



# A YEAR IN JAPAN

TO MARTIN STRICKER, CHAIRMAN OF THE SCHOLARSHIP FUND

*Swiss – Japanese Chamber of Commerce*

*Scholarship Fund*

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## Preface

I would like to start my report with thanking Mr. Martin Stricker, Chairman of the SJCC Scholarship Fund for his continuous support, the SJCC with all its donors who ultimately make it possible for young students to add a year in Japan to their education and the SCCIJ for offering a free membership for university students and therefore enabled me to attend their events in Japan.

Especially I want to thank my Mother and Father for their never-ending support all my life. Without them I would have not been able to live the life I have now. They assisted me when I felt lonely and when I was on the brink of giving up.

It feels like yesterday when I applied for the scholarship and, to my own surprise, got accepted for it. In fact, it happened more than one year ago. Motivated by the positive result I started to compare different language schools and settled for the Kyoto Japanese Language School, KJLS which is, as the name suggest, located in Kyoto. Distracted from writing my bachelor thesis, the three months between the application for the school and the granting of the Certificate of Eligibility, COE passed fast. Only another two months later I found myself travelling to Japan.

The first three months in Japan passed relatively slow as I was fascinated every day by new things I discovered. However, these things became more and more ordinary and mundane and let me fall into a little depression in late December. The fact that I had not found a single suitable internship aggravated my feelings even more. However, through the support of my family and the relocation to the dormitory of the school I managed to shake it off and regain the incentive to continue my journey in Japan.

In fact, my life changed with the new year and I got accepted shortly afterwards as an intern in the company I most wanted to work in, ever since I had received the scholarship. Even though this meant that I needed to return to Switzerland for six weeks, I was energised by the possibility that opened up.

Now that I am writing this report I look back on my time in Japan and am surprised that already ten months have passed since I entered Japan and received my resident card. I look back on the hard but satisfying time in the language school, the many festivals in and around Kyoto I could attend, all the new friends I could make and the good times we had together and finally the time when my friends and family came to visit me in Japan.

I hope that this report, even though full of text and almost containing no pictures, will be helpful for either someone who is asking himself whether he/she should apply for the scholarship or someone who already got granted for it and is preparing for his/her stay in Japan.

*Italic text* indicates cross references while untranslatable words are placed in square brackets.

## Introduction

### Motivation

During my stay the question why I selected Japan for my time abroad in, out of all the other places that I could have chosen instead, came up on quite frequently. Nevertheless, it is difficult to find the right words to express my true motivation and fascination about Japan.

I have always been fascinated by foreign cultures and customs. According to my friends, I even adapted to the local habits in every country I visited on vacation. Unlike other foreigners in Japan I did not have a specific fascination for this country, that may come up from reading manga or anime during childhood. Instead, I fell in love with the country rather late, namely on my first travel outside of Europe in 2013. To celebrate new year eve, my friend and I decided to travel outside of Europe to an Asian city and after considering the possibilities, we decided to visit Tokyo. I had the greatest holiday of my life and I was instantly fascinated from the completely different culture. I started to save money upon my return to Switzerland only to travel to Japan again six months later to see more of the country than solely Tokyo.

During my time in university the idea of doing an internship abroad solidified. My positive recent experiences in Japan and Asia's aviation market being one of the fastest growing in the world, led me to the decision to travel to Japan.

By coincidence I heard of the SJCC Scholarship program in a presentation about the open possibilities after graduation, pointing out the benefits a semester or year abroad can bring. After informing myself about the scholarship and going through some reports I felt that the program of SJCC would suit my desires perfectly. The guideline of having to spend 12 months in Japan out of which three to six months should contain attending an intensive language course and another additional six to nine months of gaining practical experience as an intern was a perfect fit. I concluded that this would enable me to get a more profound insight into Japanese culture and the language whilst gaining work experience in an Asian country.

In order to be admissible to apply for the scholarship, I handed in my CV in November 2015, a year before the scheduled departure to Japan, but due to the change of the Chairman of the Scholarship Fund from Mr. Paul Dudler to Mr. Martin Stricker exactly during this time my letter of interest was left unseen. However, after contacting the Chairman again in December I received the application form and after my university exams could send it in with all appending documents end of February 2016. As a result, I was invited for an interview in Basel with Mr. Martin Stricker one month later and got accepted as a recipient of the scholarship in May the same year. It was the beginning of a new chapter in my life and I began to organise my stay in Japan on the same day.

# INTRODUCTION

## Timeline

As an overview I have listed the major events in the table below.

TIME	EVENT
<b>December 2013</b>	First travel to Japan
<b>February 2014</b>	First heard of the SJCC scholarship
<b>November 2015</b>	Requested the application form
<b>February 2016</b>	Applied for the scholarship
<b>March 2016</b>	Interview with the Chairman of the Scholarship Fund
<b>May 2016</b>	Acceptance as a recipient of the scholarship
<b>May 2016</b>	Applied for the language school in Kyoto
<b>July 2016</b>	Finished Bachelor's degree at ZHAW
<b>August 2016</b>	Received the Certificate of Eligibility
<b>September 2016</b>	Received the visa from the embassy
<b>October 2016</b>	Arrived in Japan and started studies at my language school
<b>March 2017</b>	Graduated from my language school
<b>April 2017</b>	Travelled back to Switzerland
<b>April 2017</b>	Acceptance for an internship at Swissport Japan
<b>June 2017</b>	Travelled again to Japan
<b>August 2017</b>	Received the working visa
<b>August 2017</b>	Started work at Swissport Japan

## Preparation and administrative work

Although many previous reports cover the preparation and administrative work needed for the year abroad, I would like to address this topic once again and try to provide the most recent information. A brief overview of the most relevant information can be found in the *Appendix Overview of preparation and administrative work*

I would like to mention that the information provided is, sometimes specific for my situation and can vary depending on the needs and expectations.

In this part, I concentrate mainly on the preparations needed in Switzerland as well as the administrative work in Japan without going too much into detail regarding the change of status of visa. Although I had to extensively deal with visa issues, namely waiting for the visa for four months and therefore returning to Switzerland for six weeks, my colleague Jean-Marc Sujata<sup>1</sup> has covered the Visa application and changing process in detail. Therefore, I will solely supplement his part with my personal experiences.

The best advice I can give for administrative work, whether it be in Switzerland or in Japan, is to stay calm. There might be situations in which one finds himself questioning the complexity and feel lost in administrative regulations. The latter applies especially for the administration in Japan. Unfortunately, the information you receive from the authorities changes depending on who is asked, even within the same unit or office. The best example is, that during the deregistration in Kyoto two women were discussing the best way to ensure that I am covered with the National Health Insurance during the movement process to Osaka, by accusing each other of providing me with wrong information.

By staying persistent without ever being impolite is usually the key to success. It makes “ダメ” (impossible) things magically possible in a fraction of the time otherwise necessary.

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<sup>1</sup> Sujata Jean-Marc (2017): A year in Japan. Midterm Report.

URL: <http://www.sjcc.ch/scholarship-fund/reports-testimonials/scholarship-reports/jean-marc-sujata>

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## In Switzerland

### Japanese Language School

After receiving the confirmation of the scholarship, the first thing to organise is the Japanese language school. In order to find the suitable language school the following points should be addressed:

- The city:  
Do you prefer to live in the metropolis Tokyo with its skyscrapers, entertainment districts and neon lights everywhere? For sure it can have a certain charm for Swiss people since it is totally different from any city in Switzerland. Further can living in one of the business centres, namely Tokyo or Osaka, enable you to find possible employers or business opportunities more easily.

Or do you want to explore other parts of Japan such as Hokkaido with its harsh weather in winter, with lots of snowfall and frozen seas, the Kansai region which used to be the political and cultural centre of Japan for many centuries, Japans third largest island Kyushu which represents the early centre of Japanese civilization and therefore offers many historic treasures and natural beauty or any other part of Japan?

For me it was certain that someday I wanted to live in a big city but still chose Kyoto as the place to complete my Japanese language studies. This is due to the fact that as an aviation engineer I expected to find an internship most likely in Tokyo and therefore would be living in a big city for at least six months anyway. Hence, I could choose Kyoto as a comparatively small city to experience more of Japan than just Tokyo and furthermore I felt that I would be able to concentrate more on my studies with less distraction.

However, I ended up with finding an internship in Osaka. And Kyoto, with a population of 1.4 million people only the seventh largest city of Japan, is after all still a relatively large city for Swiss standards with lots of potential distractions. Nevertheless, I do not regret to have chosen Kyoto at all since the language school turned out to be much more time consuming than I had initially thought and therefore, living in a big but comparatively slow-paced city with lots of temples, shrines and parks, helped me concentrate more on the important things as well as enabled me to maintain my mental balance.

- Entry date:  
Most Japanese Language Schools have two possible entry dates, namely April for the first term and October for the second term. Since the visa application requires up to three months, the application deadlines are in October/November for the first term and in April/May for the second term. However, due to limited space and the first-come first-serve policy it is very likely that a language school is full even before the



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application deadline. Depending on the date the scholarship is granted you should choose the entry date that not only suites you the best but also gives you some preparation time for the many required documents.

If you are not dependent on a certain entry date and you decide to study in Kyoto or the Kansai region in general, I totally recommend choosing the second term. Even though the cherry blossom-season (桜) is the most famous in Japan, I personally preferred the colourful leaves in autumn. The combination of Kyotos' temples with the famous maple tree leaves in a variety of colours is truly spectacular.



**Kyoto Botanical Garden in autumn**

- The language school:

My initial source of information for language schools was the website [www.gogonihon.com](http://www.gogonihon.com) which is, besides English, available in the three major languages of Switzerland. The website lists some language schools of Japan's major cities and categorises them in teaching methodology and intensity. Furthermore, it contains helpful information for the application process. However, I should mention that even though the service is free for prospective students, the website only lists schools that have a partnership with gogonihon. Hence, there are many more language schools to choose from which are just as good.

Due to the positive reviews from former recipients of the scholarship, my initial plan was to apply for the Kyoto Institute for Culture and Language, KICL<sup>2</sup>. Unfortunately, the school had no space left by the time I wanted to apply. Therefore, I listed all other language schools in Kyoto and wrote down the pros and cons of every school. The best website for independent information on Japanese language schools is maintained by

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.kicl.ac.jp/en>

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the Association for the Promotion of Japanese Language Education<sup>3</sup>. Besides the neutrality and integrity of this website the main advantage is that schools can be searched by specific prefectures. It also provides information such as the number of registered students with their origin, the number of teachers employed as well as the results of the Japanese-Language Proficiency Test, JLPT. This information was nowhere else to be found and important to me as my evaluation of the pros and cons focused on the percentage of western people in the school, the number of students per teacher and the certification rate in the JLPT. The reason why it is important to take the percentage of western people into account is simply because there are schools which try to attract Chinese and Taiwanese students who are used to the Asian teaching methodology and have little to no difficulties in learning 漢字 (Chinese characters). Hence, it is beneficial to choose a school that is more open to western people. After neglecting the schools which consisted of almost only Asian people the remaining schools were:

- Kyoto Japanese Language School, KJLS<sup>4</sup>
- Nihongo Center<sup>5</sup>
- Kyoto Minsai Japanese Language School<sup>6</sup>

Even though I compared all three schools to each other with the previously described criteria there was a draw between Nihongo Center and KJLS. Nihongo Center had the biggest western people percentage but KJLS had less students per teacher and a better certification rate. Eventually I chose KJLS mainly based on the impression I got from the respective schools' websites.

The application process for KJLS is by far the most complicated one<sup>7</sup> but paradoxically this tipped the balance to its advantage. It gave me the feeling of a reputable Language School.

Now, after attending six months of classes in KJLS, I am totally satisfied with my choice. In retrospect, I would add the choice of Japanese learning material used by the school as a criterion to the evaluation. KJLS and KICL use the Book "Minna no Nihongo" for beginners and students and Nihongo Center uses their own book. One should know that the Minna no Nihongo books are, in my opinion, the best books for communication and basic Japanese but not suited for people who intend to receive an JLPT Level Certificate, since the order of the Kanjis is rather random, unlike the order of the JLPT Levels.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.nisshinkyo.org/english/index.html>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.kjls.or.jp/>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.nihongo-center.com/>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.kyotominsai.co.jp/>

<sup>7</sup> <http://kjls.or.jp/download>

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Additionally I would rate my evaluation approach a little too scientific. Therefore, in conclusion I still recommend listing the pros and cons of the language schools that come into question but be sure to trust your instinct and, especially if you already started studies in Japanese and therefore using one of the many language books, choose a school that uses the same book rather than relying on their JLPT certification rate.

### Visa

I strongly recommend applying for the student visa and take advantage of the fact that most language schools will organise these visas for you. Although it takes more effort to fill out the respective forms compared to just entering Japan with a tourist visa, the student visa and the residence card that comes with it enable you to open a Japanese bank account, sign a mobile phone contract and most importantly rent an apartment<sup>8</sup>.

Once the application forms are filled in, the school issues a Certificate of Eligibility (COE) and sends it to you in Switzerland. In my case the time between sending the application forms and receiving the COE took exactly two months. With the COE, your passport, the visa application form<sup>9</sup>, and a passport conform photograph it is possible to receive the visa at the Japanese Embassy in Berne.

As soon as the visa is issued, which took only one week in my case, the preparations in Switzerland regarding visa are finished.

### Accommodation

Besides the visa application process most Language Schools assist you in matters of Accommodation. KJLS has one dormitory, two apartments and a Home Stay Program to choose from.

I decided to take part in the Home Stay Program offer by KJLS. It is designed for foreign students who are looking to improve their Japanese and at the same time learn about Japanese culture through a home stay and is not aiming to provide the cheapest accommodation possible. In fact, my home stay turned out to be slightly more expensive than living in a dormitory, as I had to commute between the home stay family, most of them live outside of the city centre, and the school. The goal of the program is that the student gets a profounder understanding of Japanese society and experiences the lifestyle of a Japanese family at first hand.

My feelings regarding the Home Stay Program are mixed. I was the only student at my guest family and had an entire two story apartment to myself. As Breakfast and Dinner are included in the price, this gives you the opportunity to experience a variety of Japanese dishes instead of

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<sup>8</sup> It is also possible to rent an apartment with the Tourist Visa but the choice of apartments is limited.

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.mofa.go.jp/files/000124528.pdf>

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sticking to ramen or sushi. However, every guest family has different characteristics such as time management, cost and duration of the commute to school and rules. This caused some trouble when it came to the times of meals, the night curfew and the restriction of use of equipment. The first host family that was introduced asked me to only use the shower in the evening and because I need a shower in the morning to wake up, I asked my school to find another guest family for me. I also heard of guest families who had more than ten students in their home which, sure enough, lead to the students' feeling being more in a hostel than in a true guest family. In contrast, a friend from KJLS which is also Swiss was so happy with her guest family that she stayed an entire year with them. Hence, choosing the Home Stay Program can either be a hole in one or can turn out to not match your expectations.

Nevertheless, I recommend applying for the Home Stay Program as it is a great opportunity to get used to the Japanese lifestyle. You get support for administrative work during the time when your Japanese is still quite limited and, should the guest family not fit at all, there is usually the possibility to change to a dormitory or apartment.

After the initial three months I changed to the dormitory of the school, where I shared the bathroom and kitchen with a classmate and could drive to school by bicycle. The dormitory of KJLS is called "Abreast Nishinotoin" (アブレスト) and is located directly in the city centre near the station <sup>からすまおいけ</sup>烏丸御池. Hence, instead of having to commute with the subway for 40 minutes I had a 10-minute bike-ride to school which saved me some money. All in all, I was happy to live in this dormitory that was close to a lot of places and out of all the possible housings from KJLS I can recommend it the most. Nevertheless, I sometimes missed the good times of my home stay.

### Luggage

Because I like to dress in different styles and wanted to be prepared for every situation I packed quite a mass of clothes. In total I had more than 60 kilos including a snow board. Thus, choosing the suitable airline can start by considering the baggage allowance. Most airlines allow two baggage for flights to/from Japan. But since I flew to Bangkok on a SWISS flight before going to Japan, I could only take 23 kilos worth of luggage in addition to the snowboard. Although I considered buying additional baggage allowance I found a good alternative.

I prepared a cargo box in the size of 80x60x60 cm which can be easily bought from relocation companies and let my father send it to me after I had an address in Japan. The transport of such a box with a total maximum weight of 31.5 kilos costed EUR 132 and was therefore much cheaper than taking it on a flight. With SWISS an additional baggage of 23 kilos is charged between CHF 140 and CHF 180.

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Below you can see a picture of the box to get a rough idea of the size.



### Cargo box that luckily fitted through my door

The only drawback is that it must be sent from Germany with DHL and thus you will need a German address to do so.

If you decide to pack such a box, you should prepare a list of the things you are sending in the package for DHL with the customs declaration form attached. Additionally, when entering Japan you are obliged to list belongings that are worth more than JPY 10'000 on the yellow customs declaration form as further described in *When entering*.

### Flight

Next to Japan my favourite countries in Asia are Thailand, Myanmar and Vietnam. Hence, I took the opportunity to fly to Japan via Bangkok to spend two weeks holiday in Thailand and Vietnam. Since return-flights with SWISS between Zurich and Bangkok tend to be incredibly cheap I booked a flight with the latest bookable return date. The flight from Bangkok to Tokyo can be easily booked one-way since the prices for flights within Asia are usually not dependant on whether you fly one-way or return.

Unfortunately, flight tickets can only be purchased less than twelve months in advance. This gives you two options for booking with SWISS:

- Book the flight via Phone:  
If you book the flight through their call centre and explain them your situation they add the option for you to change the date of your return flight once for free on your ticket. However, you must be able to tell them the exact day of your return to Switzerland at the time of purchase and you have to call the call centre again in advance of the initially booked return date. They will then rebook to the second date for free. I did not know exactly when I will fly back and therefore I chose the second option.

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- Book the flight normally and pay the change of booking:  
A ticket that is bought online is usually cheaper than the one booked via call centre. Therefore, even though I had to accept to pay an additional CHF 200 for a rebooking of my return flight, I could save money at the time of booking. Further did this option allow me to flexibly arrange a rebooking to a date of my choice up to the day of my initially booked return flight (i.e. August after one year).

Because of visa issues I had to travel back to Switzerland already after my language studies (further described in *Searching for an internship*). Having chosen the second option allowed me to use the already bought ticket. In addition, it unintentionally gave me the opportunity to travel again to Thailand before the waiting time in Switzerland.

When I returned to Japan end of May I booked a one-way ticket with Emirates. During my search for flights, I found out that only a few airlines, namely gulf carriers (airlines from the Middle East) or airlines from Asia, are offering tickets that are not dependent on whether you book one-way or not. For instance, a one-way flight with SWISS from Zurich to Tokyo costed around CHF 5'500 in economy class. Furthermore, does a flight with the mentioned airlines enable you to fly either to the Haneda Airport in Tokyo or to Osaka in case you live in the Kansai region.

### Credit Card

I already owned a credit card and did not have to apply for one. I strongly recommend everyone who is planning a year abroad to apply for a credit card (credit or prepay) before leaving Switzerland for the following reasons:

First, receiving a phone contract in Japan is easiest if you have a Credit Card, as described in the section *Phone contract*. Unfortunately, Japanese banks will usually not issue a credit card for foreigners if you stay with a student visa.

Second, it is the easiest means of paying for flights and hotels if you want to travel within Japan. Although you receive a cash card from your Japanese bank, unlike in Switzerland you will almost never be able to pay anywhere. Credit cards are accepted almost everywhere.

### Debit Card

Unlike a few years ago it is now possible to withdraw money with your Swiss debit card at almost every ATM that is found in convenient stores and at some banks. Since I left almost all my savings on my Swiss bank account and got financial support from my father through transactions to my Swiss bank account this was very useful. After I received the bank account in Japan and all administrative work in order to receive transactions from overseas were completed I made my first and last international transaction between the accounts. I was amazed that what is usually easy within Europe turned out to be ridiculously complicated. Not only did the process almost take one week but also did the Japanese bank charge JPY 4'000 fee on top of the fees from my Swiss bank.



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Luckily, I found a much easier and cheaper way of transferring money from your Swiss to the Japanese bank account: Withdrawing money with your Swiss debit card (the fee in my case is CHF 5.- for every withdrawal) and deposit it on your Japanese cash card (for free). The process takes maximum two minutes and can be done at any ATM in one of the many convenient stores.

### Residency, military and miscellaneous duties

Information regarding the deregistration and other administrative duties if you emigrate from Switzerland can be found on the website of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs<sup>10</sup>. On the website you can find general information, such as a useful checklist or a glossary, and country specific information. These publications helped me the most during my preparation and are written in great detail.

The most important things to keep in mind are:

- Persons liable to compulsory military service must apply for exemption from service while abroad
- You should get in contact with the social security office (AHV) to ensure that you will not have an interruption
- Although there are no obligatory vaccinations for an entry to Japan, ask your doctor which vaccinations are recommended. If necessary, ask for your medical files to be handed over to you (and have any particularly important records translated).
- Notify the municipal registration office and ask for confirmation of your deregistration. You will need this document in order to complete the customs formalities at the Swiss border and for securing the tax-free import of your personal affects into your country of destination.<sup>11</sup>
- During the deregistration, you will be handed a tax declaration form that has to be filled out and returned. Hence, it is beneficial if you obtain the relevant information such as the bank or salary statements beforehand.

Especially the application for the exemption from the military service will take some time. Hence, I recommend getting in contact with the authority around two months prior to the scheduled departure. If the exemption is granted you will have to go to the closest arsenal and return your equipment.

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.eda.admin.ch/eda/en/home/living-abroad/emigrating.html>

<sup>11</sup> According to the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs. I did not have to any customs formalities at the Swiss boarder nor did I have to present any of the Swiss confirmations for the tax-free import

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## Insurance

As you might know, every resident in Switzerland is obliged to have a health insurance. As soon as you change your residence to another country, you will no longer be covered by that insurance. Usually the municipal registration office will ask for the date you leave the country and please be advised that from this day on your Swiss health insurance is no longer valid! In my case, I stated the date of my flight to Bangkok instead of the effective day I enter Japan and realised that I will not have any insurance during my two weeks in South East Asia as well as the first few days in Japan just later that day. Unfortunately, once the form is handed in at the registration office, the date cannot be changed anymore even though you ask them very politely to simply change the date on one paper you just handed in one hour ago.

Therefore, you have three options regarding insurance:

- I want to emphasise that this is an option but I do not recommend it at all: You can hope that everything will be fine during the days from your deregistration to the registration in Japan. In case of an accident or a sickness which requires immediate medical attention, you are on your own!
- The second option is rather easy but was not possible for me anymore. The date you state at the registration office is around one week after your scheduled arrival date in Japan.
- Since I don't like option one and in retrospect could not change the date stated at the registration office I had to search for a travel insurance. Unfortunately, Swiss insurance companies will not accept you for their products if you do not have a Swiss health insurance anymore. The products they offer are usually just in addition to the minimal coverage from the obligatory health insurance.  
Through my search I luckily found out that STA Travel Austria offers a worldwide travel insurance (without USA and Canada) as well for Swiss citizens without any health insurance for as little as € 49.- for one month of coverage.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> <https://versicherung.statravel.at/reise-krankenversicherung>



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## In Japan

I flew to Tokyo instead of Osaka because I knew that I will have to register at the Swiss embassy after my entrance. I planned one week in Tokyo not only to organise the registration but also to get a phone contract as well as a bank account. However, if you did not register your domicile on your residence card, you will not be able to sign any contract whether for a phone number, nor a bank account. Further it is not possible to open a bank account if you do not have a Japanese phone number. Hence, I have rearranged all the administrative steps needed in Japan and recommend the following order.

### When entering

When entering Japan, you have to look for a different immigration counter, namely the one for prospective residents, which will directly issue your residence card. Once you receive your residence card you are obliged to always have it with you since Japanese law dictates that you must be able to identify yourself at any time. After the immigration is done you proceed to the customs where you are asked to fill out the yellow customs declaration (seen below). If you await baggage that will be sent to you within six months, you must fill it out in duplicate and state that you have unaccompanied articles.

**CUSTOMS DECLARATION**  
Declaration of Personal Effects and Unaccompanied Articles  
Please fill in the following information and submit to Customs.  
(Only one written declaration per family is required.)

Flight No./Name of vessel: SQ 636 Point of embarkation: Tokyo-Haneda  
Date of Arrival in Japan: 2016 Year 10 Month 03 Day  
Name: Last name (or Surname) Arslan First & middle name Deniz Oliver  
Address in Japan (Accommodation):  
Tel: \_\_\_\_\_  
Nationality: Switzerland Occupation: Student  
Date of Birth: 1994 Year 12 Month 27 Day  
Passport No.: \_\_\_\_\_  
Number of Dependents: Adult ☒ Under 20 years old ☒ Under 6 years old ☒

※ Please answer with a "✓" mark to the following questions.

1. Are you bringing the following into Japan? Yes No  
① Prohibited Articles or Restricted Articles (Please refer to side B.) ☒ ☒  
② Goods exceeding duty-free allowance (Please refer to side B.) ☒ ☒  
③ Commercial goods or samples ☒ ☒  
④ Any items you have been requested from someone else to bring into Japan ☒ ☒  
\* If your answer to any of the questions above is "Yes," please list your belongings in "Description of Personal Effects" on side B.

2. Cash, Checks (including T/C), Promissory Notes, Securities which exceed the amount of ¥1,000,000 or its equivalent. Yes No ☒ ☒  
\* If you choose "Yes," please submit "DECLARATION OF CARRYING OF MEANS OF PAYMENT, ETC." to Customs.

3. Do you have Unaccompanied Articles? Yes ( 2 ) PKG(S) No ☒  
\* If you have any unaccompanied articles, please submit this Declaration Form in duplicate. Unaccompanied articles shall be imported within 6 months from the date of your arrival. The sealed declaration must be presented at the time of clearance of the unaccompanied articles.

(NOTICE)  
As regulated by laws and regulations concerned, you are required to declare all the articles that you have purchased or acquired abroad and are bringing into Japan. Any false declaration or failure to declare may be subject to penalty in laws and regulations concerned.  
I declare that the above particulars are true and correct.  
Signature P. Arslan

(-B-)  
※ Description of Personal Effects  
(If all your answers to 1. and 3. of side A are "No", you need not fill in this section.)  
\* Regarding the column of "Description of other goods", If the total market value of each personal item does not exceed ¥10,000, you need not write it on this declaration Form.

Alcoholic Beverages		Bottles	* Customs use only
Cigarettes	<u>400</u>	Pieces	不送品物
Cigars		Pieces	
Others		g	
Perfume		oz	
Description of other goods	Quantity	Market Value	
Winter-jacket	<u>1</u>	<u>40000</u>	使用中
Jacket Michael Kors	<u>1</u>	<u>12000</u>	
* Customs use only			¥0 JPY

③ PROHIBITED ARTICLES  
① Narcotic drugs, stimulants, marijuana, psychotropic substances, MDMA, etc.  
② Firearms such as pistols, revolvers and machine guns, and bullets or parts thereof.  
③ Explosives, gunpowder, materials for chemical weapons, germs such as anthrax, etc.  
④ Counterfeit, altered or imitated coins, bank notes or securities, and forged credit cards.  
⑤ Obscene or immoral materials, and child pornography.  
⑥ Articles which infringe upon intellectual property rights (patent, utility model, design, trademark, copyright, neighboring right, etc.)

③ RESTRICTED ARTICLES  
① Hunting guns, air guns, swords, etc.  
② Internationally protected endangered animals, plants, or their products (crocodiles, corals, turtles, ivory, musk, cactus, etc.)  
③ Live animals and plants, meat products (including sausage etc.), vegetables, fruits, rice etc. (Quarantine inspection is required prior to Customs inspection.)

③ Duty-Free Allowance (excluding crew member)  
- 3 bottles (760ml/bottle) of alcoholic beverages.  
- 400 cigarettes (If you are a Japanese resident, please contact a Customs officer)  
\* There is no duty-free allowance for alcoholic beverages and tobacco products for those under 20 years old.  
- 2 ounces of perfume  
- Goods for personal use that were purchased abroad with a total market value not exceeding ¥200,000.  
\* When the price of an article exceeds ¥200,000, duties and/or taxes will be imposed on its entire value.  
\* As for children under 6 years old, duty-free allowances are limited to the articles owned for their personal use.

As regulated in laws and regulations concerned, every person entering Japan is required to submit this Declaration Form to Customs.

SMAZ4267D

### Customs declaration

## PREPARATION AND ADMINISTRATIVE WORK

### Embassy

Although you have 90 days from the date of your deregistration (not entry to Japan) to register at the embassy, I recommend having it done as soon as possible in the case you fly to Tokyo and already know your future address. In the case you do not know your address or make your entry at a different place than Tokyo you will be able to register anytime within these 90 days, as the registration at the embassy is not needed for any of the subsequent administrative duties. In any case, you are obliged to go to the embassy in Tokyo and please ensure to bring your passport or ID, your confirmation of deregistration [*Wohnsitzbestätigung*] and if possible your certificate of family origin [*Heimatschein*] with you.

### City hall (市役所)

As soon as you have your housing and therefore an address you will have to register it at the city hall (市役所) or in some cases at the ward office (区役所). You will have to register your address within 14 days after you have moved to your housing. Ask your guest family or school for help with the registration at the city hall/ward office since the process is quite complicated when doing it for the first time. However, I will try to give you a rough description of what to expect.

First you should go to the Residence Registration Division (市民窓口課) and fill out an application form with your personal information (name, birthday etc.), your address and your phone number. Usually the staff in these offices are very helpful and can help you through the process. As you will not have a phone number yet (since your address is not yet registered), inform the staff about your situation and you will be able to leave that box blank. After you have filled out the form, proceed to get a number from the ticketing machine (very important) and once it is your turn, hand in your application with the residence card. You will be given a new number and as soon as the address is printed on the card you can get it.

Consequently, go to the counter of the National Health Insurance (国民健康保険) which is usually right next to the registration counter. You will have to get another ticket and wait for your call. The first question will be whether you need national health insurance. If you do have any other form of insurance you might be asked to prove it. Otherwise you will be enrolled in the national health insurance plan which covers 70% of medical expenses. Since you will be a student without income, the monthly price for the insurance should be in between JPY 1'500 and 2'500 per month. Hence, I definitely recommend registering for this health insurance. If you are student at the KJLS the remaining 30% are covered through another insurance which means that you will not have to pay anything in the case you become sick or have an accident.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Advance payment must be done but gets reimbursed from the additional insurance

## PREPARATION AND ADMINISTRATIVE WORK

In case you have to visit a doctor there are useful multilingual medical questionnaires covering almost every medical condition<sup>14</sup>.

Usually every form at the city hall/ward office can be filled in using Latin letters. This can be beneficial if you have to write down your new address. For instance, my second address in Kyoto had 25 kanjis; and not the easy ones.

### Phone contract

As I spent one week in Tokyo without being able to receive a phone contract or bank account I used the time to gather as much information as possible about the many different options.

I like to be connected and be enabled to write messages on Line or WhatsApp at any time, watch YouTube-Videos, listen to music in the Subway or search the best connection from A to B.

Although the biggest providers, namely DoCoMo, Softbank and AU, have various options to meet everyone's needs, the minimum contract time is usually two years. Your residence card states your visiting period, which is less than two years (usually one year for first time visas). Thus it is not possible to receive a contract. However, I think that the options from these providers are overpriced anyway and only make sense for Japanese residents who get discount when buying a mobile phone with the contract.

The easiest and cheapest possibility for foreigners is going to the next Yodobashi-Camera and talk to the people who sell phone contracts and ask for OCN Mobile One. As also described in the section *Credit Card* it is the only provider I could find that accepts foreign credit cards and offers a minimum contract period of only six months. Based on my needs I signed up for 10.0 GB data per month and have therefore access to 4G internet on the DoCoMo net by only having to pay as little as JPY 3'240 monthly. Based on one's needs there are different plans (currently eight) to choose from which can be seen in the overview *OCN Mobile One*.

While most newer mobile phone models can be used in Japan, many older phones may not work due to different technologies. Most importantly, there is no GSM network in Japan, so GSM-only phones do not work. Hence, it might occur that the staff will ask you to present the Japanese technical conformity certificate on your phone. Governments worldwide have tried to ensure that wireless electronic devices do not interfere with other products on the market. However, they are generally only able to control devices within their specific sphere of influence. Thus, Japan issues デジタル技術の基準適合証明 or shortened 技適 certificates while Europe and the United States issues CE and FCC respectively. While it is easy to show the range of certifications on an iPhone<sup>15</sup>, on my Samsung it was not possible since only the European certificate CE is engraved in the back of the phone. Although I contacted Samsung and asked for the Japanese certificate, I did not receive it. Hence, in my case I had to confirm the staff that

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<sup>14</sup> <http://kifjp.org/medical/>

<sup>15</sup> Found in the settings

## PREPARATION AND ADMINISTRATIVE WORK

I will take responsibility and cannot receive a refund in case the SIM card does not work. To this day, I never had any problem with the SIM card and all functions including 4G/LTE internet are working properly.

### Bank account

The phone number will finally enable you to open a bank account. After reading reports from former recipients of the scholarship I decided to open an account at the Shinsei Bank (新生銀行<sup>しんせいぎんこう</sup>). Since my guest family and most of the Japanese people I asked never hear of this bank, I followed their advice and instead opened an account at the Japan Post Bank (ゆうちょ銀行) only to find out, that the transfer of the scholarship will only be made to a bank and not to a postal account.

After all, I went alone to the Shinsei Bank and, after showing my mobile phone number, could open the bank account without issues. Funnily enough you will have to choose the colour of your cash card from a stunning 32 different options. (They even have a thick folder which contains every colour with its own description.)

Although the bank seems to be only known by a limited amount of people, it is a trustworthy bank that is focusing on foreigners and offers online banking and foreign currency deposit options. However, the biggest advantage you have with a Shinsei bank account is that, unlike with other banks, you can use almost every ATM located at convenient stores for free instead of paying fees for withdrawal and even deposit. Compared to the bank account my experiences with the postal account are rather negative since to not having to pay high fees I am only able to use the ATMs at postal offices which are usually only open during business hours.

### Driving License / JAF

If you have a Swiss driving license and want to be able to drive a car or motorcycle in Japan, all you need to do is having your Swiss driver's license officially translated by the Japan Automobile Federation, JAF<sup>16</sup>. Usually this takes only a few hours. Being able to drive a car was useful in many situations such as when I travelled to Hokkaido or the two times I relocated.

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<sup>16</sup> <http://www.jaf.or.jp/e/>

## Japanese Language School KJLS

In this chapter I will describe the preparation for the school itself rather than the application which I covered in the section *Japanese Language School*. Next to a review I want to give you an example of a typical day in school and conclude my experiences.

### Preparation

At KJLS, you will be asked to come to the school as soon as you arrive in Japan and to take a placement test for the class. I recommend preparing well for this placement test as I regard it better to be placed in a class that has a level which is slightly too high for you than too low. If, after the first few weeks you realise that the level of your class is too high, it is generally easier to change to a lower class than to a higher class, in case you feel unchallenged.

### Grammar

If you will be working with Minna no Nihongo I recommend buying the supplement that has the translations and most importantly the grammatical explanations in your mother tongue<sup>17</sup>. Although grammatical explanations from the teachers for the first book were sufficient, it was becoming harder and harder during the second book to fully understand the nuances of the different grammatical forms. The supplements can be easily purchased from Amazon Japan and usually arrive within two days by mail.

### Kana

As a second preparation, I recommend practicing the Hiragana and Katakana extensively since you will have to write in Kana from the first day on. Although I thought I knew the Kana well, I still had some trouble during the first few weeks to on one side being able to keep up with the speed of my teachers and on the other side not losing too much time with writing in tests. For instance when it took me five minutes to write down サウジアラビア (Saudi Arabia) and インドネシアのバリ (Bali in Indonesia) in a 20 minute test with 20 such questions. Most people struggle more with Katakana than with Hiragana since it is not as frequently used. If you prepare yourself adequately you can concentrate on more important things.

### Kanji 漢字

A good App on Android to learn kanjis is "Japanese Kanji Study"<sup>18</sup>. The big advantage of the App is that you can create custom groups for the kanjis that you are learning at this moment. By the way, I recommend adding the Japanese keyboard on your smartphone as soon as possible to get used to the different layout.

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<sup>17</sup> Besides others available in the three major languages of Switzerland

<sup>18</sup> <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.mindtwisted.kanjistudy&hl=de>

## Vocabulary

Besides the kanjis the learning of the vocabulary is most time intensive, since KJLS expects you to learn the vocabulary at home and use the time in class to discuss the grammar. I used the app “Quizlet”<sup>19</sup> which is free and has prepared vocabulary lists for every lesson of Minna no Nihongo from the community to which I added my own lists as well<sup>20</sup>. If you prefer to create your own lists, I recommend doing so on a laptop by logging in to your account through their website. This will allow you to import your vocabulary from an excel sheet.

## Review

Just like my colleague Jean-Marc Sujata, another recipient of the scholarship, I have mixed feelings about the language school I have chosen. However, overall I rate KJLS positively.

First it is necessary to mention that the teaching methodologies used in Asia are different than to what we are used to from schools in Switzerland. For instance, this is reflected in the required skills in the JLPT tests, where grammar, vocabulary and kanjis are the main part of the test whereas speaking is totally neglected. Hence, KJLS also concentrates mainly on learning things by heart and competencies like speaking or proper pronunciation are only of secondary importance.

Taking notes during class is regarded as impolite and students were instructed to listen to the teacher and make their notes after the class.

Finally, the relationship between a student and his teacher is very hierarchal and therefore the teacher must be respected and you mustn't contradict him/her.

However, teachers at KJLS are used to foreigners and start to understand that we have different approaches than Asian people. Misunderstandings such as when the teacher thought we were not listening to her because we would take notes could be solved by explaining, that without taking notes and just listening, we could not memorise the grammar. My teachers were always open and interested to learn about the differences in culture and tried to change their methodology accordingly, although sometimes just barely.

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<sup>19</sup> <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.quizlet.quizletandroid&hl=de>

<sup>20</sup> If you would like to use my lists on Quizlet simply use this link:  
<https://quizlet.com/join/eC9f3k9ac>



## A typical day at school

In the picture on the following page you can see a typical weekly lesson plan from KJLS. Other than at KICL, KJLS does not have a fixed repetitive weekly or daily plan and although there are continual lessons in sequence it provides greater variation.

At KJLS the day usually starts with a 5-minute quiz which can be either a vocabulary quiz (語彙) as seen on Tuesday (火曜日) and Friday (金曜日), or a grammar quiz (文法), as seen on Wednesday (水曜日).

In this example, Monday (月曜日) commences with two grammar lessons for Minna no Nihongo's chapter 42. The third lesson is reserved for 練習 (practice) where the newly learnt grammar will be exercised by answering questions from your teacher correctly and the fourth lesson is, as every day, reserved for practising kanjis. In case there is no quiz in the first lesson, as on Monday and Thursday (木曜日), you will have a 5-minute kanji quiz at the beginning of the fourth lesson.

After the vocabulary quiz, Tuesday starts with conversation (会話) between you and your classmates, continues with a reading drill (本読みドリル) where one at the time has to read aloud, and ends with the first of two grammar lessons for the following chapter and the daily kanji lesson.

On the bottom of the lesson plan you can see the homework you receive, that corresponds with what you have learnt during the day or will learn, when it comes to vocabulary.

In this example, you would study two entire chapters in total from Minna no Nihongo (around 40 vocabularies per chapter), start with the grammar from a third chapter and have two vocabulary, one grammar and two kanji quizzes, while learning roughly 40 new kanjis.

Occasionally you will have hearing (聞き) lessons which repeat two or three chapters as well as bigger tests which will be used for the assessment of the final grade.

# JAPANESE LANGUAGE SCHOOL, KJLS

2016年度 秋学期 初級 Bクラス スケジュール  
NO.9  
2月13日(月)～2月17日(金)

	2/13 (月)	2/14 (火)	2/15 (水)	2/16 (木)	2/17 (金)
I	42課 ～のために ～のに使います ～に...かかります	語彙クイズ 40・41課 会話	文法クイズ 41・42課 43課 ～てきます	本読み ドリル	語彙クイズ 42・43課 聞く (42・43課)
II		本読み ドリル 41・42課まとめ	練習	応用練習	44課 飲みすぎる 使いやすい 短くする
III	練習	43課 雨が降りそうです	会話		
IV	漢字クイズ 37・38課 漢字 39・40課③	漢字 41・42課①	漢字 41・42課②	漢字クイズ 39・40課 漢字 41・42課③	漢字 33～40課
<div>ぶんぼう か かんじ か</div> <div>文法42課／漢字39・40課</div> <div>ぶんぼう か</div> <div>文法43課</div> <div>かんじ か</div> <div>漢字41・42課</div> <div>ぶんぼう か</div> <div>文法44課</div> <div>こい か</div> <div>語彙43課</div> <div>こい か</div> <div>語彙44課</div>					

Lesson plan from KJLS



## Conclusion

I can recommend KJLS if you like being in a school with small classes and if you prefer having the same teachers from whom one of them is your primary teacher. I liked this setup because you always knew what the individual teaching method of your teacher would be in your next class and having one main teacher helped in situations where we had a problem.

However, you must be prepared to spend most of your day attending class, doing your homework, learning kanjis and vocabulary. Unlike KICL which plans three months, KJLS goes through the two Minna no Nihongo books within six months. This still requires you to learn at a fast pace as KJLS concentrates on the deep understanding of the grammar and the ability to use the correct term when speaking. Hence, usually no one has to repeat the books.

At KJLS you will learn a lot of kanjis since, as described earlier, the last one of the four lessons per day is always reserved for this sole purpose. Learning ten new kanjis every day is regarded as the minimum.

The best advice I can give is, regardless of whether you are at KJLS or at any other language school, after the first few months you should focus on the points that are important to you even they might not match the ones from your school. Although I had homework every day, which I always completed, I started to focus on speaking and listening instead of being perfect in the kanji or vocabulary tests. Since you are living in Japan you should take the opportunity to talk to the people. Just as in any other language there are various ways to say something and thus your textbook will never cover everything. Instead you will have to cope with grammar at a level, that even Japanese people sometimes could not tell me the exact differences. For daily conversation with friends only the basic grammar is used.

Finally, I recommend enrolling for six months of language school unless you have good prior knowledge in Japanese language or your internship is already fixed prior to your flight to Japan. Searching for a workplace in Japan can in some circumstances take long and having enough time is therefore extremely beneficial.

## Living in Japan

### Activities and Festivals

The biggest surprise while being in Japan was to find out that Japanese people are engaged in several activities and that there is a vast range of activities to choose from. From my point of view the best website to get information from is “Japan Guide”<sup>21</sup>. It has an entire subsection about interests and activities in Japan and ancillary information such as Japanese history or helpful knowledge about Buddhism, giving you background on the shrines and temples. If you are interested in seeing one of the countless local festivals (祭り) in Japan I recommend that you visit the website of “Japan Talk”<sup>22</sup> since it is more detailed.

In Kyoto you have the additional option to visit the <sup>きょうとしこくさいこうりゅうかいがん</sup> 京都市国際交流会館 (Kyoto International Community House) or easier Kokoka<sup>23</sup>. Kokoka will assist you in almost every situation during your stay in Japan by offering free consulting services for topics such as legal advices or visa, as well as offering interpretation and counselling service via phone. Further does Kokoka have a pin board where you can find activities offered by residents or even language exchange offers.

During my time in Kyoto I was able to visit among others the <sup>じだいまつり</sup> 時代祭り (“Festival of the Ages”) which is held annually on October 22 in Kyoto and celebrates the founding of the city by Emperor Kammu. Also, I visited the <sup>さんじゅうさんげんどうおおまとたいかい</sup> 三十三間堂 大の大会 which is an annual <sup>きゅうどう</sup> 弓道 (Japanese art of archery) competition for 20-year old archers and in this year was luckily during the few days of snowfall in Kyoto, the <sup>わかきやまやき</sup> 若草山焼 in Nara and the Sapporo Snow festival in February. Below you can see some pictures of the mentioned Festivals.



Jidaimatsuri

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.japan-guide.com>

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.japan-talk.com/jt/new/japan-by-month>

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.kcif.or.jp/en>

## LIVING IN JAPAN



Ohmato Taikai



Wakakusa Yamayaki

# LIVING IN JAPAN



Sapporo Snow Festival

## Making friends

Although it may seem hard to make friends in Japan due to the possibly limited Japanese language abilities and the prejudice that Japanese people do not share their true emotions (建前 <sup>たてまえ</sup> “masquerade”) it is actually very easy.

First of all, yes 建前 <sup>たてまえ</sup> exists and it is almost impossible to understand it. 本音 <sup>ほんね</sup> and 建前 <sup>たてまえ</sup> are the Japanese words to describe the phenomenon of the Japanese society which makes a distinction between a person's true feelings and desires, and the behaviour and opinions one displays in public due to the expectations by the society. In many cases 建前 <sup>たてまえ</sup> leads to outright telling of so-called “white lies” in order to cover up the true feelings or making someone upset. However, in most cases it is possible to ask someone to talk in 本音 <sup>ほんね</sup> with you and not having to be afraid that you might get upset.

Secondly, there are many university students who are interested in talking to foreigners and assisting you to learn Japanese while giving them the opportunity to improve their English or other language skills. I definitely recommend to check the dates of these events taking place at



the major universities around you. I have personally found almost all my friends in Japan directly or indirectly through these events. As described earlier it is also possible to make friends by visiting Kokoka to look for language exchange offers there.

During my studies in the language school my colleagues and I usually went to a Starbucks close by to spend the afternoon doing homework and studying vocabulary. Many students study at Starbucks because it offers big tables and free Wi-Fi. Almost every day it happened that people nearby started to doubtfully watch us doing our homework and after some time started to talk to us. It was a great place to make friends as well, since you usually had broken the ice by talking about your studies and further it enabled us to directly ask Japanese people if there was something we did not quite understand in our homework. My intention is not to advertise Starbucks in this report but I want to point out the fact that making friends in Japan is considerably easy. Asking for help with your Japanese homework or sharing your experiences in Switzerland and other western countries is probably the easiest way to put the sometimes shy Japanese at their ease and get in contact. Once this is done you usually exchange your LINE ID (not WhatsApp) and start to text and do all the other things you do with your friends. Therefore, installing LINE on your phone is crucial.

### SCCIJ

Just like the SJCC in Switzerland there is a sister organisation in Japan called the Swiss Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Japan, SCCIJ<sup>24</sup>. Being a recipient of the scholarship offers the great opportunity to join the SCCIJ and make use of the network at of the many events throughout the year. Although most of the events are held in Tokyo, there are still some in other regions of Japan. I took the opportunity and attended the Christmas Dinner at the Hilton Hotel in Tokyo which is one of the highlights. By chance I got to meet my colleague Jean-Marc Sujata at this dinner who turned out to be another recipient of the SJCC scholarship and was living in the same city doing the same things in a different school. The conversations and exchanges are an interesting distraction from the sometimes mundane life in the language school.

### Part-time job

First of all, my intention of searching for a part-time job was not of monetary reasons. Most part-time jobs in Japan have an hourly salary of only around JPY 1'000 anyways. The decision to apply for a part-time job was based on the expected experience I could gain as well as being more integrated into society.

In my opinion the easiest way of finding a part-time job in Kyoto is at the earlier described Kokoka. Along with language exchange offers and all different kinds of messages to foreigners,

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<sup>24</sup> <http://www.sccij.jp/home/>

## LIVING IN JAPAN

Kokoka has the biggest part of their pin board dedicated to part-time job openings which are specifically directed towards foreigners. Offers to work as an English teacher are the majority and further usually contain the best salary. Although most of these offers state that the applicant must be a native English speaker, what they actually mean is that they are searching for a person with a good command of English.

After applying for five English teacher openings and getting accepted to all of them, I chose to work part-time in a Japanese kindergarten that offers English courses for children between the age of 3 to 5. As this job required my presence only on Thursday and Friday I applied for an additional job at a guesthouse.

Both of my part-time jobs were a significant experience. Especially the job at the kindergarten, which was by far the hardest jobs I ever had, made me grow incredibly and I became more patient, empathetic, spontaneous and less monotonous while speaking. To work with children was very satisfying as they are open minded and curious but get easily bored which leads to the teacher having to change the program every 5 to 10 minutes and add as much variety as possible.

Below I attached one of the openings as an example.

INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY HOUSE Kokoka  
MESSAGE / メッセージ (HELP WANTED / 求職)

**Seeking  
Energetic NATIVE  
English, Spanish, French teacher**

“AMERICAN CLUB” Language school,  
located SHIJO-KARASUMA in KYOTO.  
We are looking for part /full-time  
teachers.  
From Monday to Saturday.  
Flexible.  
Please call or send your resume.

≡ アメリカンクラブ ≡  
〒600-8491  
京都市下京区室町通り四条下ル西側 カワモトビル5F  
Email info@american-c.com  
URL www.english.kyoto.jp  
TEL 075-352-8881  
KAWAMOTO Bldg. SHIJO SAGARU NISHIGAWA MUROMACHI-DORI  
SHIMOGYO-KU KYOTO

名前 / NAME: AMERICAN CLUB 電話 / TEL: 075-352-8881

### Job opening at Kokoka

## Internship

An in-depth report of my experiences during my internship will be part of the final report. However, the searching for an internship was part of the first six months in Japan and I want to include it as it turned out to be quite a challenge for me.

### Searching for an internship

Although I knew that as an aviation engineer with a specialization in operation & management, it would be hard to even find a job in Switzerland, I knew it would be even more difficult to find a job in Japan. I almost got the point of giving up.

I started my search for an internship on different websites, namely Daijob<sup>25</sup>, GaijinPot<sup>26</sup>, CareerCross<sup>27</sup> and LinkedIn<sup>28</sup> in August. Until December I only found roughly four jobs that seemed to be suitable. However, these four jobs were not meant as an internship as the requirements states some years of working experience and the visa sponsoring was not offered.

Hence, I had to extend my search and after a long time I found the website of Kopra<sup>29</sup> which finally had potential internships in big companies like Audi, Mitsubishi and Bosch. I was unable to find any company in the aviation sector at that time, but working as an operational engineer did not necessarily mean that I needed an internship in that very specific sector. The downside of Kopra is that most of the internships offered are for students who are still enrolled in university. Internships in Japan are usually regarded as a supplement to the studies in university. Japanese graduates then usually start to work in a company directly without the need for an internship. Although there was a single internship offer for graduates from Audi I never received an answer after handing in my application.

While searching for job openings on the stated websites I also chose the rather unconventional approach of sending unsolicited applications to various companies in the aviation sector. Unfortunately, I never received an answer from the respective companies either.

After having searched for months I was on the brink of giving up and thought about making use of one of the offers received owing to my part-time job at the kindergarten, which offered me an internship as an English teacher. I decided to refuse that offer as I did not like the idea of being an English teacher for the sake of the requirement to have some kind of internship

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<sup>25</sup> <https://www.daijob.com/en/>

<sup>26</sup> <https://jobs.gaijinpot.com>

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.careercross.com/en>

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.linkedin.com/jobs/>

<sup>29</sup> <https://kopra.org>

## INTERNSHIP

completed within the scholarship program. After all, I had one last chance for an internship thanks to my friend from university.

By coincidence we were talking on skype prior to his job interview for Swissport, also mentioning my seemingly hopeless situation. During his interview later that day he was asked to read the performance sheet of Tokyo Narita airport as part of the selection process.

After joining Swissport he was able to meet the regional management of Swissport Japan and suggested to put me in touch with them.

As a result, I was contacted shortly after and was offered to send in my application documents which led to an interview in March, that was held completely in English. After many mails and me already travelling back to Switzerland, in mid-April I finally received a confirmation for an internship with Swissport Japan.

At this point I should mention that because my dormitory was provided by the language school, from which I graduated mid-March, I had to move out without a confirmation of an internship. Although it is possible to rent regular apartments, most of them are unfurnished. Keeping in mind that the accommodation would be included in my employment I decided to return to Switzerland.

Unfortunately, even though I attended the interview beginning of March and received unofficial acceptance for the internship there were uncertainties regarding the visa that had to be clarified first. As a result, I received the official acceptance only by mid-April. Furthermore it took the HR department from Swissport another two months until they finally handed in my application. Adding the processing time at the immigration meant I could only start the internship beginning of August. After all, I am still extremely thankful for the opportunity to complete an internship in the company I most wanted to work in, ever since I had received the scholarship.



## APPENDIX

### Appendix

# APPENDIX

## Overview of preparation and administrative work

Preparation and administrative Work		
<b>In Switzerland</b>		
Japanese Language School	<b>First thing to organise!</b>	
the city	Live in metropolis? Other parts of Japan?	
entry date	First term: April	
	Second term: October	
language school	gogonihon	<a href="http://www.gogonihon.com">www.gogonihon.com</a>
	Association for the Promotion of Japanese Language Education	<a href="http://www.nisshinkyo.org/english/index.html">http://www.nisshinkyo.org/english/index.html</a>
Visa	Apply for the student visa:	
	1. Fill out all forms	
	2. Receive Certificate of Eligibility, COE	
	3. With the COE, passport, visa application form and photograph receive the visa at the Japanese Embassy in Berne	<a href="http://www.mofa.go.jp/files/000124528.pdf">http://www.mofa.go.jp/files/000124528.pdf</a>
Accommodation	Apartment / Dormitory / Home Stay depending on school	
Luggage	Eighter the allowance from your airline or a cargo box up to 80x60x60 cm	
Flight	Can only be booked up to 12 months in advance	
	Book by phone: free rebooking but return date has to be known	
	Book normally: charge for rebooking but return date has not to be known	
Credit card	Strongly recommend to apply for a Swiss credit card	
Debit card	Very useful in Japan as ATMs in 7eleven and FamilyMart allow withdrawal	
Residency, military and miscellaneous duties	Start early! Most important things are:	
	Apply for exemption from military service (2 months prior to departure)	
	Get in contact with the socail security office (AHV)	
	Vaccinations and having particularly important records translated	
	Reregister at the minicipal registration office and receive a confirmation	
	Fill out tax declaration (prepare bank or salary statements)	
Insurance	Three options:	
	1. No insurance	
	2. Stated date of leaving Switzerland is after arrival date in Japan	
	3. Travel insurance such as from STA Travel Austria	<a href="https://versicherung.statravel.at/reise-krankenversicherung">https://versicherung.statravel.at/reise-krankenversicherung</a>

## APPENDIX

In Japan		
When entering	Different immigration counter (the one that issues resident cards)	
	Fill out customs declaration in duplicate if awaiting a cargo box	
Embassy	Obliged to register within 90 days from the deregistration in Switzerland	
City hall	Register your address within 14 days after moving in (necessary for phone and bank)	
Phone contract	Easiest is to go Yodobashi-Camera and ask for OCN Mobile One	
Bank account	I recommend opening an account at the Shinsei Bank	
Driving license	To be able to drive in Japan you have to get an official translation from the JAF	

Back to *Preparation and administrative work*.

# APPENDIX

## OCN Mobile One

**In OCN Mobile One, you can choose the SIM plan and basic data capacity based on your usage.** Prices in parentheses include tax.

**Basic Monthly Fee**

Choose the plan that's right for you **SIM Card**

**8 plans**  
You can change plans once per month!

Maximum Transmission Speed	Basic Data Capacity	Voice & Data SIM (Incl. SMS functions) 1,2,3	Data Only SIM 1	Data Only SIM (Incl. SMS functions) 1,2
262.5Mbps <sup>#2</sup>	110MB/day	<b>¥1,600</b> (¥1,728)	<b>¥900</b> (¥972)	<b>¥1,020</b> (¥1,101)
	170MB/day	¥2,080 (¥2,246)	¥1,380 (¥1,490)	¥1,500 (¥1,620)
	3.0GB/month	¥1,800 (¥1,944)	¥1,100 (¥1,188)	¥1,220 (¥1,317)
	6.0GB/month	¥2,150 (¥2,322)	¥1,450 (¥1,566)	¥1,570 (¥1,695)
500kbps	10.0GB/month	<b>¥3,000</b> (¥3,240)	¥2,300 (¥2,484)	¥2,420 (¥2,613)
	20.0GB/month	<b>¥4,850</b> (¥5,238)	<b>¥4,150</b> (¥4,482)	<b>¥4,270</b> (¥4,611)
500kbps	30.0GB/month	¥6,750 (¥7,290)	¥6,050 (¥6,534)	¥6,170 (¥6,563)
	15.0GB/month	¥2,500 (¥2,700)	¥1,800 (¥1,944)	¥1,920 (¥2,073)

1 There is a separate package cost of ¥3,000 (¥3,240). 2 Call charges and SMS fees are applied separately. 3 There may be penalties for breach of contract. Refer to #15 for details.

**Adding SIM cards (Sharing Capacity)**

Share data capacity!

**[Monthly Fee]**  
(Cost required every month)

Voice & Data SIM card (Including SIM functions)	¥1,100/card (¥1,188)
Data Only SIM card	¥400/card (¥432)
Data Only SIM card (Including SIM functions)	¥520/card (¥561)

Using OCN Mobile One, a maximum of 5 SIM cards can share data capacity per contract. When you purchase an additional SIM card while applying newly for OCN Mobile One, the initial cost (additional handling fee for SIM cards for the additional card is free, but when an already existing user of OCN Mobile One purchases an additional SIM card, an initial cost (additional handling fee for SIM cards) will be charged for Voice & Data SIM card (including SIM functions) at ¥3,000 (¥3,240) per card, and for Data Only SIM card (including SIM functions) at ¥1,800 (¥1,944) per card. Check <http://service.ocn.ne.jp/mobile/onehandbook> for details. While recommending that you use the filtering service for users under 18 years of age, in order to protect juveniles from trouble, check <http://www.ntt.com/personal/services/mobile/oneoption/share.html> for details.

**Call Charges / Transmission Fee**

**070/080/090 Call Charges**  
General Phone Subscribers/  
Mobile Phone

¥20 (¥21.6) / 30 seconds

If you use OCN Phone (OCN Denwa)

¥10 (¥10.8) / 30 seconds

**050 plus**  
Call Charges

Free calls between 050 plus users, 24 hours a day

General Phone Subscribers ¥8 (¥8.64) / 3 minutes

Mobile Phones (excluding Photo) ¥16 (¥17.28) / 1 minutes

**SMS<sup>1)</sup> Transmission Fee**

Domestic Calls ¥3 (¥3.24) / call

Overseas Calls ¥50 (duty free) / call

**OCN Hikari Mobile Wari**

Earn a discount of ¥200 (¥216) on the monthly fee of OCN Mobile One, if you are subscribed to OCN Mobile One on the same address as that of the OCN Hikari connection. To receive the discount, apply for it on the dedicated website. Check <http://s.ocn.jp/hmw> for details.

**Discount of ¥200/month**

**How to setup OCN Mobile ONE**

**STEP1 Purchase the package**  
Buy the "OCN Mobile One" package at a retail shop.

**STEP2 Apply**  
Apply via the dedicated website written on the package.  
\* Credit card required for registration.

**STEP3 Device Configuration**  
Insert your SIM card into and configure your device. You can begin using the SIM after configuration.

**Combining these options for more benefits!**

**OCN Phone (OCN Denwa)** (Voice & Data SIM)  
Call charges are economical even when you use an inexpensive SIM!

Service	OCN Denwa	OCN Denwa 10 minute Kake-hodai Option (Renewal referred to as "10 minute Kake-hodai Option")
Application <sup>1)</sup> Monthly Charges	Not required / Free	Free during the month in which application is given <sup>2)</sup>
Domestic Call Charges	Pay-as-you-go (Only for the calls made at ¥10 (¥10.8)/30 seconds)	Flat rate Up to 10 minutes ¥0 (¥0.00) for every 30 seconds in excess of 10 minutes, ¥10 (¥10.8) for every 30 seconds in excess of 10 minutes.
Features	This is a voice service that is available to any customer who uses the "OCN Mobile One Voice & Data SIM".	This is an optional voice service of "OCN Mobile One Voice & Data SIM" that allows you to make free and unlimited number of domestic calls within 10 minutes using the "10 minute Kake-hodai option" per call by paying a monthly fee.
How to Use (Common)	You can dial using the "OCN Denwa App" or you can prefix "003544" at the beginning of the number when you make a voice call.	

1 The monthly fee is free during and including the day and month in which application is made only for those customers who have newly applied for "OCN Mobile One Voice & Data SIM" and "10 minute Kake-hodai Option" at the same time. Not applicable to cases in which the service is cancelled during the month of application. For other customers, monthly fee will be charged from the month of application. Call charges are applicable in excess of 10 minutes in case of the "10 minute Kake-hodai option", even during the period in which monthly charge is free. 2 Connection services such as emergency call (110/119), navigation dialing (0570) etc., and some international calls are not available. 3 In order to use this service, it is necessary to subscribe to OCN Mobile One Voice & Data SIM. Also, the conditions of use also include a minimum usage period. Check the following for more details. 4 About Usage Fee etc. Some of the charges may not be economical. 5 Domestic call charge Pay-as-you-go option of "OCN Denwa" and excess of 10 minutes of "10 minute Kake-hodai option" is ¥10 (¥10.8) per 30 seconds. 6 International calling charges do not include the "OCN Denwa" "10 minute Kake-hodai option" domestic call charges and monthly fee. (prescribed calling charges are applicable) 7 Check <http://050506.ntt.com/ocnmobileone/plan> for details on international call charges. 8 Check <http://s.ocn.jp/denwa> for details on "OCN Denwa (OCN Phone)".

**050 plus**  
Calls made between customers having "050" numbers are free of charge.

You can save the basic monthly fee of ¥300 (¥324) on "050 plus" numbers when combined with OCN Mobile One

Voice & Data SIM	Free
Data Only SIM	¥150 (¥162)

1 Call charges are separate. 2 For details, refer to [http://050506.ntt.com/smp\\_ap050plus](http://050506.ntt.com/smp_ap050plus).

**Enriched Functions**

**Burst Forwarding Function**  
High-speed communication (maximum communication speed 262.5Mbps<sup>1)</sup>) is possible for the fixed data that has begun communicating even when Turbo is OFF or when speed is restricted<sup>2)</sup>.

**Wi-Fi Spot**  
You can save data traffic while on the go. Number of usable Wi-Fi access points: **Approx. 82,000** (As of August 19, 2016)

**OCN Mobile One App**  
Data usage can be confirmed at a glance. You can save data capacity using the Turbo ON/OFF function.

**Basic Capacity Carry-Forward Service**  
Unused basic data capacity at the end of a day or month can be carried forward!

**Additional Data Option**  
Even if you use up the basic data capacity, you can always make an additional purchase up to the extent that you need!

**Turbo Function**  
Smart usage of this function can help you save basic data capacity!

**Count Free Function**  
Data communication of eligible services<sup>3)</sup> does not count as basic data capacity!

**Raku-Raku Convenient Number Portability**  
Same phone number. Can switch over after a SIM card arrives. Check the OCN website (<http://s.ocn.jp/mp>) for more details.

**Voice & Data SIM**

This service requires a compatible device. Check the OCN website (<http://s.ocn.jp/m2>) for verified data devices. #1) Depending on your service, your monthly fees may not be cheaper. #2) In LTE areas, maximum incoming transmission speed is 262.5Mbps, while maximum outgoing transmission speed is 50Mbps. Maximum transmission speeds apply in some areas and to some devices. For details on the relevant areas, refer to the OCN website (<http://s.ocn.jp/m2>). For the transmission speed of your device, please ask your device manufacturer. #3) If the data limit for your plan is exceeded, your transmission speed will be limited to a maximum of 200Kbps when both sending and receiving. #4) If you have unused data capacity at the end of a day or month, that balance will be carried over into the next day or month. #5) There is a minimum usage period for the "OCN Mobile One Voice & Data SIM", counting the month in which service usage is begun as "Month 1". If the service is cancelled during this minimum usage period, a breach of contract fee will apply (¥8000 (tax included)). The same will apply to the "10 minute Kake-hodai Option". For MNP transfers, an MNP transfer service fee of ¥3000 (¥3240) will apply. #6) Up to 5 free domestic (within Japan) messages per month. Additional charges may apply depending on the number of characters in each message. #7) The services covered are OCN Mobile One App, "My Pocket", "050 plus", <Applications> Identification like a driving license or passport will be required during the application process. #8) Applications from minors are not accepted. #9) After a package has been purchased, it is necessary to apply on the dedicated site (<http://s.ocn.jp/m2>) for Voice & Data SIM. For Data Only SIM before beginning use. #10) Payment by credit card only. #11) Select a size after confirming the size of your device's SIM card (standard micro/nano). No cancellations or returns are accepted after size is selected. #12) The usage plan can be changed once per month. #13) No basic monthly charge applies for the month in which the application is made including the month 10 days after the day the application was made, and excluding cases in which the service is cancelled during the same month in which it commenced. #14) "Universal service charge" applies for every SIM card. For details, refer to <http://www.ntt.com>. #15) It is possible to apply for "050 plus" while simultaneously applying for OCN Mobile One. #16) No monthly basic fee, receive one "050 plus" number for each OCN Mobile One Voice & Data SIM card. It is also possible to make your current "050 plus" number free of charge instead. #17) Even if you cannot OCN Mobile One Voice & Data SIM, your "050 plus" may not be cancelled depending on the terms of your contract for other services, and you may be charged a basic monthly fee of ¥300 (¥324) for this service. For details, refer to <http://s.ocn.jp/050>. #18) Some numbers cannot be called via "050 plus", such as emergency numbers (110/119). For details, refer to [http://050506.ntt.com/smp\\_ap050plus](http://050506.ntt.com/smp_ap050plus). The transmission quality and of ability to make calls via "050 plus" may be affected by factors including network congestion, usage type, and transmission equipment including the user's device environment. #19) Cancellations: Transmission speed is provided on a best effort basis. The actual transmission speed may differ depending on the communication environment and status of network congestion. #20) Services provided by NTT Docomo such as sp mode, sp mode multi etc., are not available. #21) Referring service is not available on NTT Docomo devices. #22) Voice calls cannot be made in case of [Data Only SIM]. #23) The section highlighted in yellow ( ) does not apply to Data Only SIM.

Back to Phone contract.