MASTER THESIS

BLINDING GOLDEN PAVILION

A research on the perceptions of authenticity regarding Japan

Gergana Dimitrova Dimitrova

10th Semester Tourism

Spring 2015

Supervisor Lill Rastad Bjørst

AALBORG UNIVERSITY
DENMARK

I would like to thank my supervisor Lill Rastad Bjørst for her constant mentoring, motivation and positive attitude. I would like to thank her for the kind support she provided me with and especially for the all the times she went out of her way to help.

ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the perceptions of authenticity regarding Japan among young European travelers. The topic was chosen based on the strong personal interest the researcher holds for Japan and Japanese culture. Furthermore, the researcher is fascinated with exploring the notion of authenticity and cultures, therefore combines the two ideas within this thesis.

The study is an exploratory one, where the researcher assumes the constructivist approach and by using qualitative methods looks to understand what are the perceptions of authenticity. Data is collected through 12 individual semi-structured qualitative interviews, which are supported by a focus-group interview and a survey with 59 responses on a preliminary stage.

Data collected from the interviews has been analyzed through a theoretical framework created for this thesis. The framework provides understanding on main notions necessary for the analysis, such as travel motivation, destination image creation, authenticity, as well as commoditization and push and pull factors.

The analysis revels that the perceptions of authenticity correlate with the destination image that the interviewees hold, as well as, with their knowledge about Japan. The researcher notes three distinguishable patterns, where interviewees with strong knowledge about Japan express elaborate image and perception of authenticity is influenced by Japanese people. Interviewees with medium knowledge, showed a pattern of having a positive image about Japan and a perception of authenticity that is influenced by both physical and abstract representation of culture. For the third patter, the researcher notes that interviewees within it have a strong opinion of what is authentic about Japan and are prompt to disappointment when their image does not overlap with the reality.

The researcher named the thesis Blinding Golden Pavilion based on a pattern found during the research of interviewees regarding the Japanese people being the most authentic thing about Japan. The name notes that it is not the gold that shines the brightest within a culture.

Keywords: Japan; authenticity; destination image formation; perceptions; travel motivation

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1 INTRODUCTION

European travelers have always been fascinated with Japan and Japanese culture (JNTO, 2012). Being the alluring beauty of the Japanese *sakura* cherry blossoms or the grandeur of *Kinkakuji* (The Golden Pavilion) in Kyoto, Europeans continue to hold great interest in Japan and even more so in the peak of summer 2015, when the drop of the yen and the flight ticket prices has made long-haul trips to this destination more affordable than ever.

Figure 1: Kinkakuji, Kyoto. Personal photo.

And the numbers speak volume about the interested European travelers hold for Japan. Inbound travelers from Europe have increased with about 18% for 2014 (Japan National Tourism Organization, 2015). Japan has been voted readers' top choice destination for 2014 by The Guardian (The Guardian, 2014); has been called "*top destination for 2015*" (Chandran, 2014) and was included on the top 2014 destinations on the rise for the TripAdvisor traveler's choice (TripAdvisor, 2014).

Despite the stated above interest for Japan as a destination, many travel related websites, such as TripAdvisor and the sort, disregard it as a 'hot' topic. Japan Today (2015) labels the country as "*unpopular*" and lines up factors to support this, including expenses and language barrier.

This distinction between what the travel industry and the media present and what travelers experience raises questions regarding the perceptions of Japan.

Figure 2: Miyajima, Hiroshima. Personal photo.

It is interesting for this thesis to understand what motivates people to visit Japan. Why Japan is popular to begin with could be found in the notion of orientalism (Said, 1977; Silver, 1993), where the difference between western and eastern

cultures fascinates the visitor (Said, 1997). The Guardian's readers regard the merger between modern and traditional culture to be the main reason for choosing this destination (JNTO, 2014; The Guardian, 2014). Precisely these two notions of orientalism and culture raise questions in regards to the perceptions of authentic Japan.

In tourism the notion of authenticity is not new. Many authors (Bruner, 2005; Cohen, 2010; Volkman, 1990; Kessing, 1989; MacCannell, 1976) discuss what is authentic and what is staged in the industry and how tourism influences cultures. This has been a reoccurring discussion.

Mass tourism leads to commodification of the culture in different ways (Silver, 1993; Cohen, 1988), thus it is interesting to how this has reflected on the perception of Japan, which has been visited by more than 10million tourist for 2014.

Many researchers (Bruner, 2005; Cohen, 2010) argue that tourism leads to intentional underlining of particular cultural aspects that could attract new visitors, despite their weakening everyday importance (Bruner, 2005). As Silver (1993, p.303) points out tour operators are mostly concerned with the marketing presentation of authentic culture and are motivated by profit, rather than an "accurate" representation.

Figure 3: Kobe Tower, Kobe. Personal photo.

In the scope of the later idea, it is interesting to discuss how the demand side perceives authenticity in regards to Japan. As the Japanese main tourism body has stated, the largest number of visitors to Japan are people up to the age of 35 (JNTO, 2014). Therefore, by demand side, this thesis underlines namely young travelers, due to their importance for the Japanese tourism.

Furthermore, it is interesting to discuss how Japan copes with the mix of modern and traditional and how this reflects on the perceptions of authenticity regarding the country. The thesis looks to do so by examining destination image pre- and post-travel and the relation with factors like personal knowledge, and travel motivation. Therefore, the researcher poses the question:

What are the perceptions of authenticity regarding Japan among young European travelers?

The researcher chose to answer this question by identifying, through qualitative interviews, what are the perceptions of authenticity regarding the country. Moreover, the researcher will look for elements that motivate young European travelers to choose Japan as a destination and what influences their decision making process. Furthermore, in order to provide dependable answer, the research will discuss what influences the perceptions of authenticity. In addition, the researcher chooses to briefly examine how the incident in Fukushima, within the frame of last-chance tourism, is related to the perceptions of authenticity. In order to answer this question, the research will focus on changes of traveler's perceptions prior and post travel.

The research is done through qualitative semi-structured individual interviews with young travelers in the age between 20 and 35. The choice is made based on the travel activity of young people in the stated age group.

As to answer the research question, this thesis will first provide understanding on the research stand from which this project is being conducted. This would be done in the Methodology chapter, where the thesis provides answers to the methods in use, how and why they were chosen and what this means for the project.

This would be followed by a Theory chapter, which explains the theoretical lense, through which the researchers analyses the problem. This chapter will provide knowledge on basic notions of this project like young travelers, authenticity, communization in tourism, destination image formation, heritage tourism and last-chance tourism.

This would be followed by a critical analysis of the empirical data of this research in the Analysis chapter and a summary of the findings in the Conclusion chapter.

2 METHODOLOGY

This chapter is focused on providing understanding of the qualitative methods utilized in this thesis in order to answer the research question regarding the perceptions of authenticity in Japan among young European travelers. Furthermore it is set on explaining the stand the researcher holds during the process of research, how this influences the thesis and why. This chapter would provide description of the used methods and justify their usage in regards to the data collection and analysis. In addition this chapter would provide understanding on the sampling, data collection and data analysis tools.

This chapter will first provide description of the paradigm of the research, followed up by an explanation of the methods appropriate for the paradigm and how they are being used for the research. The chapter would then explain the sampling process and the data collection process, concluding with the analysis and a reflection on the data.

2.1 Philosophy of science

In order to understand how the methods for the research are chosen for this project it is important to provide understanding of the paradigm through which the researcher chooses to write and the philosophical stand behind it. Creswell (1998) describes the science that is focused on the structure and methods used for gaining knowledge as Philosophy of science.

Philosophy of science works with the nature of reality and the "*reasoning from effect to cause and vice versa*" (Teichaman & Evans, 1999, p.4). Philosophy of science is the basis of the project and a stepping stone for the research process, as it allows the researcher to select a paradigm from which to work and the appropriate for it research tools. Rosenberg (2000) explains that philosophy of science provides understanding on the role of the participants in the research and how this underlines the usage of multiple approaches.

Therefore, the researcher of this project chose to begin the research process with philosophy of science and the selection of paradigm. This influences the selection of appropriate methods that would provide answer to the posed question regarding the perception of authenticity for Japanese heritage sites among young travelers from Europe.

First and foremost, it is important to identify what the paradigm for this project is, as to understand how the process of the research would proceed. The academic literature describes a paradigm as a "*set of basic beliefs*" that works as a lens through which the researcher sees the world and understands it (Boeije, 2010; Creswell 1998; Guba, 1990; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Jennings, 2005, p.104). The paradigm works as the spine of the project, providing the research and analysis methods, how they are used and providing understanding on how the researcher is influencing this project (Boejie, 2010; Guba, 1990).

For the purpose of this project the researcher choses to write from the constructivist paradigm, as this paradigm best fits analysis and interpretation of socially constructed phenomena (Boeije, 2010; Creswell, 2010; Guba, 1990) such as the perception of authenticity for Japanese heritage sites among young travelers from Europe.

The constructivist paradigm is one that acknowledges the existence of multiple socially constructed realities for each individual person based on his own set of knowledge, background and system of beliefs. (Creswell, 2010; Somekh and Lewin, 2005; Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006). This is explained as "*multiple, apprehendable and conflicting social realities*" by Guba & Lincoln (1994, p.111). Furthermore these realities intertwine and influence one another, thus making every reality a subjective understanding, which the researcher would look to analyse, describe and look to understand, but not judge (Guba, 1990; Creswell, 1998). Unlike other paradigms, such as positivism for example, here the researcher looks to discuss and interpret the reality as it is presented, rather than look for one ultimate truth (Guba, 1994). This is underlined by Gergen (1985, p.267) who states that in the constructivist paradigm "*possibilities are opened for alternative means*".

The existence of multiple realities in constructivism leads to the understanding that a social phenomenon can be interpreted from different angles and ways, namely through the different realities for each individual. (Guba, 1994; Gergen, 1985; Fink, 2000). In the context of this thesis, constructivism would allow the researcher to approach the problem of perception of authenticity through the different realities of the participants.

As each reality is a subjective matter (Gergen, 1985; Yin, 2011), constructivism also conducts that each participant in the research has his own role and influences the research process, thus

co-creating the reality of the project (Creswell, 1998; Bryman, 2012; Stake, 1995; Gergen, 1985; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Esterby-Smith et al, 2008; Kvale, 1999). In other words the reality of the thesis is a creation of the notion of the research and the participants and is not a reality that needs discovery (Creswell, 1998). Kvale (1999) underlines, that the researcher constantly influences the research process, which is according to researchers (Gergen, 1985; Fink, 2000) is a positive influence due to the subjective nature of reality and the co-creation of reality. For this example, the researcher influences the thesis by selecting the topic of interest and how to approach it, which methods to use and how to apply them in order to answer the research question regarding the perception of authenticity among young European travelers visiting Japanese heritage sites. Following the stated above, the researcher acknowledges the subjective matter of the thesis and the data presented in it.

Since perception is a subjective matter, the researcher choses to utilize methods in the constructivist paradigm as they allow the collection of in-depth qualitative data (Creswell, 2010; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Fink, 2000; Jennings, 2005). These qualitative methods would allow understanding of perception of authenticity Jennings (2005) explains that methods within the constructivist paradigm aim at providing explanation and educative outcome.

The choice of paradigm can also be explained from **ontological** perspective. Ontology is explained as "worldview" (Jennings, 2005, p.104) and in its core defines the "nature of reality" (Guba, 1990, p. 18; Teichman & Evans, 1999, p. 4; Creswell, 1998, p.75). Taking into consideration the basic understanding of constructivism about the existence of multiple realities, the researcher of this thesis utilizes relativist ontology (Jennings, 2005). In other words, the researcher looks to understand the perception of authenticity of young travellers by using qualitative methods that provide information regarding the personal understanding of each person.

Another perspective would be **epistemological**, which is focused on the relation between reality and the researcher (Bryman, 2012; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Easterby et. al, 2002; Guba, 1990; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Creswell (1998) states epistemology explains how knowledge and realities are being created. As this project is set on identifying personal perception of authenticity, this would lead to interaction between the researcher and participants for the data collection. As stated before, constructivism implies the co-creation of knowledge and realities

(Creswell, 1998), this epistemology would explain how the subjective knowledge for this thesis is being created by the interaction between the researcher and the participants (Gergen, 1985; Guba, 1990).

Within the philosophy of science it is important to take the **methodological** perspective. The methodological assumption deals with the different methods applied during the research in order to answer the research question (Easterby-Smith et. al, 2002). This project is based on methods that would allow the collection of qualitative data, namely focus group interview, individual in-depth semi-structured qualitative interviews, discourse analysis, interview transcription and surveys. The basis on which these methods were chosen is provided further on in this section.
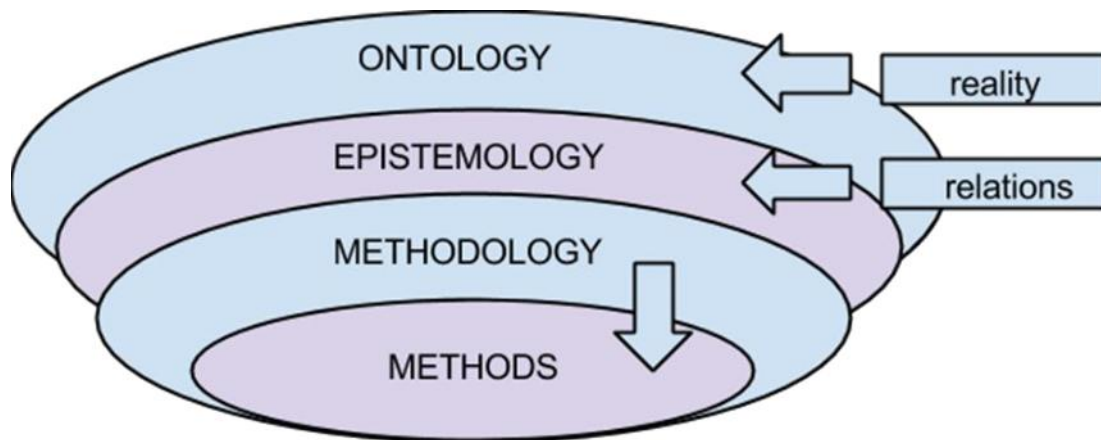
Figure 4: Relationshop between research phases in the constructivist paradigm. Figure created for this thesis on the basis of Creswell (1998)

2.2. Research Design

The research design could be described as the frame for the research process (Berg, 2009; Bogdan & Taylor, 1975; Kumar, 2011). It consists of the research phrases, which the researcher follows in order to answer the research question. It should be underlined that these phases are not separate entities, but intertwine and, thus, should be regarded as different steps of the same process.

The research design begins with the selection of a problem or topic to research. This is referred to as "thematising" (Fink, 2000, p.4) or formulation of the research question within set general topic, in this case tourism research. A number researchers point out that a well formulated research question is a cornerstone for a good research (Boeije, 2010; Kothari, 2008; Silverman, 2000).

The selection of topic for this project was based on personal interest in the Japanese tourism, as well as first-hand experience and knowledge on the topic. This basis was built upon by academic and media articles regarding authenticity and Japanese tourism, in order to identify a gap or a problem to research. This research identified a lack of suitable and state-of-the art academic literature that covers the topic of what are the perceptions of authenticity regarding Japan among young European travelers. It should be underlined that the process of formulating the problem to concrete research question undergoes changes throughout the whole research period (Boeije, 2010). This is due to the fact, that the researcher gains new knowledge and information throughout the research, thus enhancing and shaping the initial problem. This going back and forth is a trait of the hermeneutical cycle, which would be explained further in this chapter. As Gadamar (2004, p.270) stresses out, the starting problem formulation could be broad and would lack the precision and complexity of later formulation. Therefore, the researcher of this thesis is set on narrowing the topic as much as possible, as suggested by the academic literature (Boeije, 2010; Kothari, 2008; Silverman, 2000), by selecting a specific destination and a target group to research.

The topic selection is followed by a data collection phase. This includes selection of various qualitative research methods suitable for researching a socially constructed topic such as perception of authenticity. In order to understand socially constructed phenomena, the researcher choses to utilize individual semi-structured face-to-face qualitative interviews, supplemented by transcriptions, surveys and discourse analysis. Transcription of the interviews is important as it would allow the researcher to use a visual textual source, alongside the recording and, thus, use triangulation to give the data more credibility and simplify the process of analyzing the data (Kvale, 1996; Fink, 2000). The process of analysis would be simplified in a way that the researcher would gain access to different data collection methods and would be able to compare and combine the results, thus providing new perspectives on the topic without looking to explore the perceptions of authenticity through other topics. In the scope of this thesis, the researcher has transcribed all of the interviews.
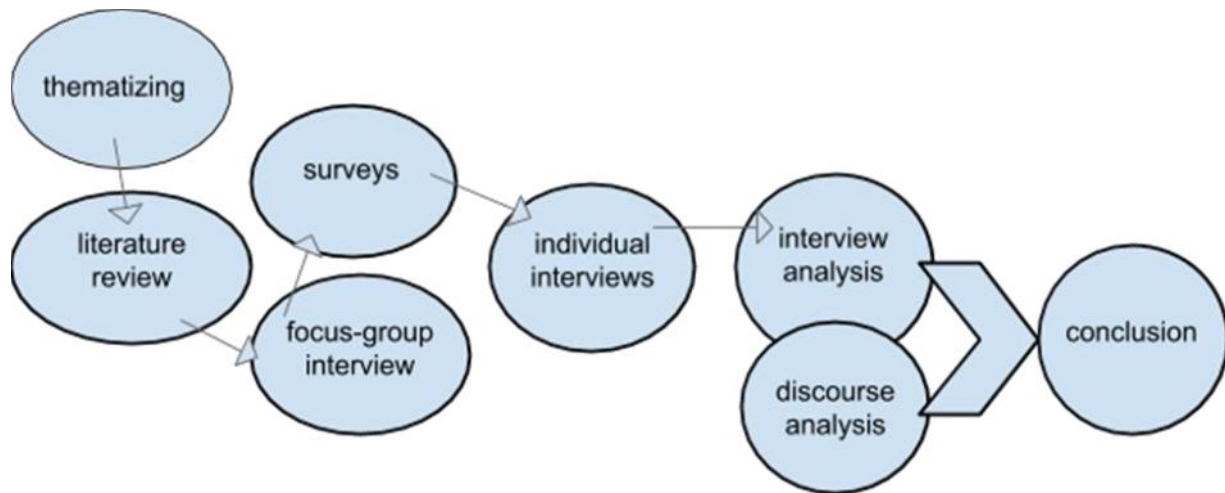
2.3. Hermeneutics

As mentioned before, this thesis follows hermeneutics. The hermeneutical cycle is a process of going back and forth throughout the research process, as to use and apply any new information acquired during the research (Fischer, 2006). By gathering more data, the researcher is enhancing his knowledge of the problem and this reflects the process itself (Kvale, 1999, p. 48; Bernard & Ryan, 2010, p. 183; Laverty, 2003; Phillips, 1987). As Gadamer (2004) points out, following hermeneutics allows the researcher to gain new perspectives on the topic and thus improve the research process.

The research process starts with the personal knowledge of the researcher on the topic and a particular understanding of it. This is considered both positive and negative, as this pre-set understanding limits the researcher and could exclude new points of view (Gadamer, 2004, Laverty, 2003). The personal knowledge of the researcher is the basis or starting point of the research, on which the data that follows during the process is built upon. Gadamer (2004) states that the core of hermeneutics is the idea that knowledge should also be expanded and the researcher should look to understand through the whole process. This idea corresponds with the main points of the constructivist paradigm.

The research process follows the hermeneutical cycle for the very beginning of the project until the end, which allows the enhancement of all phases. In the scope of this thesis, hermeneutics could be seen on several levels. First the focus-group interview allows the researcher to gain new

insides on the researched topic and thus elaborate and narrow it down. Furthermore it allowed the researcher to produce a more elaborate interview guide for the main interviews. Hermeneutics could be seen during the main interview phase, where the interview guide is amended if necessary, as to accommodate new emerging topics of research.

2.4. Researcher's role in the process

As this project follows constructivism, it is important to underline the role the researcher herself plays in the research process, that is, by taking decisions about the research paradigm and applicable methods, as well as with participation in the data collection and analysis (Kothari, 2008; Kvale, 1996, p. 16; Gergen, 1985; Guba, 1994). Creswell (1998, p,11) states that "*all researchers bring value to a study, however, qualitative researchers make their values known in the study*".

The individual background of the researcher influences the project and provides a starting point of the process, thus basing this project on a personal interest (Kothari, 2008; Stake, 1995). The background of this researcher is mainly Japanese linguistics, which explains the selection of topic about Japan. Furthermore the personal knowledge and experience as a tourist in Japan provides the researcher with an insight on the topic, thus allowing her to elaborate further on about the perception of authenticity regarding Japan.

A positive side could be seen in the fact that the researcher comes from Bulgaria, thus has a outside understanding of the Japanese culture and is able to comprehend topics from different perspective. Additionally, the time spend as an exchange student provided understanding of the Japanese side to some extent, thus enhancing the understanding of the culture and Japanese tourism first hand.

A downside of writing a project independently is the lack of a different point of view that a co-researcher would have contributed to the project. The researcher acknowledges this point and tries to minimize the effect by doing a preliminary focus group on the given topic regarding the perceptions of authenticity for Japan among your European travelers.

2.5. Qualitative research

This section is set on providing description and reasoning for the qualitative methods utilized in this thesis in order to answer the main research question regarding the perceptions of authenticity.

As mentioned before, this research is set in the constructivist paradigm, which employs tools suitable for analyzing socially constructed phenomena (Esterby-Smith et al., 2008; Creswell, 1998). These tools are namely qualitative; as such methods are best suited for taking into consideration the existence of multiple realities for every participant, according to his background, knowledge and understanding of the world (Jennings, 2005). Qualitative methods lack objectivity, as this is not a trait suitable for the constructivist paradigm. On the other hand, qualitative methods are designed as to take into consideration the human nature of the participants and how their personal knowledge contribute to the project by showing different points of view during the process and, thus, co-create this thesis (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Guba, 1990). The researcher of this thesis does not look to be objective, but to understand the perception of authenticity the participants in the in the interviews have.

Qualitative methods are suitable for going in-depth into socially constructed phenomena, by looking to identify the reason behind (Jennings, 2005). The thesis is writing within the lines of an iterative analysis, as it follows the hermeneutical cycle, thus including both inductive and deductive methods of analysis during different phases of the process (Bryman, 2012).

2.5.1. Surveys

Fink (2003, p.1.) states that a "survey is a system for collecting information from people or about people to describe, compare, or explain their knowledge, attitudes and behavior". In the scope of this thesis, the surveys aimed to obtain written data. Fink (2003) suggests that appropriate length for an interview is with more than 5 variables and more than 50 people. This thesis achieves the criteria by acquiring more 59 surveys. However, this data is taken only as complimentary to the individual face-to-face in-depth interviews due to various limitations surveys pose as a method.

First, the researcher perceives them not very reliable data sources in this case, due to the uncontrolled nature of the survey (Litwin, 1995). The researcher posts the survey on social networks, groups and forums related to Japanese culture as to ensure controlled environment of

participants, namely people who are interested in Japanese culture. This, however, cannot assure the credibility of the data, as the survey is anonymous and, therefore, the researcher cannot confirm the validity of the data (Litwin, 1995).

The surveys were designed as complimentary data source alongside the individual face-to-face interviews. The survey was designed with closed options, as well with open questions. The researcher aimed at people, who would prefer to not have a face-to-face experience but are willing to fill in a survey regarding authenticity and Japan. The survey provides supportive quantitative data, as well as qualitative data for this research.

2.5.2. Discourse analysis

A method that the researcher uses in this thesis is discourse analysis. It is a qualitative method that analysis language in use, answering the questions how and why the reality was reproduced in the text (Fairclough, 1995; Hall, 1997; Brown, 1983). Discourse analysis in the scope of this thesis was used when interpreting the transcription of the interviews, as well as when interpreting the webpages, namely the Japanese National Tourism Organization webpage and the Visit Japan webpage that influenced the travel motivation of participants in the interview.

Discourse analysis in this case was done on the official Visit Japan webpage, as well as within the lines of social media and webpages that cover tourism in Japan. The analysis would focuis on semiotics, as well as photo and colour choice. The point of this analysis is to discover the construction of the Japanese image by the media, usage of authenticity and to identify if there is a gap between the perceptions of the participants in this thesis. Discourse analysis has not been selected as primary data collection tool, but a method within triangulation as to allow the researcher to view the data from a different point. Discourse analysis would allow the researcher to better identify signifier and signified (Hall, 1997).

2.5.3. Sampling of participants

This section provides explanation of how the participants in this project were selected. Qualitative methods are most suitable with purposive sample or sampling of particular participants according to selected by the researcher factors (Palys, 2008). Purposive sampling is used for both the preliminary focus-group interview and for the individual qualitative interviews. Sampling of participants requires making choice for who to be included in the sample and where

and how to proceed with the data collection (Palys, 2008). Purposive sampling is most suitable for this thesis as it narrows down the participants to people who can provide the researcher with data related to the project (Grumbein & Lowe, 2010).

It should be taken into consideration that the sample of participants for this project was done on a subjective basis by the researcher and therefore, the sample could not be described as reprehensive of a population or target group (Black, 1999). This point of view is true to a lesser extent to the sampling done for the focus group, as its purpose was to give different points of view for the researcher and enhance the understanding on the topic and not collect particular data. The researcher takes into consideration Black's (1999) statement and looks to provide a purposive sampling of participant from a diverse background, nationality and age. The researcher also takes into consideration that the thesis follows a targeted group, namely young travelers, thus acknowledges the limitation of the sample, but, as mentioned before, the main researcher question is set on understanding not providing quantitative data.

Sampling for the focus group is done on the basis of several major criteria. First, the individuals are selected on the basis of displaying suitable level of conversational English. This is important as to have an insightful conversation and allow the individuals to express their thoughts, with ought problems. The participants are being sampled with a simple conversation before the focus-group, through which the researcher confirms if the communication is on a good level. Another important factor for sampling the focus-group is set in their experience in traveling in general. This criterion is important in order to select participants who know would be able to understand the notion of authenticity and other notions of the travel process. Last, but not least, the participants were selected on the basis of no experience in travelling in Japan. This was done in order to get a new insight of the problem. As the researcher herself has experience in travelling in Japan, it is of upmost importance to understand the point of view of participants who have little to no knowledge of the destination and have not experienced it. This allows the researcher to see the problem from new angles and this improve the research process. The researcher looked to interview people with personal contact, as this would have provided the comfort of a group of people who know each other and could feel comfortable expressing criticism on the topic.

Sampling of the participants of the main qualitative interviews was done on a similar basis. The participants were selected based on good communicational skills in English, as this is the

language of the thesis. However, some interviewees were exempt of this criterion due to their unfamiliarity with English. In these cases, another suitable for both the researcher and the interviewee language was used, namely Bulgarian. The interview transcription of these interviews is translated. The interviewees for the qualitative interviews were sampled according to their knowledge of Japanese culture and tourism. The researcher looked to interview people who have had visited or are currently traveling in Japan. The sample for the main qualitative interviews was done on the basis of personal contacts, snowballing (Bryman, 2012) and search on the internet for forums and groups related to Japan or Japanese education.

Interviewing personal contacts is a topic criticized to some extent by the academic literature. Main critics point out that the close relation between the researcher and the interviewee hinders the research process as the interviewee is not prompt to explain but takes for granted that the researcher understands (Seidman, 2012). Another limitation could be seen in the fact that when interviewing close friends, the researcher may avoid sensitive to the interviewee topics (Seidman, 2012). The researcher takes these points into consideration but choses to proceed from a different standpoint. While Seidman (2012) criticizes the interview of friends, Blichfeld and Heldbjerg (2011) support the idea that, interviewees tends to feel more comfortable when the researcher is a familiar face. The researcher chose to apply this academic point of view as her own due to previous experience doing interviews in such manner. This method also allows the researcher to sample the participants more easily. In addition, according to the understanding of the researcher, the topic does not include sensitive topics, therefore sampling of acquaintances would not provide limitation on personally sensitive subjects.

2.5.4. Focus group interview

This section is set on describing what a focus group interview as a method brings to this thesis. A focus group interview is described by the academic literature as a collective interview (Fink, 2000) and in the lines of this research was used as a preliminary tool of data collection, as suggested by some authors (Morgan, 1997; Weeden, 2005). Focus group interviews as a qualitative method (Bryman, 2012; Morgan 1997; Smith & Heshusius, 1986) is suitable due to the knowledge a group can bring by interacting together. Morgan (1988, p.12) describes the benefits of a focus group as "*data and insights that would be less accessible without the interaction found in a group*".

As a method focus group interviews are suitable for early stages of the research process. This is because *"responses can be instrumental in uncovering issues not previously known to the researcher"* (Weeden, 2005, p. 182), thus highly useful when exploring the new topic and examining new perspectives. What a focus group interview brings to this thesis is exactly the collective knowledge the individuals participating bring for the researcher on the preliminary stage of the research. As mentioned before, one of the downsides of individual writing is the lack of different perspectives on the given topic. The researcher identified this problem and looked to eliminate the negative trait by selecting this preliminary method.

As suggested by the academic literature (Boeije, 2010; Weeden, 2005; Krueger & Casey, 2000), the interview location is of upmost importance. Boeije (2010) points out that the location of the interview should be chosen with consideration of the topic of the research. Another important factor would be the comfort of the place and how quiet it is for the researcher to be able to interview (Weeden, 2005). In the scope of this thesis this means a facility related to Japanese culture. Unfortunately due to the lack of a suitable establishment that covers the suggested by Weeden (2005) criterion of quietness, the researcher took the decision to set the interview in her own home. This was done with several considerations. First and foremost, the interviewees suggested the location as most suitable. The researcher was able to set a thematic mood for the focus group by implementing suitable cultural factors such as music and food.

The setting of the food is an important factor during an interview, in order to make the interviewees more comfortable (Krueger, 2002). Another strong point of the setting is the familiarity of both the researcher and the participants. For the researcher, it means familiar surround that would make her feel more comfortable to facilitate the interview. For the interviewees it would mean a comfortable environment.

The focus group consisted of six participants between the age of 21 and 29. The age was selected in consideration of the target group of the main research question. The participants were representative of different nationalities, namely Denmark, Bulgaria, Italy, Hungary and Lithuania, and as mentioned before, were selected as participants that have not visited Japan. For further information about the sampling process, please refer to the previous section. All participants were representatives of a different educational background, which provided a diverse insight on the topic for the researcher.

2.5.5. Focus group interview facilitation

In order to facilitate a focus group interview in an orderly fashion, the researcher prepares a preliminary focus group interview guide with theatrical questions.

Facilitation of the focus group interview was done by the researcher, which posed some disadvantages, which would be described in the following section. The participants were seated in a way as to see the researcher and each other. Krueger (2002) suggests the circular shape as most suitable, as the participants would feel equal to each other. The researcher takes into consideration this opinion, but does not take it as a requirement for a focus group of people that are familiar with each other. The researcher starts the interview by setting rules and requiring on record agreement of recording the interview. This is followed by a short description of the topic, namely perception of authenticity regarding Japanese tourism in order to keep the participants on track and focused on the topic (Krueger, 2002).

2.5.6. Strengths and limitations of the focus group interview

As a method, the focus group interview poses several strengths and limitations in the lines of this thesis.

Strength can be seen in the new perspective a focus group gives to the researcher on the topic. As mentioned before, the group interview is set as a preliminary stage and thus aims to provide the researcher with different points of view. In the lines of this thesis, the researcher enhanced her initial perspective on the topic by expanding the research into including discourse as a topic for discussion. The importance of discourse in the formation the perception was pointed out during the group interview.

The dynamic environment of a focus group gives the researcher the ability to inquire new topics and adjust the questions as to incorporate new ideas as they emerge during the conversation. A focus group gives the researcher the strength of the discussion. Focus-groups are more time-efficient, as the researcher is able to collect data from many people at the same time (Grumbein & Lowe, 2010).

A limitation of the focus group interview could be seen in the difficulty of managing a group of six people. This could be seen in the recording, where the researcher faces problems of directing the flow of the conversation in the right direction. This limitation has been underlined by

Grumbein and Lowe (2010) and the researcher takes into consideration that a portion of the data gathered through the group interview could be irrelevant for the particular thesis.

Weeden (2005) states, in a group, there are dominant individuals that could intimidated others and prevent them from expressing freely their opinion. This limitation has been taken into consideration and the researcher took measures to provide equal speaking rights to all participants in the group, knowing who the dominant individuals could be, as the sample of participants was familiar.

Another limitation could be seen in the behavior of the group, as, compared to individual interviews, the researcher has to rely on the self-discipline of the participants and their focus during the interview. It is pointed out that this setting where the researcher interviews a group is not nature (Morgan, 1997), but, due to the preliminary function of the focus group interview, the researcher takes into consideration the limitation, but considers it unimportant in this case.

Regarding the data of the focus group interview, Stewart and Shamdasani (1990) argue that due the purposive sampling of the participants, the data gathered from them cannot be used for generalizations and giving attributes to a larger sample. Due to the constructivist paradigm, the researcher perceives this limitation irrelevant for this project, as the paradigm does not apply generalization (Bryman, 2012).

2.5.7. Data processing of the focus group

Data from the focus group interview was used to improve the research process and gain different perspective on the topic of the thesis. Due to the hermeneutical cycle, the reader would not be able to examine clear evidence of the focus interview benefits for this project. Nevertheless, the researcher used the recording of the focus group interview for the preliminary purpose of creating the questions of the individual semi-structured interview and to add new topics to the thesis. The focus-group interview improves the interviewing skills of the researcher and prepares her for the main research phase

2.6. Individual qualitative semi-structured interviews

For the purpose of this thesis, the researcher chose to do individual semi-structured qualitative interviews as a main research method. This was done on the basis of the academic literature, which points out individual interviews as one of the most widespread and suitable method for

collection of qualitative data (Cook, 2008; Kvale, 1996). The choice of a semi-structured interview, compared to a structured one was grounded in several elements. First, semi-structured interviews give the researcher the flexibility to navigate within the topic as *"there is no fixed range of responses to each question"* (Ayres, 2008 p. 811). The interview is structured as to cover main points of the research, but is also flexible enough to accommodate new topics in the process and allows the researcher to explore them during the interview, which would provide more qualitative data and allow the researcher to understand how the interviewees perceive authenticity in regards to Japan.

The role of the interviewer is underlined by the academic literature (Persuad, 2010; Kvale, 1996). As the interviewer navigates the conversation, the more skilled he or she is, the better the quality and content of the data would be (Persuad, 2010). As stated before, constructivist acknowledge the fact that the researcher, in his role of an interviewer, influences the project (Creswell, 1998). The interviewer affects the interviewees by conversing with them, forming a certain empathy based relation (Kvale, 1996; Persuad, 2010). This is unavoidable, according to Kvale (1996) due to the human, thus subjective, nature of the process of conversing. In the lines of this thesis, this is not seen as a negative trait, as the researcher holds personal interest in topics related to Japan, thus is not only subjective, but holds positive attitude to the topic. Therefore, the researcher acknowledges that the interviewees could hold similar understanding, which would result in a meaningful conversation and good interaction between people who would feel understood by the researcher (Persuad, 2010; Kvale, 1996). Due to the individual nature of the thesis, the researcher self-evaluates her communication skills through the focus group and prepares for the main interviews.

The academic literature underlines the importance of an appropriate setting of the individual interviews (Elwood & Martin, 2000; Krueger & Casey, 2000). Suitable place would be quiet, comfortable, convenient and dependent on the power relation between the researcher and the interviewee (Elwood & Martin, 2000; Krueger & Casey, 2000; Morton-Williams, 1985). A face-to-face interview allows the researcher to observe the participant as well as listen to them, which is an additional plus for face-to-face interviews, as the researcher is able to register reactions in the interviewees on different parts of the conversation (Elwood & Martin, 2000; Opdenakker, 2006). Observation is an ethnographical method that allows the researcher to gain better

understanding of emotions and feeling through body language and uncover meanings behind words (Schutt, 2011).

In the line of this thesis, when possible the researcher did a face-to-face interview with the interviewee. In these cases, the interviewees were given the option to choose the place and time of the interview, as this would give them leverage in the power relation and make them feel more comfortable to talk (Elwood & Martin, 2000). For the first case place of the interview was set in Aalborg University, neutral zone with academic character. The second case, the interviewee requested an interview at their home. This brings the researcher into an unfamiliar environment, which could be considered a negative trait (Kvale, 1996), but in the line of this thesis is negated by the power relation expert (the researcher) and interviewee.

Most interviews were done over free messaging software, skype in the case of this thesis, due to the location of most participants, which happens to be Japan for most cases. With the development of technology skype interviews are becoming more popular as an interview research method (Weinmann et.all, 2012; Bertrand & Bourdeau, 2010). Skype allows a form of face-to-face interview with the webcamera and offers the interviewees the relaxing and familiar surroundings of their home.

There are, however, some limitations to the skype interviews such as the quality of the connection. Due to the long distance between Denmark and Japan, the researcher took into consideration the possible bad quality of the sound of the recording. Nevertheless, the researcher took measures by making sure the participants are interested in this type of interview over a phone interview. The researcher took about five to ten minutes before every recording for small talk and testing the connection, sound and video, as to make sure the quality was acceptable. All cases were acceptable for this thesis; though it should be underlined the researcher was prepared to do a phone call interview, another method suggested by Weinmann et.all (2012), which would not be explored in this project, due to irrelevance.

Due to time and financial restriction, the researcher was not able to perform interviews in person with some of the interviewees, but considers skype interviews an acceptable alternative for this thesis.

2.6.1. Interview guide

For the individual face-to-face semi-structured interviews, the researcher follows an interview guide. The importance of the interview guide is underlined by the academic literature (Kvale, 1996, Bryman, 2012; Morgan & Guevara, 2008). As mentioned before, the interview guide is formed after the focus group interview and explores three major topics. Bryman (2012) suggest starting the interview with the so called "facesheet" information, about travelling habits of the participants. Therefore, the interview guide starts with general information about travelling habits of the interviewees. This also allows the researcher to identify if there is anything different outside of their usual travel habits that they do in Japan in later phases in the conversation.

The second topic explored in the interviews is Japan. As mentioned before, interviewees were asked to describe their travel experiences in the country, how they chose where to go and what to do, their image of Japan, Japanese culture and people.

The third section explores the notion of authenticity in and out of relation to Japan. The guide is designed as to explore what influences the perception, how and why; how the perception is formed, what role it plays as a travel motivational factor and as image formation factor.

As mentioned before, this thesis follows the hermeneutical cycle and this is strongly evident from the interviews. At the beginning, the researcher structured the interview guide by putting third before second topic, namely authenticity and then Japanese image. During the course of interviewing, the researcher found out through practice this is not a suitable order for the thesis and was confusing for many interviewees, therefore changed it.

All, except one, interviews were performed in English, as this is the language of this thesis. The interview guide was formed with simple questions (Bryman, 2012), as there were no native participants or tourism experts, that could be familiar with academic terminology. However, the researcher faced some limitations during the interview process, which are described further in this chapter.

2.6.2. Interviewees

As mentioned before, purposive sampling was used for the selection of participants for the interviews (Bryman, 2008; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). The participants were sampled according to their age, namely born after 1980 and experience in travelling to Japan. Participants were

selected through personal contacts, as the researcher already has connections with people who have been to Japan, as well as snowball sampling (Bryman, 2012), which provided the researcher with participants from second and third connections. Some of the participants were approached through Facebook groups for people interested in Japanese culture.

 After the process of sampling, the final sample consisted of 12 qualitative interviews of collective time of 332 minutes (approximately 6 hrs) and with participants who had or currently have experience in travelling in Japan. Participants were between 21 and 33, with mostly with long experience with Japanese culture and travels through the country. The sample for this thesis consisted of 7 men and 5 women, as shown in Figure 6.

Name	Age	Country	Experience in travelling in Japan
Tihomir	27	Bulgaria	Very strong experience / 3 visits
Fabrizio	30	Italy	Limited experience / 1 visit
Petya	24	Bulgaria	Strong experience / 1 visit
Ivelina	24	Bulgaria	Strong experience / 1 visit
Radostin	23	Bulgaria	Very strong experience / 2 visits
Marie Louise	31	Denmark	Strong experience / 1 visit
Danniel	33	Denmark	Strong experience/ 1 visit
Dimana	21	Bulgaria	Very strong experience /1 visit
Claudia	28	Italy	Limited experience / 1 visit
Niels	25	France	Very strong experience / 2 visits
Martins	23	Latvia	Strong experience / 1 visit
Ivailo	28	Bulgaria	Limited experience / 1 visit

Figure 6: Participants in the individual qualitative interviews

The participants were selected according to their experience travelling in Japan. Strong experience in the line of this thesis means longer period of stay in the country and more visited places and sites in Japan.

2.6.3. Strengths and limitations of the interviews

As any methods, individual face-to-face qualitative interviews have both strengths and limitations.

Strength could be seen in the relatively easy performing of an interview in terms of time, money and quality (Cook, 2008). Individual interviews provide qualitative in-depth data from the interviewee, as well as chance for observation of the immediate reaction to the questions (Creswell, 1998; Kvale, 1996; Schutt, 2011; Opdenakker, 2006; Hall, 1997).

However, the academic literature points out some negative aspects of individual in-depth interviews, such as the fact that the data gained from this interview is a recollection of the experience, rather than the experience at the moment (Cook, 2008). To negate this limitation, the researcher looked to interview people, who are currently residing in Japan, which would mean that they are close to the setting of the performed travel.

Another limitation was seen in the language in use and namely the word "authenticity" itself. Many of the interviewees showed confusion when confronting the term and were unable to give an answer unless asked to explain authenticity for the researcher. This limitation is seen very relevant for the thesis, as it underlines the complexity of the studied term in the scope of the problem formulation. The researcher took the decision not to substitute the word "authentic" and "authenticity", but provoke the interviewees to explore the meaning behind the word. As all participants have higher education, the researcher perceived the word manageable.

A limitation could be seen in the skype interview connection, where on some occasions the researcher was unable to hear clearly, but this did not affect the flow of the interview and the data was later retrieved from the recording without any problems.

At a point the researcher experienced a technical problem with the audio-recorder, which was substituted during the interview. In this case the researcher lost a minute of the data, between switching devices. The researcher acknowledges this limitation, but considers it unavoidable due to the unpredictable nature of the event.

2.7. Data processing

Analysis of the interviews is the most important part of the research process. The researcher analyses the available data through her own perspective and knowledge (Fink, 2000) and then produces a conclusion of the research.

The data collected from the interview is in the form of recordings, as suggested by Kothari (2008). As this is considered unsufficient data source, the researcher transcribes interviews (Kvale, 1996) as to gain a visual data sources for discourse analysis and interpretation. Interview transcriptions make the research process easier and provide a chance for the researcher to revise the data while listening and transcribing. By listening and transcribing, the researcher focuses on the meaning behind the words; therefore the researcher chose to remove irrelevant conversation fillers in some cases, such as jokes or emphatic sentences. For the purpose of this study, the researcher corrects the grammatical mistakes of the interviewees if necessary as to provide an easier to understand transcription.

In one of the cases the transcription was substituted with a translation. The researcher acknowledges this gives a different type of data, namely secondary interpretation when translating, but perceives it as a plus due to two factors. First, the researcher is a certified translator with experience in the field and is certain of the correct translation and interpretation. Furthermore, the interviewee was able to provide a more explicit data, as the interview was done in the native language for both sides, namely Bulgarian. The researcher translates by avoiding any modification in the meaning of the answers, however Kvale (1996) underlines that mistakes are unavoidable.

During the transcription the researcher was marked with "R" and the interviewee with "I" for easier understanding. Irrelevant to the project has been marked as such and omitted. All interviewees have been asked for the recording before and on record for transparency. Transcriptions and recordings of the interviews are available on the CD.

With these two available data resources, the researcher then enters the analysis phase where she identifies information in patters and themes, also called open coding (Punch, 2009; Creswell, 2013; Kvale, 1996). The researcher categorizes the date into main topics according to the

theoretical framework and looks for patterns or new insights in the data sources (Esterby-Smith, 2002; Creswell, 1998; Bryman, 2012; Kvale, 1996).

Patterns and concepts found during the analysis are supported by quotes during the analysis. All patterns are categorizes, filtered through the theoretical framework, compared and combined. Discussion on the categories and new findings is available in the Analysis chapter.

2.8. Evaluation of the research

Although this thesis is set in the constructivist paradigm and, therefore, the subjective nature of the research is taken into consideration, the academic literature (Creswell, 1998; Guba & Lincoln, 1985) points out the importance of providing an evaluation of the research, due to the existence of different perspective on the data. The researchers finds the criteria for assessment suggested by Lincoln & Guba (1985), namely credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability most suitable for this qualitative research and decides to follow them for evaluating this thesis.

2.8.1. Credibility

As described by Lincoln & Guba (1985), this criterion evaluates whether the data is credible and has been approved by those, who provided it, namely the interviewees.

Credibility in the lines of this thesis has been assessed through the utilization of various data collection methods, as to ensure different angles of analysis, also known as triangulation. For this thesis, the triangulation is achieved through qualitative semi-structured face-to-face interviews, surveys and discourse analysis. This allowed the researcher to provide in-depth analysis on the perceptions of authenticity regarding Japan among young European travelers achieved by combining data from the different methods. .

2.8.2. Transferability

This criterion deals with the possibility of the conclusion drawn from this research to be applied to other cases (Trimble et al, 2011). For this thesis, transferability is achievable by providing a sample of interviewees accessed by the same criteria as for the thesis, namely young European travelers that have visited Japan. To apply transferability, the size and similarity of the two samples are examined, as to determine the strength of the transferability

2.8.3. Dependability

Stake (2010) describes this criterion as one for evaluating how dependable the outcome of the analysis is. The researcher of the thesis takes responsibility for providing solid data that is used for providing an in-depth analysis and findings.

However, this criterion is criticized by some academic researchers (Bryman, 2012; Horsburgh, 2002), who argue that, taking into consideration the subjective nature within constructivism, the evaluation of how dependable and in-depth the process is, would also be matter of subjective perspective.

Nevertheless, the researcher takes into consideration this criterion for evaluation and the critic regarding it and takes measures to ensure dependability by documenting the research process in the form of recordings and transcripts during the data collection.

2.8.4 Confirmability

This is criterion deals with the possibility to confirm the data of the thesis and the findings. (Patton, 2002). As the researcher produces and assesses the data independently, conformability within this thesis is achieved through the supervision by an internal supervisor.

2.8.5. Reflections

The researcher also provided self-reflective evaluation on the data and analysis of this thesis, as to ensure transparency and credibility.

First, the researcher self-reflects on the sample of participants for the research. During the process of developing this thesis, the researcher recognizes that the sample is slightly dominated by representatives from one country and occupation. Therefore the data for the analysis provided more understanding on the perception of authenticity among interviewees with a large knowledge base regarding Japan.

The researcher acknowledges that the sometimes she asks misleading or not entirely developed questions during the interviews, thus compromising the depth of the data in regards of some topics explored in the research.

During the research, some of the initially planned methods of analysis were not utilized due to the researcher not familiarizing herself with the method to the required level. In addition, the

researcher acknowledges some flows in the theoretical framework that could have encompassed more complex notions that would help analysis of the perception of authenticity regarding Japan.

3 THEORY

In order to answer the research question regarding what are the perceptions of authenticity regarding Japan among young European travelers, it is necessary to provide understanding of the main notions and theoretical standpoints that the researcher has chosen to base her research on. Therefore, this section is set on providing a theoretical framework for the thesis by describing main ideas present in the research, such as authenticity and commodification, Japanese tourism; travel motivation to visit Japan as a destination; destination image formation and last-chance tourism.

The first part of this section focuses on providing understandings of authenticity and commodification in the tourism industry. The section is followed by a representation of the Japanese tourism industry and its distinctive features, through travel motivation and push and pulls factors to visit Japan. The understandings of Japanese tourism and authenticity are then combined in order to examine the authenticity in consideration of Japan. The section also briefly examines the role of language in the sense of authenticity and travel motivation. The section concludes with a summary of the theoretical framework for this thesis.

3.1. Young people

As this thesis is focusing on young European travelers it is important to define the target group in the line of this thesis. The researcher chose to focus on millennials or the so called Generation Y travelers based on the fact that The Japanese Tourism Agency has registered the highest number of visitors for the last three years to be age groups 20-29 and 30-39 (JTA, 2014). This coincides with the age division of people born roughly between 1982 and 2000, also called Millennials or Generation Y (Howe & Strauss, 2009). According to Howe and Strauss (2009) the millennials, as a generation, are characterized by not being as concerned with ethnicity, money and geography (p.271) as the previous generations. This could reflect on their travel habits and perceptions of other cultures. As a generation, millennials are unified by technology and the access to the internet from childhood gives them new perspective on the world, cultures and traditional markets such as tourism (Howe & Strauss, 2009).

In relation to this thesis we can say that Japan has registered larges number of people from this age group because these are the people currently in their prime, with the money, time and ability to travel to a long haul destination (Howe & Strauss, 2009).

In the scope of this research, however, the researcher chose to focus on young from Europe. This decision was done on the basis of the idea that people with similar upbringing would have similar understanding of cultural phenomenon (Hall, 1997). In order to avoid too large sample, the researcher chose to examine only young travelers from Europe. This is based on the presumption that Europeans would have similar understanding of Japanese culture within the context of Western societies' understanding of Eastern culture (Said, 1977; Silver, 1993).

It should be underlined that, in the line of this thesis, the researcher chose to refer to millennials or generation Y as young European travelers, due to perceiving the scientific terms confusing for the reader and, therefore, not suitable for the thesis. The reader should note that the terms millennials, generation Y and young traveler for this thesis signify the same age group with similar characteristics, as described in his chapter.

3.1. Authenticity

The word *authentic* itself traces its origins back to ancient Latin where it meant *primary* or *original* (Trilling, 1972).Today the etymological development of the word leads to the notion of "genuine" and "based on facts; not a copy" (Oxford Dictionaries, 2015; Trilling, 1972) and authenticity is the trait of being authentic or "faithful to the original" (Oxford Dictionaries, 2015). Golomb (1995) adds that authenticity has been a subject of debates from ancient times and is evident in many subjects such as literature and philosophy.

The notion of authenticity in the tourism industry has been known for a long time and is part of many scientific debates (Taylor, 2001; Wang, 1999). It has been argued that the term *authenticity* has changed and continues to change its meaning for the tourism researchers (Wang, 1999; Golomb, 1995; Trilling, 1972), therefore it is important to provide a concrete understanding in what way is authenticity presented in the sense of this thesis.

Trilling (1972, p.93) explains the origin of the word authenticity in tourism as a term used to describe weather an art object is "*what they appear to be or are claimed to be*". He also argues that it encompasses the meaning of "*credibility of existence*" (Trilling, 1972, p.93) and self (Wang, 1999; Handler & Saxton, 1988) closely relating the objective and subjective in reality. It should be underlined that authenticity is a term that relates to both objects of authentic nature but also the experience (Wang, 1999; Handler & Saxton, 1988). Within the lines of this thesis the focus would be on the authentic experience rather objects in order to answer the main research question regarding the perception of authenticity among young European travelers.

Often authenticity in tourism is used to describe traditional cultures in the sense of unique (Sharpley, 2005; Wang, 1999; Taylor, 2001) but this leads to misunderstanding of the temporal position an "authentic" item holds. Authenticity holds object and subject, time and space of a culture (Taylor, 2001) and Bruner (2005, p.9) states that cultures are "never fixed, enclosed units" but are socially constructed and change all the time, thus underlining that the notion of "real" and "traditional" are terms that hold ground into the narrative (Bruner, 2005) taking place into the cultural environment. In other words, authenticity can be an attribute to both physical objects and abstract notions like culture or tradition (Taylor, 2001). What is authentic can be translated in to the discourse of a certain time and location; and could change meaning if the discourse changes (Hall, 1997). To simply state it, we perceive things authentic if we connect them to our understanding of authentic at that time and place.

Authenticity is closely related to the identity of a culture characterized by geographical positioning (Taylor, 2001), social existence (Cohen, 1988), historical past (Wang, 1999), "*correctness*" and beauty (Trilling, 1972, p. 94). The notion of the authentic is related to the identity of a culture through several points. The word itself is a concept of describing knowledge generated by the locals (Hall, 1997; Taylor, 2001). The knowledge is truth for the locals and is translated into local culture, which in its turn can be translated into objects or representations of the culture (Hall, 1997; Cohen, 1988; Taylor, 2001; Wang, 1999; Vlastos, 1998). Therefore when referring to something as authentic we signify acknowledgement of its local origin. Physical cultural objects, for example, can be a signifier (Hall, 1997) for the culture. It would signify meanings for locals according to their knowledge. As Hall (1997, p.18) states "*culture is*

sometimes defined in terms of "shared meanings or shared conceptual maps"; referring to the fact that people with the same background would have the same understanding of a concept. In the line of this thesis it would mean people with the same background would have the similar understanding of what is authentic and they would translate authentic signifiers into feelings, such as nostalgia for example (Vlastos, 1998) or pride (Ehrentraut, 1993). By perceiving one thing or the other authentic, people give it additional cultural value as a signifier of the local identity (Hall, 1997, Vlastos, 1998). Therefore, it contributes to the identity of the culture. For Japan, for example, people identify themselves as Japanese through their common history, knowledge and language. In other words they are set in the same discourse and have the same understanding of themselves through culture (Hall, 1997). In the lines of this thesis, the idea of authenticity related to cultural identity closely relates to how locals perceive themselves through tourists. Tourists bring new perspective and add new meaning of authenticity to old objects (Vlastos, 1998) such as traditional *furusato* (old village) houses in Japan, as an example. In other words, locals start to identify notions as authentic and add more contexts to them identify with them and take pride in them, because other people value them (Vlastos, 1998; Ehrentraut, 1993).

Figure 7: Japanese Furusato

The opposite would be true as well in many cases of staged authenticity, where the locals put aspects of the local culture for tourists to enjoy and admire (Bruner, 2005). This notion would be developed further in this chapter.

Authenticity depends on complex things, such as origins, images and discourse during the time (Taylor, 2001) and it could be describe as "*the opposition between self and society*" (Cohen, 1988, p.373). The above presented theories overlap with questions about what "reality" and

"existence" are, posed by philosophers. As said in the methodological section, the researcher of this thesis writes from the constructivist paradigm, thus choosing to state that "reality" is a socially constructed phenomenon based on the background and knowledge of an individual and is not to argue what it is and what not, but rather accept and look to understand it. Therefore the theoretical framework is not set on identifying a concrete notion of the reality of authenticity.

Furthermore it is argued that "*authenticity is thus a projection of tourists' own beliefs, expectations, preferences, stereotyped images and consciousness onto toured objects, particularly onto toured Others*" (Wang, 1999, p. 355). This notion is supported by other authors such as Bruner (2005) and Silver (1993).

In the lines of this thesis and taking into consideration the theories presented above, the researcher choses to understand authenticity as a term that describes a notion that encompasses the sense of belonging to a particular place or group of people proven by time and local consumption and evoking strong feelings.

3.2. Commoditization and staged authenticity

While there are many ways to describe authenticity, as stated above, within the lines of the tourism research, many authors (Cohen, 1988; Greenwood, 1977; Appadurai, 1986; MacCannel, 1976; Taylor, 2001) discuss what impact tourism has on local cultures (Greenwood, 1977). It is argued that tourism in many cases has led to the staging of local cultures in order to fit the demands of the tourism industry (Cohen, 1988; Bruner, 2005) and commoditization (Greenwood, 1977, Cohen 1988). In other words this is the process of giving price and market place of an object, activity or a service of cultural value (Cohen, 1988). Cohen (1988) also argues that this commoditization leads to changes in the local cultural as to accommodate demands for the external public. In a narrow to this thesis context this is supported by Vlastos (1998) who argues that "*tourism (whether passive or active) is one important agent of authentication and double nostalgia*" when talking about how old Japanese houses are being perceived as "authentic" to some extend because of tourism (p. 118).

Alteration in authenticity is considered unavoidable (MacCannel, 1976) due to the economic influence that tourism as an industry has on culture. It is underlined that this influence is negative, damaging and, therefore should be regarded as a treat to cultures (Cohen, 1988). In this

regard Greenwood (1977, p.131) states that there are many examples of a culture being "*altered and often destroyed by the treatment of it as a tourist attraction*".

But it is not only the industry that looks to stage authenticity for generating revenue. The tourists themselves influence the perception of what is authentic and what not and lead to the staging of particular features (Silver, 1993). Wang (1999, p. 351) states that "*things appear authentic not because they are inherently authentic but because they are constructed as such in terms of points of view, beliefs, perspectives, or powers*". It is argued that tourists generally have short nature of encounters with particular cultures; therefore the industry looks to enhance the feelings invoked during this short visit in order to make them memorable for the visitor (Taylor, 2001). This leads to the staging of cultures or presenting them in a way that would fulfil the expectation of the tourist (Cohen, 1988) that does not necessary coincides with what local people perceive authentic. This creates a front and back stage experience (Cohen, 1988; Bruner, 2005). What happens in this case is that the presented cultural aspect being a festival, tradition, object or any other sense is being intentionally underlined and labeled as "local" and "unique" but this also takes it out of the discourse that makes it authentic (Bruner, 2005). Discourse as in "*meaning produced in different periods*" (Hall, 1997, p.43) so we can say staging would remove the meaning behind, therefore would remove the original purpose and put it in a questionable position regarding authenticity.

As cultures constantly change (Bruner, 2005) it is hard to argue what is authentic and what is being taken out of context or staged. It should also be taken into consideration that the personal perception in this question is of upmost importance. In this sense Cohen (1988) describes authenticity as "negotiable" (p.379). As the time frame is considered by many as crucial aspect of something considered authentic it is possible to change the perception (Greenwood, 1977; Wang, 1999). This leads to the notion of "invention of traditions". The term is argued to identify traditions created to allure tourists but become authentic over time (Cohen, 1988; Vlastos, 1998; Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983). This notion underlines the importance of the personal perception of authenticity. In the scope of this study it is important to understand what effect this invention of traditions has on the Japanese tourism. Vlastos (1998) and Ehrentraut (1993) argue that most of the Japanese traditions have been selected and shaped after the world wars, thus have gone

through this "invention of traditions" stage. It is interesting for this research to analyse if the process of "shaping" (Vlastos, 1998) is still ongoing according to the study and how that affects how and what tourists perceive authentic.

3.3. Fear of the inauthentic

Although the tourism research literature does not explicitly state the existence of a fear of the inauthentic, some authors discuss the influence the industry itself has on the personal perception of authenticity or the "inauthentic" in particular. The "inauthentic" would refer to "fake" and staged experiences (Newman, 1997; Culler, 1990). As tourists are in the search of the authentic (Bruner, 2005) they get fed up by the representation of authenticity that the market offers and thus regard it as inauthentic and avoid it (Boorstin, 1992; Culler, 1990; Newman, 1997). Culler (1990, p. 6) writes that "*the denigrators of tourism are annoyed by the proliferation of tacky representations—postcards, ashtrays, ugly painted plates and fail to grasp the essential semiotic function of these markers.*" When a product is perceived as inauthentic the human consciousness looks for ulterior motives for its creation, thus invoking negative emotions and displeasure (Newman, 1997).

The fear of inauthentic experience could also be found in the social structure and the travel narrative (Bruner, 2005). Travelers fear that their experience would not be, as unique as they have imagined it (Culler, 1990; Boorstin, 1992) and would be unable to produce a narrative that would enhance their social status when they come back from the travel (Bruner, 2005; Cohen, 1988).

As to avoid the fearful inauthentic experience travelers look for things that are marked authentic (Boorstin, 1992; Culler, 1990; Vlastos, 1998; Neman, 1997) without regards of the experience being actually authentic or now (Culler, 1990; Boorstin, 1992). In the same sense visitors look for "*less touristy*" (Culler, 1990, p.4), as they are interested in the process of discovering a new culture (Culler, 1990; MacCannel, 1976). The tourists themselves are looking to be distinguished from other tourists (MacCannel, 1976; Culler, 1990) because of the fear of the inauthentic, manufactured experience.

Boorstin (1992, p.106) states that "*The American tourists in Japan look less for what is Japanese than for what is Japanese*". Although the example is not from Europe, it could still be regarded

exemplary for Western tourists in Japan and their perception of what is authentic and inauthentic about Japan.

3.4. Japanese inbound tourism

As this thesis is focusing on Japan as a destination, it is important to understand the Japanese inbound tourism as a whole. This chapter provides brief explanation on common types of tourism in Japan. By discussing these, the researcher aims to familiarize the reader whit what types of tourism could the travel motivation be based upon. The preliminary academic research showed that there is no sufficient accessible academic research in English on the Japanese inbound tourism; however, the Japanese Tourism Agency (2014) provides statistical data, which could be used as a basis to build upon the understanding about Japan as a destination.

In order to understand how tourism in Japan as an industry has developed it is important to understand process of meaning making. Japanese themselves have particular distinguished features as tourists that greatly reflect on the industry (Moeran, 1983; Imanashi; 2007). Japan in general is regarded as a nation with notable "*customs, values and social relationships that link… past generations*" (Vlastos, 1998, p.1). It should be underlined that cultures have considerable influence on the marketing of tourism products and services, as well as travel motivation and choices (Watkins & Gnoth, 2011; Imanashi, 2007). Taking this into consideration we can deduct that the Japanese themselves are agents and shape their industry.

Japan is characterized by a strong domestic tourism (Vlastos, 1998; Ehrentraut, 1993; JNTO, 2015; JTA, 2013) and an underlined "*company-customer relationships*" (Imanashi, 2007, p.519). Taking into consideration the sates above, it could be deducted that the Japanese tourism market has developed in a way as to please both domestic and foreign visitors. Vlastos (1998) argues that a large number of the Japanese traditions have been invented and are actually post world wars inventions that aim to unify Japan not only as a country but as a nation as well. He states that "*cultural traditions are chosen, not inherited*" (Vlastos, 1998, p.12) and explains how this strategic choice of what is truly Japanese about Japan is a normal process of how "*the past enters the present*" (Vlastos, 1998, p.12). Some authors, however, point out that the Japanese tourism industry looks to attract foreign visitors and yet focuses a lot more on domestic ones (Kurihara and Okamoto, 2010). Kurihara and Okamoto (2010, p.913) state that there is a necessity to teach

the Japanese how to communicate with foreign visitors due to the long period of isolation. There are also many cases of assimilation of foreign culture (Moeran, 1983) into the Japanese society that creates the sense of authentic among locals but is considered inauthentic by foreign travelers (Vlastos, 1998; Ehrentraut, 1993). This, however, is being argued as a distinctive feature of the Japanese (Moeran, 1983; Vlastos, 1998).

Another feature of the Japanese tourism could be seen in the search of "uniqueness" and constant underlining of how different Japan is from the others and how its beauty can never be understood by foreigners (Moeran, 1983). This culturally embedded need for authenticity (Moearn, 1983) describes the need for authentic Japan that the locals display and look for themselves. This could be seen in the language used to describe Japan as a destination by the National Tourism Organization (Moeran, 1983; Ehrentraut, 1993). This notion would be further examined in the Analysis chapter.

3.4. Travel motivation to visit Japan

Another way to examine the distinctive features of the Japanese tourism is through the travel motivation to visit Japan. This would be done through the push and pull factors framework, as it is recognized as a suitable constructivist tool to discuss travel motivation (Beeton, 2006; Bowen & Clarke, 2009; Dann, 1977). In this sense of this thesis it would allow us to examine the distinctive features of the Japanese tourism and discuss where authenticity stands in this framework.

In general tourists travel as to escape the ordinary everyday life and to consume experiences (Bruner, 2005; Cohen, 1988). Their search for travel experiences could be based on internal motivation or push factors (Crompton, 1979; Dann, 1977; Gnoth, 1997; Uysal & Jurowski, 1994). In other words, travelers are motivated by a particular need to travel based on personal urges. Pull factors, on the other hand, are described as positive features of the place of interest or destination that attract the visitor (Crompton, 1979; Dann, 1977; Gnoth, 1997; Kim & Lee, 2002; Uysal & Jurowski, 1994). While push factors would initiate a search for travel experiences, pull factors would help determining where this need can be fulfilled (Crompton, 1979).

Although there some criticism is applied to push and pull factors, their importance has been proved by the academic society. Dann (1977), for example, points out that pull factors play secondary role in the decision making process and could not be considered as strong as personal motivational factors. This however, has been proven wrong, as later publications prove how pull factors work into creating a need to travel to a particular destination (Bowen & Clarke, 2009; Uysal & Jurowski, 1994).

There are various push and pull factors, as described by Crompton (1979) but in the line of this thesis we will examine the once that match the Japanese Tourism Agency's statistics. Most people are internally motivated to travel in order to escape the ordinary life (Crompton, 1979; Bruner, 2005) and relax. This tendency is also strong in Japan, where the Japanese Tourism agency (2013, p.28) states that most inbound visitors came for "*sightseeing and relaxation*".

On the other hand, pull factors vary significantly according to the destination (Crompton, 1979; Gnoth, 1997). Turnbull & Uysal (1995) provide several categories to distinguish pull factors. Based on the Japanese Tourism Agency (2013)'s visitors' survey, the following categories of pull factors strongly apply to Japan as a destination: heritage and cultural pull factors, relaxation, cities and natural resources.
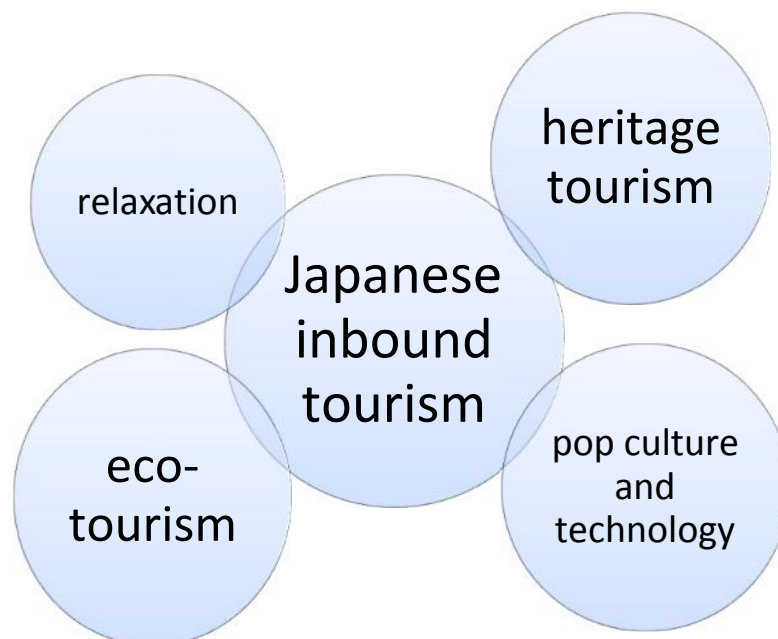
Figure 8: Model of popular tourism types in Japan. Made for this thesis.

Taking the above states into consideration we can deduct that what characterizes Japan as a destination is the strong heritage tourism (JNTO, 2015). Japan holds 16 World Heritage Sites (JNTO, 2015) and, as mentioned before, sightseeing is one of the strongest pull factors to visit the country. Furthermore, heritage tourism is considered to be an "*essential element of national representation*" (Park, 2010, p.116) and thus coincides with the discussed previously in this chapter regarding the strong national representation sense of belonging the Japanese express (Vlastos, 1998). It is argued that the physical aspect of heritage tourism works as a marker of a national identity and invokes sentiments and nostalgia among locals and therefore appeal to both foreign and domestic tourists (Park, 2010; Poria et all. 2003).

Although heritage tourism is undeniably strong, the Japanese Tourism Organization has issued a few campaigns to rebrand the country, the most recent being the Visit Japan Campaign (JTA, 2014) aimed at increasing foreign visitors and promote sustainability; the WOW Campaign (JTA, 2013) that initiated a photo contest that aimed to increase the word-of-mouth marketing on the internet and the Cool Japan Campaign (2002) that was aimed at rebranding Japan as a country of modern pop culture trends such as anime

Figure 9: Example of cultural element: anime

(Japanese animation), j-pop (Japanese pop), fashion and electronics. These campaigns can fit into the cultural pull factors by Turnbull & Uysal (1995). McGray (2002) argues that the Cool Japan Campaign is an effort to put Japan on the globalized market and open it to foreigners, thus making the country more tourist-friendly and accessible.

Relaxation and natural resources, such as onsen (hot springs), for example, are also strong pull factors. The Japanese Tourism Agency describes "onsen" and "Mt. Fuji" as two of the most twitted words while traveling in Japan (JTA, 2015) thus proving the importance of both relaxation and nature among foreign visitors.

3.5. Last-chance tourism and authenticity

What could be interesting for this paper to examine is the notion of last chance tourism in regards to Japan as a destination after the Fukushima incident in 2011. According to the Japanese Tourism Agency (2015), the decrease of overseas travelers to visit Japan has been overcome and foreign visitors are now increasing. In order to identify further on in this project if there is any relation between this increase and the notion of last-chance tourism it is important to understand the notion. Last-chance tourism identifies "*the desire to see these vulnerable places and features before they disappear or are essentially and irrevocably changed.*"(Dawson et. all, 2011, p. 250). The term refers to natural resources, but could also be identified with mass tourism, where the mass production and staging could obliterate the original authentic culture (Dawson et. all, 2011). In regards to authenticity Dawson et. all (2011, p.254) state that "*over-visitation by tourists, urbanisation, and pollution have degraded the cultural and physical fabric of these sites so much that tourists perceive the authenticity of the attraction to be 'lost'.*" Last-chance tourism plays on authenticity that could be lost, nostalgia over the impending loss or the sense of doom. In this regard it is interesting to play on the notion if post-Fukushima's Japan is perceived as last chance tourism due to natural disasters and mass tourism. This notion will be examined further in the analysis chapter.

3.6. Destination image formation

The destination image is an important concept within the tourism research (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999). In the scope of this thesis, the image formation is important as it examines the "relationship between image and behavior" (Bloglu & McCleary, 1999, p.869). The image influences the behavior of the tourists (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999), so it is important to understand how the image of Japan was constructed for the participants of this thesis and how this influenced their decision making.

A destination image is a combination of personal factors, also known as push factors, as mentioned before and stimulus, also known as pull factors (Bloglu & McCleary, 1999; Crompton, 1979; Dann, 1977; Gnoth, 1997; Kim & Lee, 2002; Uysal & Jurowski, 1994). The destination image is perceived to be constructed of the personal knowledge, feelings, beliefs and impressions of the destination, as well as the global understanding of it (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Beerli & Martin, 2004). The individuals show interest in a destination based on their

individual beliefs and then construct a mental image before the travel, thus constructing the pre-travel narrative (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Bruner, 2005; Beerli & Martin, 2004). In the scope of this thesis it is important to understand what the image of Japan is before the travel in order to examine how authenticity fits in the image formation and how the personal knowledge influences what people regard as authentic in Japan. This falls under cognitive or perceptual components of the destination image construction (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999). Beerli & Martin (2004) point out the destination image frame by Balogly & MacCleary (1999) as a highly suitable for academic research, as, unlike other measurement scales before that, it takes into consideration aspects of the destination.

Therefore the researcher looks to follow the suggested by Balogly & McClearly (1999) frame for destination image formation, namely examining the sources of information, education and socio-psychological factors that have effect on the perceptual or knowledge based evaluation and the affective or feeling related evaluation.

3.7. Summary of the theoretical framework

This chapter aims to provide understanding of the theories that shape the research process and to provide understanding of major notions used in this thesis such as authenticity, commodification, travel motivation for Japan, as well as last chance tourism. The related academic theories have been described, discussed and combined into a framework suitable for this thesis. The theoretical framework is used as a cornerstone of the project, on which the researcher builds the interview guide for gathering data.

The theoretical framework was built on the notion of authenticity, due to the strong traditions (Vlastos, 1998) of the Japanese culture. Authenticity is described as notion related to "tradition" and "original" identity, bound by strong feelings of belonging and proven by time. Although the academic works argue of the existence of different types of authenticity, the term is recognized as a distinguished feature of a location or local people that is transferred from past to present. Authenticity can be an attribute given to both the cultural and the physical products of knowledge (Hall, 2007; Taylor, 2001).

Furthermore, the framework provides understanding of staged authenticity and commodification. This refers to materialization of the experience and its transformation into marketed goods.

Staged authenticity is a term coined to describe that the tourism industry takes a feature of a culture and frames it authentic for the visitor, even if this is not the case, thus creating front and back stage of the authentic culture. The commodification and staging of authenticity is considered a treat to authentic cultures as it destroys them in favor of economic benefits from the tourism industry.

Another fear could be based in the last-chance tourism, where the traveler is looking to experience something authentic for a last time before it being destroyed by a natural disaster or mass tourism.

The theoretical framework discusses the motivation to visit Japan through push and pull factors. Understanding of travel motivation and push and pull factors for tourism has been presented. This motivation has been deeply examined through specific for Japan pull factors.

Furthermore, the theoretical framework provides understanding of the Japanese tourism's distinctive features through the travel motivation of foreign visitors to the country. It has been concluded that Japan has very strong heritage tourism. This trend could be based on the strong national tradition Japanese display and the sense of belonging to the Japanese nation. Other strong features of the Japanese tourism include eco-tourism, relaxation tourism and pop-culture consumption.

The following chapter utilizes this theoretical framework in order to understand what are the perceptions of authenticity regarding Japan among young European travelers

4 ANALYSIS

This thesis is set on identifying what are the perceptions of authenticity regarding Japan among young European travelers. The answer to this question is provided in this chapter, based on a qualitative analysis of the empirical data gathered throughout the research process. The data is based on discourse analysis, surveys and 12 qualitative in-depth semi-structured interviews.

The analysis is the most important part of the research where all new findings are presented, discussed, analyzed, filtered through the theoretical framework of this thesis and summarized for the reader. The analysis of the data has been done, as mentioned before, through the constructivist paradigm and qualitative research methods, which are most suited to analyze socially constructed phenomenon (Boeije, 2010; Bryman, 2012).

The analysis chapter is divided into two thematical points based on the theoretical frame as follows:

Japan - this section is focused on the correlation between the image of Japan and perceptions of authenticity among young European travelers. The researcher begins the analysis by exploring how the image of Japan was formed by the participants and looks for patterns that show relations between the image and the perception of authenticity. Furthermore, the researcher explores elements that influence the pre-travel images of Japan, filters motivational factors to visit Japan by discussing and comparing them to the push and pull factors frame. In addition, the chapter provides discussion on how factors that influence the image formation of Japan are related to the perceptions of authenticity among young European traveler.

Authenticity – this section covers critical discussion on the perception of authenticity. The analysis starts with discussing the general formation of perceptions of authenticity. Furthermore, this section provides exploration of the factors that could directly influence the perception of authenticity and how this is done. In addition this section discusses the notion of "the inauthentic"among young European travelers and compares it with their image of Japan, as to elaborate further on the correlation between the notions.

The Analysis chapter concludes with a summary of the findings.

4.1 Japan

The beginning of the analysis provides exploring the notion of Japan among the participants in the interviews this thesis. The researcher chose this as a starting point as to put the notion of authenticity into the particular context of the chosen destination. By first exploring the perception and image of Japan, the researcher looks to discuss the relationship between the perception of authenticity and pre-travel factors.

The researcher is interested why participants chose to travel to Japan. Motivation to visit Japan is important as it is the starting point of understanding the image of Japan and how it was formed to begin with, before travel. This chapter begins with comparing general travel motivation with the motives about visiting Japan, as to identify any overlaps or differences and explore why they occur. Furthermore the chapter will identify push and pull factors for Japan, as well as within Japan. The researcher is interested how particular travel activities are selected and on what basis. The findings are then compared to the theoretical framework of this project. The researcher looks to identify patterns of overlapping or differentiation between why the participants chose destination and why they chose Japan.

4.1.1. Travel motivation

By exploring the travel motivations to visit Japan, the research looks for patterns in the motivational factors. Furthermore this chapter discusses relations between the travel motives, image formations and perceptions of authenticity. This relationship is further elaborated on in the chapters following travel motivation.

First the researcher asked the interviewees to express their travel motivation in general and their particular motivation to go to Japan.

The initial pattern present in the travel motivation of the interviewees coincided with the travel motivation of young travelers, as described in the theoretical chapter. In regards to travel motivation Marie Louise states:

"Well, it's fun and our generation, we have the opportunity to see most of the world, so why not make use of it before becomes impossible."

(Marie Louise, 31, Denmark, 2015)

It should be underlined how the interviewee states "our generation", therefore underlining (Howe & Strauss, 2009)'s understanding of how unified millennials. This notion is supported by Martins who says:

"... To see new places. The world is a huge place and it only becomes bigger and there are more things I want to see."

(Martins, 23, Latvia, 2015)

The two statements underline the vastness of the world and the travel destinations, as described by Howe & Strauss (2009) but also agree on the notion of exploration of the "new". This is summed up by Ivelina's statement:

"*To experience different things, to escape the mundane, everyday life…*"

(Ivelina, 24, Bulgaria, 2015).

This coincides with Bruner (2005) and Cohen's (1988) opinions on travel motivation, namely that people travel to escape the ordinary. The general travel motivation for the sample of this project is exploration of the unknown. This coincides with

However, for the participants of the interviews for this thesis, the exploratory motivation can be separated in two patterns of "see" and "feel". This is important, as the two senses are generally differentiated by the image formation terminology and therefore, the researcher looks to explore how the two patterns influence the perceptions of authenticity, as well as the image formations. This notion is explored in the image formation chapter further in the analysis section.

What is important to understand within the travel motivations is what motivated the participants to travel exactly to Japan as a destination. The data from the survey shows that for more than 50% of the participant's direct reason to travel was work or education related. However, the researcher is not interested in the immediate reason for the trip, but looks for reasons behind the choice of the destination.

The researcher searches for patterns of overlapping or differentiation between general motivation to travel and motivation to visit Japan. The analysis of the data showed strong overlapping

between the two, but also underlined aspects that require attention. The overlapping is expressed by Radostin's opinion:

"I travel mostly to meet new people and to find different cultures and to learn how different people from different cultures think and perceive things"

(Radostin, 23, Bulgaria, 2015)

His statement is also significant in yet another perspective. He directly states interest to communicate with members of "different cultures" and experience their perspective and understand things. This, once more, points out to the "feel" and "see" exploration evaluation that would be discussed further in the image formation chapter. Before the in-depth exploration of the images, it is important to show why the researcher identifies overlapping between general motivation to travel and motivation to visit Japan. A good example within the sample is presented by Martins, whose opinion underlines Silver (2003)'s statement about the opposition between the East and the West and how it attracts visitors:

"I thought I want to see something totally different."

(Martins, 23, Latvia, 2015)

This notion is supported by Dimana, who underlines the difference between Japan and the West during the interview. However, this pattern is not as strong as underlined by the academic literature. This is somewhat noted by the academic literature on millennials, therefore the researcher concludes that it is the age that influences this particular motivation's importance. Due to the unified nature of the young travelers and the abundance of informational sources, the researcher notes a pattern of participants stating they would like to experience and see the culture, but not get familiar due to difference. In simple words, the data of this thesis shows that the participants have created a model of Japan before going there and are motivated by personal factors and affiliation, rather than exploring the unknown and getting familiar with it.

The interviews showed a notable pattern of people pointing out personal interested in Japanese culture from early childhood that influenced their image of Japan and served as a push factor to visit the destination. Niels explains what interested him in Japan as follows:

"Many different things! I don't know which reason was the best one. But there were many popular Japanese animations, comics and games when I was a child. And also I was doing aikido, a Japanese martial art, when I was six years old. I was also interested in all this high-tech stuff."

(Niels, 25, France, 2015)

The same notion of media serving as the initial factor was expressed by Marie Louise, as well as, Ivaylo, who clearly state that their image of Japan was influenced by the media and what their personal interest in Japanese pop-culture like anime, manga and drama series. It is important to explore this personal motivation and what effect it has on the image formation and thus on the perception of authenticity. The first "hook" (as described by Niels) on Japanese culture for the participants, lines up with the image formation sources of information.

The importance of the factors is explored in the following chapter.

4.1.2. Image formation

This chapter is set on discussing the image of Japan people construct, as to understand in what way authenticity is related to the destination image formation. This research critically analyses the image of Japan through motivational factors to visit the country, utilizing the push and pull factors frame. The researcher follows Balogly & McClearly (1999)'s destination image formation framework and discusses the different factors that influence the image of Japan.

Informational sources

The researcher begins the research with the variety and type of the data sources which influence the formation process. The researcher looks for patterns among the interviewees regarding the image formation factors, discusses what the sources of information add to the image and analyses if the perception of authenticity is influenced within them. It is important to discuss the informational sources, as they influence the destination choice and the perception of the destination (Balogly & MacClearly, 1999).

Within the lines of destination image formation, as mentioned before, a part of the participants state that their interest in Japan began with getting familiar with the culture through anime, manga, drama series and other cultural elements (such as sport and food). This was stated by

Marie Louise, Fabrizio, Dimana, Ivailo and Niels, who point out that their first impression of Japan was created by the media and then they were interested to look for more information about the country. At this point the personal interest was not to the point of motivation to travel, but rather gathering of information. Marie Louse states:

"I think it's really difficult to describe. First you get all these impressions from drama series and anime. This is some sort of utopian view of Japan, everything is cleaner, nicer and funnier. Everybody looks better. But then when you start studying it, you kind of form a more realistic view"

(Marie Louise, 31, Denmark, 2015)

This is a notable quote, as it summarizes a notable pattern among the participant's perception of the destination before travelling to be media based and idealistic to some extent. Another example is Niels, who states:

"...I had imagined Japan with plenty of robots on the streets and a really high tech image. {...}Stuff like this. And I had this kind of beautiful image in my head. I tried to image a traditional temple, traditional house in the mountain, isolated and with a wonderful cherry blossom and the Japanese women dressed like geishas."

(Niels, 25, France, 2015)

It should be underlined that both examples lead to the notion that further exploration on culture of Japan changes the perception of the country, as well as the perception of authenticity.

Relationship between knowledge and image formation

During the analysis the researcher could distinguish three notable patterns based on the level of knowledge the participants had and how that level affected the image formation, as well as the perception of authenticity. First the analysis will explore knowledge as a factor influencing the image of Japan. This factor is underlined by the academic literature as important (Balogly & McClearly, 1999). The three patterns are as follows:

Strong knowledge: The first group is represented by participants who are strongly influenced by the knowledge they have. These participants have a predominant cognitive/perceptual evaluation

of the image of Japan, based on their education and various sources of information. This group however expresses both cognitive and affective image formation of the destination, as the participants express personal interest based on feelings, combined with elaborate knowledge about Japan. The group is represented roughly by Tihomir, Radoslav, Dimana, Ivalina, Petya and Marie Louise, who are characterized by the same element – education in Japanese language and culture. This is supported by the survey, where respondents who stated strong knowledge about Japan or Japanese education had notably similar image about Japan. The image of the group is elaborate and overlaps with what the participants stated they have experienced in Japan.

This was evident through Marie Louise's statement regarding how her image of Japan changed:

"*But then when you start studying it, you kind of form a more realistic view*"

(Marie Louise, 31, Denmark, 2015)

An important trait of this pattern is the search for understanding of the culture, not merely consumption. For example, this is underlined by Tihomir, who states:

"*And the reason why I study Japanese, just because I like the language and it sounds interesting to me. {…} I just wanted to understand it.*"

(Tihomir, 27, Bulgaria, 2015)

The notion of understanding Japan also forms this particular image that the participants have regarding Japan and Japanese culture. As they have formed the image from various sources, including academic one, they are aware of many details about the culture, including the language. How the prior knowledge influences the image formation is explained by Ivelina in the following way:

"*I guess a little bit of negative way. When you have prior knowledge it's less exciting when you actually visit the place. If you knew nothing, then everything is new and it gets more emotional. And when you learn things for the first time and if you have a lot of knowledge before that it's kind of "I know that. I know that already". I don't think it's a very good thing. I wish I didn't know that much before I came here.*"

(Ivelina, 24, Bulgaria, 2015)

This statement underlines the importance of informational sources as stated by Balogly & McClearly (1999).Although most participants do not stated they perceive the knowledge as negative, they do explain similar statement regarding their prior knowledge about changing their perspective. For example Radostin, who states:

"It was important, but I learned more while I was here"

<div align="right">

(Radostin, 23, Bulgaria,2015)

</div>

This statement underlines both the need to experience and learn more at the place, as well as the importance of the prior knowledge. Regarding the image, most participants point out that they were surprised by ordinary life rules. The researcher found that the more the participant has learned about Japan beforehand, the more realistic the image about Japan is. For example, Marie Louise states:

"Japan is like any other country. It's quite normal. It's only special sections especially made for tourists that are these television, drama kind of places."

<div align="right">

(Marie Louise, 31, Denmark, 2015)

</div>

In addition Tihomir states:

"...so even before visiting Japan I was to some extent prepared to what it would be. So I wasn't really shocked or something."

<div align="right">

(Tihomir, 27, Bulgaria, 2015)

</div>

This pattern is notable as participants with strong knowledge looked to gain experience from their trip, rather than cognitive knowledge. This is stated as follows:

"As it goes for information, I wouldn't say it changed much, from before I came to Japan. It's more with the experience that I get."

<div align="right">

(Ivelina, 24, Bulgaria, 2015)

</div>

If we go back to the beginning of the section, where the "see" and "feel" exploratory motives were discussed, now it is important to state that the connection between knowledge and image

formation reflects for this sample in the context that people who know more look to "feel" more when familiarizing with new culture. Tihomir, for example, underlines during the interview, how important is the atmosphere of the place, as follows:

"If I go to such a place I like the atmosphere itself"

(Tihomir, 27, Bulgaria, 2015)

A similar notion was expressed by Marie Louise, Petya and Ivelina. These statements point to the idea that the interviewees were not influenced by signifiers, such as heritage structures, as much as they were by communicating with people. In this line of thoughts Radostin states:

"I try to go not only to places where tourists go to, like the famous tourist sites, but also I try to meet people in an informal setting, for example in bars or restaurants or places where not every tourist will go, so I can feel the spirit, the real atmosphere of the place that I am visiting."

(Radostin, 23, Bulgaria, 2015)

Due to this and similar statements, the researcher chose to name the image interviewees with strong knowledge explain, elaborate. The choice of naming the image elaborate was based in several factors. First, it during the interviews there was a notable pattern of interviewees mentioning "people", as in the above stated quote from Radostin. Ivelina, chose to state that her image of Japan was influenced as follows:

"Also it's more about the Japanese people rather than Japan as a whole"

(Ivelina, 24, Bulgaria, 2015)

The idea that locals influence the perception on the image was summarized by Petya, who states:

"Well, before going there I had the perception that it's not going to be something really, really awesome, if you use the popular term, but going there and immersing in the culture and meeting people and connecting with them, making friends, these changed the whole perception about Japan that I had."

(Petya, 24, Bulgaria, 2015)

This statement is important in several ways. It underlines the moderate image Petya had before travelling to Japan, namely "*not going to be {...} really awesome*". As said before, other interviewees stated similar ideas regarding Japan. In addition, she strongly underlines the importance of the communication in the image formation of Japan for her. Therefore, the researcher finds a pattern within people with strong knowledge to regard communication as important factor for influencing their image by enhancing their knowledge of the place.

A quote that can summarize the importance of the knowledge is one from Dimana, as follows:

"Before the reason to like it (Japan) was that it was very different. It gave me things I could not find in the Bulgarian culture, like a different look on things; different philosophy. But now, that I am here, and that I stated my education in Japanese philology I understood that Japan is not that different. Japan is not that far away. People are the same everywhere."

(Dimana, 21, Bulgaria, 2015)

The researcher summarizes that due to previous personal knowledge, people who state strong pre travel knowledge about japan have contracted an image of the country that, to their understanding, overlaps with the reality they have met. The image of Japan is elaborate and covers many sides of the Japanese culture. The pattern's correlation with authenticity is explored in the next chapter.

Another very important pattern, that the researcher uncovered regarding the influence of knowledge on image formation and, therefore, on authenticity, is within the lines of moderate knowledge of Japanese culture. It should be underlined that the researcher states "moderate" as to differentiate from academic level of knowledge, but does not look to judge or justify the knowledge of the participants. Therefore, the term moderate would be examined only in terms of the pattern.

The **Moderate knowledge** group is represented by participants who were strongly influenced to visit Japan by the media and pop-culture. Representatives of this group state that their primary motive to visit Japan in the first place is their interest in the cultural elements, such as manga and anime. For example, Ivaylo states:

"...I always wanted to visit the Land of the rising sun because I am an anime fan."

Participants in the interviews that express interest in pop-cultural elements like anime and manga are interested in acquiring other information regarding the country. For example Niels underlines this by saying:

"I've read many books and seen many documentaries about it. So I had quite a good image, a correct image overall."

(Niels, 25, France, 2015)

This is a notable example where the personal interest pushes the interviewee to research more about Japan. However, the researcher noticed a pattern presented by people influenced by pop-cultural elements connected with a rather positive image of Japan. For example:

"...Everything was charming. {..} I knew they were different from the rest of the world. We all know that. But they succeeded my expectations. I knew it would be very different there, that it would be amazing, but all in all, I was left charmed more than I've expected."

(Ivailo, 22, Bulgaria, 2015)

During the interviews, interviewees who, for this thesis, were combined in the medium knowledge pattern were not prompt to criticize as much as people who express academic knowledge of Japan. Furthermore, while within the previous pattern, people were more inclined to be interested in feeling the "atmosphere" of the place, here the interviewees show a stand that combines interest both in heritage sites. This is explained as follows:

"There are some must see places that I went because they are a definite must see. {..} A typical must see place is recorded in the UNESCO heritage list and it's probably the place that I read a lot about. {...} The thing is, that there are so many very interesting places even just within the popular tourist places in Japan, that even just focusing on this popular place is enough to provide a unique experience"

(Niels, 25, France, 2015)

The group is notable for the pattern of exploration present in it, which is a lot stronger than in the first group. Moderate knowledge patterns include inclination to both "feel" and "see" exploring

of new cultures. Similar statement is stated by Fabrizio and Ivaylo and it could be seen from the following quote:

"I also visit modern popular things the same way I visit heritage sites. I think they go hand by hand. {…} {…} I think they should go hand in hand. Commercial and underground. "

(Ivailo, 22, Bulgaria, 2015)

Within the lines of this thesis, the image of Japan within the pattern of medium knowledge is analyzed as strong and positive. This is how Fabrizio explains it:

". But I don't know if it was because I had a lot of pre-understanding of Japan before. Yeah, probably this influenced me, like I had such a positive image before, so, then the difference really astonished me."

(Fabrizio, 30, Italy, 2015)

What should be underlined is that within this pattern, the interviewees, as well as within the first pattern, are influenced by the Japanese people. The researcher notices a correlation between the knowledge and the perception of the people, which is identified through the following statements:

"I knew they were different from the rest of the world. {…} I did know they were like programmed robots. I never liked that about Japan. But, maybe, that's the thing that drives them ahead. {…} …but they (the Japanese) are different."

(Ivailo, 22, Bulgaria, 2015).

What can be seen from this quote is the intentional underlining of the word "different" when the interviewee describes the people. This contradicts to the first pattern, where people are regarded the same. However, the stated above quote is significant in a way. The interviewee does not directly stated he is attracted to Japan because of the different culture, but the researcher is able to find notable pattern of this statement through the constant use of the world "different" and the expressed excitement during the interview. This correlates with the statements by Silver (1993), Bruner (2005) and Said (1977) who, within the academic literature, underline how Western cultures are attracted to the unknown and different that Asian cultures can offer them.

This differentiation between East and West is also present in the third pattern the researcher identified during the analysis of the data. Within the last pattern of **Minimum knowledge,** interviewees do not express strong personal interest for the destination. For example Claudia states her reason to go to Japan as follows:

"I travelled with my best friend. He loves Japan. And I promised him that we will go once. So that's the reason why I chose it."

(Claudia, 28, Italy, 2015)

Similar opinion is expressed by Danniel, who says:

"Because my girlfriend was studying there and it was an opportunity to go to Japan and see her…"

(Danniel, 33, Denmark, 2015)

These statements correlate with the academic literature that states that personal contacts with family and friends strongly influence the travel motivation, as well as the image formation (Balogly & McClearly, 1999).

It should be noted, that the researcher refers to this pattern as minimum knowledge only due to selecting this a term to describe it, but not judge it. It refers to the fact that the interviewees express no interest in personally familiarizing themselves with Japanese culture. Claudia, for example, explains she had not looked for information before travel, as follows:

"Not really. Because I knew he was going to look for some information"

(Claudia, 28, Italy, 2015)

Here, the interviewee explains that she did not have the time to search. The researcher notices similar notions within other interviewees, such as Danniel, who states that he did not look for information, because:

"…my girlfriend was in Japan and she was my local guide and I only depended on her to do that"

(Danniel, 33, Denmark, 2015)

Within the lines of this thesis, this is the reason why the researcher describes a pattern of minimum knowledge regarding the destination. This knowledge influences the image formation in a way, that the interviewees who display this motivation factor are strongly perceptive of the difference. This was mentioned within the previous group, but it should be underlined that the categorization is only within the understanding of the researcher and is not a defined category. On the contrary, some of the notions overlap, such as the notion of different. It is explained as follows:

"They think and act in a totally different way compared to European people. {...} Completely different. It was a cultural shock. Because I went to Tokyo and it's a very big city and I was thinking: "OK. Tokyo looks like a European or an American city." It's not like that. It was completely different."

(Claudia, 28, Italy, 2015).

This quote once more proves the factor of difference between European and Asian cultures, as stated by the academic literature (Silver, 1997, Bruner, 2005, Said, 1977). As mentioned before Martins express similar motive to visit Japan:

"And mainly I went to Japan, because I thought I want to see something totally different."

(Martins, 23, Latvia, 2015)

What should be noted is that, within this pattern, there is an overlap between the general motivation to travel and the motivation to visit Japan. However, this is not that evident within the previous examples, as it is within the minimum knowledge pattern. What could be said for this image constructed within this pattern is, that it is strongly influenced by the Japanese themselves. This was explained as follows:

"It was a nice place and the people where very polite. And very welcoming"

(Danniel, 33, Denmark, 2015)

This is what states Danniel when asked what his image of Japan is. It is notable that he is short on words regarding the "place", as well as on other signifiers during the interview, but is willing

to explain the behavior of the Japanese. Similar notion was expressed by Martins, who explains his experience with the Japanese people as follows:

"...I think mainly it changed about the people. Because I've heard people were pretty closed up and they're in their lives they don't open up so much and if they do, they often would say things to make you happy and not the things they actually mean. And I read about that but once I experienced it felt a lot different than what I've imagined."

(Martins, 23, Latvia 2015)

This quote also underlines that the interviewee regards people as an important factor that influences his perception of Japan and his experience at the place. The researcher notes that this pattern of no personal interest overlaps with the pattern of strong knowledge regarding the matter of importance of the Japanese themselves.

What could be summarized for this patter is that they have constructed the image of Japan during their trip. A summary of the three patters is presented in the following Figure 10:
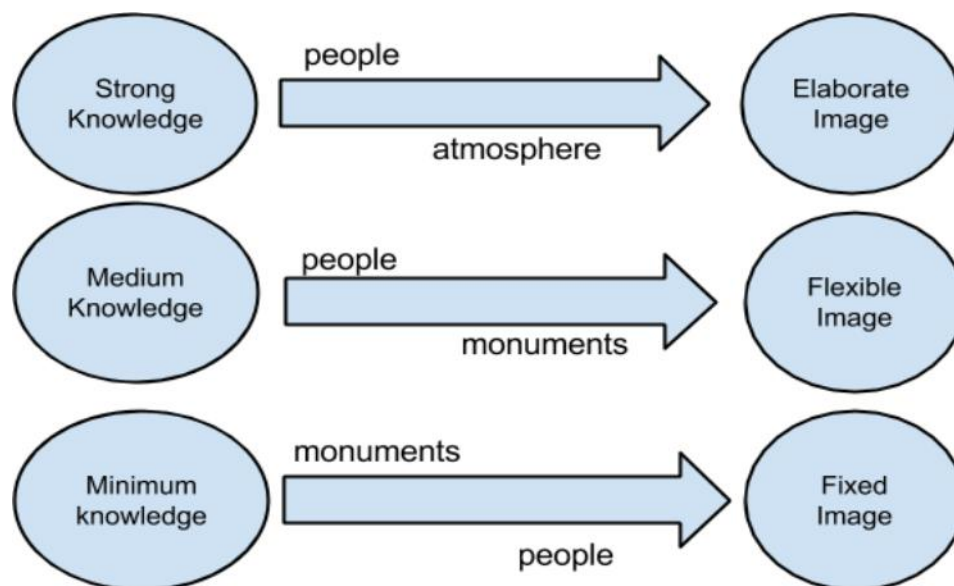

Figure 10: Visual representation of the knowledge-image patterns

What can be outlined within the three patterns are the factors that influence the image of Japan among the interviewees. What has been mentioned before is the important role the Japanese. For example, this is how Radostin explains why the people are important agents in influencing his image of Japan:

"... back alleys and roads, where you can meet people, which are not actually used to interacting with tourists, because not all tourists go there. I met a couple of middle aged people and we talked to them a little and it was completely different because those back alleys, they are quiet and they are not full of people. Not only tourists, but also Japanese people, so they offered a completely different atmosphere."

(Radotin, 23, Bulgaria, 2015)

Again the atmosphere is mentioned, which underlines the perception that the knowledge influences the seek of emotion through experiences, rather than through cognitive knowledge. Overall the researcher found a strong understanding of the interviewees, who state that communication is what would change their perception of Japan. On a further note, this would be discussed later in the authenticity section, the interviewees point out personal contacts with Japanese as a major factor for their perception of authenticity. However, the researcher chose to discuss another important agent in the formation of the image, namely the Internet, due to an underlined importance during the interviews.

To summarize this chapter, these three groups form similar traits in the image of Japan they have formed within the corresponding patterns and this shows similar perception of authenticity, which would be discussed further in the analysis. The important role informational sources have on the image formation and consequently on the perception of authenticity is supported by the survey, where respondents who pointed out similar sources had, yet again, similar image of Japan, as well as perception what is authentic about it. This would be discussed within the Authenticity chapter of the analysis.

The image on the Internet

Most of the participants during the interviews and the survey, point out the internet as their primary source of information regarding Japan, therefore the researcher started with the image Japan holds on the internet, as to check what is the discourse constructed there. For example, Ivelina states the following regarding the internet:

"In the era of the internet you can find almost everything. On the internet it's not about the information, but the actual experience. You can read the information but when you experience it of course it's different."

(Ivelina, 24, Bulgaria, 2015)

The same notion was expressed by other interviewees, including Ivailo, who is explicit about his source of information being the internet. Therefore, the researcher was interested if the image on the internet underlined in any particular way authenticity and how that is reflected in the discourse the interviewees present.

First the researcher started with the official Japan Tourism Agency and the Japanese National Tourism Organization, as these were source of inspiration pointed out by some of the interviewees, namely Fabrizio. It could be noted that, according to the survey, the lowest percentage of people stated that they are interested in gaining information about Japan through dedicated travel agency and this was underlined through the interviews, where the interviewees clearly state that they prefer to plan the trip themselves and/or to roam freely as to discover Japan. Tihomir, explains this as follows:

"I prefer to choose the places I visit because I have the freedom to choose something that I like. If someone else chooses for me, I am not sure if they will choose a place I would like."

(Tihomir, 27, Bulgaria, 2015)

The percentage of people who gain information through friends and family is also relatively high, as it was noted in the previous chapter regarding the patterns of knowledge. The following survey screenshot depicts the information sources that were stated during the data collection process.

How do you get information about Japan?

TV / Radio	21	40.4%
The internet	48	92.3%
Travel brochures / Travel agencies	7	13.5%
Friends and family	26	50%
Education	33	63.5%
Other	7	13.5%
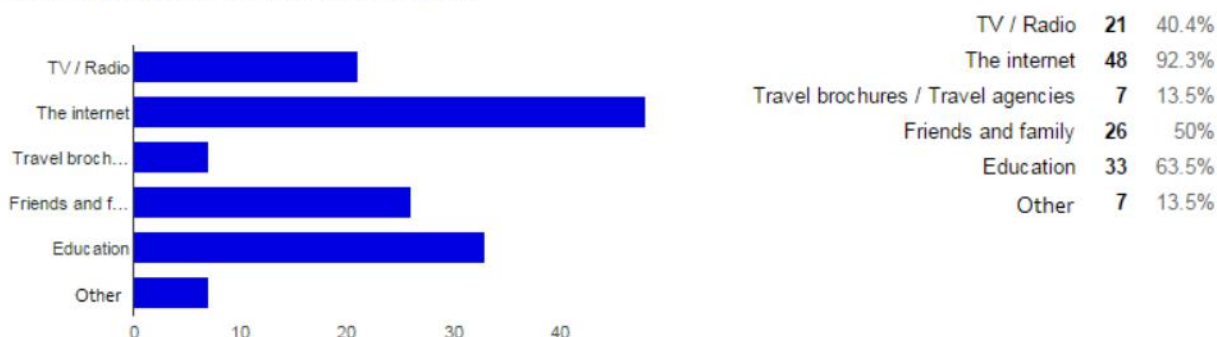
Figure 11: Survey for the thesis - Data sources about Japan. Retrieved 28.05.15.

Taking the two official webpages of the Japanese government, the first thing that the researcher notices is the colour. Colour, as a signifier, speaks about variety and abundance (Hall, 1997). The

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pages are crowded with images of different cultural aspects and clusters of information surround them.

Figure 12: Japanese National Tourism Organization official webpage. Retrieved 28.05.15.

The style of positioning the images and the information is particularly interesting. Most Japanese sites begin with one large slideshow above all images that grab the attention of the visitor. The photos there are almost in all cases present combination of heritage, modern and nature or all on the same photo. If we go back to the very beginning of the thesis, the reader would find out that this is exactly what started the research – people underlining that the uniqueness of Japan is within this combination of old and modern.

Within the lines of the presented by the webpages discourse, the researcher notices the strongly used word "tradition". The official webpages also include "heritage" and "value" first in order. However, there is a notable shift in the focus of the tourism agency. Though most words used to allure new visitors relate to traditional tourism types as heritage tourism or leisure tourism, in the most recent Visit Japan webpage, there is a notable "common life" section, which is not present or as elaborate on the other pages.
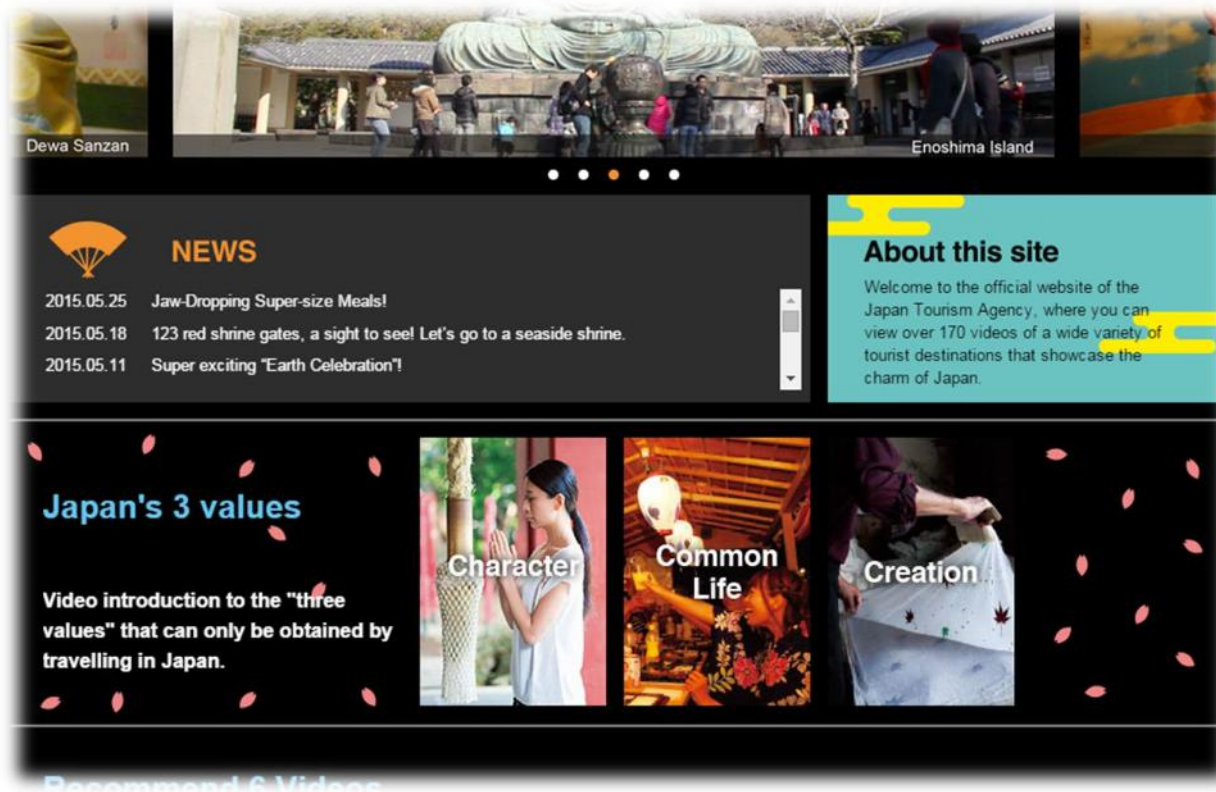
As mentioned before, the Visit Japan campaign is set on attracting foreign visitors to Japan. The occurrence of this "common life" section underlines a shift of focus. The importance of the everyday life was also uncovered during the analysis of the interviews, where the interviewees state it their interest about it. For example, Radostin states in relation to authenticity as well that he wants to experience local culture and authenticity through the eyes of the locals:

"... From how locals perceive it. How their daily lives are and not just how they are trying to show it to tourists. That's what I think authentic is."

(Radostin, 23, Bulgaria, 2015)

This quite shows the importance of everyday life according to the interviewee. In relation to this quote it is important to understand the relationship between the image and the perception of authenticity. This is done in the following section.

4.2. Authenticity

This section begins with general exploration regarding authenticity. Then it narrows down into authenticity in relation to Japan. This structure was chosen due to the philosophical nature of the term "authenticity" that the interviewees pointed out as hard to understand during the interviews.

4.2.1. The notion of authenticity

The researcher asked the interviewees, as well as, within the survey what is the perception of authenticity as it was important to understand how they define it and then put it into the particular context to check of overlapping or differentiation.

By asking this, the researcher constructed a figure of the most common words associate with "authenticity" based on 59 surveys and 12 qualitative interviews. The cloud was formed by processing the transcripts through a cloud generation, thus the researcher looked to include another resource for the analysis based on objective program word-count. The words are as presented in Figure:

Figure 14: Word Cloud for authenticity

Within the word cloud, the more often used the word, the bigger it is displayed. In other words, this visual source shows that within the sample of this thesis, the are many people that understand authenticity in terms of "original", "old" "traditional", "cultural" and "ordinary". This coincides with the theoretical framework where the academic literature agrees on associating authenticity with traditional and original (Taylor, 2001; Wang, 1999; Trilling, 1972).

Within the qualitative interviews, Ivelina for example explains authenticity as:

"...the first thing that comes to mind is old, but I guess that's not really the only thing.{...}... so maybe something that has preserved its original image, its original ways. Depends - if it's a place maybe it has preserved its looks as an old place, a custom or a practice or an art. Maybe it is preserved the way it has been done and it has been done along these lines."

<div align="right">

(Ivelina, 24, Bulgaria, 2015)

</div>

This quote shows that the interviewee's opinion coincides with the academic literature (Sharpley, 1994; Wang, 1999; Taylor, 2001) that underlines the temporal importance that authenticity holds. Tihomir adds:

"...something unique, that you cannot see somewhere else. Something like that. Something that does not exist anywhere else."

<div align="right">

(Tihomir, 28, Bulgaria, 2015)

</div>

The interviewee gives an example of understanding authentic as "unique". However, during the interviews, the researcher identified a different pattern of understanding of authenticity. The interviewees provided explanations about authenticity as stated by Tihomir, Ivelina, or Ivailo, as follows:

"Something ancient that can be found only in the said culture…"

<div align="right">

(Ivailo, 23, Bulgaria)

</div>

The researcher noted an even stronger patterns of people regarding authenticity as a true to the original. This is explained by Clauida as follows:

"*Authentic means to be who you are. To be yourself."*

A similar notion is expressed by Danniel as well:

"Authentic is if you are not trying to be something you are not…"

(Danniel, 33, Denmark, 2015)

What the researcher noted is that many of the interviewees understand authenticity through the eyes of the locals or as "ordinary" as described by some of them. This is evident from the following explanations:

"… you can see how people react to their mutual environment, and how they react to other people. You can see a part not only of their lives, but of their culture and their spiritual how to say it mentality if you like."

(Petya, 25, Bulgaria, 2015)

Petya is explaining what she perceives as authentic. What the researcher perceives from this quote is the meaning behind the words, namely the underlining importance of understanding authenticity through local people. This has been also underlined by Radostin as:

"Because locals know their culture best and in tourist sites people try to present their country in the best way possible."

(Radostin, 25, Bulgaria, 2015)

Similar notion is expressed by Dimana, who says:

"That there's nothing traditionally Japanese, like food and that everything has been imported from China or Asia. {…} That's when you think: "Yeah, that's not authentic at all", but by now, I have decide it's a lot more authentic, because people have decided that this is their identity, therefore it's a lot more authentic."

(Dimana, 22, Bulgaria, 2015)

Marie Louise states in the same line of thoughts:

"For me historical sites are authentic and also, you know, sites that are not made for tourists. Sites where the average Japanese goes."

(Marie Louise 31, Denmark, 2015)

The researcher compares the statements from the interviewees and identifies that the perception of authenticity is strongly influenced by the understanding of the locals. The notion of the personal contact, as mentioned within the image formation, influences the perception if something is authentic or not. Furthermore, the researcher identifies that the interviewees perceive things that the locals do authentic. This was uncovered by exploring the comparing the notion of authenticity regarding Japan, as well as, during the discussion of the inauthentic.

During the interviews, the researcher also found a pattern that overlaps with the academic literature. The quote states:

"Everything that is there at the place is authentic. Because culture like a creature that constantly changes. I can't say this is a knock off and this is authentic. Everything you feel and see is authentic. And it becomes authentic for you experience."

(Dimana, 22, Bulgaria, 2015)

This statement overlaps first and foremost with Bruner's (2005) idea about cultures not being fixed entities. Furthermore it overlaps within the lines of authenticity being strongly influenced by both outer and inner factors (Taylor, 2001; Wang, 1999)

The data analysis showed overlap between the overall understanding of authentic and authenticity in context of Japan. However, the research underlined a notion, the researcher explored in the media, namely the combining of modern and old. This was uncovered when interviewing Ivelina for example, who states:

"Especially now that I am in Japan, I can see that Japanese people like new stuff and if I am more into the authentic thing, they always mix up new stuff. Then make a collaboration of new and old stuff. And it's not necessary a bad thing. There are some pretty good results in most things. It doesn't need to be a 100% authentic, to be a good thing."

(Ivelina, 24, Bulgaria, 2015)

What the researcher understands from the statement is the underlining perception of authenticity regarding Japan as a mixture. This was also shows from the following quote by Marie Louse, who states:

"But I think that one of the things is for it not to be superficial, not something made for commercial purposes, something that's there and it's natural."

(Marie Louise, 31, Denmark, 2015)

In this line of analysis, interviewees mention both modern pop-culture sites like the Ghibli Museum (mentioned by Marie Louise and Ivailo), as well as sites like Kyoto (mentioned by Claudia and Fabrizio) as authentic.

Another perspective on the question is provided by Dimana, who states:

"However stupid it sounds it's because people are too considered of others. That's the most authentic thing about Japan. Everyone is considered about others, not to harm him, not to offend him. Therefore I can say that the way people interact with you is authentic. {..} They really think about you and they look after you, and that's something really authentic about Japan. To think about other is something really Japanese."

(Dimana, 22, Bulgaria, 2015)

This statement is in line whit the previously expressed importance of the human factor in order to understand authenticity.

Therefore the researcher asked the interviewees to explain what is not authentic for them, as to elaborate on the notion of the authentic by providing a new perspective on the question. By analyzing the answers regarding the inauthentic, the researcher found correlation between the three patterns regarding knowledge and image formation and th perception of the authentic and inauthentic.

First, the researcher identifies that interviewees with strong knowledge express similar understanding of authenticity, connected with the atmosphere, people or food in Japan. For example, Tihomir explains:

"The first thing that came to my mind is {...} a kind of traditional Japanese pastry, which is strongly related with Kyoto and you can usually find it only there. {...} For example, if it's religions - Shinto is authentic for Japan and you cannot see it anywhere else."

(Tihomir, 27, Bulgaria, 2015)

Or Radostin, who explains that authentic for him is the ordinary:

"How their daily lives are and not just how they are trying to show it to tourists."

(Radostin, 23, Bulgaria, 2015)

What the researcher perceives from these quotes can be understood from MacCannel (1979)'s theory about the tourist. In many of the cases, where the interviewee had academic background within Japanese, the researcher found overlapping between MacCannel's (1979) idea that the tourist looks to distinguish himself from other tourists. The stated above quotes are also in line with Bruner (2005)'s idea that tourists look for this back-stage experience during their travel. Radostin explains this back-stage, as stated before, with the back alleys of Tokyo. This notion is underlined by the interviewees with the adjective "quiet" as opposite to tourist site. For example:

"But right next to the place where we visited with my mother two year ago, where all the tourists usually go, there were these quite little streets that people were actually drinking and having fun and it offered a completely different atmosphere of Tokyo that actually I didn't expect to see."

(Radostin, 23, Bulgaria, 2015)

The same notion was underlined by Dimana, who explains why she dislikes visiting popular sites in Japan:

"All in all people ruin the experience. You can't fully enjoy the place, no matter how beautiful it is and how popular it is. If there are people, the experience is the same as a photo or something else."

(Dimana, 21, Bulgaria, 2015)

It is important to underline that interviewees with strong knowledge do not disregard visiting popular tourist sites in Japan, but intentionally look to experience the back-stage (Bruner, 2005), as the experience from popular sites does not offer them the atmosphere, a quiet place would offer. Dimana also adds:

"Temples are not authentic {..} I can't say the food is authentic, because most of the food is based on changed Chinese recipes. Japan, in general, is hard when it comes to determining what's authentic and what not. Because there's always something, that has been taken and assimilated."

<div align="right">

(Dimana, 21, Bulgaria, 2015)

</div>

This quote is in line with the complex nature of authenticity. It also undernotes an idea expressed by other interviewees within the pattern of strong knowledge, as mentioned before.

On the other hand, a notable difference within the patterns was underlined by what people perceive as not authentic. While, as stated above, interviewees within the strong knowledge perceive physical object or signifiers as inauthentic, interviewees there was a pattern of interviewees from the other two knowledge patterns, namely medium and minimum, who were more prompt to say it was the people that were not authentic. This notion was expressed by Fabrizio, Ivailo and Claudia. Claudia for example states:

"You never know what people are. You have the impression that you are playing a game with them. So this was a little bit disappointing."

<div align="right">

(Claudia, 28, Italy, 2015)

</div>

In this line of thought it is important to note a comment from Martins that points out to Boorstin (1976)'s idea about the Japanese, as explained in the theoretical framework. Similar notion is expressed by Fabrizio who says:

"I've a sensation that the reality in Japan is not that real. I think that there is something fake in the way they behave"

<div align="right">

(Fabrizio, 30, Italy, 2015)

</div>

Maritns, additionaly explains why he was disappointed from Kyoto, as a destination:

"...I think it depends on what I imagined it should be and how it actually is. {...} Even though I did research before, I was still surprised and I thought it would be a bit different. But I noticed it was a modern city, I thought it would be calm like, but in reality it was just a big city, so..."

(Martins, 23, Latvia, 2015)

This quote lines with Boorstin (1976) idea that people are not interested in what is really authentic, but rather want to experience what they think it's authentic. This was underlined by Dimana and Ivailo too. Dimana says:

"The more inauthentic it is, the more Japanese it is for me."

(Dimana, 22, Bulgaria, 2015)

The same opinion was expressed by participants in the survey. For the survey, people who have visited Japan pointed out how authentic they perceive the Japanese people. It is interesting to note, that the survey was filled by people who have not been there. These participants pointed out heritage sites as authentic, but due to the time limitation, this thesis does not focus on pre-travel discourses of people who have not visited Japan.

Within the understanding of the authentic, it could be summarized that for the sample of participants who have strong knowledge about the Japanese culture and history, the most authentic would be the atmosphere in Japanese. Participants from this pattern look to experience everyday life and understand authenticity through the locals. Another pattern of understanding would be the less flexible one, where the participants have a specific understanding what is authentic before going to Japan and look to find that authenticity. Within this pattern the exploration of see is stronger.

What the researcher also analyses is if there was any notion of last-chance tourism, based on the incident in Fukushima. The analysis of the data showed a surprising result. The incident in Fukushima did not instigate any last-chance tourism in the sample for this thesis. The participants completely disregard last-chance tourism as applicable for Japan. However, what the

researcher found was a notice of admiration of the Japanese people. This is how Marie Louse explains it:

"...the Japanese, they recovered quickly and they were able to recover by themselves, so now I think I was impressed how quickly Japan manage to pull through and this shows they are a strong country.."

(Marie Louise, 31, Denmark, 2015)

What the researcher uncovers within the lines of the Fukushima incident is the lack of any relation to last-chance tourism. On the contrary, the interviews uncover that the perception of authenticity for Japan changes in a different way; the interviewees feel this is an example of strong cultural sense for Japan, like in the example of Marie Louise above. This underlines the notions from Vlastos (1998) and Ehrentraut (1993) who explain about the Japanese spirit of unification and how it is displayed within Japan. The researcher concludes that for this sample there is no evidence of last-chance tourism.

To summarize the analysis, the researcher found a pattern of relation between the pre-existing knowledge about Japan, the image formation about the country and the perception of authenticity.

The researcher notices a pattern that indicates that overlaps with the academic literature that states the importance of pre-existing knowledge in the image formation, as well as within the lines of authenticity (Balogly & McClearly, 1999; MacCannel, 1976; Taylor, 2001). The researcher notes for this thesis three patterns of knowledge regarding Japan, namely strong, medium and minimum. Within the three patterns there are differences, as well as some similarities regarding the construction of the destination image and respectfully for the perception of authenticity. The researcher finds a patter with interviewees with strong knowledge who have an elaborate image of Japan and flexible understanding of authentic, as well as within participants with medium knowledge who show understanding of the image of Japan and look to have a cognitive experience there. Within the last pattern, interviewees with minim knowledge have a very flexible image of Japan, but fairly strong understanding of authenticity.

5 CONCLUSION

The analysis of this thesis aims to provide an answer to the main research question, namely: "What are the perceptions of authenticity regarding Japan among young European travelers?" .The researcher took into consideration destination image formation, travel motivation for Japan, as well as understanding of authenticity and the inauthentic in relation to Japan and concluded that the perceptions of young European travelers regarding Japan are correlated to their pre-existing knowledge regarding the destination.

The knowledge is influenced by the type and variety of information sources, which influence the destination image and the authenticity. Within the sample for this thesis, the researcher finds three distinguishable patterns of relation, depending on how knowledgeable regarding Japan the interviewee is. Furthermore, the researcher, uses data from surveys filled for this thesis, and compares it with the qualitative data from the semi-structured interviews.

One of the patterns shows that the more the interviewee knows about Japan, the more elaborate the image of the country is and the more flexible the understanding of authenticity about Japan is. This pattern showed that, for this sample, interviewees are inclined to understand authenticity regarding Japan as a combination of old and new, as well as commercial and tradition. The interviewees look to understand authenticity through the locals and, therefore, connect it with the ordinary and everyday life.

Another notable pattern is connected with medium knowledge about Japan, where the image is under construction, so to say, and the interviewees are open to new notions, look to explore both new knowledge and emotional experiences in Japan. Interviewees within this pattern are motivated by media factors like anime and manga, thus provided the researcher with a positive image of Japan, as well as positive understanding of the authentic regarding Japan. The researcher noted that the perception of authenticity regarding Japan within this pattern is connected with signifiers, or objects, as well as Japanese people at the same time. In other words, interviewees with medium knowledge showed a pattern of understanding Japan as both ordinary and unique in the sense that the industry describes the image of Japan.

Furthermore, in the scope of this analysis, the researcher noted another perception of authenticity regarding Japan that is connected to the image the tourism industry has provided. Interviewees with minimum knowledge about Japan show fixed understanding of what is authentic and what not, within Japan and outside of this context. The image of Japan within this pattern is underlined by the sense of differentiating East and West, and therefore the perception of authenticity includes mostly typical Asian characteristics as authentic.

Within the lines of this research, the analysis did not show any evidence that the incident in Fukushima had any effect on the interviewees in regards to their travel motivation, nor in regards to last chance tourism. However, the researcher noted a beginning of a pattern that showed the incident in Fukushima having a positive effect on how the interviewees perceive Japanese culture.

The researcher concludes for this thesis that the perceptions of authenticity regarding Japan show differences and similarities and are influenced by other factors, such as knowledge, destination image and travel motivation.

5.1. Value of the thesis

What this thesis brings for the academic world is within the lines of understanding authenticity. The research for this thesis brings data on the perception of authenticity, image formation regarding Japan and correlation between pre-existing knowledge and perceptions of the authentic among young European travelers.

5.1. Suggestions for further research

Due to time and resource limitations, the researcher could not explore topics related to this thesis. Therefore this chapter is set on describing possibilities for further research in the scope of this topic that the researcher was not able to explore or were uncovered during the research process.

A good starting point for further research would be a change of the sample. The researcher suggest on spot research with people experiencing Japan at the moment. This would allow observation at the place and would provide direct context for the interviewees. Another interesting point would be to focus only on short-stay visitors or tourists that experience Japan for a first time. As this thesis focused on young European travelers, the researcher of this project

perceives that a larger and even more specific sample of interviewees would be more suitable for further research.

A particular topic, that came up during the research was the perception of food tourism in Japan in regards to the perception of authenticity. Due to lack of sufficient data, the researcher chose not to discuss this topic within the lines of the thesis, but notes if for further research.

As this thesis does not focus on specific factors that influence the perception of authenticity, a possible future research could provide in-depth analysis on what and how influenced the perception of authenticity regarding Japan.

An important point for further research would a comparison between the perception of authenticity of locals and tourists.

Furthermore, this thesis concentrates on the demand side. However, a possible future research would be on the supply side of the Japanese tourism or the Japanese side of the image formation with focus on the formation of authenticity and the invention of traditions.

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Introduction	Bryman (2012) Facesheet
Please introduce yourself briefly?	
Why do you travel? What motivates you to travel?	
What do you look for when selecting your travel destination?	
What kind of activities do you prefer while travelling?	Howe & Strauss (2009) Young travelers
How important is for you the place of visit to be a popular tourist destination?	
Japan	Japanese Image Vlastos (1998
Why did you travel to Japan?	
How did your image of Japan form?	
What interested you in Japan in the first place?	Destination Image Balogly & McClearly (1999
What is authentic about Japan?	
What is not authentic about Japan?	
How would you describe your experience in Japan?	Said (1977); Silver (1993) Differenced between east and West
What was your perception of the place before travel?	
Were your expectations of Japan met? How? Why?	
How did that change during and after travel?	
How did that change your perception of what is authentic and what no?	
Authenticity	Taylor (2001); Wang (1999); Trilling (1972); Bruner (2005); Authentic and staged/ Factors influencing authenticity
How important is for the place to be authentic?	
How would you define authentic?	
What is authentic according to you?	
How did your understanding of authentic form?	
How do you judge if something is authentic or not?	
What is not authentic?	
What influences your perception if something is authentic or not?	
How important is for you something to be authentic or not?	
How was your personal knowledge of Japan influenced of what you perceive authentic or not?	

APPENDIX B: ORIGINAL TRANSCRIPTION OF QUOTES

Dimana (p.50) „Преди беше, че беше много различна, че ми даваше някакви неща, които не мога да намеря в българската култура и просто, по-различен поглед, по-различна философия. Но реално, сега, когато съм тук и когато започнах своето образование в японистиката, разбрах, че Япония изобщо не е толкова различна., Япония не е толкова далечна. Хората са си хора навсякъде.“

Ivailo (p.50-51) „ … Винаги съм искал да посетя страната на изгряващото слънце, защото съм аниме фен“

Ivailo (p.51) ..“ Всичко беше прекрасно. [...] Знаех, че са различни от останалата част на свет. Всичко го знаем това. Но те ми надминаха очакванията. Знаех, че ще е различно и, че е ще е страхотно, но като цяло бях останал очарован повече от очакваното.

Ivailo (p.52) „ Както посещавам исторически забележителности, така и модерни неща. Мисля, че вървят ръка за ръка. .. Комерсиално с ъндърграунд.“

Ivailo (p.52) „ Знаех, че са различни от останалта част от света. Знаех си, че са малко като програмирани роботи. Никога не съм го харесвал това в Япония. Но, може и, това е което ги дърпа напред. Ама са различни.“

Ivailo (p.61) „Нещо древно, което може да се намери само в определен култура“.

Dimana (p.62) "Че няма нищо, което е традиционно изконно Японско, като да кажем храна и че всичко е привнесено от Китай или някъде другаде от Ази. Тогава ти всъщност си мислиш "Да, това не е истинско, неeавтентично, а пък в крайна сметка, решавам, че е дост а по-автентично, защото хората, нали те са решили, че това е тяхната идентичност, следователно е доста по-автентично.”

Dimana (p.63)" Автентично е всичко, което го има на мястото. То е автентчино. Защото културата е като едно същество, което се променя постоянно. Тоест всичко е автентично. Не мога да кажа, това е менте, това е автентично. В смисъл, всичко, което ти преживееш и видиш, то може да бъде автентично. И то става автентично за твоето лично изживяване."

Dimana (p.64)" Колкото и тъпо да звучи, това е, че хората много мислят за останалите. В смисълтова е най-автентичната, най-истинската японска черта, е това,че всеки постоянно се съобразява с другия, да не го нарани, да не му причини неудобство. {...} Ето, защо бих казала,че отношението на хората е автентнично, дор и на някои да им се струват престорено мили и престорено се грижат за теб. Не хората мислят за те би се съборазяват с теб и това според мен е нещо доста автентично и японско и нещо истинско японско.

Dimana (p.65) „ Като цяло разваля преживяването. Не можеш да се насладиш на мястото, независимо колко е красиво или популярно. Ако има хора, преживяването си е като да гледаш снимка или нещо такова. „

Diaman, (p. 66) „ Храмовете не са автентично. Не мога да кажа, че храната е автентично, защото по-голяма част от храната са променени китайски рецепти. Япония, като цяло, е трудна за определяне дали е автентична или не. Защото винаги има нещо, което е внесено и преработено. „

Dimana (p.67) '' Колкото по неавтентично е, толкова по японско е за мен"

APPENDIX C: TRANSCRIPTIONS

TIHOMIR

[00:00:01.10] R: Before we start I want to ask you if it's OK to record the interview?

[00:00:06.13] I: Yeah, it's OK.

[00:00:07.18] R: Thank you. So before we start I want to tell you that there are no right or wrong answers. I am only interested only in your opinion on the questions I am going to ask. Please, don't be concerned with providing me with the right answers. It is only your opinion that's important.

[00:00:31.01] R: So would you please introduce yourself briefly. What is your name, what do you do?

[00:00:38.08] I: My name is Tihomir Manev. I am currently studying in Osaka University in Japan as a research student in the Faculty of Lecturers. That's basically it.

[00:01:01.16] R: Let's talk about travel habits. Why do you travel?

[00:01:08.17] I: Well up until now, if it is abroad I always travelled to Japan like three times and they were all in order to study here. I have been here for one year and I will be here for two or more years. Even though I am here to study I don't always do that, I travel across Japan to places I like. For example I like visiting old temples and buildings. So I sometimes drive to such sites.

[00:02:11.24] R: Awesome, so does sightseeing motivate you to travel?

[00:02:12.18] I: Yes.

[00:02:16.03] R: Is there anything else you look to do while you are on a holiday?

[00:02:22.14] I: While on a holiday I like to eat. I like to try things.

[00:02:36.01] R: What kind of activities you like to do while traveling? Like would you say you are motivated to go someplace just to try the food?

[00:02:47.13] I: I rarely go to some place only to try the food. Usually I just want to see the place and of course I want to try their food, to see what the people are like there. I just want to feel the environment. See the different aspects of the place.

[00:03:14.27] R: How important is for you the place you visit to be popular?

[00:03:18.29] I: Not really important. The most important thing for me is to have some interest in that place. Like if I have seen it on the internet or some friend has told me it's a nice place or something. That's enough for me.

[00:03:43.24] R: What would motivate you more to visit the place - if you get information from a personal contact, like a friend or relatives or if you checked previews on the internet.

[00:03:54.15] I: I think that personal contacts are more important. Even if I get information from a personal contact I check the information for myself as far as possible. Usually I check the internet, on what it looks like, where it is and other general things. And if I like it and it's nice, I usually go.

[00:04:34.08] R: When you look for a place to visit, do you look if the place is authentic?

[00:04:40.16] I: Authentic? I am no really sure about that. Probably not...If it's authentic it's OK, probably better. But that's not really relevant.

[00:05:00.04] R: How would you define authentic to your understanding.

[00:05:17.07] I: I don't know, like something unique, that you cannot see somewhere else. Something like that. Something that does not exist anywhere else.

[00:05:35.26] R: We are talking about Japan, so what do you think authentic about Japan is?

[00:05:35.21] I: Well...Generally its culture. It's pretty different than other countries. If you compare it to some of the other East Asian countries it has some similarities. Even compared to them it has its uniqueness. That's what Japan is probably famous for. Like I said in the beginning, the things I like the most are like the traditional

architecture, some of its foods, the atmosphere in general. Like when I go to some old temple or some old street or place.

[00:07:07.23] I: If I go to such a place I like the atmosphere itself. For me especially some places. For example one of my favourite is Fushiminarytaisha in Kyoto, which is a shintoist temple and like when I go there, it's like I enter in the world of Japanese fairy tales. I cannot explain it pretty well, but I really like that.

[00:07:54.17] R: So authenticity for you would be something connected with feelings?

[00:07:58.04] I: Yeah, to some extent probably.

[00:08:04.28] R: What would influence your perception if something is authentic or not? Like when you said that for you authentic is something unique and you cannot see it anywhere else, but if you take an example of something you think authentic or unique, what will influence your perception that it is or not?

[00:08:34.00] I: As I said I connect authentic with unique or something similar. So for example if there are a lot of instances of something, for example some kind of food. If I can find same food or similar food somewhere, it's not really authentic to me. If I can find the food only in the specified place, it is authentic for this place. Something like that.

[00:09:27.14] R: Can you give me an example of something authentic Japanese?

[00:09:31.23] I: The first thing that came to my mind is namayatsukaki, which is a kind of traditional Japanese pastry, which is strongly related with Kyoto and you can usually find it only there. So it's the most famous traditional Japanese pastry in Kyoto. It's one of my favourite actually. For me this is authentic for Kyoto, because I can only find it there. And in fact if I hear Kyoto and food this is the first thing that comes into my mind.

[00:10:59.05] I: Or for example religion or architecture or something. For example if it's religions - shinto is authentic for Japan and you cannot see it anywhere else. I don't know if there is even a similar religion out there. There might be, but not to my knowing. So this is something authentic to the country. If it's architecture, the traditional one I think that anybody can picture it. Not really authentic to Japan. Yes, the Japanese style is a bit different than the one in China or Thailand, but for me because it's really similar, the Japanese borrowed it from the Chinese or Korean, it's really not authentic. It's authentic to the whole of East Asia.

[00:12:28.02] R: What did change your perception on what's authentic or not?

[00:12:36.02] I: I don't know. If the Japanese architecture was something really different, which I cannot see anywhere else, it will be authentic only to Japan. That will change it. In the case of architecture for me it's really similar to the one in China or Korea, so it's not really authentic. Of course they are not exactly the same, but on a general level they have a lot of similarities.

[00:13:13.29] R: OK and how important is to you that something is authentic or not?

[00:13:19.04] I: It's not really that much. It's nice if something is authentic, but even if it isn't, if it's something which I like, it does not matter. If it looks nice, for example a building or food or a drink or even music or a book, if it's something I like, it doesn't matter. It's important for me just to like it. For me it does not necessary needs to be authentic.

[00:14:02.15] R: You said that you like sightseeing, like for example when you travel you will not choose a destination, whether you heard or read somewhere it is authentic.

[00:14:12.26] I: Nope, not really. I don't really look for that information. I just search for something that I like, for example I want to visit a temple. And I just see some temple on the internet and I really like it. I just search like where it is, I search for some other pictures and if it looks nice I just go there. I don't compare it to some other temple to see if it is different from them or not. It may be the same like some other temple. It doesn't really matter to me. I just go there because I like it.

[00:15:03.24] R: Let's talk a bit about your travels in Japan. I mean I know you are there, but you have been there already two times. And this is the third time.

[00:15:11.27] I: That's the third time, yes.

[00:15:14.13] R: Ok, so let's talk a bit about that. So why did you travel to Japan in the first place. Why did you choose Japan?

[00:15:21.15] I: I just came here to study, because my major is Japanese and for me the best place to study Japanese is Japan. So that's why I came here in the first place. And the reason why I study Japanese, just because I like the language and it sounds interesting to me. Basically that's it. I just wanted to understand it.

[00:16:06.26] R: So you visited for study reasons. So while on your exchange, did you look to travel in the country?

[00:16:16.27] I: Yeah, of course. I didn't travel that much, actually. But of course I travelled.

[00:16:27.14] R: What interested you? Like what places did you want to check, why did you choose them?

[00:16:36.23] I: For instance I went to the famous places that I knew beforehand. And I knew them because they were famous. So that's normal. Because I have seen them on TV or on the internet and they look nice and I wanted to visit them. That's why I wanted to visit them. At least some of them. The other ones, that are not that famous, some of them some friends told me about them, like for example a friend of mine told me about it. He said let's go to some temples. And for example in Kyoto there are Fushiminari, with some fox statues and I said that that sounded really nice and let's go check it. I went there and it became one of my favourite places in Japan. Another reason is because the first time I was here I didn't go by myself, but rather some people took me there. I was still in a program and that was part of the program, visiting some places. And they just took us to different places. And that's another way to visit something for me. For example I visited Miyajima in Hiroshima, I visited some places in Tokyo, in Kiyomizudera and the Golden Pavilion, Kinkakuji. They took me there. It wasn't because I wanted to but because it was a part of the program. Of course it was nice, but it wasn't something I planned. It was something planned for me.

[00:19:11.24] R: How important is for you to plan your trips yourself? To choose the places that you visit?

[00:19:21.27] I: I prefer to choose the places I visit because I have the freedom to choose something that I like. If someone else chooses for me, I am not sure if they will choose a place I would like. It may happen that the place is OK for me, but maybe it is not. Because people are different. And have different standards. I prefer to choose a place by myself.

[00:19:56.05] R: You said that you prefer to choose the place yourself because they might choose a place you would not like. What is a place that you would not like in Japan?

[00:20:22.05] I: For example in the Japanese Disneyland. Like an amusement park. I am not really a fan of this. If they are famous one like the real Disneyland or Universal Studios and somebody invited me, I would go. I would not really like it and I would prefer to go somewhere else. That's one thing.

[00:21:00.12] R: Could the fact that you do not want to go to an amusement park be related to authenticity in some way?

[00:21:04.21] I: I don't think so. I just don't like such places. I don't find them interesting. I don't like the attractions, I don't find them amusing. That's the only reason.

[00:21:34.02] R: And how would you describe your travels in Japan. Were you satisfied?

[00:21:41.13] I: Yes generally I was. But actually I haven't travelled that much and there are a lot of places I still haven't seen. And there are places I want to see. So I will probably travel much more in the incoming years.

[00:22:09.08] R: How did you imagine Japan and the places that you visited before you travelled abroad? Were your expectations met when you went there?

[00:22:20.09] I: Well generally yes. So maybe some places look a bit more ordinary than I imagined. But it wasn't really on disappointing level. It was still OK. It is my major, Japanese, to some extent Japanese culture, so even before visiting Japan I was to some extent prepared to what it would be. So I wasn't really shocked or something.

[00:23:05.29] R: Was there any place that did not meet your expectations?

[00:23:13.28] I: Maybe the Golden Pavilion. Everyone talks about how really beautiful it is. I don't know. It's really nice you should go there... And I went there, it was nice, but it wasn't that much of a thing. It was just as nice as another normal temple.

[00:23:53.29] R: Let's take Kinkakuji as an example, because I had two interviews before that and just to give you a background, there are many people that have no idea what that is. And they said, that they do not perceive it authentic, because it's golden. I wanted to ask you if you think that the story behind it is important. Because you said you weren't exactly satisfied and it was as beautiful as any other local temple, but it's still a very, very popular tourist destination. So would you say the story behind it would bring more value to it.

[00:24:55.01] I: For me it could do something like that. If we are talking about Kinkakuji, it doesn't really matter for me. It's not that interesting story. I don't remember it fully but the fact that I do not remember it, shows that it's not that interesting to me. If it is a place that's interesting for me, it would make the whole place more interesting for me. I like places with interesting stories.

[00:25:29.11] R: So the story is important. Is it important when you select the place?

[00:25:36.05] I: Yes, why not. But if it is part of the reason to like some of the places, yes. But even if there is not interesting story, but the place itself is beautiful, the buildings are beautiful, the nature is beautiful, then it's still OK. But if it has a nice story or an interesting story behind it, it's another reason to make it interesting. And as I said, if we are talking about Kinkakuji, even the story isn't that interesting.

[00:26:28.20] R: It was just an example, because it was very popular, so I just grabbed the first popular example.

[00:26:36.13] I: I actually really don't know why it's so popular. Probably because it's golden and in Japan, there aren't other golden temples. Probably because of that.

[00:26:53.11] R: Do you think that there are places in Japan, that don't have to be heritage sites, it could be anything ranging from technology, pop culture and so on. Do you think that the Japanese government has it on the agenda, to make places popular for tourists. Like to say "invent them"?

[00:27:21.00] R: Do you think that there are such "invented" places in Japan? Like tourist traps.

[00:27:35.05] I: As far as I know at the moment the Japanese government is trying to make Japan as a whole a more popular tourist attraction worldwide. It has some efforts for sure. For example making a heritage site a UNESCO one, is a part of this policy. And is a way to make something more popular. So Japan is one of the countries in the world with the most heritage sites. It simply has a lot of them. And it's all because of the government.

[00:28:45.06] R: Sixteen as of last year or seventeen.

[00:28:53.06] I: So yeah that's one of the examples I can give. Other precautions of the government are like making the Yen cheaper.

[00:29:08.06] R: And it's working. They registered the highest visitor count in April this year.

[00:29:19.15] I: And for example if I compare Kyoto or Osaka now, to three years ago, when I was here for a year. There are really a lot more people. Foreigners. In Kyoto there are always foreigners there, but now there are even more, it's always crowded. And in Osaka, there were some foreigners but not that much. Now when you go in the city centre in Umeda, or Nanba, Shinsaibashi you can really see there are a lot of foreigners now. You can feel that there are a lot more tourists coming.

[00:30:11.10] R: There are many people that say that they wouldn't visit a place, because there are many tourists visiting it. Not exactly heritage sites like Kinkakuji or Kiomizudera, but let's say restaurants that are popular with foreigners. Would you say that this is true for yourself? Would you think that if it's popular among tourists, it's not authentic?

[00:30:32.09] I: Not really. I don't really mind there being a lot of tourists, but I would mind if it was really crowded. I would still go probably if it's a place I like, but it's just that if it is really crowded, it will be not really convenient. For example you go somewhere and there is a crowd, like you go for example ten meters in twenty minutes. You can't really walk normally. That's really not nice. That's one thing I don't like. But if they thought of some way to make it not that crowded or easier to travel, walk around, then it's not really a problem for me.

[00:31:53.08] R: Would you say that the fact that you know the language helped you to perceive the country better?

[00:31:57.23] I: Yeah, I think for Japan, that's really important. If you don't know the language you wouldn't really be able to talk with people here. You can talk with some people, but usually most people here don't know other languages than Japanese. Especially English, their English is really bad. If you meet a person on the street or if you go to a store somewhere, the chances that they would speak good English are not really high I think. Speaking in Japanese for me is really important. Not only to understand their culture, but also for being here as a whole. You can do it without Japanese, especially if you are here on a short term, but it's a lot more convenient to know Japanese. Especially if you want to make friends, if you want to understand the people.

[00:33:22.00] R: Do you think it's important to understand the people to understand the culture?

[00:33:24.11] I: Yes of course, because people and culture are related so it is very important. Culture is something that people have created after all. So if you know the people, you know at least some part of the culture.

[00:34:00.12] R: I think that's about it. Would you like to add something more?

[00:34:18.20] I: I really don't have anything else to add.

[00:34:40.23] R: Thank you and I will stop the recording.

RADOSTIN

[00:00:00:01] R: Small talk. Irrelevant to the project information.

[00:14:10.00] R: Thank you for agreeing to this interview and before we start I want to ask you if it's OK to record.

[00:14:39.20] I: Yeah, sure it's fine.

[00:14:45.05] R: Awesome, so before we start up, I wanted to tell you that there are no wrong or right answers. I am only interested at what you think regarding the questions I am going to ask you. So please do not hesitate to answer from your heart.

[00:14:59.13] I: OK.

[00:15:01.25] R: Can you, please, briefly introduce yourself.

[00:15:01.21] I: My name is Radostin Orozov, I am studying in Japan for a year. And I am interested in Japanese culture and the Japanese language in general. And well... I am a fourth year student at my university in Bulgaria. I am 23 years old.

[00:15:32.26] R: OK, let's start with something general. Why do you travel?

[00:15:34.01] I: I travel mostly to meet new people and to find different cultures and to learn how different people from different cultures think and perceive things. To see new places, to learn stuff about the world.

[00:16:06.11] R: OK, what do you look to do, while traveling?

[00:16:07.12] I: I try to go not only to places where tourists go to, like the famous tourist sites, but also I try to meet people in an informal setting, for example in bars or restaurants or places where not every tourist will go, so I can feel the spirit, the real atmosphere of the place that I am visiting.

[00:16:41.15] R: OK, well please elaborate on that. Why do you think that a place with no tourists will be real?

[00:16:46.21] I: I am sorry, come again?

[00:16:49.17] R: Would you please elaborate on what you just said, because you just said that places without tourists would be places that you would visit, to feel the real atmosphere. So why do you think so?

[00:17:03.00] I: Well, because if it's a tourist site, than everyone will be working there from that country would try to best show their country as a hospitable, that the hospitality of their country is great, their food is great, that their culture is great and that may not necessarily be the way that the tourists are shown, when they go to a tourist site in general. That's my opinion at least, but yeah. So I think if you go to a please with less tourists, some back alley or somewhere you may find something different about the country that you are visiting.

[00:17:47.22] R: OK, so when you select a destination that you should visit. Would you say it is important for you, the place to be popular or would you prefer to select a place that is not? Or maybe both?

[00:18:01.22] I: I do not choose places to visit based on popularity, like for instance if I find a country that is interesting and I want to visit it, I do not care if it's popular or not. I just follow my interests, to put it simply.

[00:18:25.26] R: You say, that it's important for you to visit a place that's authentic?

[00:18:26.16] I: Ahhh, authentic?

[00:18:34.05] R: Yes.

[00:18:34.05] I: How would I know it's authentic?

[00:18:34.15] R: That was my next question. What do you think authentic is?

[00:18:40.16] I: Haah...Or maybe the thing that I talked about earlier, but in tourist sites, the culture and the food and the atmosphere that get presented, may not necessary be as authentic as when we go to a place that there is less tourists and the real spirit of the country. So maybe that is what I am looking for, that is what I think authenticity is for me. Visiting the tourist sites, they offer so authenticity, but it's man-made to an extent. That's what I think.

[00:19:28.01] R: I can give you an example of academic literature on what they say about authenticity. They connect it with feelings and it has to be something old, but it can also be something new. Authentic things can be objects, as well as let's say cultural experiences like festivals or dances. Would you say that's true for you?

[00:19:53.12] I: To a point, yes. Old stuff, for example a castle will not get as authentic as it is. I mean. You can't fake that. The authenticity of a castle is the way it is. If it is of course renewed, in a way that ruins its authenticity. Like it is not like the way it was in the old days, then I think that the authenticity is a bit ruined. But I do believe that the atmosphere of a say a marketplace that is famous with visitors, with tourists, may not be as authentic as when you go to a marketplace that is not famous with visitors.

[00:20:58.26] R: OK, so to just see if I am getting it correctly. You connect authenticity with what the local perceive as authentic?

[00:21:07.22] I: Yes. Yes you may say that.

[00:21:12.08] R: Ok. Why do you think so?

[00:21:18.23] I: That is because every country tries to present itself in the best way possible to tourists. For example when you be in Bulgaria.

(ACTIVITY) Interview is momentary interrupted by a phone call to the participant.

[00:22:09.12] I: I am sorry.

[00:22:16.08] R: We were talking about why do you think that what the locals think is authentic can be authentic for you.

[00:22:24.14] I: Because locals know their culture best and in tourist sites people try to present their country in the best way possible, which may not always be the truest way, which may not be authentic. For example we can show to tourists that Bulgaria is full of Christians for example. We can show them all the churches and people would say, yeah Bulgaria is a Christian country. But we still have Muslim people there, right. To us Bulgaria will always be like Christians and Muslims living together. But we choose on our own to show tourists that Bulgaria is only a Christian country for example. Yeah, so what locals choose to show tourists may not always be authentic, that is why I prefer to go to places where locals don't on purpose try to show tourists the county but they just interact with the people.

[00:23:35.17] R: But don't you think that the popular tourist destinations have been selected, let's say by the people, the local people or the government, as tokens of their most cherished historical moments, that they want to share with other people?

[00:23:49.23] I: Yeah, but there are also places that they do not chose to share, right?

[00:23:56.21] R: Yes.

[00:23:56.21] I: And I think it's important to go to both places. I am not saying that you should not go to the popular place, but just not only go to the popular places.

[00:24:12.22] R: I am just provoking you. On purpose. Would you give me an example of something authentic, according to you?

[00:24:22.17] I: Ahhh....Something authentic...Is it OK if I think about it?

[00:24:37.03] R: Sure! From your visit to Japan, for example?

[00:24:37.03] I: I was just thinking about it, but...For example when I went here with my mother on a 10 day tour around Japan two years ago. We went to Taxa and we went to Moseima's place, where is a temple there. About when I went to Tokyo or when I went to the same place with my friends this year. This year we went to Osokos, but since Osokos is a neighbourhood in Tokyo, it has a lot of small back alleys and roads, where you can meet people, which are not actually used to interacting with tourists, because not all tourists go there. I met a couple of middle aged people and we talked to them a little and it was completely different because those back alleys, they are quiet and they are not full of people. Not only tourists, but also Japanese people, so they offered a completely different atmosphere. When you go to Tokyo and you go to all these famous places, there are not only a lot of tourists, but a lot of Japanese people doing some work or going about their business, but there are a lot of people there. Then you get the sense that Tokyo is full of people everywhere you go. But right next to the place where we visited with my mother two year ago, where all the tourists usually go, there were these quite little streets that people were actually

drinking and having fun and it offered a completely different atmosphere of Tokyo that actually I didn't expect to see.

[00:26:54.05] R: How was the atmosphere different?

[00:26:57.07] I: Well it wasn't crowded, people were there to enjoy themselves and it was different, because the usual sense that you get from Tokyo is that everybody is only there to work and they are always under some sort of stress and in a hurry and it's not always that. That's not always the case.

[00:27:31.22] R: Ok, can you give me another example of something that is not authentic?

[00:27:31.22] I: Something that is not authentic? In Japan or in general?

[00:27:41.17] R: Could be in Japan.

[00:27:59.27] R: Because you are talking about how for you the experience was authentic in the back alleys, where it was not crowded. So I was just wondering how would you define if something is authentic or not?

[00:28:17.02] I: If you do not have a basis to compare it, you would not know if it's authentic or not. The first time I was in Tokyo I thought that the usual crowded places with the people worrying about their jobs and hurrying somewhere that was the atmosphere. But when I went there the second time this year, I realised that that may not be authentic atmosphere that may not be the case for everyone living in Tokyo. Not all of Tokyo is crowded and full of people worried about their jobs.

[00:28:59.00] R: So would you say that something authentic for you would be construction from all the different ways people perceive something. Because you said that the first time you went it was crowded and it was something normal and authentic for Japanese people, but then when you went the second time, your perception changed. Would you say for something to be authentic for you it is important to see all the different sides of the same problem.

[00:29:32.15] I: Ah...yes. That is what I find as authentic.

[00:29:38.14] R: Yes, but why?

[00:29:38.14] I: Well because everything has it's too sides I guess. You can't feel everything about a place just by going to one or two famous places of a country. You can't feel that country the same way you would feel it, if you tried to perceive it from the other way. From how locals perceive it. How their daily lives are and not just how they are trying to show it to tourists. That's what I think authentic is.

[00:30:22.15] R: What can influence you perception of what is authentic and what is not.

[00:30:25.19] I: What would make me think something is not authentic?

[00:30:35.14] R: For example, or what you never though that it was authentic, would suddenly you will perceive it in another way. What could influence?

[00:30:49.22] I: I can't speak in general about that.

[00:30:55.13] R: OK, then give me an example.

[00:30:55.13] I: For example, in Veliko Tarnovo the castle of Tsarevets. I was told that it used to look that way in the middle ages, that is restored the way it is now. The way it is restored now is the way how it used to look in the middle ages. But then I talked to some archaeologists friends, who told me that it did not use to look like that at all. And that is how it ruined the authenticity for me, for example. Because it didn't have...It was created more as a tourist attraction, rather than to show Bulgaria's culture or capital the way it used to be. So I think that ruined the authenticity for me. Now I see it as an attraction, the way you would see a theme park perhaps. Which is different than the cultural heritage site, I think.

[00:32:06.13] R: Do you think it's important to preserve the original form?

[00:32:12.00] I: That is the most authentic thing when it comes to culture and heritage, because it's something we have inherited from our ancestors, so we need to show it to people as something we have inherited, something that is a part of our heritage, we have to perceived it the way it is and try to preserve it for future generations in the same way.

[00:32:47.23] R: So how would you way, your personal knowledge regarding any culture, for example Japanese, would influence how you perceive something as authentic or not.

[00:33:02.16] I: Well knowledge about it at first. If I know more about something then I can judge on my own if it's authentic or not. Then I would also try to see if what is shown to me right now is the way the locals are trying to

show it to me, so I can tell my friends that it is authentic and everybody can go and see it. Or whether it is actually not so great or is different, its purpose was different or something. I would try to judge the things that I am shown or the place that I am shown is trying to be offered to me. If the people from that country are trying to show it to me in a certain way, that may not necessary show it the way it was meant to be. So that will ruin the authenticity for me.

[00:34:24.23] R: OK, I will talk in terms of Japan, so now that you are there, what influences your choice for a place to visit?

[00:34:38.04] I: Well mostly places that I haven't been to and when my friends recommend to go to.

[00:34:59.03] R: If you want we can talk about the first time you were there, as a tourist. How did you choose the first time the destinations or the places you visited?

[00:35:04.23] I: When I came here as a tourist it was a tour, so we did not have a choice to go to. We just had predetermined places that we had to visit. And since there are not a lot of tourist companies that offer tours of Japan and most of these companies have the same tours we could not choose a lot. But when I came here, I month after I arrived in Japan last year, I was told by friends that in Nagano there is this traditional Japanese inn, which I was told I should visit, because it had a rich history. So I decided that I should go there since I have not been there. And it had a rich history and it wasn't that famous with tourists and Japanese people don't know it that much. So I went there and I was very delighted by how there was a tour of the place and a tour guide told us a lot about its history. How it was used to be made in different ways. So that's why I chose to go there. I got it recommended by friends who had actually been there. And it is preserved the way it used to be in the old days. So I think it was authentic in a way. That's why I chose it.

[00:37:02.06] R: Do you think that places that have been visited by many people, it doesn't need to be tourist, even locals it somehow ruins the authenticity of the place?

[00:37:11.01] I: No. I don't think so. Of course it depends on the place. If it's too authentic for people to go and see it, that a different matter entirely. I think there are these lakes in Rila in Bulgaria. There were a lot of people who actually visit them and because people trample the grass on the lakes, they are starting to become like swamps, because a lot of mud is going in the lakes. Because of the people gathering around them. And that kind of since it is a natural phenomenon I don't think we can talk about in terms of authenticity, but it ruins it in a way.

[00:38:16.19] R: Do you think that the same thing is happening to Japan?

[00:38:21.19] I: No, I don't think so. Because it's a very culturally rich country, with a lot of cultural heritage and I don't think that cultural heritage of any country can be striped just by having a lot of people. I think the opposite would be true. If few tourists go to a certain country then that country will try it's best to appeal itself to tourists and will try to bend the way its culture and customs would work, in order to appeal to those tourists. But when it comes to Japan, I think it is interesting the way it is. So a lot of people continue to come here and it will not hurt in any way the culture. So no, I don't think that a lot of people coming to Japan is hurting it or its authenticity in any way.

[00:39:28.11] R: And how would you regard the incident in Fukushima?

[00:39:34.17] I: I think it was unfortunate, but it was preventable.

[00:39:42.28] R: Did it influence in some kind your perception of the Japanese culture or heritage.

[00:39:52.26] I: No, it did not.

[00:39:55.21] R: I am asking because, as you know after the incident they had an influx of tourists in Japan, because they perceived it dangerous and so on, and so forth. But there are many people that tend to visit Japan, because they perceive that because of the tsunami and earthquakes they would not have the chance to visit the island in the future due to natural disasters.

[00:40:23.19] I: Well I haven't heard about that but I don't think that's the one reason to come to Japan. For me the incident in Fukushima did not deter me from coming here at all, since first of all the place that I visited are far away from there, secondly there is this, the people who were actually in the danger zone, were evacuated and there was any danger for people living farther away, the Japanese government would have looked after them in a way. So it did not influence me in any bad way. Like radiation is supposedly contained so it did not deter me in any way from coming here.

[00:41:33.23] R: And I was there exactly after the incident and I am still alive.

[00:41:38.02] I: Yes, that is true.

[00:41:43.21] R: How was your perception of Japan before you went there the first time. Did Japan meet your expectations?

[00:41:54.22] I: Yes and no. I thought that they have Wi-Fi, like we have this perception of Japan, that it is technologically advanced nation and it is. But it's not the land of the future. Like for example when I came here first I was really disappointed that there is no Wi-Fi everywhere you go. That was really strange for me. I thought because in Bulgaria we have places with free Wi-Fi, apparently more than in Japan, which surprised me. That is something that surprised me. Also I knew that Japanese people are obsessed with rules, like they believe that a society can function properly if everyone is following set rules. I did not expect it to be that important in Japan. That is another thing that I knew it was important, but not to that extent.

[00:43:45.01] R: How do you think that your personal knowledge of the Japanese culture before traveling influenced your perception of the country?

[00:43:53.08] I: It was important, but I learned more while I was here. Because it was simply a matter of how everyone's memory works. When you see something and then you hear how it was made and its history, you remember more about it, than when you read about it in a book. So you can definitely learn more stuff, when you are traveling.

[00:44:29.06] R: Do you think it was important that you had the pre-existing knowledge before travel. Do you think you would be able to experience more or the culture. Or maybe not?

[00:44:41.07] I: Well if you haven't studied anything about the place, if you haven't read anything before going there. When you go there you will learn a lot about it. I don't think it is necessary to learn more about the place before going there. Yes to a certain degree, not to break some rule, or thing that you should not have done and cause trouble to people. To that point yes, but you can travel and learn on your own, just don't cause people trouble. So yeah, maybe just a bit. A little prior knowledge might not hurt.

[00:45:35.28] R: Did you read any additional information before traveling?

[00:45:39.00] I: No.

[00:45:44.04] R: And now do you read, when you are there?

[00:45:49.24] I: I read a little, but I mostly have my Japanese friends to explain to me, when something is appropriate or not. Or when I want to know something about their ways. At least they tell where to read some stuff about it, but I rarely read on my own. We have classes about that so I don't count that as reading about the place.

[00:46:23.29] R: And do you think that knowing the language is important for a person as a tourist to experience what is authentic about Japan?

[00:46:34.15] I: For Japan in particular it's really helpful to know about the language. Because a lot of Japanese people have trouble studying English and for example in hotels, the people working in the reception. You would think that they would know English in order to meet the guests and perform their duties, but that is not always the case. In fact, a lot of Japanese people working in hotels do not have any idea how to talk in English, once spoken to. So learning the Japanese language in Japan would be helpful in traveling.

[00:47:26.03] R: And now when you have experienced travel in Japan, how would you say your perception on what is authentic and what is not has changed.

[00:47:28.05] I: My perception of authenticity has not changed a bit I think. I listen to other people, but then again I always think about it on my own. So it has not changed my perception for the authenticity of Japan. It is the way I thought it would be and it hasn't changed a bit.

[00:48:26.26] R: So I think this is about it. Do you want to add anything else?

[00:48:26.26] I: No, I don't have anything else.

[00:48:26.26] R: Thank you for this interview and now I will stop the recording.

PETYA

[00:00:03.06] R: And now we are recording so thank you for agreeing on this interview. Just some record would you agree to record it?

[00:00:08.10] I: Yes, I agree it's okay

[00:00:13.27] R: Thank you very much and would you introduce yourself briefly

[00:00:19.14] I: My name is Petya Toncheva, I'm from Bulgaria, 25 years old. Currently working, hopefully going to university again

[00:00:32.06] R: Good, good, and just before we begin the main part of the interview, I want to set some rules that there are no wrong or right answers I'm going to ask you some things about japan and your travel there and some other things, but i want you to know that you shouldn't look for the right answer to the question. The only thing important is your opinion.

[00:00:58.09] I: Okay

[00:00:58.09] R: And let's start with some general information. So, why do you travel?

[00:01:03.10] I: I did travel to japan...

[00:01:08.06] R: Why do you travel in general?

[00:01:08.28] I: Why do I travel in general. Well, for fun, for the experience, for (unclear text)

[00:01:25.28] R: And what do you look to do when travelling?

[00:01:32.17] I: I want to learn a little bit more about the culture of the country i visit, sightseeing, to know the people a little bit better

[00:01:49.20] R: How do you select the place to travel to?

[00:01:53.28] I: It got to have really, really rich history, something to be seen there, something to explore, like (unclear text), like the myths, the mythology.

[00:02:09.11] R: Okay and is that important for you when you select the place you travel to for the place to be popular tourist destination?

[00:02:21.22] I: No I don't think that is the most important thing.

[00:02:26.11] R: Why?

[00:02:26.11] I: it doesn't matter to me if there are a lot of people or not. if i really like the place, culture, history and everything else it doesn't matter if there are a lot of tourists or if it is popular for other people or not.

[00:02:44.25] R: and is that important for you if the place or the thing is authentic?

[00:02:51.17] I: yes.

[00:02:53.02] R: why

[00:02:54.24] I: because if it's not authentic i can see it everywhere else and the whole journey, the whole travelling, the experience have (unclear text)

[00:03:09.14] R: okay, and this was my next question. How would you define authentic?

[00:03:12.17] I: how would i define authentic. well, for example in japan, their traditions they are well preserved, and you can see how people react to their mutual environment, and how they react to other people. you can see a part not only of their lives, but of their culture and their spiritual how to say it mentality if you like.

[00:03:45.25] R: and you said you choose your destination to travel to if it's authentic or not, what would influence your perception if it's authentic or not?

[00:04:01.27] I: probably if they preserved their traditions, their culture, for example like Greece - they preserve their mythology and they cherish their history

[00:04:22.28] R: so just to summarize and to check if i undestand correctly, you connect authenticity with let's say history of the nation, and it has to be time-related, in other words for something to be authentic it has to be preserved from the past? is that it?

[00:04:44.01] I: yes, kind of. preserve the old traditions, maybe to combine them with the new but still to see the true (unclear word) of the people and the country

[00:04:54.12] R: this something authentic is in your opinion is something that is related to an object or more like tradition and culture or maybe both?

[00:05:05.19] I: maybe both. that depends on the ..

[00:05:12.27] R: can you give me an example of something really authentic in your opinion? could be connected to japan.

[00:05:19.28] I: the very first thing that comes into my mind (unclear text) for japan (unclear text) tourism and temples. you can see that they are closely related to history and they are fragments of peoples lives, there all the time. they connect to them. i don't know how to explain it.

[00:05:54.20] R: however you feel like. and how about something you don't perceive authentic?

[00:06:03.12] I: things that are brought from other countries and just mess up the whole view of the country. like when you import something really, really new that doesn't suit really well with the culture. just doesn't fit in the whole ...

[00:06:31.26] R: can you give me an example?

[00:06:35.05] I: umm, like in japan you can see really, really authentic things and the small buildings, japanese pond and you see a whole street packed with different kinds of clothes that are not even near to japanese style and you can see all those foreigners. not that i am racist just it is not like... like you're not in japan, like you're in another country in the world.

[00:07:16.08] R: how do you judge if something is authentic or not?

[00:07:22.21] I: i don't know really, that depends on the person's perception. i can see that the thing is cherished by all those people that live there and it's part of their lives. maybe that's enough for me to consider it authentic.

[00:07:48.12] R: okay. let's put authenticity in terms of travelling, so how important is for you for the place you visit to be labeled authentic?

[00:08:02.09] I: Really important I could say.

[00:08:05.27] R: why?

[00:08:06.11] I: cause that's the whole nature of the country. its heart and soul, if you put it in other words. in these words.

[00:08:18.17] R: does it bring more value for your travel if the place or the thing you are experiencing is said to be authentic?

[00:08:26.19] I: yes. i think so.

[00:08:30.10] R: okay. why?

[00:08:33.03] I: cause the experience is different. it is not like you can go for an example to america i don't hink there are so many authentic things there that you would still remember them after 20 or 30 years.

[00:08:56.24] R: mhm. do you think if the thing you're experiencing is authentic, do you think it will bring more let's say ??? would it bring more feelings?

[00:09:10.03] I: yeah.

[00:09:12.22] R: so would you say that you connect authenticity with let's say inspiration or nostalgia.

[00:09:22.02] I: yes.

[00:09:23.16] R: okay. Why? my absolutely favourite question in the world. Why?

[00:09:30.07] I: why do i connect them? Hmm...

[00:09:36.20] R: is it important for you to have these feelings?

[00:09:40.07] I: yes, i think that they complement the experience for me from the country and from the people there and when you look back to the time you visited some place and you remember the things that you saw there it brings not only memories, but feelings and it's like kind of you live in the country, the streets you connect with the people. even though you're not from there.

[00:10:22.21] R: Indeed it does. let's talk in terms of how to choose a tourist destination. do you think a popular tourist destination can be authentic?

[00:10:35.10] I: yeah. they can be authentic, but not all of them i think are really, really authentic.

[00:10:42.06] R: why?

[00:10:44.03] I: cause every person has a different perception of authenticity and sometimes people choose destination to visit not for the whole experience, but just to see more people and just go shopping. and i don't think that's a criteria to travel somewhere.

[00:11:06.19] R: okay. let's talk about in terms of japan. why did you travel to japan?

[00:11:15.05] I: i was there on a programme connected with the university to get a national degree in Business, so that was the main reason why i travelled there.
[00:11:29.18] R: okay, so educational purpose. did you travel while you were there within the country?
[00:11:35.22] I: yes. a lot.
[00:11:37.29] R: okay so how did you choose the places to visit?
[00:11:42.20] I: well. First I chose places that I knew about with rich history, that i wanted to visit. places that had something that would interest me like arcs or Shinto temples or Buddhist temples.
[00:12:09.23] R: and did you look for more information about the country and the places you could visit before travelling?
[00:12:16.19] I: yes, yes.
[00:12:19.09] R: but how did you get your information?
[00:12:20.19] I: umm, via internet of course.
[00:12:29.26] R: okay. Maybe travel brochures, trip advisor.
[00:12:34.28] I: umm, no. for some of the places we checked in a travel guide, but that's not really a good, how to say it, a good criteria to base your choice of destination.
[00:12:58.00] R: okay. Why not?
[00:12:58.15] I: because in travel guides they usually write things that would interest the masses like what are the popular restaurants there, what are the popular shops there. it's not something that you would learn about the whole place.
[00:13:19.14] R: would you say the things they recommend on the internet are not authentic?
[00:13:23.04] I: sometimes I think they are not really authentic.
[00:13:27.02] R: okay. And what have you read before travelling, that would in any case or somehow change your perception of the country?
[00:13:39.16] I: the things i read before going there?
[00:13:44.17] R: yes like you said you were on a study program, you had some pre-existing knowledge about the country from your studies. so by reading this did somehow your perception of the country change?
[00:13:58.29] I: i think it changed for the better, because before going there i had a perception that was close to the situation there, but still not exactly true. When you go there and immerse in the culture and in the live everything changes. you perceive it in a different way.
[00:14:26.01] R: do you think it's important to live there in order to understand real japan?
[00:14:32.09] I: yes. if you don't spend ... even if you spend a week there, i think it would be enough to immerse in the (unclear word) of japan, but otherwise i don't think that you would trully understand it, if you just read about it or watch documentary movies or something like that.
[00:14:56.29] R: do you think it's possible to percieve authentic japan by visiting the popular destinations?
[00:15:04.06] I: umm, no. i don't think that if you visit the popular destination you would understand japan or that would make it more authentic. you have to search for the things that you're interested in and visit regions that are not popular like niigata or sapporo. it's not that it is a bit popular destination or anything but you can see how the culture is different there, how people react and you would find different kinds of arts and ...
[00:15:53.26] R: and how would you describe your experience in japan? was it satisfying?
[00:16:00.23] I: yes definitely satisfying and i think that you want you would never ever forget.
[00:16:12.11] R: did japan meet your expectations?
[00:16:14.06] I: yeah. i think that it even exceeded them
[00:16:19.12] R: oh. how?
[00:16:20.29] I: well before going there i had the perception that it's not going to be something really, really awesome, if you use the popular term, but going there and immersing in the culture and meeting people and connecting with them making friends there changed the whole perception about japan that i had.
[00:16:54.12] R: what was awesome about japan?

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[00:16:57.26] I: everything. the culture, the religion, the small authentic shops that you can see down the streets, that all handicraft stuff and how people talk, how people react to different kind of nationalities, how they perceive you as a foreigner.

[00:17:27.14] R: so i guess you're changing nationality, then?

[00:17:30.12] I: i don't think it would be possible. but i would try (unclear text)

[00:17:37.18] R: now that you have visited japan what was really authentic about it?

[00:17:46.17] I: everything, i think everything. maybe that the country saved its history and religion the best and its culture even after so many years, the people still remember their culture, still remember their history and cherish it. and they are still trying to restore the former glory that japan had before the WWII.

[00:18:24.07] R: do you think that effort is made in some way for alluring more foreigners, or do you think it's real?

[00:18:34.08] I: i don't think so. they are trying to attract more foreigners, but i think they are still trying to remain a closely connected community and they are still... how to say it... so open-minded and open-hearted to foreigners (unclear text).

[00:19:06.11] R: do you think it's important to understand the language in order to understand the culture?

[00:19:12.23] I: you can immerse in the culture even if you don't know the language, but if you do know the language i think it would help you get a better notion of the country.

[00:19:32.19] R: in what way? what would knowledge of the language bring in matters of culture?

[00:19:38.17] I: for example you can talk to people and they can explain facts and tell you stories that won't (unclear text).

[00:19:51.17] R: is it important for you to hear a story about the place or festival, let's say, from a local person?

[00:20:00.03] I: yeah, i think they could (unclear text) put life in it.

[00:20:10.05] R: okay, how?

[00:20:13.15] I: cause maybe when you read it in a magazine or there (unclear text) really connect with it, but when some people tell it, and explain things that you cannot read from there - different story.

[00:20:40.04] R: would you select the place based on the story you heard? let's say you heard in this place something happened, would you go there just to check if it's true?

[00:20:50.23] I: yeah. I've visited some places to check.

[00:20:56.28] R: okay, and you talk about the stories, so in terms of popular japanese destinations like, let's take kinkakuji for example, are there many people that are not satisfyied with their visit because it doesn't seam realistic to them? could you say that they are right?

[00:21:22.29] I: no, definitely not. cause i've visited it and not only that the scenery is magnificent, but you can feel some energy flow from it, if i could say it like that. and i think that maybe those people were not satisfyied from it, cause they didn't submerge themselves enough in the culture or...

[00:21:53.22] R: but in the particular example, would you say that this happens because their expectations are set too high by the tourist ministry?

[00:22:05.18] I: yes. sometimes maybe their expectations are too high but that is not the only reason for it. maybe they expected something more like the things they show on tv, like popular anime characters, how people are always happy and talking and really that is an aspect from japanese culture, but that's not (unclear text).

[00:22:42.16] R: do you think that media is actually changing how people perceive something is authentic or not?

[00:22:50.19] I: yes i think so.

[00:22:53.11] R: do you think that is good or bad and why?

[00:22:56.25] I: i don't think that is particularly good. media shows maybe the best from both (unclear word) in order to change the perception and in order for more popular things. and that's not always a good thing, cause culture, history and everything else that defines the place falls to the background.

[00:23:34.11] R: do you think that how media influences, do you think it could ruin the culture in any way?

[00:23:43.00] I: i think so. i think it can ruin culture in some way. maybe not in a grand way, but little by little.

[00:23:55.10] R: do you think mass tourism has the same influence, or any influence at all? do you think mass tourism would have any influence on the culture?

[00:24:09.09] I: oh, of course. (unclear text) tourist come in and out of the place.

[00:24:21.15] R: how do you think it would influence japan for example?

[00:24:25.20] I: i think that if they continue with the mass tourism, of course, money are brought in the country, but they are trying to promote more and more popular stuff and just leave anything else in the background and that... in my experience, people that i lived with, they are just looking for the popular stuff, for those anime characters that they promote on the tv and they don't focus their attention on anything else, like going to shamisen lessons, to learn how to play it, or learning how to fold origami, or experiencing things that are really, really part of the culture.

[00:25:30.04] R: okay and do you think the japanese themselves would change what is authentic about japan?

[00:25:38.07] I: i think that the new generation would change many things about the...

[00:25:47.12] R: what would be the new authentic japan? now you mentioned origami and shamisen and other folklore things that are connected with the cultural history of japan. what do you think the future would be?

[00:26:05.06] I: in the future will be really modernized japan that has forgotten everything about (unclear text).

[00:26:32.09] R: and regarding that incident in fukushima, do you think that this somehow changed the culture in the country?

[00:26:44.14] I: I think that the incident (unclear text). The basic things about their nation (unclear text)

[00:27:13.28] R: Did the incident influence viewings in any way?

[00:27:19.17] I: I wasn't there during that incident but when i was there we had volunteer (unclear text) and we had meetings about this. You can see how people suffered when they tell their stories just (unclear text).

[00:27:48.17] R: do you think the incident somehow influenced tourism and do you now think that it may have… as a place that they might not be able to visit in the future?

[00:28:05.13] I: (unclear text) a lot and more and more people perceive it like a dangerous place. Of course due to the radiation that they ????

[00:28:27.13] R: You would be quite surprised to know that japan hit a new record of tourists visiting Tokyo in April this year. 1,7mil. or something, first time in history of Japan record.

[00:28:48.15] I: that is great.

[00:28:51.28] R: Indeed it is. What places did you visit while travelling in japan?

[00:29:01.09] I: I visited probably most of Tokyo area. They are not cities inside the city but like... district, you could say it, because Tokyo is really, really big and probably it's not the best word but... I visited Kyoto and Kyoto district, Niigata, we went to Kamakura.

[00:29:56.09] R: did any of the places you visited disappoint you in some way?

[00:30:02.00] I: no.

[00:30:05.23] R: you said that your expectations were exceeded, can you give me a particular example of something that exceeded your expectations?

[00:30:14.00] I: well, at first i thought that people won't be treating you as warmly as you would like. Japanese people are not the warmest people, if you would say it like that. Yes, they are polite, but they don't show their emotions and for example i had to go into hospital there so I went with 2 Japanese girls from the university and i was just shocked how they helped me and how they reacted to the things that happened. So they can be really, really warm people and really, really sincere.

[00:31:10.24] R: do you think that the most wonderful thing about japan is the Japanese themselves?

[00:31:15.29] I: I think they are one of the things. Not the main one, but one of the things. I don't think that only the people make the country, so.

[00:31:32.03] R: Okay. I think that's about it.

[00:31:36.05] I: Okay. Glad I could help you.

[00:31:38.01] R: Is there anything else that you would like to add about your trip to japan?

[00:31:43.28] I: No.

[00:31:46.22] R: Okay, so thank you and now I'll stop the recording.

NIELS

[00:00:08.27] R: Thank you for agreeing for this interview and before we start on record is it OK if we record.

[00:00:15.19] I: Yes, I am OK for that.

[00:00:21.10] R: I want to tell you that for this interview there are no right or wrong answers. Your opinion on the topic is important. We are going to be talking about your trip to Japan, how you perceive the country and your perception about authenticity, which will explore in a minute. If you don't understand any of the questions, please ask me, I will rephrase them. It is important that you understand what I am asking.

[00:00:45.06] I: Ok.

[00:00:45.06] R: Would you introduce yourself shortly.

[00:00:50.15] I: I am Niels Montenary, I am French and I am currently in Japan in Hokkaido, in the North Japan. And it's great here. I am a student at the University of Hokkaido, currently.

[00:01:13.05] R: Let's begin with something general. Why do you travel?

[00:01:21.02] I: I got interested in Japan, since long long time ago and I like Japan, so I just wanted to be here. To live here.

[00:01:37.26] R: What interested you in Japan?

[00:01:43.07] I: Many different things. I don't know which reason was the best one. But there were many popular Japanese animations, comics and games when I was a child. And also I was doing aikido, a Japanese martial art, when I was six years old. I was also interested in all this high-tech stuff.
And I had imagined Japan as plenty of robots on the streets and a really high tech image. And also I was interested in medieval Japanese history, like samurai and ninja. Stuff like this. And I had this kind of beautiful image in my head. I tried to image like a traditional temple, traditional house in the mountain, isolated and with a wonderful cherry blossom and the Japanese women dressed like geishas. Maybe I thought that I want to live in such a thing.

[00:03:56.13] R: Now that you are there, how did your image of Japan change?

[00:04:02.13] I: Maybe there are not that many robots in the streets. It's not as high-tech as I imaged before. We don't eat sushi that often. Pretty much everything about the gastronomy is not what I actually though.

[00:04:57.05] R: Were you disappointed?

[00:04:59.25] I: Basically I had a pretty good image of Japan before coming here. I've read many books and seen many documentaries about it. So I had quite a good image, a correct image overall.

[00:05:20.13] R: Did you read any travel guides?

[00:05:21.20] I: Yes, I had a Japanese guide. I can't remember the name. But at least two hundred pages.

[00:05:42.01] R: Did the guide influence how you see Japan in any way.

[00:05:46.14] I: Yes, probably. It was a long time ago. But there were this explanation about the salaryman and they explained the combination between tradition and high-tech and all the details that I wasn't completely aware before reading the guide.

[00:06:28.23] R: How would you describe your experience in Japan. Are you traveling now in the country?

[00:06:34.07] I: Not currently. I am quite busy so I don't have much time to actually travel. But I traveled a bit last time.

[00:06:52.03] R: Ok, were you visiting as a tourist?

[00:06:56.18] I: Yeah, I was mainly traveling for study purpose, for a job interview. I was also traveling especially in Kyushu Island once. I saw Fukuoka, Kunamoto, Kagoshima, with Sakurajima and also the Asuza, another volcano. And Yakushima.

[00:08:01.23] R: How did you choose the places to visit?

[00:08:14.19] I: Mainly because it was a long round trip, so I could get a cheap flight ticket and it was a perfect season to go to this places. And I really wanted to go to Yakushima, because it is very famous as a tourist place and all the locals. And the Mononoke Hime forest.

[00:09:02.22] R: Is it important for you to visit places that are popular?

[00:09:17.13] I: Not really, probably a bit. There are some must see places that I went because they are a definite must see.

[00:09:30.24] R: How would you define "must see"?

[00:09:38.27] I: A typical must see place is recorded in the UNESCO heritage list and it's probably the place that I read a lot about.

[00:10:05.28] R: So would you say you would choose a place according to your personal interest and a place that you have a lot of knowledge about and you want to see in real life. Or would you prefer to go to a place that you haven't heard that much about?

[00:10:29.10] I: the thing is that there are so many very interesting places even with just the popular tourist places in Japan that even just producing them is enough to provide a unique experience. So I don't feel like I need to go to some different place, that's just me. But maybe later.

[00:11:12.02] R: Ok, let's talk a bit about authenticity. What is authenticity according to you?

[00:11:21.10] I: I would say that for Japan it is something that only exists in Japan. You can't find it anywhere else in the world. There are quite a lot of things like this here.

[00:11:40.14] R: Can you give me an example?

[00:11:41.23] I: The geisha, sumo, tori, the shinto temples. The architecture of the old houses. And some historical places. The sakura and the momiji, during autumn.

[00:12:35.28] R: If you want you can give me an example for something that's not authentic according to you in Japan.

[00:12:53.20] I: Of course there are many things that are not authentic in Japan. What could I mention?

[00:13:08.24] R: Maybe you can give me an example of something that you though it was authentic, but changed your mind.

[00:13:15.03] I: There are lots of foods that are actually really not Japanese, but just foreign food, that's processed in a slightly different way. Like ramen, it's only slightly different than what you can find in China or other places. And also there are a lot of French style bakeries, which are slightly different, but I would not call this authentic.

[00:14:05.07] R: Why not?

[00:14:12.10] I: Because it's just an adaptation of foreign products to the Japanese tastes. It's authentic is some way, but just part of.

[00:14:34.02] R: What would influence your perception if one thing is authentic or not? How do you judge how are things authentic or not?

[00:14:52.14] I: Good question. Ok, just give me a few seconds to think about.

[00:15:08.29] R: What exactly did you have an image about before, then suddenly acquired information and that changed your mind. Or was it because your experience went in a different way there.

[00:15:27.02] I: I think it's mainly because these are not things which I would relate to the Japanese historical culture. Things that are recent, even if it's things that you can probably only find in Japan, it's really not related to the culture of Japan, a century ago. I don't feel the authenticity.

[00:16:15.09] R: How important is for you is for a place or experience to be authentic when you travel? Let me paraphrase that. If you choose a place to visit, would authenticity influence your selection of the place.

[00:16:40.19] I: I want to see a place that tells me about the history of Japan or related to some historical event. It might be related to some specific philosophical thinking or something like this. For example with Yakushima(???) in Yakushima forest I related to the Ghibli animation of course. And this Ghibli animation is very unique I think. Very unique experience in the way of making animation and I can relate this to some philosophical thinking in some way. I feel it kind of authentic, kind of specific to Japan and unique.

[00:18:22.21] R: You know about the incident in Fukushima, right?

[00:18:23.10] I: Yes, of course.

[00:18:24.00] R: Did that influence your perception on the culture in some way?

[00:18:33.23] I: Yes and no. A bit I had some friends that spent their Christmas holidays or some weekends going to the Fukushima area and to help rebuild the region. This is some point that I didn't expect at all. And I was quite impressed, but their solidarity. So this is a good point. But on the other hand, I am of course a bit concerned what I eat. Sometimes I am thinking if the fishes are still good to eat or not. Also when I see all this automatic vending

machines, everywhere I am concerned with this. And the energy problem in Japan due to the nuclear power plants that can shut down. I am a bit disappointed.

[00:20:24.26] R: Why disappointed?

[00:20:30.19] I: Because it's kind of a bit illogical to keep spending so much energy in useless things, while they have such a big social problem.

[00:20:51.06] R: I am asking you because there are many people that after the incident wanted to visit Japan, because due to natural disasters they though that they might not be able to visit Japan in the future. Due to earthquakes, tsunamis, maybe another incident like that. So they perceive that another natural disaster might wipe Japan out of the face of the Earth.

(ACTIVITY) Connection got bad, so the Researcher had to repeat the question again.

[00:21:33.25] R: So do you think that's unreasonable?

[00:21:37.02] I: Well, there is still a probability. That's catastrophy happens in Japan, probably higher possibility there than in other places in the world. So there is a possibility of a huge earthquake in the Kanto area, that was predicted. Yeah, I think it might be a good reason.

[00:22:15.06] R: Have you been motivated to visit the place for the same reason?

[00:22:21.24] I: No, not at all.

[00:22:29.16] R: Have you been motivated to visit a place if you know that it will become really popular in the future?

[00:22:36.14] I: No, but for your previous question, I believe there is one thing I want to go to see. There are these night trains that will be stopped soon. Some got already stopped and all of them in one or two years maximum. And these trains have a kind of specific atmosphere and can be an unique experience to do, according to the image they had about it. So I would like to take a trip in a night train between Sapporo and I don't know Tokyo or Osaka or something like this, before it's stopped.

[00:23:42.22] R: OK, and some last questions. For the future places you like to visit in Japan. What would you choose?

[00:23:52.15] I: In the near future I plan to see the field with lavender that displays many different colors, like a rainbow. I hope I can see this in one or two months.

[00:24:45.18] R: What would motivate you to visit there?

[00:24:47.01] I: Because it's beautiful.

[00:25:00.11] R: How do you know it's beautiful?

[00:25:00.11] I: I saw images, photographs of it in the internet.

[00:25:16.00] R: Is there anything else you want to add?

[00:25:21.26] I: Japan is a wonderful country!

[00:25:25.00] R: Indeed it is. And that will conclude our interview, so thank you for your time.

MARTINS

[00:00:00.00] R: Ok. So thank you for agreeing on this interview. And just on record do you agree to this recording?

[00:00:07.20] I: Yes

[00:00:08.20] R: Awesome. So, before we start, I have to set some rules. There are no wrong or right answers. I'm going to ask you about how your trip in Japan went, what is your perception of authenticity and we are going to talk about those things during the interview. So if you don't understand any of the questions, please ask me, I will rephrase them for you. And I hope it's okay to be on a first name basis.

[00:00:35.06] I: Okay.

[00:00:35.19] R: Ok. So, would you please introduce yourself shortly?

[00:00:41.15] I: My name is Martins, I'm living in Denmark. I used to study in a Danish university, ICT engineering and I am currently waiting for my future education.

[00:01:05.07] R: Awesome. And let's start with some general questions. Why do you travel in general?

[00:01:11.18] I: Well, I think it's to see new places. The world is a huge place and it only becomes bigger and there are more things I want to see. So I guess it just started with the first time I travelled and then I got hooked on it. Every time I go to travel somewhere I love it.

[00:01:43.06] R: And why did you visit Japan?

[00:01:43.06] I: Well, my main reason was for a project. As I finished my 4th semester I need to have six months practice. And mainly I went to Japan, because I thought I want to see something totally different. Because previously I haven't travelled outside of Europe. So I wanted to see somewhere further than Europe.

[00:02:21.18] R: Were you interested in Japan before travelling there?

[00:02:24.02] I: I would say not too much. I had an idea about Japan, I had something that I was interested in…

[00:02:35.04] R: Like..?

[00:02:35.04] I: The culture, the history but I wasn't studying the language or communicating with people before that or doing research. Just curiosity I would say.

[00:02:54.20] R: Okay. And did you go to visit places in Japan? Were you travelling within the country?

[00:03:06.06] I: Yes. I was in Tokyo and there was quite a lot to see in the city. I managed to travel, I took a trip to Kyoto. I went by myself.

[00:03:26.10] R: Why did you go by yourself?

[00:03:26.11] I: Because at that moment there was nobody I could go with. Everyone was busy. Because I was working, so I had to work Monday to Friday, and some of the Saturdays were busy too. As I went through AIESEC, there were some AIESEC events and work events on the weekend, so there wasn't much time to travel. When I had the opportunity it was either I go home or I go travel. So I decided to travel.

[00:04:05.17] R: How did you imagine Japan before going there?

[00:04:08.13] I: Well, I thought it would be more like in the movies with history and so on, but I don't think I imagined it too different. I thought it would be maybe more high-tech and everybody would have some high-tech gadgets, but it wasn't exactly like that. It's very developed in a way, but it's not the way I thought it would be.

[00:04:40.13] R: And did you read any travel materials before going there?

[00:04:44.28] I: Not really. I read about how the companies work and what I should be prepared for.

[00:05:01.20] R: You said you went to Kyoto. How did you choose Kyoto?

[00:05:04.11] I: Well, I think was because one thing is that I wanted to try the Japanese trains, *shinkansen*, the bullet trains. And because in Kyoto, there are a lot of historical places that are still saved. It was that in one place I could see a lot of different places, so I decided to go there. And it wasn't too far away; it took me only 3 hours to get there. That's why I went there. But, of course if I would back to Japan, there are many other places I would like to visit.

[00:05:49.23] R: You said you visited Kyoto because it has many historical places there. Were you interested in historical sites in general?

[00:05:56.10] I: Well, I'm not a historical enthusiast, but I like to see places, so I did a little bit of research on TripAdvisor . I just interested in seeing those places as it's very very different from the places we have in Europe. For example, I went on a hike on the mountain and they have these orange gates, a lot in a row, and it was really really interesting. You just walk under these old-time gates and there's nothing on them, but it's a very interesting life you get on top of the mountain and you see the city and it was amazing.

[00:06:53.20] R: So how did you perceive, Kyoto or Tokyo for example. Where they authentic?

[00:07:02.04] I: Authentic...Like

[00:07:05.25] R: How would you define authentic? Let's start with there.

[00:07:07.11] I: I think it's something Japanese, like cultural. In terms of Tokyo it was quite authentic to what I imagined it would be. It was a huge metropolis with people living in very busy areas. That's the modern Japan. And Kyoto, I would not say it was as authentic as I thought it would be.

[00:07:45.27] R: Why?

[00:07:45.27] I: Because, in general, the city itself I thought it would be more like an old city, but in reality it was like every other city. It had some special places with old buildings, but they were not really integrated. The old

buildings were like a museum, and there are the temples and where the people live in the center it's just new buildings and it's like a modern city.

[00:08:26.00] R: How do you judge if something is authentic or not?

[00:08:28.07] I: I think it depends on how I feel about it. I mean I can't really judge it, it's my subjective opinion.

[00:08:41.13] R: Yes, of course, I am interested in your opinion.

[00:08:44.04] I: Okay, I think it depends on what I imagined it should be and how it actually is, so... Although, even though I did research before, I was still surprised but I thought it would be a bit different. But I noticed it was a modern city, I thought it would be calm like, but in reality it was just a big city, so...

[00:09:20.17] R: Can you give me an example of something authentic in the Japanese culture according to you?

[00:09:24.00] I: How to say it. The apartments ...the bedrooms of most of the people I've visited... They are all covered in those bamboo mats. I cannot remember the correct name..

[00:09:46.05] R: Tatami?

[00:09:49.14] I: Tatami, exactly. And I was in a hotel in Kyoto and there were also tatami, and that's something really cool. Also the temples… People are really dedicated to that. Because when you go there, they are waiting in line on New Year, so they can start praying for the next year. As I noticed in Tokyo, the line was really really long. An hour long. In terms of authentic I think it is pretty Japanesy.

[00:10:45.25] R: What could influence your perception if something is authentic or not?

[00:10:50.02] I: I think it would help me a lot if I knew the language before I went there.

[00:11:00.15] R: Why?

[00:11:02.09] I: Because it would help me to communicate better with people. And I can see things and I can have my opinion about them, but if I can talk with people and hear their opinion.... Now it's just my opinion and there's no discussion going on.

[00:11:32.13] R: Did your perception of Japan change in any way after your visit there?

[00:11:34.14] I: Yes. I think mainly it changed about the people. Because I've heard people were pretty closed up and they're in their lives they don't open up so much and if they do, they often would say things to make you happy and not the things they actually mean. And I read about that but once I experienced it it felt a lot different than what I've imagined. So, I think my main change was the actual people, what I thought they would be was really different. Well, it was close and yet different. Once you communicate it's different. Well, I cannot say 100% it's true. I never learned Japanese, so that could have been something that would change my perception, but with other people I have talked, I have very good friends from Korea, and he had similar ideas. Because he knew Japanese and he could communicate with them. So...

[00:13:31.04] R: The people - the most important thing about Japan...

[00:13:35.26] I: Yes, I mean. It was the people, the metropolis but...I don't know. There are, of course many things to see, but the most interesting thing, when I left, I learned it was the people. They were very different than from what it is in Europe. We say what we mean and so on… Of course not always, but more often.

[00:14:06.29] R: I know what you mean. You do know about the incident in Fukushima?

[00:14:13.06] I: Yes

[00:14:13.06] R: Did that influence your perception of Japan in any way?

[00:14:17.04] I: No. I heard that the air quality might be bad but in terms of...I wasn't really into it. It wasn't my main concern at that time.

[00:14:40.14] R: I am asking because there are actually many people that visit Japan because they think, due to natural disasters Japan might seize to exist in the future.

[00:14:51.04] I: It's possible. But at that point I didn't think about that in that way. But now, I that was not actually my main concern. We talked about it to some extent. That there could be some danger to us, but it was okay. But the most dangerous thing are the earthquakes themselves, because you can experience them very often yourself. (Irrelevant information)

[00:16:09.27] R: I know what you mean. Tell me, if you could visit Japan again, what would you visit there?

[00:16:13.05] I: I would probably try to visit the lower parts of Japan - Okinawa, because, as I understood, it's a lot different from the... Earthier the lower part or the top, because the climate is very different in those parts. and there is a different culture and people . Because, in my dormitory, there were some people from Okinawa and as people, they were a lot different than the ones from Tokyo. And the same goes for the people from the top. And that's just my opinion, but it's not because of the people that I want to visit, it's just the experience.

[00:17:06.08] R: Well that's about it. Do you want to add anything else before we finish?

[00:17:09.28] I: Ah, well, I don't know.

[00:17:17.08] R: Only if you want. Okay, then that was it. I will now stop the recording.

MARIE LOUISE

[00:00:02.00] R: So thank for agreeing on this interview. And before we start I have to ask you on record if it's okay for you to record this interview.

[00:00:11.24] I: Of course

[00:00:11.24] R: Thank you. Now for this interview, I want to tell you that I am interested in your opinion on the questions I'm going to ask you but there are no wrong or right answers. It's only your opinion that matters. If you don't understand any question, don't hesitate to ask me, I will rephrase it for you. And I hope you are okay for a first name basis.

[00:00:35.06] I: Of course

[00:00:36.04] R: Awesome. So let's start. Would you introduce yourself briefly?

[00:00:40.05] I: My name is Louise. I am 31yo. I have a bachelor degree in Japan studies with supplementary course of international communication and right now I am studying my master's degree at CCG. And with my studies I have been 6 months in Japan. I speak conversational Japanese to some level.

[00:01:16.14] R: Okay. Let's talk about something general. Why do you travel?

[00:01:22.20] I: Well, it's fun and our generation, we have the opportunity to see most of the world, so why not make use of it before becomes impossible, you know when we have kids it'll be more difficult to travel around with.

[00:01:40.10] R: What do you do when you travel? What do you do on your holiday?

[00:01:42.07] I: I eat. That's the best thing about travelling - trying new food in different countries. It's my favourite part. We also travel, my husband, he's Chinese, but from Mauritius, so we travel to visit his family who live, basically all around the world. And then I have friends in different countries so I travel to visit them.

[00:02:04.27] R: What motivates you to choose a destination to travel to?

[00:02:06.10] I: Well, I'll say: "Have I been there before? Do I have friends there? How much money do I have?" for example, this summer we will be going to England, we won't have enough money to go abroad further away. But next year we will be going to Singapore to visit some friends. So it depends on our economy and if we have been there before. And if we haven't been there before , it's a destination of choice ,unless its' somewhere we really really really want to go again.

[00:02:47.13] R: What would be a place you really want to go to?

[00:02:49.19] I: Japan

[00:02:52.13] R: Japan?

[00:02:54.08] I: Yes

[00:02:54.08] R: Why?

[00:02:54.21] I: Well, I feel I didn't get to see enough of Japan. And I also really want to go to Korea. I like the Asian cultures and then, general archaeological sightseeing at places would be interesting. But definitely Japan, because during my 6 months there I really didn't get enough of the culture I miss the food terribly.

[00:03:20.26] R: So, why did you choose Japan? What interested you in Japan?

[00:03:25.09] I: Well, it was a coincidence. Because I was studying archaeology at the time and I have come to the conclusion that this wasn't the study for me. And at the same time I've been introduced to Japanese drama series and I really liked that , but I hate reading subtitles so, I thought I'll learn the language for fun at evening classes and then at evening glasses I've just realised this is awesome and this is what I want to do.

[00:04:00.16] R: How did you form your image of Japan? What is your image of Japan?

[00:04:04.19] I: I think it's really difficult to describe. First you get all these impressions from drama series and anime. This is some sort of utopian view of Japan, everything is cleaner, nicer and funnier. Everybody looks better. But then when you start studying it, you kind of form a more realistic view. Japan is like any other country. It's quite normal. It's only special sections especially made for tourists that are these television, drama kind of places. So, it's kind of difficult to explain, the vision of Japan is actually a lot like Denmark.

[00:05:02.25] R: In what way?

[00:05:02.25] I: Well, the food is kind of heavy, not too spicy, not too oriental. Except they eat rice, instead of potatoes. And you know, people just go about their business, the have regular jobs, they go to school, they have a day just like people in Denmark. I guess if you are there only as a tourist, it might seem different, when you've lived there for 6 months, it becomes quite normal.

(Irrelevant comment)

[00:05:43.16] R: Did Japan meet your expectations?

[00:05:47.02] I: Yes. I would say they did. I was a bit surprised how expansive food was. I've been told, but it was even more expensive than I expected.

[00:06:00.10] R: And did Japan meet your cultural expectations?

[00:06:00.13] I: Yes. At some point it was even more awesome, because all the cultural sites are very beautiful and all the temples... this is something we don't have in the west. All these, beautiful cultural places. And I suppose we do have them in the west, but we are used to the kind we have here, so these oriental temples were kind of different .And all their religions and traditions. I was in Akita, and they have something called the namahage demon. And so there was a namahage festival, where we went and there were some grownups dressed as these demons and scared the kids. It was a really different experience and at that point it was actually really awesome. And it was also good that we were prepared for the way the communicate in Japan, so we didn't have any problems with that. I noticed some other exchange students, they had negative experiences with this.

[00:07:05.10] R: So do you think that, in order to fully experience the Japanese culture you need to have some pre-existing knowledge of it.

[00:07:16.03] I: I would say, if you are going to live there you will need to have some knowledge of it. If you are there as a tourist, it does not matter. we all had to share a room with a Japanese student and if you don't understand how they communicate, and you know how their culture functions, you are going to have some problems.

[00:07:42.06] R: Did you read additional information before traveling to Japan?

[00:07:46.07] I: Only about sightseeing places

[00:07:49.14] R: How did you choose what to read?

[00:07:49.14] I: One of my friends had visited Japan as a tour guide and we pretty much knew what we wanted to see beforehand from our studies, so we just wanted to see if there was anything that the tour guide recommended that we haven't thought of.

[00:08:12.12] R: What did you visit while being in Japan?

[00:08:13.07] I: Well, Akihabara, that's kind of a must for us, because most of japan studies knows about it and likes anime to some extent and Akihabara is the anime capital in Tokyo. Then there were temples, few places from movies, like the big cross-section in Shibuya, the one you always see on postcards, the statue of Hachiko

(irrelevant comment)

[00:08:59.12] I: When we went to Akita we didn't actually know what we wanted to see, but the university arranged all these trips around places in Akita, so that was already paid. (Irrelevant information)

[00:09:22.08] R: Was it important for you to select places that were popular among tourists.

[00:09:28.23] I: No, it didn't necessarily had to be popular among tourists. It just needed to be something specific, something special for Japan. And big cultural sites, I am more interested in the history behind it than how popular it is.

[00:09:45.01] R: So what are the deciding factors for the places you've visited.

[00:09:50.08] I: Well, some of them were like, big historical cultural sites, such as the big castle in Tokyo. (Irrelevant comment) Some of the big stations. Ueno zoo, too, but's because I wanted to see pandas. But I think, it's basically the history behind it, if I like it, there was a shopping are I've seen in a drama. I really wanted to visit just because I could say so, when I saw the TV drama next time: "I've been there". And my friend that I travelled with, he also had some sites that he wanted to visit, but he's been there before. And then there were different restaurants I wanted to visit a restaurant that makes okonimoyaki. And then we went just sightseeing in the area we lived in.
[00:10:53.07] R: So, were you looking to visit something authentic in Japan?
[00:11:00.25] I: Yes. It depends on how you define authentic.
[00:11:09.11] R: This was my next question. How would you define authentic?
[00:11:11.15] I: For me historical sites are authentic and also, you know, sites that are not made for tourists. Sites where the average Japanese goes. So, we went to schools and spoke English with the kids, through one of these programs I went on a homestay for one weekend and that was really authentic, because this is how the live. When we went to the family, of course they showed us their best sides, because it was for westerns and people visiting, but, it was really nice to try that. And with my roomate at the dorm...when it became every day, it was not touristy, it was..we lived there and that was the kind of thing I like as well, and taking walks in Akita and not touristy spots. That was the more authentic parts of Japan. I think.
[00:12:19.07] R: How would you describe touristsy site?
[00:12:22.06] I: It depends on the type of the touristy. For some of them, the historical sites, they are, I suppose, authentic as well, because these were made before tourists even started coming to Japan. But some of the sites such as Ueno park and zoo are made for tourists, so I wouldn't call them authentic, but it's still fun to see and I also went to Ghibli museum, they weren't actually many tourists there, it was mainly Japanese people, I also went to the One Piece exhibit at Tokyo and that was mainly Japanese people as well and not too many western people. But that's still new and it's commercialized, but I was interested in anything really, but for authenticity it's more of the everyday life that tourists don't see usually.
[00:13:29.02] R: If you could describe authenticity in three words, what would the words be?
[00:13:31.18] I: Not tourist sites. I don't know. It's difficult to describe in three words, because it can be very different things. It can be, the home of a Japanese family, it can be a restaurant that is local and not for tourists. It can be a historic site. But I think that one of the things is for it not to be superficial, not something made for commercial purposes, something that's there and it's natural.
[00:14:21.12] R: Can you give me an example of something that is authentic about Japan according to you?
[00:14:25.29] I: Let me think. I think there are a lot of authentic things. A lot of the food is authentic. It's not like food anywhere in asia, it's very different, not spicy at all, it's heavy Japanese food and very sweet (irrelent coment)
[00:15:09.24] I: I also think the nomihoyudai are kind of very typical Japanese authentic.
[00:15:26.00] R: Can you give me an example of something that is not authentic according to you in relation to Japan?
[00:15:35.25] I: I would some of the nature, because the Japanese are very intend on controlling nature, so even though it looks like beautiful natural nature, it's actually very controlled. The Japanese gardens are very authentic in a way that it's traditional Japanese but it's not authentic in a way that it's not natural at all, even though it looks like it. It's actually very precisely calculated and planed
[00:16:11.19] R: Just to summarise if I am getting it correctly. For you, authenticity would be something that is not controlled.
[00:16:18.21] I: Well it depends again on how you look at authenticity. One form of authenticity is what I consider to be the truth, not controlled. If you visited a Japanese family - this is how they are, thi is how it works, but on the other hand you can see it historically, it has a big history and in that way nature, Japanese gardens are authentic in that way, so it again depends on how you define it.
[00:16:48.11] R: How do you judge if something is authentic or not. What influences your judgment?
[00:16:55.07] I: I suppose it's weather I like it or not really. I think there is some level of see though...
[00:17:13.20] R: Transparency

[00:17:17.13] I: Yeah, for this kind of things. For the big historical sites like castles and stuff, you know these are authentic

[00:17:24.28] R: How do you know they are authentic?

[00:17:24.28] I: Well we know the story behind them. and the history

[00:17:31.05] R: How do you know the history?

[00:17:31.09] I: From studying Japanese history. These kinds of sites, they may hive burned down at one point and rebuild and stuff, but the site is historically authentic. But then there's places like disneyland, and this is not authentic, this is a tourist trap. it's fun, but... it's definitely not authentic and not something Japanese. But I would say something truly Japanese is authentic and transparent - we can see when it's not truly Japanese, when it's western inspiration for the tourist.

[00:18:22.26] R: In that regard what do you think about the Japanese McDonalds?

[00:18:24.13] I: Not authentic.

[00:18:30.05] R: Why?

[00:18:34.20] I: Because, I supposes, it was because of the big surprise I got when the first time I went there and I bought a burger and it was full of this sauce, teriyaki sauce and I didn't expect that and it was just - this is not McDonalds.

[00:18:56.21] R: I'm asking because there are many people that argue that the Japanese have this amazing ability to turn western culture into Japanese culture and they include McDonalds and Tokyo Disneyland as examples.

[00:19:11.07] I: To be fair, I haven't been to Disneyland, but I just think it's a theme park and it's not historically authentic for the Japanese, you know. But for McDonalds, it's McDonalds that has the ability to adapt. Maybe if I did know it I would have mind it , but when you are surprised like that it's not nice. But if you go to China is adapted to Chinese tasted. (irrelevant information) It's more the McDonalds ability to adapt, rather than the Japanese ability to include it.

[00:20:09.07] R: What do you think regarding their ability to include western culture? How does that influence perception of authenticity?

[00:20:14.16] I: I think they are actually quite good at adapting western culture. They do take a lot of concepts and I think they are especially good at taking something new that is invented and the Japanese take it and perfect it. That I actually quite like. You know the hybrid car, which didn't work properly then they took the idea and perfected it. So they are very good at adapting western technologies and that's in some ways positive. The Chinese are good at it, but they do it in a different way which kind of ruins the whole country. Japan is not as bad as that. They do it in a more environmentally friendly way if they can.

[00:21:02.12] R: How about the incident in Fukushima. Did the incident somehow change your perception of the country?

[00:21:11.09] I: Well, not of the country as such. it was the year before we had to go on exchange. (Irrelevant information) I felt awful for the Japanese, but I also saw the difference. These disasters, they usually happen in very poor countries and when you see the total devastation and the flood and everything. It was expensive cars floating in the water, not cheap houses and the Japanese, they recovered quickly and they were able to recover by themselves, so now I think I was impressed how quickly Japan manage to pull through and this shows they are a strong country and they are not one of those poor, third world countries that most people consider everything outside of Europe and the western countries. (Irrelevant information).

[00:22:56.14] R: Did the incident somehow influence your perception on the culture? Travel related, let's say?

[00:23:07.21] I: I don't think. Of course I wouldn't go to Fukushima or near the atomic plant but other than that, not really. It changed my perception on a lot of people, how hysterical they became about it. It was just a small part of japan that was affected by this. You can still go there, just not near any radioactive areas.

[00:23:34.25] R: Do you think forming this perception on the incident in Fukushima was somehow influenced by you studying Japanese and Japanese culture and you had a good knowledge about it?

[00:23:48.18] I: I would definitely say it had some influence for the Japanese students nobody freaked. It was parents that went "Don't go there". It sounds negative but it was more ignorant people, not necessarily stupid, just ignorant of Japan and Asia in general and the cultures there.

[00:24:15.10] R: I'm asking because after the incident Japan experienced a reflux in visitors but then they recovered. There are many people that argue that this is because this could be their last chance to visit Japan, because you know the earthquakes and tsunamis and Japan is going to be gone by 2020.

[00:24:40.18] I: No, I don't... Of course I know Japan's history and they have natural disasters like this all the time and Japanese from the time they were born, they are raised to anticipate these natural disasters and how to react to them. One of the reasons they recovered so quickly is because, you know, they already had all these rules in place. You know if something happens, we need to do this and they are hit by earthquakes and tsunamis and typhoons all the time. It's nothing new to them, it's just because, you know, this happened with the atomic plant and now they have even higher security standards than before and they had some of the highest in the world to begin with.

[00:25:31.07] R: How about tourist? Do you think tourism influences, let's say historical places, for example, or nature or anything in Japan?

[00:25:41.09] I: To some extent tourism always influences these kind of places more in the way that they tear them and they become very used and they need to be maintained more. Of course these tourist sites, historical sites, they become mere commercialized for tourists and a lot the bots and stands selling things and maybe unnecessary decorations that haven't been there on normal circumstances, so in a certain way, they do affect it. I think when you go to see the castle of Tokyo you don't actually see it like it would have been historically because it's commercialized for the tourists

[00:26:31.10] R: How do you feel about that

[00:26:33.10] I: Well, at one point I really, when I go places like that I would like to see it the way it was, without all these unnecessary stuff. I have an ability to imagine how they were and I can still see the historical value of the places it's just, you know, I feel it's a shame; I pity the places and the historical sites more than I pity the tourists.

[00:27:06.27] R: would you be prompt to visit a place if you know it's going to become popular in the future?

[00:27:10.25] I: Well, yeah, I don't mind that. In this case it was actually nice, because I would probably have the chance to see it as it truly is before it becomes commercialized, that would mean a lot to me, to see it.

[00:27:26.03] R: Why?

[00:27:27.27] I: Because then I get the full picture, again within authenticity, it would be more authentic the way I see it. Maybe I would visit it later again and I can say like "this is not the way it is originally planned" So I would like that, I love these kind of things.

[00:27:54.10] R: You said you want to visit Japan again. Would you visit the same places you visited?

[00:27:55.06] I: I mainly went to akita before, but now one of my best friends lives in Kyoto or Osaka, downthere somewhere. And I haven't seen Kyoto so I will probably go to places I haven't seen. If I go to places I've seen it would be to visit friends and of course Tokyo, there are places I would like to go again there, like Akihabara, or odaiba onsen, so I would like to go there as well. Just Odaiba in general is an awesome place, but it's very touritsy, not authentic at all. But is like in the dramas, when they go on a date, they go these game arcades and I really want to try that but the big game arcades were closed every time we went htere.

[00:28:52.03] R: Would it be important for you to visit places that you already have some preexisitng knowledge or would you prefer to choose places you've never heard of?

[00:29:01.20] I: Places I've never head of, if they are amazing, I wouldn't mind going there, but the problem would be, if you've neve heard them how would you go there?

[00:29:14.26] R: Let me rephrase that. You have a selection of places, you know some of them better like, lets say Kyoto and the goledn temple and you know some of them less, like Shinsaibashi in Osaka, which is the main shopping street basically. How would you judge which one to visit?

[00:29:33.16] I: In this case I would go for the golden temple, because it's a big historical site and I'm really into history. But if it was this and another historical site I havent'seen or heard before I would probably raed up on the new site and then decide which one, if I couldn't go both places, of course.

[00:29:55.14] R: What would influence your decision?

[00:29:59.01] I: I think the story behind it is imporant.

[00:30:05.01] R: How?

[00:30:06.04] I: If I like the story, if it's a big story and interesting story, then it's worth seeing. but if it's just like, some farmer build this millions years ago, and then they moved out 20 years later, it;s like no hisotry

[00:30:22.09] R: So does the story add up to your perception of authenticity? Or is it just something additional?

[00:30:26.17] I: Yeah, to some extent . I mean, if it has a hisotry and it has the historical value, of course it's authentic and it has all this history that adds to it, but at the same time all the big historical sites are tourists sites you go and they are from the aristocrats, the you know walthy and rich, influential people and it's not really from the average japanese back in medivel times and so in that way the authenticity can be questioned as it only shows only one part of the society but it's still the only thing that's left from that time because everything else is poor quality.

[00:31:21.11] R: Well, that's about it. Is there anything else you would like to add?

[00:31:27.18] I: Japan rocks!

[00:31:28.20] R: Okay, so thank you for this interview!

IVELINA

[00:00:03.09] R: Thank you for agreeing to this interview. Before we start I would like to ask you if it's OK to record.

[00:00:13.18] I: Of course.

[00:00:16.16] R: Awesome. Now I want to tell you that there are no wrong and right answers. I am mainly interested in your opinion on the subject I am going to ask you. Now you know a little bit, we are going to talk about Japan and how you are traveling, went there and your perception of authenticity. Before we go to the hard stuff I want to ask you to briefly introduce yourself.

[00:00:45.06] I: My name is Ivelina and I am studying in Japan right now. I came to Japan in September last year and I will be here until September this year. I'm a student of Japanese, I am 23 years old and I am living in Osaka right now.

[00:01:08.08] R: Awesome. So let's start with general information. So why do you travel?

[00:01:16.17] I: In Japan or in general?

[00:01:18.02] R: In general.

[00:01:22.19] I: To experience different things, to escape the mundane, everyday life, I don't know.

[00:01:39.04] R: Ok, so how do you select the places you visit for traveling?

[00:01:46.00] I: Oh, I just go with the flow. I mean, when something comes up I just go with the flow.

[00:01:55.15] R: What do you look to do when traveling?

[00:02:01.17] I: Well of course to see cultural monuments or museum or to try the local food. You know just experience the atmosphere of the place.

[00:02:20.15] R: Is it important for you the place you visit to be popular destination?

[00:02:26.10] I: No, not necessary.

[00:02:27.10] R: Why?

[00:02:27.21] I: Because for me is more important to really feel the atmosphere of the real place, not only the famous things, but see the local life. The little things of the places, no specially the big things.

[00:02:51.01] R: You talk about the real place. What's a real place in your understanding?

[00:02:56.02] I: Something that is not on the brochures, like the big famous stuff, but more like I want to see the everyday life of the locals.

[00:03:12.11] R: Ok, the everyday life. Do you think perhaps the popular places are not real?

[00:03:21.05] I: Not necessary, not real, but just a little bit customized for tourists. So they are tourist oriented. And I want to see more of the ordinary life.

[00:03:37.29] R: Can you give me an example of something ordinary that interests you?

[00:03:43.15] I: Like the local food, only not necessary in famous restaurants but more like how local people prepare it – the taste of the household, or stuff like that, I don't know.

[00:04:07.12] R: Awesome, so when you select the place to visit, would you say it's important for you to have some sort of authentic feeling about it?

[00:04:20.13] I: Authentic feeling as in what?

[00:04:24.24] R: This is what I am going to ask you. What do you think authentic is?

[00:04:33.16] I: I am not sure, maybe it's different for different things and places. Like the first thing that comes to mind is old, but I guess that's not really the only thing.

[00:04:46.14] R: I told you, there are no right or wrong answers, it's just exactly what you think.

[00:04:51.05] I: Yeah, ok so maybe something that has preserved its original image, its original ways. Depends - if it's a place maybe it has preserved its looks as an old place, a custom or a practice or an art. Maybe it is preserved the way it has been done and it has been done along these lines.

[00:05:36.13] R: Ok, awesome. So how important for you is the thing you experience being it a place or let's say a traditional culture, to be authentic?

[00:05:55.06] I: Of course it's good thing in a way, it doesn't necessary have to be a 100% authentic to be a good thing.

[00:06:07.25] R: Why?

[00:06:08.15] I: Especially now that I am in Japan, I can see that Japanese people like new stuff and if I am more into the authentic thing, they always mix up new stuff. Then make a collaboration of new and old stuff. And it's not necessary a bad thing. There are some pretty good results in most things. It doesn't need to be a 100% authentic, to be a good thing. Of course it is important, but not that important for me.

[00:06:49.08] R: Ok, do you think that what the Japanese people are doing, by mixing new and old, you think that's positive.

[00:06:59.04] I: Yeah, I think it's positive, because we cannot stay in the past all the time. Things change naturally.

[00:07:14.15] R: Would you say that this creates a feeling of authenticity for you?

[00:07:24.15] I: You mean, the mixing of new and old?

[00:07:24.25] R: Yes.

[00:07:29.03] I: Not necessary, but it's also not necessary a bad thing. I mean, there are still authentic parts. You can actually see what is in all the traditional parts of it, but you can also see the new part. It is really interesting to see how they manage to mix it. A 100% authentic is not really that important.

[00:08:01.26] R: Can you give me an example of something authentic for you?

[00:08:12.24] I: In Japan or in general?

[00:08:15.11] R: If you would like in Japan.

[00:08:19.24] I: For me in Japan it's the art. And the practices, especially martial arts, aikido and judo, the spiritual things. Especially the authentic Japanese spirit. Even though it's the twenty first century and a lot of things around in this practice, preserve the spirit. It's one of the most authentic things they are.

[00:09:09.00] R: What would you define the Japanese spirit is?

[00:09:13.22] I: It's the spirit of keeping calm, no matter what happens around you. Of not showing your inner distress or your inner feeling outside. Being really calm and having controls over everything.

[00:09:43.21] R: So now that we are talking about authenticity. What do you think in terms of Japan, can you give me an example of something that you perceive not authentic?

[00:09:55.17] I: Kawaii bunka, the cute culture. It's recently very popular. And it is authentic in a way, but it's new and you can say it's characteristicall to Japan. But I am not really sure if it's authentic. But it's Japanese. I mean all the cute culture, the oversized eyes, the unnaturally white skin, the gothic Lolita and Lolita dresses.

[00:10:49.26] R: Why do you think it's not authentic? Because you said it's characteristic. It's part of the culture. And you said it's not authentic at the same time. Why do you think so?

[00:11:02.15] I: Because first it's kind of restricted to young people and it's not entirely the whole of Japan. And as I said earlier the authentic Japanese spirit if more calm, more reserved in a way. And that really contrasts to the

kawaii bunka. But maybe with time it will actually become authentic. I am not really sure myself what authentic is actually. Now that I think about it, I guess it has a lot of meanings. That are not only old.

[00:12:05.04] R: Our perception of things can always change. You said something about kawaii bunka being for young people. Do you think for something to be authentic, it has to be accessible for everyone?

[00:12:26.29] I: Yeah.

[00:12:26.29] R: Why?

[00:12:35.17] I: It's a difficult question.

(ACTVITY) Researcher has to repeat the question again because the Interviewee does not understand it and there are problems with the connection at that time.

[00:13:21.29] I: Japanese Kawaii bunka is in the process of developing right now. It's not really settled down. It's still developing. So maybe when it settles down and some time passes, I guess it will become authentic thing. At the moment there are too much changes going around, you can't just point a finger and say - this is authentic, because it's still changing and hasn't settled down yet.

[00:13:58.11] R: Just to check if I understand correctly - you are saying that for something to be authentic, it has to have a defined form.

[00:14:16.08] I: Yes, I guess.

[00:14:17.17] R: Ok, and what can change your perception if something is authentic or not?

[00:14:35.12] I: People's perception changes with experience. So a little more experience.

[00:14:42.06] R: Is it important for you to have experience. So you know that something is authentic or not.

[00:14:52.08] I: Not knowing if it's authentic or not. That can be not that important. For me it's not really necessary to have a definition for everything, but the experience is what's important. Even when you don't have the definition and the place I see and visit are not necessary authentic. It doesn't make them less important or any less nice or good places to visit.

[00:15:42.28] R: Would you say that the tourism industry somehow influences how authentic some things are? How?

[00:15:53.10] I: Because it helps the industry and its main goal is to make money, right. It makes everything a little more tourist friendly. Old places and places like temples and shrines and places for prayer and for revering the gods. And on the entrances there they are selling souvenirs. I think that contrasts the understanding of Shinto and it's only for making money and it kind of ruins authenticity for me.

[00:16:53.00] R: Do you think perhaps that some places that became popular among foreigners, do you think that actually preserved them?

[00:17:12.02] I: The building itself is naturally not changed, only the atmosphere is what changes. For example temples and shrines they should be sacred and there supposed to be this quite sacred atmosphere around them. And instead when there are a lot of tourists and when there is selling and buying going around, kind of ruins this thing. I don't know if you can actually understand what I am saying? The building may not change but the atmosphere definitely changes.

[00:18:03.19] R: I am asking you because of something you said. You said that you don't need it to be a 100% authentic for you to enjoy it.

[00:18:17.21] I: Sure yeah, but it like more historical stuff. Especially for temples and shrines, it's like trying to sell stuff at a church. And a church is not a place for selling. If we can compare it to something more familiar. I guess is ok for museums and historical places, but especially for shrines. There are places that you can mix new things, be tourist friendly, but there are some places that it's just not really OK in my opinion.

[00:19:14.23] R: I understand. Let's put it in terms of your travel to Japan. Why did you travel to Japan?

[00:19:26.10] I: Right now for educational purposes.

[00:19:29.23] R: What interested you in Japan in the first place?

[00:19:34.06] I: The arts and the cultural sites, the poems and the entire cultural heritage are especially interesting for me. I also like calligraphy, tea ceremonies and those kinds of practices.

[00:20:15.22] R: Where have you been in Japan?

[00:20:20.29] I: I have been to a few shrines in Kyoto and Osaka, I've been in Osaka Joand in a few Shinto shrines but I forget their names. Because there are shrines in almost every neighbourhood. Also in Kyoto, Kiyomizudera, Osakajinja I have been twice. And it's really a nice place. I also happen to see Miako dancing, a geisha training and I have been to Hiroshima, Miyajima and I have been to Fukujamaken, with the really beautiful mountain there, nature and waterfalls. Also Nara. And I think that's for now.

[00:21:48.16] R: How did you select the places that you visited?

[00:21:55.01] I: I have been invited. I said I am going with the flow. Someone invites me and I say Ok let's go.

[00:22:04.02] R: So you didn't purposely select them?

[00:22:05.26] I: No, not really. I have a certain places that I want to visit, but it's not like I can go any day. So if it so happens to be possible I just go with the flow and go visit somewhere.

[00:22:31.04] R: What motivate you? If let's say you have been invited to four different places at the same time. What would motivate you to choose one of them? What would be the decision making?

[00:22:49.01] I: For me as I said I like old period culture and Shinto shrines, so I guess I would choose the place, where there is a big beautiful or interesting Shinto shrine or something related to the Han period. Or for example when I went to Hiroshima, I went to visit a Japanese garden called Shukeien and there is a little tea ceremony houses and I like this.

[00:23:43.21] R: How would you describe you knowledge about Japan before you travelled?

[00:24:01.15] I: In the era of the internet you can find almost everything. On the internet it's not about the information, but the actual experience. You can read the information but when you experience it of course it's different. As it goes for information, I wouldn't say it changed much, from before I came to Japan. It's more with the experience that I get.

[00:24:41.15] R: Did you look for additional information about places you can visit, before going?

[00:24:46.14] I: If I have time I look, but if not I just go and in the places there are usually people.

[00:24:58.09] R: How do you think your personal knowledge before travel influenced your perception of Japan?

[00:25:10.14] I: I guess a little bit of negative way. When you have prior knowledge it's less exciting when you actually visit the place. If you knew nothing, then everything is new and it gets more emotional. And when you learn things for the first time, and if you have a lot of knowledge before that it's kind of...I know that and I know that already. I don't think it's a very good thing. I wish I didn't know that much before I came here.

[00:26:05.28] R: Do you think that your personal knowledge influenced somehow how you perceive if something is authentic or not?

[00:26:13.15] I: Yeah I think I had a little bias.

[00:26:17.21] R: Can you give me an example?

[00:26:24.08] I: I had this expectation that all Japanese know their history and culture and it's not like that. I was literally disappointed. Because some Japanese didn't know things that I knew. Because when I am interested I look for information and I know the things I am interested in. Most Japanese don't actually know their own cultural and historical heritage. And it's a little bit disappointing.

[00:27:11.06] R: We talk about authentic, but could you give me an example of what you think is not authentic about Japan?

[00:27:24.01] I: The everyday life really. Everyone is so busy, that they don't really appreciate the things around them. And there are all those authentic places and those authentic practices and of course there are a lot of people who practice them and appreciate them and know a lot about them. But most of the population is not so interested and they don't know stuff.

[00:28:15.15] R: If you are saying that they are not interested on a daily basis in this cultural stuff, would you way that this actually means that all these preserved heritage sites and customs that they don't practice anymore, there are more or less turning into something not authentic, because it's not something that they are using in everyday life, it's not something that they appreciate.

[00:28:43.05] I: It's not like that nobody appreciates it, it's just that most people are not. There are of course a lot of people in Japan, the population is very high. Maybe in some point in time that may happen and they will no longer

be considered. At that time historical heritage and shrines may not be considered authentic. I can never know. But as of now, they are still not forgotten to that point.

[00:29:47.06] R: Do you think that the Japanese themselves will change what is authentic or not for their country. Do you think that they purposely would do it?

[00:30:06.26] I: No I think they are trying to preserve. It's just they are trying to make it more popular and the process of making something more popular makes it change, even if you don't try to do it. But I wouldn't say they are trying to change, just happens naturally when you are trying to make something more popular, more customer-friendly.

[00:30:54.06] R: Would you say that's natural for popular tourist destination to adjust to the market, even if we take Kinkakuji for example? Would you say that it's something bad?

[00:31:12.05] I: I don't want to put labels of good and bad. Things just happen and even if they change.

[00:31:25.28] R: We talk about change and does it matter if you know for example that it changed during the ages, somehow the custom changed and the history changed. Enhancing it to be more popular. If you know that, would that influence somehow, how you perceive the place?

[00:31:50.24] I: It would. The world always changes. As I said earlier, it does not necessary have to be a good or a bad thing. Things change and OK, this place changed. But you just go to see it and you cannot help it. The material cannot stay the same over the years. As I said if it's for practices, Japanese spirit and stuff, ok you can preserve it, but not the material things. It's only normal for things like that to change, but even if it changes the way I perceive it, it wouldn't necessary be in a good or in a bad way. I don't think that that's really defined.

[00:33:04.06] R: Would you say that the incident in Fukushima had any influence on how you perceive Japan?

[00:33:13.17] I: For me not really.

[00:33:15.29] R: Why?

[00:33:18.21] I: Because, why would it.

[00:33:25.10] R: I will tell you why I'm asking. Because when it happened Japan experienced a reflux of people going there, because they perceived it as dangerous, with the radiations and all in all they didn't want to go.

[00:33:46.13] I: Yes, I understand that but for me. It was never a factor. I am not scared. I am not that kind of a person. If this had changed my perception, then I wouldn't have come in the first place. Japan is quite dangerous even without incidents. Not in Osaka where I am, but in general there are a lot of earthquakes. If you are scared from this, it does not have to do with this particular incident.

[00:34:29.06] R: There are many people that are actually worried that because of all the earthquakes and so on and so forth, Japan will disappear from the face of the Earth. So they are going there to visit for the last time in their lives.

[00:34:45.26] I: I didn't know that. In my case, it didn't really have an effect.

[00:35:00.27] R: Let's talk a bit about the language. Do you think that knowing Japanese is important for understanding the culture?

[00:35:16.11] I: It can be easier but not necessary the most important. Of course it's easier to get information that's usually not written on guide books and pamphlets, when you know the language and you can actually talk to the people and ask them. This is a nice thing, but it's not really necessary that if you don't know the language you will not understand the culture. I don't think that. But it's a nice thing, it can be a plus. But it's not the most important.

[00:36:27.22] R: Do you think people that know the language would perceive different things authentic than people that don't know the language?

[00:36:35.28] I: It's something that doesn't have anything to do with knowing the language; it more depends on the person. I mean everyone's perception is different and it can still influence it, but maybe it's not necessary. There might be people who are influenced and those who are not. More a personal issue than knowing the language.

[00:37:09.03] R: Was there anything from your visit in Japan that disappointed you?

[00:37:18.25] I: I guess the social structure of Japan. It's not like I didn't know what it was before I came here. But when I came it was harder to adjust than I thought. The way Japanese society works is just not my thing. Also it's more about the Japanese people rather than Japan as a whole. Again these things kind of put me off.

[00:38:15.29] R: Do you think that in order to experience the real world, the authentic Japan or what is true to the country. You need to live there?

[00:38:41.19] I: It depends on the length of your travel. Of course if it's really a short vacation like three days, then it will be difficult. But stay a little bit longer and you will have the opportunity to wonder around freely.

[00:39:14.26] R: So you are saying that it's important to have the freedom to walk around.

[00:39:18.17] I: Not really those tours with groups that are really restricted. I don't think that's very good option. Maybe go on you own, casual and make it a little bit longer and wonder freely and walk around, not with a guide and a group. For me this is the best way to experience it. You don't have to necessary live and work here. Depends on what you really want to see and to experience.

[00:40:14.11] R: And I think that that's about it. Is there anything else that you want to add about your experience in Japan?

[00:40:25.06] I: Yeah, Japan is great for visiting, but not so much for living.

[00:40:43.06] R: Thank you for this interview.

IVAILO

[00:01:39.22] R: Thank you again for agreeing on this interview. Just on record, do you agree to this recording?

[00:01:48.00] I: Yes, I agree.

[00:01:50.14] R: Before we start, let's set some rules. There are no wrong or right answers. The most important thing is your opinion on the questions I am going to ask you. We are going to talk about your trip to Japan, what made impression on you and other fun things.

[00:02:04.02] I: Okay. I am going to tell them again.

[00:02:06.21] R: Tell me now, why did you go to Japan?

[00:02:11.29] I: In general, I went to see my girlfriend, but I always wanted to visit the Land of the rising sun, because of I am an anime fan. Yeah, well, that's it. I was always intrigued, because of the anime I also got interested in the culture and other things.

[00:02:33.04] R: Were you first interested in the anime, or did you start with being interested in the culture and then discovered the anime?

[00:02:35.12] I: Maybe at the same time, but probably the anime was first and helped in that matter.

[00:02:44.18] R: How do you find information regarding Japan?

[00:02:49.05] I: Internet. In Bulgaria the information is scares, there are some events, but that's something from the least years, after the clubs started organizing events and it became a bit popular. But in general, several years ago there was scarcely any information, besides some events and animesBG's forum.

[00:03:15.28] R: Before you went to Japan, did you read any additional information regarding the destination? For example some travel related information, such as sites to see, history of Japan and stuff like that?

[00:03:25.17] I: Honestly no. I agreed to whatever my girlfriend has decided. There were some places I wanted to visit, but we couldn't go there.

[00:03:41.18] R: Where did you want to go?

[00:03:41.18] I: Well, I really wanted to go to the cat island. I don't remember how it's called. (irrelevant comment). And I really wanted to go to Ghibli's museum, but unfortunately we couldn't go.

[00:03:59.06] R: Why did you choose these places?

[00:04:02.26] I: Well, I really like cats and the whole history of the island is interesting. I don't know if you know. Well, long time ago the people of the island had problems with rats, so they decided to breed more cats to cope with the problem. But at some point the cats' population became a lot more than the humans on the island. Now the island is a huge attraction. As far as I remember, there's also an island with rabbits, but that's a bit girly.

[00:04:35.16] R: Ok. How important is for you the place you visit to be popular?

[00:04:38.28] I: Not at all.

[00:04:42.18] R: Why?

[00:04:44.02] I: Because many places that are not that c<u>ommercialized</u>, there are many beautiful temples. Overall these are really beautiful. When I went to Japan, everyone knew Kyoto. We walked a lot there. It's maybe the most popular commercialized destination for temples and things like that, but we saw other places that are not so famous in Bulgaria. We saw amazing things.

[00:05:11.25] R: How did you choose the places to visit in Japan?

[00:05:16.27] I: Well, Dimi, has been there for a long time. She is familiar with the culture, she read a lot, and she's generally more interested in Japanese culture. She's also an anime fan, but still more interested in the culture, thus she's studying that. Overall, she knew where to go and soon.

[00:05:41.22] R: What did you like most about Japan?

[00:05:42.02] I: That's a difficult question. Ah… well… Everything. Everything was charming. (irrelevant comment) Maybe I liked most that the most important thing is that you have to be considered the others. The fact that the train has to arrive on time. The whole culture, the way they've constructed everything for everyone and everywhere to be accessible. Food as well. Everything was awesome.

[00:06:35.13] R: Did Japan meet your expectations? How did you imagine it before going there? Was the way you've imagined it?

[00:06:39.10] I: I knew they were different from the rest of the world. We all know that. But they succeeded my expectations. I knew it would be very different there, that it would be amazing, but all in all, I was left charmed more than I've expected.

[00:06:57.00] R: How was Japan different from what you've imagined? Which factors were involved?

[00:07:03.24] I: Well, I can't really tell according to which factors. Overall, there was no information regarding the details. The whole world thinks that they eat only rice and fish, but it's not like that at all. Rice is just a garnish for them. (irrelevant comment) I didn't have any expectations, all in all. I knew it would be great, but it was actually even better! I didn't expect that many temples or places to visit. I am talking not about temples, but you know how many jinjas there are around, but there were many buildings, which were worth visiting. There were many festivals. Many things.

[00:08:14.17] R: Ok. Now let's go to one of the most difficult questions in this interview. What is authenticity according to you?

[00:08:23.02] I: Authenticity...hummm....

[00:08:25.09] R: Yes. What is authentic according to you?

[00:08:26.11] I: Something ancient that can be found only in the said culture. Maybe... I think it's that. Something that can be found only there, that is not that popular and that is specific for the local culture.

[00:08:48.24] R: Was Japan authentic according to you?

[00:08:50.27] I: Oh, yes, definitely. I think it was definitely authentic on its own. I haven't travelled that much, I was only in the Netherlands. But there's no base to compare on. Japan is very authentic. They really take care of the authentic things that were around from many many years ago. They've kept them and renewed the old. They keep what has been around from before.

[00:09:27.25] R: Can you give me an example of something you think it's authentic about Japan?

[00:09:34.06] I: There was this temple, which, if I'm not mistaken, was 14 centuries old. And this temple...I presume it was rebuild during these 14 centuries, but the temple build the same way it used to look 14 centuries ago. And the Buddha's....there are Buddhas all over the world, but the Japanese are a bit different. The short skirts... The eye patches... Bishounens... (irrelevant comment). And that's it... (irrelevant comment)

[00:10:50.22] R: Perfect. Was there anything that you expected to be authentic, but was rather not? Maybe something that disappointed you in the culture?

[00:10:56.12] I: I can't think of anything, but I did know they were like programmed robots. I never liked that about Japan. But, maybe, that's the thing that drives them ahead. (irrelavant comment). All in all, basic things but I can't think of anything.

[00:11:48.27] R: Just asking. Is there anything that influences your perception if something is authentic or not?

[00:11:52.12] I: I can't answer.

[00:12:00.16] R: Just asking. Because many people say that the Japanese people have this ability to incorporate western cultures and make it their own. Often they give McDonalds as an example, where all the hamburgers are for the Japanese market.

[00:12:18.27] I: Yeah, they like to copy, but when they copy in way to make the things look completely their own. Let's take ramen for example. Ramen is Chinese, you know, but the whole world knows ramen is Japanese. Shall we mention the English words? (irrelevant comment) The way the make them Japanese. There are many things like that.

[00:13:01.21] R: Do you think it's important to know the language in order to know the Japanese culture better?

[00:13:02.19] I: If you are there - yes. It's really difficult to manage only with English in Japan. Now, only with English you can't do anything and that's because Japanese people can't speak English. Another language is out of question. Maybe you can reach a level of knowing the culture, but that level would not be enough as to fully understand their culture. Something that I didn't like about the Japanese is full of complexes. For example, they draw themselves with big eyes in the animes. Always with big breasts. And the eyes. They don't like the shape of the eyes, the colour of the skin, they don't like tanning, which is strange. The whole world is working hard to tan, but they are different. (irrelevant comment)

[00:14:22.09] R: Yeah. Tell me now, you know about the incident in Fukushima?

[00:14:25.19] I: Yes

[00:14:27.06] R: Did that influence your trip to Japan in any way?

[00:14:31.24] I: Definitely not

[00:14:34.10] R: I am asking because, I found literature that says that many people might have visited Japan, because they thought that it would be wiped out of the face of the earth due to earthquakes or tsunamis and might not be able to see it ever again.

[00:14:51.19] I: No. Never thought about that. I always dreamed about going to Japan. It was a distant dream. Financially, actually however you look it at it, it's on the other side of the world , but now I had a wonderful reason to go and combine the profit and pleasure.

[00:15:13.20] R: Of course. If you could, would you visit again?

[00:15:17.01] I: Yes.

[00:15:19.07] R: What would you visit on your next visit?

[00:15:23.26] I: The other part of Japan I couldn't visit. But I would go back to the places I've been.

[00:15:31.05] R: Like?

[00:15:32.07] I: I would go again to Kamakura. It was a charming town with so much history and amazing temples and traditions. The narrow-gauge line there. Kyoto...despite being commercial, I liked it a lot, because it combines traditional and modern. The city is so...modern and at the same time, there's an old temple on every concerned that underlines the authentic about the Japanese culture. I would visit Osaka, since it's so close to European culture. They are very open there, even though I don't get how they walk on the opposite site. The people from Osaka are different from the others. I would definitely visit Japan again, if I could.

[00:16:46.23] R: You said you would visit Kyoto again, Kamakura, these are places, as you've said, with a lot of history and tradition. How important is for you to visit heritage sites?

[00:17:03.11] I: Yes...The way I visit heritage sites, I also visit modern popular things. I think they go hand by hand.

[00:17:17.05] R: Okay. And is it important for them to be authentic?

[00:17:19.09] I: Yeah.

[00:17:21.28] R: And would you choose a place according to how authentic it is?

[00:17:28.18] I: No. I would first speak with a person that has been there, I would read a lot... However there were places, I can't remember which, but Dimi has read a lot about a very commercial place. When we finally went there it was nothing special. But places that has been written little about and are not that famous were really beautiful and wonderful

[00:18:05.04] R: If you could choose between really popular places and not so popular ones, what would you choose and why?

[00:18:14.21] I: You mean if you can't combine them?

[00:18:17.18] R: Yes, if you have to choose one or the other?

[00:18:17.24] I: The non-comertial one. Because these places are not so popular. The unknown is tempting for everyone. But I would choose a popular one because they have been, so to say, sealed with approval. I don't know. I can't imagine not visiting famous places in any country of visit, and at the same time not to visit small places. I think they should go hand in hand. Commercial and underground

[00:19:07.12] R: Why would it be important for you to visit the commertial?

[00:19:14.10] I: For a tag...I am joking , but why not.

[00:19:21.29] R: You are joking, but that's a fad.

[00:19:26.23] I: Yes, that's the world we live in. We are so modern that we have to tag everywhere we went (irrelevant comment). That's the thing. When I uploaded my photos on Facebook. The photos from Kyoto and the Golden Temple for example, received a lot of comments like "Oh, it's unique there. I've been there. Some other people have been there and so on". But the photos from Kamakura and the Great Buddah it was like "Ah, what a big Buddah. Where is this from?" And things like that.

(irrelevant comment)

[00:20:23.24] I: I liked the Silver Pavilion for example more than the Golden one, despite the lack of any silver on it.

[00:20:29.20] R: Why did you like it better?

[00:20:33.01] I: There weren't so many people, first of all. And I liked the garden. The temple itself was nothing special, but the garden was something amazing.

[00:20:48.12] R: Great. Well that's the interview. Would you like to add some final words?

[00:20:54.03] I: Go to Japan!

[00:21:01.07] R: Well thank you very much!

FABRIZIO

[00:00:02.16] R: Here we go. Before we start I want to ask you if it's okay to record this interview?

[00:00:08.08] I: It's okay.

[00:00:12.26] R: Thank you.

[00:00:15.02] I: Now that we begin, let's set some rules of this conversation. There are no right or wrong answers. I'm interested in your opinion about what I'm going to ask you. We are going to talk about Japan and authenticity in Japan and how you relate it. Your perception and what you have visited. And it's really fun. So, now that we start I want to ask you to introduce yourself briefly? What is your name, what do you do?

[00:00:45.02] I: I am Fabrizio Jussepe Neggretti. I come from Italy. I studied International communication in Italy and here I study CCG at AAU. And now I'm writing my thesis.

[00:01:02.27] R: Thank you. Let's start with some general questions about your travel habits. so why do you travel?

[00:01:08.28] I: I travel a lot. Usually I like to go to capitals in Europe, for example. I would like to visit all countries in Europe, still I didn't. And sometimes I, also like to go out of Europe. For example, I've visited some cities in the US. But Japan was my dream from when I was a teenager. And I went there, but it's the only country in Asia that I have been to.

[00:01:38.14] R: What do you look to do when you travel?

[00:01:42.09] I: I like to go randomly in the streets, if it is possible to talk to some pople living there. And I like when I know someone living there, so maybe they can show me around.

[00:01:55.07] R: Is it important for you to know a person when you vist a place? Do you select it by personal recommendation or by travel guide or something?

[00:02:01.06] I: I do both. When i decided on a destination I look on the internet, for example there are some internet sites telling you which are the 10 most important attractions in a city. But I also contact people that live in that city. For example, via my network in Facebook and a lot of times I ask them to meet in the place, so we walk around together.

[00:02:34.03] R: Okay. So is it important for you to select a popular destination? You said you liked capitals, but is it important if it's like, popular among tourists?

[00:02:44.20] I: Maybe I'm more attracted by popular destinations, but I also visited a lot of places that are mostly unknown and some of them I really enjoyed. But I think that first in my life I want to visit all the famous places and then, as a second priority the less important place.

[00:03:13.02] R: Okay. When you select the place, is it important for you for the place to be authentic?

[00:03:17.24] I: What do you mean by authentic?

[00:03:23.07] R: This is what I'm going to ask you? What do you think authentic is?

[00:03:26.08] I: So for me authentic it would be that it is real and spontaneous and it is in contradiction with some stereotypes, for example. For example in some destinations people say "Yes, in this place. for Example, in France, people say the French people are like this and this is this. They eat baguettes and this. And I noticed that sometimes these kind of things are just attractions for tourists but then, their real life, the things are not really like this, so I think that if you want to find authenticity in the way the live authenticity, you have to live in a place for a lot of time or you have to know someone living there. But if you just go to the main attractions for tourists, maybe you can miss some authenticity and just see the superficial side of the place.

[00:04:21.01] R: Do you think these popular tourist attractions are authentic?

[00:04:23.13] I: Let me think. Maybe some of them are and some are not. But I think that in general they are often overestimated. And I noticed also in my country, for example. I am Italian and I notice that there are a lot of people that want to go to Italy and before they told me that they expect something that for me is not my real perception of Italy. So I think that maybe abroad is the same. Maybe I expect something, but that is just something that is there for calling tourists.

[00:05:06.21] R: Is it important for you for the place you visit to be authentic in your understanding or if it's, for example, popular tourist destination, does it matter if it's authentic?

[00:05:17.02] I: I want the complete view of the place. So if there are some places that are made for tourists and maybe not that authentic but still they are symbols of the place I want to see them. and then I want to see also some real life.

[00:05:38.10] R: Do you think authenticity, as a term is related to physical object or is it related to experiences as culture?

[00:05:47.15] I: More the second. The first things that you said, that thing is more related to a fake vision of a place.

[00:05:58.07] R: Why?

[00:05:59.15] I: Because for example, Japanese eat sushi. This is something that everybody says. But sushi itself for me it's not authenticity like... For me authenticity is to know if Japanese people are really (unreadable recording) maybe don't perceive sushi in the same way we think, what they think about it's really that important in their culture. So this sushi definitely exists, for example, but i don't know if ot has the same value for them that we imagine that it does.

[00:06:39.09] R: So, you ...just to summarize if I understand correctly. You connect authenticity with the meaning the local put in something?

[00:06:52.12] I: Yes.

[00:06:53.21] R: Do you think it should be related to time somehow? To paraphrase, do you think it should be old, for example, to be authentic?

[00:07:08.16] I: I don't understand. What do you mean by old?

[00:07:12.29] R: Like, for example, with Japan. (Irrelevant comment) There are people that say the Golden Pavilion is really authentic because it's really old, and something to be authentic need to be from the past

[00:07:32.05] I: That is just the opposite, because for example in Rome. Rome is full of monuments from the past, but the real life now is not that connected to these old buildings. They are there and they are very attractive. And there are these connections of people that imagine Rome so monumental and historical, but the real life of people in Rome, maybe is not that connected to these buildings for example, so if the city is old of course it has an influence on the modern life of people, but it's not that important for authenticity. It's the first time that I think about this topic. (Irrelevant comment)

[00:08:28.05] R: What could influence your perception if something is authentic or not?

[00:08:33.23] I: For example if a local tells me it's authentic, I would believe it. If Wikipedia tells me it's authentic, I would not believe it.

[00:08:46.13] R: Okay, Why?

[00:08:46.13] I: Because, in general, on the internet there's this tendency to exaggerate some characteristics. Because people like to put things in categories and to say, for example, "Japan is like this. You can find this, this and this." But if a recall Japanese tells me how he experiences his culture is completely different in my opinion.

[00:09:16.10] R: Let's put this understanding of authentic into context of Japan. So why did you choose to travel to Japan?

[00:09:19.27] I: Why? Because I grew up with manga and anime and I was very fascinated with Japan when I was a teenager. So I always wanted to go and then I have a friend who is a flight attendant, so could have a huge discount to go to Japan, so I took the chance I stayed one week there in Tokyo.

[00:09:44.19] R: Okay. Did you search for additional information before going there, like travel information?

[00:09:53.04] I: Yes. Actually I knew a lot, because I've read a lot before going, but some days before leaving I downloaded the 90 pages guides. And I tried to read it in the long flight (irrelevant comment) I just used it for the locations of places, for understanding the best ways to reach a place and to organize the daily movements for, example. There were also some tips that were good. Recommendations that were good. I think that I've read some information on the internet in general, like about other people that have traveled in Japan before.

[00:10:53.05] R: So you said that before going and before reading, you had some personal knowledge about Japan. Did reading the materials change your perception of the country?

[00:11:04.19] I: No, but my perception changed meanwhile I was there.

[00:11:11.25] R: Ok. so how did it change?

[00:11:13.26] I: It changed a lot, because I noticed that in Japan everything is so strange. And full of lights and the Japanese people, first days, seemed to be so kind. They were bowing so much, every 2 seconds, "arigatou gozaimasu" every 2 seconds and I thought that they were very nice. They were smiling and everything like this. And when you answer about information they are very nice and they help you. But then, after that I realized that they do this in a sort of pattern. Like they are thought to do like this, for example, in the shops, it's clear after one week, it was clear for me that they were thought to behave in a certain way, to reply to the customer in a certain way. Also in the streets you can see that the people behave in a structured behavior. It's hard for me to explain the concept in my mind, but I thought, like they are not spontaneous, like I was imagining before.

[00:12:29.18] R: What would you say, could this be somehow related to your perception of authenticity? You said that at the beginning you had the idea that they are very polite and it comes from their heart, but then you "learned" that it's actually something imbeded in the culture and that they have to do it, even they want or not. Do you think that, perhaps, something you thought it's natural for them and coult be found only there is not natural anymore or authentic anymore?

[00:13:02.26] I: I've a sensation that the reality in Japan is not that real. I think that there is something fake in the way they behave. And this is very hard for me to say, because I have a big respect for Japan and Japanese. But I noticed that. It was so evident for me after one week. But I don't know if it was because I had a lot of pre-understanding of Japan before. Yeah, probably this influenced me, like I had such a positive image before, so, then the difference really astonished me.

[00:13:48.01] R: How would describe your experience in Japan, let's say on the scale from 1 to 10?

[00:13:55.27] I: Oh, let's say 10, because it's the most exotic place I've been. I did a lot of travels and I would put Japan as my 2nd favorite destination, so... Even if I notice this kind of fake life, I still like that kind of society. Everything works fine and services works perfectly and it's so safe. The locations are beautify and there's such as big fusion between religion, for example, Buddhist and Shinto religions and the city. It's like, you go around and you didn temples everywhere. And they like to visit them. So yes, it's amazing for me.

[00:14:55.01] R: Do you think Japan met your expectations?

[00:14:58.26] I: No. It's different than the Japan that its portrayed in manga and anime. It's very different. But I still liked it, in a different way. Now that I read the manga, I've a different view. I can understand why an author is representing something. I think now I understand them more.

[00:15:28.08] R: Do you think now's better? Now that you understand them...

[00:15:28.27] I: I think yes. For me it's better, like I enjoy more really.

[00:15:37.08] R: Just to summarize. For you was a good experience that you perception changed. Now do you perceive that you understand the real Japan?

[00:15:48.12] I: I like to think that I got to know more about their real Japanese. And I also want to mention something that I didn't mention. I've a friend in Japan. An Italian girl and we met there. I contacted here and we met. And she lives there, so she could explain to me a lot of things about the experience and naturally she confirmed my sensation that this kind of behaviors that they have are in structured patterns

[00:16:21.00] R: Ok. How did you select the place to visit in Japan?

[00:16:25.16] I: I saw in that guide that there are many areas of Tokyo that are worth visiting and I wanted to visit them all. And so, yeah, I visited all the areas of Tokyo. Then I also wanted to go little abroad, but then I was also with a friend and we couldn't manage but we wanted to go to Kyoto and to Disneyland. But at the end we conldn't go and that's a pitty. In general we wanted to see all the different quarters of Tokyo.

[00:17:00.25] R: What did you visit in Tokyo?

[00:17:02.25] I: Everyday - one area, sometimes two. So Shinjuku, Roppongo, it's hard for me to remember the names. All the areas (irrelevant comment). Some parks. The we went up to the Tokyo tower. (irrelevant comment) I was more into Tokyo tower, because of manga and anime. They made me a lot of expectations of this tower. and then we visited a lot of temples. We went to that crossing, the famous one where a lot of people cross the street at same time. Then we went to eat some local food. That was very curious to try. Like okonomiyaki, which is like an omlet. And my friend wanted to try sushi and I went with her. And what else... We went up to the governmental building and it's beautiful. And then we were just going around. We visited the old Tokyo. It's really beautiful. And Then the area of manga and anime, there are some shops full of , like full full full, like 5 floors full of comics or gadgets. Yeah, that's it.

[00:18:49.22] R: Was it important... You said you read a travel guide. Was it imporant how they describe the place. was it important if they say things like "this is where you can see the real Japanese culture. And this is the most real place. And the food here is very...

[00:19:08.28] I: I think it's inevitable that I was influenced by this guide. Of course, if I read that it's recommended and it's real Japanese, I still go, just to see if it's true or not.

[00:19:19.23] R: How would you judge if it's true or not?

[00:19:23.21] I: How do I judge...I don't know. at the beginning i was more naive maybe, and I was believing whatever I was seeing. But now, after some days you... you create your opinion. I don't know how, but you kind of understand if something is true or not. But if you ask me how - I don't know. It's my brain. It works by itself.

[00:19:49.28] R: What is authentic about Japan? Something really authentic?

[00:19:52.17] I: It's authentic that the society is structured very good. It's authentic that Japanese people know what to do since they are born till they die. I have the sensation that they tell them how to behave in every stage of their lives. So, maybe they are not stressful. they shouldn't be anxious, because they know what to do. For me a big reason of stress is that I don't know what I would be, what I would do in my life. But they know, it's so clear for them. School, 20 hrs a day, then university, then work and then they die for the company. (irrelevant comment)

[00:20:55.22] R: You mention about habits of bowing to people. What else would you say it's not authentic? (irrelevant comment) Was there anything that you though it was very authentic, very Japan-like and when you went there you felt like it's not.

[00:21:23.01] I: What is authentic for example is the consumes that I saw. I mean, these big shops are so full of people buying everything. and their products are so silly, they are just so silly for me that really everybody buys. They really like to collect things and I think this is real for them. If I have to say something fake, for example, they

are sometimes...(disturbance in the sound) It's the relationship they have with their religion. It's true, it's authentic I think, what is practically happening in the temples - people go there and they have their way to bow and to clap the hands. It's like a little ritual that they do in any temple where they go. and then they put a coin. I sometimes cool not notice like they consider these kind of things superstition. and it's not really radiated in them. They don't really believe in what they do. I think they mostly these kind of things for superstition. They are thought to do like this and they just do it, without thinking too much. It's the same thing they do in every temple. (irrelevant comment) The food, when you enter a shop, a restaurant for example, outside there's like a glass and insider there all these fake foods. It's seems very real, but then it's not. It's like place or rubber and it's so astonishing. I though it's true and it's not. And then, all these lights and pictures and comercials everywhere. It seems so fake. I don't know. Like if everything is artificial and built for creating something that doesn't exist. I get the sensation, sometimes of being inside a videogame. And all that was happened there gave me the same impression. For example, I was going to a metro and when I was entering I heard a jinle. Nanananan~ and (bad quality sound) Some strange thing and sounds everywhere. I don't know, there's something strange there that attracts me and at the same time it makes me feel like I don't want to be there.

[00:24:24.14] R: Okay. Do you think in order to perceive the culture it's important to understand the language?

[00:24:33.19] I: I noticed that many people don't speak English and I was expecting that they were speaking English. And they don't actually, but still they were trying to understand me. I was trying with my very limited knowledge of Japanese. But no way, they were not understanding my Japanese at all. Like, I'm vegetarian and I tried in the restaurants to say "watashi wa vegetarian desu". and they were not understanding me and they were always bringing me fish or meat. So it depends if a person can adapt. It's not that necessary to know the langue if you are used to travel. If it's the persons first travel and he goes to Tokyo, maybe it would ne be the best choice.

[00:25:33.18] R: Do you think you would have grasped better the life, the everyday life of the Japanese, if you could read or speak, even if it's not related to normal things like eating?

[00:25:47.24] I: For example, a lot signs in the city are in Japanese. I would have probably understood more, but still I had internet with me, so in the hotel I was checking in English and sometimes I was trying to translate and some maps I think were in English. Like, for example, maybe the map of the merto was in English. Like there were the names both in Japanese and English.

[00:26:18.18] R: Do you think the Japanese government should take some initiative to make it more foreign friend? Not only Tokyo, but the whole country?

[00:26:27.08] I: For the country I don't know, because I visited only Tokyo. But on the other hand I know it's impossible to visit everything, so... I am mostly satisfied in any case. Probably I could have found some little villages where, there are for example old Japanese living in another way, because Tokyo is still... similar to western society. Maybe in some little cities, things would be evident I would only see Eastern society, maybe more religion, more temples

[00:27:14.07] R: Do you think the rest of the country could have been more authentic that Tokyo. Because you say that they have a lot of western culture in Tokyo.

[00:27:22.20] I: Yeah, well, the told me and I've read on the internet. I think so, but I cannot guaranteed, because I'm not experienced by myself.

[00:27:31.21] R: Do you think that places that are popular among tourists could be altered in some way to, attract westerners?

[00:27:41.23] I: Yes, this is true, but not only in Tokyo. I mean everywhere it's like this. Even in Rome I think it's like this. In Tokyo it's so evident that the Western presence.

[00:27:56.27] R: Do you think if that's a good thing or a bad thing?

[00:28:00.21] I: Bad

[00:28:02.06] R: Why?

[00:28:04.28] I: Because it's artificial, it's not natural, it's created for a purpose, to attract people. (irrelevant comment)

[00:28:26.22] R: Do you think the Japanese have a way to incorporate western ideas into Japan and Japanese culture. (irrelevant comment)

[00:29:02.07] I: I know that... I don't remember when, but 50-60 years ago, Japanese opened to the world and they opened to the western societies on purpose. and a lot of word in Japan they took it from English (irrelevant comment). It's good that they are open to other cultures, but they should not lose their identity. So I don't know in the long time if they would lose something of their own culture like this. But I don't like it, what they took bad from the Western society is the consumism. I have the idea that before they were not like this "buying, buying, buying" all these stupid products (irrelevant comment)

[00:30:17.05] R: How important is for you to know the story behind a place you visit? Is it important how a local person tells the story?

[00:30:22.09] I: When I was visiting the governmental palace, a lady approached us and asked us if we wanted a guide for free. And we said yeas and she told us a lot of historical facts. And we really appreciated it. I like to know the historical parts behind it. In particular when they propose to tell me for free in this way I don't have to read boring books. It's very nice for me. I understand more when i know the history. and in general, I like to know. The more I know, the more I like the thing.

[00:31:04.15] R: Would you select a place to visit according to the story? Like if you have head that something happened there and you go just to check if that's true.

[00:31:17.25] I: It could probably have an influence but it's not my ownly characteristics I look for. But probably if I notice something up in there and I'm curious about it...

[00:31:32.19] R: So I think that's about it. Anything else you would like to add about your trip to Japan?

[00:31:39.24] I: I didn't like the food. I was expecting the food to be amazing. actually me and my friend, we had a lot of trouble the first days to adapt the local food (irrelevant comment). It was hard for me to find something good. There were good things, but most of the reaturatnst had this strange smell that we didn't enjoy. and they don't use a lot of bred, and they eat a lot of bred and every night i was going to this 7/11 to buy bread and chocolate because I was starving. Me and my friend were starting all the time, but the okonomiyaki was very good.

[00:32:33.16] R: Ok. Authentic Japanese food. Enjoying the best of it. (irrelevant comment)

[00:33:06.08] R: Ok. I would stop the recording now. So thank you very much.

DIMANA

[00:00:00.00] R: And now we are recording. Just on record, do you agree to record this interview?

[00:00:12.26] I: Yes, no problem.

[00:00:12.26] R: Let's some set rules in the interview. There are no wrong or right answers. It is only your opinion that matters on the questions. If you don't understand any of the questions don't hesitate to ask me, I will rephrase it for you. And I hope it's okay to be on a first name basis. Okay. Let's begin. Tell me, why do you travel in general?

[00:00:43.28] I: I travel to see new things, because the world is big and I want to see as much as possible during this life. This is my general reason to travel. My motivation.

[00:01:00.13] R: What do you do when you are travelling?

[00:01:04.24] I: Usually, if we disregard my current stay in Japan, I go on package holiday of one to two weeks if we are talking about abroad. At home in Bulgaria they could be for a few days and I look to visit famous tourist attractions and to try the local food. These are my priorities.

[00:01:27.29] R: Why do you choose local attractions?

[00:01:30.10] I: Because these are the things you can't see at another place. You went there to see something specific that's available only there and no matter how many photos you see, it's more interesting to feel it, more personal when you experience it. The place, or the attraction, whatever there is.

[00:01:54.15] R: Is it important for you the place you choose to be a popular destination?

[00:02:01.03] I: No, not at all. Of course I would prefer first to see the popular destinations and then the less popular but from my personal experience I know that the less popular destinations are often more interesting than the popular once.

[00:02:22.03] R: How so?

[00:02:23.14] I: They give you a very different and a lot more personal experience. On the other hand, when the destination is very popular, there are too many people and I... if I can't say that the location becomes worn out, but the experience becomes a lot more annoying. You just go there, take photos, you can't experience. But when you visit a non-popular destination, you can pay a lot more attention, you can have a different angle or to add more to your perception of the place, if you had any about the place, the country, the people.

[00:03:02.22] R: Great. Let's then talk about Japan! Why are you in Japan?

[00:03:06.19] I: I am in Japan for a year. I am studying as an exchange student with a scholarship from the Japanese government and the Japanese ministry of Education. I am located in Chiba prefecture, which is near Tokyo, a bit east of Tokyo.

[00:03:29.05] R: So you are there for an educational purpose...

[00:03:31.22] I: Yes.

[00:03:33.17] R: Tell me what interested you in Japan? As to choose to go there...

[00:03:35.08] I: I love these questions. In general I study Japanese philology and therefore I had to come to Japan in order to complete my education. What interested me in Japan... The reasons to study Japanese and like Japan are very different. What I like about Japan... Before, the reason to like it was that it was very different. It gave me things I could not find in the Bulgarian culture, like a different look on things, a different philosophy. But now, that I am here, and that I started my education in Japanese philology I understood that Japan is not that different. Japan is not that far away. People are the same everywhere. Modern people do not define themselves that much of their traditional culture. Now the things I like about Japan are completely different than the things that hooked me up. What hooked me up was that, my father, even when I was little he would raise my interest in Japan, because he is into martial arts. The first technical boom in the 80s was about Japanese technology, Japanese cars, videogames... This is what hooked me up, but now I can't say that's what I like about Japan.

[00:05:04.28] R: Oh, okay. Let's start from the beginning. How did you imagine Japan before going there?

[00:05:07.08] I: Well, Japan before going there and Japan- the one I see here are not that different. Maybe I could compare Japan before I started studying about it, compared to Japan that I see now. Before I started studying about Japan I thought it's was something like what many Bulgarians imagine America to be - a dream place, where anything is possible. My understanding was that it was a country of limits, where at least half of the population were geishas and samurai or the other part are eating sushi every day. This has nothing to do with reality. Maybe my understanding was too idealistic, compared to now.

[00:06:02.19] R: And how is it now?

[00:06:04.10] I: I don't know. Now I have this researcher's look on Japan. I can't... I lost my tourist charm from Japan long time ago. (irrelevant comment). Japan is an island in the ocean, which shocks me from time to time. The earthquakes shock me. But it's still a country like any other, and the people are like any other people. Maybe the culture is a bit different. They have their positive sides, as well as negative. And that's it. (irrelevant comment)

[00:06:53.26] R: Tell me, now that you are there, do you travel around Japan?

[00:07:00.19] I: Yes, I do. Now, for the 8 months I've been here I've travelled to almost all sightseeing places in Tokyo, like the big districts. I've been to Sapporo, which is the capital of Hokkaido prefecture. I've been to Kyoto, Osaka, Yokohama, Kanagawa prefecture is I place I've travelled to a lot. Kamakura and where I live in Chiba. (irrelevant information). I've seen Fuji from the train. From now on I will go to Okinawa during the summer and next month to Nagano. I consider going to Nara, maybe to Guma. And if I have the time for anything else during my last 3 months here.

[00:08:31.28] R: Perfect. Tell me now, how did you choose which places to visit and which places you are going to visit? What motivated you to select exactly these places?

[00:08:38.20] I: Well, my motivation was very basic. I have many colleagues who are located all around Japan. And I am travelling to see them. (irrelevant information). On my way to visit them, I travel around the cities.

[00:09:17.16] R: Let's now talk about popular places in Japan. You say you select the places to visit according to having a friend there. Have you ever chosen a popular tourist destination?

[00:09:37.29] I: Well, maybe that was Hokkaido. Because, at least among my colleagues, the snow festival in Sapporo during February is quite famous. Starting first year university we had the dream to visit the festival. It is around a week, we saw 3 days of the festival. And that was popular tourist destination that we wanted to visit. Another one was Kyoto. I did visit the famous places in Kyoto, but still kept aside some time to visit the places my colleagues who live there suggested to me. I have Japanese friends that were born there, who told me to see other places instead of the famous stuff.

[00:10:23.13] R: Why did they suggest exactly these places instead of the famous.

[00:10:28.10] I: Mostly because there are no people.

[00:10:31.09] R: How people influence the place?

[00:10:33.03] I: Well... To walk around a famous place in Japan, compared to famous places around the word is a completely different experience. Just for comparison, I've been to Paris. There, to climb the Eifel tower or to check the Louvre... no matter how many people there are, it's nothing like going to the Golden Pavilion in Kyoto. Here you have to line up on a line, where you wait around 40 minutes and if you visit Disneyland up to 3 hours. And to visit a famous place in Japan, where there are so many people it's more of a procedure. It's not tourism, it's not fun, it's just a procedure. You line up, buy a ticket, walk with the same pace, every 30 sec there's a person, clad in uniform, with long sleeves, no matter if it's summer and he shouts with a microphone in your ear "Be careful. Go on. Don't stop. Here you don't stop for more than 30 sec. So you pass and you take photos at the exactly same place all the others took the photo from. You beg people to take the same photo for you and your friends like for the other people. You eat the local specialty. You buy the famous souvenir, which is so specific that no other would do from this place. You can't take a photo without at least 10 Chinese or grannies with umbrellas. It doesn't matter if it rains or it's sunny. There's always a granny with an umbrella behind you. And that's it. All in all people ruin the experience. You can't fully enjoy the place, no matter how beautiful it is and how popular it is. If there are people, the experience is the same as a photo or something else.

[00:12:34.25] R: Now that you mention it, let's talk about authenticity. What is authenticity according to you?

[00:12:39.04] I: Oh, well...

[00:12:49.07] R: What do you associate it with? What is authentic according to you?

[00:12:50.26] I: Well, maybe we can say what is not authentic according to me. Authentic means real. Everything is authentic. Even the Chinese knock offs are authentic because they exist. We can't say that an authentic experience would be to go Kyoto and see a geisha. That's not authentic for me. Everything that is there at the place is authentic. Because culture like a creature that constantly changes. I can't say this is a knock off and this is authentic. Everything you feel and see is authentic. And it becomes authentic for you experience.

[00:13:39.12] R: What's authentic according to you personally?

[00:13:40.14] I: Everything I've seen is authentic. I can't say... For example a katana forged by the master for several years... Some people can label it authentic. But things change and authentic changes too. I don't like this category, I can't judge my experiences or souvenirs, or whatever with them being authentic. I don't like this category. I look to avoid it. It's the same with traditional stuff and authentic... I don't like them, because traditions and what is real constantly changes.

[00:14:37.14] R: Can you give me an example of something that is not authentic in the lines of Japan?

[00:14:40.10] I: Well, yeah.... Something not authentic.

[00:14:50.07] R: Of course, to your understanding.

[00:14:50.10] I: It's a bit different.

[00:14:56.00] R: Yes, I know... (irrelevant comment)

[00:15:27.23] I: Well, authentic in Japan... However stupid it sounds it's because people think too much about the other. That's the most authentic thing about Japan. Everyone thinks of the other, not to harm him, not to offend him. Temples are not authentic, all temples...okay, maybe 90% were burned and rebuilt again. Even the oldest and the most authentically looking temple, it is possible to be built in 1980. I can't say the temples are authentic. I can't say the food is authentic, because most of the food is based on changed Chinese recipes. Japan, in general, is general for determining what's authentic and what not. Because there's always something that's been taken and assimilated.

Therefore I can say that the way people interact with you is authentic. Even if some people say that Japanese are misleadingly nice and misleadingly take care of you, that's not true. They really think about you and they look after you, and that's something really authentic about Japan. To think about other is something really Japanese.

[00:16:42.24] R: What would influence your judgment if something is authentic or not?

[00:16:46.09] I: Maybe, the only thing that influences the perception is how I feel about it. So when I feel that's real I can say "Yeah, that's authentic". If I feel it like it's being faked or it's...I don't know. I would say it's my personal perception and intuition.

[00:17:20.03] R: No outer factors?

[00:17:23.16] I: Maybe not.

[00:17:25.29] R: Have you ever experienced a change in your perception if something is authentic or not?

[00:17:32.00] I: Yes.

 [00:17:38.20] R: Can you give me an example?

[00:17:38.20] I: Well, when I found out that authentic Japanese food does not exist. That there's nothing traditionally Japanese like food and that everything has been imported from China or Asia. Like the fried meat from Korea or the ramen, which we though it's Japanese was actually Chinese. That's when you think yeah, that's not authentic at all, but in now, I decide it's a lot more authentic, because people have decided that this is their identity, therefore it's a lot more authentic. Let's say it like that. That's how my perception changes.

[00:18:27.14] R: Have you ever experienced disappointment because you found out this was imported from China, for example?

[00:18:34.12] I: Maybe that happened in the past. But, all in all, the whole Japanese culture is based on assimilating foreign cultures. Therefore, the more inauthentic the more authentic it is. That's how it sounds. The more inauthentic it is, the more Japanese it is for me.

[00:18:54.10] R: That's good. Tell me now, you do know about the incident in Fukushima?

[00:19:02.03] I: Yes

[00:19:02.03] R: Did that influence you in any way? For you travelling?

[00:19:06.25] I: For my decision to go arrive here or...

[00:19:16.12] R: Well, for the choice of place to visit when already in Japan...

[00:19:25.16] I: Well, within my selection of place to visit, this had no effect. Because I have plans, during the summer to go to Sendai, the capital of Fukushima, because there's an interested building there, which and a friend of mine and I want to visit. It has influenced me in other aspects, and that's the food I choose to eat here in Japan. I look the rice, especially the rice and vegetables I eat to have been produced as far away as possible from Fukushima. Which means either Kyushu or Hokkaido production. At the beginning my professors scared me, that I should not drink water. The first several months I was buying only bottled water, which was again, from Kyushu or somewhere else. At the end, I decided it's impossible to avoid it and at least something would get affected by Fukushima. Therefore I decided not to pay so much attention. Another interesting observation I have on Fukushima, is the governmental tactic, from the last several months. They want to stimulate tourism in Fukushima. Everywhere - subway, trains, on huge posters and on TV adds you can see "Eat food from Fukushima. Buy these things from Fukushima. Go visit Fukushima". And the Japanese get really influenced by that. When someone tells them on the TV or someone writes in the newspaper that it's safe in Fukushima, go there, eat their things...They decide that if it's has been said that there's no danger on the TV, that means it's really safe and stop paying attention. I and the other foreigners don't really accept this. This is really...Well, we understand why the Japanese government does it, because otherwise the whole prefecture would die out. There won't be any people who would live there. But, after all we don't want to sacrifice our health. Because this danger is real, it's not made up, as the Japanese government is trying to convince us. The danger is still on-going. I would advise people to avoid consuming food from Fukushima and no going there. I would go there for a few days, but it's good to be careful.

[00:22:03.26] R: How about the thing you are looking to visit within the prefecture...What motivated you to go exactly there?

[00:22:08.12] I: Well, it's this famous building. Well, it's not really that famous but there's this building in Sendai, a mediatheque. My friend, with whom I would go, she's an architect and she's making a detailed research of this building, which is a very functional and different, it's something like a library but for all sorts of media and she just wants to go there and look how it's made in real life, because she's been studying it. I want to go and see it with her. And then there's this island with cats that's close to the seashore. If I have the time, I would like to go there, but maybe it would not be on this trip to Japan. But I would look to visit for a day or two in this prefecture and from there on, if possible I would like not to be there.

[00:22:59.17] R: I am asking, because, after the incident the number of tourists visiting Japan declined.

[00:23:06.15] I: All in all, it was not only the tourists, it was also the students which would like to go there. Now it's 2000 - 3000 less than before.

[00:23:14.05] R: (irrelevant comment) In recent years, Japan has experienced increase in tourist numbers (irrelevant comment). Now the question is, that many people say that the increase of number is because people think this could be their last chance to visit Japan, due to the disasters. That's why I asked?

[00:24:05.17] I: In that case they all can go to Venice, because it can disappear. They can also go to Amsterdam, because it can sink soon. Yeah, it's an interesting logic. (irrelevant comment). But that's highly impossible, but why not, the Japanese win from all of this.

[00:24:47.29] R: Yeah, more or less. Have you ever been worried by something similar. There are other people that are worried that the tourism has really bad influence on the Japanese culture and it's changing constantly.

[00:25:05.12] I: The Japanese culture constantly changes with or without the tourism. Things are constantly being imported. It has all started from the Chinese hieroglyphs, that were imported 5-6 century. That's when the Japanese culture changed. The Japanese culture changed a few centuries before that when the Japanese tribes came to the island and before that the local cultures changed. When things come from Korea, when Buddhism is imported. Japan changes with all the things that are being imported. I don't think some tourists from less than 100 years would change Japan that much. Well, of course they would change it, but that's not something bad. The Japanese culture has been made as interchangeable. It can't be constant. Like any other culture, but they won't destroy it. Another thing is that the Japanese are really good at keeping their old things by adding new stuff. The worst that could happen is for the Japanese to take some things from the tourist that visit. But that definitely does not mean that they would destroy their culture. If an earthquake happens, or like, a few weeks ago the Hakone volcano became active, which hasn't been active since the 12th Century. Maybe I regret not being able to go during autumn to visit there and see it, because now it's closed for tourists maybe. If now it actually explodes, I won't be able to see it in the next several years the surrounding area, which is really beautiful. But that was a chance...

[00:26:39.10] R: If you knew it would explode, would you have visited it?

[00:26:39.29] I: Yes, I would have gone.

[00:26:44.13] R: And now you understand how some people visit places

[00:26:48.09] I: Yeah. In truth this can happen anywhere. Big earthquakes can happen in Turkey too and it can destroy anything. Everywhere the world this is possible. So I don't think people should panic that much about Japan. Not more with any other place in the world.

[00:27:07.16] R: Different people. Different understanding. It's not only Japan. But that's our example.

[00:27:14.28] I: If people knew something like that would happen, they would have probably been more prompt to go there, but... There's nothing we can do about it.

[00:27:26.10] R: If you can describe Japan with 3 words, what would they be?

[00:27:28.27] I: Wow... Only 3 words! Well... isagimono no aware. These are my words.

[00:27:46.26] R: Okay. Well, that's it. Is there anything else you would like to add before finish?

[00:27:57.03] I: Well...

[00:28:04.03] R: Only if you want

[00:28:04.03] I: Let me think. I don't know. I don't think people should be shocked by Japan. They shouldn't think Japanese are so advanced than all the others. Well, their successes are disadvantages for other sides. Like not countries, but points of view. Everyone have their positive and negative sides and I don't think we should envy

someone that has achieved something or that we should loathe ourselves because we haven't achieved something. Because, as Bulgarians or other European countries or countries from America or Africa. They all have their positive and negative sides. The things we have achieved and are yet to achieve... Cultures are like that. Now we get to know them in order to supplement each other. I don't think we should be afraid or scared by Japan, or adore it too much. That's it.

[00:29:00.11] R: Thank you very much and now I will stop the recording.

DANNIEL

[00:00:00.00] R: So thank you for agreeing on this interview. And now as we start, I have to ask you on record if it's okay to record.

[00:00:12.07] I: It's okay to record

[00:00:12.07] R: Thank you very much. Just to clarify we are doing a qualitative interview, which means there are no wrong or right answers. It's just your opinion that matters. If you don't understand any question, ask me, I will rephrase it for you and I hope it's okay on a first name basis?

[00:00:33.02] I: It's okay.

[00:00:34.14] R: Thank you. So would you introduce yourself shortly?

[00:00:38.27] I: I am Daniel Geneser Wo Shing Hai. I am a high school teacher and I teach biology.

[00:00:52.02] R: Thank you very much. Let's talk about something general. Why do you travel?

[00:00:56.19] I: Mostly to visit family and friends. And sometimes for educational purposes. And rarely only for fun.

[00:01:12.13] R: Ok. How do you select the place to travel to?

[00:01:17.08] I: If I have relatives or friends or if something interesting is taking places there, sometimes I travel...

[00:01:29.10] R: What is interesting in your opinion?

[00:01:31.15] I: Like biology stuff, so if there's like conference in the US for biology teachers in general, it's interesting to see what happens in other countries.

[00:01:47.25] R: Ok. And what kind of activities when you are on a holiday?

[00:01:56.27] I: I do some local sightseeing, otherwise spending time with family and friends

[00:02:01.11] R: And how important is for you when on a holiday to choose a place that is popular?

[00:02:11.16] I: Doesn't really matter?

[00:02:12.09] R: Why?

[00:02:13.10] I: Because the main purpose of traveling is not visiting popular places, but visiting family and friends.

[00:02:24.07] R: Okay. Let's talk about your trip to Japan. So why did you go there?

[00:02:26.09] I: Because my girlfriend was studying there and it was an opportunity to go to Japan and see her before she... sooner than waiting for her to get home.

[00:02:46.00] R: How did you imagine Japan before traveling?

[00:02:50.23] I: Actually I don't know. I didn't have any... I only saw some movies, so I knew there was normal picture of Japan.

[00:03:08.01] R: Did you read any travel information before going there?

[00:03:12.25] I: No. Not really

[00:03:16.17] R: Why?

[00:03:19.24] I: Because my girlfriend was in Japan and she was my local guide and I only depended on her to do that

[00:03:27.11] R: And what did you visit while in Japan?

[00:03:32.03] I: We visited Tokyo and then the local area around my girlfriend's university in Akita

[00:03:43.10] R: Did you like it? Did Japan meet your expectations?

[00:03:58.22] I: It was a nice place and the people where very polite. And very welcoming.

[00:04:00.10] R: So how was Japan? Was it authentic in your experience?

[00:04:04.28] I: Yeah, I don't think they try to be something they are not. They are Japanese and they don't really care how other people see them, because they are Japanese

[00:04:16.11] R: Why do you think so?

[00:04:18.26] I: They are very proud of their culture, I think, and of what they achieve as a country.

[00:04:24.25] R: How did you form this knowledge? Why do you think they are proud?

[00:04:32.27] I: It's historical. I think they see themselves more than other people.

[00:04:42.28] R: I asked about authentic, but how would you describe authenticity? What is authentic for you?

[00:04:54.06] I: Authentic is if you are not trying to be something you are not, so you are really just what you are and if it's in your personality to be part of yourself it's just who you are. It's not something you are trying to be.

[00:05:11.06] R: Can you give me an example of something authentic in Japan according to you?

[00:05:13.13] I: The people.

[00:05:23.22] R: Why?

[00:05:25.00] I: They just behave like Japanese people. They are not trying to be other type of people.

[00:05:38.13] R: Was there anything that was not authentic in Japan?

[00:05:44.09] I: Japan is like multicultural, they are taking lots of cultural stuff from other countries, so maybe most things in Japan are things they copied in, so it's not real authentic Japan like if you would imagine them 2000 years ago.

[00:06:09.21] R: How do you judge if something is authentic or not?

[00:06:15.17] I: I think if something is authentic it's something that's a normal part of you. So if the things they have brought in from other countries are part of their culture it's authentic. Even though it's not originally Japanese.

[00:06:36.04] R: Do you think it's, let's say good, that they are able to incorporate other cultures in their own?

[00:06:45.10] I: I think it's a good thing that they are trying to do that

[00:06:51.26] R: You said you didn't read anything before going to Japan. Now that you have been there how did your knowledge of what is authentic about Japan form? Now do you perceive different things authentic there than you did before that?

[00:07:18.27] I: I'm not sure about what's real authentic Japanese, because there's been a lot of exchange between Japan and other countries, so if authentic is what is originally Japanese it's very difficult to distinguish between what has been absorbed in the Japanese culture and what is directly from the ancestral Japanese culture.

[00:07:59.04] R: And if you have the chance, would you go again to Japan?

[00:08:03.10] I: I probably would, but I'm not sure if it would be on my own initiative. I think it would be from my wife's initiative to go there?

[00:08:21.28] R: Okay. If you could choose a place to visit in Japan, what would you choose?

[00:08:25.19] I: Maybe Fujiyama

[00:08:29.01] R: Why?

[00:08:31.00] I: It should be like, very spectacular place to visit and maybe, I think there are a lot of special nature around those places.

[00:08:46.18] R: Would you choose a place that is authentic in your opinion?

[00:08:53.03] I: I think I would. I think Fujiyama is part of the original Japanese culture and combined with the nature I expect there it would be an authentic experience.

[00:09:11.01] R: Is it important for you to experience the thing you expect to experience or would you prefer the experience to be different from what you have expected?

[00:09:20.14] I: Actually I don't know. I like when things proceed as I expect but it's boring if I can predict what's going to happen. So, in my own mind I prefer the things to proceed as I expect, but really I think I like to be surprised sometimes as well.

[00:09:52.09] R: We talk about Fujiyama. You know about the incident in Fukushima?

[00:10:02.18] I: Yes

[00:10:02.18] R: Did that change your perception of the country in any way?

[00:10:02.18] I: No, I don't think so. They are very effective and they didn't need any help like the Philippines or the Nepali, who need help now. But the Japanese, they didn't need any help, they were just taking care of themselves. They rebuild very fast.

[00:10:47.15] R: I am asking because there were many people that could have visited japan, because they thought it could be their last chance to visit. How do you feel about that?

[00:10:48.24] I: Maybe they weren't well informed, so they made their opinions on not well informed basis.

[00:11:01.20] R: How about mass tourism? Do you think the many visitors Japan has are influencing their culture?

[00:11:09.21] I: Most of the tourists in Japan are, as far as I know, Japanese or maybe Chinese, so I think most of the tourism they don't need to change anything, because the target group is themselves and culture is very near to them. So the Europeans travelling there is just a small probe of the tourism in Japan.

[00:11:42.17] R: Okay. And do you think the Japanese themselves are trying to change their culture in order to attract more westerns?

[00:11:50.21] I: Yes, I think...Maybe not westerners, but maybe western companies, so I think they are very interested in cooperating with the western companies, because there's lots of money in the western companies.

[00:12:21.15] R: How about western tourists?

[00:12:24.14] I:I don't think they do anything in particular...Maybe the make brochures and programs in English, but otherwise I don't think they have changed anything

[00:12:42.28] R: Yes. I think that's about it. Do you want to add anything else?

[00:12:51.05] I: No.

[00:12:51.05] R: Okay. So thank you for this interview.

CLAUDIA

[00:00:02.17] R: Thank you for being in this interview and just on record are you OK if we record it?

[00:00:09.00] I: I am OK, yes. I agree with this.

[00:00:15.24] R: Before we start, I have set some rules. First, there are not right or wrong answers. I am interested in your opinion on the questions I am going to ask you. You know we are going to talk about your trip to Japan, what you perceive as authentic or not, what authenticity is. But if you don't understand any of the questions, please ask me and I will rephrase them for you. And I hope you are Ok on a first name basis.

[00:00:42.21] I: Yes. Sure.

[00:00:44.19] R: So now please introduce yourself shortly.

[00:00:49.21] I: Ok, I am 28 years old, I am a flight attendant and I like to travel. It's my first interest. So I went to Japan in January 2015, with a good friend of mine. I am from Italy but I live in Vienna now.

[00:01:29.01] R: Tell me how do you choose the places that you travel to?

[00:01:37.07] I: Actually by interest. When I am interested in a culture, when I think it could be interesting to fly somewhere to see a new place, then I just book. I am not the kind of person who will think one year before planning a trip. Just by sensation. If I want to go somewhere and I have the chance, I will book.

[00:02:09.03] R: What do you do when you are on a holiday?

[00:02:14.03] I: I travel. I have a lot of interests, I read, I relax. But most of all I am traveling around the world and I spend a lot of time visiting cities. That's what I like the most.

[00:02:33.17] R: Why do you like it the most?

[00:02:40.21] I: Because it's interesting to see how each city seems different or similar. And you can discover a little bit from the culture of a country, visiting cities. How the cities are build, how they look like, how the city is organized and so on.

[00:03:10.27] R: Is it important for you to go to places that are popular?

[00:03:14.01] I: No it's not.

[00:03:14.17] R: Why?

[00:03:14.17] I: Because places that are popular are too much touristic, sometimes. So, for example if you go to London or Paris, they are wonderful cities, but you don't know how the people live there. Because there are so many strangers and so many tourists, there are a lot of attractions.

[00:04:15.04] R: How would you define too much tourists?

[00:04:17.22] I: You can't explain. Sometimes when you are in a place with too much tourists you cannot enjoy the city, the atmosphere of the country.

[00:04:48.17] R: Let's talk about your trip to Japan. Why did you choose Japan?

[00:04:51.11] I: Because I travelled with my best friend. He loves Japan. And I promised him that we will go once. So that's the reason why I chose it.

[00:05:09.02] R: Would you say that your choice of Japan was motivate by your friend?

[00:05:14.08] I: It was motivated from him. I used to live in Florida for one year and I met many people from Japan and I thought that it could be interesting to see Japan. They think and act in a totally different way compared to European people. And then my best friend motivated me a lot.

[00:06:10.12] R: Did you read any additional information about Japan before traveling there?

[00:06:14.23] I: Not really. Because I knew he was going to look for some information. I am a flight attendant, so I don't have so much time in my private life.

[00:06:43.19] R: How did you imagine Japan, before going there?

[00:06:45.18] I: Completely different. It was a cultural shock. Because I went to Tokyo and it's a very big city and I was thinking, OK Tokyo looks like a European or an American city. It's not like that. It was completely different.

[00:07:12.23] R: How was it?

[00:07:14.25] I: It was like surprising, because you had to imagine a very big city and everyone was silent. I was surprised. There are not so many cars on the road. It is surprising, so many people in a big place and everything is quiet.

[00:08:11.25] R: So you didn't image it like that?

[00:08:13.06] I: No, not at all.

[00:08:20.29] R: Did you think it was authentic?

[00:08:49.17] I: They follow rules very strictly. For example if you go into a shop. And it's hard to understand, if you never saw something like that. If you go into a shop, people inside are like have to do particular things. And it's always the same. The sellers do always the same things. I don't know what they were selling, because I don't speak Japanese, but for me it sounds always the same. They are not spontaneous, they are following rules all the time when they are in the public.

[00:10:24.00] R: How would you define authenticity? What is authentic for you?

[00:10:27.13] I: Authentic means to be who you are. To be yourself. To not follow rules. For example to be authentic in your job is to be yourself and even if I follow rules, I get something for me in what I am doing. That's authenticity. And it was not the case in Japan.

[00:11:04.07] R: Why do you think so? Why do you think they are not authentic? You said that you saw them doing what they are doing every day, they follow these rules and they follow their customs. Why do you think that's not authentic?

[00:11:14.24] I: For example Japanese people are extremely kind. If you ask for information, they help you anytime. You won't see any of them angry or in a hurry or nervous or just disappointed. This is what's my impression. Their habits are like I have to always smile, always to be glamorous, always to be kind and friendly. Even if I feel different, even if I am not in the mood. If you are there, you can feel it. And they are doing it because the society wants them to do this. Not because they want to do it.

[00:12:29.10] R: Were you disappointed by this discovery?

[00:12:36.24] I: You never know what people are. You have the impression that you are playing a game with them. So this was a little bit disappointing.

[00:13:04.15] R: How did you judge that something is authentic or not? What influences you perception?

[00:13:21.13] I: That's a good question...Referring to a person or in general?

[00:13:29.11] R: Not necessary a person, but everything.

[00:13:36.16] I: When a thing or a person is not perfect. Then it's authentic.

[00:13:41.18] R: What could change your mind if something is authentic or not?

[00:14:10.08] I: Referring to a thing, it's difficult to say. But referring to a person, when this person is acting like he is feeling.

[00:14:34.27] R: Do you think that authenticity can be both for culture and for objects?

[00:14:46.20] I: Yes, it's not referring to Japan, but I can remember that there is a city in the USA and it's not authentic. All the houses look the same and the roads are clean, it's like a doll city. This is an example for a non-authentic city. Because a real city has smoke and it's not that clean and the houses are not always the same. So yes authenticity can refer to a culture and to a person and place.

[00:15:50.27] R: What was authentic to Japan according to you?

[00:16:05.23] I: I really don't know, because in Tokyo nothing is authentic. But I didn't go to Kyoto or other typical small cities. No wait, there is something that's authentic. It's food.

[00:16:28.14] R: Why?

[00:16:28.14] I: Because in Europe, if you are a stranger, you can eat everywhere to McDonalds or you find something according to your food habits. And in Japan you can't. They have typical meat and all the food. It's difficult to find something that's not authentic.

[00:17:15.03] R: You mentioned Kyoto. Why do you relate Kyoto with authenticity?

[00:17:21.12] I: Maybe because it's not a big city and read people live there like they used to live before globalization came.

[00:17:40.18] R: OK, where did you read that?

[00:17:44.10] I: On the internet.

[00:17:49.05] R: Did you look for any specific web pages related to Japan?

[00:17:54.24] I: I just wrote Kyoto on Google.

[00:18:05.03] R: Let's talk a little about Fukushima. You know about the incident, right?

[00:18:10.19] I: Yes, of course.

[00:18:13.16] R: Did that influence your decision to travel there in any case?

[00:18:18.14] I: No because we are poisoned from all sides, the food we eat, the water we drink. Who knows...I though at the time in January, that it's not a risk when I fly to Japan, because it's not healthier to live in Vienna, than in Japan. So I was not influenced about it.

[00:18:51.08] R: I am asking because there are many people, that after the incident decided to visit Japan, because due to the natural disaster it could be the last time they could go and visit.

[00:19:06.12] I: The only thing that influenced us, was that we chose to drink water only from bottles. And not from the tap. That's the only thing we did.

[00:19:39.27] R: If you could go there again, would you decide to visit Japan again?

[00:19:44.08] I: Yes of course, because Japan is quite big and I would like to go back.

[00:19:55.14] R: If you could go back, what would you visit?

[00:19:57.25] I: Kyoto.

[00:19:59.10] R: Why?

[00:19:59.25] I: For sure because it's more authentic than Tokyo.

[00:20:11.11] R: So you would choose the place according to how authentic it is?

[00:20:15.03] I: This time for sure.

[00:20:20.11] R: So how do you imagine Kyoto?

[00:20:26.18] I: Like a small city with a lot of green with a lot of small houses.

[00:20:44.26] R: How would you feel if I told you it's filled with tourists to the brim.

[00:20:47.20] I: No, really!

[00:20:51.13] R: Kyoto is one of the most popular sites in Japan. Because I think they have four or five of the world heritage sites, there is the city. How does that make you feel?

[00:21:05.12] I: Lost...Because you are right.

[00:21:15.12] R: And I think that's about it. Is there anything else you want to add?

[00:21:20.19] I: No thank you. Thank you for your time. And I hope I was useful.