



東洋大学

Semester Abroad in Japan at Toyo University

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My exchange semester in Japan was one of the most enriching experiences of my life. I would recommend it to anyone who has the opportunity to do an exchange semester. The combination of academic challenges, cultural experiences, and personal development has helped me grow both as a student and as an individual. The most enjoyable part was immersing myself in a completely new world and creating unforgettable memories.



As it was my fourth semester in the Master's program for Human-Centered Computing (HCC), I was only required to take one course from FH Hagenberg. I

chose Innovation Studies, as I wanted to learn more about cutting-edge innovations and new technology in Japan. To maintain my visa status, I was also required to attend a certain number of classes per week. Therefore, I decided to take Japanese language courses focusing on theory, practice, project work, reading, and kanji to further enhance my language abilities.

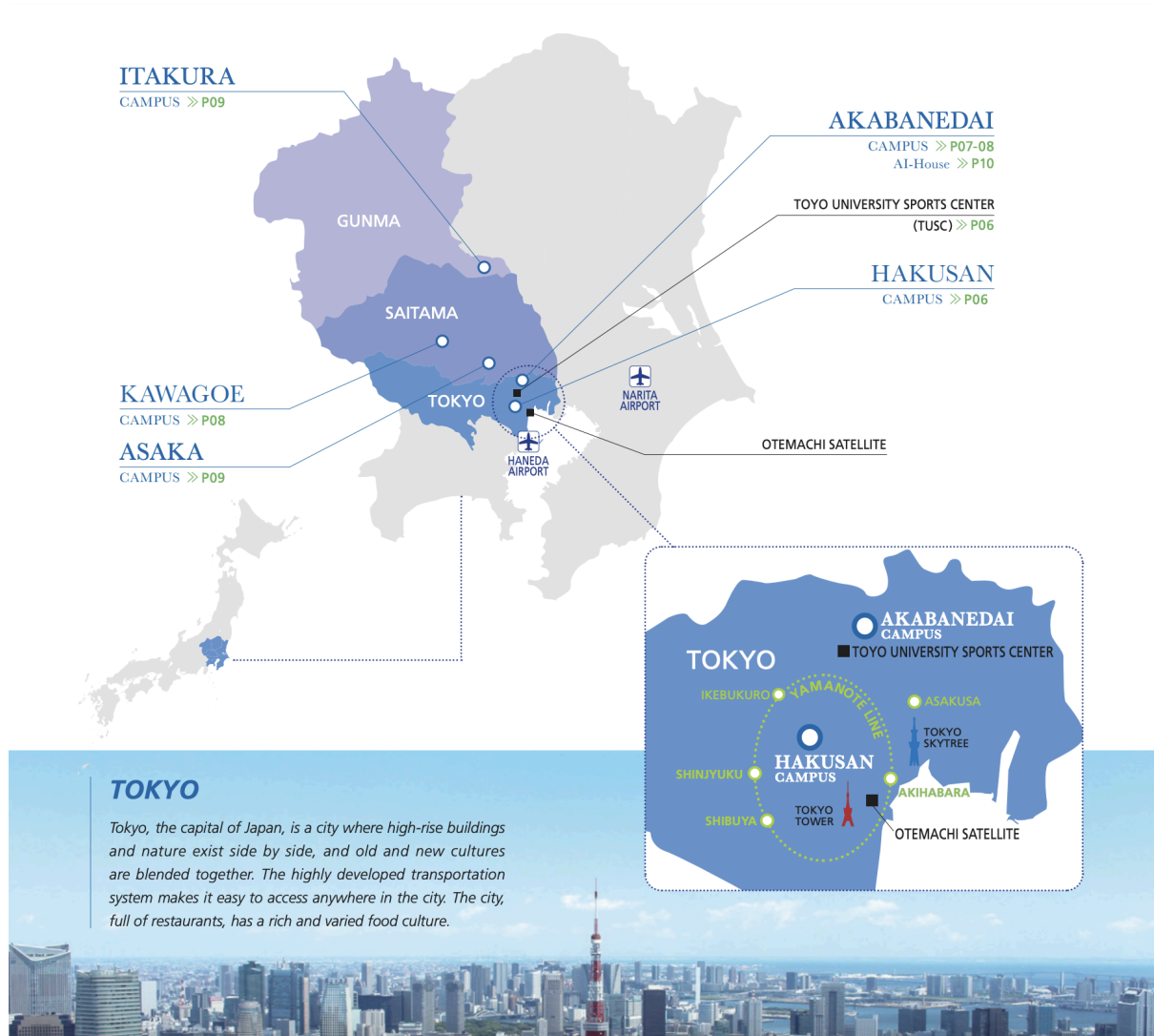
Daily Life & Academic Experience

As of 2024, Tokyo has an estimated population of around 14 million people in the 23 special wards, with the Greater Tokyo Area, including surrounding prefectures, housing over 37 million residents. This makes it the most populous metropolitan area in the world.

A typical day started early due to Tokyo's rush hour and the distance between the campus and the dormitory (AI House). We usually left at 7 AM and arrived on campus by 8 AM. Classes generally started at 9 AM and continued until noon or up to 6 PM. We had breakfast and dinner at the dormitory, while lunch was available in the campus cafeteria.

Toyo University, founded in 1887, is one of Japan's oldest private universities. The university offers a wide range of undergraduate and graduate programs, including international studies and Japanese language courses especially for exchange students. Toyo University has multiple campuses, with the main one (Hakusan, the one I attended) located in central Tokyo. Roughly 31,200 students attend Toyo University (as of May 2023).





The various language courses significantly improved my Japanese. The practical courses and project work, where I collaborated closely with Japanese students, were particularly beneficial. This collaboration provided valuable insights into Japanese work culture and academic practices.

Accommodation

I stayed at AI House HUB-4, a new international dormitory at Toyo University's Akabanedai Campus. The accommodation was comfortable and well-equipped, with numerous communal areas and study spaces. Being close to other international students helped me quickly form friendships and settle into the new environment. The AI House also provided two meals a day and organized various events to promote cultural exchange.

Cultural Experience

I experienced many traditions and customs in Japan. Notable festivals included Hanami (Cherry Blossom Festival) and Tanabata. Although Japan's summer heat is very challenging, Hanabi (fire work festivals) made it more than worth it.

I developed many new skills during my exchange semester, especially in language and intercultural communication. I became much more independent and learned to navigate a completely new environment. The intercultural competencies I gained will undoubtedly benefit me in my future career.



Tips for Future Exchange Students:

Preparation: It is essential to have basic language skills and be aware of cultural differences beforehand. One of the biggest challenges was the language barrier, although my Japanese level was sufficient for daily life.

Openness: Be open to new experiences and make connections with locals to better understand the culture. And don't be afraid to actually talk Japanese ;)

