**Please tell us your most significant international experience to date**

**The word limit is 300, please help shorten the essay.**

The cultural shock I experienced in Kyoto during my trip in Japan was probably one of the most eye-opening experience for me. During a trip with consistently excellent customer service, getting a head and shoulder massage with complimentary snacks and drinks during a haircut in a hair salon in a mall was the epitome of the trip. As a foreigner who can’t speak Japanese, it was very difficult to navigate around the city, so we took a taxi and showed him the destination which is a restaurant located in Gion. The taxi driver took the initiative to call the restaurant to ask for the exact location as it is common to have many restaurants with sign written in Kanji cluttered on one street. He brought us to that street and stopped his cab and went out with us to look for the place and make sure that we went in to the right restaurant. This is my first time receiving such impeccable service. However, the most significant experience happened when I was queuing for a restaurant when a customer was yelling at the staff for giving the wrong pocket change. For a country with excellent service, you would have thought that one small mistake would have been tolerated. The most baffling part, was that none of the other customer seemed bothered with the incident. It bothered me until I asked my Japanese friend about it. It turns out excellent customer service does not mean customers reciprocate the kind treatment. As I found out, Japanese staffs are polite because they are expected to. This is the first time I learnt the difference between being polite, and friendly. On the other hand, Japanese customers can treat staffs however they like because they are the customers. In my country, we have a saying that customer is king, but in Japan, they took it on a whole another level. The Japanese generally believes this culture is one of the causes for high depression and suicide rate within the Japanese society. To take it further, this system also works in japanese corporates where managers and subordinates have the same dynamic relationships as customer-staff. This means managers get to treat subordinates like customer treats Japanese staff. This contrasts to the western society where the philosophy ‘all human has equal value’ is believed widely despite their backgrounds, positions, or job. This trip to Japan has opened my eyes that the politeness in Japan has masked the pressure put on its workers. I truly admired their respectfulness and dedication at work which is something that I wish are adopted to an extent in Indonesia. On the contrary, that the lack of positive reinforcement and respect for subordinates are deep-seated issues that needs addressing. That day, I realized that relationship between subordinate and manager or strangers in a café, can have bigger and lasting effects on the society as a whole. From that day onwards, I learnt that the small ways we treat people around us, might not mean much to us, but it affects them and the place we live in.