



Name: SIM Vireak

Scholarship Category: Monbukagakusho

Accepting Institution: Hitotsubashi University,
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1. Why did you apply for the Japanese Government Scholarship?

As a high school student, my dream was simple. Like every other Cambodian high school students, I wanted to receive quality education abroad without putting financial burden on my parents. Japanese government scholarship fits the most to such dreamers. This scholarship is the most popular—hence the most competitive—because while Japan can provide international standard education, they also provide sufficient allowance without having students to rely on other means of financial support.

2. Nowadays, Cambodian youths are offered a lot of opportunities of study abroad under the government scholarships of various countries. Compared with the other countries, what are advantages of study in Japan, and what are challenges for Cambodian students?

“Similar Asian culture, successful economic development, high morality”.

When you go to study abroad, you expect to learn something from that country and bring back home development lessons, businesses and technologies.

Japan has similar Asian culture enabling us to relatively adapt to life easier. It is doubtless one of the greatest role models of post-war economic development and is a striving business and investment platform while its technologies are topnotch.

Its people also have the highest morality. The most significant example was during the aftermath of the Great East Japan Earthquake, where Japanese people still respected the queue to receive basic supplies without any violence or looting and supermarkets

didn't hike the prices despite the shortage of supplies. This is nowhere to be seen in any disaster area in the world.

These are things that we can learn best from Japan and bring back home for the betterment of our economy and society.

The challenge for foreign students in Japan is Japanese language. After one year of intensive Japanese course, we will go straight to classes receiving lessons and taking exams along with native Japanese students. (This is not the case for research students who receive courses in English.) The first year at university is the toughest and challenging experiences but so far almost all foreign students can survive this hardship and compete with good grade.

Language barrier can also be regarded as an advantage because you can master two languages at the same time. In Japan, most libraries have plenty of resources both in English and Japanese. There are courses available in English too. Thus, on top of mastering your English, which can be done anywhere, mastering Japanese will take you another mile in terms of educational perspective as well as future careers.

3. After finishing study in Japan, many of ex-scholarship recipients have been actively contributing to the development of Cambodia utilizing the expertise and skills they acquired in Japan. How do you utilize such expertise and skills in your work now? Is there any other benefit of study in Japan for your current daily life?

Skill is important thing but personality, attitude and networking are other important factors that many students tend to ignore.

From professional point of view, people do not expect fresh graduates to be highly-skilled and able to work from the first day. Works will train people. Employers tend to evaluate your ability and willingness to learn new things and how you approach your works or problems.

Thus, at university, I tried to absorb as much as experiences as I can and the good thing is Japanese university system has vast opportunities for self-development. Such exposures provided me many learning angles on top of academic programs. Part-time job, where you can learn real local Japanese language skill apart from textbook; student association or extra-curricular activities, where you can learn organizational skills and behavior, train your leadership skill and connect to various people; homestay program, where you can learn domestic culture; company or NGO internship, where you can attach yourself to professional society; study tour abroad; academic club, where you can advance your knowledge, etc.

I experienced them all. I didn't want to lose any chances. I think such opportunities cannot be found elsewhere.

These experiences made me become what I am today. They gave me confidence and strong ability to adapt to professional society after graduation.

4. As you know, the MEXT Scholarship has become one of the most competitive scholarship examinations in Cambodia. We got totally around 1,300 Cambodian applicants for 4 categories last year, and the candidates must survive at a really tough competition among international candidates even they passed the in-country exam. Taking your experience into account, what do you think what tips for passing the MEXT scholarship examination are?

“Master the basics”

Choose a good teacher where you can really learn past exam papers. Don't follow your friends to famous teachers where you cannot understand what he/she teaches you.

“Master your English”

English will open door to many knowledge opportunities. I had average knowledge in math and I was not an award-winning student in any subject either. But I believed English has put me in a better advantage. I like reading books through which I gained general knowledge.

Study English does not equal to study grammar. Basic grammar is important and you really need to memorize the rules but it shouldn't take all your time. Don't rely too much on your teachers to put English inside you. Self-study is key. Try to spend more time on self-study through different materials; newspaper, Hollywood movies, books, CNN, BBC, practicing with tourists or at Christian churches (you don't need to be Christian) etc. Don't be shy to imitate native accent because this will help you understand the real pronunciation when natives are speaking.

Also, learn to write because writing will push you to think about vocabularies.

“Study stably and regularly”

Spend one whole day to make your study timetable that covers everything you need to learn. After you made it, respect it well. Don't compete with your friends to study late until one or two o'clock in the morning and got sick the next day. You just need to study stably and regularly, even if you have or don't have exams.

5. Message for this year's applicants.

“Study hard, have confidence, and expect the luck”

Not all scholarship recipients are award-winning students. You don't need to worry about that. What you need to do is to study hard and accumulate your knowledge. Lastly, when you are confident that you have studied hard enough, you just need to wait for your luck. Well, with 1300 applicants, luck is the final deciding factor. If you fail this year, don't blame yourself or get upset. Try your luck another year. Good luck to you all!!