

## Inner-Asian migration patterns and demographic change

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The University of Heidelberg and University of Kyoto collaborate on the program on Courses of Asian and Transcultural Studies. As a third-semester student of the Master of Transcultural Studies in Heidelberg University,

I participated in classes offered by the University of Kyoto's graduate school of letters that are part of the joined CATS

Program. Additionally to a Japanese language course, I participated in four classes of the CATS program: Gender in Japan; Family, Work and Care; Cross-border Migration; and History and Culture of Kyoto. Moreover, I attended several

guest-lectures that were held by visiting professors outside of regular classes, such as a presentation on the growing nationalism in France and the Chinese – Philippine relations. Classes were generally very interesting and I greatly benefitted from the diverse student body and the inputs of teachers and students from all around the world, who made the program truly transcultural with their diverse experiences.

Luckily, I was also able to gain deeper insight into my main fields of interest: migration and demographic change. It was exciting to learn more about migration patterns in Asia, which can be quite different from the European experience. Especially aspects such as marriage-migration and the feminization of migration were interesting new concepts for me. Additionally, Japan is an interesting place to study and research on demographic change, as it is innovation leader in many related fields of research. These great new insights will also help me prepare the research for my upcoming master thesis, which will focus on closely related topics.

My experience in Japan was fascinating as it was the first time for me to visit East Asia. I am glad that the JASSO-scholarship funding enabled me to travel and thus see parts of Japan outside of Kyoto such as Osaka, Tokyo and Hiroshima that I could have otherwise not afforded to visit. For me, Kyoto was the perfect place to study and experience Japan at the same time. I enjoyed the diversity and rich culture and also the fact, that the city is not as big and overwhelming as e.g. Tokyo. It provided a very pleasant learning environment. Additionally, I greatly benefitted from Professor van Steenpaal's class on the history and culture of Kyoto, which gave me a new historical perspective and insight on the city I was living in that went far beyond a guided tourist tour.

Staying abroad for half a year in a country with which's language I was initially entirely unfamiliar strengthened my self-confidence. It is valuable to know that one can manage life in a foreign country even without any language skills. This lesson encouraged me once again to pursue a career that will require

me to move to different countries as well. Staying and studying in Japan also showed me how fascinating East Asia is, thus widening the geographic focus of my studies and future career plans. During my undergraduate studies I had focused on the region of Southeast Asia, but now thanks to my stay in Kyoto I got to know East Asia, too, and I will continue to learn more about this region. Moreover, I feel encouraged to continue studying the Japanese language and taking the JLPT N1 test as soon as possible.