Journal question for Week 1: What role does food play in your culture? Which traditions does your family have that involve food?

Certain foods are eaten in certain situations. For example, during birthdays, people normally eat cake. On New Year, we usually eat mochi. Many times mochi is in soup with cabbage as zoni. Osechi is a variety of different foods in a box that represents different things in life for New Years. We also eat udon noodles on New Year’s Eve. On the Fourth of July, people often eat food made on the grill. Halloween and Easter are often associated with candy. We eat rice, bread, and noodles often. We usually have some kind of starch, vegetable, and meat with every meal, and occasionally have dessert. Dango is a popular snack and can also be a meal in some cases. There is a lot of different foods in the Japanese culture that people in America do not usually know about, such as takoyaki, okonomiyaki, or taiyaki. Taiyaki is a food that is seen in festivals. It is in the shape of a fish. The outside is a pancake-like food, and the inside has bean paste, or anko. People in Japan like to make different kinds of bread. There are lots of different varieties. One of my favorites is melon-pan. It is simply bread covered in sugar cookie.

Journal question for Week 2: What have you noticed about your eating, drinking, or exercising habits? What surprised you?

I have noticed that my eating habits have decreased very slightly. I have been drinking about the same amount, and I have been exercising much more. I am surprised that my eating habits did not change very much. I had expected to eat much less food because of the time it takes in order to log it on the computer, but I have been eating about the same amount. I also thought that I might realize that I eat very much, and I would try to change and eat less, but that is not what happened. I ate a little less because it takes some time to log it on the *My Fitness Pal* website. What surprised me was that overall, my eating habits have not changed. I am drinking the same amount of water every day, but I know I need to drink more. Lately, I have been exercising much more. This is because I simply decided to start exercising each day again, so I was not surprised.

Journal question for Week 3: Have you made any changes in your eating and/or exercising habits? Why/Why not? If so, what changes have you made?

I have made little changes to my eating habits. I have been trying to eat healthier to an extent. It is hard to change habits that I have always had, such as eating a snack when I get home. However, lately I have been eating a bit less whenever I am aware of what I am eating. Other times, I simply eat the same amount or more. I have exercising much more compared to right before this project. Before we did this project, I did nearly no exercise. Now, I try to exercise a little bit each day. I sometimes go to the gym for about 30 to 45 minutes with my mom. When I have too much homework to go to the gym, I try to do some exercises at home before I go to bed. Compared to a couple years ago, however, I still do very little exercise. When I lived in Japan, I did 9 hours of gymnastics a week and I had PE every other day. I go to aikido sometimes now.