

Japan Alumni Global Network Newsletter

December 2023 issue

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Looking Back at Hot Topics of 2023 in Japan

WBC: Japan secures 3rd win, its 1st in three championships

Japan won its third WORLD BASEBALL CLASSIC held in March 2023, securing the country's first win in three championships. Baseball is a popular sport in Japan, and fans across the country cheered for their players nicknamed Samurai Japan. When the team won, great excitement spread nationwide.



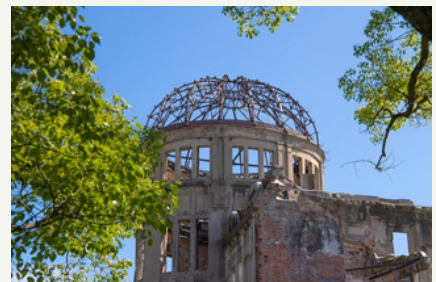
A large number of visitors to Japan



In 2022, Japan lifted entry restrictions and resumed acceptance of overseas visitors. As of January-October 2023, the number of inbound tourists had reached 19.89 million, recovering numbers to 74% of pre-COVID levels. Japan has become easier to visit as international flights increase in number and return flights continue. The government's policy is to attract tourists to regional areas and increase consumption to revive Japan into a tourism-centered nation.

G7 Summit held in Hiroshima

The G7 Summit was held in Hiroshima from May 19 to 21, 2023. Hiroshima has suffered devastation from nuclear weapons in the past, so it was selected as a meaningful venue for spreading the message of world peace. This message was transmitted from Hiroshima, one that emphasizes cooperation rather than division.



Here are alumni testimonials!

Here are some testimonials from research and other alumni who job-hunted in Japan!



■Profile

Name: Jen Laforteza

Department: Photography Course
at Tokyo Visual Arts

Nationality: Philippines



Pursuing your Creative Dreams in Japan! What You Need to Know about Turning Your Creative Dreams into a Career

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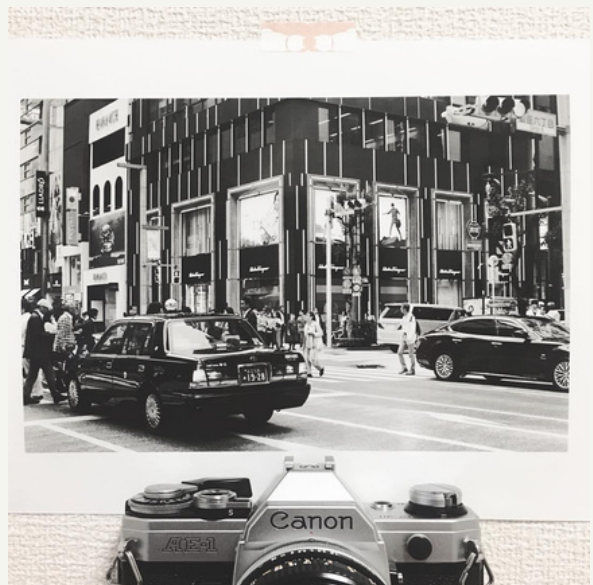
Hi! My name is Jen Laforteza and I'm currently working in Japan at a job that lets me use my creative skills to reach people around the world. My path started in 2016, when I came to Japan from the Philippines. I studied a Japanese Language Course at Bunka Institute of Language in Tokyo for 1 year, then a 2-year Photography Course at Tokyo Visual Arts.

I won't sugarcoat things since there's a lot of hurdles that come with being a working foreigner in Japan - more so in creative jobs. A good example of this is my first job in Japan in 2019 at a video production company. I was excited to apply there since they produced movies and TV commercials. However, after joining, they didn't allow me to do that type of work at all. In the end, I left after only 6 months, feeling frustrated.

At this point, I thought about what to do with my career. I've always been a creative person - I love to write, draw, edit and take photos. So I decided to focus my efforts on finding jobs that let me do this. This is easier said than done because creative jobs in Japan are notoriously difficult to get into and sometimes you can't be picky.

Luckily, not too long after, I got one such job at a start-up company that created content for foreign students in Japan. I wrote blog articles and used my photo editing skills for their social media! Start-up companies like this can be a great way to get your foot in the door. Compared to bigger companies, there's less competition. The downside is that they can sometimes be unstable - something to keep in mind when applying. When COVID hit Japan in 2020, it was this instability that led to me being out of work again after another 6 months. The early months of COVID was a hard time to be out of a job. I found freelance writing work, one example of which is in the photos. I enjoyed writing about many interesting Japan topics but it was hard to turn it into a stable income. I relied on the kindness of friends to get me through financial difficulties.

After close to a year of this situation, in 2021, I found my current job. I work to introduce people outside of Japan to all the great products from here - things from anime, fashion, Japanese culture and more! Although this job wasn't what I expected to be doing when I started, I still get to be creative: I make videos, photos, and write! I also feel valued for my international perspective that connects me to people around the world. When you come to Japan to pursue your creative dreams, your road might be smoother or bumpier than mine. But one thing's for sure - Japan is an excellent place to turn creativity into a career, so why not try and see where it takes you?



Check out what current international students are doing!

Stay informed about research that current international students are doing at universities!



■Profile

Name: Maqsood MUQADAS

Graduate School:

I am currently pursuing an MSc degree in Agriculture at the Graduate School of Environmental and Life Science, Okayama University, Japan.

Degree: I hold a Bachelor of Agriculture from Kabul University, Afghanistan.

Nationality: Afghanistan

About the research that you are doing in Japan

In Afghanistan, an agricultural country with favorable climate for fruit and vegetable production, the emphasis has predominantly been on increasing production, leaving postharvest aspects neglected. Consequently, substantial losses occur in the postharvest phase due to inadequate technologies and infrastructure. To address these issues, my research targets the potential application of edible coatings on tomatoes, strawberries, and persimmons, with the aim of maintaining their quality and extending storage life. The overarching goal of this research is to offer actionable insights for implementation in Afghanistan, thereby enhancing food security, reducing losses, and fostering sustainable postharvest practices.

A short introduction of what you are researching

Edible coating is a thin, protective layer applied to the surface of fresh fruits after harvesting. It helps extend shelf life by creating a barrier against moisture loss, oxidation, and microbial growth. Typically made from natural materials like plant-based polymers or waxes, edible coatings keep fruit appearance and quality while reducing the need for chemical preservatives. This technique is a sustainable approach in postharvest management, preserving fruit freshness and nutritional value. My work focuses on developing and implementing these coatings, specifically studying their effects on maintaining quality and extending shelf life for three key types of produce: tomatoes, strawberries, and persimmons. Additionally, I'm exploring the molecular intricacies underlying the mechanism of these coatings. To achieve this, I'm using RNA-sequencing technology to uncover the genetic and molecular processes involved.

Some details about your research and working environment

I am deeply immersed in postharvest physiology research in Japan, where I harvest fruits and conduct lab experiments and share my findings in national and international conferences. Beyond research, my interactions with Japanese students, though initially shaped by their polite manner and shyness, have blossomed into supportive friendships that greatly enhance my life and work. Currently, I'm enthusiastically striving to learn the Japanese language with their guidance.



Introducing the International Student Association

Here are some of the organizations that are active as returnee student associations in each region.

Check the activities of those who have returned to their countries using the following resources!

■British Association of MEXT Scholars (BAMS) (UK)

The British Association of MEXT Scholars (BAMS) is an organisation dedicated to providing a like-minded community for MEXT scholars returning to the UK as well as providing support and encouragement for new and future scholars departing UK for Japan. We are a growing organisation that strives to host regular events, both virtual and in-person, for returning MEXT scholars to enjoy knowledge-shares and new experiences and build a community in the UK. We have close ties to the Japanese embassy in the UK and have a regular presence at pre-departure orientations for outgoing MEXT scholars, helping them appreciate the challenges and experiences they will face in the coming months and years and how to make the most of the opportunity they have seized.

Web site



Linked in



e-mail: bamscommittee@outlook.com

■Czech Network of Alumni and Students of Japanese Schools (Czech)

Czech Japan Alumni Club is an informal community network, whose main objectives are:

Web site



- to facilitate communication and networking among students and alumni who study or studied at universities and other institutions in Japan,
- to share experience with those who are interested in studying in Japan or are about to leave for their studies in Japan,
- to promote social networking with the community of Japanese citizens living, working or studying in the Czech Republic,
- to promote professional contacts with Japanese companies operating in the Czech Republic and with universities and research institutions in Japan.

Czech Japan Alumni Club exists under the patronage of Japanese Information and Cultural Centre, Embassy of Japan, Czech Republic.

e-mail: japanalumni.cz@gmail.com

■German JSPS Alumni Association (JSPS-Club) (Germany)

The German JSPS Alumni Association (JSPS Club for short) was established in 1995 on the initiative of former JSPS fellows. Currently there are about 500 researchers from various fields, which include about 60 members living in Japan. The community is open to researchers from German speaking areas who have stayed in Japan using not only JSPS but other scholarship systems such as JASSO.

JSPS-Club holds annual symposiums for those who are interested in German-Japanese academic exchanges and regular meetings for members in Japan and German-speaking countries. In addition there are annual events held by local groups throughout German speaking countries.

We actively share our fellow researchers' research activities and event reports in English through our newsletter "Neues vom Club" published for our members.

Web site



■Centro de Ex-Becarios de MONBUKAGAKUSHO (Paraguay)

The center is composed of professionals who had the opportunity to study in Japan. We are an organization dedicated to fostering cultural exchange and strengthening the bonds between Paraguay and Japan.

Our association actively participates in events that promote Japanese culture, creating awareness about scholarship opportunities for aspiring scholars. We believe in the power of education and cultural exchange in building stronger ties between nations. We are committed to supporting individuals interested in studying in Japan and connecting with alumni who have experienced the MONBUKAGAKUSHO scholarship firsthand.

Web site



e-mail: liz01mariana@gmail.com

Destination Name: Liz Mariana Aguilera Romero (the new president of this Center)

For other international student associations in each region, please see below.

<https://www.studyinjapan.go.jp/en/network/list/>



Introducing "Job Hunting Guide for International Students"

JASSO publishes "Job Hunting Guide for International Students" every year. When international students start job hunting in Japan, they may be confused by the activities and recruitment schedule unique to Japan. The number of employment of international students is increasing, but you may wonder when to start preparation? What is the required Japanese level? How do you prepare for the interview? There would be various questions.

Understanding the current situation of job hunting for international students, and above all, knowing the needs of Japanese companies for hiring international students is indispensable for job hunting. This guide book provides detailed and easy-to-understand explanations of the challenges faced by international students.

For example, when and what to do, research in industry / company and applying for a position, preparation for employment examination, changing status of residence, stories of others' experiences, etc., you can cover information related to job hunting with this one book.

Main contents of "Job Hunting Guide for International Students 2025"

- Before Starting to Job Hunt in Japan
- Preparation for Job Hunting Activities
- Applications
- From Screening Tests and Job Offers to Joining a Company
- Changing Your Status of Residence
- Job Hunting Reports

You can download the PDF version of "Job Hunting Guide for International Students 2025 (Japanese Version)" at the following URL (the booklet version will be sent from the end of February 2024).

https://www.jasso.go.jp/ryugaku/after_study_j/job/guide.html

In addition, the PDF file of the 2025 English version can be downloaded from the same URL from around the end of February. So please take advantage of it.

https://www.jasso.go.jp/en/ryugaku/after_study_j/job/guide.html

"Job Hunting Guide for International Students 2025 (Japanese version)"



If you are looking for a job in Japan, first consult with the career center or the international exchange center of your university (school).

Introducing support programs for international students and former international students.

JASSO also supports international students who have returned to their countries. This time, we would like to introduce the "Follow-up Research Fellowship" . The recruitment for 2024 has been closed, but reports of former participants might be helpful.

■ Follow-up Research Fellowship

This is for students who have completed study in Japan and are active in the fields of education, academic research, or administration as they return to their home country. By subsidizing travel expenses and stay expenses to Japan, this program allows you to come back to Japan and conduct short-term research at a Japanese university with your former faculty members.

- Number of members in 2023: 26
- Number of members in 2024: App. 25 (projected)

[Here for the report of the Follow-up Research Fellowship]
https://www.jasso.go.jp/en/ryugaku/after_study_j/tanken/report/index.html



Providing useful information via Facebook!

JASSO has a Japan Alumni Global Network page on Facebook! We post useful information for former and current international students, hoping to create a great place for online exchange.

Official Facebook Page
"Japan Alumni Global Network"



Introducing our Facebook page's popular posts and articles of 2023!

Below are the top 3 that received the most Likes!

- What are some tricks to filling out Japanese job applications ?

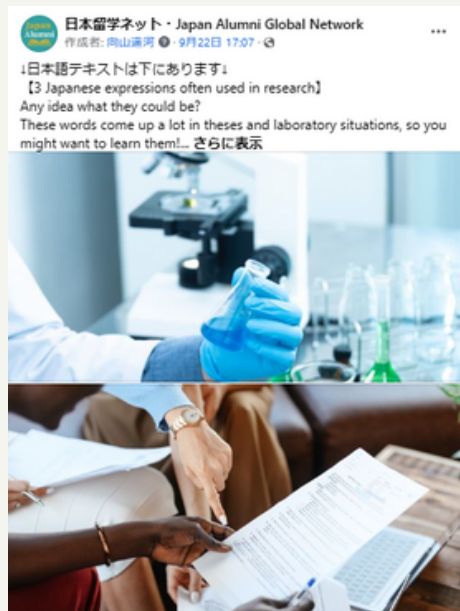
<https://www.facebook.com/jasso.japanalumnglobalnetwork/posts/595397006035125>

- 3 Japanese expressions often used in research

<https://www.facebook.com/jasso.japanalumnglobalnetwork/posts/645679727673519>

- Benefit of Researching at Japanese Graduate School

<https://www.facebook.com/jasso.japanalumnglobalnetwork/posts/631048699136622>



We've been receiving the most Likes on information related to job hunting and research. Japan Alumni Global Network will continue to provide useful tips, including information about culture and life in Japan.

Those who are reading this post now! Would you like to introduce your memories in Japan or/and topics you want to share with fellow students on the Japan Alumni Global Network? Please write your name and email address and contact us via Facebook direct message or email "alumni-newsletter@jasso.go.jp".

Note from the editor

Thank you for reading the December 2023 issue of the Japan Alumni Global Network Newsletter.

JASSO publishes a newsletter once a year as part of our Facebook postings to provide useful information to current / former international students.

In this newsletter, we introduced news about Japan in 2023, information about finding a job and career in Japan, and activities and accomplishments of our former international students. Did they remind you of your study in Japan?

On the Japan Alumni Global Network Facebook page, we post the latest news about Japan, activities of former international students, and information about finding a job in Japan, in order to expand the network of former international students who studied in Japan and to maintain a long-lasting connection with Japan. We post the latest information on Japan, the activities of former international students, and information on finding a job in Japan. Comments from readers are also shown on posts, and we hope that they will help you remember your study abroad days and provide an opportunity to reconnect with your former university and old friends again.

Please take a look at our Facebook posts as well!



Publisher

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