

Report on My Experience at the Short Term Invitation Program JENESYS 2.0 organized by Japan International Cooperation Centre (JICE)

Zain ul Abedin Shibli

Step-3

I was a part of a short term invitation program to Japan Called JENESYS 2.0 organized by Japan International Cooperation Centre (JICE) which commenced on 18 May, 2013 up to 25 May, 2013. During the program, I got the opportunity to visit Japan and throughout the tour and I was able to experience a lot of wonderful and amazing things.

But before I share my experience with you, there is one important thing I like to mention which has made this tour even more wonderful. It was the fact the there are people appointed JICE to guide us through the customs and immigration procedure not only at Narita but at Bangkok as well. It shows the level of the whole arrangement, which was brilliant.

We stayed the night at Narita Tobu Hotel. The hotel was great and the arrangement was good. We also got the chance to try Japanese breakfast in the morning next day, which quite delicious. We depart for Minamiaizu town by bus and travel through Tokyo to arrive at the railway station. The journey was breathtaking for me, as I always wanted to see Tokyo with my very own eyes. The next part of travel was by Shinkansen. It was a dream of mine to travel in bullet train and I got it on that day.

I arrived at the lodgings in the bus. The accommodation was a Ski Resort among the beautiful mountains covered in greenery. Let's not forget the journey from the railway station to the lodgings, which was a sight to behold. The arrangements there again were good. In the evening we had our dinner at the restaurant with had a variety of Japanese Cuisines. I try all the food which we can as a Muslim (i.e. Halal food) and find it quite good. Although, it'll a little bit time to get used to the taste. I had the orientation for the tour together the rest of the people from all the groups about the details of the entire program making it the official starting point of the program.

On the 1st day, first stop for the groups were at the Town Hall for the courtesy call with the Mayor. He welcomed us with warm gestures to Japan and to Minamiaizu town. After the short speech by the Mayor, the participants were given a lecture about the Minamiaizu town's history, culture, local economy and the problem they are currently facing. There were also Q&A sessions. I learned a lot about the Minamiaizu town and its people. I also learn about dedication and sincerity of the locals to the Minamiziau town.

The 2nd day arrives. It was the most memorable day for me during the entire tour. I visited the Arakai elementary school and saw the superb performance of the nursery school kids and the Taiko Drum Performers Tatsumi Kai at the community Hall. Not to mention that I also take part in the cultural event in which each country perform their respective activities and also practice playing the drums myself. I was extremely impressed by the Japanese education system and the dedication of the teachers to educate the young generation and the also the dedication of the children to learn with their sincere hearts. The children there were wonderful and were extremely happy to meet us. I attend Calligraphy and Origami classes with them and I learn from them these arts which I have never done before in my entire life.

The performance by the nursery kids was so perfect that I have nothing to say but amazing. The Taiko drum performance was extremely good and flawless. Their performance shows the level of their skills and how much they had to practice to reach their level. I am saying this, since I also got the chance to practice the Taiko drum with the help of an Instructor and I was having difficulty to continue drumming for more than few minutes. It requires real skills and commitment.

The 3rd arrived and we had to take part in a workshop to prepare an action plan based to our experience. The workshop gives me the chance to learn about teamwork even further. After the preparation of action plan, a presentation was delivered by each teams about the learning experience and their future action based on those actions.

Then the final day came. We left Minamiaizu in the morning to go to Asakusa, Tokyo. It was a moment of happiness for me to come to such a nice and welcoming place and yet I also felt sadness to leave after such a short period. The departure from the lodgings was again in the bus to the railway station and again the journey was a sight to behold. From the station, the journey toward Asakusa began in the Tokyo Skytree Chartered train. This is also a wonderful experience to travel from the beautiful country side to the right beside the base of Tokyo Skytree. Tokyo Skytree is a must watch sight.

In Asakusa, we visited the ancient Buddhist temple and Shinto shrine. We also got the chance to do last minute shopping there. We also got the chance to Visit Akihabara and Ginza. But the time too short to enjoy it fully, but I still tried to enjoy it as much as I can. And then, the day of the final departure to Pakistan comes too quickly, if you ask me. But on the May 25, we left Japan with mixed emotions, some were happy and some were sad.

All in all, it was a wonderful journey, though it was quite short to explore a country like Japan where every step you take is sight you never want to forget. Although I experienced a lot of things on this trip, but if I start explaining every single detail, then I am afraid it will a long time to end. It was extremely memorable experience for me.

In the end, I would like to offer my thanks to JICE for giving us this wonderful opportunity to come and see Japan and experience it firsthand. I also offer my thanks to the Counsel general of Japan and the rest of the members of the consulate and PJCA to select us and provide us the guidance to for this tour.

Thanks You!