

## 2019 Re-inventing Japan Project (Long Term)

Chapingo Autonomous University

Agricultural Parasitology Department 3rd Year

Rafael Sebastian Benitez Estrada

Tokyo NODAI Department: International Agricultural Development

The academic training in the area of agronomy that I received at the Chapingo Autonomous University allowed me to expand my thinking and learning capacity,



strengthening my knowledge and my aptitudes to face new challenges, taking into account that I have the competences and the necessary criteria to carry out planning and research work in the field of Agronomy, in particular of Agricultural Parasitology.

My expectation as a student, was to be able to participate in the academic programs that can be related to my field of study, as well as to participate in

other study programs that Tokyo University of Agriculture offers to foreign students, such as field or laboratory practices and in this way obtain the best possible advantage of staying at Tokyo University of Agriculture.

Mexico has the potential for agricultural and livestock production, however I am always looking for new management techniques and also seek to improve production systems.

Japan is a country that creates new technologies to make agricultural production grows under a specific research system for a higher education level, so it represents the opportunity to receive this kind of education in a country of great importance it will strengthen my knowledge to continue with my professional training in this field.



I think going abroad while you are University student makes you grow culturally and academically, so taking an exchange to Japan is a way to expand my borders and know what other developed countries are doing to help agricultural development.



I arrived at Haneda airport and from the first moment in Japan, I could see that most people were different, in terms of habits and customs. Japanese culture is one of the strongest cultures in Asia and even in the world.

During my exchange program I joined the courses that Tokyo NODAI offers to foreign students such as: Vegetable Production Technologies for International Cooperation, Planning and Design of Landscape Plants, Life

History and Applications of Landscape plants, Food and Health, Global Food Systems.

The study of the courses I was involved in at the University were focused on one of the NODAI phrases, "Return Man to the Farm", which seeks to bring new technologies in the field of agriculture back to the population to re-interest in crops, just as at my University, NODAI has several areas of study focused on field development, from direct sowing to mechanized sowing, systematized irrigation and controlled environment under greenhouse. In each of the courses taught at the university we work with professors specialized in different areas of agriculture to give us a broad overview in their respective areas of study in order to give us the best possible understanding without giving margin of error to the doubt.

Also during the semester some of the courses included field trips for better learning in the fields and laboratories of the University. For a better performance in the classroom, teachers have tools such as computer programs that make more favorable understanding of the subject.



One of the best experiences is to be able to study in the classroom under an international environment where you can perform in a better way, showing the production systems as well as the new technological innovations of each country and know how agriculture is developed in each country participating in Tokyo NODAI.

In each meeting, we all shared our experiences as students of agriculture, which is what we are currently investigating, what our main problems are and what we do about it for the resolution of conflicts in the field.



Before my academic exchange to Japan, I previously studied three semesters of Japanese language at my current university in Mexico, which was one of my motivations to participate in the Re-inventing Japan Project that Tokyo NODAI offers to students from Latin America. Once I arrived at the university I had no doubt to join the intensive Japanese course and improve my level to be able to get involved in groups of Japanese people, talk with my classmates and to enter the Japanese world, which was my dream once I arrived in Japan.

I couldn't wait to start Japanese classes and finally prove everything I knew and have a good ground to continue my Japanese language study.

The teaching system is represented by the classes in the classroom as well as the help of speaking with classmates and didactic videos that help us for a better understanding. The evaluation consists of tests that include the writing of Hiragana, Katakana and Kanji as well as reading comprehension and listening.

At the end of the course we practice Japanese calligraphy writing.

Also during the semester I had the opportunity to interact with Tokyo NODAI students through English Coffee and Latin America coffee meetings where students interested in learning or practicing English spoke about different topics of daily life in Japan which allowed us to make great friendships during our stay in this great country, while in the Latin America coffee meetings, students from Brazil, Peru and Mexico spoke in English, Spanish and Portuguese while our Japanese classmates guided us with their language.



In English Coffee I met amazing friends who showed me amazing places around Tokyo and even invited me to their homes to taste delicious food made by their mom, it was undoubtedly a unique experience.



At my university I belong to the Department of Agricultural Parasitology so in Tokyo NODAI I joined the Tropical Plant Protection Laboratory where I learned a lot about controlling diseases such as fungi and bacteria in the main tropical crops of Japan.

## MY EXPERIENCE

### APRIL

This first month was a little cold but very comfortable, ideal to go out to appreciate the parks full of cherry blossom (Hanabi), for me it was an impressive spectacle to see the corridors full of petals everywhere.



Over time I became accustomed to Japanese culture and food, I also learned to use the train and move from one point to another. Occasionally I met my classmates for dinner or to go out and see new places and be surprised with everything Tokyo has.

The Buddhist and Shinto temples around Tokyo are fantastic sceneries worth seeing because they give the city that ancient touch. A few steps from the NODAI dormitories, is Gotokuji temple, the temple of the famous cats of fortune, I could not wait to go out to know it.

### MAY



The golden week in May allowed me to visit typical places of Japan, such as the typical houses with large gardens and Tatami floors. Also during this month I was able to enjoy a delicious green tea ice cream.

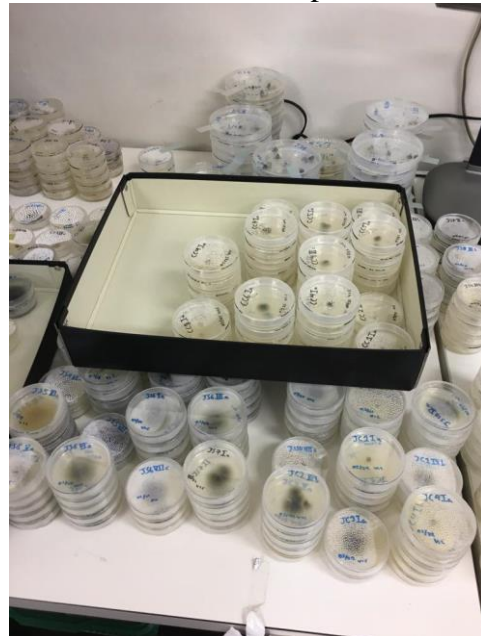
Together with my friends, we enjoyed the days of the golden week going out to know interesting places of Tokyo and its adjacent prefectures as well as Kanagawa, Yamanashi

and Chiba prefecture, we toured as many places as we could. To end the golden week, I visited Yokohama City in Kanagawa Prefecture, it was one of my favorite places because it is right next to the harbor, a great park and In addition, we were able to observe a parade on the occasion of the golden weekend, it was an excellent day, enough to return to Tokyo.

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Upon restarting classes, I joined one of my laboratory colleagues with whom I collaborated in the identification of Phytopathogenic Fungi of Mango from Okinawa Prefecture. During the mushroom extraction I was able to try different methods for the identification of structures, I really learned a lot about this treatment and about procedures inside the laboratory. Throughout my stay in the laboratory, I met many colleagues who helped me to a better understanding, I am really very grateful for everything they have taught me.



## JUNE

One of my favorite activities during the summer, were the festival celebrations (Matsuri) along the main streets of Tokyo where I could appreciate many typical dances of ancient Japan and many people happy dancing and enjoying being able to show part of their culture

The Matsuri in Japan are a very common tradition that allows foreigners to get to know a large part of their highly varied culture.

I attended the baseball game of the NODAI team, a unique experience, during the match we celebrated dancing the NODAI radish dance.

This month me and my classmates of my Planning and Design of Landscape Plants class visited one of the most beautiful places around Tokyo, the city of temples in Kamakura, also visited the monument of the great Buddha and took a breath in front of one of the strongest religious symbols of all Japan and even all of Asia, no doubt it was an unforgettable experience.



## JULY

This was one of my favorite months because I had many activities in the university, I had the great opportunity to present to my classmates of Global Food Systems the bases of Food in Mexico with the purpose of show them the variety of foods from our main grain grown in most of my country, corn. It was also very interesting to learn about food systems in other parts of the world, my classmates also explained important topics about food in their countries and how their crops are processed to obtain their main foods.

Finally, this month I had one of the most important trips during my stay in Japan. Together with my laboratory mates that study Insects, we went on an excursion to Yamanashi Prefecture, it was a trip to collect insects, and in the transfer to Yamanashi Prefecture I could appreciate a beautiful landscape from the train.





We stayed in a camp dedicated to the collection of insects, the hotel also had a large museum of the science of entomology where you could observe more than 5000 types of insects for learning.

During the insect collection time, I had a very pleasant time with all my friends who showed me insect catch techniques and I also observed some differences between the insects of Mexico and the insects of Japan. During this study trip, I also got to know the traditional Japanese baths (Onsen) an experience a little different from what I was used to have in Mexico but it was also a unique experience because I could be part of one more of the Japanese traditions.

## AUGUSTS

The last month was incredible, although it was time to say goodbye to some of my colleagues who would leave Japan soon, we enjoyed the last days together going to karaoke, going out to dinner our favorite dishes and visiting our favorite places. At university it was the end of the semester, so it was time to give all our effort to get good grades in exams and homework. At the end of the classes, some of my friends and I did an internship for "Sustainable Use of Natural Resources" in ERECON (Institute of Environmental Rehabilitation and Conservation) an organization focusing in research and extension programs to contribute to sustainable use of natural resources in Asian countries.

During the first days of August, students from Brazil, Peru and Mexico worked on ERECON projects, analyzed topics explained by some of the coordinators, one of the most interesting topics was, do farmers really need agrochemicals to manage their crops? For this, we are implementing the use of pellet compost made from food waste to produce organic fertilizer, which has a lower production cost and is sustainable for farmers, in this way would reduce the use of chemical fertilizers in the soil.

The best thing about this course is that the organizers asked us to apply everything we had learned through this internship in a project that would help us in our lives, for making an extension throughout the countries in Latin America, bringing ideas that come from projects that support countries in Asia, to countries in America.



As part of this internship, we made a field trip with the farmers of an ERECON field with whom we shared a delicious BBQ in the field, it was a very pleasant interaction. An important part of this tour was to recognize the importance of Saitama, the interaction between man and agriculture in rice fields in Japan.

## FINAL TRIP

Days before returning to Mexico, I had the opportunity to travel to KANSAI, the historic part of Japan. (Osaka, Kyoto and Nara)



## SHAPING MY CAREER

As a student of Agricultural Parasitology, I consider Japan to be one of the countries that remains at the forefront, developing scientific and technological advances that bring benefits to agricultural production. In my area of study there are new techniques for detection and management of diseases, which is very important, today, in Mexico, pests and diseases in crops represent a percentage of loss between 35 - 90% economically affecting small farmers who are developing and that their economy depends directly on their production. That is why I want to improve my academic training to support Mexican agriculture seeking economic and productive sustainability that will lead us to grow and contribute to the development of Mexico.



## BEFORE TO SAY GOOD BYE

My experience could not be better, I'm deeply grateful whit NODAI's students, staffs and professors for every moment we spent together as academic time as cultural time. Thanks for all the knowledge we changed each other. Thanks NODAI for give this opportunity, see you the next time.