
Being a Minority in Japan: JETs of African Descent

Pre-Departure Seminar June 27, 2015

- 1. What are some of your concerns or expectation as a person of color living in a predominantly Asian society?**
 - a. Sharing the most pressing concerns with the group / rumors about life in Japan.
- 2. My experience in Japan as a former JET of African descent.**
- 3. What might you experience as a person of African Descent in Japan?**
 - a. Lots of looks, stares, and touching from people who are curious about you. However, you will be treated like a celebrity in many cases.
 - b. Your students will think you are the most interesting person they've met their entire life.
 - c. Some Japanese people may think your interests are heavily into hip-hop, rap, and reggae music. Also some will think you are good at singing gospel, dancing, playing basketball and running track.
 - d. Finding skin care, makeup, and hair products can be extremely difficult. Searching for a hairstylist who is experienced with styling and braiding black hair can be hard as well.
 - e. At times you may feel self-conscious of what you do in front of others such as the pressure to not promote stereotypes of blacks.
- 4. Navigating life on JET**
 - a. Be involved in your community and in JET
 - i. Volunteer at local festivals and events in your town or prefecture
 - ii. Become a member of a local AJET chapter
 - b. Try new things and venture out to places that you otherwise are not able to do here in the US.
 - i. Learn karate, kyudo, tea ceremony and other traditional Japanese sports/customs.
 - ii. Travel to popular destinations in Japan or in Asia. Visit your JET friends in their town/prefecture.
 - c. Learn to speak, read, and write Japanese allows you to...
 - i. Have dialogue with your co-workers and students which can go a long way goes a long way
 - ii. Shopping, traveling, and making friends becomes a lot easier
 - d. Be yourself!!
 - i. This is a chance for you to learn and discover new things about yourself.
 - ii. Don't be afraid to share your experience as a person of color living in Japan.

5. Questions

If you have any questions, concerns or need any advice, please feel free to reach out to me anytime at spence1400@gmail.com. I'd be happy to help. Good luck and have fun!!