Integrated Humanities Study Tour to Kyushu, Japan

Overview

As one of the overseas tours of the Global Classroom Programme held during Activity Week, 36 teachers and students visited Kyushu, Japan for six days from 22nd to 27th April, 2018 to find out more about the history, geography and culture of Japan. During the tour, we were engaged in objective, inquiry-based learning activities to enhance our knowledge of Japanese culture, and were able to experience the local way of life through visits to museums, cultural centres and handicraft workshops. We also visited observation decks, memorial hall and memorial park, gaining insights into the devastating effect of natural disasters, as well as the deadly long-term effect the atomic bombings have on the nation.

Places visited

Throughout the six days of the tour, we visited various attractions in Kyushu, including Dejima, Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum, Peace Park, Mount Inasa Observation Platform in Nagasaki City; Unzen Volcano Area Global Geopark, Memorial Park of Houses Destroyed by Debris Flow, Mount Unzen Disaster Memorial Hall and Chidiwa Fault in Shimabara Peninsula; Hui Ten Bosch in Sasebo City; Haku Haku, Fukuoka City Disaster Prevention Center, Kushida Shrine, Hakata Machiya Folk Museum and Dazaifu Tenmangu in Fukuoka City.

History of Nagasaki

Nagasaki was the second district in Japan that received the atomic bomb in 1945. The Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum covers the history of atomic bomb attack in an accessible way. The museum tour started with a clock showing the time of 11:02 a.m., marking the time when the second atomic bomb – ‘Fat Man’ – was dropped on Nagasaki on August 9, 1945. We were struck by the historical records of victims who were injured or killed by the flash heat and blast winds generated by this explosion. Next to the museum, there is the Nagasaki Peace Park, a tranquil space that commemorates the atomic bombing as well as the souls of the departed. Taking a stroll in the Peace Park allowed us to reflect upon the destruction of war, and reconsidered the true meaning of peace.
Geographical features of Kyushu

As one of the four largest islands of Japan, Kyushu is the ideal place to look at the unusual geography of Japan.

We witnessed the aftermath of volcanic eruption when we visited the Memorial Park of Houses Destroyed by Debris Flow, a heritage site with a collection of buried houses buried by debris flow from the 1991 Heisei (Mount Unzen) eruption. To further understand how volcanoes work and how they affect the lives of residents who live around them, we also visited the Mount Unzen Disaster Memorial Hall, a museum that educates visitors with hands-on display, videos and the eruption simulator.

The highlight of the tour came when we attended the 1-hour General Experience Course at the Fukuoka City Disaster Prevention Centre where we experienced simulated earthquake, strong wind and fire, and learned to fight fire with fire extinguishers.

Japanese culture

There is a saying ‘when in Rome do as the Romans do’, so we did the same as Japanese when we were in Kyushu in order to experience the Japanese culture. We wore yukata while having Japanese traditional cuisine; we also enjoyed a hot spring bath after dinner like what Japanese usually do almost every night.

The most memorable parts of our tour would probably be hands-on experiences. Students had a chance to make their own seaweed, one of the most common kind of food in Japanese meals.

Besides, students joined a handicraft workshop in Hakata Machiya Folk Museum, where they produced a Japanese traditional paper doll called “Hakata hariko”. By creating their own “Hakata hariko”, students could understand more about the old daily life and culture of Fukuoka city in Meiji and Taisho period.
Reflection

Learning experiences outside the classroom are interdisciplinary. When we go out into the world, we encounter it with different disciplinary “lenses”, be it History, Geography or Life and Society. The study tour combined the disciplines of the subject of Integrated Humanities and allowed us to apply what we have learnt in the classroom to the real world. Through the tour, we understood the significance of peace and harmony, gained fresh perspectives on ecological conversation, as well as reflected on our own way of life.

During the tour, students were asked to form into groups of four and collected useful information for the topic they have chosen, like history of the atomic bomb attack or the geographical features of Kyushu. Then, they formulated their tour experience either in the form of a poster, leaflet, news article or comic strips. By completing the group projects, we hope students could reflect upon what they have learnt throughout the tour with the help of their critical thinking skills and communication skills.
Students’ Group Work

Poster

Consequences of Earthquakes

Comic Book

日本九州交流團

Bosco

Chester
AN earthquake of seismic intensity 7.6 occurred in the city of Fukuoka yesterday, at 12:23pm. This massive earthquake has hit the north-western part of Kyushu, a total of two large prefectures: Fukuoka, Nagasaki.

Experts say that, this huge earthquake was caused by the active moving of Fukushiyama obliterated belt, and the aftershock earthquake of Kumamoto Earthquake in Kyushu, 2016. Moreover, this earthquake caused Tsunami in Nagasaki, near the sea coast. Hundreds of buildings were flooded away towards the sea. This caused a large damage in the city.

WHAT HAPPENED AFTER THIS HORRIBLE SHOCK?

The Fukuoka Disaster Prevention Centre quickly retained people who had lost their homes during the disaster. Here are some quotes from the Japanese we interviewed inside the prevention centre. Shinji, living in Fukuoka City, immediately rushed to the centre in order to save him from death by the aftershock earthquakes that occurred six more times after the initial earthquake, as he said, ‘my house kept on shaking after the earthquake. Electricity cut down at once; my lamp and television were destroyed as they fell. Luckily, I escape before the house collapsed.’
Kannigiwa, who was still at his primary school when the earthquake hit, said he and his classmate hid under tables when they felt the earthquake. He was rescued by the firemen, but his friends, unfortunately, didn't make it, because of the falling furniture.

Kannigawa

THE CATASTROPHE CAUSED 930 DEATHS
After the shock in 6 hours shock, nearly 1000 people lost their lives as they tried to escape, with more than 1/3 hit by heavy furniture. Many car crashes occurred in both Fukuoka and Nagasaki Prefecture, causing approximately 200 deaths. 400 and 230 elderly and children were found dead respectively. Most schools were damaged in Fukuoka. There was also a fire blaze as certain areas where people had been cooking at home. Approximate 1600 people were hurt and has been sent to the hospital.

CAR CRASH IN NAGASAKI HIGHWAY TOOK AWAY 130 LIVES
The great shock also led to the fracture of one main route, connecting Fukuoka and Nagasaki, four buses passing through the road get trapped on the bridge, bumping caused a four bus-skewer, twice of the four buses even catch on fire. The road was later closed to ensure no more accidents will happen.

ALL REFERENCE SOURCES:
tre-information-technology-essay.php
Do you know?

In the history of Japan, it has been segregated from the other countries for about 2000 years. Without influence from other countries, unique traditional culture and handicrafts were developed in Japan.

Washi (Japanese paper), chopsticks, Hakata Hariko are examples of the over 1200 traditional crafts in Japan, and most of them are handmade and traditional Japanese materials are often used such as wagami.

Reflections

Wesley:
I am very grateful that we were able to attend this handicraft making workshop during the tour. In addition to that the Hakata Hariko was a great ornament, I was also able to learn how to make this traditional handicraft. Through this, I was truly able to learn about the culture of Japan in the past.

Erik:
It was definitely a valuable and precious experience for us to have this opportunity to learn how to make a Hakata Hariko. As Hakata Hariko is a traditional handicraft in Japan, only few people know how to make this handicraft nowadays. So this is really a precious opportunity for all of us to participate in this event to learn more about the traditional culture and handicraft of Japan.

Henry:
I was so delighted to make the traditional crafting during the trip which even local Japanese students might not have the this opportunity. Nowadays, people do not care much about traditional handicraft due to the hectic lifestyle of the urban people, so by learning how to make the Hakata Hariko, we can pass on this traditional crafting skills from one generation to the other, making sure that this special handicraft will not be lost.

James:
I was very grateful to have the opportunity to do some traditional crafts during the tour. Making Hakata Hariko let us learn history through direct contact. Through this, we were able to learn the tradition and history of Hakata.
Background Information

What is Hakata Hariko?

Hakata Hariko was first produced in the mid-Edo period by the Papier-mâché artists in Karuizawa by placing layers of Japanese paper in wooden molds or clay molds.

These dolls are still made by hand using the same meticulous and traditional techniques until this day. Finally the bright coloring in Nikawa are used for the painting of symbols of luck such as tiger and the Daruma doll.

Also, the Japanese believes that Hakata Hariko can bring them good luck, therefore they are always placed at the entrances of restaurants.

Traditional Handicraft Making On Day 5

On the afternoon of the fifth day, we visited the Hakata Traditional Craft and Design Museum. We took a brief look at the exhibition hall and found many aspects of the Hakata way of life.

Then we went to the Machiya Hall. It is an example of traditional architecture that has been moved here and restored to its past state in order to offer visitors a glimpse into the past.

Finally, we participated in the Traditional Crafts Workshop. We got a step-by-step guide and students unleashed our art potentials to design and make our very own Hakata Hariko.

Steps to make a Hakata Hariko

1. Tear the paper into strips and stick it onto the pottery model.
2. Put a wagami on a wet table.
3. Sprinkle some glue on it.
4. Spray some water on the wagami.
5. Put a newspaper on it.
6. Sprinkle some glue on it.
7. Spray some water on the newspaper and repeat step 2.
8. Put a wagami on the top.
9. Paste some seaweed on the surface of the wagami.
10. Rub the paper into a ball after adding water to it.
11. Add some oil on the pottery model.
12. Put the fin (cardboard) into the dried paper and stick them together.
13. Paint the paper with acrylic and add some gold powder on it.
14. Use a hairdryer or put it under sunlight to let it dry.