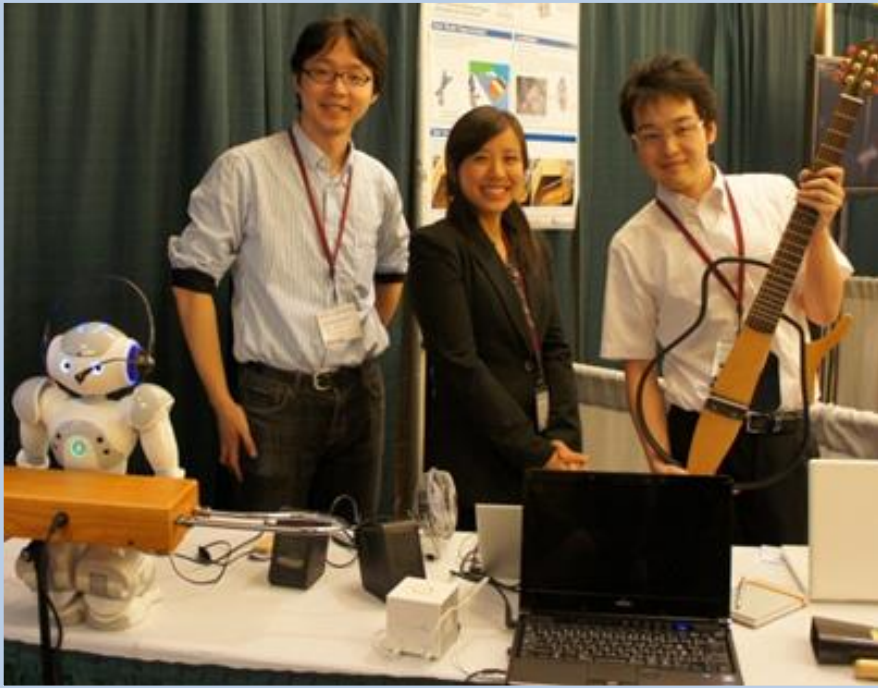# MEXT Scholarship Profiles - Angelica Lim

Scholarship Type:
Research Student (Followed by Masters and PhD)

Program/Field:
Computer Science / Artificial Intelligence / Robotics

University in Japan:
Kyoto University (2009-2014)

University Alma Mater in Canada:
Simon Fraser University

Current Status:
Lead Software Engineer, Aldebaran Robotics, Paris

On Designing User-Friendly Robots: Angelica Lim at TEDxKyoto
tedxtalks.ted.com/video/On-Designing-User-Friendly-Robo

Why did you apply for the MEXT Scholarship?

I was interested in robotics after graduating from the Simon Fraser University, and felt that Japan had the best robots in the world. The MEXT Scholarship was a perfect way to continue my studies in a country that had even better technology and opportunities for my field than in North America.

What challenges did you anticipate (or find out) about living and studying in Japan?

I didn't know Japanese at all before I learned about the MEXT Scholarship program. So, when I decided to apply, I started taking courses right away – a summer class and an evening community course. When I arrived in Japan, the immersion classes offered by MEXT were extremely invaluable, and I continue to use the Japanese I learned to this day.
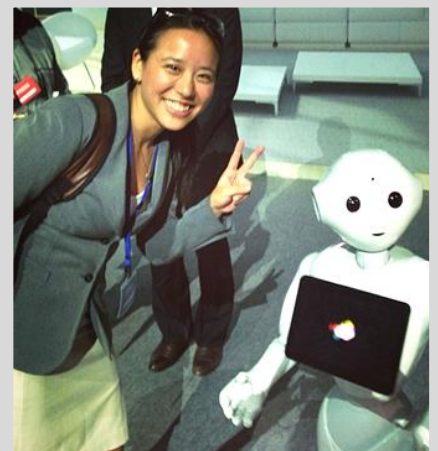
What is your most memorable experience of your time studying in Japan?

Being a part of the launch of the world's first consumer humanoid robot, Pepper! As a robotics Ph.D. student, I landed a part-time job working on a secret robotics project for the Japanese telecom giant Softbank, and a French robotics company. Thanks to the Canadian system in which I learned French, and my Japanese robotics studies, I acted as a technical liaison between the French engineers in Paris and their Japanese colleagues in Tokyo. In June 2014, our robot, Pepper, was launched in a huge auditorium at Tokyo Disneyland. It was

amazing to have played a role in it!

I had many memorable experiences, such as speaking at TEDxKyoto, and being served ramen by two knife-wielding robots!

Thanks to my research lab, I was also sent to attend conferences in Slovenia, Taiwan, Portugual, San Francisco, France, Germany and Italy.

What else was enjoyable about Japan?

The onsens. I loved going to Japanese-style hotels (ryokan), eating fine food, and sitting in natural hot spring baths, surrounded by nature.

How did studying in Japan benefit you in your current role?

My current role at robotics world leader, Aldebaran Robotics, is a perfect fit, thanks to MEXT. I can now speak Japanese at this Japanese-owned company in Paris, and lead a team in developing an emotional robot, which was the subject of my Masters and Ph.D. theses at Kyoto University. Plus, 5 years in Japan has allowed me to be able to comment on intercultural differences, to help my colleagues understand each other.

What comments or advice do you have for people considering studying in Japan?

If you don't know basic Japanese yet, I'd advise learning it before going, so that you can enter Beginner Level 2 or Intermediate Japanese immersion classes upon arrival.

Beginner Level 2 will get you far, whereas entry-level Japanese can be quite limiting.

Also, for researchers it's best to try and attend a top university for your CV later on, but choose your professor wisely to make sure you have fun while doing it! I found a professor whose webpage had lots of pictures of student gatherings and events, and it turned out he was not only a top prof, but we also had a lot of great lab trips and activities!

Checking out Japanese culture with friends.