

Talon Jack

I had heard many good things about Japan from family and friends who had gone before, so I was excited. I'm glad to say this trip didn't disappoint. Throughout the trip, we learned about Japan's history, food, and culture while also having a lot of fun. First was Niigata, where we visited Ajikata JHS and exchanged performances and learned Kendo and Judo. While in Niigata, we also visited the Shirone Kite Museum. I saw some of the biggest and unique kites I had ever seen, and watched a video on the history and significance of the kite festival. We spent some time at a farm where we experienced traditional mochi rice pounding and got to pick fresh strawberries and cucumbers straight from the fields. Next, we traveled to Tokyo and visited Tokyo Sea Life Park in Edogawa, where we met students from varying schools who took us around the aquarium. As we talked, we got to know each other, and my partners were really cool. Then the homestay. My host family was incredibly kind and hospitable, and they even bought me gifts. They took me to a temple where I got a fortune and an omomori. They made beef sukiyaki for dinner and it was delicious. The next day my homestay student took me to Kanto Daiichi HS, where I interacted with the students and even did Kendo and Calligraphy. Afterwards, we visited the Mayor of Edogawa. In Hiroshima we met students from Hiroshima Kokutaiji High School at the A-Bomb Dome, who we interacted with and learned from. We visited the Peace Memorial Museum and went to Orizuru Tower to fold origami cranes and learn their significance. We also went to the Shukkeien Japanese Garden, viewed Hiroshima Castle, and made our own okonomiyaki for dinner. Lastly, we visited Miyajima Island. We explored the market,

made momiji manju, and branded our own rice paddles. We saw the Itsukushima Shrine and the deer which tried to eat everything. It was a great memorable trip overall.