

ADVERTISEMENTS



Living in Japan for a few years will help you develop as a person and see things from a new perspective



~ This is not just a story far away from you but a real story near you. It might become your own story one day anytime...

Introduction

A growing numbers of international students continue to embark on their journey to pursue higher education in Japan. Renown for high quality education, Japanese universities currently offer almost 1,000 programmes taught fully in English (about 150 at undergraduate and 850 postgraduate level). The opportunity to earn a degree without being a native Japanese speaker has made Japan a popular study destination for students attracted by its exotic culture, safety and surprisingly affordable living expenses. Here is an excellent speaker, Ms Nathalie Duval from Seychelles, who kindly agreed to share her experience of studying in Japan.

She was awarded the Japanese Government MEXT (*1) Scholarship, of which application will be open in April for Seychellois, administered by the Embassy of Japan in Seychelles. She arrived in Japan in October 2020 under the Covid-19 chaos and started her academic career at the Naruto University of Education (NUE) pursuing Master of Education degree. Her story below would let you realise how a student from Seychelles could broaden his/her world by studying in Japan.

*1 MEXT stands for the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology – Japan



I enjoy visiting inspiring and historical spots in Japan. (Photo taken at the Kinkaku Temple registered as World Heritage since 1994.)

Message from Nathalie

Language barrier

There is a general idea in the world that the Japanese language is very difficult to learn and that it is difficult for foreigners to be able to cope in Japan because of this barrier. This might cause fears or worries for people who want to study in Japan. However, the fact is that it is not as bad as it appears to be. I have been in Japan for over one year, nevertheless, I have never gotten any desire to quit my studies and go back home because of the language issue. Neither did I have any problem to get my needs met or issues solved. Being an international student is really a privilege due to the amount of care and attention given to us. Hence, to clear any fears, the best advice I can give is that, before coming to Japan, it will be to your advantage to start learning some basic Japanese. Some ways of doing that is by watching online videos and visiting some webpages (2*).

*2 Several recommendations for online learning Japanese are shown here. <https://www.studyin-japan-africa.com/learn-japanese/>

However, there would be no need to worry because many universities in Japan usually have Japanese language programmes for international students. In my case, I did a six-month Intensive Language Course at the Tokushima University before moving to my university, where I also took some Japanese classes alongside my other courses. After learning something in a Japanese class, you often come across some of them either in the shops, on TV, on a sign, during a con-

versation and so on, which you actually understand perfectly. It is such a wonderful moment giving me feeling of achieving a milestone! Just for fun, I sometimes listen to random people's conversation around me, not to eavesdrop but to see how much I can pick up!

The reason why I chose Japan for my studies

I learned in depth about Japan while I was completing my undergraduate degree in Botswana. I chose a course entitled 'Civilisation and Modernisation in China and Japan'. I learned a lot about the history of Japan, its rapid reconstruction after the war, emphasis on values and work ethics and the way and how their cultures were to a large extent preserved despite increased development. In addition to that, my lecturer in that course had studied in Japan and the manner he delivered the lectures passionately by sharing his experience in Japan increased my desire to go to Japan either for holiday, cultural exchange or study programme.

I am currently pursuing a Master's degree in Global Education and this course aims to introduce students to the comparative study of education around the world and how it is comparable to that of Japan. NUE has experience of international educational cooperation and international exchange in the field of teacher education. It trains "teachers who try to learn from the world, think with the world and teach in the world" with abilities to respond to cultural diversity and tackle educational issues with independence. My research focuses on a comparative study of the history subject in Seychelles and Japan.

Impression of Japan

My image about Japan now is what I initially imagined and much more. The people are extremely punctual, very diligent and efficient in all their work, having a high level of cleanliness, healthy food and physically active lifestyle, which are all not only worth experiencing but also adopting as one's habit and lifestyle. During my interaction with my professors, course mates, friends and other people, I got to learn, appreciate and adopt these principles they live by. I have also seized the chance to take part of various exchange programmes organised by different schools or the local board of education, where we, foreigners, regularly interact with elementary, junior and senior high school students. These programmes not only give us opportunities to present our home country, but also help Japanese students to get opportunities to interact with foreigners and develop their ability of communication in English.

In these programmes, I learned one game from the students and found myself playing often was the Japanese version of rock, paper scissors called *janken*. There is also a community group organised by numerous citizens where we meet and discuss about our home countries and share information regarding our daily life experiences in Japan. The university also organised some trips for us. For example, we toured a traditional Japanese puppet (*ningyo joruri*) museum followed by a puppet show and a small session on how to operate the puppets. We also experienced the paper making factory (*washi*) and gotten the chance to create my own postcard from scratch, another interesting visit was the pottery making workshop (*tôgei*) where I molded my own pot! This is just to name a few. I was particularly impressed with the way Japan handled the 2020 Olympics. It is evident that only very few developed countries would have been able to host the event in such a situation as efficiently as Japan did.

What is nice in Japan

Fully funded-scholarships and partial financial supports are available for Seychellois to live and study in Japan. Many good reasons to study in Japan especially for women is that Japan is one of the safest countries in the world with extremely low crime rates. The people are very polite and courteous, hence you will not feel left out. Japan has a rich cultural heritage together with ideas borrowed from other countries which are infused with existing customs to become something distinctly Japanese. For example, during my visit to Kyoto, on a normal day I could see many people walking around



in town dressed in the traditional Kimono and woden sandals but at the same time using their iPhones to chat. Another example is that the famous KitKat chocolate has diverse flavours in Japan such as green tea (*matcha*) and strawberry and so on. The fact that there are some flavours which one would probably not imagine has made it become uniquely Japanese. And not to forget the pizza flavours...

From my personal experience, I can say Japan has proven to be efficient in the way they have handled the Covid-19 pandemic. Based on Japan's high education ranking and international assessments ranking, it is evident that Japan has a high educational standards. Therefore, it will be a good opportunity to be studying in such an environment. Living in Japan for a few years will help you to develop as a person and to see things from a new perspective. It is an excellent way to invest in yourself and your future. In addition, if you seize this opportunity well, you will develop hands-on skills that will make you stand out from others.

Information on Japanese Government MEXT scholarship
Through the Embassy of Japan in Seychelles, Seychellois can get an opportunity to apply for the fully sponsored government scholarship. The application window opens once a year in late April, which is usually for the next year April's admission. Visit the website of the Embassy of Japan in Seychelles (<https://www.sc.emb-japan.go.jp/>) or their Facebook (@JapaninSeychelles) and check its eligibility.

Japanese university search

For assistance on identifying the various study options in Japan, MEXT entrusted Study in Japan Global Network Project Regional Office in Sub-Saharan Africa to provide essential information such as what universities there are to apply. This office has a Data Portal which allows users to search their ideal programme according to major and degree one wishes to study.

University Search Data Portal <https://studyin-japan-africa-portal.com/>

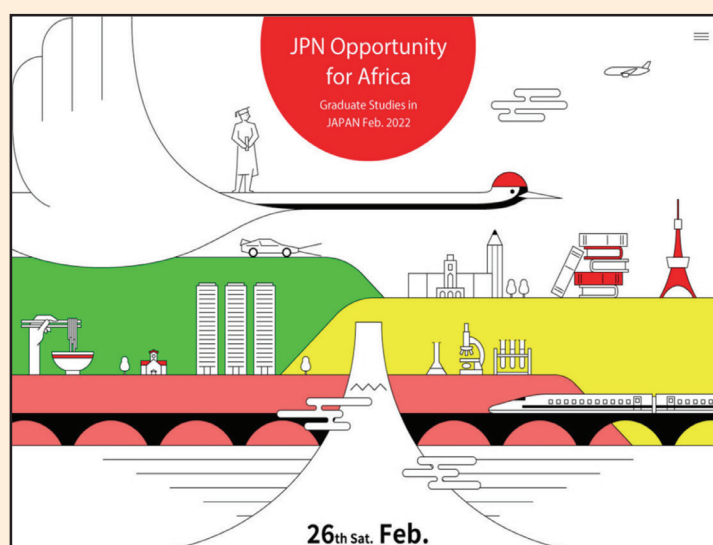
Study in Japan ONLINE fair to be held on Saturday February 26, 2022!!!

Study in Japan Global Network Project Regional Office in Sub-Saharan Africa is glad to announce that the study in Japan online fair "JPN Opportunities for Africa: Graduate Studies in JAPAN Feb. 2022" is coming soon. If you consider going abroad for your graduate studies, just register and e-meet with university staff in Japan directly on the day. We try our best to make this coming Saturday memorable for your future career.

Register from here. <https://www.studyin-japan-africa.com/>

For any further inquiries, search "Study in Japan for Africa" on the internet. We are there for you.

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