**Personal Statement**

I have been fascinated with Japan for just over 2 years now, it's a country rich in culture and history. I have enjoyed talking with people I met travelling about their adventures in Japan, this sparked my interest in learning the language and as much as possible about what life is like in Japan. Having already travelled extensively throughout Australia on a 2 year working visa I wanted to challenge myself by visiting a country that had a unique culture completely different from my own.

One of the great things about travelling is the people you meet, during my travels I met a number of Japanese people who spoke very fondly of their home, they were always extremely kind and welcoming with a great sense of humour. From the impression I got from these individuals alone I knew Japan would be a destination I would visit one day. I have been actively saving so I can visit and enjoy this incredibly interesting part of the world.

Being a keen photographer I can't wait to take lots pictures in Japan, from the snowy mountains in the north to the flourishing cherry blossoms during the spring or the many temples spread throughout Japan. It seems like a photographers paradise having such a changing landscape from the cold north to the tropical south and I wish to capture my travels up and down the length of the country with my Canon!

As well as photography I also run a successful travel blog and have been writing about my travels for the last 3 years, I will document the places I got and the culture I experience through my website which will hopefully inspire more people to visit Japan.

I hope to do a lot of hiking while travelling around the countryside in Japan, hopefully this will be done with my friend Chie who lives in Tokyo and is also a avid hiker!

Whilst I'm travelling up and down the country I also hope to try lots of the amazing food Japan has to offer, being a vegetarian many people have told me this will be a challenge but I hope to find many interesting foods to try!

This trip will have its challenges as well as the fun times but that's part of travelling, thankfully having already done long periods of travelling before I'm aware of some of the difficulties that occur and know how to deal with these. There will be times when I don't understand the language or the culture but with patience and hard work I hope to turn these challenges into positive experiences that will help me develop as a person and learn to integrate myself in Japanese life as best I can. Whilst travelling is an amazing experience I believe sometimes it's the lessons you learn and how you overcome difficult times that enrich life and will be the memories that I will cherish.

Many Thanks,

Taran Ramshaw