



Billy

From Burlington Lakeshore to Japan

"I'm treated like a movie star here"

日本だいすき

It's been the fastest four months of my life.

Literally, the time change means my month ended half a day earlier than it ever has before. But that's beside the point, time is flying by faster than my host dad confronted with a charter of gender equality (more on this later)! The Rotarians said that my youth exchange would be over before I knew it, and I'm honestly hoping the rest of the year slows down.

I've been living with the Chadani~san's since I walked off the plane wearing my red blazer (because I didn't stand out enough) and clutching my phrasebook for dear life.

They are honestly the best first host family I could ask for, they speak a total of three English phrases: "hello", "thank you" and "BILLY WAKE UP!" This forced me to learn Japanese quickly (and slightly less apathetic sleeping habits') within the first month I could read and write.

Hiragana and Katakana (two alphabets that serve the exact same purpose but are completely different) and after 3 months I was becoming fluent, at 4 months I'm very proud to say *ぼくの にほんご だいじょうぶ です* (I speak Japanese!).

The Chadani~san's are two 70 something year olds with an astute sense of Japanese value, this is both good, and bad. The good part is my host dad's dislike of anything not done the "way of the Japanese" immersed me fully into the old (albeit somewhat odd) traditions of *日本*. Unfortunately the "way of the Japanese" includes EXTREME sexism, somewhere between shouting "more rice" and "this food is not fit for sasuke (the cat)" I

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lost it and told my host dad that it's not ok to treat his wife like that. Bad idea, baaadddd idea, if you're an outbound reading this DON'T BE A HERO! Seriously, not good, I was yelled at for a solid 30 minutes in rapid Japanese (and was forced to imagine the worst when I didn't understand half of it) but, the next day all was forgiven, lesson learned, *ここは日本です* (this is Japan).

Other than that, Japan is amazing, I honestly couldn't have been sent to a better country to go on exchange, unlike most countries, you aren't an exchange student, you're THE exchange student. I'm treated like a movie star here, pictures get taken of me on the train by school girls who forget to turn off the *taking picture light* on their cell phones. It's amazing, school is a place where I ENJOY being (odd concept), everything that could go well, has.

I switch host families in a week and I will be rather sad to be leaving the people I know and trust, but at the same time, I get a 16 year old host sister at my next family. If there was one thing to change about the Chadani's I would give them children my age, I'm dying to have someone my age at home and I think it is going to be great!

Here is where I run out of things to call amazing and boast about, until next time, *oyasumi nasai* (by far the best term I have learned, it's a combination of goodbye, goodnight and talk to you soon).

From the other side of the world,

Billy

Japan