



SCHOOL OF MODERN LANGUAGES
NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY
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My Experience in Japan

By Dagija Kugeviciute (BA Hons Japanese
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I am a third year Japanese & Cultural Studies student at Newcastle University. As part of my course, I am currently spending a year

abroad in Hiroshima city, Japan and I can easily say that so far it has been one of the best years of my life.

Going to Japan was my biggest dream for a long time but when I finally came here it even exceeded my expectations. I could not imagine that during this relatively short time in Japan I would gain so much valuable experience of life and confidence in my language ability. I know that after I leave Japan, I will miss the harmony of everyday life, the beautiful Japanese language, the kindness of Japanese people which often makes you feel owing so much that you cannot give back, impressive temples with subtle smells of incense sticks and the gongs of bells echoing in the air, and so much more.

When I came to Japan, the first couple of weeks of adaptation were not that easy. However, I soon got used to daily life here because from the very first days I noticed that Hiroshima Shudo University's staff was always ready to help and involve us in various interesting events with the local people. Also, each of the international students had a Japanese buddy (provided by the university) who would keep



us company and help out whenever we needed assistance. Moreover, I had a chance to make several wonderful friends not only from Japan but from all over the world and thanks to them, I never felt alone.

I think Hiroshima is a great place to spend a year abroad not only because of its historical importance which can be felt every day but also it is a perfect city for people who like taking pictures, you can find nature, traditional and city life here; even my room looked out upon beautiful scenery of river and mountains.

I recommend everyone to challenge yourself to learn Japanese and to come to this beautiful country because it will definitely become one of the irreplaceable experiences of your life.



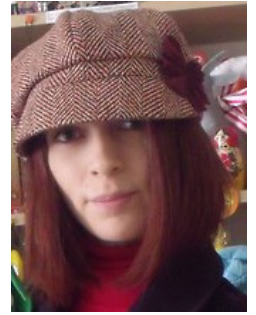
My First Year of Japanese

By Lornafay Dickinson (Japanese and Cultural Studies BA Honours)



Illustrated by Lornafay Dickinson

I've had an avid interest in Japan and its culture for as long as I can remember. My passion lies within anime, manga and Japanese music, so learning the language was something I was very interested in. I started studying Japanese and Culture this year and so far it is one of the most rewarding things I've ever done. The course is intense but also a lot of fun and Japanese is such a unique language that I would encourage anyone to give it a go. Over the last year at Newcastle, I've made some good friends that I could share my interests with and also, thanks to the cultural side of my course, I learned a lot about Japanese Culture which I wasn't aware of. I'm looking forward to continuing my course over the next three years so that I can continue to develop my language skills. I'm especially looking forward to experiencing Japan for myself during my year abroad, which I think is definitely an advantage to this course, as it is giving me many opportunities that I might not have had before. Not only this, but the opportunity to speak with native Japanese



speakers has also been very important to me, as I have learned a lot about Japan and the language from them, too!

By Marcus Forrester (Modern Languages BA Honours)

My first year of studying Japanese at Newcastle University has been a truly amazing one. My school, much like many other schools in England, didn't offer Japanese as a subject at A-level or GCSE so to start learning an



Illustrated by Marcus Forrester

Asian language was something completely new to me; something new but just as exciting. I must admit though, at first, it seemed quite daunting to learn such a different language and the pace started out to be quite challenging but I soon got used to the routine of learning the weekly grammar, vocabulary and kanji. Before I knew it I was able to read hiragana and katakana with a degree of ease which was really rewarding. Here at Newcastle, it's really easy to surround yourself in a language which is great for beginners. I found myself a tandem partner with whom I meet up weekly and there is also

the weekly 'Oshaberikai' ran by the Anglo-Japanese society. This has meant that I have been able to improve my speaking through practice with natives; something that I'd never been able to do before at sixth form. So it's safe to say that I've really enjoyed Japanese at Newcastle University. It's an awesome language, a great course, and it's taught by great teachers and I'm very glad I've had the chance to study Japanese here. 日本語はとても楽しい



In my room at my accommodation. Trying to learn the Kana!

My experiences in Japan

By Daniel Bird (BA Hons Modern Languages)

I spent this year just outside of Tokyo, in the Saitama prefecture of Japan, studying Japanese at Dokkyo University. My degree at Newcastle is Spanish and Japanese, and as Japanese is the language which I have studied less, and because it is arguably a much more difficult language to learn than a European one, I have spent my entire year abroad here in Japan.

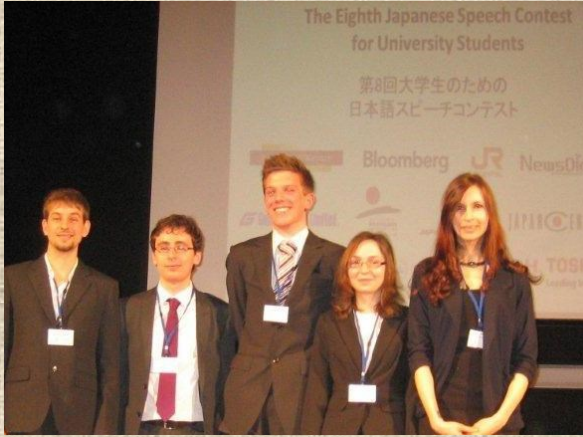
Japan is very different to the UK in many ways. For me the biggest difference was the attitudes of Japanese people compared to those of the UK. Things which happen quite a lot in the UK such as somebody speaking loudly or playing music on the bus/train would never happen in Japan. Japanese people are very intent on keeping face and staying reserved and quiet in these types of situations. One thing that I found quite difficult to adapt to was the amount of people on a daily basis who would stare at me because I was a foreigner. I guess this happens less in big cities such as Tokyo or Kyoto, but as I was studying in a lesser visited Japanese prefecture, I was getting a lot of attention!

My favourite thing about this year has been the opportunity to get out of the university environment and really see Japan. The crazy geek culture of Tokyo with all of its modern, and exciting video games in Akihabara, as well as the excellent restaurant hub of the lesser visited Kanda, here you can eat gorgeous Japanese pancakes or the most crunchy fried chicken with pickled peppers in the local Izakaya (Japanese bar/restaurant place...a very social atmosphere!).

I've also visited a few places a bit further afield in Japan. Kusatsu, the onsen (hot springs) town in the snowy North, where every hotel or establishment has it's own private onsen which make visitors feel like they've paid hundreds of pounds for access to this relatively cheap yet incredibly relaxing feature of Japanese culture. I've also been to the Geisha district and temples of Kyoto, where I visited again an Onsen, this time on a mountain side forest...beautiful!



Japan's culture is ridiculously different to anything I've ever seen in Europe, and is a country which is definitely worth a visit! It's also a great place to go if you get 3am karaoke cravings (not like the UK in a bar...you get a private room with your friends) or fancy treating yourself to a midday sushi snack. Either way, you'll get to experience something really different from what you're used to at home, and have a lot of fun!



Japanese Speech Contest for University Students



We are proud to introduce Anna Mihejeva, Stage 4 student (here on the right) who was successfully chosen as a finalist of the 8th Japanese Speech Contest. This is the third consecutive year that we have succeeded in producing a finalist in such a prestige contest as this.

My Year in Japan

By Emma Wilson (BA Hons Linguistics with Japanese)

I can honestly say that deciding to do a year abroad in Japan was the best decision I made in my University career. It sounds like an exaggeration but I met so many wonderful people from, not just Japan but, from Taiwan, China, Korea, America, Australia and many more. It's an opportunity and experience that I would recommend to anyone. You can really learn about the culture first hand while still being under the protection and care of the University.



I lived in Hiroshima City for my study abroad and when I arrived my Japanese was not amazing and I had next no real world speaking experience. If I'm honest; I was a little scared and all I wanted to do was call my mum. However, I soon realised how incredibly friendly everyone was and how eager they are to help you get settled in. Within the first week or so I had my apartment with internet set up and I could Skype with my parents. I quickly adjusted to the Japanese way of life and one of the many advantages of being a University student in Japan is that you have quite a bit of time to have fun!

The term times are different in Japan so you actually arrive in their second semester. This means that you get two months off for Spring break in February and March which is a great opportunity to travel. I went to the southern island of Kyushu for a few days which was beautiful and had my first experience on the Bullet Train! The Japanese transport systems are incredible and the Bullet Train is definitely my favourite way to get around. It is a little expensive but it goes at about 180 miles an hour and gets you places in no time. In the two months I also saw Tokyo and visited friends in Ise.



Fortunately, at Hiroshima Shudo (my University) we were able to choose our own classes. There were many to choose from and some were even taught bilingually. As well as language classes I did classes in Japanese culture, novels and film. I even took a Chinese language class in second semester which was a lot of fun! I think for anyone who likes to experience new things and is willing to jump in at the deep end Japan is the place to go!

Newcastle University's Anglo-Japanese Society



Newcastle University not only allows you the rare opportunity of doing a degree in Japanese but also provides you with a social group for British and Japanese students alike. You can discover more about Japanese culture and show the Japanese students a bit of your own culture (yes, it's interesting to them!) whilst making new friends from all over the world, taking part in Japanese activities and learning some Japanese, whether you are doing a degree in Japanese or not.



My name is Annie and I am the president of the Anglo-Japanese Society this year. Being involved with the society has undoubtedly been one of the highlights of my four years at Newcastle University. I have made lots of Japanese friends, learnt more about the culture and massively improved my Japanese through making friends. When you first arrive at university, joining a society is one of the best ways of making new friends instantly! Run and organised by your fellow students, the Anglo-Japanese Society strives to make everyone feel integrated.

We hold frequent socials and activities throughout the year. To name a few: weekly language exchange meetings, where everyone meets at a Japanese café in town and speak a mixture of English and Japanese; pub quizzes; Japanese film nights; trips around the UK – Edinburgh, Beamish museum, York, Alnwick Castle; nights out; money raising for the Tsunami Appeal; a variety of themed par-



ties – Halloween, Christmas, Pancake Day and Japanese food parties. Then our most famous annual events are the Winter Ball and the Boat Party, a chance for everyone to get dressed up nicely, have a three-course meal and have a drink and dance (all held on a boat for the Boat Party!) We also have ties with the Japanese university, Teikyō University in Durham who organise the Boat Party which takes place in Durham and who also hold an annual Japanese festival in the autumn that we attend.

The Anglo-Japanese Society is always full of an amazing selection of fun, interesting, enthusiastic and diverse people. If you will be studying Japanese at Newcastle University then joining is a must! But even if you just have an interest in what we do, EVERYONE is welcome!



Contact us

For information about admissions please contact Lesley Sherrin
Tel: 0191 222 5082, e-mail: sml@ncl.ac.uk
or visit <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/sml/research/subjects/eastasian/>

