



Evdon SICAT

Nationality: Philippines
Current employer: Sumitomo Mitsui Construction Co., Ltd.
Graduated university: Hokkaido University (Sapporo)

Self Introduction

I am originally from the Philippines. By profession I am a civil and structural engineer. I came to Japan almost 7 years ago, as I was interested in learning the Japanese technology and culture. To realize this interest, I applied for a scholarship offered by the Japanese Embassy in my country. After I received my scholarship, I was fortunate enough to pursue my master studies and eventually continue to PhD studies under the supervision of Prof. Tamon Ueda of the Laboratory of Engineering for Maintenance System in Hokkaido University. During graduate studies, the focus of my research was about the durability of concrete, particularly on the freeze-thaw damage of concrete. Two years ago, I joined Sumitomo Mitsui Construction Co., Ltd. and began work on the design of bridges. From this year, I started working for the Technical and Engineering Service Division of the company as a Technical Design Engineer, focusing on the fabrication and construction of precast concrete.

What was your initial motivation to come to Japan?

Japan is very well known for its advanced technology in almost everything. As a civil engineer back in my home country, I saw large construction projects being built by Japanese companies instead of local companies. This motivated me to come to Japan and study in order to learn about the advances and technologies related to the construction industry, moreover the way on how Japanese do things with such high quality and standard.

What were your reasons for staying and working in Japan?

Learning the theories and application of what we have learned in school are two different things. Somehow I still wanted to apply what I have learned in graduate studies and learn through actual experience by joining a Japanese company. In addition, I have known Sumitomo Mitsui Construction even back when I was still in the Philippines and wanted to join the company, so when I had the opportunity to join after graduation, I was lucky enough to be accepted.

What were the positive and negative aspects of your academic experience?

On the positive aspect, being in an academic environment helps you develop the technical and soft skills required to solve (very) difficult problems which professionals in the industry may not be able to do. On the negative side, it takes quite a long time to acquire your graduate degree, while your counterpart in the industry have already years in experience.

How did your academic experience affect your decision to stay in Japan?

Personally, I think that in graduate studies you are focused in a very specialized subject. Wherein in the industry, you work in general areas, the specialized knowledge we acquired in a long time in graduate studies may not be applied in the general working environment.

What aspects of the academic environment helped you in acquiring a job?

One advantage of studying in Japan is the support of your supervisor, in my case, it was a really big help in landing a job in Japan.

What sort of work are you doing at your current job?

My work is generally related to the area where I specialized in graduate studies. And, since it is a Japanese company the language used is Japanese.

How would you describe your interaction and relationship with your coworkers?

Interaction and relationship with Japanese colleagues is quite good, while with foreign colleagues is at ease. However, since I have limited Japanese capabilities, it is sometimes hard to make myself understood. Japanese colleagues are very understanding of my situation and they try to communicate in a manner where I could understand, either in simple Japanese or in English.

Have you experienced any issues or problems thus far in your work environment?

It is really not an issue or a problem, but the working environment is totally different from where you get used to. For example the long working hours, the rigorous business manners and environment, however in the long run, you'll get used to it.

Based on your experience, what sort of support is necessary from universities or other organizations to help foreign students who want to stay and work in Japan?

Alumni association who can give advice and knowledge to those seeking to work in Japan. Support from supervisor is very important.

What should foreign students do if they are interested in staying and working in Japan?

The Japanese language skill is very important, so start learning Japanese at an early stage. Other skills can be learned eventually as you work.