

サラ・ステイヴンズ

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### Ise and Japan Study Program 2018

I learned about this study program through my professor who recommended it for me last year. Before coming I did not know a lot about the content of the program except for the information on the application website and the titles of classes on the schedule. It was the location that appealed to me the most. Ise was one of those places that I had marked in my guide book for my first trip to Japan since I remembered reading about “The heart of Japan” during history classes, but for different reasons had not got the chance to visit. As I had already done exchange studies in Sapporo and Osaka, and traveled to major cities as a tourist, I was also looking forward to getting to know life in a smaller city. Three weeks is a good time to get in to a feeling of a place.

The study program was build up on three main parts, classes, field studies and hands on experiences. This was very well planned as we would start off with a lecture about a certain topic or place, then, in the afternoon or the following day we would visit this place, or even get to experience it ourselves. The Shinto ritual is one example of this. The many different lecturers also provided interesting perspectives as they would present aspects of Shinto or Ise in very different ways.

I was many times surprised and humbled as to how many people from various background came together to make this program the amazing experience as it turned out to be. The Kogakkan University staff, Ise City staff, priests, owners and workers of the places we visited and all the volunteers. It made me very happy to see how warmly everyone spoke of their city. This is something moved me and I hope that I can take this experience and pass it forward when visitors come to Gothenburg. Understanding what Ise means for the people living there gives the slogan “The heart of Japan” a deeper meaning. For me, this interaction with so many interesting people was perhaps the most valuable part of this study program.

There was only one part of the program that I did not appreciate so much, visiting Ise Sea Paradise. For the same reasons that I am weary about visiting zoos and aquariums at home in Sweden I worried about what conditions the animals would be living in when I read about where we were going. Unfortunately, my suspicions were justified and being there made me quite uncomfortable. Many of the enclosures were too small for that animals to move at all, many even looked sick, children were running around yelling and making the environment very stressful. It was not the type of establishment that I would like to support. Luckily, Meotoiwa was not far away and I could spend the free time taking photos there instead, making the day a success in the end anyway, as I had had a very good time making kamaboko and talking with citizens of Ise.

For future study programs, my main suggestion would be to provide some of the content, for example power point slides or some of the reading material, in advance. That way it would be possible to look through the content and prepare for classes a little better. Even though one of the requirements were to be able to follow classes in Japanese, when going so deep into a subject as Shinto as we did, there are many expressions and concepts that are foreign. As it is a very intense course, any preparations that could be done before classes would be very helpful to take in more of what is said during class, and to be able to participate better in discussions at the end.

I would have liked to have time to walk around more and photographing. During the classes we learned about many places that seemed interesting that I wanted to visit. To accommodate all that

however, this study program would have had to be extended at least a couple of months. So, for me, it is a motivation to go back and explore more soon again.

As I mentioned during the program, it is not easy to point out one or two favorite parts of this study program as each element was well connected to the rest making it one single experience rather than several small ones. The Ise and Japan Study Program is a rare opportunity that I think anyone studying Japanese and has any interest in Japanese culture, religion or history should apply for. It was three very intense weeks and I will need some time to process all my experiences, lecture notes, books, handouts and photos, but I know that what I have learned during this program I will take with me through life in many ways.

### 伊勢と日本スタディープログラム2018

私はこのプログラムについて、私の日本語の先生から聞きました。行く前にあまりプログラムについて知りませんでした。皇学館大学のホームページで読んで、興味を持ちました。私はこれまでの日本歴史の授業で、伊勢は「日本のこころ」と学んでいました。初めて日本を訪れた際、伊勢についての興味を持っていましたが、足を運ぶことができませんでした。その後、留学した時も大きな都市（大阪と札幌）だったので、今回小さな町で勉強するのをとても楽しみにしていました。

プログラムは3構成に分かれていました。講義・体験型講義・フィールド・スタディで、それぞれが連動していました。講義のすぐ後にその場所を実際に訪ねるので、講義で学んだことがよく理解できました。

私は、様々な国からそれぞれの境遇を持った人々がこのプログラムを体験することに集まったことに驚きました。皇学館大学の先生やスタッフ、学生サポーター、伊勢市のスタッフ、神社の関係者、見学先の職員、そして伊勢市民のすべてが何かを語っていた時、それはいつも温かい語り口で、非常に嬉しく思いました。伊勢が「日本のこころ」と呼ばれていることを何となく実感できました。私はこのような人々と対話できることがこのプログラムの一番の魅力だと思います。

今後のスタディープログラムのために、私は参加者がプログラムの前に事前学習することを提案します。参加者は皆日本語で授業を受けられるのですが、神道の講義には知らない言葉がたくさん出るので、事前に書籍等で学んでおいた方がもっと理解が深まるように思います。

伊勢と日本スタディープログラムは日本について研究する人々や、歴史や神道について興味を持つ人々には良い経験だと思います。この3週間は非常に忙しくて、すべての経験、すなわち撮影した写真、学んだこと、本、講義ノートを整理することには時間がかかると思いますが、このプログラムに参加できたことは私の大切な思い出になりました。以上