

Cleanliness of Osaka, Japan

2025 student Ambassador

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When I spent three weeks in Osaka, Japan, I was amazed by how clean and organized the city appeared. From the train stations to the quiet backstreets, there was a strong sense of care for the environment. However, I also learned that this cleanliness did not mean perfection. Like any large city, Osaka has its busy areas where trash can pile up, especially after big events or late at night. Still, what stood out most to me was how quickly people worked together to clean and maintain their surroundings. I am truly thankful for the opportunity to have studied and lived there for those three weeks because it helped me understand how cleanliness reflects both personal responsibility and community effort.

On my first day in Osaka, I was surprised by how neat the city looked. The sidewalks were swept, the air felt fresh, and the train stations were well maintained. What shocked me most was that I rarely saw public trash cans, yet there was barely any litter. I soon learned that people in Japan often take their trash home instead of throwing it away in public. It wasn't that Osaka was magically clean; it was that its people were taught to be responsible for their own waste. Still, there were moments when I saw signs of the city's human side. After busy nights in Dotonbori, I noticed a bit of trash left behind, but by the next morning, cleaning crews and even volunteers had already cleared the area. That dedication impressed me even more than the clean streets. Cleanliness in Osaka isn't automatic; it's a constant team effort that shows how much people care about their city.

While attending school in Osaka, I saw how this sense of cleanliness started early. Every day before classes, the students helped clean their classrooms—sweeping the floors, wiping desks, and organizing supplies. There were no janitors doing these daily tasks; it was the students themselves. Participating in this routine made me realize that cleanliness in Japan isn't just about appearances—it's a value that is taught and shared. At the same time, I saw that people weren't perfect. Sometimes we missed spots or didn't sweep everything completely, but what mattered was the attitude. Everyone tried, and that consistent effort made the difference. In my own life, I had never experienced such teamwork for something as simple as cleaning, and it made me see how small actions can build a respectful community.

During my stay, my research focused on cleanliness in Osaka, but my learning went far beyond just observation. I started paying attention to how the city balances modern life with keeping things tidy. For example, in crowded subways, people waited in organized lines and didn't eat or drink, which helped keep public transportation clean. Parks and public spaces had signs reminding visitors to sort recyclables correctly. Even with all the traffic and tourism, most areas remained impressively clean because people respected shared spaces. Still, Osaka was not spotless everywhere. In entertainment districts like Namba or Tennoji, I noticed that after weekends the streets could get messy before dawn cleaning began. These moments showed me that every city faces challenges when it comes to waste and cleanliness. What made Osaka stand out wasn't that it avoided messes completely, but that it handled them efficiently and respectfully.

Outside of class, I spent time exploring Osaka with the friends I made at school. Together we visited historical landmarks like Osaka Castle and the Osaka Museum of History. These places were not only beautiful but also well cared for. I noticed that people visiting temples and shrines

behaved respectfully—removing their shoes when needed, keeping noise down, and never leaving trash behind. We also explored busier spots like Dotonbori and Shinsekai, which showed a different side of Osaka. These areas were filled with bright lights, food stalls, and crowds. Sometimes a little litter appeared near food stands or riverbanks, but what impressed me was how quickly it was picked up. Street vendors cleaned up their areas at the end of the night. Traveling with friends through these different neighborhoods helped me see how balance works in a big city and how people can enjoy themselves while still caring about keeping their city beautiful.

Reflecting on my time in Osaka, I feel grateful not only for the experiences I had but also for what I learned about personal and social responsibility. Cleanliness isn't about perfection; it's about participation. Everyone plays a part—whether it's picking up after themselves, sorting trash correctly, or cleaning their classroom at school. Living there taught me that being clean doesn't just mean having spotless streets; it means having respect for others and for your environment. It also made me realize that every community can be cleaner if people share the same mindset. I took that lesson home with me and now find myself more mindful of how I treat public spaces.

My three-week stay in Osaka, Japan, changed how I see the connection between people and their environment. The city's cleanliness impressed me not because it was perfect, but because it was cared for. There were moments when I saw trash or clutter, but those moments only reminded me how hard people work to maintain order and pride in their community. I am thankful for the opportunity to have studied there, made friends, and learned lessons that go beyond the classroom. Osaka showed me that cleanliness isn't about having a flawless city—it's about having people who care enough to make it better every day. If I could get the chance to do this again, I would do it in the blink of an eye!!!