



My American Life

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"I'm special, because I'm an exchange student. I'm Japanese. I can't speak English well, but I am special." I was kind of thinking this when I left Japan.

On August 27th, 2008, I noticed that I was on an airplane alone. I didn't know anyone around me. There were a lot of Japanese on that plane. After about 10 hours I was in San Francisco airport, and I couldn't see any Japanese persons anymore. I just saw Americans speaking English. I saw the clock and it said 9:35. My next plane to Seattle was at 10:20. I didn't have enough time to do everything, and San Francisco airport was very big. I almost got lost. I missed the plane, and I didn't know what I should do.

Then someone talked to me. It was a guy who looked about 25 years old, and he took me to the gate. I had to call my coordinator, because she was waiting to pick me up. I didn't have a phone, though, and I couldn't find a public phone near my gate. So I decided to ask someone to borrow his phone.



▲My Homestay Family

I saw an old man who was talking on the phone. I was thinking I would ask him when he finished taking on the phone. He finished, but my body didn't work. My hands and my legs were shaking and my mouth was closed. In my mind I could do everything I wanted, but my body would not respond. After about 20 minutes, my hands and my legs stopped shaking. "Can I use your cell phone?" I asked. It was from my mouth. Yes. I did it. The kind man lent me his phone, and I called my coordinator, but she didn't answer the phone. I was shocked. Then it was time to go. I just got on the next plane and went to Seattle. My new life in America started on that day. It was still August 27th.

My host family lives in Marysville. It takes 2 hours by car from Seattle. On the way to Marysville with my coordinator, she talked to me about a lot of things, but I just remember that I said, "America is greener than Japan". I was very tired.

I met my host mother and sisters at a soccer field, because my host sister had a soccer game. After my host sister's soccer game, I rode in a car to our house and my Mom called out to me, but I don't remember a single word that she said. I met my host Dad at home. He was cooking spaghetti, and I thought, "What a kind man! He is doing house work."

September 1st was my first day at school. My school is Marysville Pitchuck High School, which is very big. There are about 2500 students, and of course the buildings are very big, and I needed a map to walk in the school. I'm in the 10th grade, which is called "sophomore year" here in America, and my school has separate, small learning communities since last year. There are various communities: ISC, BioMed, TTA, Pathways, and SFE. I'm in the School for Entrepreneurs (SFE). It's kind of like a business school.

We have 6 periods during a day, and in the 1st semester I took many interesting classes: fitness walking, Japanese class (I was the TA), Studio Art, World Geography, College Algebra, and Language Arts 2. I was surprised that Math is so easy in America. I was in a lower math class, but I talked to a counselor and moved up to College Algebra. The class was kind of hard to do, but it was fun. In the 2nd semester I had Swimming, Japanese class (again, TA), Introduction to Business, Health, College Algebra and



◀Halloween

Language Arts 2. I liked 2nd semester better than the 1st semester. I think that's because I could speak to my friends in English more than in the 1st semester.

When I came to America, I couldn't speak English very well, so I thought everyone would help me, but I was wrong. Some students were very kind, but most of the students didn't care if I could speak English or not. If I didn't speak English, nobody would talk to me.

In order to make more friends, I decided to join the basketball tryouts. At first, I didn't know what "tryouts" meant, because there are no tryouts in Japan. Anyone can join a club if she wants to. But in America, there are three days of tryouts for all kinds of sports. I met two other exchange students in basketball tryouts, but they quit. I tried to do my best. I thought I couldn't make the team because everyone was so good, but I made the sophomore team. I felt that my basketball skills were getting better every day. The season was only three months long, but it was a great experience for me.

Softball tryouts were in March. I enjoyed playing softball, and I made the team. There were 20 students on my team. It was a very big team, but everyone was very friendly. We trained with different partners every day. I liked the softball team more than the basketball team. I made a lot of friends through both sports, and I thought it doesn't matter if I'm Japanese and if I can't speak English extremely well. In sports, everyone is equal.

My American life will be over soon. I can't believe it. "Study abroad!", I want to tell all of my classmates at Nagoya International. That was my dream before I came, and it is my dream still. I am living a rich life. ☺



▲Elephants we saw on safari

interesting. Sri Lankan people really like Japanese people and I met a few Japanese people traveling around Sri Lanka. Japan introduced a lot of technology to Sri Lanka so they have a good relationship.

My sister and I visited Sigiriya and climbed the famous rock. On safari I saw many beautiful elephants really close. We also saw ancient ruins from the 10th century in Polonnaruwa and went to many beautiful beaches.

The food was amazing. I love spicy food and we ate so many delicious curries. Also, Sri Lanka is famous for producing tea and I drink at least three cups a day so I was really happy to be able to get tea wherever I went. Usually when I travel, milk tea is one of the things I miss the most! One of the highlights of the trip was watching dancers from Kandy. They were very expressive and the costumes were gorgeous.

Some people speak English in Sri Lanka because like Belize, it is an ex-British colony. However, many people don't speak English and so we communicated using gestures and pictures and we often gave tips to show our appreciation – tipping is a big part of Sri Lankan culture.

The trip to Sri Lanka was an unforgettable experience and I would love to go back one day to visit some of the places I didn't get a chance to see on this trip. ☺



My Travels in Belize and Sri Lanka

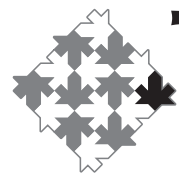
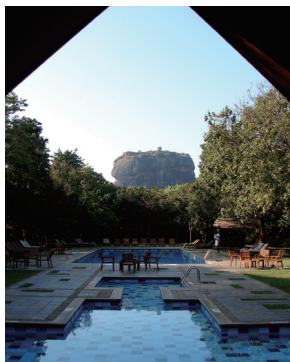
Megan GREEN (UK)
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▲My sister and one of the stunning beaches

I went to Belize in Central America for three months after finishing college (high school) and before I went to university. In England it is common to either work or travel on a "gap year" before going to university. I took part in a volunteer program. I worked for the first five months of my gap year to raise money for my trip. There were about 100 people on the program, including people from Belize, England, Australia and America. I took part in three different projects – building a school, building a hurricane warning system and taking part in an adventure program.

In Belize we slept in hammocks and washed using hand pumps not showers. The Belize climate is hot and a little humid but as it is near the sea there is often a cool breeze. I met many local people who were so friendly and hospitable. They often invited us to their houses for dinner. Their diet consists mainly of refried beans, rice and chicken (which they raise and kill themselves). Although English is the official language of Belize



▲TULAY PROJECT「子どもがつくる新しい地球のカタチ」に参加。(中面特集)

[テクノロジーは国際社会に必要か]

革 新たなテクノロジーが世に出るたびに、大げさも言える議論が沸き上がる。これで世界が平和になると主張する者がいれば、一方で、それがわれわれの社会的関係を破壊し、墮落に導くのではないかと恐れ始める者もある。テクノロジーが諸刃の剣であり、人間がテクノロジーの恩恵を享受しているがゆえに、破壊への下降線を辿っているとすれば、両者の論点は時間の隔たりがあるにせよ正しいことになるのかもしれない。

テクノロジー (Technology) という単語は2つのギリシャ語から成り立っている。芸術や方法を意味する「Techne」と、言語や知識を意味する「Logos」である。つまり、テクノロジーとは、人間が何かをより良く行う方法を知識などによって具現化するという意味の語である。広い意味でこの語に値する事柄を探せば、人間が初めて使用したテクノロジーは棍

棒だろう(映画「2001年宇宙の旅」の冒頭を思い起こしてほしい)。猿人や原人が手にした木や骨がその起源とされており、加工や強化が行われて発展し、柄頭を備えたメイスなどが生まれたという。その後、何千年もの時間をかけて発展したテクノロジーは、今や地球外の惑星探索まで可能にしている。しかしながら、われわれはテクノロジーの発展がもたらした戦争や公害などを目の当たりにして、テクノロジーがただちに理想郷を実現させるとはもはや信じていない。それなのにテクノロジーをさらに発展させ、さらなるイノベーションを起こすことで世界はより良い場所になるとどこかで期待している。何故なのだろう。そもそもテクノロジーの発展は必要なのだろうか。

われわれの生きている国際社会は、人口問題、食料問題、環境問題など、途方もない課題にすでに疲弊している。確かなことは、これらの難題に立ち向かう時、われ

われはテクノロジーを使用する覚悟があるということだ。テクノロジーは、増え続ける世界の人口に食料と住居と仕事を配分することを可能にしている。また、温暖化などの環境問題に取り組み際には、目標値を達成するための努力を惜しまない。将来にわたってテクノロジーは国際社会の忠実な公僕として働くだろう。

さらに、国際社会が自然界の1つの仕組みであるとも考えてみよう。国際社会に壊滅的な被害を与えるエネルギーギッシュな自然界はわれわれの脅威である。本性をなかなか見せない自然界を深層心理で恐れているとすれば厄介だ。よそよそしい自然界との協調を表舞台で謳いながら、自然界を自由にコントロールできる世界に作り変えようとわれわれが無意識に行動しているとすれば、もはやテクノロジーを手放す勇気などないだろう。だからこそ、テクノロジーの発展を夢みることで、われわれ人間はようやく安眠できるのかもしれない。☺