

Sergianni Jennings
Bowdoin Language Study Award Essay

I learned a lot in the 8-weeks I spent studying Japanese at the Middlebury Language School. I was placed into ~~Study~~ intermediate-level class and I got about how to say a basic

phrase every time I spoke. This was a challenge I had never faced before. However, The Middlebury Language School creates an environment where mistakes are welcomed and not judged. Everyone in the program was also incredibly patient with each other. I truly believe I made life-long friends during the program. During the 8-weeks my friends and I invented “

” or “Reward Friday.” “Reward Friday” occurred every week and challenged us to explore what we could do in Middlebury, Vermont. We had worked hard the whole week, so we deserved to do something fun on Friday. One Friday we went to get tea from Stone Leaf

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final report

project I compared the movie “I Graduated But...” to modern Japan. “I

Graduated But...” is a 1929 Japanese movie written and directed by Ozu Yasujiro. The film is only 10 minutes long, and it depicts the life of a Japanese man who has graduated college and is trying to find a job. While he looks for a job, he is offered a receptionist position, however, he insists that since he graduated from college he deserves a better job. Unfortunately, he is given no other choice but to take the receptionist position. His new boss’ last words to him in the film are “You have finally realized the reality of life.” After discovering this film I was inspired by the relationship the 1929 movie had with the meaning of college and finding a job in current, 21st century Japan. In my report I studied the “worker ant” lifestyle of many Japanese salarymen, who are valued for their skill and not their personal qualities. I also spent a lot of time researching how Japanese students perceive college in Japan. Many had responded with “College

is a waste of time here,” which resonated with the movie’s plot as well. It was interesting to learn how Japan has changed so much and so little since the 1920s. Writing this entire report in Japanese also taught me a lot. I learned how to articulate certain sentences better and I remember going over specific sentences that make sense with English in mind, but can not be written in Japanese. I think the biggest challenge was trying to write an essay in Japanese without using my English writing skills. In many ways, it felt like learning how to write an essay all over again. I am so grateful I was given the opportunity to attend the Language School and what I learned in only 8-weeks will definitely help me as I continue to pursue fluency in Japanese.