



My Experiences in Japan

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ISAS

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How did I end up in Japan?

ASTRO-E

I was working on an instrument for a Japanese X-ray astronomy satellite at NASA/GSFC.

My Research in Japan

- Calibrating the X-Ray Spectrometer on board ASTRO-E
- Testing the cryostat at SHI in Niihama
- Integrating and testing the satellite
- Launch operations at Kagoshima Space Center
- Studying high-mass X-ray binaries
- Developing new X-ray detectors for astronomy

ASTRO-E Launch



Research Environment

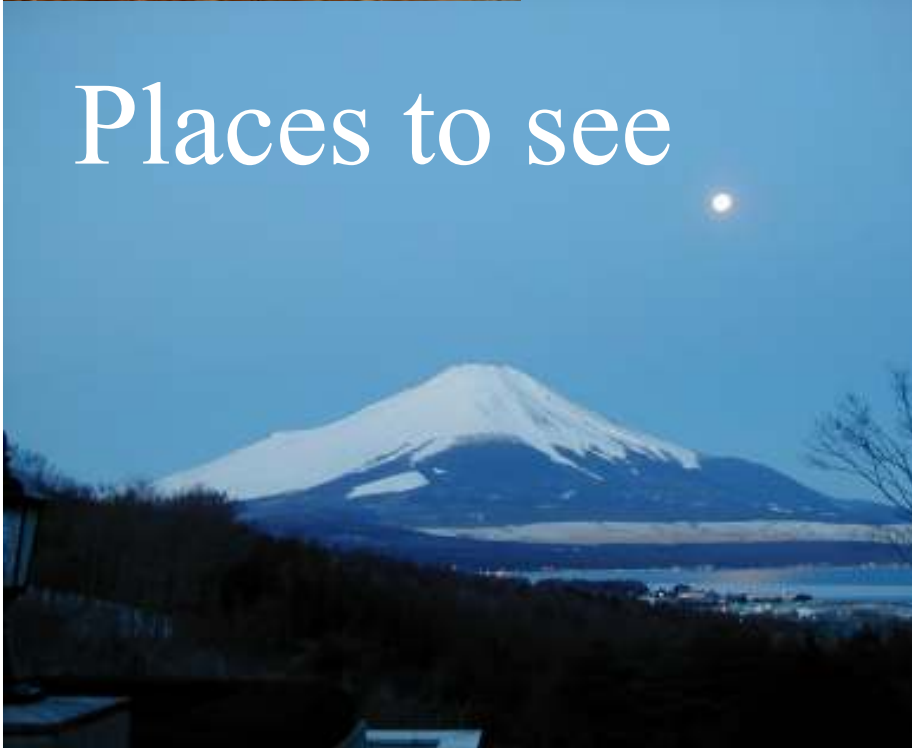
- Secretaries to handle admin, but few technical staff
- Long hours, but not working all of the time
- After-work socialising
- I was expected to attend meetings, even if I couldn't understand what was being said
- Lots of requests to edit manuscripts.

Ancient and Modern





Festivals



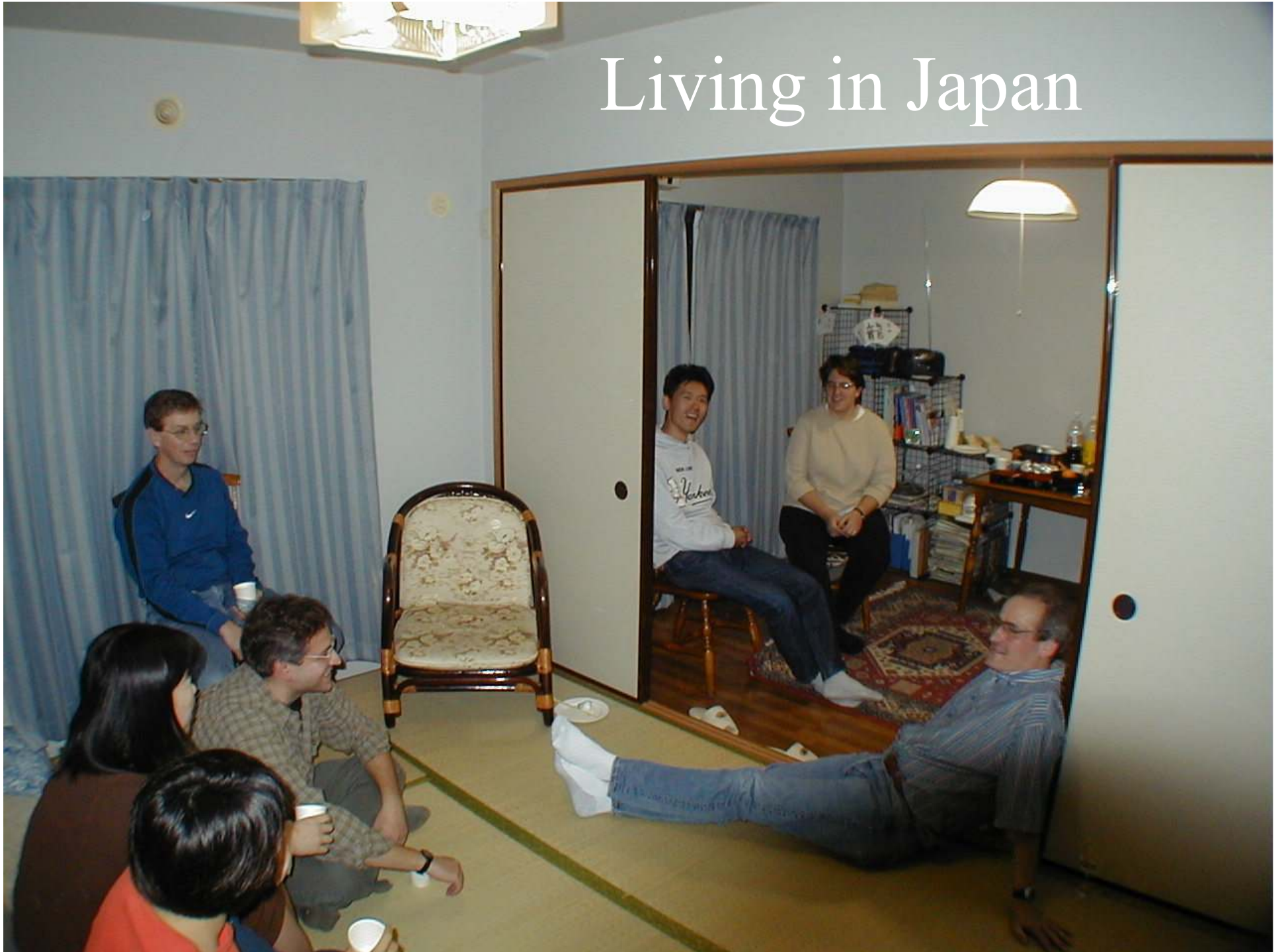
Places to see

Living in Japan



I was well paid (tax free) with a generous housing allowance.

Living in Japan



Japanese Food



Communicating



Before you go

- Consider what your partner is going to do there.
- Start learning Japanese if you have time.
- At least learn hiragana and katakana.
- Ask your host to appoint someone to help with opening bank accounts, renting an apartment etc.
- Don't close your UK bank account.
- Travel light: you will want to bring lots of stuff back.

When you get there

- Start learning Japanese immediately.
- Get an alien registration card, national health insurance card, and bank account.
- Make contact with other gaijin.
- Find out where the recycle shops are.
- Work hard, but don't forget to travel and socialise.

Summary

- Our two years in Japan were an experience that we'll always remember.
- We made lots of friends there.
- We would go back again tomorrow if we had the chance.
- I'm still collaborating with my colleagues at ISAS.

<http://www.astro.isas.jaxa.jp/~audley/>