

MOBILITY PROGRAM TO JAPAN

This is the first ASASIPintar Global Outreach Mobility Program group, consisting of 6 students with the destination located in Saga Prefectural, Japan. Six ASASIPintar students, namely Ong Jun Yang, Mohammad Haziq bin Oon, Iman Hakimi bin Zamzam, Sim Li Xuan, Teo Huey Shiuan and Loo Jie Qi forming this delegation departed on 3rd May 2015 from Malaysia to Japan and came back to Malaysia on 10th May 2015 after accomplishing the mission. With the theme of “Explore, Execute, Excel”, this program aimed to promote exchange of knowledge especially in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) field through research project presentation and also to learn about education system implemented in Japan. Other than that, a personal experience of culture of Japan was achieved as one of the purpose.

This program owes many thanks to UKM for the approval of proposal of this program and also to Pusat PERMATApintar Negara for the funding as well as lecturers who helped along the planning of this program, especially Madam Siti Noor Diana binti Mohd Kamaruddin and Mr Salleh Huddin bin Abdul Rashid for its successful completion. Throughout the stay in Japan, we owed our survival to our dearest *senpai* (senior), Adlil Darsani bin Husni who was ever willing to guide and accompany us since our arrival until departure. His helpfulness and patience made our trip to Japan a smooth and interesting one.

On the first day of the visit (7th May 2015), we went to Chienkan Senior High School. We are welcomed by Mr Tsuruda Tomoki, the Teacher’s Consultant from Global Human Resource Development, Educational Policy Division, Saga Prefectural Government. Later on, we had a courtesy call to the principal of the school, and a session where we introduced ourselves. We introduced the education system in Malaysia and also specifically in Pusat PERMATApintar Negara. We learned that to get into such Super Science School, a test has to be taken by the students, much like PERMATApintar but the difference is that the test is not IQ-based.



ASASIpintar students and the interpreter, Adlil Darsani bin Husni with the instructors of Chienkan Senior High School

After that, we were brought around the school to visit the classes and facilities in the school. Chienkan Senior High School, being awarded the title of “Super Science School”, uses high technology in aiding the teaching process. For example, there are a computer and a large touchscreen monitor in class. Their use is extremely convenient and can be used alongside with traditional blackboard teaching method. We also enjoyed the recorder playing of the students in the music class.



In the afternoon, we presented our research projects to three classes of second year high school students of Chienkan Super Science High School. Iman Hakimi Zamzam's research is on the anti-proliferative activity of aqueous extracts of *Annona Muricata* tea, juice, puree, and pure puree on Raji cells. Muhammad Haziq Oon presented a study on knowledge and practice of safe

sleep practices for babies among NICU nurses in UKM Medical Center. Ong Jun Yang investigated the direct carboxylation of benzene to benzoic acid with carbon dioxide in the presence of Lewis acid and non-Lewis acid catalysts. On the other hand, Sim Li Xuan talked about the effects of different concentration of silver on bacterial growth of *Bacillus* sp. L1B9. A study on knowledge, attitudes, perceptions and practices on sexual health among young adults in Malaysia was carried out by Loo Jie Qi. Teo Huey Shiuan conducted a research on the effects of dietary habits and behavioral habits on enamel erosion among adolescents.





After our research presentation at Chienkan Super Science School, we were blessed with Mr. Tomoki Tsuruda for his willingness to guide us to one of Saga City most prominent historical sites: Saga Castle. We went there by two taxis and the journey from the said school to Saga Castle took about 10 minutes. Once we arrive at the Saga Castle, our envoys were graced by the hospitality of Saga Castle's staff and a middle-aged Japanese woman who spoke eligible English became our tour guide for the rest of our time in Saga Castle. She started by telling us a brief history of Saga Castle which was burned down and reconstructed again numerous time during the course of history. She also introduced us to Saga Castle's first *daimyo* or Lord which was Nabeshima Katsushige and the lordship was passed from generation to generation of Nabeshima clan till the last *daimyo*; Nabeshima Naomasa.



Today, Saga Castle is known as Saga Castle history Museum and a large part of it was reconstructed. It is recognized as one of the 100 Fine Castles of Japan and is one of the main attractions of Saga City. During our tour, we were given the chance to see the architecture of the Castle which was built without using a single nail which proves Japanese's creativity and excellence in architecture. The tour guide also took us to the Lord's banquet room, a mini theatre that explains about the rich history of Saga Castle, a corner where we can figure out the inner workings of Saga Castle's architecture by solving a puzzle and many more. Our trip to Saga Castle lasted until 6p.m. and we were really grateful for the hospitality and the knowledge of Saga Castle that the Saga Castle history Museum's staff had given us.

During the second day of our visit in Saga Prefecture, we had a tour to Saga Prefecture Office at 10:30a.m. .The staffs of Saga Board of Education welcomed us warmly and brought us around. At the highest level of the building, we could see the scenery of well-organized Saga City. Also, we were being introduced to all sorts of specialties in Saga Prefecture, for example, the plantation of Ureshino Tea, pottery, Saga's mandarin oranges and Saga rice which has good quality. Explanations for each specialty were clear enough and some of us asked questions too. We learned more about their culture, history and tradition which are different in Malaysia.



At the end of our tour, we did not forget to thank Saga Board of Education for hosting our visit for these two days and all the arrangements made. As a token of appreciation, we gave some souvenir to the Superintendent of the Saga Board of Education. “Do visit Saga Prefecture again in the future, we will definitely host your visit again,” said the representative of Saga Board of Education. That was a memorable morning, which brought us one step closer to Saga Prefecture, Japan.





After having lunch, we took taxi to Saga Commercial High School and reached there at 1.00 pm. We had a short session with the Principal of Saga Commercial High School as well as administrators and instructors of the school. Throughout this session, we knew more about the curriculum of the school which concentrates on business knowledge as well as education system of Japan. Almost half of the students in the school will directly work for the government and the private sector after they graduate while other students will continue their study in the university.



After that, we had the opportunity to join the English lesson of two classes. In the class, we introduced our nation, Malaysia to the students through the slides we prepared. We explained that Malaysia is a multiracial, multicultural as well as multi-religious country where Malays, Chinese, Indians and the indigenous people of Sabah and Sarawak live together in unity. Moreover, we also recommended well-known attractions in Malaysia such as Petronas Twin Towers, Kuala Lumpur Tower, Cameron Highlands, Malacca City and so on. Besides explaining the culture in Malaysia including traditional cuisine, dance and festivals celebrated by different races, we also showed the Japanese students the traditional clothes of different races by wearing them. In addition, we knew more about the culture in Japan by interacting with the students who were separated to six groups in the class. At 3.40pm, the English lesson ended and we took photos together with the instructors of the school as well as staff of Saga Board of Education before we left the school.

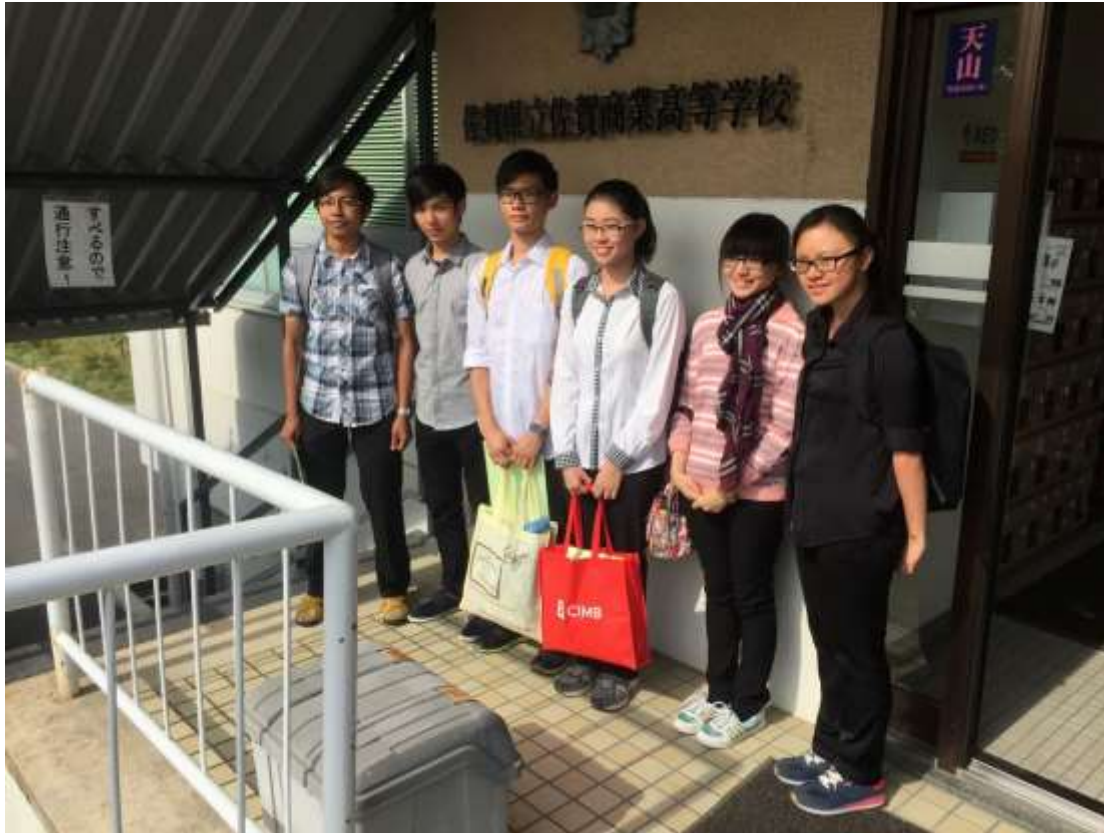




ASASIpintar Students and Instructors of Saga Commercial High School



ASASIpintar Students and Staff of Saga Board of Education, Mr Tsuruda Tomoki



ASASIpintar Students in front of Saga Commercial High School

Throughout the stay in Japan, we observed the discipline and cleanliness cultivated in Japanese by the view of pedestrian lights and also the lack of trash in sight on the road. Also, we had met many warm and passionate people who were ever ready to help when we were in confusion even though there existed a communication barrier. The visits to historical sites were memorable ones, with those guides presenting to us in very detailed and patient manner. This program was definitely a success and similar programs should be encouraged in the future to enable students to develop a much holistic character that embraces many social skills which are not covered by textbooks during lecture.

Reported by,
Ong Jun Yang