

Report on JSH 2017-18

It was 7.30 pm, a very busy Rakshabandhan night and people at the airport were bustling about, chirping and talking, some were parting with teary eyes, and some were hugging each other after a long time. It's crazy how many emotions are there in a single place. I was the first one to arrive and naturally waiting for my team was making me anxious. It was my second time abroad, but my first time without my family. I had mixed emotions, a little fear, and loads of excitement, some curiosity and a sense of responsibility. When everyone had finally arrived we said goodbye to our family and took the very first step into the airport, our first step towards our win. After all the necessary work was done, we boarded the plane. It was Garvit's first time flying and he was really excited. We watched a few movies and tried to sleep. There was a stopover at Hong Kong for an hour and we finally reached Japan after 8 hours of waiting. The first thing I saw was an island in the shape of an irregular square and then the view got even better. We landed and collected our bags and came out of the airport. There she was, with her "SSH India" signboard waving in her hand, waiting for us with a huge smile, Ms. Saeko Horinaka, our translator. We waited for the other school to come and then took the monorail to our hotel, Daiwa Roynet. The monorail reminded me of Delhi metro, only with a better view. Our hotel was a very welcoming place. We all got our separate rooms which were really nice.



There was a reception in the evening. We all got a chance to interact with people from all parts of the world. We shared some things about our culture and learned some things about their. It was a great experience to get to know such diverse people, with their own ideas and theories about things and to get to learn them. The food was a problem of sorts, especially for us, since we needed vegetarian food. But we managed to eat enough to fill ourselves. We went back to the hotel after the reception and prepared for the big day ahead.

We woke up at 5.30 the next morning and wrapped up with our breakfast by 6.30. I tried tofu which was horrible but still worth trying. We took the monorail and went to Kobe Convention Centre. We went to our booth, put up our posters and arranged our table. People started coming in a while. What surprised me the most was how friendly each one of them was. Most of the students were Japanese. They readily participated and were very humble and genuine. We got many "good job" stickers which really motivated us. Our 10 minutes presentation went pretty well. People were keenly listening and their questions were also very thought provoking. After leaving the convention centre, Ms. Saeko took us to our haven, "Himalayan

java”, the Nepalese-Indian restaurant. The “ghar ki daal” and “aalu gobhi” gave a kind of unexplainable satisfaction to all of us, along with nostalgia.



The next day we saw the presentations and project ideas of 6 selected Japanese schools. They were very interesting. My personal favourite was the one which talked about pollen grain transportation. We had a brief poster session after. I utilized the opportunity to explore the ideas and projects of other schools. They were fantastic. The closing ceremony was right after the session. The prize winners were acknowledged and we won the “peers choice award for best poster presentation.” None of us could keep our smile off our faces the whole day.



This was the time when we actually started exploring Japan. We went to see the Kobe port tower which was magnificent. We also went shopping.

The next day we visited Rokko Island high school. We did many activities. My favourite was calligraphy. All the Japanese students looked beautiful in their kimono. The tea ceremony was also lovely. We also got a chance to interact with Japanese students and it was really fun. We visited the Akashi Kaikyo Bridge which was simply pulchritudinous. We later went for a cable car ride through the mountains. It was very peaceful and simply amazing. With the peaks against the setting sun and the cicadae all around, whose voice filled the air, it felt like the most peaceful place ever. We also got a chance to ride the Shin Kan Sen., the bullet train we all were dying to sit in. After a very long and tiring day, we came back to our hotel and packed up our bags.



We had our flight the next day, which got delayed by an hour. It was a long way back home but the happiness of meeting family took over all the tiredness.

This trip was not only a learning experience in terms of science or math but also in learning to live without family, to make new friends, to strengthen bonds with old ones, to learn about new cultures, to try new things, to open ourselves to millions of possibilities that the world has to offer, to learn and to teach.

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