

2017 Re-inventing Japan Project (Short-term) International Students Summit, RJP Internship

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Since I was little, I was taught to respect my antecessors and the struggle they had to do so that I could have all the opportunities I can have now, and for me, the most formidable one was to cross the ocean, to come from Japan, their homeland, to go to a country they hardly knew something about, Brazil. It was always hard for me to understand why they came by their own will to Brazil, so far away from their family and friends, to suffer a harsh condition, similar to the one the African slaves suffered, and when I asked my grandfather about that, he replied: “they did that because their conditions in Japan was way worse than that, and now you can have a happy life because they overcame all these difficulties”, the pride and joy about them was great but I what I felt greatly was curiosity about my great-grandparents.

I learned that what made my antecessors so successful was the hardworking spirit they had that made other trust and admire them, and the respect they had toward other people and the their possessions, because all of that have a history and a person’s dedication to be in the way it is. Both of these were things they learned back then in Japan, because of that, I felt that going there and knowing this country and its people, would be an important step for my personal development.

We went to Tokyo right after the 17° ISS, there I had the chance to talk about more than 30 countries and its cultures, it added to my cultural knowledge and vision of the world in a way that I could understand better about Japan and Asia, making me realize there was many aspects about them that I didn’t knew, making me more open to new information. Another aspect that made my exchange program more interesting than a simple touristic travel was the fact I could discuss with many Brazilian and other Latin American people, some of them had the same experiences as me in Brazil, and could change their opinion about Japan as they lived there. The fact that we could stay in the same dorm as them and could go out with them without restrictions was the main factor that allowed those experiences.

The first experience we had was right after arriving in the dorm, right after the detailed explanations about the dorm, it was scary but made me realize how Japanese were so organized, we went to a “kaitenzushi” where we got to know the foreign students in Tokyo NODAI, including some Brazilians, and was our first contact with the Japanese’s cuisine. More than knowing some new dishes we don’t have in Brazil, it made me realize how western and eastern cultures were so apart, because, as being from a family who followed some Japanese’s traditions, watching others avoiding some dishes and struggling to use chopsticks, was a shocking scene.

In the second day we did a tour in Tokyo NODAI’s campus, as I didn’t know much about NODAI, it was really shocking that the infrastructure and history were so great. Another interesting fact was about how NODAI and maybe Japan were so environmental friendly, as there was solar panels and whow most of the students commuted by foot or by bike, thing that later on I realized was a common thing in Japan, due to its safety and as a solution for the land’s lacking.

Then we had our first class about Miyakojima’s agriculture, it was pretty interesting because even though both can be considered tropical agriculture, the problems and the used techniques are so different. In Miyakojima, typhoon is their main problem and the agriculture is based in a high technology level fruticulture inside greenhouses, but Brazil is don’t have the typhoon’s problem, but as our agriculture is based in great land use, we have a great problem to control pests and diseases. And, finally, by the end of the day we had our Japanese class, it was funny as my friends were having so much difficult to speak easy words, but it wasn’t so interesting because I already speak Japanese to some extend.

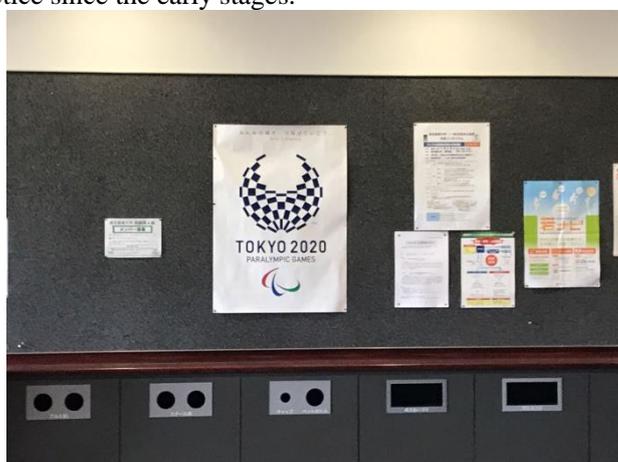
At night, I met some friends from Tokyo NODAI who came to Brazil in this year’s short program. Everyday, they guided me around Tokyo, they were really conscious about what could they show us about their ow country and were worried so that we could have as much fun as we could.

They were one of the few Japanese I had the chance to speak with, so I tried to ask as much as possible about Japan, its people and culture, and they were the only chance I had to practice my Japanese language's skill and could measure how much I could talk with them.

At September 28th we went firstly to the Laboratory of Landscape Botany and Arboriculture, we were guided by Professor Suzuki, who explained about the research projects done by the department's professors and gave us a lecture about the history about Japanese gardens, the experience of talking with professor openly was really interesting, and the theme as interesting as the Japanese garden are so different from other types. After that, we went to Professor Sakata's Laboratory of Plant Molecular Genetics, the equipment are something we are used to deal, but the security in the new GMOs was a first for me.

The afternoon's classes was Edo's Aesthetics and Environmental Resiliency, it surely was the lesson I was the most curious, but unfortunately it was the first class of the semester and happened to be a self-introduction and to explain about rules in class. But because of that I happened to get to know some new people so it was pretty meaningful. Right after was Molecular Biology and Biotechnology's class, I had already had this class in Brazil, but watching in English was interesting and as the Japanese people asked some molecule names in Japanese, made me think about how would it be important to study Japanese's technical language if I want to study in Japan in the future.

At night I met a relative who lives in Japan and then it was the sole moment I scrolled around the city alone, so I could take it slowly and could take notice better about the city and its people, because when I was with others I was always focused in a discussion so couldn't pay attentions in my surroundings. Japan's streets are way thinner than Brazil's as a results of the land's lack, and because of that, allied with the safety and trust in the people, there was many people, including children around the city even at night. Another interesting thing was the great number of students in the streets, it was explained that they stay in school after classes to do extracurricular activities such as sports and arts, it's a nice way to promote the personal development and motivate the students. Not only in Tokyo NODAI, but in other schools including middle and high school, there was some 2020's pics Game's advertisement, it also showed how much Japanese think highly about the sport's practice since the early stages.



Picture 1- Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games' s Advertisement

At September 30th, we started our internship program at ERECON, at first our role was simple, we simply had to scroll around Global Festa Japan 2017's booth and talk with the presenters about their projects. It was surprising how many projects that involves Africa there was, maybe because as a developed country, there was not so much challenges to address inside Japan. Most NGOs which worked in the field of agriculture and sustainability were working to create leaders in their own countries who could change their countries knowing better than anyone else what's the cause of their problems, similarly to what Tokyo NODAI does promoting ISS, but there was others which worked in many different ways.

As I could discussed about many projects in ISS, I could discuss with the presenters trying to make them realize some faults in their projects and working in some solutions together, or making them understand their projects better, in a way that they could improve it. The fact that I could speak

in Japanese helped me because even though it was hard to understand everything they spoke, the presenters felt more at ease to talk and show their ideas, and as I explained about the exchange program and the fact that I am Brazilian, they were interested in my opinion, or so I felt.

After that we discussed about what each one found about in their own research and compared with Brazil, Mexico and Peru, and what we found about is that all of them tries to implant a technology and hopes that the people uses it, don't minding about their social condition, so it was really interesting.

In the second day, as I visited most of the booths, I returned to the most interesting ones, discussed more deeply and went to some non-agriculture related booths, one of the most interesting was a NGO which tries to integrate the work done by different NGO, in a way they could cooperate and make their ideas easier to be done. I could talk with a researcher from JIRCAS too, he explained me briefly about the Japanese's agriculture and the most developed research fields. Until that chat, I had already realized how Japanese's agriculture was different, but I could get a much deeper understanding about that. I thought that some fields such as precision agriculture and remote sensing, fields that interest me the most, were the strong point in Japan, but as the fields are mainly small scale, it proved to be false.

In the last day, we had to use our knowledge attained in Global Festa and ISS to try to create a new idea to be implanted in our own country. At first, the Brazilians thought about using our ideas presented in ISS and use the advices we received at ISS and the new ideas from Global Festa, but accepting the challenge from ERECON, we created a new idea using the projects from University of São Paulo and Rural University of Amazonia.

The discussion were really interesting and I learned a lot about the Japanese agriculture but the most meaningful thing in the internship program was working under Mr. Ueno's tutelage. He was really strict about punctuality, and he always made sure we were working when he should be and resting in lunch time, asking us which booth we visited always he met us in Global Festa, and saying we should visit the shopping center our the Ferris wheel in the break. Unlike Brazil which the results are more important than the time spent working. At first I thought it may be a Mr. Ueno's personal issue, but seeing him trying to get along with us, I understood it was something normal, which was shocking.

At the end of that day, the other exchange program students went to do shopping, but I went to a public bath with the Japanese people, at first it was a frightening thinking about, but it happened to be a nice experience, it was a moment that I could be nearer from the Japanese culture.



Picture 2- Public bath "sentou"

In the last day, we went to Meiji Jingu Temple, we got in touch with the religion and some of the few moments in the Japanese history that we study in Brazil's schools, the Meiji era and the World War II, the first one, representing by the wine barrels alongside with the sake's ones. And the later we can see as the original temple was destroyed but it was rebuilt.

Them we went to Tokyo NODAI's natural museum. Unfortunately I couldn't read the explanation but it seems to be to make general population conscious about the environmental

problems, which was impressive. The thing I was interested the most was a farmers house's replica, as learning about my antecessor's style of life was the first goal to go to Japan.

In the last day, before going to the airport, I strolled around Setagaya with Tokyo NODAI's students and tasted some Japanese dishes.

And lastly, returning to Brazil, discussing about my experiences with many people, including people who had the international experience in Japan or other countries and a student from Tokyo NODAI who is in USP now, made me think about what I learned and understand things I couldn't alone.

These 8 days in Japan were really meaningful, I learned a lot about the Japanese culture and mainly how are its people, I realized that staying in Japan for a longer time will be great experience for me, they can teach me a lot to make me grow as a person. I got to talk with many Japanese and foreign people, which one with their own opinion about Japan, I think I achieved my goal to know more about Japan. Not only that, I realized that Japan too has its faults and they can improve themselves by knowing Brazil.

I think the fact that I could talk in Japanese was of great importance to enjoy as much as I did because I think most people I talked with would be uneasy to talk in English or the chat would not be as enjoyable as it was and the fact I could talk with ease was another achievement. All of that made me more eager to chat with more people in Japanese and hone my language skills.

I got to know some Japanese people and discuss with them because I befriended with some of them in Brazil and because of the party in the last day, but if that was not the case, I could not know about the Japanese people, thing that I think as the most valuable when going to another country, so it would be interesting to allow the next year's students to have this opportunity. A way to do that may be having the party in the first day and not the last, so that we can count on them in our stay.

Since before participating Re-Inventing Japan Project I admired Japan and thought that living there would be great, but now I am sure about that. About my career, I will apply to MEXT scholarship to do a master course in Japan, and my wish as a professional is to make farmers adopt a sustainable technology based in its profitability, so being in a NGO, government or private sector, I wish to create or evolve a technology, maybe in the field of plague and disease remote sensing and early detection.