

Japan Trip – CUC Summer Exchange Program 2023

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FPT University, Vietnam

Lan Nhi Vo Nguyen (Little Flower)

Since very long time, I have always dream to experience lives in Japan. When seeing the program on my university post, I applied immediately. After being in the wait-list for months, I was announced to prepare documents to go to Japan for the CUC 10 days trip. I still remember our flight from Hochiminh city delayed and how we were waiting with sleepiness and excitement. After 3 hours delay and 6 hours flying, we arrived Narita Airport. We (Vietnamese) met Thai friends first, then the Taiwanese friends came, we chitchatted in front of the airport combini until we met the Japanese supporters and wait for German and Indian friends.



On the way from airport to CUC, I couldn't take my eyes off the Japanese street, house, people, even a traffic light made me felt like anime. When we arrived the CUC campus, the school was large, open space, full of green trees and fresh air. At that time, I felt this is really ideal environment to live and grow, and I was grateful to stand here. After orientation, we check-in room. My room had the scene and smell of a Japanese tradition. I stayed with Nancy, sometimes we forgot we're foreigners so I talked Vietnamese to her and she spoke Thai to me, then we laughed when realized it. My group took a bus to Ichikawa Station to eat dinner. We ate all types of chicken dishes, fried dumplings and horse meat, which Sota liked but Ray and Selina was afraid. The total bill was over 2000¥/person. It wasn't too high but it could shock who had planned only 200¥/per meal as me. Thank to Maiko, the 1st journey was smooth and we didn't lost, phew~.



On the next day, CUC prepared the yukata activities for us. The professionals helped us wear and made gorgeous hairstyle then we went to Asakusa with it. We tried the lucky message, sightseeing around, ate matcha ice cream, strawberry candy, pickle cucumber and bought souvenirs. Osuke won the salmon and tuna sushi earrings gatcha, then he shared it for us.. After walking for a whole afternoon with tight yukata, we nearly couldn't breathe on the way back. It was tired but so fun.



On 19th and 20th, we separated for different plans; AJ, Maiko, Selina, Mia, Ray, Sota and I went to Skytree. I expected it would be the same as Landmark 81 in Vietnam; however, it was new. Firstly, it was super crowded, me and Takeru lining while planning how to escape if there was zombie. Secondly, from here Tokyo, we can see the biggest ferris wheel and rollercoaster of Yokohama amusement part. At night, we passed the Asakusa again. The night of this place has a mysterious and chilling vibe. We wanted to eat BBQ so Takeru ran to the restaurant first to book seats; unfortunately, it had full so we decided to eat monja and okonomiyaki. It was surprisingly delicious.



Since arriving Japan, I noticed that Japanese women are pretty. They have personal fashion, make up carefully, dress neatly and usually wear high sole shoes. I was impressed by Yuri-sensei unique style. This motivated me to go shopping in Shibuya on Sunday hehe. Besides, I found out Daiso is a reasonable store to choose souvenir. I bought a furin, computer light, lamp, aroma, wood bowl, etc. within 110-330¥ for each and those all have good quality. In the afternoon, I visited the Hachiko inu statue, his story movie made me cry. Then I had chance to try the most yummy udon restaurant, they even put natto in. It was my 1st natto.



● *My advises for a Japan trip:*

- 1. Don't bring meat or sausage (or wrap it carefully until you believed the police dogs at airport can't smell it).*
- 2. Japan is safe but there're still silent bad people. Wear protection pant under dress and be careful when go escalator and train (could have hidden camera).*
- 3. Think twice when buying at stores in the station. Usually it's more expensive. But good deals exist too (like the 110¥ mochi)*



Review the lectures:

Before coming to Japan, I was curious how to use energy efficiently and advance human life in household, organization and a whole country. Not only Japan, CUC already surprised me with the realistic practice on renewable energy, which 100% supplies the school. Moreover, I feel the mindset of human in CUC is more 'green', friendly and different than my place - as a private university belonged to a business corporation. It reminded me the philosophy "money is only a means", so when we can find out an answer for the energy problem, we can less cave into pressure for money.

In the socio-political class, I presented about the 9 Dash Line (a.k.a. Cow Tongue Line in Vietnamese). I couldn't stop wakuwaku despite worry of learning new knowledge in short-time then sharing it with everyone. I prepared it for days. I listened to news podcast when taking shower, scripted in head while confused which water bottle is cheaper and still practiced the speaking flow before my turn. I was surprised that after the presentation, many friends asked many questions, told me their opinion and said they hadn't heard about this before. This experience really made me proud and helped me get confidence back. Meanwhile, the other friends presented the hidden problems of their countries, which also new to me. I had thought people would only go abroad to study passively, but now I found out our 'global mission' is to spread the truth and to understand the world more. Everyone is enthusiasm with the classes. I love this atmosphere.

The final lecture was taught by a Vietnamese professor, who had the view of a family growing up in Vietnamese war. When she told story about the poverty and the terrify that the war left, I totally agreed because I used to hear the same experience of my grandma and parents. It's funny that I kept looking at her and nodding head without knowing the other friends were shedding tears.



A few days later, AJ and I visited her house and we talked about many things. In Japan, there's a prefecture for universities and professors' houses only, no pachinko is allowed here. Thuy-sensei said she moved here to have a better educational environment for her children. I admired her decision and how hard-working she did since she came here. It was inspiring watching the superiors enjoy what they do everyday. I have changed my mind about my education path after the program.



The woodblock print and museum time was awesome. Japan is truly a place for culture and art, it arouses our artistic soul. With rakugo, art is the way we use tone, rhythm, facial expression and imagination. With Japanese traditional tea ceremony, art is how we dress, walk and gesture femininely, besides the logical taste of sweet and bitter matcha. Art is creative from the inside feeling. We treasure even the small details.



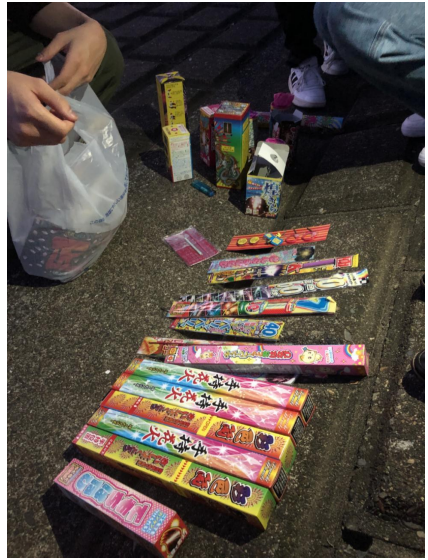


24, 25 Aug - The memorable last days

The last presentation was Lin Lin's. When we practiced together last night, I felt nervous too, didn't know whether my review was helpful or not. She studied seriously all the time which reminded me also had to do better than I used to. You did great girl~

The world tour was fun. We exchanged our national snacks, games together and heard about each country. India has tons of spices and their dresses are unique. German's traditional clothes are interesting, kind of the medieval sense. Taiwan has lots of fun and a sporty spirit. And I still remember the capital name of Thailand was as long as a half of the present page. Thank guys for everything you shared.

On our last night, after standing in front of the gate, having an unknown conversation by mixing languages and planning for an hour, we decided to do all the wishes. We went fireworks as written on the team's goal paper. We went BBQ and Nancy was so happy, then we made another Thai-Chinese-Vietnamese-Japanese class again in the restaurant. After that, we sang karaoke until late night. Gladly, we could catch the last bus to campus. I ended the day with AJ, we sat together in my dining room and wrote last words for our friends. We wished we had more postcards for everyone.



It was emotional from the farewell party to the time we said bye-bye. I was the last person stepped out the CUC gate. At that time, I had a feeling like "oh.. so it's the end..". I will miss them, miss these happy days and miss Japan. Thank Toma for sending us gifts until the last moment. Thank Mr. Miyahara for still waving until I totally couldn't see CUC anymore.

Finally, I want to send my thankfulness to all CUC's humans for this amazing program. I can feel everyone passion, care and effort to make our trip enjoyable. Seeing new culture, meeting new people and living the fulfilled days, everything is special to me. It opened my eyes and gave me new perspectives about the world. Thanks to this program I have more confidence to focus on my dream. I will remember those days and keep belief whenever I have tough time.

Thank you CUC. Thank you all my friends from Thai, Taiwan, German, India, Vietnam and Japan.

from Lan Nhi with love. <3



