

In 2009 I got the fantastic opportunity to be take part in the long-term Europe-Japan Mutual Understanding Program of the Japanese Government. During these four and half a months I “borrowed” the everyday-life of an average Japanese high-school student, attending a Japanese high-school, being the part of a Japanese family and doing my best in the “whole new world” of that incredible country. Exploring the traditional Yamagata-ken made me understand that perhaps we are not the same, there are differences, but these differences are not bad. Not good either. They are normal, which we should not adjudge but accept and view them as the most natural things.

My host-family, the Onodera’s, they were “the family”. Without the prefix host-. They were my parents, my siblings, my nieces and first in my life, I experienced the wonderful calm of a big, loving family. Spending all your time in a friendly, warm environment, it was a new sense for me. They taught me the most important things which come nearly everyday into my mind- I returned two months ago, though. I learnt about the Japanese mentality, the effective problem-solving ability, to be always in time and that serving others or putting your own ego a bit under the European norm is not ignominious, but can make you grater and is a very “light” feeling. I enjoyed every minute. The grand-children played with me a lot, and accepted me as a member of their family for the first sight. My sister and brothers took a huge care of me, and even not realizing it that time, but they helped me make my mind, my way of thinking a lot more “adult-like”. And I loved my o-kaasan and o-tousan. We chatted about all topics of the world: politics, economy, religion, food, customs. I got a lot of new perspectives from them which I am truly grateful for.



With classmates in Kyouto

My school was the place where I spent the most part of my day. My second home and host. It was the place to pick up a huge amount of knowledge. This knowledge was not confined to the academic subjects, but rather the important stuffs as the world-wide famous Japanese diligence, patience, steadfastness and purposefulness. It was a difficult moment, when I had to give back my uniform, and wave into the direction of my school when-returning back to Tokyo-, I was taken to the airport. I can not



Me and Kouchou-sensei with the maikos in Sakata-shi

mention anything, which was not unforgettable. Just to enumerate some of them: the ribbon of the school-uniform, my lunch-box, the kendo-club, the peace of the library, preparing for the nikyuu in the shinroshitsu, the best headmaster for ever (it is a bit unbelievable even for me, but I miss Kouchou-sensei and Kyoutou-sensei more, than my classmates or friends)... I was enchanted from the first day on. Nobody knew me there, but I got so much help and good words from all my teachers, as never before in my whole life. The school-trip to Osaka and Kyoto was the top of my “adventure-mountain”.



And I have to mention the wonderful two weeks (in total), which I spent with the other Europeans together in Tokyo before and after our home-stay. Everyday we had various activities, where the people of the IFA prepared us with a great attention, care, and we were able to master our ideas about Japan and got known each other's culture as well.

The Slovenian, the Spanish girl and me in Hakone

During my time, spent in Japan, I fell in love with Japan even more. Compared to the other exchange-students, I had never had some "Japan-mania", I was "just" interested in the language (in an enormous way and wanted to pass the nikyuu no matter how ^ ^"). And I think, I was able to stay always really objective while I was enjoying the land of the rising sun. But something has changed in my inside. Japan has become a part of me, which I can not cut out anymore. In the same way as my arms, my legs or my nose, I have also a Nippon-part in my body. Or rather in my soul.

When now, after two months, I recall my memories, I still can not believe that this girl called Ilona Miterkó was really there. That she, Ilona Miterkó was me. When I got the call in April 2009, that I am the lucky one, who obtained this scholarship, I felt dizzy and just had one single thought: "Oh my God, it is unbelievable! Thank-you-thank-you!" It is still like a dream of mine, and I was let live in my own dream for more than four months. I am thankful in an unexpressionable way. The Hungarian Japan Embassy, Shinozawa-san; the IFA, Nogami-san; my host school and family (they are always in my heart), everybody whom I met in Japan; my Japanese teachers, Yoshizawa- and Matsuda-sensei and absolutely mostly the Japanese Government: 言葉で言い表せないくらい、感謝の気持ちが一杯です。ありがとうございました。（本当に本当に本当に・・・）



(1., in the kendou-club
2., Yamagata-kenritsu Sakata-nishi Koutougakkou

3., with O-kaasan, O-tousan and Kano-chan
4., with O-kaasan and O-tousan in Toukyou)