

Nguyen Thi Thu Ha

Began working at East Japan Welfare Management Service Corporation in April 2019. Thu Ha had an interest in Japanese and wanted to live overseas (away from her parents) and came Japan right after graduating high school. After studying at a language school in Niigata, she studied economics at Niigata Sangyo University for four years. Her favorite food is sushi, and her favorite sushi is engawa (the edge of a flounder's fin).



We're coming to visit you!

Let's check out a COMPANY!



In this column, we interview foreign nationals employed in companies in Niigata. We look at the cultural differences in work cultures, how the person is fitting in to the company and the community as an individual and see their hard work in action.

This time, we visited the **East Japan Welfare Management Service Corporation**.

Introducing **Nguyen Thi Thu Ha** From **Vietnam**

—Tell us about your current job.

The East Japan Welfare Management Service Corporation Group is taking in a class of 18 Vietnamese technical interns for the first time in 2020. I work for the human resources / communications division, so my job is to offer support for them so they can work without any issues. I am doing a variety of preparation before they arrive, including making a manual for them about living in Japan.

—What other duties do you have, besides helping the technical support interns?

In addition to the manual, I'm also helping the employees at the facility that is going to be taking the interns in to make sure they know what to do. I visit periodically to let them know more about the new interns and when they will arrive, in addition to communicating about other things.

Recently we held a send-off party in Vietnam for the incoming interns. In addition to interpreting between Japanese and Vietnamese, I also presented about our company in Vietnamese. I was very nervous, but I was also happy to meet the new interns.

—What times do you feel are the most fun at your job?

I am most happy anytime I get to use my knowledge or things I've learned up until now to help others. Also whenever anyone else is happy because of how I've done my job.

—What are the hardest things at your job?

Japanese. (She laughs.) I've had to put together a lot of paperwork since starting, and I check on the internet as I work to make sure I use the right words. I also have my seniors check my work before submitting it. I also study Japanese through my work.

—You sound like you're working hard! What was the biggest change between working and your life as a student?

The biggest change was in my own way of thinking. When I was a student, I always felt like I was only responsible for myself, and if I made a mistake it was mine to deal with. Working now, I've realized that I have to think about how my actions effect those around me, and that I have to behave properly.

—How do you spend your holidays?

Recently I've been attending international exchange events. There's a Vietnamese cooking event called "Betoaji" that I've been attending. A few days ago we made banh xeo, which is a Vietnamese dish similar to Japanese okonomiyaki, and yogurt black sticky rice pudding.

—Tell us about some of your goals for the future.

I want to do my best at my job. I want to do my best to make sure our interns feel happy to be at our company. And I want to help them see not just the benefits of their job, but also the charms of Japan and of Niigata, and help them find opportunities to experience them.

—Do you have any words for exchange students looking to find jobs in Japan?

Since you already made it this far, try to actively talk to others and interact with them. You'll meet many people and your chance for a job will come. Just take one step forward and meet others. I'm also going to challenge myself to work hard at my job.

Thank you for your kindness!

This piece was suggested by director Keisuke Kubota.

He has worked to both open and operate care facilities and has helped develop a total of 50 of them in Niigata and the Kanto region.

The company first started recruiting employees of foreign nationalities last year, starting with Ms. Thu Ha. Mr. Kubota said "At first, I felt like I had to act like they were the same as the Japanese employees. But working together with them, I found that they had no need to change their personalities or culture. I started to feel like I should accept them as they are, and if they have a new opinion, that I should work to incorporate that into our business." Speaking about working with those of other nationalities, Mr. Kubota said "I feel motivated to grow, and you can see the results. I enjoy working with them."

(Keisuke Kubota (Pictured Right))

