

JAPAN, SEINAN GAKUIN UNIVERSITY INTER-VARSITY TRIP REPORT (14/06/19-23/06/19)

By Sehliselo Dlodlu

Our trip to Japan, Fukuoka; Seinan Gakuin to be exact, was an incredible one. The experiences we shared with the locals were nothing short of amazing, from the "unorthodox" food, such as raw eggs, raw fish eggs and noodles served as a cold dish, to the astonishing pragmatic way of living of the Japanese, whereby they all thrive to find their place in the community and work as a unit, rather than the western "every man for himself" standard, it was all such a wholesome and wonderful experience.

Naturally, the Japanese are inconspicuous by nature, as they will not draw attention to themselves in order to try not to step on others toes. They are a very considerate nation, I believe that there are many mannerisms that we could all learn from, especially in being more attentive and helpful towards one another. I made many friends, exchanged contacts and hope to see them someday. I will never forget the fun times we shared at the beach, teaching each other how to dance and let loose. The feeling was evidently mutual because when I left I was given two endearing postcards from my newly found friends; Emmy and Nonoka, which I have since framed.

Japan has quite an interesting history, and its present-day alliance with the United States draws as far back as the 18th century, and these two countries have continued to enjoy cordial relations economically and politically; with the US helping reform Japan, turning it into a democracy. This was very interesting to learn, especially as a Politics student. I believe that the intercultural exchange program between the University of Johannesburg and Seinan Gakuin University will go a long way in educating students from both institutions about both countries; each country's history, the different cultures, and the diverse backgrounds and way of life, rather than rely on stereotypes which hold no substance. In essence, the trip to Japan made me realise the importance of cultivating the culture of wanting to know more about the world around us.

What an experience!! Thank you so much to the Politics Department and the International House for providing me with such an opportunity, I look forward to being

a professional jetsetter soon. And special thanks to our amazing chaperones; Ma Rae and Nezo. They made the trip worthwhile, and managed to tighten a few loose strands, and ultimately run a tight and happy ship. Japan was an experience that I will cherish forever. Thank you so much.