

VJEP



VIETNAM JAPAN EXCHANGE PROGRAM

AAEE Newsletter, Vol.11



Asia Association of
**Education &
Exchange**

BEFORE PROGRAM

We had been preparing for this program from April, both in Japan and Vietnam.

To promote the program to both countries' students, we made brochure and recruited members. Finally, 10 members in each country were selected out of over 200 applicants.



BEFORE PROGRAM



After the members had been decided, we conducted many pre-program meetings. We discussed about the contents, made presentation, and practiced our performance for the welcome show between members and the exchange celebrations at the high school and university we would visit.



BEFORE PROGRAM

The theme of our preparation was “How to keep our tradition, or, should we keep the tradition or not”. Both teams did extensive research about our countries’ traditional things like festivals, dance and industries.



We had prepared for the presentation and also had made performance with our traditional dance and song. We performed them many times in the program.

DAILY DIARY

THROWBACK1- CITY TOUR

The first day of VJEP went by in a flash. We got to experience many new things together.

We visited the War Remnants Museum, the Independence Palace, the Central Post Office and had a small chat at the Turtle Lake. We came to learn a lot about the Vietnamese War and the effects that the war has left behind. As students who are currently living in the peaceful and modern world, we feel so sorry for those who has been suffering from the agent orange and also remind ourselves that we have to treasure our lives more.



DAILY DIARY

THROWBACK1 - CITY TOUR

After having a delicious meal, we all headed to our Opening Ceremony where we listened to a talk from Mr. Duc Nguyen about himself as a person who suffered from agent orange which encourages us to work harder and become a better human being. Then together the Japanese students sang him a song and gave him flowers as a thank you.

At the end of the day, the Vietnamese students has prepared a surprise gift: Nón Lá, Vietnam's traditional hats, which were decorated by their own hands. It was so hard for them to keep a secret about the gift! But the result was definitely worth it!

Hope you guys have a nice sleep and tomorrow we'll be heading to Cu Chi Tunnels



DAILY DIARY

THROWBACK2 – WILDLIFE RESCUE STATION and CU CHI TUNNELS

On the second day, we had a chance to have a look at the countryside of Vietnam with so many eye-opening sights. Without the skyscrapers and crowded streets, the rural area seemed so quiet and peaceful, but also very fascinating.



At the Station, the weather was rather hot and humid, but it was soon forgotten because of our excitement when seeing the animals. It was actually scary and amusing at the same time when we got to see wild bears, monkeys, otters and many more animals for the first time. The keeper said that even though the animals here were being kept in a cage, they remain their wild nature, so that when the time was right, they could release the animals into the wild again.

DAILY DIARY

THROWBACK2- WILDLIFE RECUSE STATION and CU CHI TUNNELS

After having visited Ben Duoc Temple to burn incense in commemoration of heroic martyrs, we headed straight to Cu Chi Tunnels, an immense network of connecting underground tunnels, which were the location of several military campaigns during the Vietnam War. The tunnels were used by Viet Cong soldiers as hiding spots during combats. When we get into the tunnels, it was quite dark and stuffy, some parts were so small that we had to crawl on our knees, but it was such an amazing experience!

Not only we got to know a little bit more about Vietnam and its culture, our participants had also spent a great time together: we shared stories, played games and sang many songs.



DAILY DIARY

THROWBACK3 – MINH LONG SHOWROOM, COOKING CONTEST and BONDING PARTY!

Since our research topic is traditional handicraft villages in Vietnam, we came to Minh Long Showroom in Binh Duong today to learn about art ceramics products. Minh Long is one of the best producers in town; they frequently export their products in many countries. We even got a chance to decorate our own ceramic product: a plate which we can take home later as a souvenir!



Later on, we were divided into teams for the cooking contest. Each team will have one hour to go shopping in AEON Mall and one and a half hour to cook at Bà Nội Trợ Tài Danh. The place was so cool with many supplies for our dishes. Even though it was the first time for some of us to try cooking, the contest went smoothly because we helped each other out! We cooked traditional Vietnamese and Japanese food and then we had Mr. Seki to taste it and decide who were the winners. Not only we have learned about different kinds of food, but we also gained some valuable experience in team working activities. The dishes which we cooked were also our dinner, and they were delicious!

DAILY DIARY

THROWBACK3 – MINH LONG SHOWROOM, COOKING CONTEST and BONDING PARTY!

It was a long day and our last activity is doing a presentation about our own culture. There were things that we have heard about each other's country on the TV or newspaper but then we had a chance to know better and deeper since the presentations were very well-prepared. After that, we tried some Vietnamese street food like the spring roll, mixed rice paper and "bo bia" and sat in a circle to share stories about ourselves.



DAILY DIARY

THROWBACK 4 – HOMESTAYING

“Home-staying was quite a peaceful and interesting experience for me. The people there were very friendly and hospitable. Although we had language barrier, we still enjoyed meaningful moments that night. We sang songs about our hometowns and shared our life stories.” – One participant shared

We stayed at Thai Phien Flowers Village, one of the biggest flower villages in Da Lat, and experienced something we had never done before! The village is not only colorful in the daytime but also sparkling of yellow lights at night. The scene was so breathtaking that we had to take a moment to admire it. This was the first time we had ever been so close to nature like this.



DAILY DIARY

THROWBACK4 – HOMESTAYING

The local people were also very nice to invite us to have dinner and join the campfire with them. The dinner was delicious, that was the first time the Japanese participants experience Vietnamese traditional meals when they sat in a big circle on the mats. The people in Thai Phien even prepared tents and sleeping bags for us to sleep. No doubt that they had taken very good care of us.

“At night, everyone seemed to be a part of a family. The feeling of this moment would stay in my heart forever.”



DAILY DIARY

THROWBACK5- TEAMBUILDING

IN CU LAN VILLAGE

Leaving Thai Phien, we were once again surrounded with the magnificent nature in Cu Lan Village. The highlight of the day was the teambuilding game when we were divided into 5 teams: Dai Mon, Sun stars, Mero Sathi, Survivors and Pretty Girls. With the slogan: “Who will be the last one standing?”, everyone was very excited and aiming at the first prize (first prize came with a surprise award! ;)) At the end of the day, everyone was tired and covered with dirt because of the game, but there was a big smile on their faces because whether winning or losing, each team had an amazing time together :)



DAILY DIARY

THROWBACK5 – TEAMBUILDING

IN CU LAN VILLAGE

“The most interesting challenge was climbing the combination of traps in the “12 warriors” game, but the most tiring one must be climbing the “Oh my god” hill. The coordinators, who called themselves angels were so evil, they made us to go through all these things : But together, we won! Now we are going to enjoy our first prize!” – One team shared.

Because it rained that night, so we just sat in circles and shared our emotions and then got some sleep in Highland Traditional Houses. The weather was cold, but we felt warm when we slept together and knew we would always have each other’s backs.



DAILY DIARY

THROWBACK6 – TRADITIONAL HANDICRAFT VILLAGES AND RESEARCH

During the trip to Da Lat, we visited many traditional handicraft villages to collect information on the program's research.

On the first day, we went to Cau Dat Farm, one of the oldest farms in Da Lat.

We got to know the process of making tea and planting vegetables in the factory and the greenhouse thanks to the warm welcome and detailed

introduction of the farmers in Cau Dat.

Later on, we visited Me Linh coffee, the highest coffee shop in Da Lat and

learned how they made weasel coffee, the most expensive coffee in Vietnam.

The beautiful scene along with delicious coffee were something that we would never forget!



DAILY DIARY

THROWBACK6 – TRADITIONAL HANDICRAFT VILLAGES AND RESEARCH

In the afternoon we visited Cuong Hoan Silk Factory and the Cricket Farm. It was such a fun experience for everyone to have a taste of cricket wine and deep-fried crickets. Some even cry after eating them, but later on all of us had to admit that the crickets were delicious.

After we gathered enough information, the participants were divided into 5 groups (4 people/group). Each group had to make a video and a presentation about what they think based on what they saw and what they have interviewed the workers.



DAILY DIARY

THROWBACK7- FAREWELL

"Thinking about waking up tomorrow and coming back to my daily routine, I guess I'll miss you guys and our memories a lot. As strangers from the beginning, we went through many things together and now it's very hard to say goodbye" - One participant shared.



We had a small farewell party before the Japanese participants went back to their country. It was such an emotional night not only because it was the last night we spent together, but also because of the surprise that we have never expected. None of the Japanese students knew that they had a buddy - a person who has secretly taken care of them ever since the journey began. And they had to guess who their buddies were.

DAILY DIARY

THROWBACK7- FAREWELL

There were laughs and tears, but most of all, it was indeed a great night. While watching video clips about the whole journey, we realized how far we have gone and how much we have changed in 2 weeks. Not only the relationship and the atmosphere between us changed day by day, but the changes also came within ourselves.



"I feel like there is no border, no gender differences, no gap between developing and developed countries, just one group of young people become friends. This program told me such a thing so strongly. And I appreciate this experience from the bottom of my heart." - One participant shared

The saddest part must be when we got to the airport and even though all of us knew that it was time to be apart, but we really don't want to let go of each other's hands. We all wished that this moment could stay forever. Every journey has to come to an end, but as long as the memories lives in the heart, true friends will never be apart.

DAILY DIARY

What We Learn From The Program

After the tour had done, all of the participants shared their feelings that they miss the days we have spent for 2 weeks. It seems long but feels so short. It convinces that our journey was so fruitful and filled with a lot of memories. There were laughter, there were tears. We faced enormous troubles caused by our cultural differences. We experienced hardships to overcome it. It wasn't easy to understand each other, but after we shared our true feelings, somehow our relationships became stronger than before. Since that, we build a true relationships.



DAILY DIARY

What We Learn From The Program

"My criteria through developing countries had changed. There is no gap between each other as a person, whether the country is developed or not. We became friends. It is so hard to say goodbye to each other. There is no gap between us wherever we live." -one participants shared.

VJEP had ended, but as long as the memories are stored in our heart, true friendship between us will last forever <3



DAILY DIARY

What I Felt through This Program –from one Vietnam participant

This program has been the best experience in my life/ so I'm having a hard time catching up to my usual life.

I've been struggling a lot, but I won't let it overwhelm me. I will go back, with an improved mindset and achieve my dream and goals. I've launched so much through this trip. The Japanese people are very disciplined and open-minded, they are very unique in their own way. There are many things that I thought to accomplish all my goals, so I need to try harder, not only to reach my limit but also surpass it.

Today, they're like my family, over the course of only about two weeks, I've grown to care so much for them, now that they're gone, I think a part of me just died. But, all the time we had spent together, I will treasure each and every second of it.



DAILY DIARY

What I Felt through The Program -from one Vietnam participant

After this, I will be a better person, I'm also more confident and more determinant. I am all set to complete all my goals in the future and become the person I always wanted to be.

I don't know what the future will offer, but I'm sure we will see each other again. So until that day, I will keep moving forward and be prepared for our next journey. I'm looking forward to seeing you guys again!!



VJEP 2016

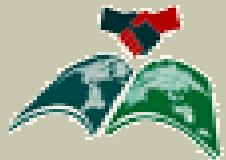
“Don't cry because it's over,
smile because it happened”



THANK YOU FOR READING

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Chief Editor: Yuha Yoshikawa (AAEE, Japan)

Nguyễn Ngọc Bảo Trân (AAEE, Vietnam)

Ngô Đình Phương Vy (AAEE, Vietnam)