

## *My unforgettable trip to JAPAN*

In my report about my trip to Japan (between 20/06/2009 and 26/07/2009), first I would like to express my gratitude to the Japanese Embassy and to the IFA.

Before the trip I read a few books about Japan – its culture, geography, history and places of interest.

I also studied Japanese very hard, not just at school but in my free time, too.

On the whole, this five-week-stay in Japan was excellently organized for the participants I think and I also had a lot of opportunities to improve my competence in Japanese and learn about everyday life Japan. The experience also increased my cross-cultural understanding of other European countries. I still keep in touch with an English, Danish, Irish and a German student.



The Big Group

We spent the first week in Tokyo. Here we had orientation on the first two days. There were very interesting lectures about Japan, its culture and the cultural differences that usually cause misunderstanding for foreigners in

communication.

On the next few days we had an intensive Japanese course. Based on the diagnostic tests (written and oral) I got in the highest-level group.

In the first week we also visited quite a few places of interest. Such as the Tokyo Tower, the Edo-Tokyo Museum, Asakusa.



The Tokyo Tower

At the end of the first week everybody travelled to their host families. I took the shinkansen to Ogaki where I met my host family. All members of the family

were very kind to me and they immediately took me to a water polo match which I really enjoyed.

After the match they introduced their house to me. I found this detached house very interesting because it was a mixture of a traditional and a modern Japanese home. I was really pleased with my room because the bed was big enough for me (I'm 192 cms tall) and there was also air-conditioning and a brand new computer.



My Host Family

Although in Hungary I did not really like Japanese foods much – all meals which my host family were delicious. I found the traditional Japanese food really tasty and healthy.

The family was genuinely interested in my home country and they kept asking questions about Hungarian customs and food.

They also took me on a few trips to Takayama and Osaka, which I really enjoyed. We also went bowling once.

I attended a High School near my home. I was impressed by how well-equipped the school was. I found the swimming pool very useful in the PE lesson.

On the first day I was asked to introduce myself to all the teachers (in Japanese, of course).

I visited several classes in all grades. I found the “shodou”-classes fascinating. I was really impressed by the way the teacher was teaching calligraphy. When I left the school at the end of the third week the shodou teacher presented a whole “shodou-kit” to me that made me rally happy.



My School Mates

I regularly attended the school library where I was studying and reading. In the English classes I picked up a lot of Japanese when we were translating from English into Japanese. I gave a lot of lectures to several classes about Hungary, using my DVD and Hungarian music. Here were also Question and answer sessions in the end.

In the afternoon I took part in several club activities such as judo, kendo, ping-pong, volleyball, baseball and my favorite sport: water polo. I got very well with the water polo team players of the school. I was also asked to help in giving instructions. I enjoyed my time here and I have very pleasant memories. Once I went to Kyoto with the water polo team, while the others were having a match I was sightseeing there. I made a lot of friends. I got a lot of present from the team.



In Kyoto

On the last day I expressed my gratitude to all the teachers at the school. The next day when the family took me to the station I again thanked them for everything, expressing that it was an experience of a lifetime. And I left for Tokyo.

The next day we went to Kamakura where we saw the Big Buddha and we also went to an “onsen” at Hakone and we also went sightseeing to the Ashinko Lake, to the Owakudani Valley and to the Hakone Open-Air Museum. On the last day we went to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where everybody was asked to give a two-minute presentation about their stay in Japan.

After returning to Hungary I was asked to give a presentation about my experiences to my classmates. I also showed my photographs and answered their questions.

I would definitely advise any Hungarian student to take part in such a program. Living with a Japanese family and going to a High School (even for a short period of time) gave me a fascinating insight into life in Japan and it also contributed to improving my Japanese competence.