

INTERVIEW SERIES WITH ALUMNI OF 'LOOK EAST POLICY'

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Ritsumeikan University (2009–2013 & 2017–2021)

Tell us about your study in Japan

This is my story. I came to Japan to study Bachelor of Engineering at Ritsumeikan University in 2009. Later in 2011–2013, I continued study in Master of Engineering at the same university. After 4 years working in Malaysia, I came back to Japan to further study in PhD. I continued study in Doctor of Engineering in Advanced Mechanical and Robotics Engineering at Ritsumeikan University (2017–2020). To gain working experience in Japan, I worked as a postdoctoral fellow at Ritsumeikan University for one year (2020–2021). So, in total, I stayed in Japan for 8 years. I am now a senior lecturer at Universiti Malaysia Perlis (UniMAP).

What surprised you in Japan?

There are several things that surprised me in Japan. First is the beauty of Mount Fuji. As we know, Mount Fuji is one of the top tourist spots in Japan. The view and scene of Mount Fuji are surprisingly beautiful and astonishing. From far away, the mount looks like a complete triangle shape. Especially during spring and autumn, we can see the top of the mountain covered by ice. I believe you will never get bored even already seen it

multiple times. Secondly, it is difficult to get a Japanese driving license in Japan. In my case, I converted my Malaysian driving license to a Japanese license. The passing rate of driving tests in Shiga Prefecture is comparatively low. After taking 4 times driving tests and one driving class, I passed the driving test. Unfortunately, each test cost me 4000 yen. The rules of driving in Japan are different compared to Malaysia.

Look East Policy & you

This is my background related to Look East Policy. I am very grateful to get the chance to study in Japan by receiving a scholarship from Yayasan Pelajaran MARA (YPM), from Diploma to Ph.D. Degree. I joined the Japanese Associate Degree Program (JAD), a twinning program under the HELP III project initiated by YPM and the Government of Japan. After that, I continued my Master's and Ph.D. studies with a scholarship from YPM. I also previously became a lecturer at Malaysia Japan Higher Education Program (MJHEP) at MJII, Beranang, Selangor. Through Look East Policy, I got a chance to study in Japan

and learn about the Japanese lifestyle. This valuable experience opened my point of view and way of thinking. Japan also taught me to value time, work hard, appreciate tradition, and think before acting. This valuable experience has changed my mind to become a better person in the future.

Your favorite:

Person

My favorite person is my parents, wife, son, and siblings. In addition, a few memorable people around me during my stay in Japan is including my supervisor at the university, Prof. Dr. Shinichi Hirai. He taught me a lot about research and academic life. Besides, I also have many friends in Japan. They supported me in completing my study and going through the ups and down living in Japan.

Place

The first visit for my family and me was Mt Fuji. It is very beautiful even before that, we have already visited several times but we never get bored. We also went to Hiroshima, Osaka, and other beautiful places.

Food

I like to eat Aburi Salmon Sushi as well as tempura udon. It tastes good and delicious.

Custom

I am interested in Japanese customs called "Omoiyari." "Omoi" means think, while "yari" means do. Therefore, it means to think of others first before doing something.

The custom taught us to care for others in

everything we do. For example, when we arrive at a train station in Japan, we should stand in line. We need to give a chance for people inside the train to go outside first before we board the train. We should not rush into the train and wait in line for the person inside to go out first to prevent congestion at the station. Another example, we should not throw rubbish anywhere in Japan because it can pollute the environment. In addition, we follow the traffic rules because we think that if we break the rules, it causes problems to others.

Additional

I hope for more sharing experience program like this so that we can improve our social network among Japanese graduate students. I also hope that Alumni of Look East Policy (ALEPS) will continue to conduct more interactive programs that benefits all.

Speaking of future of Malaysia and Japan, I hope for more closer cooperation between Malaysia and Japan in terms of economy, academic, and technology. Moreover, I am looking forward for continuation of skills training of local talent as well as increasing sharing knowledge in term of technology between both countries.

As personal advice to young students who plan to study in Japan, mastering the Japanese Language takes time and effort. I believe that if we keep focusing on our main

objective, we can succeed. Do not waste your time with something unbeneficial, or you will regret it later. Surviving in Japan is indeed a real challenge, and don't forget to make friends with someone around you. Take care and good luck.



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