

# A Place of Diversity, Tradition, and Innovation

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**W**ALKING through the streets of Kyoto, the old capital of Japan, you get to walk past countless shrines with red torii gates, glorious temples with large bells, and discrete houses lining narrow alleyways. It is here in the heart of Kyoto, across from the Kyoto Imperial Palace, where Doshisha

University is located. As soon as you enter the Imadegawa Campus, you can feel the history. The large building immediately opposite is the oldest brick building in Kyoto City. It is not hard to imagine being a student of one hundred years ago, setting foot in Doshisha for the very first time and beginning a new life journey.

Doshisha University is one of the 13 'Global 30 (G30) Universities' making significant progress in achieving their goal. Other listed universities are Tohoku University, Tsukuba University, Tokyo University, Nagoya University, Kyoto University, Osaka University, Kyushu University, Keio University, Sophia University,



Doshisha University chapel

Meiji University, Waseda University, and Ritsumeikan University. G30 is a project in which 13 universities selected by the Japanese government are joining forces to ultimately increase the number of international students to 300,000 by year 2020. International students can now apply from abroad, take online interviews, write their entrance examinations in English, and once enrolled in the school, choose from a variety of courses conducted in English. On top of an incredible cultural experience that is



**Global Village in learning commons building**



**Shoeikan, Doshisha University**

promised, scholarships are also generous. These are only some basics of the project; a lot is being done in creating a learning environment where both Japanese and international students are able to influence each other and correspond about the globalizing world.

Doshisha University has a very interesting history. It was founded by two popular historical figures, Jō Nijijima, who is said to be the first Japanese to attend a university abroad, and Yae Nijijima, his wife. Jō Nijijima travelled to the US at a time when Japan was still in national isolation, and when citizens were strictly prohibited from travelling abroad. His academic experience, and the encounter with Christianity in the US, had a profound effect on him and eventually led him to create Doshisha.

While Doshisha's Imadegawa Campus is home to six buildings designated as national cultural property, other buildings are undergoing continuous modernization. This April, the Learning Commons building was newly opened. It features a group work area fitted with a touch screen TV, that can be used for searching international news from over a hundred countries worldwide, an academic

support area (where instructors are readily available), a multimedia lounge, a workshop, an English-only zone, and there is a tatami area with traditional Japanese décor.

When interviewed, three university staff pointed out that there are a considerable number of international students entering the university, hence a diverse student environment is starting to come to fruition. Students are taking an active interest in each other's background, whether it be language, culture, religion, or hobbies. Now the focus is on providing even higher quality programs as well as strengthening relationships with universities around the world. There are still many obstacles to overcome, however, as of September 2013, Doshisha University has built relationships with 167 universities in 39 countries, and the number is still growing.

One member of staff, Ms. Matsumoto, stated that "We are willing to do our best to support students who have a strong desire to study in our school and who do well in the entrance examination".

Over half of the international students say that the main reason they chose to study at Doshisha is that they had an interest in Japanese culture and society. Certainly this is something that they can easily find in Kyoto. Doshisha is working on their next goal, which is to create a strong

career support system in partnership with Japanese companies, so that international graduates can apply their newfound skills before returning home, thus contributing to the globalization of Japan from within. 

## STUDENT INTERVIEW



**Jean Pierre Steve (Haiti)**

"The classes are way tougher than those at schools in Haiti, with loads of assignments. But it is exciting to be able to learn about various aspects of Japanese society and economics through everyone's presentations on their respective topic of interest. In February this year, I participated in a University sponsored visit to Kazamaura Village of Aomori Prefecture, which is associated with Joseph Hardy Neesima (Jō Nijjima), together with other international students at Doshisha University. I had never experienced such cold weather but was really impressed by the snowy landscape that I saw for the first time in my life."

### >> TOPIC 1

## POINTS-BASED SYSTEM FOR HIGHLY SKILLED FOREIGN PROFESSIONALS

In May 2012, Japan introduced a points-based system for Highly Skilled Foreign Professionals (HSFP) for the purpose of contributing to economic growth and industrial innovation in Japan. The system helps foreign professionals choose Japan as a desired place for work.

This opportunity is open to academics, engineers, or business managers. Applicants are assessed on educational attainment, period of professional experience, promised annual salary, and professional achievements, etc.

What are the benefits? They include: permission for multiple activities, permission to bring one's parents, relaxed conditions for the permission for permanent residence (It will be granted after about five years of stay), permission for the spouse to work, and permission to bring a domestic worker, etc. 

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