

Re-Inventing Japan Project (Long Term)

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Being part of the Re-Inventing Japan Project has been the most wonderful and enriching experience I have had as a student and as a human being. Previously I already knew that Tokyo NODAI is a prestigious university that is very committed to the development of agriculture in various countries of the world and that to achieve this, it had very well equipped laboratories and facilities. The courses offered by the program looked very interesting and related to my previous studies at my university (Universidad Nacional Agraria La Molina), they would give me a different perspective on the world agricultural reality and the challenges that it presents today from the economic, social and environmental point of view. Thus, I was totally convinced that I would not miss this opportunity because I would expand my knowledge in a high level university with regard to academics and I would have the fortune to do so in a country socially and culturally different from mine; the experience could not be more complete and I decided to apply to the program to study five months in Tokyo NODAI.

Tokyo NODAI

I arrived in Japan on September 19, 2018 after a very long trip, somewhat anxious and very excited to know everything that I enjoyed living in those five months. Days prior to the start of the new semester of Tokyo NODAI on the Setagaya campus, the CIP coordinators gave us the necessary information to develop in the student's environment. I met my host-professor and they referred me to the Tropical Crops laboratory, I knew the facilities of the university (laboratories, library, classrooms, cafeteria, etc.) all very well equipped and with good infrastructure.

Starting the semester, the first week was a trial period to experiment and learn the content of the courses for our final registration. The courses I decided to take were five: Ecoly and Food Production, Comparative Development Agriculture, Comparative Food Production Technologies, Food and Health 2 and Molecular Biology and Biotechnology. Most courses were shared with students from different parts of the world and all classes were very participative, open to dialogue and discussion among the students which allowed the classes to be more enriching as we learned about the cases and events of their countries .

- ✓ Ecology and Food Production provides the fundamental agroecological concepts to understand the current reality of agriculture, the problems it faces and possible solutions from the point of view of sustainability and environmental conservation.
- ✓ Comparative Development Agriculture, informs us about scientific research and agricultural extension works in Asian and African countries that help to have a better understanding not only of the agricultural reality but also social, cultural, economic and political.
- ✓ Comparative Food Production Technologies is about recent research in food production and its relationship with environmental problems that climate change has caused in agriculture, as well as the explanation of possible alternatives to project ourselves to a more sustainable agriculture in the future.
- ✓ Food and Health 2 explains the relationship between food and healthy life through studies on food composition (mostly Japanese), organoleptic components, texture of food, among others and its impact on the eating habits of society.
- ✓ Molecular Biology and Biotechnology presents scientific studies on molecular biology in the agricultural area.

Additionally, within the subjects that could be studied were Japanese language classes at intermediate and advanced level. However I could not take any of these since the courses had high difficulty for my level so I took the course for beginners and learned by myself.

Field - trip Samegawa Village

During my stay in Japan, I had the opportunity to visit Samegawa Village twice, located in Fukushima prefecture at the invitation of Professor Teruaki Irire. For me, these two visits will be unforgettable and will always carry out that memory in my heart.

In those two visits I had the opportunity to learn about the dynamics of the Satoyama environment and the community's efforts to preserve. Sustainability activities were included in the same place to help the community voluntarily as an example of cutting trees to provide them with care. livestock feeding, among others. I also visited some fields of Fuji apple where I learned what are the main pests of the crop in Japan, where I noticed the value that is given to the consumption of fruits in this country.

On the other hand we made other activities where I could exchange experiences and learn from the culture of other Japanese students. I learned how to prepare traditional dishes such as mochi, konnyaku and enjoy delicious Japanese food like nabe, onigiri, kare, among others.



Internship in ERECON and study visit to Kashiwade

December began with the visit to "Kashiwade" in Chiba prefecture. This is a store of fresh vegetables harvested by a complex of 230 farmers in the area. Inside it we find mainly potatoes, turnips, roots and even flowers. The purpose of the place is not only the sale of vegetables but also the exchange of knowledge between consumers and producers through experiential activities to promote agriculture and local consumption. The place also has a restaurant called "Sanji House" where we enjoyed a vegetarian buffet.



After the visit to Kashiwade we went to the Kikkoman factory, a Japanese corporation dedicated mainly to the sale of soy sauce and other seasonings. There they gave us information about the history, elaboration, qualities and use of soy sauce.

In February with other exchange students from Brazil and Mexico we participated for a week in an internship at ERECON "The Institute of Environmental Rehabilitation and Conservation, which is a non-profit institution that seeks to encourage sustainable development by integrating the use of natural resources , environment, agriculture, as well as the social aspect, in different Asian countries. This internship has broadened my

outlook on sustainability issues and how institutions ERECON seek to help with ecological practices in rural Asia. I have managed to raise awareness of the importance of the social aspect in the development of an extension project. We take classes on soil composition and composting and pellet compost, issues on Sustainable farming in Nepal and at the end of the internship, rural area dedicated to agriculture was visited very close to the institution where several fields of crops were observed, some of them organic and directed by NGOs that seek to recover the Satoyama environment.



Tokyo – Kyoto – Osaka – Nara – Hiroshima

Leaving aside the academic part, knowing the culture and interacting with Japanese society without a doubt made me a better human being. During my stay in Japan I was able to meet several districts, all with acquaintances for a particular characteristic or particularity. I was able to contrast the modern traditional Japan and learn from the customs and traditions of each of the places I visited.

I had the opportunity to visit many places in Tokyo, being the Japanese capital somewhat less calm than other places, with luminous signs, many people walking fast and pop culture very striking and original. Among the places I visited are: Shibuya, Shinjuku, Yokohama, Ueno, Asakusa, Kawasaki, Tachikawa, Odaiba and many others besides other memorable places like Kamakura.

During the winter holidays in January, I took the opportunity to visit the Kansai area: Kyoto, Osaka and Nara. I was able to know the 3 places in a week. I lived new experiences, enjoyed gastronomy and visited many places I had previously only known on television or documentaries such as: Fushimi Inari Taisha, Kiyomizu-dera, Ginkaku-ji, Kinkaku-ji, Nara park, Todaiji temple, Dotombori and many others plus. For me it was a dream come true.

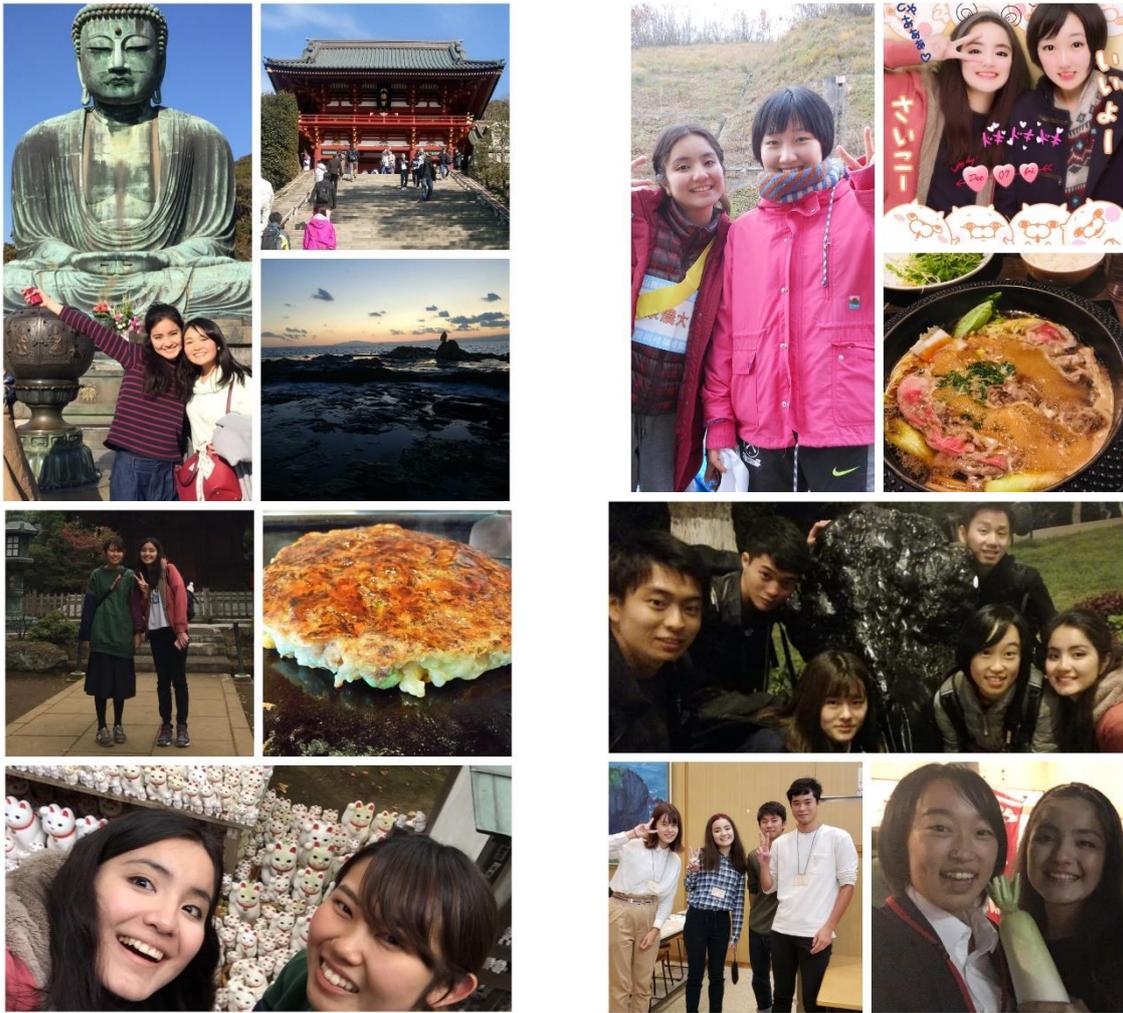
Some of these places I visited alone, others with family or friends. It was the first time I planned so many visits alone, making reservations and taking control of my money.



People in Tokyo NODAI

Since my arrival in Tokyo Nodai I felt at home. The CIP coordinators always kept abreast of us and cared about our wellbeing and development in the university. The Japanese students, despite not knowing my language (Spanish), were very interested in knowing more about my culture and were always willing to help me if I had any doubts, from the academic to the simplest, such as what train to take. Absolutely all the people and friendships that I formed in Tokyo NODAI were very hospitable to me and they always made me feel part of them.

I made many friendships from Japan and other countries in my classes, roommates, university events, laboratory with which I hope to keep in touch for many more years and with which I will be eternally grateful for having accompanied me and shared with me pleasant moments in my five months of stay in Japan. I thought it would be more difficult to make friends but luckily my thinking was wrong. The language barrier was not an impediment and I enjoyed the company of every person I met, everyone contributed something to me and I got the best and warmest memories.



Future

Without a doubt, this scholarship has influenced me in a positive way both in my personal life and as a future professional. I have known the true value of money and I have learned to prioritize the most important expenses, as well as to save money for my extra-curricular activities and also to organize well my schedules and times. Besides being five months living alone for the first time and sharing a Space with other people has made me a stronger person mentally and also tolerant.

Definitely the courses I took in Tokyo NODAI gave me the knowledge and social awareness about issues related to environmental sustainability that can be applied to try to solve some problems that afflict rural areas and vulnerable populations dedicated to agriculture in my country. The scientific advances and research carried out in Japan in this area have shown me that there is much to be done in Peru and I intend to contribute to the improvement of the agricultural system by sharing the knowledge I have acquired in my research group and with students from other universities.

Advices

For future international students in Tokyo NODAI

1. The classes of the Re-Inventing Japan Project are taught in the English language, however, having a prior knowledge of the Japanese language will help you to have a better performance outside the classrooms with other students and in your daily life in general.
2. Manage your money well. Prioritize your basic needs such as your food, transportation and be responsible for the payment of your health insurance.
3. Participate in all activities offered by the CIP and the university in general. This will allow you to relate to other students, learn and enjoy them and form bonds of friendship that will last forever.
4. Do not miss the opportunity to know all the places you can, here also lies the importance of good money management.
5. Do not be shy I try to speak Japanese although you still do not know the language well, it will help you to familiarize yourself with the grammar and without realizing it you will learn from a few.

To improve the program

1. The Japanese course for beginners could be more intensive (grammatically), it would also be a good idea to take more hours a week.
2. Teachers with a better level of the English language, some of the teachers have a bad pronunciation of the language which makes the understanding of the class difficult.