

Itadakimasu!!!!

いただきます

My adventures in Japan have inspired me
To appreciate everything I have in spite of me
Whether feeling disadvantaged or a in current state of agony
Because there is someone always less off

I've learned that my food is beyond the plate in front of me
It had a life, a story, that is beyond my appetite.
It saw things, probably came from a family, had people take care of it

And now, it's my meal
So a meal is beyond hunger
When I look at my meal now I can't help but ponder
The journey it went through
All who have touched it
It's a path that makes meals more intimate

In the past
A grain of rice left
In a bowl that
I myself portioned out to be able to finish
Was just a grain of rice
It had no meaning

What I assumed has a word for it
DISRESPECT

How dare I make a journey meaningless
How dare I decide it unworthy
How dare I be so wasteful

A grain of rice turns into two
Two turns into six
Six turns into more and
Its accumulation throughout time turns into
A meal for a starving nation

I've learned that something as common as a garbage can
Can make such a difference in my daily life
Not only were these rare items keeping the streets of Japan free
from plastic bandits who try to tarnish the clean vistas
These cylinder jewels made ME think twice about buying fatty foods that were wrapped in plastic
And how the plastic would need to be thrown out
I now questioned my hunger and thirst because
Was I willing to hold their containers for the rest of the day?
Most of the time I wasn't



Japan gave me so much

Precious beyond the adventures were the people
My group, so diverse
My leader, a surprise everyday
From Suguru, to the chefs, to the lecture instructors, to the monks,
to the last most beautiful week at Ueno
and the beautiful experiences with this new family



Volunteering was more fun than ever
I barely noticed the weather
(the land of the HOT rising sun)
Canoeing still replays in my head
Making me wish I never left
Moments that can never be replaced
Forever a film that runs on a continuous loop in my mind

Like a flower, I've grown from the root of me,
Japan watered me
Nourished me
Hit me with sunlight... verryyy hot sunlight
And through sweat and effort I grew into something new

I blossomed into a person who knows more
Is conscious of more
Can contribute more
Teach more
And for that,
I give all my thanks to The Student Diplomacy Corps

To all the people that helped make this possible
From a humble gal like myself
As they would say in Japan

Gochisōsamadeshita!!!!

ごちそうさまでした

Student Diplomacy Corps 2017
Japan Sushi Dreams & Sustainability
Hawa Gikineh – Bronx, New York