

Moldova and Japan



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I Love Japan! It is an amazing place that perfectly combines the blue ocean and green mountains. The mountain relief springs out many rivers with a clean water as a diamond. It is a pleasure to listen for the whisper of the rivers, like a mom's lullaby from my childhood. Leaves rustle, swung by the oceanic breeze joins harmoniously the rivers whisper and together with the birds of the sky form the most beautiful sounds orchestrate.



Mountains and Forests are teeming of live. Countless animals are always very busy. Squirrel fill up their stores for winter, jump from one tree to another in search of a new nut. Racoons, slicky but obsessed of hygiene, wash their food that they probably have stolen masterly from a picknick. Crowns, very capricious, still hunting for something shiny that they can stick in their already fancy nest. Wild pigs feel like kings in the forest and are brave enough to go on an adventure in search of food even deep in the people's jungle of stones. And only if you have born lucky enough you may see from far a deer mom who brought her little deer to a river to quench thirst.

I'm from Moldova, but for me Japan has become my second home and Kobe, my hometown. Things in Japan that for me used to be strange, now they are a part of daily routine and what once would

have surprised me, now is strange not to have it around.

My first visit to Japan was a cultural shock. Since I have never been outside of Europe for me the world was looking to be quite homogenous with small cultural and cuisine differences from a region to region. In fact, Europe is a place of mixed cultures and has a big variety of cultures, thus there meets, African, Asian, Slavic, and other cultures, but adapted to the locals it doesn't make me feel any major difference.

Japan, a country that perfectly combines new technologies and traditions like in a waltz has surprised me with its colorful society. The first difference that I have bumped in just immediately when I have arrived in Japan were greetings. In Japan people always bow when they want to greet someone meanwhile home, they shake hands. In Japan bowing hides an entire philosophy that perfectly demonstrates the Japanese nature to keep their tradition intact. The bow is more than just a usual greeting, it is an act of respect towards the other person. Thus, when you greet a teacher or a person of a higher rank, you bow deeper, and when you meet a friend you can just smile and shake a bit your head. In Moldova people just shake hands. But this custom is not just random thing that came up, it has its roots deep in the history. Handshake dates back to the 5th century B.C. in Greece. It was a symbol of peace, showing that neither person was carrying a weapon. In a world of continuous wars and frequent assassins this practice has become more and more popular among war diplomats and with time it has spread among usual people. It's not just a simple greeting, it's an act of disarm, a message of peace for the person you want to talk to.



Another thing that amazed me a lot was to make a



parallel regarding hygiene, and important side of a developed civilization and culture. Japan for me has an interesting specific when it comes about hygiene. Japan from far past times keep a high hygienic culture. Japanese from very young age are taught the importance of hygiene and clean environment. A feature of Japanese hygienic culture is the bath. In Japan, before entering the bath tub it is a must to take a shower first then you can enjoy sitting in a warm water of the bath. Bath in japan is more a place to relax rather than just to wash. It's interesting that even here Japanese keep the hierarchy. Within the family first enter the bath the most aged, then one by one until it turns kids time to enter bath. In Japan thermal waters are very famous and very popular among local



people. Japanese call it "ONSEN". Even monkeys in Hokaido love to warm up in those little thermal waters up in the mountains, sometimes even getting to fight for such a spot.

In Moldova shower and bath are just a way to wash yourself and doesn't have any particular custom as Japanese do, but in Moldova there's something similar to Japanese "ONSEN", the sauna. A small room well insolated and warmed up to high temperatures. There are many types

of sauna. Finland Sauna which is very hot and very dry, Russian sauna which is very hot and dry, Turkish Sauna (Roman Sauna) which is hot and very humid. In Moldova the most popular is Russian sauna, but the other types of sauna are not ignored. Sauna is practiced only during winter time when outside is very cold. An interesting custom is to get inside the sauna, warm up well and then jump in snow. This is done for the sake to improve immune system. Thus, Sauna in Moldova has 2 purposes. First is to wash all the impurities that comes out of the body with sweat and second one is to improve the immune system.

Moldova is beautiful, quiet and peaceful place. It is a very green country with lots of forests and trees. Chisinau the capital of Moldova perfectly combines green trees with white stone building. Thus, Chisinau is recognized as "the greenest city" in Europe due to may trees all the way along the streets and also the "White City" due to the large use of chalk block (stone block) in construction. Moldova, Japan, and all other countries are different and that's what make our world colorful and interesting.

but if we look deeper, we are the same, because we are all the same nice and lovely people.

