

**Essay
by
Sandy Ley**

The three weeks I spent in Japan were amazing. It all started off with a long flight to Tokyo, a transfer to Osaka, and being picked up by Kono-san. Having never been to the country before, I was amazed by all the sights, sounds, and smells of the city. I lived with the generous Imai family and their two children.

Everyday I would wake up to a home-cooked breakfast and then venture out to explore Osaka. Gabriel and I visited famous landmarks, such as the Kaiyukan, the Osaka Dome, and the Umeda Sky Building, my personal favorite. With the accompaniment of our wonderful host parents, we dined on interesting yakitori meats, and feasted on an assortment of deep-fried foods.

On certain days, Gabriel and I were able to venture outside of the city and explore Kobe, Kyoto, or Nara. I found Nara to be the most exciting. I loved seeing all the traditional temples and houses, and the deer were very intriguing. I was very sad to leave our wonderful host city, especially after experiencing the kindness and hospitality of Japan. Gabriel and I ended our trip with a visit to a candy factory and a long plane ride home. I will never forget the fun times I had or the people I met. Japan was one of the most fantastic experiences of my life, and I hope to go back one day.