world as

the priests once did. Since we practically had the ruins to ourselves, it was hard not to feel a magical experience from living such vibrant history.

Caye Caulker:

Another Cultural Daydream

Who would've thought an island small enough where everyone could circumnavigate town in golf carts would be the most beautiful place I ever saw? From staying in a hotel on the coast, to experiencing an array of decadent foods, including the best pineapple I've tasted, to snorkeling in the crystal clear Caribbean waters, the Cayes were the perfect place to evaporate worry. Nature is truly one of earth's best aesthetic pleasures.



Behind the Ruin

Orphanages: A Blunt Reminder That I am Blessed

At first, it was a scary experience to see where we would be volunteering at the orphanages. The first one we visited was Liberty Children's Home, and because it was privately funded, it was about as close to paradise as the children could get. They were shy but sweet and enjoyed being near us, even when our com-



Caye Caulker

plicated lessons backfired, and we had to resort to coloring. Unfortunately, Dorothy Menzie's was a Hollywood interpretation of a Jewish ghetto, just without the grayscale. Despite this, the children here flocked to us and adored us like they didn't know when they'd get another hug from a caring outsider. It made quite a few of us

cry. Though we may not have made a world of difference to them, they impacted us for the rest of our lives. They reminded me that I have no real right to complain. I am blessed with a loving family and money; if they



Liberty Children's Home

can smile without either of these, then I can certainly take on life's challenges with hope instead of hostility. Without a doubt, the most important lesson learned from my time abroad was through the lives of these children. They were an inspiration to help and give when I can, and even though it may not be much, every thoughtful act of charity counts.



King's Orphanage

Honorable Mention—Rachel Klaus
International Mass Media Seminar, France
Spring Break 2012

Respecting Grandpa

“...Every day at 6 o’clock p.m. Parisian and American veterans along with family members join outside of the Arc de Triomphe to honor those who have lost their life due to World War II.During this daily ceremony American soldiers are also remembered and honored as demonstrated by the American Flag being carried. I was amazed at how they took time to remember the war every day. In America we often take for granted the lives that were lost in World War II. I have forgotten to respect the sacrifice that my grandfather was willing to make. My trip to Paris has taught me to remember to respect grandpa.”



Honorable Mention—Kris Roberts
Provinciale Hogeschool Limburg, Belgium
Spring Semester 2012



Tot de Volgende Keer / Until the Next Time

“...I’d be lying if I said that every day was beautiful, and the first to say that studying abroad is one of the hardest things I’ve ever done. Adapting to new money, food, housing, transportation, friends, and teachers is not easy. Doing all of that almost 7000 miles away from everyone else I knew was heart-wrenching, but it was not the most difficult part. Despite the distance, I knew that I would return to Kansas, and I would see everyone again. The hardest thing was leaving Belgium and all of the people I had met, because there was no plan for a return.

I miss Hasselt and the people every day. Fortunately, the internet has made our friendship possible beyond those five months: I can Skype with my friends from Turkey and Scotland, write a message to my studio-mates from PHL, and watch a YouTube cover by my Spanish friend, all from my own home. The personal connection may be lacking, but it’s a way to continue our friendship until we meet again: tot de volgende keer.”

Honorable Mention—Jingjing Wu
Rennes Business Program, France
Summer 2012

C’est La Vie

“...As soon as I departed the airplane, my panic started. Struggling with my dignity and poor French for two hours, I finally arrived at the train station by asking no less than ten people. I was exhausted of walking with my luggage and tired of the jetlag, so I stopped at a seafood restaurant for a rest, and of course French delicacy. Who knew it was not a rest at all? All the dishes on the menu were in French! The “worst” and the most challenging part was the served oyster that I ordered was raw! Oh God, forgive me! I could even hear the poor oyster’s heartbreaking sound, as well as mine.”

