

# Re-Inventing Japan Project 2019

Chapingo Autonomous University . Division of economic and administrative science

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Miguel Angel Perez Andrade

Tokyo NODAI Department : International Agricultural Development.

## INTRODUCTION

My name is Miguel, I'm from Mexico and I studied in Japan as part of the 2019 Re-Inventing Japan Project program. This was a wonderful experience, all filled with unforgettable moments, beautiful places and a big incredible culture and history that enriches my knowledge. To have the opportunity to study in Japan is the best that happened to me, because I got not only new knowledge about different topics, also I learn about a new society system, and it was the best. I got many things not only in my educational training, but also cultural and personal.



I have admired Japan since many years ago, because of the language, culture, society, history, and good economy; it was my big dream to visit Japan, since I knew a bit about Japan by the movies and I watched some tv program, and another people that they also visited Japan. Thankfully this was my second time here in NODAI after my participation in Tokyo NODAI ISS 2018.

In general, I always being a big fan of Asian cultures, I always thought they had a lot to teach to other countries, but I focused on the most interesting on my opinion, so I started to study the Japanese language, and search for opportunities to saw about Japan in Mexico.

I am currently studying Engineering in Agricultural Economics in Chapingo. I really like the interactions between the farmers and the fields, also agribusiness and languages; I am also interested in many countries with respect to these topics, Japan means to me the opportunity to go out for the out of my country, and learn about the agriculture in another context and economic situation, when I heard about this programs, it becomes my main goal on my studies.

The Re-Inventing Japan Project is good and comprehensive exchange program that gives the opportunity to grow academically as personally.

## MY EXPERIENCE

In the following notes I want to sare my expirience during my student exchange in Tokyo NODAI.

April



From the first day in classes, a pleasant atmosphere is generated when exchanging knowledge, experiences, and perspectives between the Japanese teachers and the students that conform the "Reinventing Japan Program 2019".

"Please come forward, draw the map of your country and describe to us how is your agriculture"; "In this class we will read poems about the nature of Japan"; "It is important that you learn the history of this country"; "What differences do you notice between Peru, France, Mexico, Brazil ...?"

It has been fascinating to know the concept of Satoyama and understand the vision of harmony between agriculture and the environment through the words of Suzuki Sensei.

Every day there is something new to learn, a phrase in Japanese to practice, a place to visit, food to try and people to meet. It is a pleasure to be here, I'm grateful with Tokyo NODAI and my beloved alma mater for this opportunity to learn and share knowledge, experiences and different perspectives of something as wonderful as agriculture, nature, and the environment care.

June.



At the beginning of June we visited the Hama-Rikyo gardens, it was amazing to know this space that preserves the harmony of nature since 1650 in the middle of an urban area in constant growth and development.

This year's international student party was very fun and a great opportunity to try snacks from other countries, dance to the rhythm of their songs, and show off the charms of Mexico with our classmates.

I enrolled in the ISF student association, Internatinal Student Forum, and had the opportunity to join them in their project of linking students with green tea producers in Yamayuri village in Ikumi prefecture. It was incredible to be able to coexist with its inhabitants and to know the rural area of Japan being part of a project directed by students.

This month have very pleasant moments when visiting the clubs offered by the university, such as theater, painting and photography.

I had the opportunity to read the script of "Persimmon", a traditional Japanese theater play, and learn to perform on stage with Noroshige Sensei.

NODAI has many opportunities to entertain and Tokyo is a giant city with a lot to offer and museums to visit during my days off. It's been 3 months now but the excitement of learning and sharing is exactly the same as the first day.

Agust

As part of the program, together with the other latin american studients, we had the opportunitie to had and intership in ERECON.

The Institute of Rehabilitation and Environmental Conservation, ERECON, has as main objective to contribute in the sustainable use of natural resources. That why the organization is responsible for environmental rehabilitation and conservation, as well as promoting environmental education to achieve agricultural, urban and environmental development.

During our stay at ERECON, we discussed the results of the soil conservation project in Kampong, Cambodia, and analyzed the direct economic consequences in reducing poverty of farmers in this region; We review the concept of Satoyama and visit the Onoji Satoyama Community Center to harvest eggplants and tomatoes, past time with the habitants of the community and get to know the eco-tourism route offered by Machida satoyama; We visited the JICA offices to learn how Japan has contributed to the development of other countries around the world, as well as informing us about the new sustainable goals that the ONU has proposed; and we had the opportunity to know the process of elaboration of liquid fertilizers



and pellet compost as alternatives to chemical fertilizers and promoters of organic agriculture.

To conclude our internship in ERECON we conclude presenting an agricultural, social or environmental development project that we are willing to carry out in our home countries. In my case, together with my partner Rafael Estrada, we present, the initiative to establish the first organic avocado orchard in the community of Puerto Oscuro, Guerrero, Mexico. From the success of our project, we visualize a better future for avocado producing areas in our country and a radical change in the conservation of the natural resources used for its production.

In conclusion, from my experience, this program successfully achieves ERECON's mission of promoting environmental conservation, as well as raising awareness about the importance of international collaboration for agricultural, social and environmental development in developing countries.

#### What I learn from this experience

The scholarship has influenced me in a positive way both in my personal life and as a future professional. I have known the true value of money and I have learned to prioritize the most important expenses, as well as to save money for my extra-curricular activities and also to organize well my schedules and times. Besides being five months living alone for the first time and sharing a Space with other people has made me a stronger person mentally and also tolerant.

Definitely the courses I took in Tokyo NODAI gave me the knowledge and social awareness about issues related to environmental sustainability that can be applied to try to solve some problems that afflict rural areas and vulnerable populations dedicated to agriculture in my country. The scientific advances and research carried out in Japan in this area have shown me that there is much to be done in Mexico and I intend to contribute to the improvement of the agricultural system by sharing the knowledge I have acquired in my research group and with students from other universities.

## SHAPING MY CAREER

As a student of Engineering in Agricultural Economics, it was for me a great opportunity to know other forms of social organization that allows the development of society and a good organization. besides that, I had the opportunity to see closely the form of agriculture that is practiced in Japan and that has adapted to the needs and availability of the country. I realized that resources are used in the best way. They also have sustainable projects not only for their country, but also to apply them to other countries to improve their use.

I met some institutions that can help implement some projects to improve our way of production, society and the environment.

## ADVISE FOR STUDENTS

What could advise new students interested in visiting this great country, is to study about the language since it is of great help when you arrive, besides that it facilitates a bit the coexistence with the society, in addition to reading about the history of Japan , because it is a country with which it offers you a great and magnificent history. Many times if you do not know people are willing to help you, so you should not be sorry to collide with someone when you do not understand.

## SUGGESTIONS

To improve the program look for teachers with a better level of the English language. Some of the teachers have a bad pronunciation of the language which makes the understanding of the class difficult.

In the other hand from me I am very happy and satisfied with this program; Re-inventing Japan Project, as it allowed me to further develop my skills and knowledge, in addition to meeting many friends from other countries with whom we made a good friendship and stayed in communication.

I would like to thank this program for allowing me the opportunity to make one of my goals come true. Maybe something that I would like to be included for other participants, would

be something more than cultural activities, in which you can coexist even more with Japanese partners.

