No report, photo, or video can encapsulate the profundity of my joy and gratification experienced throughout my week's stay in Osaka. The MO Award is the ultimate culmination of my ongoing efforts and passion in Japanese studies. If there's one takeaway, it is that this program has bestowed me with more cultural understanding, mouthwatering food, historical insight, improvement in Japanese fluency, interpersonal communication skills, and emotional nourishment than anyone can expect from one week of experiences.

I found my supervisor and guide, Mr Kadoyama, to be pleasantly amicable, reliable, and genuine. We learn a lot about someone by the way they speak and behave, and I felt honoured to have Mr Kadoyama be my supervisor. It was thanks to Mr Kadoyama that I learned as much as I did about Japanese society, cultural knowledge, and history.

Another cornerstone of my adventure is my benevolent host family. I was honoured to receive the warmest welcome at their home, and was able to settle down promptly thanks to their friendly open-mindedness and gentleness. With the delicious meals and fulfilling conversations, I truly didn't want to leave. They are an absolute delight to be around and I can't wait to visit them one day. On my last day, they accompanied me to Nara Park where I nourished my inner child by feeding and patting countless deers. We also visited Toudaiji temple with the colossal buddha statue, where I wriggled my way through a narrow crevice through a special wooden pillar! It's believed that whoever successfully wriggles through will have a successful and peaceful year, so I was ecstatic when I found myself on the other side. Although it was only a week, I made months worth of cherished memories and I felt years wiser from our meaningful discussions at the dinner table. Our communication during daily interactions went without a hitch and by the end of the week, I had begun to feel as if I was their child.

The daily activities planned by the Osaka City Council were culturally, socially, and intellectually nourishing. I received the privilege of having a formal meeting with three esteemed members of the Osaka City Council, and was absolutely honoured to be able to access a room reserved for international VIPs. I heard that the Mayor of Melbourne had been in such a room last year during his visit. Although it was slightly daunting, I was reassured to realise that they are keen to know more about me as well. That meeting alone gave me some insight as to the responsibilities of a position in international diplomacy. By the end of it, I was disappointed that it was over because I had been thoroughly enjoying our conversation. The heartwarming final greetings and receiving of a gift from the three members of parliament became the cherry on top.

My invitation to visit Namiyoke Elementary School left me with lifelong memories. After a warm welcome and a gift by the compassionate school principal, Mr Ishii, I was invited to participate in a calligraphy lesson with year four students. I couldn't contain my excitement and was full of smiles from

start to end because I was reliving my childhood, and because I've never tried my hand at calligraphy. I was allocated alongside a fellow student in front of a compact desk on top of a chair I was happy to fit into. As someone who understands the significance of nourishing one's inner child as an adult, I cannot describe the extreme glee, gratitude, and wonder I was experiencing. I felt encouraged by the students who praised the quality of my strokes despite it being my first time. Afterwards, I was invited to an English class. It was pure nostalgia. To my pleasant surprise, one of them asked, "after arriving in Japan, have there been any things that you found surprising?". I was impressed. Witnessing the politeness and precocious maturity of the students there allowed me to glean insight as to the stable foundational fabric of Japanese society, and how it became a renowned country symbolic of respect, diligence, honour, self-sufficiency, and customer loyalty today. In that single afternoon, I was able to rediscover the pure joy of childhood as an adult. Despite the visit being a brief few hours, I was honoured to visit a school with such promising students.

Out of my visits to the various cultural establishments, my favourites would have to be Osaka Castle, where I stayed for a whopping 5.5 hours, and the Osaka Museum of Housing and Living, where I got a glimpse into the civilian lifestyles and architectural transitions throughout the Edo and Meiji periods. My interest in Japanese history originated years ago, and I was already aware of prominent generals and shogun like Nobunaga, Hideyoshi, Ieyasu, Shingen, and Yukimura. Yet being able to be there in person and comprehensively learn about the historical events between the Toyotomi camp and the Tokugawa camp brought about a cathartic quench of my thirst for the knowledge and lessons that come from studying their history. From Toyotomi Hideyoshi's grandest milestones and achievements, his key retainers, the opposition from the east, the most decisive battles, the most tragic days, to Hideyoshi's extended family tree, I left Osaka Castle with precious lessons in brotherhood, loyalty, personal relationships, attitudes to leadership, hierarchical systems, and the intertwined nature of diligence, luck, and success depicted in Hideyoshi's rise from the bottom of the social ladder. I'm sure it's no exaggeration to say that I quenched my hunger and thirst with knowledge instead of food for most of that day.

This report thus far is in no way comprehensive. My MO program had been a week of lifelong memories, and I wouldn't trade those eventful days for anything. I occasionally vividly recall my senses, emotions, and thoughts during my time there, and am full of excitement for all future recipients of the MO Award, who I'm sure will also feel the overwhelming catharsis of jubilance, exhilaration, and satisfaction during their time in Japan.