

# Lucie SCHWOEBEL (Sorbonne Université) - 1 year studying at Okayama University (Sud-Ouest du Japon) from July-2019 -

## "Rapport d'étonnement" - by Dr. Bernard CHENEVIER\*\*, September 2019

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### So much interest in Japan from childhood...

Already in sixth grade (1st year of middle school), I wanted to learn foreign languages and in particular the Japanese, whose sounds please me a lot. The Lycée Jean de La Fontaine in Paris offered this opportunity. I have also started studying Japanese at age 11. And this without stopping until present by following different learning paths.

I have also visited Japan several times: for example in 2014 with the association "Colibri" which promotes 3-week exchanges in Japan or France. During my 3 weeks in Japan, I went to Otsumanaka High School in Tokyo. I was in total "Japan" immersion. My correspondent also came to the Lycée Jean de La Fontaine.

For my second stay in summer 2017, I left with a Franco-Japanese friend and we visited Japan for 1 month from Kyushu to Sendai - In Sendai we were able to access the Yamadera temple lost in the mountains ... it's magnificent !!



**My passion:** Music - I've been playing double bass at the conservatory for over 10 years. I also started the organ last year, but I do not have a good level yet. I have already participated in concerts with my class of double bass or with the orchestra of the conservatory (16<sup>e</sup> arrondissement de Paris).

The period of music history that interested me most among those I studied was the Middle Ages. It is an extremely creative and exciting time, because it is at this time that a great part of the basics of the music that one knows in the West is formed. This is also where the scoring system appears.

**My motivations to engage in Okayama University** - As I really wanted to go to Japan to pursue studies, I wanted to go for 1 year as a 3rd year Bachelor in Sorbonne University (SU): dual degree in Mechanics and Musicology organized by SU - Among the Universities where I could study music and science (a rare combination in Japan) Okayama University fulfilled these conditions. So, as Ms. Poquet-Dhimane - in charge of international relations for Chemistry at Sorbonne - proposed me Okayama University because the exchanges are strong with this University (it is also one of the 15 best of Japan), I decided to join this great University in the southwest of the country. We had the idea to apply for the I-Ma-C program (6 months of Master Course all taught in English, focused on Physics, Chemistry and Biology) whose first edition took place in 2019. But the program I-Ma-C did not offer the kind of course I needed, so I turned to Japanese courses in the standard University curriculum.

**Registering at Okayama University: finding a reliable way to get started in the application process** - To begin the application process I contacted Dr. Chenevier who is running a program of International Master Invitations for Research Internships. It is a unique entry point that makes first contacts very simple. As the curriculum was non-traditional, he put me in touch with Professor Suzuki, currently Vice-Dean of the Doctoral School of Science, who finally redirected me to the Faculty's Director of Educational Pathways. Engineering. She was very efficient: she particularly helped me a lot to enroll in the Faculty of Engineering (Mechanical Studies) and the Faculty of Teacher Training of Schools (Musicology). Everything happened very quickly because Ms. Ohta was super competent and responsive. I must say that we do not have such a level of responsiveness at SU. An important feature of the application that was long to solve though: finding all courses at Okayama University that could be validated by SU. Finally I succeeded ..... today 18th of September.

**Financial support,** I have been a French State Fellow since I joined the University. To come to Japan, I saved some money of my scholarship. I also applied for a "study abroad" mobility grant at Sorbonne University (decision pending).

### Daily life.

Arrived in late July this year, so after almost 2 months, I can report a very good level of satisfaction: the city is human-sized, you can cycle very easily, the countryside is beautiful.

From a professional point of view, I started my stay at the Faculty of Engineering for a 2-month internship, classes starting on October 1st. During this internship period I was trained in fluid mechanics. Professor Kouchi supervised my activities.

Kuwanoki Dormitory: mainly for temporary stays and for the reception of foreign students.

My room is big and comfortable. Wifi and Internet are at international standards. I can prepare meals for myself, which is nice because I like to cook.

The cafeterias of the university are also good even if they are a little expensive. Not to mention the small family-run restaurants on the outskirts of the campus or downtown, which offer traditional and varied food for very reasonable prices, probably cheaper than in Paris (sometimes a whole meal for less than 500 Yen).

**As a matter of conclusion:** for my first weeks at Okayama University I would like to point out that:

\*\* I am well settled

\*\* I am registered in the courses that I will be able to validate with SU to obtain my Double License; I especially thank Mrs Ohta for her efficiency and her skills in my orientation and enrollment in the 2 faculties where I will have my courses;

\*\* The welcome party organized a few days after my arrival allowed me to get to know my fellow students and teachers of the lab. It is a kind of "integration party" very common in Japan.

\*\* At L-Café - (Language - Café), I met a student ("Silver" course) who is learning French. We have become friends - she probably considers me her granddaughter - and I have been able to travel with her, attend concerts and a tea ceremony. We also visited Kyoto together.

My integration in Japan steadily continues....