

- **What was your job in your country and what made you decide to study in Japan?**

Before coming to Japan, I worked at the Ministry of Investment and Downstream Industry of Indonesia, specifically in the infrastructure planning division. My work involved policy analysis and planning related to infrastructure development, investment coordination, and long-term development strategies. Through this role, I saw how infrastructure planning directly affects economic growth and regional development, while also becoming aware of the practical limitations that often arise within institutional systems.

My decision to study in Japan was driven by both personal and professional motivations. On a personal level, living and studying in Japan had been a long-standing aspiration. I was drawn not only to Japan's education system, but also to its society, where discipline, consistency, and a strong learning culture are visible in everyday life. Professionally, Japan offers an environment where students, researchers, and professors engage seriously with ideas and continuously challenge themselves. For me, studying in Japan felt like a natural step to grow both as a professional and as an individual.

- **Please briefly describe your study at your university and academic matters you are now working on.**

I previously completed my master's degree in Japan, where my research focused on railway development in Japan and its role in shaping urban structure and regional connectivity. Through this research, I developed a strong interest in how well-designed transportation systems support economic activity and everyday mobility. The study was well received at the faculty level, which encouraged me to further deepen this line of inquiry.

Currently, I am pursuing a PhD, building upon my earlier academic work while expanding its scope. My doctoral research remains anchored in railway-based urban development, while examining urban mobility more broadly, particularly the interaction between railways as the backbone of the transport system and emerging mobility services such as ride-hailing. My research explores how transportation demand management policies can better integrate these modes to improve efficiency and accessibility in cities.

By continuing this research at the doctoral level, I aim to bridge insights from Japan's railway-based development with contemporary mobility challenges, generating policy-relevant knowledge for rapidly growing urban regions, including in Indonesia.

- **Is there any difference between when you just came to Japan and right now?**

Yes, there is a clear difference between my earlier experience in Japan and my current stay. When I first came as a master's student, everything felt new. Much of my daily life was shaped by exploration, adaptation, and building friendships, and I learned largely through immersion in Japanese society.

Returning to Japan as a doctoral student feels different. I am now at a different stage of life and academic responsibility, which has changed how I interact with people and structure my time. Since my first stay, I have always felt most comfortable building relationships with Japanese people, and that remains true today. However, I am now more intentional in forming meaningful connections. Academic pressure has also increased, with greater emphasis on independent thinking and long-term research commitment.

While my affection for Japan has never changed, my way of experiencing it has become quieter and more reflective. I now pay more attention to everyday rhythms, seasonal changes, and small details of daily life, which shape how I understand and appreciate living here.

- **Please describe the best moment in Japan.**

Many of my best moments in Japan come from my time as a master's student, especially through close interactions with Japanese friends. Spending time with Japanese students helped me learn about their values, culture, and way of life beyond the classroom. I often traveled with them, including watching a Hiroshima Carp baseball game with a friend's family, visiting Hokkaido together, and sharing everyday activities such as playing golf and karaoke. I also joined a homestay program, where I spent a day with a Japanese family and experienced daily life with parents and children.

One particularly meaningful moment was receiving recognition for my master's thesis upon graduation, which marked the culmination of my academic journey in Japan.

During my current stay, which is still relatively short, I recently enjoyed participating in the Saijo Sake Festival with JICA and fellow scholars, joining the local parade and experiencing the community atmosphere. These moments have strengthened my personal connection with Japan.

- **How often do you interact with local Japanese people during the stay in Japan? If not, would you like to do something, such as participating in an event, attending for local school visit, to interact with local people? If you join the event, attend school visit, you can talk about that as well.**

I have interacted quite often with local Japanese people, especially during my earlier stay as a master's student, when many of my close friends were Japanese students and families. These interactions helped me understand Japanese society in ways that go far beyond what can be learned in the classroom.

One experience that stands out was a home visit to a young Japanese family in Hiroshima City, which I joined together with another international participant. We spent the day cooking, playing with their children, and talking about everyday life. Being welcomed into a family's home and sharing simple moments like these left a strong impression on me.

During my current stay, which is still relatively short, I am gradually building new connections. I am keen to take part in local events, school visits, and community activities whenever possible, as direct interaction with local people remains an important part of how I learn and experience life in Japan.

- **Anything you want to share about you, such as hobby, food, Japanese culture, your country, and/or your life experience unique to your living area.**

One thing I have come to appreciate deeply in Japan is that everyday activities often carry values beyond their surface. For example, eating in Japan is not only about saying *いただきます*, but also about respect for the food, the effort of those who prepare it, and the people who share the meal. Through these daily moments, I have learned how attention, gratitude, and responsibility are expressed in simple but meaningful ways.

What also stands out to me is how rules are followed with awareness rather than pressure. Even though regulations can be strict, people tend to follow them calmly and consciously. Living in Higashi-Hiroshima, a quiet university town, has allowed me to experience this way of life closely through a slower pace, well-organized routines, and respectful interactions within the community.

- **After you graduate, how would like to apply what you learned in Japan to your job? Are you planning to keep in touch with Japanese community/people?**

After graduating, I want to apply what I have learned in Japan through practical, day-to-day professional work. What has influenced me most is not a specific theory, but the way work is carried out: preparing thoroughly before meetings, respecting time, following up on discussions, and taking responsibility without being closely supervised. Experiencing this working style has reshaped how I approach my own professional responsibilities.

I also intend to stay connected with Japanese colleagues, friends, and communities beyond my studies. These relationships are built through shared routines, trust, and repeated interaction over time. By remaining engaged with Japanese working culture and everyday life, I hope to continue learning while maintaining strong ties across countries and professional contexts.

- **Message to future JICA participants.**

Please enjoy your opportunity to study in Japan. Not everyone has the chance to study at a good university in Japan with a JICA scholarship, so I hope you can truly value this experience.

At the same time, please do not limit your learning to lectures, laboratories, or textbooks. If learning were only about classes and books, you would not need to come all the way to Japan. You are not only attending a university in Japan, but you are also living here. Living in Japan is also part of studying. Many important lessons are found outside the classroom. Try to step out of your comfort zone, spend time with local people, not only with people from your home country, and make friends with Japanese students. Pay attention to everyday life.

I encourage you to think about how Japan rebuilt itself after 1945 and became known as a modern, clean, and well-organized country, while still keeping its traditions. Observe how people live, how they respect rules, and how responsibility appears in small, quiet actions. Being in Japan gives you a special chance to learn from daily life. Please make the most of your time here.