

Last weekend, I had the best experience so far in Japan, and maybe in my life! After school I met up with friends and we drove to for about 5 hours until we got to the base of Mount Fuji. Then we started to climb. I had never climbed a mountain before, and never really even gone hiking, either. It was not what I expected!

I went together with four friends. The five of us squeezed into the car and had a very excited car ride there. Even after a long day of work, none of us slept the whole way there. When we got there, around 11, I started to feel sleepy and nervous about the trek ahead. Just as we started to climb the mountain, I realized it was a lot harder than I had imagined! I imagined a dirt path, winding its way up the mountain. I didn't expect it to be so steep and with so many rocks. It was very difficult to navigate. Three of my friends are very good athletes (I am NOT) so they quickly got ahead of us. One friend and I were falling behind, and getting very out of breath, so we decided to break into two groups. Each group had a two-way radio so we wished them luck as they sped ahead of us. My friend and I caught our breath and tried to start again at a slower pace.

Once we could go at our own speed, we started to really enjoy the hike. When we got out of the car to start the hike, we were already above the clouds, and it was a full moon. So it was very bright for the middle of the night, and we had a beautiful view of the clouds below and the stars above. My friend and I took breaks often, and really enjoyed the view. Nearby was a lightning storm, and we could see the bolts of lighting off and on throughout the night. It felt like we were in outer space or on the moon.

After climbing for about 4 hours, it started to get much more difficult. We could hardly breathe and were huffing and puffing with even the smallest steps. But we both could see that we were so close to the top that we didn't want to give up. We finally made it to the top in about 5 hours. It was just after 4:30 am, and we found our friends huddled in a corner, trying to sleep and stay warm, waiting for the sunrise. We were happy that we hadn't gotten there earlier. The best part about reaching the top of the mountain was the expressions on our friends' faces. When they had left us at the beginning of the hike, they didn't think we could make it to the top. We didn't know if we would make it either, but we did! I've never felt so proud.

We stayed at the top for about 20 minutes to take some pictures of the sunrise, and then we made our way back down to the bottom. We were all so exhausted from our night of climbing and no sleep that we wanted to get back to the car as soon as we could. The whole way down, I kept thinking about how unbelievable it was that I had climbed up that whole way through the night. I had wanted to climb Mt. Fuji since I first came to Japan, so I'm glad that I didn't give up and I went the whole way. It was one of the best things I've ever done, but there's no way I will ever do it again!