

# Japan: A Gate Open to the World

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## 1. Introduction

First of all, I would like to thank the editor for giving me a chance to express my experiences in research and life in Japan with readers of IEICE-CS GLOBAL NEWSLETTER. Regarding my brief introduction, I am Ngoc T. Dang from Vietnam. Thanks to the Monbukagakusho scholarship, I joined Computer Communication Lab. of the University of Aizu (UoA) in 2007 as a PhD. student. After graduation in 2010, I went back to my country to continue my job as a lecturer at Posts and Telecommunications Institute of Technology (PTIT), Vietnam. Currently, I am a visiting researcher at Computer Communications Lab., UoA.

I gained a lot of valuable experiences during my three-year study in Japan. It can be said, both literally and figuratively, that Japan is a gate open to the world for me. From Japan, I have travelled to many countries in the world. In addition, study in Japan helps me to approach to the world of advanced knowledge. I also have a lot of new friends from all over the world during my stay in Japan. Especially, I really admire the world of Japanese culture and people.

## 2. To Other Countries in the World

I went to Japan in October of 2007. This is my first trip to a foreign country. From Japan, I have visited many other countries such as India, USA, Australia, Germany, Korea and China. My dream of traveling around the world comes true.



Fig. 1 Attending ATNAC 2009 in Australia thanks to travel grant supported by NEC C&C foundation

To be able to visit such a many countries, I did try my best to do research, write and submit papers to international conferences. In addition, the travel grants

supported by Japanese foundations for the promotion of science have helped me a lot. I would like to give special thanks to Aizu Area Foundation for the Promotion of Education and Science; Telecommunication Advancement Foundation [1]; NEC C&C Foundation [2]; and Research Foundation for the Electro-technology of Chubu [3] for awarding me travel grants to attend international conferences.

I have gained many things from attending international conferences. The most important thing is the improvement of my communication and presentation skills. Also, I know how to make a travel plan. I learned more about the people and the culture of different countries. Moreover, experience from traveling helps me to seamlessly adapt to any environment.



Fig. 2 The UoA 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary logomark

## 3. To the World of Advanced Knowledge

Before going to Japan, there was lack of chances and good research conditions for me to do high quality research in my country. It was also difficult for me to approach to advanced knowledge in my field of study. Therefore, my research achievements were limited.

Everything has been changed since I went to Japan. Japan is a developed country and a world leader in many technological fields. Japan also has one of the best education systems. Here, I can find anything I need for doing research such as approaching to state-of-the-art technologies, doing research at modern laboratories, and studying under the guidance of outstanding professors.

After three-year study in UoA, Japan, I had achieved all goals to complete my research to the best of my standard. The results I got here are not only a Ph.D. degree but also experiences in doing high quality research. Especially, the experiences in doing high quality research are very helpful for my job as an University lecturer in my home country. Even after I came back to my country, I am still able to do research

at high level and publish my papers in international academic journals. Thus, Japan is really a gate open to the world of advanced knowledge for me. “**To Advance Knowledge for Humanity**” is also the slogan of my university, the University of Aizu (as seen Fig. 2).

#### 4. To the World of Friendship

There are a lot of people from all over the world living and studying in Japan. Moreover, my university has an international education and research environment with approximately 40% of the faculty being non-Japanese [4]. This helps me to have many new friends from other countries such as Korea, India, China, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Tunisia, Germany, Colombia, USA and, of course, Japan.



Fig. 3 The IVTA 1<sup>st</sup> Anniversary in 2010

I had such a great time with my friends in Japan. We did many activities together such as volleyball, ping-pong, skiing, climbing... Our volleyball club, named the International Volleyball Team of Aizu (IVTA, Fig. 3), has currently over one hundred members from about twenty countries all over the world. Although many of my friends, including myself, had left Japan, we still keep connection with each other and share information about our work and life.

#### 5. To the World of Japanese Culture and People

Japan besides being a world leading country in economics, science and technology also has a fascinating and multifaceted culture with the traditions dating back thousands of years. Many unique characteristics in Japanese culture that are well-known in the world include cherry blossoms, food, tea ceremony, ikebana, bonsai, and festivals. Aizu-wakamatsu city (Fukushima prefecture), where my university is located, was a castle town during the Edo period. Therefore, I had a chance to visit many historical buildings and sites, such as Tsuruga Castle (Fig. 5), Oyaku-en Garden, that belonged to the lord of Aizu, samurai houses, Mt. Iimori-yama (a symbol of the process in the formation of modern Japan), and Otsuka-yama-kofun, one of the oldest burial mounds in the Tohoku region [5]. I really enjoyed the culture and tradition of Japan.

About the Japanese people, I totally agree with the comment that the Japanese hold special personality characteristics of resilience, patience, industriousness

and helpfulness that assist in overcoming hardships. I admire the Japanese people for overcoming the difficulties after the earthquake, tsunami and nuclear problems that hit their country in 2011. I regret that I was not in Japan during that time to witness it. I am also impressed by the recovery at astonishing speed of Japan after three shocks, especially in Fukushima prefecture. I am very proud to talk with my friends in Vietnam that I have lived in Fukushima and I have many friends there. I came back Fukushima three times since 2012, and I hope to come back here again in the future.



Fig. 4 GETA (Japanese clogs), a gift from my Japanese friend



Fig. 5 Hanami 2008 at Tsuruga Castle, Aizu-wakamatsu city

#### 6. Conclusion

Japan was a gate open to the world for me in the past and now it is a gate open to the world for my students from Vietnam. One of my students has got master degree from UoA, and is now working in Japan. Two other ones are following the master program in UoA. I believe that they will succeed in the future with the advanced knowledge and priceless experience obtained during study in Japan.

#### 7. Reference

- [1] <http://www.taf.or.jp/>.
- [2] <http://www.candc.or.jp/en/index.html>.
- [3] <http://www.006.upp.so-net.ne.jp/refec/WELCOME.HTM>.
- [4] <http://www.u-aizu.ac.jp/e-index.html>.
- [5] <http://www.japan-guide.com/e/e7700.html>