

JAL SPONSORS CULTURE STUDIES IN JAPAN

Yeh Ling, a second year graduate student of the Department of Japanese, has won a scholarship to study Japanese culture in Japan at the 2007 JAL Scholarship Japanese Study Program, an event sponsored by the Japan Airlines. He impressed the judges with his fluent Japanese and well-research report on Murakami Haruki, a contemporary Japanese writer. He will leave for Japan on November 24 for two weeks to embark on his cultural tour. All expenses that include food, board, and traveling are covered by JAL. He will visit Tokyo and Nara among other cities.

The purpose of this scholarship is to promote cultural understanding between Japan and its Asian neighbors. This year the organizer offered two scholarships for Taiwan region so the competition was unusually tense. It attracted 18 contestants from 9 universities, but Yeh's eloquent presentation and interest in Murakami Haruki allowed him to stand out to win his dream trip. He was in fact quite surprised at the result as he was the only candidate that did not give a presentation on science or technology related subject. He thought his choice of literature issue would not render him the favorite of the judges. Thanks to this contrary experience, his words of advice to students who wish to participate in future competitions are that they should explore their true interests and stick with them when found. Dr. Peng Chuen-yang, the Chair of the Department of Japanese agrees with him, adding that staying calm throughout the contest will also enhance chances of winning.

Yeh was very young when he was in Japan last time, so he sees this trip as a fantastic opportunity of reacquainting himself with the country he has always had admiration for. In recent years he has relied on television to keep his memory alive and yet there is still a gap between reality and television, he admits. Refreshing his memory aside, he will also use this

trip to look for materials for his graduation dissertation. He was thinking of writing about Murakami Haruki as he is one of the most intriguing writers in Japan' s post-war era in terms of his narration and portray of time. (~Ying-hsueh Hu)

2010/09/27