

2016 Re-Inventing Japan Project (Long-Ter)

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Reasons for participating in the study abroad program

The reasons that made me choose the Re-Inventing Japan Project were many and, among these are the issues: academic, social, cultural, personal and professional, among others. The fact that NODAI has a good relationship with UFRA made me open my eyes to know theoretical framework and culture that NODAI could offer to the UFRA students and one easiness was RIJP. Researching about NODAI I found a very interesting history, showered with many victories and achievements, progress in agriculture and Technologies developed over time for agricultural production it was one of the things that caught my attention, because it matches what I want for my professional formation, and consequently, for my professional life.

Academically speaking, I saw the opportunity to improve my curriculum with the student exchange, the knowledge that I would acquire in class with professors and other students from Japan and other countries, fields trips and class within laboratories make instigated me to want to be part of this program, and absorb the maximum knowledge that this new place could offer me. The knowledge that was offered in class would help me to better understand some problems and difficulties that, I visualizing from an internal perspective of my country and university, I could not understand and I know that this will be a differential not only in the curriculum, but in the exercise of engineering. Discussions and conversations with Japanese students, as well as with other foreign students, allied to the exchange of life experience and academic weighed in the decision to choose this program because it would be a unique opportunity for me to have access to all these benefits.

The plunge in Japanese culture made me even more interested, because since when I was a child I wanted to know Japan, for various reasons, among which the exotic culture, so different from all the contributions that Brazil could offer me, Japanese gastronomy has always caught my attention, as well as the warriors of the past, samurai, with his honor and pride. But mainly, the respect between the “Senpai” and “Kohai” was what I most wanted to understand and learn, because I understand discipline as essential quality for personal success and professional. Society as well, as a whole intrigues me, This information that only day-to-day life in Japan could make me learn and understand meticulously.

Then, this program made me see the chance to help my country. Particularly the Amazon, which is known worldwide as the world's lung, by its immense forests, with one of the largest biodiversity in the world of fauna and flora, observing Japan, with all the new beginnings, after natural disasters, as an example that recovery and development are possible, regardless of the difficulties. In this context, as the Amazon region in the last decades, it has been suffering from irrational exploitation of renewable and non-renewable natural resources, it started to become an urgency for professionals who work in this area and for students who want to work in that area as well, as me. Recovering these ecosystems, It is the area that I have more affinity to study, because in

Brazil there is a vast wealth of mineral resources many areas are exploited unsustainably, and the worst part is that little is done to recover or restore these environments.

Based on this problem, I saw in the methodology of Professor Akira Miyawaki a faster way to recover exploited ecosystem, which have been impacted by human actions or natural disasters. Last but not least, be able to keep in touch with other researchers, and other people who, in some way may help in my future, both academic and professional, Helping me with new knowledge, that I will apply in my country. In addition to other contacts that can give me opportunities in my professional life, in companies or research groups.

Courses offered at Tokyo NODAI

During the program period, university offered several subjects that were available, subjects that are taught in English, which is important for my learning. Professors used the maximum amount of audio-visual resources to facilitate the teaching, and student learning. The classes I attended as a student listener were: Agro-Environmenteal Engineering, these classes happen every Monday, in the afternoon. The course aims to provide knowledge and information to promote eco-technologies, and I was able to understand some concepts of environmental engineering, such as soil and water resources, remote sensing for monitoring, preservation and soil conversation. and how to plan some constructions for the rural and agricultural production.

One of the subjects that I got to see greater application of my course in forestry, was the discipline of Ecology and Food production the classes happened on Tuesday and, with a professor who used as a methodology presentations, every student should did one presentations in each class. With this, promoted a debate at the end of each presentation. The discussions were very enriching because each student can expose the reality of your locality and with that, we can get a sense of how food production was worked out in each country and, from that point, to exchange ideas and suggestions on how to innovate the purpose of this course is to understand the agroecology and food production systems for sustainable agriculture, which would be fundamental alternatives for the Brazilian recovery that would have improved and started developing new Technologies in the Amazon.

Another course was Comparative Developing Agriculture, its classes were based on Africa and Asia agriculture, and it was used pictures to support and help the view of the landscape to understand better how the Agriculture involve socioeconomics and environmental characteristics in many diferent countries and regions. The classes happens on every Wednesday afternoon, and class were composed only by foreign students.

Finally, the subject Molecular Biology and Biotechnology. Before to make this subject in Japan, I studied one subject similar in my coutry, having studied this subject in my coutry made it much easier for me to understand the subject in Japan, because I could use the base here from Brazil to deepen the theory there. It is a very interesting and highly relevant subject, this course happened on Friday afternoon.

All the subjects that I studied were in the afternoon, I believe that all disciplines have achieved their teaching goals with students and the discussions in the classes with the foreign students and Japanese students were very enriching, it was always possible to see the contrast between each country and where each place needs to improved.

Japanese language tutoring

When I arrived in Japan, I only had a superficial knowledge of the language, very basic information such as greetings. I always thought Japanese language was a very interesting language, mainly for being different from Portuguese and other languages of Latin origin, but I had never dedicated myself to learning, by several factors, and one of them was the fact that I thought I never would use this idiom. To my surprise and sadness, when I arrived at NODAI, Japanese regular classes had already started and even the basics class for me who had just arrived was very advanced. This situation made me feel upset for a while, but determined to seek the maximum of knowledge to keep up and enjoy the RIJP. Almost a month after arrival in Japan, the International Program Center provided a fourth year student of the Bio-business course, and he was my tutor throughout Thursdays, the classes took place in a common study area among the students, what was good, because we can talk carefree, without fear of bothering other people because we were listening to some audios. It was very productive because I was learning the language in a real environment of interaction of the native speakers.

The classes were very dynamic, I bought a book recommended by the Center of International Program, to self study, book came with a CD that helped me a lot to learn the pronunciation of some words. The tutor of Japanese classes was, Felipe Goh a veteran student who was responsible for teaching. He was dynamic, the fact that he is of the same nationality as mine greatly facilitated teaching-learning, because there were many doubts about the Japanese language that I had, but after some explanation, I got a better understanding.

How I was practically without any knowledge of the Japanese language, the tutor started from very beginning, teaching first “Hiragana” which is the first thing for start read some words in Japanese. Also explained the Romaji, which is the Romanized way for people from the West to know how is the pronunciation in “Hiragana” and “Katakana”. In the beginning it was quite difficult to memorize the Hiragana, by not being accustomed to the symbols, however, with day by day, becomes makes it easier to memorize, because daily contact with the language makes learning very easy.

Besides Felipe's support there were also other Brazilians who supported me in the teaching-learning of Japanese. Informally they explained me and taught me how to act in situations of everyday life, things that were out of the limits of that once-a-week period. Expressions and attitudes that we should have with the Japanese people, but usually only learn in practice day to day. Another college student who helped a lot in Japanese class was a Japanese student, Masato-san, he accompanied many of the classes that I had during every Thursday, was very productive exchange of language and knowledge that was happening, We taught Portuguese to him and, on the other hand, he taught Japanese. This was very nice because we can exchange cultural experiences and as it comes to Brazil to study one year, we took them out his doubts about Brazil, and the other hand he took out my doubts about Japan.



Interactions with students of Tokyo NODAI

Students from Tokyo University of Agriculture were very receptive and helpful, I feel very happy for all moments that I spent together with them. During the class, more mainly in the laboratory in which I stayed during the period of the program. The laboratory in which I was inserted counted on the support of 4 professors, the professor who was responsible for guiding and taught me was very helpful, didactic, and funny. If I am not wrong, he taught more 5 under graduation students and 2 graduation students in master's degree. Students from laboratory were really shy, as well as me, in a first month we passed without many conversations and long dialogues due to the shyness of both sides, however soon after a christmas party of the laboratory we began to interact much more.

I collected field data with my host professor and two other students and my colleague who came with me from Brazil. The research was to monitor the deer feeding trail in a environment park. The investigation was very productive in many aspects, scientific, because we got collected the data and geographic coordination, more particularly by interaction with the studies. We can exchange research information, we also talk about the most diverse subjects and interact to the fullest, and we could still enjoyed a very delicious dinner at the Professor's house.

The conversations with the students were very good because I could practice some things I learned in Japanese, and on the other side I could show some words and phrases of Brazil to them. I had the opportunity to go to Karaoke with them, and it was a very good experience, because in this moment I was could interact with veteran students. I had the chance to be guided in Asakusa, a tourist famous place at Tokyo, by two students from laboratory, Mayu-San and Obika-San. They also took me to see the most famous flower in Japan, Sakura flower, at this moment I felt very happy. With another student, Yukari-san, I had a chance to visit the highest building, skytree, among others interesting places.



Also I had the opportunity to participate of two lunch in the laboratory, and we call Takoyaki party, it was really good stay in those moments of break time with them. Mainly because it was soon after the thesis presentation period, and this thesis they done to conclusion of undergraduation, all the veteran students showed up their thesis very well and, what I realized they responded very well to the questions asked by the professors who examined them.



Agricultural Internships

I think that internships in anywhere is important, because is in this time you can put in practice everything which was learned and taught in theory. To knowing better the ambient and coworkers, the hierarchy and another extracurricular skills necessary for professional performance. During the period that I stayed at NODAI, I had the opportunity to meet and made a internship in a company called “Mercado”, this company is located inside of setegaya campus. The others students and I, whom participants of the program Re-Inventing Japan Project, we had the chance to see a lecture of company president, Mercado, He explained to us that the most employees were students from NODAI, and those students could put in practice the leadership, teamwork, among others characteristic essential to work in big companies, mainly in a country which has discipline and organization as priority.

Mercado company has a big variety of products from Latin America, and the strong point, from what I realized, is camu-camu juice. This is a typical fruit from Latin America which is found mainly in Brazil, but is more typical to find in Peru. That country exports to Japan the final product or feedstock to be processed in another area of Mercado company. The company also receives products from Brazil and Mexico



On 02/18, I had a chance to participate in a fair that happened in Yokohama. That fair had more than four universities beyond NODAI and other companies. The place where the fair happens is really famous because most of the young people go there to do dating meetings and there is a beautiful landscape to the ocean in the morning and, in the afternoon, it is possible to see a beautiful sunset. It was a good experience because I had the opportunity to interact with other students who are not from the laboratory, and the team worked together very well. How I and other students of the Re-Inventing Japan Project do not still speak Japanese, the responsible professor for all students from there in the event, made one system of partnership. Each international student makes a partnership with a Japanese student. However, there were a little problem, Japanese students who were there do not speak English very well, and this made somehow a funny situation, because we needed to try to understand each other. This situation forced me to try to speak Japanese more than ever, and Japanese students taught us to call customers with “irashaimase” and other words and phrases. Certainly, that was one of the best experiences which I will keep in my mind forever. My partner was one student who liked to be called “B”, he is a big partner to sell, I could learn from him some “Kanjis”. The event had a duration of all day, morning and afternoon, also I would wear typical clothes of this kind of market, the name of these clothes is “Happi”.



Visits to agricultural facilities.

NODAI has three campus. Setagaya Campus is considered one of more big with more students than others two campus, Setagaya Campus also has more laboratories. Beyond Setagaya Campus which was the place where I spent more time of the program, I visited also Atsugi Campus, Isegara Farm and Ooshima.

Atsugi Campus has more physical area, is bigger than Setagaya Campus. Most of buildings in this campus is new, this is due to the fact that this campus is new. During the visit I could enter in the great part of the buildings and to verify that, inside it's all had good equipments and good infrastructures, supported to the students with highest technology to them to do good searches. Among all the buildings and laboratories, the thing that most caught my attention was the Bio-Therapy Center, a space that use animals to therapy. Ponies, horses and dogs that they use to treatment of people, All animals are treated well, so cute and lovely. Botanical Garden was the other place inside the Atsugi campus, with the most diverse floral species forming beautiful arrangements and a splendid landscape, this place is very used for people rest and do walking around this place.

Isehara Farm was another facility I've visited and the greenhouses very well made, there are many different temperatures for different purposes. One thing that I think more interesting in a specific greenhouse of there was the some plants that was cultivated in hydroponic médium, until that moment I just had studied about this method in Brazil at UFRA, but I did not see in practice. The climatic conditions as temperature and humidity in every greenhouses are fairly controlled, because if the manager do not control this climatic conditions the plant can suffer issues. Other thing that manager need take care is about pests and fungi, it is a typical problem from greenhouses because is more easy and fast to propagate. All greenhouses there, has a highest level of sanitation, each person who want to use this space need follow the criterions to use, to handle the vegetation inside of greenhouse and do not make a contamination in the species of those places. Beyond that ambiente there are others

places in Isehara farm which also is very used by students, they use those area to developing others kind of search outside of greenhouse, and they also do as one kind of intership. As I could thought, this farm is more normally used by students from Setagaya Campus and Atsugi Campus, they go there in experimental farm to use that area and do search. The machines both large and small are new and cutting-edge very well preserved.

Another place where I have visited were in Ooshima, I had the opportunity to know this facility with Francisco and Fernanda and their Professor. He took us to collect data and the same time show to us this facility. This place is very used by Forestry students who are linked forestry area and mammals. The facility is inside of native forest, that was a thing which is very interesting.

How did this program shape your career and how will you apply what you learned in the future.

Well, this program support me in many ways, since from my personal life until to my professional life. My under graduation now has another pespective, after this experience with Re-Inventing Japan Project. Personally speaking, I learned to be more confident and to be more conviction, I improved my responsibility with university and my research. Also I learned to be more punctuality. That word will define almost all my experience with Re-Inventing Japan Project. Punctuality reflects directly in professional life, because each professional need be punctual, regardless of nationality, need be punctual with its commitments and Tokyo University of Agriculture shapeded my career in this sense.

Another aspect were knowledge that I acquired, all information will support me for I start writing my thesis conclusion of course in Brazil, every instruction that my dear Professor and others professors taught me, will be useful. Besides all the conversations, were very enriching, and I know it will help me in undergraduation and graduation.

Any advice for future RJP students

Well, my suggestions for future students who want to start this program of Re-Inventing Japan Project are more simple possibleCame with some expectation to dive in Japanese Culture. With opened mind to learn more with professor make questions to them and throw out your doubts, in each class as well. Do not be shy try to be more direct and precise as possible with host professor and others professors when make some question.

Always try to respect the schedule, take note in every moment that be in a important meeting. All this notes will help you in a future and help you if you needed. Try to plan the schedule of important events first with host professor and then with Center of International Program, for do not to conflict both appointment.

Any Suggestions to improve the program

Which each kind of course that going to be planned for foreign student can be more specific and direct. The students that going to start in this program could arrived in the right time, in the begin of semester academic, to they can get credits from subjects and not stay in the class as only student listener, because university in home country

when students go back, ask to them about the subjects which they done, and students want to certificate of subjects to putting in academic curriculum.

Finally, I just say thank you very much to Tokyo University of Agriculture, to the coordination of Re-Inventing Japan Project, Azael May Cuevas and Naomi Yamada for the opportunity and care which they had to me. My host Professor Yukito Nakamura who taught me, and the same time for the students of Laboratory of Forest Ecology, by all conversations, experience and good moments of happiness and fun that they provide me, I will never forget those moments. To the master's degree students and my dear brazilian and foreing friends. At long last Sabi, Tony, Francisco and Alfredo, friend who I made by Re-Inventing Japan Project.