Katsuki Iio

ENG100

Assignment #1

The Last Day

I was the first one who got to the [*dojo*](http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=dojo) on that day. I took off my shoes and got into the place after bowing at the entrance. I sat on the floor and closed my eyes. Feeling the silence, I expressed the gratitude to the place in my mind. In this place, I had grown up a lot. Some students came. Mayu and I started wiping the floor, but finished in five minutes. Looking through the window, there was a broad sky.

“I can’t believe it is your last day, Katsuki.” Mayu said. “Time flies.”

“I can’t believe either. The last four months passed so fast.” I said.

 I was born and raised in Japan. There, I didn’t have a lot of opportunities to touch upon other cultures as there were few immigrants or foreigners around me. However, I started studying English when I was 6 and got interested in other cultures. Since then, my dream had been to study abroad and learn their cultures. That is why I decided to come to the United States, which is 7000 miles away from my country. To go to an American college, I studied English a lot and applied when I was a senior in high school. In Japan, schools start on April and end on March, so I decided to go to a university in Japan after graduating from high school until August, when the college in America would start. I got into Osaka University. There, I joined the [kendo](http://www.kendo-usa.org/abtken.php) club and have spent almost every day in the practice. Although it was only four months that I was in the team, I can confidently say the teammates are my best friends. We have become stronger together through the hard practices and the tournaments, and we have spent a lot of time in social pursuits other than practice such as going for dinner. The days were so fun that sometimes my decision wavered. Going to America meant not only not being able to meet them every day but also not being able to be their teammate anymore.

 “[*Hajime*](http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=Hajime)!”

 With the captain’s yell, everyone started to scream and hit each other. Hearing my partner’s and other members’ screaming, I got energy. I felt like I could do it. I could be stronger. As I finished a set of *kirikaeshi*, a kind of practice, my partner started the practice. He screamed, and I screamed too. I had to be as energetic as he was because without the communication between two people, it wouldn’t be a good practice. Doing a good performance during the practice was how I expressed the gratitude to my teammates.

 I did *keiko*, the practice in the match-style, with Mr. Kobayashi, the captain of the team. He is a senior and much stronger than me, so I got hit a lot of times, and I could hardly hit him. I felt short of breath. It was hard to move my arm. However, I kept trying to concur him. Next, I did with Maho, a freshman girl with whom I always ended in draw. She attacked me and I warded off the attack, then I tried to hit her, but she dodged. I got hit by her, but next I hit her. I didn’t hesitate to make her fall down. To attack the opponents for real was another way to express the gratitude.

 After the practice, I talked to Mr. Kobayashi.

“Thank you for the *keiko*.”

And he talked gently.

“It was a good *keiko*. You have improved a lot in these four months. If you continue kendo after going to America, don’t forget what you have learned here, and you will be better.”

Then, I went to Maho and talked to her.

“Thank you for the *keiko*. It was a good [*kote*](http://www.angelfire.com/extreme4/kendo/Eexplain.html). I was completely beaten.”

“Thank you, too. It was good, but the [*men*](http://www.angelfire.com/extreme4/kendo/Eexplain.html) you hit was also great. We ended in draw again. Next time we do, I will win.”

 “Everybody, gather!”

Everybody gathered in the center of the dojo and the meeting started. Students from each grades said some comments on the day’s practice, and the captain talked.

“Today is the last day for Katsuki. Do you want to say something, Katsuki?” At the last of his comment, Mr. Kobayashi said.

Everyone looked at me. I was sweaty not only because I had just finished the practice. Everyone was quiet and waiting me to start talking. Breathing deeply, I started talking slowly.

“Thank you so much for accepting me as a teammate and teaching me a lot.”

My voice was shaking.

“I am happy that I could participate in some tournaments and practice with you guys. I wish I could be here longer, but I am going because this has been my dream since I was little. But I will never forget the days here. Again, thank you very much.”

I heard everyone clapping their hands. I wiped my eyes and saw their face. Some were smiling gently, and others were crying.

“Good luck.” Mr. Kumata, a senior student, said.

“Thank you for joining the club and being our member.” Miss. Nishimoto, a junior student, said.

After the meeting, freshman students gathered to me and we talked about the memories.

 “I wish I could develop the team with you! We will be much stronger by the time you come back!” Hikaru said.

“I’m looking forward to come back and seeing the team much stronger!”

“I remember we went to eat curry the other day. It was fun, right?” Shotaro said.

“I feel like it was a few days ago. Let’s go for a drive when I come back.”

Then, Yasuko started talking.

“Thank you again, Katsuki. We all are happy to be able to do spend time with you! And this is a present for you.”

She gave me [*tenugui*](file:///Users/iiokatsuki/Pictures/%E5%86%99%E7%9C%9F%E3%83%A9%E3%82%A4%E3%83%95%E3%82%99%E3%83%A9%E3%83%AA.photoslibrary/Masters/2016/11/27/20161127-172656/14361252_498978676963701_1003421490121696540_o.jpg)*,* a piece of cloth which we use when doing kendo. It was filled with their message.

“I will miss you!”

“I am going to be stronger and muscular by the time you come back!”

“I wish I could practice and talk with you more!”

“Enjoy the days in America!”

“Thank you guys.” Making stains on the cloth with tears, I managed to say this one phrase.

I wore the shoes and left the *dojo*. Looking up, there was a broad sky with various shapes of clouds. I hold the cloth, and I knew it would travel with me to America.

(1073 words)