

# The life in Japan is exciting! You will be one step closer to your dream.

After graduating with an MBA from the National University of Singapore, Mr. Fahd Ahmed joined Yamato Transport Co., Ltd., Japan. Although starting out with no Japanese at all, he now speaks fluent Japanese; however, he still has a lot to learn about the Japanese way of business. Let's find out how he has experienced good things and difficulties in Japan.

**Q1 Are you taking advantage of what you learned in Singapore in your current job?**

**A1** I attended the National University of Singapore to get an MBA degree. Before I entered the NUS Business School, I studied economics in Pakistan, and then I worked for three years in Karachi, south Pakistan, first for an American bank and then at a Chinese telcom company. You can't simply enter an MBA course directly after finishing your undergraduate course; you first need to have some experience in the real business world, which is why some of the students in the MBA course were in their 20s while others were in their 40s. There were many talented business people from all over the world. Of course I'm taking advantage of what I had learned at the university, but the network of friends that I built during my time in the MBA course is the greatest advantage for me.

**Q2 Please tell us how you came to join Yamato Transport, and about your job as Senior Global Account Manager in the Division of Global Business Development.**

**A2** I had wished for a long time to work at a big transportation company. In 2012, Yamato Transport established a partnership with the National University of Singapore to hire one graduate of the university every year, and I was fortunate enough the first to be hired. I have long been interested in Japanese culture. Japan is a safe country, and you are never far from the beaches or the mountains. I was also interested in trying snowboarding that I could not experience in Pakistan or Singapore. There was another reason I decided to come to Japan. My family and brothers are all living in the United States or Europe, so I wanted to go somewhere else. The post at



Yamato Transport was a chance greater than I had hoped for. My current post is Senior Global Account Manager in the Division of Global Business Development. I manage and supervise general e-commerce business targeting Asian countries such as Singapore, Taiwan, and Malaysia.

**Q3 You have been working in Japan for 4 years. What is your impression of Japanese companies? Did you have any difficulties?**

**A3** First of all, Japanese people are very strict about punctuality. You also need to care about many things such as your associations with senior or junior colleagues, greetings and polite wording, and so on. I had experience in an American company before I joined Yamato Transport, and I was quite puzzled by the stark differences between the Japanese and the American ways. I still have much to learn about honorific language,



← with his colleague, Ms. KIM HAN-BYUL

Living in Japan is lots of fun, but studying Japanese is necessary.



Photo: Nagano Tourism Organization

souvenirs, and omotenashi, the Japanese custom of hospitality.

Language is an important issue, too. At first I couldn't speak Japanese at all. After I had studied once a week for six months, I came to be able to speak halting Japanese. Now I speak more fluent Japanese, but business Japanese in contracts or rules is incomprehensible to me. That is my biggest problem for now.

**Q4 What is your favorite Japanese food? Is there anything you can't eat?**

**A4** Japanese foods are delicious. Yakiniiku, yakitori, sushi, sashimi, I like them all. Raw fish is excellent! I especially love salmon and tuna. Of course I like rice and miso soup, too. But there is one thing I can't eat. Natto. I can't stand that smell. Actually, I like cooking and sometimes I cook for myself. Pasta and steak are my specialties, but I also cook Japanese udon often.

**Q5 What is the most enjoyable thing about your life in Japan?**

**A5** My life in Japan is full of enjoyable things, and the best thing among them is snowboarding. I've been to many famous ski sites in Japan such as Niseko in Hokkaido, Hakuba, Nozawa, and Shiga Kogen in Nagano, and Yuzawa in Niigata. I saw the snow monkeys twice, blissfully soaked and relaxed in a hot spring. I think the powder snow in Japan is terrific. My favorite ski site is Niseko. The beaches in summer are great, too. Although Okinawa is popular, I visited the island of Iki in Nagasaki last year. When I searched up "beautiful beach" on the Internet, I came to know about the island of Iki, and I was drawn to its beauty. I enjoyed a wonderful vacation there. I highly recommend it. Another advantage of living in Japan is that there are many opportunities to see big artists in concert. There is no country in Asia with more opportunity to see foreign artists' in concert. I went to the concert of Eric Clapton when he came to Japan, and I also went to the Fuji Rock Festival last year to see the Red Hot Chili Peppers, my current favorite band.



I enjoy snowboarding in winter in Japan!

Snow monkeys in Nagano → ①  
Niseko ski in Hokkaido → ②  
Island of Iki in Nagasaki → ③



Yakiniiku, sushi ... Japanese foods are all superb.



I enjoyed a wonderful vacation at the island of Iki in Nagasaki

**Q6 What are your career goals and your dreams for the future?**

**A6** I'd like to stay in Japan forever. I want to keep learning and building up my career in Yamato Transport and to be an executive someday and perhaps finally the president of this company.

**Q7 Finally, please give a message for foreign students who wish to come to Japan?**

**A7** First, please study Japanese diligently. If you are just a tourist, speaking English is enough to enjoy Japan, but if you want to live and work in Japan, you need to eagerly study everything about Japan, including the language and culture. Japanese language is very difficult and there will be no end to your learning. But you don't have to worry. Your boss and colleagues will be kind enough to help you to work in Japan. People in my neighborhood shops also are very kind and often talk to me casually. I have become acquainted with many people. I'm enjoying my life here so much that I have no time to be homesick. Please come to Japan and pursue your potential!



SUCCESSFUL FRONT RUNNERS

Yamato Transport Co., Ltd.  
Office of International Strategy Development & External Affairs  
**FAHD AHMED**  
Senior Global Account Manager  
Assistant to Executive Officer