

# **JENESYS Programme 2008**

## **Reflection**

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### JENESYS Review

Having the opportunity to join the JENESYS programme was not just a pleasure, but more an honour. During the 9 day journey, we were offered the precious experience to be, and be treated as, diplomats. The journey has been remarkably enjoyable, putting away the luxury in it, it was the gained insights and perspectives that I most treasured. To be frank, I had traveled to Japan for quite a few times, however, I am sure what I had experienced in this programme would be unique.

I believe it was the aspiration to build a harmonious international atmosphere that has given the Japanese government the courage to throw such an educational programme. Teens of our age, although embarking to the important chapter of adulthood, had seldom been given the chance to step ahead. Most of the time, we are locked to our young appearance, daydreaming if not worrying about our future without any first-hand reference. However, the Japanese government has taken the lead to put youngsters onto the worldwide stage of politics, to expose us to 'adult affairs'. The Japanese authorities had treated us as honourable guests and respectable ambassadors. We were exposed to the realities of the Japanese political and economic systems, and had in-depth social and cultural interactions with Japanese citizens. These had undoubtedly provided us an excellent opportunity not just to experience the Japanese way of life, but also to understand it, like some sophisticated intellects.

Amongst all, the experiences we had in Japanese hosts and educational sectors were most inspiring.

Granted the precious opportunity to live with natives for one day, I treasured every moment of their company. The Japanese daily life was far from similar to that broadcasted in infamous Japanese animations. Some may have argued that a 9-day trip cannot tell much, but having stayed in Kagoshima, with less western affections, I believe I had seen some of the well-retained, original and native customs of Japan. Some of which, I reckon, would never experience otherwise. Unlike most Hong Kong host families, my host family brought me not to the local landmarks, but to the places that they visit every day, like their schools, municipal centre and Kendo stadium. At these venues, I had the chance to interact with many locals and understand the details of their social system. The knowledge gained was valuable, but the glory to be able to gain such knowledge was even more priceless.

The Japanese government takes an open attitude towards education, its sincerity to help us acquaint comprehensive understandings on different views was shown from the packed itinerary. We were arranged visits to governmental departments and private

organizations, where details of their work were lectured openly. Workers at the Kobe Resource Recycle Center (Kobe Kankyo Mirai Kan) even disclosed to us figures and statistics of the average pollution emission index of Kobe citizens. The generosity of Japanese to share knowledge has certainly benefited our understanding more of the country.

There are two particular virtues that I observed from the Japanese, which Hong Kong citizen should follow.

First and foremost was their moral. Above all, the Japanese put their emphasis on love. They respect each other, out of love; they conserve, because they love the environment; they preserve, because they love their cultural heritage. And because of this reason - love, they do their every work whole-heartedly, with the wish to meet perfection. Conversely, it is obvious that passion and love towards affairs are lacking in Hong Kong. In this financially biased city, people have a tendency to regard work as businesses, rather than missions. Thus, policies, although well-planned, always lack visions. The reemphasis on love would certainly help Hong Kong achieve sustainability and stability, by achieving balances between different aspects of development, and between different people.

Second, it was the trust the Japanese bear towards strangers. Japanese uphold almost no barriers towards outsiders. They share a great sense of belonging towards the human race and regard every person with trust. The sharing at the Kobe Earthquake Memorial Museum, by two victims of the Kobe earthquake, is a concrete example. Disclosing facts about the greatest threat of their country, especially to foreigners, must not be an easy job. Most countries would have covered up such catastrophes for political reasons, but the Japanese had chosen to share every bit of the circumstances, from the detriments to the evacuations and redevelopments involved. This is utter courage and faith. If Hong Kong citizens employ the same belief towards communication, threatening familial problems would probably decline. The local government would also enjoy more popularity and support by increasing political openness to the general public.

All in all, this journey has definitely been beneficial to me, both educationally and personally. I have developed new views towards education, as well as civil responsibilities as a global citizen. Spending a sum of USD 315 million on student cultural exchange may seem imprudent and unreasonable to many, but the Japanese government has proven, through the JENESYS programme, that the successful nurturance of future leaders need more deeds than words. Education is about offering opportunities to youngsters to help them see more of the current world, as well as to equip them for future challenges. I sincerely wish more programmes of such kind will be organized, for only in this way can quality education be offered.