

**Reflections on the Japan Studies Institute**  
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O ha yo u  
go zai ma su

Or

Ko n ni chi wa

The opportunity to participate in the Japan Studies Institute (JSI) at San Diego State University has been incredibly beneficial. It has been a huge learning experience for me both professionally and personally. I have spent these past two weeks exploring Japan's vast cultural, historical, political, and economic landscape. I have gained invaluable knowledge from this intensive program that I will apply to my work with the Office of Global Studies and Programmes at the University of The Bahamas.

### **Comprehensive Exposure to Japanese Society and Culture**

The program's structure allowed us to dive deeply into various facets of Japanese life through a combination of lectures, hands-on workshops, and group discussions. We explored topics ranging from the **history of Japanese literature** to **brush painting**, from **contemporary Japanese politics and economics** to the **cultural foundations of Japanese society**. Each presentation offered a layer of depth that expanded my understanding beyond surface-level knowledge of Japan and gave me a huge appreciation for the complexity and richness of Japan's identity.

One of the most memorable aspects of the program was the field trip to Balboa Park, which served as a significant interactive extension of our Japanese aesthetics workshops.

The concepts we discussed in class with such wabi-sabi (beauty in imperfection) and the incorporation of nature into daily life, came to life in a practical and emotional way when we walked the peaceful gardens and connected with the art and architecture in that calm environment. Sensi Nakamura, took the field trip to another level with explaining very aspect of the Japanese Tea Garden. In addition, Sensi Wolfgram's talk on Japanese art was also wonderfully enhanced by our visit to the San Diego Museum of Art, which gave us the opportunity to explore, analyze, and both traditional and modern pieces through the perspective of Japanese philosophy and cultural expression.

## **Connecting Learnings to the University of The Bahamas**

As Programme Coordinator in the Office of Global Studies and Programmes, my role includes developing and sustaining meaningful global experiences for our students. The knowledge gained at JSI will enhance this role in the following key ways:

### **1. Curriculum Enrichment**

I plan to introduce thematic modules that integrate Japanese studies into our global studies programming. Whether through engaging our current Japanese visual Arts club or faculty partnerships, students can explore comparative cultural studies that highlight similarities and differences between Bahamian and Japanese societies.

### **2. Exchange Programme Development**

This experience has deepened my understanding of the student exchange process from a cultural immersion standpoint. I now have greater sensitivity to how we prepare our students for cultural adjustment, especially in non-Western contexts. I intend to incorporate Japan-specific pre-departure briefings for students selected to participate in any future exchanges with our current and potential Japanese institutions.

### **3. Global Citizenship Workshops**

The values embedded in Japanese society—discipline, community responsibility, and harmony—can serve as meaningful themes in our global citizenship workshops. These values align closely with our university's goal of preparing students for a better life in a global society.

### **4. Strategic Partnerships**

Armed with a stronger understanding of Japan's higher education system and cultural priorities; I am now better positioned to pursue more institutional collaborations. I will advocate for partnerships with Japanese universities that share

a mutual interest in student mobility, research exchange, and intercultural learning for our student, staff and faculty.

**5. Campus Events and Awareness**

Finally, I plan to collaborate with various areas within the university, Japan-themed event for example, a Japanese film screening, will be able give our campus community a taste of the cultural elements I experienced at JSI. These initiatives will help internationalize our campus culture and promote interest in Asia-Pacific studies.

## **Closing Reflections**

In closing, I am deeply grateful to the JSI faculty, guest speakers, and fellow participants who made this journey so meaningful. I special thanks to Sensi Yoshiko Higurashi and Ms Jodi Dixon.

The tools and perspectives I have gained will undoubtedly contribute to the continued growth of the Office of Global Studies and Programmes at the University of The Bahamas. I look forward to taking this experience and molding it into tangible opportunities that will benefit my university's' students, faculty, staff and institutional partners.