

London, August 2012

Dear Sir or Madam:

My interest in Japan first started when I was 14. Watching a TV programme about Tokyo I was entranced by the towering metropolis. After watching the programme I researched more about Japan and it was at that point I fell in love with the language. I loved its structure, sounds and calligraphy. I surrounded myself in Japanese culture from manga, anime, films to games. I spent the next 4 years learning Japanese and about its culture in my free time, passing the JLPT L4 in 2008, but my real journey with Japan began when I entered Sheffield University to study Japanese full time.

My previous years learning were covered in the first semester and I spent the next year and half furthering my knowledge of the Japanese language, as well as its culture and history. In my 3rd year I was able to fulfill my life long dream of going to Japan.

I was fortunate to spend 10 months studying at Sophia University. Tokyo was even better than I had envisioned. I had the best 10 months of my life. I made many friends in Japan as well as from other parts of Asia and the world. It was also a great opportunity to further my language abilities.

However due to numerous circumstances I was unable to see the other great cities and sights of Japan outside of Tokyo. Being a full time student, I intended to do most of my traveling during the winter break. However at the beginning of January I contracted a bad case of tonsillitis, which meant I was unable to do any traveling and was very much bed ridden till mid-February.

I also arranged to visit other students from Sheffield University in the Kansai area, planning on going to Osaka and Kyoto. However, due to the March 11th earthquake these plans were cancelled and I was made to leave Japan for 3 weeks. Returning to Japan to begin my second semester, coming home immediately after the tests.

Returning to England I have since completed my university course, and passed the JLPT N1 last December. I also managed to go to Japan again for 2 weeks in December, visiting friends in Saitama and Tokyo, but due to money and time restrictions couldn't travel further afield.

I'm applying for this visa because I have spent the last 8 years of my life studying about Japan and its wonderful culture and history. Yet have only had the opportunity to spend a short 10 months 2 weeks there. During that time I also wasn't able to visit the other great cities and places that Japan has to offer outside of Tokyo.

Before I enter the UK work place and take under the next chapter of full time employment here in the UK, I want to take the time out to experience the Japan I never got to. To get lost in Japan's culture and language one more time, to finally go to Shizuoka, Aomori, Sapporo, Osaka, Kyoto, Hiroshima and Japanese other great cities that I have learnt such much about but never been too. I think my language abilities will also allow me to experience Japan on an entirely new level. I hope I'll be able to develop my language skills further.

While my life and future are here in the UK, Japan has always been very close to my heart from a young age. I truly hope you grant me this visa so that I can finally experience the best that Japan has to offer, and fulfill my dreams of exploring and getting to know Japan on a more personal level.

Sincerely,

Luke Palfreeman