

## Brazilian or Japanese ?

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In April last year (1999) I left my home in Brazil to start a new experience in a completely different country : Japan.

To come from far away had a good reason ; this developed and high-technology provided country would have many things to show and teach us, foreign students.

Japanese people are known to be persistent, honest, disciplined and hard-workers. And since I came to Japan I could really find these virtues in people.

For many times people get confused if I am Japanese or not. My grandparents (from mom and dad's parts) were born in Japan but since my childhood I rarely spoke Japanese. The maximum words such as " misosiru ", " makur-a ", " onigiri ". Now, learning the language I can understand what my grandparents are saying when they mix it with Portuguese. And I also can understand their habits or hobbies better than before.

Missing family and friends happens to every



1 This is my family. Some of my cousins at my grandmother's birthday party (she is the second from the left sitting on the chair). My grandfather is first on the left side.

foreign student. In Sao Paulo I live with my parents and a younger sister in an apartment building close to a soccer stadium (Palmeiras). Brazilian people loves soccer and I am not an exception, I am crazy about it.

Sao Paulo has its population similar to Tokyo's one : 11 million people. This city is an important business and cultural pot in Brazil. There are plenty of good museums, beautiful parks, sky-scrappers and good restaurants. But unfortunately this big city has been fighting against the pollution, violence and traffic jam.

I was graduated in December 1998 at Dental Faculty of Universidade Estadual de Campinas - UNICAMP. This government dental faculty was 160km away from Sao Paulo, in Piracicaba. During this time I learned much and I made lots of very good friends.

Me and my friends love going to a disco or pub in the weekends to dance and talk. We also like doing barbecues, specially with good music and a swimming pool.

Traveling is another thing I like. Since I was a baby my parents always took me with them to



2. This is what I can see from the windows of my apartment in Sao Paulo.



3. In a barbecue restaurant with some friends of mine.



5. At the special center for babies in my dental faculty where I had a little experience during a training course.



4. My graduation ceremony. We do not have kimonos



6. With my mom and sister in Natal, north part of Brazil.

their trips and maybe my interest for traveling comes from that time.

There are many interesting places to go in Brazil... It just depends on what you want to see. Nature in Amazon? To learn how to dance in Bahia? To see a carnival in Rio de Janeiro? To visit the famous waterfalls in the south?

And also, when you go abroad and know different places and cultures you start thinking different. To learn languages, curiosities about countries, to know how to value things from your own country and to make friends...these are things I really appreciate.

We have special dates to celebrate. Easter, Christmas and New Year's Eve are good examples. We join family and friends to have fun together and eat delicious dishes.

Talking about food, maybe "feijoada" is the most famous dish originally created by the slaves in the colonial time which is made of pork and black beans and it is usually eaten on Sundays or Wednesdays.

Our daily meal consists in rice, brown beans,



7. Me and my dad eating delicious crabs.

beef, salads and fruits for dessert and I really miss these things in Japan.

"Brigadeiro" is a chocolate sweet indispensable in a child birthday party. But be careful, our chocolates and candies are sweeter than Japanese ones.

Another advice: when going to Brazil do not be scared of our warmth. To hug or kiss a friend is quite common and quite good!

When you go to study abroad you go through many difficulties such as language problems, cultural differences and homesickness. But you also make lots of good friends and you learn from every little moment you are experiencing in the country. And that is what makes you grow up and see the world with different eyes.