



特別寄稿

Understanding Cross-Cultural Integration

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During the last years, the number of foreign people visiting Japan to work or to study has been increasing rapidly. The same aspect can also be observed in Japanese people going abroad for the same reasons. It indicates us therefore, understanding of a different culture is very important.

Many International Associations and Colleges in Japan place a special emphasis on diversity. For example, special events are organized every year with ethnics themes, such as Asian, Hispanic or African, and these events consist of speeches, food, dance and a variety of other cultural elements. Promoting an understanding of different cultures, people and ideas.

I am living in Japan for ten years and an experience that I have never forgotten is the culture shock when I arrived. I believe from those experiences, cultures are not understood only by ethnic practices. For instance, you do not understand Japanese culture and the Japanese people just because you ate some sushi with chopsticks, folded some origami, and watched some kabuki. To understand a culture is to understand the ways in which people think, not just to know what kind of cultural entertainment they have.

It takes time, effort and a great deal of commitment to gain some understanding of a different culture. People have to understand the difficulties and limits of cross-cultural integration, and once they do that, then they can learn to tolerate and accept other

people without any discrimination. This is what my experience being abroad is teaching me, both in terms of how I am approaching Japanese culture and how my Japanese or foreign friends approaches my own Peruvian culture.

The all mentioned above is a short message to students who are thinking of going abroad. I think, to understand a culture, you need to get out of your cultural cocoon and see the culture with unclouded eyes. To do this completely is impossible, but after several years abroad, I think, you will have a better understanding of the foreign people ways of thinking than when you left your country. It will be more fruitful your challenge if you know where you are stand. I mean, you should know first about your country and be able to explain your history, geography, costumes and so on. On the contrary, your challenge will be a simple vacation trip and sometimes it will be troublesome when you are requested to answer about your country. Understanding cross-cultural interaction is a way to Internationalization.

