

## Field Report Summer School Japan

July 2015, 2 weeks

Saitama Prefectural University, Tokyo, Japan

Student Bachelor Nursing, between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year of study

---

### SPU Summer School 2015

I am very interested in different cultures and Japan is known as a country with a very different culture compared to Switzerland. I wanted to know and self-experience the difference, so I registered to attend this Summer School Program at SPU in Japan.



Class together with students from Hong Kong

There, I learned a lot about the nursing education system in Japan and at SPU, about the main problems which confront Japan and how they want to overcome these problems.

The nursing education system has differences to Switzerland. For example, the time of studying in Japan is 4 years while in Switzerland we only have 3 years (with a vocational health background). Or the profession of public health nurse does not exist in Switzerland. In Switzerland, the field of work of a public health nurse is performed by a medical doctor, but a change in the law, that decides that, is in

progress. At SPU there is a focus on interprofessional education and work. They do not only have the same lectures as in Switzerland, at SPU they also have some fieldwork together. At SPU there are nurses, midwives, occupational therapists and physiotherapists. Also the occupational field of oral hygiene with dental hygienist is represented and part of education.

I saw that the main problems in Japan are almost the same as in Switzerland. Like in Switzerland, the rate of older people compared to younger people is rising. This results in higher costs in medication and healthcare. This is paid mainly through insurance which is paid through the government (taxes) and the insurance fee which is mainly paid through the younger people. So the problem is, that the smaller group of young people have to pay for the bigger



At the Soya Sauce Factory

group of older people. Another problem of the rising number of older people is that there have to be more caregivers, too. But there aren't. In addition, diseases that are connected to rising age are such as, cognitive-, psychological- or physiological related diseases, cancer and degeneration were also discussed. In Switzerland, cardiovascular disease is also a big problem, less in Japan. So, I learned about cancer rehabilitation, cognitive rehabilitation also with assistive technologies, prevention of depression which leads to suicide and general (primary) prevention and rehabilitation for a healthier life.



Eating in a Japanese Restaurant

During the time at SPU Summer School, I had the opportunity to live in an awesome homestay. Family Mori, which is a big family compared to my family, consists of the grandparents (the parents of my host mother), Yasuhiko and Kazue; the parents, Kenichiro and Shiori; the aunt (Shiori's sister), Yuri and the kids, Yuchi, Yukari and Yumeka. The parents and the kids live together and the others are not far away. I had a great time with them! I experienced every day something new and delicious to eat, they took me to different places such as the Soya Sauce Factory where I got 6 bottles of Soya sauce and experienced one of the best ice cream with soya sauce flavor, the Japanese Gardens where I was wearing a yukata, shopping at the big AEON shopping mall, Honjo Life Safety Learning Centre where I experienced an earthquake of level 6 and 7, to the Skytree tower and the Sensaj-Temple. They also took me to the shrine of the deceased brother of Shiori and Yuri. He died after he had a bad birth at the age of five. I was really impressed and honoured, because I think it is something very personal they shared with me and that's not something you can take for granted.

SPU Summer School was a great opportunity to see how different, but also how similar different cultures are. Before I came to Japan I expected a lot of differences, but I experienced many similarities. Of course there are differences, but I thought the differences are huge so that you can't even compare it. The most interesting parts was what I didn't know or what was different to Switzerland: Inter-professional education/work with practical work in the field in interprofessional groups, cognitive rehabilitation and assistive technologies such as the use of robots or sound systems with personalized music, community-based rehabilitation for older people including exercise and education groups for a healthier life and oral hygiene in Japan which is more important than in Switzerland. Also the parts where you could learn and do something: Physiotherapy for older people. I improved a lot from the discussions with the nurses and undergraduate nursing students and the fieldwork at Soka Municipal Hospital,



At Soka Municipal Hospital

because I could see and ask about the work of a nurse. I saw that the goal of the nurse is to provide a good environment for the patient's well-being.

It was a short time to experience the culture and the nursing system of Japan. The most important thing I learned was that in Japan the emphasis is on the patient's well-being. I hope I can bring that caring about the patients into my work. In Switzerland, the goals of the patients are mostly made by the nurse. So the patient has to do what the nurse wants. In Japan it is different. The goal of the patient is made by the nurse AND the patient. At school we learn this way but in practice it looks often very different. I hope I manage to bring that also into practice.

