

Where does my interest in Japan come from?

Dear Madam, Sir,

Is it boring if I start this letter by saying that I discovered the Japanese culture through manga and anime when I was eight years old? I know this may sound familiar because I am far from being the only one. What else could we expect when France is the second-largest consumer of manga right after Japan, and most French people in their 20s and 30s grew up watching anime on television? I loved reading manga and watching anime, but it wasn't until I gained access to the internet that I developed a real liking for Japan. I could watch anime dubbed in Japanese with French subtitles and, for the first time, hear the Japanese language. I remember thinking it was the smoothest language I had ever heard. I was eager to understand this language and to be able to speak it as well. It was the very first thing I liked about Japan.

Therefore, I started a bachelors' degree in English and Japanese. The first word I quickly memorized in Japanese was 花火. The combination of the words "flower" and "fire" created the term "firework". The Japanese language wasn't just beautiful to hear, it also described common things in a poetical way. I delved into the history of the imperial family linked to Amaterasu, Japan's national anthem, the Edo and Meiji eras... It was fascinating. Japan was no longer a country I knew through anime and manga; it had so many beautiful landscapes, arts, and traditions. I not only learned about Japan through my courses but also from my various Japanese teacher. They all had interesting stories about their lives in Japan, the Japanese people, the cultural shocks they experienced when moving to France, and the differences between Japan and France. It was pleasant listening to them.

Why do I want to spend several months there?

I have heard so much about Japan without seeing anything with my own eyes. I want to go to Japan. I want to see famous suburbs of Tokyo. I want to attend a tea ceremony in Kyoto. I want to experience a baseball game in Osaka. I want to savor Hakata Ramen in Fukuoka. I want to speak, to laugh, to go out with Japanese people. I want to hear their stories, tell them mine, and create priceless memories. There is so much to see, so much to learn, so much to discover. It cannot be done within a few weeks only. I want to go back to France with better skills in Japanese, a better knowledge of Japan and its people, beautiful memories, and numerous stories to tell my family and friends.