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A FREE MONTHLY E-NEWSLETTER FOR FRIENDS OF JAPAN & TEACHERS OF JAPANESE



TRAINING PROGRAM FOR JAPANESE- LANGUAGE TEACHERS DR. SUEYON SEO

Japanese Lecturer

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Dr. Sueyon Seo (Japanese Lecturer, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee) participated in our “Short-term(Summer) Teacher Training Program” at the Japan Foundation-Japanese Language Institute, Urawa.

The two months, more specifically 7 weeks of stay in Japan changed me significantly. The program provided an intensive course for Japanese language, pedagogy, and culture. My favorite was the culture program including various fields such as kabuki performance, tea ceremony, home stay, how to wear kimono, calligraphy, and most of all, Kansai area trip. Amazingly, the program covers almost everything of cultural aspect you can think of. Every event was so valuable and magnificent. You can literally participate to every activity that could only be introduced in the books. You’ll never imagine how thrilling it was unless you try it yourself.

I’ve been teaching Japanese in UWM (University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee) since I came to America for study in 2005. However, I’ve never lived in Japan although I achieved level 1 JLPT and visited a couple of times for both business and pleasure. I love languages and I dare say I’m pretty good at speaking in Japanese. However, when it comes to language teaching, fluent speaking is not enough; you have to understand the culture of the target language and furthermore, you should be able to appreciate it. At this point of view, my qualification is a crucial element: a real experience of living in Japan. No matter how hard I read books at

culture and study it myself in America, it cannot be authentic and I had less confidence in what I said about Japan. Fortunately, teacher training by Japan Foundation saved me from long time pain-in-my-neck problem.

If you're aware that your Japanese language is up to a certain level, you should participate to this teacher training program. It helps you extend your language ability and provides you with ideas to make your classroom fun and interesting. Some people think 7 weeks is too long and I might get homesick and suffer stress due to the totally different culture for a long time. However, after 7 weeks, I felt it was too short and I didn't even want to leave Japan. You can decently and truly experience normal Japanese people's way of everyday living through the program and I assure you, this experience will make your classroom more vivid and live.

In addition, it is expanding not only your cultural horizon but also your social network. You can meet Japanese instructors from all over the world, exchange knowledge, and build a friendship. This is priceless. I'll never forget the time I'd been in Japan and hopefully, if it allows me, I can participate to the program sometime in the future.

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