

A ray of hope in some dark times

Today we caught up with one of our recent grads Max Walton who is just starting a new job in Japan at a Japanese Onsen (Hot bath) called Yunogo Bishunkaku in a small town Okayama prefecture. Amazingly he had the courage to leave on the day the lock down started!

Max recently graduated with a Bachelor of Contemporary International studies majoring in Japanese Studies.

We asked Max how he managed to get a job overseas with everything that is going on. He said,

“The recent trip was planned as I had passed the interview to get the job, in my last year I talked to one of my lecturers from a Japanese paper and he put me in touch with the careers office of IPU Japan, our sister university in Japan”

“They had relationships with lots of places in Japan and found exactly what I was looking for. They arranged an interview with them and I got the job”.

So what was the interview like?

“It was pretty nerve racking! Ms Kageyama from the careers office in Japan helped me with how to put my best foot forward in the interview. The Japanese language classes I took at IPU New Zealand and the term I was able to spend studying at IPU Japan made sure I was ready to speak in natural Japanese. There was a couple of times I had to talk off the top of my head”

How was it like leaving on day of the lock down? was your family worried?

“I left on the 25th of March the same day as the lock down. I would have gone earlier but I needed to get a visa to work in Japan”.

“On the plane was pretty empty on the way over, it was just me and a bunch of people returning to Japan. My family was nervous with me going overseas at this time but knew that Japan was a safe place and that’s where I wanted to go”

What was your first impression when you got to Okayama?

“It’s really beautiful and I was actually surprised. I had looked at pictures online but they didn’t do it justice. The Sakura (cheery blossom) trees are out now so that brings a whole new dimension to the place”.

How is work so far?

“I officially get welcomed into the company on the 13th so I don’t have a lot work to do until then. I have been getting to know the surrounding area. It’s not like the built up cities Japan is often known for”.

“Work I am told is quieter because of the virus, but some things are still open”

Favorite papers at IPU New Zealand:

Mostly Japanese language papers, Principles of economics, and Mandarin

Advice to students coming to IPU New Zealand:

Join a club and do something fun. There're lots of clubs; the drum team is good, there is even a tea ceremony club. Getting your degree is not just about studying it's about taking that extra step and trying something new.

Best memory at IPU New Zealand:

The International Spring Festival in my first year on campus. I was in the drum team and had the chance to do a performance in the festival which was great.

Favorite dining hall meal:

Hayashi Beef Rice