

EXPERIENCE IN JAPAN

There is a well-known phrase attributed to the Italian director Federico Fellini which says: "*A different language is a different vision of life*". A new language gives you a new way of thinking and understanding reality. And learning Japanese was my personal reaffirmation of the truth of this phrase.



In 2017 I made the decision to study Japanese in Japan, motivated mainly because I wanted to live a new cultural experience, learn a completely different language and get to know one of the most fascinating and important countries in the world. After studying for a year at Yamagata University, I can state without any doubt that making an academic exchange in Japan was the best decision I could have made.

Studying at Yamagata was an experience full of surprises and joys from the beginning to the end. Since the time I arrived, until I left the city, I was always amazed by the cultural differences between Peru and Japan. From the greetings, to the use of public space and citizen security, these differences allowed me to see much better the reality of my country. One of the aspects that surprised me most about Japanese culture is the respect that exists not only towards the elderly, but to all people. Perhaps the fact of coming from a big city like Lima where everyone is busy and worried about their own problems, made me appreciate much more the spirit of community and the consideration that one has for others in Japanese society (which is much more palpable in a small city like Yamagata). I also had the opportunity to travel to other major cities in Japan such as Tokyo, Osaka, Kyoto, Hiroshima, among others. This allowed me to see with my own eyes many of the places that I had only seen in pictures before, and visit important historical sites not only of Japan, but of Universal History.





Yamagata University offers courses not only of Japanese language, but also of Japanese Culture. I was able to take courses that covered different aspects of the Japanese Culture and the Japanese language; from Japanese cuisine, pastimes in Japan, Japanese language linguistics and introductory classes to the culture of Japan. Thanks to these lectures, I did not only dedicated myself in studying the

language of Japan, but also I was able to experience Japanese culture. In the same way, the fact of having studied Japanese in Japan helped me a lot to improve my language skills, since I did not speak Japanese only in classes, but also outside of classes, in the street, with my friends, etc. However, the best thing about having studied a language in their country of origin is that I saw how the words came to life. Because it is one thing to learn the language with books and in classes, to know the grammar and the vocabulary, but another thing is to see those words converted into something real, almost tangible.

Also in this line, counting already with a certain level of Japanese language, I was able to take part in classes of Andean Archeology dictated in Japanese. I was happy to see how even in a place like Japan, so far from Peru, there is interest in the archeology and history of my country. The classes of Andean Archeology at Yamagata University not only allowed me to learn more about my field of study, but it also helped me to observe how the archeology of Peru is taught in another country, and how is generated the interest for this field of study among the students.

I was also able to establish friendships not only with Japanese, but with people from different parts of the world, with the Japanese language being the bridge between us. Making friendships with people from very different cultural contexts and from countries far away from mine was also one of the best parts of having made this academic exchange. As we all tried to learn the language with the help of our Japanese friends, I realized that a common language can do wonderful things. It helps us to understand cultural, ideological, religious diversity, etc.; but most important, it creates



interpersonal relationships that help you mature and see your reality from another angle, eliminate prejudices and learn that there are no races that differentiate us. And everything, thanks to a common language.

Finally, living a year in Japan helped me not only in a personal and academic way, but it also generated in me a unique affective feeling with Japan, its culture and its people. I want to thank all those who supported me in this beautiful experience and especially the Double Triangle Program for giving me the opportunity to have lived "in Japanese".