

Be myself

It has been almost two months since I came in U.S. The reason why I came to the U.S. was I was interested in the American culture and environment, and I wanted to meet a lot of people in the U.S. and experience the cultures. The cultural differences between American culture and Japanese culture led me to discover my new self, and I have more confidence now that I'm in the U.S. than I was in Japan. When I'm in the U.S., I don't have to worry about things that I used to worry about in Japan. One thing that is completely different about living in the U.S. compared to Japan is the "people". For example, it's not just the appearance, the energies people have, their way of thinking, and the words they use.

What image do you have of Japanese people? Polite? Humble? Shy? Yes, these are true. We have these characteristics. These kinds of characteristics make it difficult to express ourselves. For instance, it's difficult to talk to strangers casually in Japan because they may think you're strange or ignore me. However, American people don't care about talking to strangers. When I was in the supermarket, a stranger suddenly told me out loud "You are so pretty!". As I looked at her then, "is it me? or am I wrong?" because I couldn't understand what was going on. Then she pointed at me and said, "You!" I could only say just "Thank you!" and I was so surprised by the suddenness of the situation that I ran away, but I felt very happy. I thought this is a good thing and I felt I wanted to be able to say it. From this day, I decided to tell others what I thought was good for them. It makes me feel good and it can

make other person feel good, so I want to bring this culture back to Japan.

The second reason I'm feeling more confident is that I can wear what I want. Honestly, when I was in Japan, I couldn't wear what I wanted to wear. The reason why I couldn't wear is that Japanese people tend to be more concerned about how they look. It's more likely to be concerned about their appearance among young people. This tendency is related to the influence of SNS and media. Therefore, I compared myself with stylish and beautiful people, and had negative thoughts such as, "I can't wear skirts because my legs are fat." Moreover, I was concerned about what other people think of me. For instance, if I wear revealing clothes like camisole, sports bra, leggings, short skirts, it could lead to being molested. That's why my family restricted me from wearing them. In contrast, if I'm in the U.S., I can wear whatever I want without worrying about people's attention because they don't care what I look like or how I dress. When I came to the U.S., American women were not afraid to walk around outside in short pants and sports bra in summer, and then I was very surprised and at the same time envious of them. As time went on, I was influenced by these women. Thus, I could find what I want to wear, and I could wear what I wanted. In addition, I could accept my body. I no longer think "I don't care about my body", rather than thinking "this part is wrong about my body." This experience has improved my self-esteem.

I really like to speak in English because it's more stress-free than Japanese. I think English is a direct language and Japanese is an indirect language. Sometimes it is necessary to hide

one's true feelings, read the atmosphere, and follow the other person's opinion when I speak in Japanese. In addition, I can speak words in English that I would not use in Japanese. For example, "Have a good day", such nice phrase isn't used in Japan. I had never used this phrase before I came here, so I was confused how to respond to it. This phrase makes me feel good because it is a phrase that I'm happy to hear and happy to say it. I feel that there are many beautiful words in English. I also thought it was wonderful that people use them on daily life. When I go back to Japan, I will try to express my love more directly to my family and friends.

In conclusion, I could make new discoveries from my two months in the U.S. from the cultural differences between the U.S. and Japan. I'm attracted to the straightforward character of American people because it allows me to express ourselves better. I also feel that I can be myself in the U.S, but I must go back to Japan, so I would like to be myself in Japan. I love America.