

Class of '55 Award Thank You Letter

Rebecca Hennesy

SOC 256-8: Culture, Gender, and Public Policy in Japan

Alumni of the Class of '55,

I recently returned from my study abroad trip to Japan, and it is difficult to put in to words how fortunate and honored I feel to have been given this opportunity. Going to Japan is something that I had imagined doing, but that I had never believed would really happen until Cornell College, and the Class of '55 Award, made it possible.

I journeyed to the “Land of the Rising Sun” with the Culture, Gender, and Public Policy class headed by sociology professor Erin Davis. Over the course of three weeks, we explored the cities of Kyoto, Tokyo, Hiroshima, and more; we meditated in Buddhist temples, and walked along the paths of ancient Shinto shrines; we tried new foods; we travelled the crowded trains and subways; we hiked Mount Misen on the island of Miyajima. We experienced another culture, in ways that would have been impossible from our Iowa campus, and we have learned to see our own culture from a new perspective. Best of all, however, were the friends we made. Not only did our class connect with the Japanese students of Kyoto Seika University; we also formed lifelong bonds within our own group. I do not hesitate to say that the strangers with whom I began this journey to Japan have become some of my closest friends.

I feel proud of my Cornell College study abroad experience. First, I am proud of myself for taking the opportunity and giving it my all, despite the fears and hesitations that could have held me back. I have become more confident in myself because I have risen to

this occasion. However, I am also proud of my school, and the alumni of my school, for making trips like this possible for students like me. My studying in Japan would never have happened without the effort, support, and generosity of those people who have taken it upon themselves to help experiences like mine happen. Therefore, for myself and for all the other students who have been aided similarly, I offer my most heartfelt thanks for the Class of '55 Award.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Hennesy  
Cornell College Class of 2014