

My first impression of Japan was according to what I had imagined although my first – hand experience intensified the previous image in mind. The polite and warm manner shown towards a curious foreigner visiting a new country, starting from the very beginning and lasting throughout the entire program, depicts the courteousness Japanese people are known for. Each and every person contributing to the program did their very best to make the visit a pleasant and enlightening experience.



The Japanese punctuality and efficiency shone through a well organized schedule, allowing us to fully exploit the time given in Japan to enjoy the country. Within few days the program encounters different aspects of the Japanese culture, varying from cultural habits, aesthetic expositions and as well Japan in an international perspective. In this program first-hand experience was provided in addition to observation of cultural events, ensuring its participants to gain a memorable experience. These encounters indicate the possibilities Japan has to offer to its visitors of different purposes. Knowledge gained, not only of Japan but as well of my own country and other European countries, surely has broadened my horizon.

The home stay program was an amusing addition to the program, advancing the cultural experience towards the domestic domain. The host families, demonstrating Japanese hospitality, did their utmost to make our stay a pleasant one. Donating their time to guide Europeans around Hiroshima and, in my case, to have the opportunity of dressing in a kimono and gaining familiarity of domestic habits, is priceless. The palate provoking cuisine of Japan, consisting of fresh and tasteful varieties of fish and vegetables, reached its height during the home stay program where I was served a great variety of deliciously, fresh, domestically cooked food. The selection that makes Japanese cuisine results in the healthiness of Japanese people providing them longevity.



Though I had heard of Japanese organizing and punctuality prior to my visit to Japan, the actuality of it came to my surprise. Throughout my travels around the world I have never visited a country so clean, efficient and safe, despite the significant population. The citizens of Japan seem trustworthy and willing to familiarize with and aid a foreigner despite communication difficulties. Japan with its advanced technology differs from other Asian countries and yet the atmosphere and culture, its people, are incompatible with western countries. Thus Japan has a unique stance in the cultural geography of the world.

This study tour program for European youth implicates which opportunities Japan can offer in relation to Europe and its population. To have gained first- hand experience of Japan and its culture was a precious one and will definitely be practical in the future, in regard of education, work, projects or any kind of affiliation. It has already been an inspiring experience for me and I feel deeply grateful for the opportunity. I hope that in the future these two nations, Iceland and Japan, can benefit from a mutual alliance, rich of friendship.



The entire group B with the great drum players of Nagisa Taiko!