Study And Visit
Japan’s Modernisation and Post-War Experience 2016

“An Active Learning Exposure”
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The Study and Visit Japan’s Modernisation and Post-War Experience 2016 was carried out on 13-21 March 2016 and participated by 32 students from 9 countries across Southeast Asia. This programme was supported by Japan’s Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) and Japan Student Services Organisation (JASSO) in partnership with Okayama University and ASEAN University Network (AUN).

The programme offered ASEAN students a unique opportunity to visit and learn the modernisation process of Japan and its war experiences, especially focusing on the Meiji Restoration process, experiences of democratisation and reconstruction of the nation. Moreover, it also showcased the culture, tradition and people of Japan to ASEAN students. It is a good initiative to strengthen relationship between the people, enhance social interaction and communication skills, as well as explore diverse perspectives to be incorporated into the student’s academic excellence.

The 9-day programme was composed of different activities including lectures and field exposures to places related to the theme. The concept of ‘active learning’ was developed through field exposure which allows students to observe and learn at the actual locations. Furthermore, travelling as a group gave students the opportunities to mingle and make the new youth network. This booklet is aimed to share the journey that the students had experience and what they had learned along the way,
The students’ first perspective on Japan tends to navigate towards its culture such as food and their advancement in technology. A handful of students mentioned about their involvement in the Second World War. In this globalised world, the ways about different countries and cultures can be easily accessed due to the advancement in technology and information. However, it is important to take note that these advancements are made available by the determination of the people who invented it. Much like the Japanese proverb, “Fall seven times, stand up eight,” Japan has brought themselves up from several threats and wars that they have been involved in. Hence, the theme on Japan’s modernisation and post-war experience is great value in learning about.

Prior to participating in this programme, the background and knowledge about Japan were written down. Predictably, most of them had stated about the mainstream Japanese culture such as food, fashion and anime. Japan’s history was also mentioned by a few students who take majors related to Japan at their universities. Some of them had touched on the history of Japan as it was taught briefly in secondary school or they had taken modules about it in university. However, in-depth understanding on the modernisation process and the recovery from wars were among the most interested topics that they had not learned in their respective countries and that they were looking forward to explore from this programme.
In order to have a detailed explanation about Japan’s modernisation process, the programme incorporated lectures into the programme. The lectures were given by Prof. Hideki Ogawa, Center for Global Partnerships and Education, Okayama University, and served as a platform for the students to learn Japan through a local’s eyes other than the generic knowledge from textbooks. Moreover, the background about other ASEAN countries and the perspectives from people in the countries toward Japan were shared by the students during lectures.

From the lectures, the students were introduced to knowledge as to how the wars started, Japanese and the ASEAN students’ point of view about them and how it ended. In relation to the wars, one student realised that “behind every war and conflict
between countries exist many keystone figures that are responsible for making important decisions that have adverse effects on the outcomes of war, good or bad.” Some also taught that the reasoning behind the wars were similar to their countries’ folktale; “A drop of honey” as they stated that “a small incident and misunderstanding can lead to destruction.”

History is a game breaker in the modernisation of a country as people will always learn and refer from the past. From one student’s perspective, “holistic vision of history as many historical events have shaped us as individuals and nations today.” It is always important to learn from the past so that past mistakes will not be repeated.

The lectures also introduced by teaching assistants, Ms. Ryoko Nanjo and Ms. Shoko Umeda some of Japan’s
Additionally, having site visits are equally as important as learning from lectures. By visiting places that have had an impact on the modernisation of Japan and their post-war experiences, the students were able to understand more and experience feelings that can only be stimulated by visiting the places. The students visited a variety of places, including temples, memorial parks, museums and birthplaces of the historical leaders of Japan. The site visits acted as the main highlight of the programme. This section includes quotes from the participants at the sites.
The first places that the group visited after the lecture one day were Korakuen Garden and Okayama Castle. Korakuen was built by a daimyo or Japanese feudal lord, Ikeda Tsunamasa, in 1687 and was completed in 1700. Korakuen is described as one of the most beautiful gardens in Japan, and is a cultural heritage site for the world to treasure due to its three-century long history and scenic, yet humble, landscape. At the garden multiple equipped with kinds of trees and bushes, students could enjoy the early springtime, especially at the plum grove where the plum trees started to bloom.

The Okayama castle was built in 1597 in the style of the Azuchi-Momoyama Period. Unfortunately, during the last year of the Second World War, the castle was destroyed. Thankfully, it was rebuilt in 1966 due to the accurate records kept by the garden designers. This shows Japan’s dedication in restoring significant places that have been affected by the war. In front of the castle was where our first group photo was captured.
Yamato Museum, Kure

“I really admire Japan that was able to create such an advanced technology, especially the battleship during the past time.” - Bun Mey Linh | Royal University of Phnom Penh, Cambodia

“I learnt that the entity of Yamato was more than just a battleship. Behind it was a complicated process of endless planning and it was the epitome of Japanese pride and patriotism.” - Carmel Cheng Lock Yee | National University of Singapore, Singapore.

“The Japanese’s recognition towards the importance of historical items. Most of the items exhibited are still good shape or as best as they can be.” - Thornwarat Laojariyakun | Chulalongkorn University, Thailand

The museum also had several aspects that impressed the students.

“The museum had an area where children can play and study.” - Nhat Huy Vo | Vietnam National University Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam

“I was impressed by Yamato theatre because we can learn by the movie which was made easy to understand.” – Moukda Sonephet | National University of Laos, Lao PDR
Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park

The park is a memorial park in the center of Hiroshima, Japan. It is dedicated to the legacy of Hiroshima as it is the first city in the world to suffer a nuclear attack. Before the bomb, it served as the political and commercial heart of the city. After the bomb, it was decided that the place should not be redeveloped but instead devoted to become a peace memorial facility. Evidently, due to its history the site was selected as one of the place to be visited. The students had similar emotions whilst visiting the park and also learned an eye-opening lesson.
“I was impressed by the way Japan kept everything they could from the war and also the stories that came with everything.”
- Jearanai Chaiyasan | Mahidol University, Thailand

“There was a sad spirit in the park.”
- Noor Haffiz Izwan | Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Malaysia

“Solemn but Serene - the turning of the city and the bombed areas into parks and memorial sites that give us hope.”
- Belle Ng Ree Yin | National University of Singapore, Singapore

“I think this trip makes me know more about the value of life. It’s very helpful trip.”
Tran Nguyen Quynh Nhu | Vietnam National University Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam,

“The reminiscence of the past is necessary for a mistake not to be repeated once again.”
- Marie Grace T. Ramos | De La Salle University, Philippines

“Hiroshima reminded me of Khmer Rouge in Cambodia. The pains were almost the same.”
- Bora Chanbormey | Royal University of Phnom Penh, Cambodia

“Peace must be promoted at all times. The damage of a war has a greater impact that what we can imagine.”
The students were also moved by the story of Sadako. The park also had impressive features such as tributes to children by having a thousand crane artworks. The visitors’ book allowed anybody to write messages and enabled others to read what they felt when visiting the park.

“I was gravely saddened by the stories I read, especially that of Sadako’s. I was deeply moved by her hope and determination to live. I’m glad that a moment for children was made.”

- Megan Eloise N Chua | De La Salle University, Philippines
The second day of visits consisted of the Itsukushima Shrine, a Shinto shrine on Miyajima Island. The shrine and its Torii gate are unique for being built over water, seemingly floating in the sea during high tide. It also honours the first Samurai. The place made the students feel “amazing with the old ancient buildings and amazing architecture” (Lim Sengtong | Royal University of Phnom Penh, Cambodia). As it is a shrine, they learned about “Buddhism and Shinto and how they coexist in the Japanese culture beautifully” (Oranun Tansitthipun | Chulalongkorn University, Thailand). The place was peaceful whereas the environment was serene and beautiful. The fact that the shrine was “Still standing strong in the middle of the sea” (Aisah Husin | Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Malaysia) was fascinating. It is important to note that “Even in the modern era, it is very important to retain the beauty of tradition” (Marie Grace T. Ramos | De La Salle University, Philippines)

“I know some Japanese traditional architecture like this has similarity in using orange for temples, which is symbolic for peace and prosperity.” - Amalin Hayati binti Yaakub | Universiti Sains Malaysia, Malaysia

“There are splendid places to see both the great architecture and wonderful nature.” - Channissara Janshine | Prince of Songkla University, Thailand

Itsukushima Shrine, the sea to the front and Mt. Misen Primeval Forest to the rear, were announced the World Cultural Heritage by UNESCO in 1996.
Kaiten Memorial Museum
Ohtsushima Island

Kaiten human torpedo was created in the last year of the Second World War as a special attack weapon consisting of torpedoes loaded with explosions and piloted by human operators to strike the enemy. Kaiten with its name meaning “heaven shaker” was intended to shake the heaven to turn the war.

The facilities are intended so that people will remember the history of Kaiten human torpedoes and continue to pass their story to future generation. Initially, the students did not know about Kaiten and the visit has rectified the situation. They learnt how dedicated a person was to their country as the Kaiten were mainly volunteers and young people from military school or naval engineering college students, and preparatory flying students with the average age at the time of death at 21.1.

“A brave pilot had struggle for his nation’s peace and didn’t care about his life.”- Lim Sengtong | Royal University of Phnom Penh, Cambodia

“War and nation - sentiments can truly shape the way people think and act”- Belle Ng Ree Yin | National University of Singapore, Singapore

“The whole idea of the Kaiten fascinating to Japan majors like me. It is an addition to Japan’s war efforts, which gives me a much holistic view in Japan studies.” – Lara Danielle L. Cartujano | University of the Philippines, Philippines
“My feelings are mixed. It is saddening how desperation drove Japan to create the human-torpedo programme, but the conviction of the soldiers cannot be denied.”

– Angelica Mukhi | Ateneo de Manila University, Philippines
Just a walking distance from the hotel where the students stayed in Shimonoseki located the Sino-Japanese Peace Memorial Hall which was created to make the furnishings and other valuable historical artefacts used at the Sino-Japanese Peace Conference in 1895 after the end of the First Sino-Japanese War. The museum was constructed in 1935 and was completed in 1937.

“It was breathtaking and what I’ve learnt from my module on Japanese history came to life.” – Carmel Cheng Lock Yee | National University of Singapore, Singapore

“I learnt that Japanese people or soldiers preferred to die proudly for their country than live in failure.” – Hanako Luangaphay | National University of Laos, Lao PDR
Close to the hall is Akama Shrine, sacred to the spirit of Emperor Antoku, who died at the age of three in the sea during the battle of Dan-no-ura in 1185.

Spending time walking in Shimonoseki for the whole morning, not only the students learnt about the history but also were impressed by observing the Japanese’ weekend activities in Kanmon Tunnel, which connects Shimonoseki and Kitakyushu, and Karato local market.

“I feel happy that I can see the wedding ceremony at Akama Shrine.” – Nur Farsikin Bt Pangil | Universiti Sains Malaysia, Malaysia
Hagi has several attractions. It has a castle town that has been preserved since the Samurais inhabited the city. The area is also home to a famous school where revolutionary thinker Yoshida Shoin used to teach his students. He was one of the most brilliant political thinkers and school teachers in the history of Japanese society. Here, his students and he advocated a vision for a new society in Japan. The participating students were impressed and surprised by the fact that:

“How a single man from one school greatly influenced the ideology and administration of the Meiji era.” - Angelica Mukhi | Ateneo de Manila University, Philippines

“Visiting Hagi is my favourite place because I really like seeing the different traditional houses of Japan.” – Christine Solis | Ateneo de Manila University, Philippines

“In order to be a good leader, education is important.” - Nurul Hidayah Mohd
Rurikoji Temple,
Yamaguchi

The last place is Rurikoji, a Buddhist temple situated the spectacular five-storied pagoda which built in 1442 as a memorial for Yoshihiro Ouchi who was killed in the Oei War in 1399. This five-storied pagoda is among the 3 finest pagodas in Japan apart from Horyuji Temple in Nara and Daigoji Temple in Kyoto. This is the last stop during 3-day excursion and before heading back to Okayama for group work and presentation.

“The picturesque scenery at Rurikoji Temple, the pagoda, the flora and the overall layout of the temple are a perfect combination from ancient wisdom.”
- Thornwarat Laojariyakun | Chulalongkorn University, Thailand

“The best shrine site I’ve ever visited ever. It has a complete criteria of a temple should have.”
- Amalin Hayati binti Yaakub | Universiti Sains Malaysia, Ma-
As this booklet's theme is on “active learning exposure”, it will touch on what the students have learned and achieved through this journey of exploring Japan’s modernisation and post-war experience.

From the trip there are several characteristics which are embedded in the Japanese culture that stood out to the students. Some of the characteristics are:

**Determined and goal-driven**

From the trip the students felt that Japanese people are very hard working and it is a good characteristic to learn from. The Japanese people were determined to devote for their country and even volunteered to die for. They were also determined to reconstruct their country back up after the war. Being determined and goal-driven is an excellent characteristic to have as almost anything can be accomplished with by having this aspect in mind.
Hopeful

As they stayed hopeful for a better future despite the hardships and suffering they experienced. Through this feeling, the students were amazed by the Japanese resilience after the war as the Japanese were ambitious in improving and developing the country’s living and standard of life by unity with hope of conserving their country national treasure and architecture instead of remaining in ruin which is important as being hopeful would create an ambition to achieve one’s goal.

Pure motivation and diligence

Lastly, being disciplined. The Japanese worked long hours day and night to contribute to Japan’s economic miracle. They were open to influence and change and built upon their existing knowledge and resources. With the effect of the war being heavily suffered, the students learned that the Japanese were more diligent in building themselves up in which they were prepare to be hardworking and understand the meaning of striving themselves for the better. As for that, children in Japan are being disciplined from the very early age in order to develop good manners among the society. Most parents in Japan guide the development and establish routines of their children’s behaviour with close supervision. As time goes by, this will eventually develop
positive decision making and action as well as constructive independent thought.

**Hand-on experience**

Other than learning about Japan in their home countries, the students were able to have an interactional learning experience as they gained a load of knowledge by being in the country itself. It is a great opportunity that is rarely available.

“It was raining heavily and we needed to take shelter. A small restaurant owner offered food and shelter to us strangers” (Marie Grace T. Ramos | De La Salle University, Philippines). Being able to experience the hospitality of the local people of Japan does not come round on a day-to-day basis.

Another wonderful aspect is friendship. Alongside learning about Japan, friendships were built. Being able to make memories, learning from each other, sharing, exchanging and hearing different perspectives from other people around the world is not readily available. It allowed the students to step out of their comfort zone, voice out their opinions and expressing their feelings and impressions.

Lastly, self-development. Through this programme, the students were able to reflect on themselves which leads to self-development. Apart from gaining more academic knowledge on global
Significance of ASEAN-Japan

The students shared what they thought was the significance of ASEAN-JAPAN in this globalised era and what outcomes it can bring for the future. They believed that relationships and diplomatic ties between countries would bring about cooperation and betterment in a lost community.

“As the world is coming together, promoting cultural understanding and respect is essential in advancing good relationship between countries and people. Deepening the relation and mutual understanding among the peoples in ASEAN and Japan would strengthen a regional community that respects cultural diversity, resulting in cultural, social and economic sustainability.” - Oranun Transitthipun | Chulalongkorn University, Thailand

“ASEAN-Japan partnership is significant in dealing with non-traditional transnational issues today, such as terrorism, trafficking, and battling pandemics. The partnership also helps strengthen the bond between Asian nations, which helps in regionalism and community-building.” - Lara Danielle Cartujano | University of the Philippines, Philippines

Additionally the ASEAN-JAPAN significance brings about the promotion of influence towards building one’s own country where Japan can become a role model.

“I think that the significance of ASEAN-JAPAN in this globalisation era is to promote and strengthen in knowledge as well as experience of Japan to other countries and those could help other countries especially ASEAN members to avoid the mistakes and prepare for new challenge” - Lim Sengtong | Royal University of Phnom Penh, Cambodia
In having the opportunity of joining and participating in the programme, the students were able to experience more than just learning. The programme had helped them become more confident in many ways as it has greatly helped them to become aware, more critical and open minded. The enriching activities had managed to install a feeling of betterment in themselves intellectually, morally and socially. Thus, the programme greatly had proven a better knowledgeable exchange as they gained enriching knowledge personally and able to feel the environment from the site visits.
“It has been an amazing and wonderful experience, and I would like very much to be a part of something so special again.”
- Joanna Pong | National University of Singapore, Singapore

“I have gain a lot of things from this programme not only experience and knowledge but also new friends, new skills and new perspectives. The benefits of this whole programme are the strong relation between youth of ASEAN and Japan.”
- Channissara Janshine | Prince of Songkla University, Thailand

“I have been greatly enlightened on Japanese history and culture, and I cannot wait to share it with other Filipinos. For my country, this programme helped and taught me the steps to become developed and progressive. So hopefully in the future I would be able to reappropriate what I learnt here to my country.”
- Christine Solis | Ateneo de Manila University, Philippines

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