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Introduction

Kyoto Program

With its history as Japan’s former Imperial capital for over a millennium, Kyoto is rightly famed for its ancient shrines and temples (which outnumber its convenience stores), its traditional ryokan inns, and its centuries-old craftsmanship. Even today the city retains its status as the cultural capital of the nation. Despite its old-world feel Kyoto is an energetic city looking firmly to the future, with an impressive list of high tech companies making their home here. The Stanford Japan Center is situated inside the Imadegawa campus of Doshisha University, on the northern edge of the old Imperial Palace gardens in the heart of the city. Students can take Winter and/or Spring Quarter academic programs, as well as an optional 10-week summer internship at leading companies and institutions all over Japan. The curriculum during the academic quarter typically combines intensive Japanese language study with Japan-focused content courses on culture, contemporary affairs, business, and technology. In the summer, students continue to improve their language abilities and meet new challenges within the Japanese work environment. This past year we celebrated 25 years of operation, and wish a for another great 25 years plus to come.

Academic Objective

The Kyoto Program is designed for students with intellectual interests in the complex interplay between Japan’s distinctive blend of ancient and modern culture, the diverse challenges the country faces as a post-industrial nation surrounded by rising regional powers, and the way that Japan continues to innovate in the face of the forces of globalization. The program also helps students understand the professional value of developing linguistic proficiency and cultural competencies that facilitate interaction in the Japanese culture while simultaneously complementing their technical abilities.

Students benefit from the multiple levels of Japanese language offerings, coursework on aspects of Japanese culture and contemporary society, economics and politics, as well as from access to summer internships. The Kyoto Program permits students having limited prior
knowledge of Japan the opportunity to explore how a deeper appreciation of Japanese culture can create new dimensions in their academic and professional development.

**Student Guide**

This guide is from students for students. We aim to give you another resource in addition to the multitude of information you may already be receiving from the Bing Overseas Program (BOSP) or the Stanford Japan Center (SJC). While not fully comprehensive, we hope that we are able to highlight different aspects of Japan that we encountered over our time in Kyoto and beyond. This guide will encompass both aspects of the Stanford Kyoto program: the study abroad/cultural component during the academic quarter and the internship component over the summer. Enjoy

気をつけて、お楽しみください!
LIFE IN JAPAN
日本の生活

History

The island country of Japan has a long and rich history shaped early by both Chinese and Western European influence. The feudal system led by shogun and ruled by an emperor led to a period of isolation from the world, later opened back by pressure from the United States. Japan grew strongly as a military power through the late 19th and early 20th century but came to a halt with the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. Today, the country holds one of the world’s largest economies, is a member of the UN and G7, and enjoys the highest life expectancy of anywhere in the world.

Introduction

Japan now prides itself on its delicate balance between old and new tradition. On one side of the street one may worship at an ancient shrine honoring one of the thousands of Shintō gods, and on the other side one may stumble upon the latest technology in robots. Through the BOSP Kyoto Program, we hope to encourage students to achieve cultural fluency. How students interpret this is up to them. Whether it’s through walks down the narrow alleyways, food adventures in traditional restaurant establishments, or endless enjoyment at the game centers, the opportunity to become integrated into the city and competent in Japanese culture.

Arrival Logistics

As mentioned in the orientation, entering the country may and will seem confusing. Upon arrival you will go through immigration and customs. Make sure you have your passport ready with your COE and visa in the passport during this time. They will take your COE and in exchange give you a resident card (在留カード). This will be the most valuable item during your time in Japan and it is extremely important (and required by law) to have your resident card on you at all times.
You will also have to register within two weeks of arrival into the country at the local city/ward office. This is a mandatory process and your host family will work with you to find a time to go. If you arrive before the first day of the program, remember to calculate the two weeks starting when you arrive in the country, not when the program starts.

**Adjustment**

Remember that jumping into a new environment will take some time to adjust. Whether it’s cultural or logistical, by the end of the ten weeks you will have made your way through a whole slew of roadblocks and challenges. There are dozens of resources outlined in the program booklet and anything back on campus is accessible during your time abroad.
Classes

Students will soon find themselves in a new classroom environment. While in-classroom teaching will still be important, using the city as your classroom might be a new experience for students. As the city of a thousand temples and shrines, Kyoto offers more than what Stanford can. From temple visits to mountain hikes, the classroom is not limited to just the classroom.

Everyone will be enrolled in a Japanese language class during their time in Kyoto. Classes run Monday to Thursday in the morning for about two hours. This is longer and more intensive than you may be used to back on campus. Hopefully, full immersion in the environment will aid you in your language study. At the end of the academic quarter, you will also have the opportunity to showcase your language skills with a presentation on an aspect of Japanese culture not only to your peers but also to all the host families and SJC staff.

To further enhance your abroad experience, a few students from Doshisha University and Kyoto University may also be taking the cultural courses with you. For them, the process of applying for this opportunity is voluntary and competitive. They do not receive academic credit, but are there to engage in the same cultural exchange that you are here in Kyoto for. Welcome them, make friends, and hang out. They are a wonderful resource as natives of the city. You may end up finding your favorite place through their help.

Cultural Association of Stanford in Kyoto (CASK)

CASK is a group comprising students from Doshisha University and Kyoto University. The main purpose of the CASK is to provide assistance during your time in Kyoto. Because they are all local students, they may offer some of the more insightful opinions and advice while you are abroad. The group will also coordinate with SJC to lead social events, such as sake tasting and onsen trips.
Clubs and Activities

Just like at Stanford, there are a multitude of students groups and organizations on campus, ranging from English conversation clubs to restaurant eating clubs. If you are going abroad in the spring, your academic quarter will align with the new academic year in Japan, which allows you to view the Doshisha version of the activities fair. Joining a club is not an essential part of the study abroad experience, but will provide you with another opportunity to interact with local students. Most are welcoming to short-term students, especially study-abroad students, so definitely give it a try.

If you want to try volunteer during your time abroad, the center will also assist in coordinating a position. Positions in the past have included volunteering at a kindergarten or a hospital. These are another great way to interact with the local community.

Campus Resources

Within the Stanford Japan Center, you will have access to a computer, printer, and wifi internet. In addition, there is library stocked with books on a variety of Japanese topics that you can use for research and papers. With your Doshisha University ID card, you will also have access to the campus libraries.
General Guidelines and Tips

Your homestay will probably be the most important aspect of your time abroad. While it may take some time for you to adjust both to the Japanese lifestyle and to living with a new family, remember that your hosts are also trying their best to adapt to and take care of you. The host families sign up voluntarily each year because they want to engage in cultural exchange, so be open to new and unfamiliar things. Below are some general tips:

- First impressions go a long way. Remember to bring an *omiyage* gift for your host family. Spend the first free weekend if you can with your host family. They have been expecting your arrival for months!
- Eating meals at home is spending time with your host family. Try not to miss many meals and definitely let them know ahead of time if you plan to do so.
- Communication is key. Keep your host family updated. They care about and worry for you just as they would their own child.
- Spend as much time with your host family to make the most out of your homestay. Just chatting or watching TV after dinner can make a big difference not only in your relationship but also in your language skills.
- Electricity is expensive, so be mindful of your consumption.
- Bathing/showering happens usually at night. Ask your host family know if you prefer to do so in the morning. They can try to accommodate.
- Remember to keep your room clean. It is still space that they are providing you.
- Some families may impose a curfew. Please be respectful and honor their request. Regardless, if you plan to be out later than normal, you should inform your host family.
- Do not feel obligated to always spend time with your host family, but be respectful and courteous if rejecting an offer from your host family.

The list may seem overwhelming at first, but remember that the center is always available if you encounter an uncomfortable situation. Almost all host families go without a problem and we want to ensure that you have a meaningful and fun time abroad. This experience is a learning opportunity for both sides of the homestay so be ready to adapt and learn.
LEISURE

Money

You will learn quickly that Japan is still very much a cash and coin society. Most places will not accept credit cards. While it is not necessary to bring a large amount of cash into Japan, we do recommend bringing about 100 USD to assist with your arrival. If you plan to do some personal shopping, you can bring more. However, there are convenience stores on most streets that have ATMs where you can withdraw money if you bring a credit card. Check if your bank an international fee, generally around 3%. You should also inform your bank ahead of time so that they do not freeze your bank account.

Food

Your host family will provide you with breakfast and dinner everyday. The center will provide you a stipend for your daily lunch, about 800 JYP per lunch. On campus, you will have a variety of food options at conveniently cheap prices. A lunch on campus can range from 300 JPY to 800 JPY. The freedom to choose your lunch allows you to also explore outside the cafeteria, such as at convenience stores and nearby (or even faraway) restaurants. During the weekend, your host family may provide you with lunch, but this is not to be expected of them. Your lunch stipend covers weekend lunches as well.

Transportation

Kyoto has an extensive train, subway, and bus system that can bring you to almost all corners of the city. It may be useful to learn the different lines and where you are able to go early in your travels. You will also be integrated with the transportation system through your morning and evening commute. Some daily commutes can range from 5 minutes by biking to over an hour with multiple transfers. Pass the time by reading books, listening to music, or doing homework.
Overview

The internship component, formally known as the Stanford in Kyoto Internship Program (SKIP), is a chance for you to further enhance your experience in Japan and immerse yourself in the work culture which you may find to be different from the normal study abroad experience. The ten weeks will give you more freedom but present many “real-world” challenges that will hopefully prepare you for your after-college life. Most internships are located in Tokyo, the most populous metropolitan area in the world, but you may also find yourself in a smaller town and have the opportunity to explore a different corner of Japan. Either way, the internships may present similar roadblocks, but hopefully results in a rewarding experience.

Logistics

Your internship should have been, for the most part, finalized before your arrival in Kyoto. Many companies do not have formal internships, as the concept is not popular in Japan, and so there may be some logistics that need to worked out once you arrive. Internship tasks have varied each year with each student and each company, but generally follow one of two forms: the company may give you a project to work on for the ten-week period with some guidance, or the company may have you assist in a project where you will have a smaller role. Regardless of the role that you play, the company may treat you more as a guest/VIP and not demand a lot from you. This will be a learning experience for both sides.

As mentioned in the orientation and outlined in the key dates, there will be a period of one week where you will not be under the program’s guidance and care. You will be expected to move out on the Sunday after the closing ceremony and farewell party. Arrangements can be made to stay at your host family’s place, if they allow and at a cost of 2000 JPY/night. Most students, however, travel either in or out of the country during this time and make their way to the internship location by the following Saturday or Sunday, which is generally the first day you can move into your internship housing. Note for some housing accommodations, you may not be able to move in earlier that the day or two before the scheduled start date.
During this transition you will also have to officially move out of your homestay residence and move into your internship residence, both of which require you to inform the local city/ward office. Your host family will have already assisted you during your first time during the first two weeks of your arrival in the country, and will probably do so again when you move out. Some companies may have a coworker accompany you to the city/ward office, while some students may simply do so on their own free time. Do not forget to go to your city/ward office once again when you move out. These are important processes in Japan.

Internship arrangements vary slightly, but either Stanford or the host company will cover a living stipend (about 250,000 JPY for ten weeks), housing, long distance travel allowance from Kyoto to internship site (areas not in the Kansai region), daily commute between your housing and internship site, luggage delivery up to two pieces from Kyoto to your internship accommodation, and COE application fee for change of visa status (if applicable).

What is not covered by the program includes: meals and living expenses exceeding the stipend amount, travel expenses from your internship site to the airport at the end of your internship, National Health Insurance (required during the internship period), incidental and personal expenses (e.g., pocket wifi, laundry, etc.).

Finally, to celebrate the completion of your internship, you will all be brought together to present on your experience. This will not only be an opportunity for you to learn about each other’s experience, but also a chance to catch up with old friends. This will happen near the end of the internship period in either Kyoto or Tokyo. Transportation to/from and lodging for that night will be provided by the program.

**Business Etiquette**

As many of you have had cultural exposure through Japanese classes, it should not surprise you the level of respect you are expected to show within the workplace. Remember that you are a representative of Stanford University and the study abroad program. Many of these internships require many meetings between both parties to establish.
Tips

Here are a few tips that may be of help during your internship:

• You may be expected to communicate primarily in Japanese, regardless of your language level. While they may not expect near fluency, do work hard to follow along. You will be surprised how far your Japanese can go by the end!
• You may find yourself with more time and independence during the summer without classes and other commitments. Utilize this time to explore your new environment. You may also want to hang out with your coworkers after work and during the weekends.
• Dress appropriately and try to always look kempt. While not all internships will impose a dress code, you want to give off the look that you care about your appearance.
• Avoid habits that you may be more accustomed to in other work settings such as listening to music while doing work, surfing the web or going on Facebook when not idle, and checking your phone for unrelated matters.
• The Japanese have a concept in the working world know as ほう・れん・そう. This comprises the following three ideas: 報告（ほうこく）– reporting, 連絡（れんらく）– informing, 相談（そうだん）– consulting. Some companies may follow this heavily and have this expectation without explicitly letting you know.