



# JSPS FELLOWSHIP EXPERIENCE

Pola Berent  
2017





# ABOUT MY STAY

## **DURATION**

08 May 2017 – 07 August 2017

## **HOST INSTITUTION**

Osaka City University, Graduate School of Urban Design and Engineering

## **RESEARCH**

My research fed into the work that I have already completed in London.

**PURPOSE:** to establish whether people (cyclists and pedestrians) from a country with significantly different traffic rules (and associated social norms) for cyclists (where cyclists regularly mix with pedestrians on sidewalks) show different attitudes and perceptions of comfort while travelling on a shared-use path.



# LIFE IN JAPAN: ACCOMODATION

**2/3 OF MY STAY: OSAKA CITY UNIVERSITY GUESTHOUSE**

**1/3 OF MY STAY: HOTEL IN MORE CENTRAL NEIGHBOURHOOD  
(TENNOJI)**

## **Advantages of staying in university accommodation:**

- Staying in the guesthouse next to the university made initial culture shock more manageable.
- Guesthouse was located in a quieter, more suburban area, very close to university.
- University guesthouse will usually be a more affordable option (higher standard for the price).

## **HOWEVER**

- 1 month in a hotel allowed me to experience living in more central, vibrant area.
- Change of environment made the loneliness more manageable.
- Since places with English translations (restaurants, bars, cinema) were more accessible meant I went out every day

# LIFE IN JAPAN: MONEY

**JAPAN RELIES ON CASH,  
MAJORITY OF SHOPS DON'T  
ACCEPT CARDS**

**YOU CAN TAKE THE CASH  
OUT IN MOST OF CORNER  
SHOPS SUCH AS 7ELEVEN**

If you are going to stay in Japan for over 6 months you should be able to apply for residency card and open a bank account.

I was staying in Japan for 3 months and opening an account proved problematic: my supervisor opened an account in his name and just gave me a card which allowed me to withdraw cash



<https://origami-book.com/column/course-en/8691>



# LIFE IN JAPAN: MOBILE PHONES AND WIFI ACCESS

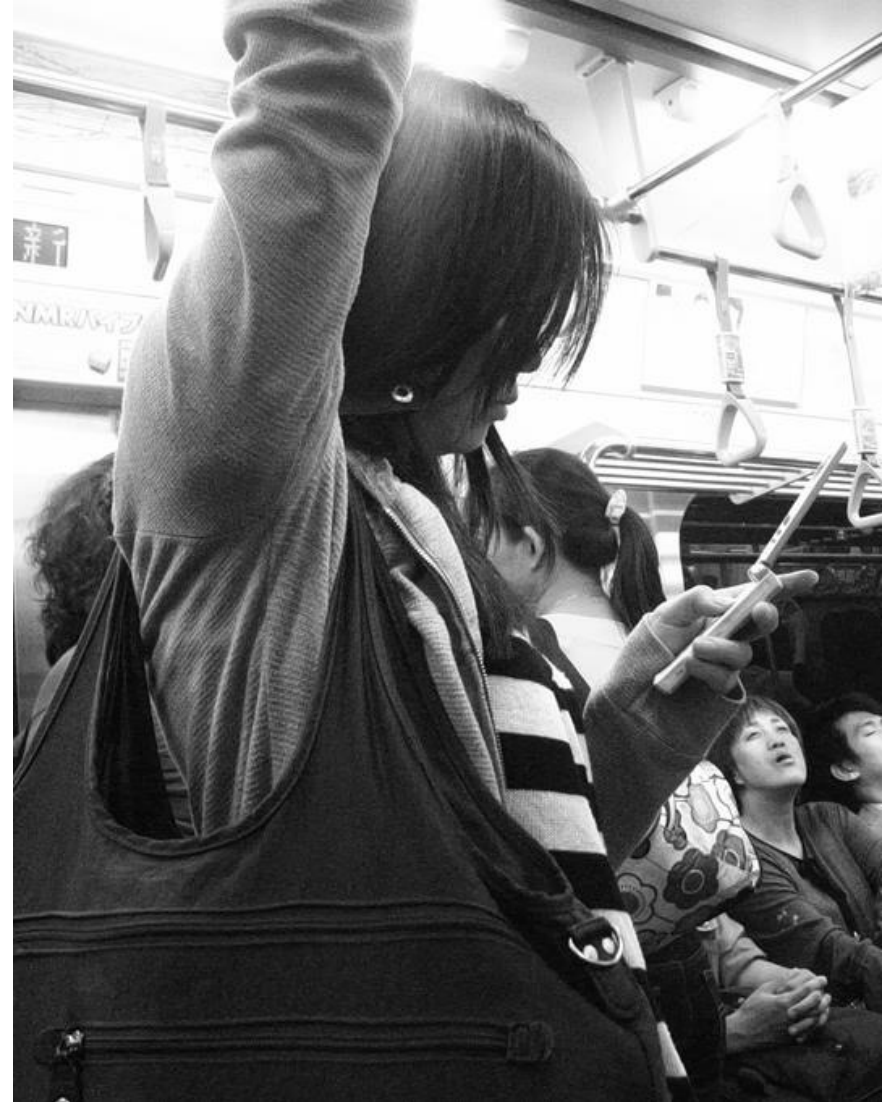
## **DATA ONLY PLANS**

- My supervisor provided me with an iPad
- I relied purely on data only plan, which was cheap (around 2,500Y per month)
- I used Facetime, iMessage and Facebook to stay in touch
- I carried my UK phone with me and if I needed data to use it (f.ex. Whatsapp) I would just share a hotspot (however, before you leave UK double-check with your mobile network the travel arrangement you have)

## **FREE WIFI SPOTS**

Trains, public spaces, restaurants, coffee shops

## **RENTAL PHONES**





# LIFE IN JAPAN: TRAVEL

## TRAVEL CARD



## TRAIN (JR) /SUBWAY



## CHEAP AIRLINES



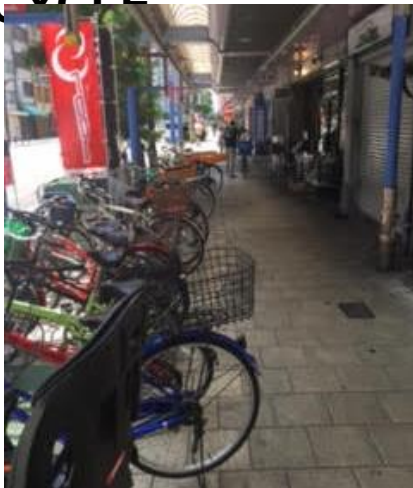
Inspiration of JAPAN



## BULLET TRAIN



## WALK AND CYCLE



## BUS



# WORKING IN JAPAN: THE RESEARCH CULTURE

## TITLES

San, Sensei

## RESPECT FOR PEOPLE HIGHER IN ACADEMIC HIERACHY

## CLOSE INTERACTIONS BETWEEN LECTURERS AND STUDENTS

The lab (where students work daily) is connected to the offices of lecturers  
Lecturers take part in casual social events organized by students f.ex. barbecue

## ENGINEERING/ TRANSPORT

Male-dominated





# WORKING IN JAPAN: WHAT TO EXPECT

## LITERATURE REVIEW

- Very few of Japanese journals/articles get translated into English
- Some of the translated ones are not available through regular search
- When meeting researchers in your field, always ask for recommendations (they might have English versions of presentations etc)

## CONDUCTING A SURVEY

- Collecting data on site in Namba
- Paper and Electronic versions
- Small gift (ice tea) for respondents
- Japanese students don't have experience of interacting with the public/strangers to collect data





# CHALLENGES

- **JETLAG**
- **CULTURE SHOCK**
- **LONELINESS**
- **COMMUNICATION**

- Everyday communication can be very difficult: Most people in Japan do not speak English
- In some settings (f.ex.university), the biggest challenge will be that no-one will stop you and say they are struggling to understand; always make sure to email follow-up notes
- However, don't ever worry about being unable to communicate in more formal situations, as there are systems in place to help people out f.ex. Problem with tickets on the train station (phone translation)



# GENERAL CULTURE

## SAFETY:

- Very low crime rates
- Feel very safe at all times (even in unknown neighborhoods after dark)
- Don't have to worry about private property (f.ex. In restaurants it's okay to leave your bag, iPad etc and go and order)

## FOLLOWING RULES/RESPECT:

- People do not cross on the red lights
- Respect for public space (very clean, relatively quiet on public transport)

## FOOD/RESTAURANTS:

- Eating with chopsticks
- Taking shoes off
- Table charges
- Professional attitude (no small talk)
- No tipping

## GIFTS:

Bring from the UK something small, tea or biscuits, souvenirs





# POST-FELLOWSHIP

- **Research on Inclusive Cycling Training in the UK and Netherlands**
- **Workshop in Ehime**
- **Potential workshop in London**
  
- **JSPS Alumni Association**



International Association  
of Traffic and Safety Sciences



# GENERAL ADVICE

## **FOOD**

If you are a vegetarian or vegan (or have any other specific food requirements/ allergies), eating out/or shopping might be quite challenging.

## **TRAVEL**

Be aware that when travelling you might need to check information on earthquakes, typhoons, tsunamis etc

## **DRESS SENSE**

Compared to the UK the dress sense is significantly more formal

## **SOCIALIZING**

It is very helpful to put an effort into meeting at least one foreign person, who lives in Japan and speaks Japanese. You can do it through MeetUps, Apps etc

## **SCAN AND TRANSLATE**

An app that will help you with grocery shopping



# GENERAL ADVICE

## GOOGLE MAPS

Best app to find directions by different modes of transport (inc estimated costs).

It also has an option to share your location with someone, which can be very helpful when you don't feel confident in the new environment)

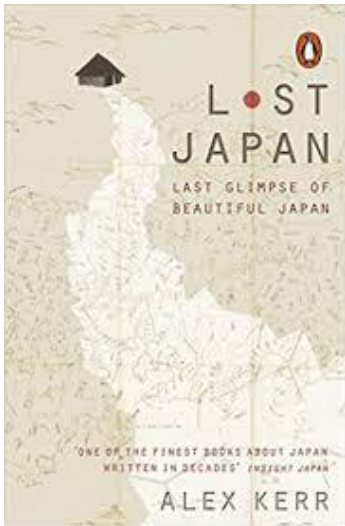
## MONEY

If you save some money, make sure to research well best places to exchange it

**BE OPEN-MINDED**

**DON'T MAKE ASSUMPTIONS  
and LET GO OF  
PRESUMPTIONS**

**ADOPT 'YES' MENTALITY,  
ESPECIALLY AT THE  
BEGINNING**



**LOST JAPAN  
By Alex Kerr**







**THANK YOU.**

**Contact:**

**p.berent@ucl.ac.uk**