

Kurashiki Student Exchange 2002

By Iain Collis

I wanted to go to Japan because it has and was always a dream of mine, I wanted to meet the people, take in the culture, and now I've been and I must say, I am not disappointed. Japan is all I dreamed it would be. A country with nice people and a good society. It has also been my dream that for when im older for me to live in Japan, and after the impression Kurashiki made on me I am going to live in Kurashiki.

I'd like to thank the council for making it so we could go but mainly Pip and Richard. They made sure everything was organised, even helped Michael when he lost his passport. They helped us a lot. They were there to make sure that everyone was organised and they thought and planed out everything on this trip perfectly. They gave the support, which was needed for a trip overseas like this one.

I felt very comfortable wearing the uniform which we all decided on. And Pip and Richard were right and I am still wearing it. It was really comfortable and did look good, and we stood out in the crowd.

One thing which I disliked about the trip was the flights, I mean sure there was movies and people to talk to, but I mean 11 hours. On the way back didn't seem as long luckily.

Japan was the best experience I've had in my life. The people, the culture, the food, the country itself. It was all-great. I had a really good time. It didn't matter that I was missing the school holidays. I am very grateful that you took me onboard as part of the team. I feel that everyone had a good time.

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My home stay family were some of the nicest people I have ever met. I would go back to stay with them anytime. They have also said that anytime I want to come back they're willing to let me stay with their family. It made family life a bit easier for me because quite a few of the family members spoke English, the father spoke a little, the mother spoke fluent, the elder sister was studying English. And to top it off there was another person staying. Her name was Sunna and she came from Australia. It made it easy with her around because although I could understand some of what they were saying if I couldn't she would translate for me. It seemed to be that nearly every person on the team lived in a house where some one spoke English (luckily for us).

School was quite scary actually, I mean sure the kids are nice and so are the teachers, but I found it a little hard getting used to the fact that about 300 girls would be following you saying "HI!!" I couldn't really understand a word in most of the classes, except for English. My AET, Jennifer was really nice; she took me for 1 period everyday I was at

school. In one of the periods we went to the schools Tatami room, and I learned how to play the Shyukuhachi which is an old Japanese flute made out of bamboo.

I had the most enjoyable time I could EVER have in Japan. I don't think it could have been better or that we could have had a better team. I'd like to thank the council once again for inviting me on this trip. It was an experience I will never forget. I will not forget Kurashiki or the hospitality of its people. And it wont be too long till im back there. To live.

Your sincerely

Iain Collis