



Exchange Tour to Japan

5A Ng Man Wai

In December 2016, I was nominated by our school to participate in Japan-East Asia Network of Exchange for Students and Youths Program from 13 to 21 December organized by the Japanese Government. We went to Tokyo, Kyoto and Nagoya. This program enhanced my understanding of Japan through different activities such as Field visits to research institutes, museums, specialized organization, interaction with Japanese youths in school attachment, cultural experience by home stays and visits to traditional cities and historical sites. The trip was full of fun and excitement, and it was completely free of charge and fully sponsored by the Japanese government. I was so lucky and grateful for having this precious learning opportunity.

We went to two high schools: 京都市立紫野高等學校 and 名古屋市立名東高等學校. We visited their campus, had lunch with them and attended their lessons. Japanese students are very friendly. Although they cannot speak English well, they still tried their very best to talk to us. Moreover, we were very lucky that we got the chance to dress in Japanese kimono. We wore it to visit the shrine.

We also experienced the daily life of Japanese people by staying in a local Japanese home. I lived with a Japanese family for a whole day, we sew together and we made traditional Japanese food for dinner together. Although we faced language barrier, the grandparents of the family took good care of us. I enjoyed the time very much. Japanese culture is totally different from Hong Kong. For example, we need to sit on the floor and take off the slippers when we go into tatami room. This is such a great opportunity for me to discover more about Japanese culture.

We visited shrines and temples in Kyoto. Kyoto formerly is the imperial capital of Japan for more than one thousand years. It is also known as the thousand-year capital. We visited Kinkakuji Temple, Fushimi Inari shrine, Enryaku-Ji and Omihachiman. In Hong Kong, there are many skyscrapers but in Kyoto, we saw none of them. We could see that Japan does a good job in the conservation of Japanese cultural and historical heritage.

Last but not least, I would like to encourage those students who are struggling with studying foreign language like English, Japanese and French. To be honest, learning a foreign language is not easy, especially for a senior form student like me who also needs to manage my studies and extra-curricular activities at the same time. I have to spend a lot of time studying a new language and I make a lot of efforts on improving my Japanese fluency. Although the path is tough, I never give up. Therefore, I earned the opportunity to go to Japan. My efforts are not wasted. Learning a foreign language opened a new world for me so I can know more about the world and communicate with foreigners. I hope to encourage all of you, never stop trying and try hard to study English or other foreign languages, otherwise you will lose a lot of opportunities.

