

Personal Growth Through Work and Childrearing



Ms. NGUYEN QUYNH PHUONG

Nationality: Vietnamese

Arrival in Japan: May 2016

Currently works for a food-related company. She has one son.



Reason for coming to Japan: My two older sisters had also been to Japan, and I had the impression as a child that Japan was a wonderful country and the Japanese people were kind. I graduated from a university in Vietnam and worked there for a year before coming to Japan.

Post-arrival experience: During my first two years in Japan, I worked part-time while attending a Japanese language school. It was difficult to find a balance between studying and working. After graduating from Nagoya University of Economics I studied international law for two years. I am currently working for the same company in a job related to imports, exports, and business negotiations. My supervisor and coworkers are very kind to me and the atmosphere at my workplace is good. Around the time I graduated from graduate school, my first son was born.

Job satisfaction: I am able to try new things at work every day. For example, I asked the company if I could do a job related to exports. I always want to try new things.

About my child's upbringing: My mother came from Vietnam to help me with my child's upbringing for two years after the birth, but it was very difficult after she returned back home. For example, my son has been attending kindergarten since February 2022 and if he has a temperature of 37.5° or higher, the daycare center will contact me and I have to leave work early to pick him up. I also cannot go to work the next day if my son is not healthy enough to go to the daycare center the next day. I often don't get enough sleep. Also, my husband is often away on business trips, so it is difficult for me to take care of my children by myself, but fortunately, I can do my work online, so I am able to get by.

My son's language of use: Outside the house my son speaks Japanese. I would like to stay in Japan forever, but due to my husband's family circumstances, we might have to return to Vietnam someday. I don't want my son to forget Vietnamese, so I speak to him 100% in Vietnamese at home. He is learning Japanese through watching his favorite anime. I also teach him English at home.

About Japan: I would like to live in Japan forever. Japan is an easy and safe country to live in, and the air is clean. It is a country where food is also safe and trustworthy. Although some of the rules are strict, as long as you follow them everything is fine. If you are unsure about something, you can ask your fellow workers or superiors at your workplace, which is a good way to learn.

Message to foreign residents raising children: Making time to spend with your children is difficult, but it is a happy time to be treasured. Having children can also increase your motivation to work. By working as well as raising children, we can challenge ourselves to try new things and grow. It also leads to better results. We also want our children to remember their mother tongue so that they will have fewer problems when they return to their home countries. I have learned through my work that kindness and politeness in any matter will bring good results.

To all those who will be raising children in Japan

1. About the education system

Compulsory education in Japan consists of six years of elementary school and three years of junior high school. Children of foreign nationalities are also treated the same as Japanese nationals. Foreign children can attend elementary school and junior high school in the same way as Japanese nationals. Students cannot enter high school without graduating from junior high school. After graduating from high school, students can also go to college or to a vocational school.



◆ *School Enrollment Guidebook for Foreign Children* (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology) <Available in Chinese, English, Filipino, Korean, Portuguese, Spanish, Ukrainian, and Vietnamese>
https://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/shotou/clarinet/003/1320860.htm

◆ *Guidebook for Developing Pathways for Children Connected to Foreign Countries* (Aichi Prefecture) <available in Chinese (simplified), Chinese (traditional), English, Filipino, Portuguese, Spanish>
<https://www.pref.aichi.jp/soshiki/tabunka/shinro-gidebook.html>

2. Planning ahead for financing public elementary and secondary schooling

Be prepared with a plan

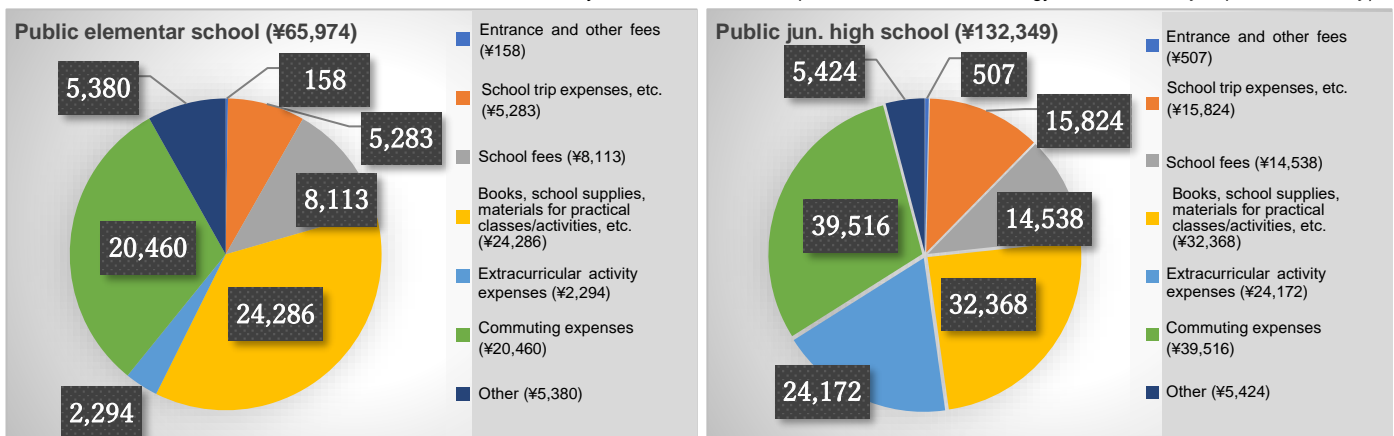
There is no tuition fee for classes. However, there are various expenses such as meals and lunch and educational materials. In elementary school children need school bags, gym uniforms, swimwear, and jackets that will need to be replaced as they grow. In junior high school, uniforms, gym uniforms, and so forth are required.

[Example: Things students need to buy]



◆ How much money do you need for education? (National average per child per year).

(Source: Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology 2021 Child Study Expenditure Survey)



3. About High School

There are three types of high schools: full-time, part time, and correspondence. There are also regular, industrial, and commercial schools. High school education is not compulsory. It is necessary to pass an entrance examination.



Special examination methods for foreign children (such as the Foreign Student Selection System):

Some full-time high schools in Aichi Prefecture offer special examinations for foreign children with the usual three subjects of Japanese, mathematics, and English combined into one exam, with furigana phonetic transcriptions added to the Japanese characters. It is also possible to take exams at part-time high schools with furigana transcription added.

Inquiries: High School Education Division, Aichi Prefectural Board of Education

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Opportunities to Get to Know Each Other

The Inuyama International Association (IIA) held a *Home Visit* program, in which foreign residents visited Japanese families to deepen mutual exchange through experiencing real life in Japan.

Year 2022 : 5 countries,
17 attendees, and 7 host families
Year 2023 : 5 countries,
12 attendees, and 7 host families



Voice of Participants'

- ◆ The most enjoyable part was chatting with each other while eating delicious food.
- ◆ I became friends with my host family. I would like to invite my host family to my home if I have a chance.
- ◆ We talked about various things. For example, about religion and cuisine in Japan and my own country.

Host Family Interview, Ms. Akagi Masayo. (Hosting female students from Cambodia and Vietnam)

My experience as a host family : It was fun. My mother, who lives alone said she also enjoyed it. Maybe it's part of their culture but they respect the elderly. I saw their smiling faces and felt that they had been carefully raised properly. It was also interesting to see how different they were from us. For example, they were very interested in dried persimmons, which are commonplace for us. I got a lot of energy from these two upbeat and fun women. I want them to continue to do well. I would like to host again next time. Home visits are fun, so I would recommend many foreigners and Japanese families to experience this. I would also like to discuss this experience with other families who have hosted guests.

Their understanding/impression of Japan : I hope I have given them a good impression of Japan. They said, "I would like to visit again."

After the experience of being a host family : Until now, the family members have always been aware that "they'll understand without my saying it," but by hosting people from different languages and cultures, we started listen to each other's stories with the understanding that we all have different personalities and come from different family backgrounds, which has made our family more caring and close knit.

Benefits of people from different cultures living together : I think if we start by accepting our differences, things will go more smoothly. The same applies to Japanese people interacting with each other. Building good relationships starts with listening, talking, and explaining to each other. That is really important! Let's open up and get along with each other!



A Student Who Is Studying Hard at the Inuyama Japanese Language Class!



Ms. Suzuki Yumi
Nationality : Japanese
Occupation :
Homemaker
Came to Japan from
the Philippines in 2023



I graduated from a public school in the Philippines in September 2023 and came to Japan in October. I would like to continue attending the Inuyama Japanese Language Class to improve my Japanese and find a job in the manufacturing industry in Japan. The staff members at the language class are very kind. At home, I study Japanese by watching Japanese dramas on TV. My favorite Japanese foods are tempura, ramen, and onigiri.

< Comments from Mr. Zenmoto Masaru, a volunteer teacher >

Yumi san understands very quickly and is very diligent in her studies. When we studied counting, after learning how to read "one, two, and three cups (1-ppai, 2-hai, 3-bai)", she was immediately able to read "one, two, and three animals (1-ppiki, 2-hiki, 3-biki)! She seems to have a good sense for the Japanese language. Yumi san is always smiling and engaged in her studies. So I am grateful to Yumi san for making teaching the class so enjoyable. Let's continue to have fun learning!



※Japanese Language Class⇒



Opportunity to speak in Japanese with people from many countries



「Multicultural Chat Club - Online」

We hold online meetings once a month for one hour to talk about a topic we choose. As we discuss our topic, we learn about each other's cultures and customs. Speaking with people from different cultures can lead to new discoveries.

◆ To apply :

[https://forms.gle/](https://forms.gle/cLmM8LAJmsoza)

[cLmM8LAJmsoza](https://forms.gle/cLmM8LAJmsoza)

[QVB8](https://forms.gle/cLmM8LAJmsoza)



Next meeting date : 7:30 p.m. ~ 8:30 p.m., March 13th (Wed.)

※Held alternately on weekdays and Saturdays.

Opportunities to experience new things and communicate with others. Even just a little Japanese is fine.

Experience cooking, festivals, and culture together! Meet new people outside of your workplace and family.



July 9, 2023 International Cooking Course⇒



Oct. 22, 2023 Hiking in Inuyama

◆ Find more events on our home page or on Facebook

Home Page (HP)
<http://iiea.info>



Facebook
「Inuyama International Association」



Interview with language instructor

IJA offers language classes taught by native speaking teachers. In this issue, we interview Ms. Kan Inson who teaches the Korean language class.

Hometown: Busan, South Korea

First visit to Japan: 1996

Likes about Japan: Japanese people are calm and kind. Japanese people are mild-mannered and don't intrude into other people's affairs. Favorite foods are sukiyaki and takoyaki.

Charms of Busan: Busan is a modern city with fashionable and nice coffee shops along the coastline. Busan is also famous for its seafood, such as octopus, squid, and sashimi. When traveling in South Korea for sightseeing, please visit Busan and not only Seoul.

Charms of the Korean Language: The Hangeul writing system for Korean was so that anyone could easily write and read it, so, please don't think it's too hard and give it a try. Since the word order is the same as in Japanese, you can easily write sentences if you learn the letters and the vocabulary. South Korea is very close to Japan and many Japanese visit there for sightseeing. I recommend you visit South Korea after you learn enough Korean to read the signs at train stations and food menus in restaurants. I think if you are even just a little interested in Korean culture, you would find it even more enjoyable if they can read and write the language.



※The other language classes that IJA offers are as follows:

Chinese, English, German, Portuguese, and Spanish







※Information about Language Classes →



About the tax system in Japan

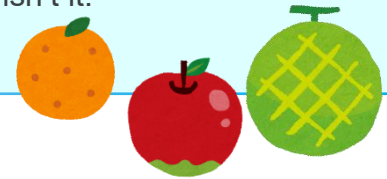
People who work, live, and shop in Japan must pay tax to the national government and local municipalities (prefectures and cities). Taxes are used to support your daily life.

(Source: Living and Working Guidebook - To Foreign Residents Living in Japan supervised by the Immigration and Residency Management Agency)

Type		Who pays?	How much?	When? How?
Income tax	National Tax	A person who has a salary and/or other income. 	Tax is determined by the salary, income, etc. received during the previous year from 1/1 to 12/31.	① Every month the company pays income tax directly (income report [<i>gensen choshu</i>]) ② In the period 2/16~3/15 of the following year you worked, you must submit the documents and pay any tax (final tax return [<i>kakutei shinkoku</i>])
	Local Tax	People who have an address and work in Japan as of 1/1.	The amount of tax is determined by the salary, income, etc. received during the previous year from 1/1~12/31.	① Paid monthly by employer (special collection [<i>tokubetu choushuu</i>]) ② Pay the tax yourself
Consumption Tax	National Tax	Anyone who purchased items or who received commercial services.	①8% (groceries other than alcoholic beverages bought at supermarkets, etc.) ②10% (goods and services other than ①)	When you buy something or receive a service, you must pay the consumption tax.  
	Local Tax			
Vehicle Tax	Local Tax	Person who owns his/her car 	①Automobile tax/Light Vehicle Tax Tax is determined by the category of the vehicle. Motor vehicle tonnage tax: ②Vehicle Weight Tax Tax is determined by the weight of the vehicle.	①Automobile tax/Light Vehicle Tax: Must be paid when you purchase a car. A person who has a car on 4/1 may pay at banks, post offices, convenience stores, etc. ②Vehicle Weight Tax: Tax is paid when during the annual car inspection. Tax is determined by the weight of the vehicle.
Fixed Asset Tax	Local Tax	Anyone who owns land, buildings (houses or apartments) or business-related items (machinery, equipment, or vehicles, etc.), as of 1/1 each year.	Notice for tax payment will be sent between April and June. 	The payment date is written on the notice received by mail. Payment may be made at a bank, post office, convenience store, etc. 

Various cultures and customs

In the Philippines, on Christmas people eat special dishes such as roasted pig. In preparation for New Year's they decorate and eat 12 or 13 types of round fruit, such as apple and orange. What kind of preparations do people in other countries who are close to you prepare for the New Year? It is interesting to ask each other, isn't it.



Fun Japanese onomatopoeia!

Do you know what onomatopoeia is? Onomatopoeia are words that describe a state, movement, etc. in sound. Learning Japanese onomatopoeia makes Japanese conversation more enjoyable! You should have fun using it in your conversation in Japanese!

Uto-uto



Appearing on the verge of falling asleep or in a state of drifting into a light sleep.

Pun-pun



A state of being extremely angry and in a bad mood.

Poka-poka



Something that feels warm to a pleasant degree.

Gutsu-gutsu



The sound of food simmering or boiling or the state of food that is simmering or boiling.

Cool Japan

Japanese-style meal (washoku)



Do you like sushi, sukiyaki, and tempura? Traditional Japanese cuisine is called *washoku*. Japanese food is not only beautiful to look at, it is also nutritionally balanced, which is said to be one of the factors contributing to longevity. Japanese food was registered as a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2013 and is attracting attention from people around the world as *washoku*. Japan has four distinct seasons, and Japanese cuisine has incorporated a variety of ingredients that can only be enjoyed in each season. Such ingredients are called *shun*, which means seasonal in Japanese. In Japanese cuisine, the broth from bonito flakes and kelp is called *umami*. The successful use of this umami flavor creates a deep taste while bringing out the flavor of the ingredients. Another characteristic of Japanese cuisine is the use of fermented foods and seasonings. Examples include natto, pickled vegetables, soy sauce, miso, and bonito flakes.

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