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Experiences in America

By Mizuho Sasaki

When I go abroad, I can learn a lot of things from another culture. If I think my culture is the only culture, it is a mistake. We can become more flexible people when we

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meet people who come from other countries. We can learn a lot from living in different cultures. I had three experiences I found very different in this culture when I first came here.

The first experience was prayer before meals. When my host father said, "Let's pray" before eating, I thought he said "play." As soon as he said that, everybody closed their eyes, then my host father started praying. In my culture, we usually say "Itadakimas" before eating. It is a short word, but it includes many wishes. I am not a Christian but I am beginning to understand the meaning of prayer. I think American culture is very influenced by Christian ideas.

The second thing that happened was on the bus. I went to school by bus on the first day, but I did not

know where to get off. In Japan, there is information inside the buses on tape, so I did not know what to do here. I asked the bus driver, "Please tell me when the bus arrives at Concordia College," the bus driver said loudly "Concordia College." I got off the bus but it was not the exact bus stop, so I walked very far until I reached the school.

The third trouble was with the mail boxes beside the sidewalks. In Japan, there are many garbage cans near the sidewalks. These look like U.S. mail boxes and are red. One day, my friend and I were walking down a street and saw a blue mailbox. I thought it was a garbage can. My friend told me it was a mail box. I almost made a big mistake.

These three experiences happened when I first came to America. They are good memories for me now. I know about prayer before meals, where to get off the bus and what color a mail box is. To learn another culture is exciting.