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Report on the “Ise and Japan” Study Program

When I applied for the Ise and Japan Study Program at Kogakkan University, I wanted to learn about the famous Ise Grand Shrine, which I had studied in an introductory Japanese art history class. The professor had assigned one or two articles about the Shrine early in the quarter, and I was intrigued by the cycle of rebuilding that restarts every twenty years. In addition, I had hoped to learn about Shinto, on which few classes are offered. Although I study Japanese printed illustrated books from the nineteenth century, I wanted to attend the program because I believed that the knowledge I would gain could help me in the future, when I will hopefully be working at an art museum.

During these past three weeks, I not only had the opportunity to see and learn about the Ise Grand Shrine, but also to experience Ise from different perspectives. Every day, the lectures grew geographically in scope: from the Inner and Outer Shrines, to the towns around them that were built upon tourism, to industrial towns that formed around ship-building, and to Nara and Kyoto where offerings were created. Every day, our understanding of Ise grew from the Shrine outward. As an art historian, I particularly enjoyed learning about the architecture of Ise and discussing the preparation procedures for the rebuilding of the shrines with the head of the Shrine workshop. At Yasaka Shrine in Kyoto, we were also able to see a Buddhist sculpture behind the altar for kami, as well as a screen painted by Maruyama Ōkyo, which is rarely exhibited.

Not everything we saw was perpetually new like the Shrines. In the ship-building towns of Ōminato and Kamiyashiro, our elderly guides pointed out the inns that once housed countless travelers who had arrived in Ise by sea, and the empty lots where houses once stood. We visited the last functioning shipyard and the last workshop making L-shaped nails for ship-building, fully aware that in a few years they might no longer be there.

I am truly grateful that I had the opportunity to participate in this program. Neither Shinto nor Ise are directly related to my dissertation project, but the program instilled in me a desire to possibly pursue a topic on Ise in the future. Moreover, I was able to form invaluable relationships with professors, fellow students, students at Kogakkan University, and locals. Sometimes we were serious, sometimes we were silly; the intensive three weeks allowed us

to develop a strong bond through shared experiences. Though we have parted ways, I hope to continue to maintain contact with the friends I made at Ise.

The Ise and Japan Study Program is a wonderful program that not only teaches what the Ise Shrine is about, but also fully immerses participants in the history and culture of Ise itself.

「伊勢」と日本スタディプログラムに参加して学んだことは数え切れないほどあり、大変貴重な経験をさせていただきました。私は日本美術史を専攻しており、十九世紀の日本の版本を研究しています。このスタディプログラムに興味を持ったきっかけは、まだ学部生だったころ、初めての日本美術史の授業で伊勢神宮が日本の伝統的な建築様式の一例として挙げられていたことを覚えていたからです。

伊勢ではとても充実した三週間を過ごしました。毎日授業があり、特に二週目はほぼ毎日フィールド・スタディで歩き回り、ハードなスケジュールに疲れ切ってしまうこともありました。しかし、終わって振り返ってみると、毎日どこかへ行って、時間を有効に使ったから、たくさんものを見て、たくさんの人と触れ合うことができたことに気づかされました。私の中で一番印象に残った場所は神社と大湊でした。伊勢神宮の「常若」とは対照的に、神社と大湊は空き地や空き家が多く、以前の姿とは比べものにならないくらい変わっていますが、それでも地域活性化のために励む人々に心を打たれました。

伊勢も神道も私の博士論文には直接的な関係はありませんが、このプログラムのおかげで伊勢についてもっと調べてみたいという意欲に掻き立てられました。皇學館大学のスタッフや先生方、伊勢市の産業観光部観光誘客課の皆さま、そして現地の人々に支えられて伊勢で過ごした三週間を一生忘れることはありません。このプログラムに参加できたことを光榮に思います。心より感謝申し上げます。 以上