


SEIRAN ENGLISH JOURNAL

ALTは何しに日本へ

WHY DID YOU COME TO JAPAN?



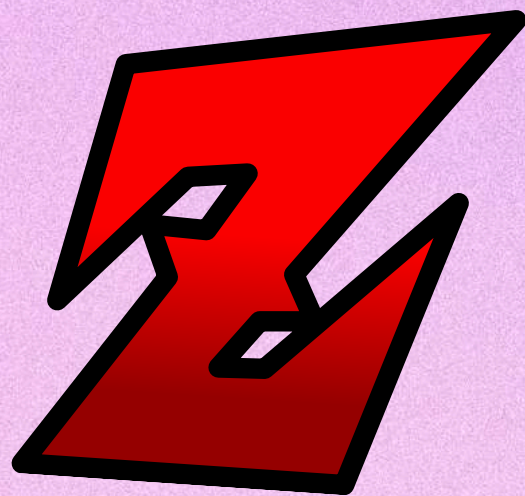
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A long-exposure photograph of a city street at night, with the Tokyo Tower illuminated in red and white in the background. The street is filled with light trails from cars, and modern buildings line both sides. The sky is a deep blue.

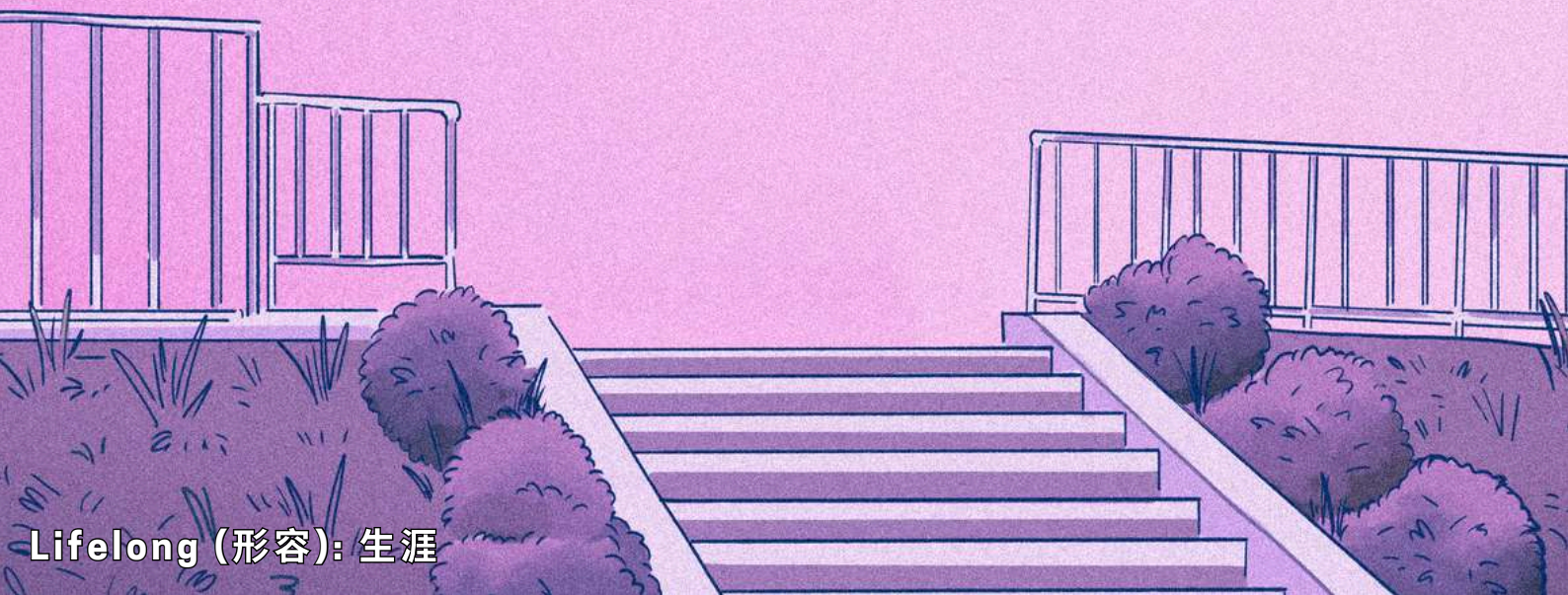
“Why did you come to live in Japan?”

This is a question many Japanese people ask ALTs and other foreigners in Japan. I decided to ask this question to ALTs and other people I know in Japan.

I came to live in Japan because of a lifelong interest in Japanese culture. This interest started when I was a child. I grew up watching anime before school (Pokemon, Sailor Moon, and Dragon Ball Z), and playing Nintendo games.



When I was a high school student, I studied Japanese, and spent lots of time on online forums for fans of videogames and anime.



When I finally had the chance to visit Japan in university. I went to Tokyo, Kyoto, Kobe and Osaka. I had such an amazing time, and everyone I met was so kind, so I decided to move back to live after graduation.

Decide (動): 決める

I have many different interests. I like Japanese art, like ukiyoe, textiles, and irezumi. I love Japanese fashion, music, and trains. I enjoy skiing in the mountains around Gunma, as well as hot springs, and travelling in general. I also collect omamori - I have around 60 now.



Hot spring (名): 温泉 Textiles (名): 織物 Around (副): くらい

Before coronavirus, I lived in Nagasaki City. I know it's very far from Gunma, but if you have the chance to visit, I highly recommend it. There are beautiful beaches, and an amazing night view of the city from Mount Inasayama. Also, it's close to Fukuoka, which has a youthful atmosphere, and my favorite kind of ramen - Hakata-style tonkotsu ramen with garlic.

↙ Nagasaki City
Night View

**By James
ALT at Ota Higashi
High School**

**Youthful atmosphere: 若々しい雰囲気
Garlic (名): ニンニク**

“I came to learn about collectivist cultures, and I love Sanrio!”

Ava, from the
USA.
ALT at
Tatebayashi
Girls High
School



Collectivist (形容): 集団主義者

When I was in junior high school, my Spanish teacher was sick, and the Japanese teacher taught us instead. She taught us how to make paper cranes and showed us pictures of Japan. At university, I really wanted to study abroad here in Japan, but couldn't afford it. I learned about teaching English in Japan, and decided to give it a shot!

**Leydiana, from the USA
ALT at Ota Girls High
School**



Paper crane (名): 折り鶴

I went on a trip to Japan with my friends in 2017. I had so much fun, I liked the food, the nature, the culture, and everyone was very friendly. I wanted to come back and see everything! A few years later, I found out about teaching English in Japan, and decided to try it out. In 2023, my dream came true and I ended up teaching at an elementary school in Gunma. I've enjoyed exploring the country with new friends!



Elliot, from Australia
ALT at Shimomuroda
Elementary School

(To) end up (句動): 行き着く Explore (動): 探検する

I came to Japan because I like Japanese culture, Japanese language, and Japanese people. I studied Japanese in university. I also studied abroad in Japan for one year, in Nagoya City. I met many friendly Japanese people when I was studying, and had a great time living in Japan. So I decided to come back to work in Japan.

In particular, I'm interested in Japanese art. I now work translating old art books from the Edo period, and even earlier!

**Joey, from the USA.
Former ALT in Nagasaki City.**



Translate (動): 翻訳する Period (名): 時代


Before I was born my mother spent two years living in Japan as a teacher.

When I was growing up I would always hear cool stories from my mother about Japan which made me want to go to Japan. I also always found Japanese culture like anime and video games really fun, and Japanese history very interesting. When I went to high school I was able to study Japanese and have been trying to learn more ever since.



**Andrew, from Australia.
ALT at Minakami
Elementary School**

Born (形容): 生まれる Grow up (動): 成長する



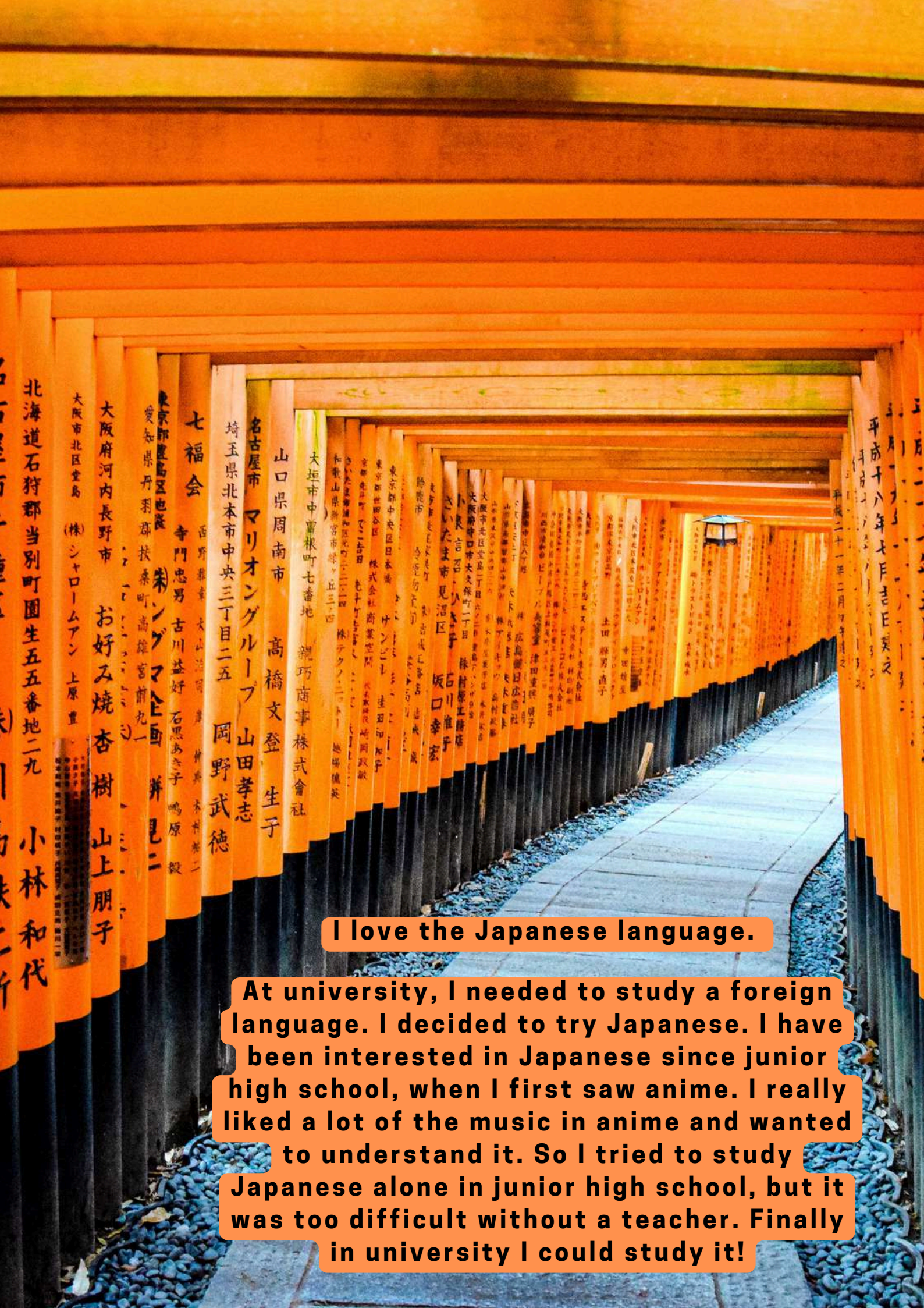
After university I wanted to travel and Japan was my number one choice. I just wanted to live in a country that had new things to see, new people to meet, and lots of delicious food to eat! Japan is very far away from my home, the UK, so just getting the chance to live and work here is very lucky.

And, Japan is famous for its beautiful mountains and scenery, which we have little of in the UK. I didn't realize how hot Summer would be though :((



**Ewan, from the UK.
ALT at (Takasaki) Shiroyama
Elementary School**

Famous (形容): 有名な Scenery (名): 景色 Realize (動): 気づく



北海道石狩郡当別町園生五五番地二九 小林和代

大阪府河内長野市 お好み焼杏樹 山上朋子

七福会 寺門忠男 古川益好 石黒あき子 鳴原 毅

愛知県丹羽郡扶桑町高錦宮前九一

名古屋市中区栄三丁目二五 岡野武徳

山口県周南市 高橋文登 生子

大垣市中曾根町七番地 親巧商事株式会社

東京都中央区日本橋 株式会社 商業空間 住田和加子

大阪府堺市東区大津町一丁目 株式会社 住田和加子

さいたま市見沼区 坂口幸宏

大阪府堺市東区大津町一丁目 株式会社 住田和加子

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I love the Japanese language.

At university, I needed to study a foreign language. I decided to try Japanese. I have been interested in Japanese since junior high school, when I first saw anime. I really liked a lot of the music in anime and wanted to understand it. So I tried to study Japanese alone in junior high school, but it was too difficult without a teacher. Finally in university I could study it!

When I studied Japanese at university, I became interested in languages and how languages are taught. The study of languages is called 'linguistics' in English. I became an ALT to learn how English is taught to people who don't speak English. I wanted to see the difference between learning English as a native speaker, like I did, and English as a foreign language. Of course, I also wanted to improve my Japanese, too.




I also have other reasons for coming here. For example, I want to travel a lot in Japan. I also like Japanese food and traditional Japanese culture, like kimono. But the main reason was to understand languages more. Both to study and understand Japanese, and to understand how English is taught.

**Raven, from the USA.
ALT at (Takasaki)
Tsukasawa Junior High
School**



Traditional (形容): 伝統的



So it seems like the main reasons people move to Japan are:

Japanese people were very kind to them

They previously travelled to Japan and had a good experience

They are very passionate about Japanese culture and language

Did these responses surprise you?

Are there any other questions you would like to ask foreigners living in Japan?

Passionate (形容): 情熱的な

An interesting activity is to search for population information on the internet, and imagine a country as a small village of just 100 people.



Population (名): 人口 Imagine (動): 想像する

If Japan were a village of just 100 people:



Half of the people in the village are aged 50 years old or above.

27 people would live in the same 'house' (Tokyo).



23 people are aged 70 or above.

15 people are aged below 20 years old.

**There are 2
babies and 3
foreign people.**

