

Tokyo Bliss!

Tokyo bliss!



We left our houses all ready and prepared for our 8-hour flight ahead. Oh, how excited we were! Our excitement could hardly be controlled but Mannat ma'am never failed to do the impossible. During the whole journey, Mannat ma'am made sure that each one of us was comfortable and ate well.

When it finally dawned, we reached Tokyo, our first destination in Japan. It felt like a dream. Eagerly, we all collected our luggage and rushed to the restroom to change and head out. Our first stop was the Honda showroom where we met the Honda Asimo robot. We were shocked as to how far technology has come. A robot that can dance, run, hop and do what not.



We then headed towards Asakusa to visit the Sesōji temple and shop at Nakamise street. We clicked beautiful pictures at the destination and observed the amazing architecture. Our lunch was at a local restaurant



nearby. Of course, it wasn't as good as the amazing Rajma Chawal our mothers make but it was something new and worth trying.

To look at Tokyo at a glance, we went to Tokyo Sky Tree (which was too crowded and expensive, so we went to a government building of the same height) and just saw how



pretty this city looked. A bird's eye view was worth it. By now, we had even tried using the cool vending machines they had to buy water.



On our way to Shibuya crossing, we came across Hachiko memorial where we took pictures with the statue of Hachiko and jumped around in excitement, those who hadn't known about it were excited to learn about it and watch the movie.



Even though Shibuya crossing is supposed to be the most crowded place, I feel Delhi's Kashmiri Gate metro station is more crowded than that. We then went for shopping; we got confused in that store as it had 6 floors full of everything we wanted to buy, from food to stationary to clothes. Everything was available in that one shop. Honestly, one could spend an entire day in there and buy everything they don't need, except the one thing they entered the store for. Haha!

Overall, our day 1 experience in Japan was very memorable and I don't think I will ever forget about it.

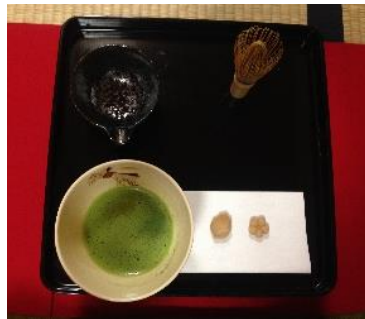
- Gracy

Wah! Osaka



After a fun journey to Osaka by the bullet train, we all struggled to pull our luggage from the station to the hotel. The rooms were relatively smaller but the view from the window was spectacular. After resting for a while we started to explore the area. While roaming around on the roads at night, we started to compare Tokyo and Osaka and most of us felt that Osaka was better because it could be easily seen on foot, all the shopping centres and restaurants were nearby, the weather was great and it seemed more welcoming as a city. After walking around the metropolitan area, we decided to shop for a while at a mall nearby. We split into groups as we all wanted to go to different stores and decided to eat so we proceeded to search a place for dinner but it was funny to see how the eateries start shutting entry at 10pm so we walked around further and were very happy to find Mc Donald's and planned to take away the food to the hotel. We were super excited to sit in Mannat maam's and Gracy's room, have food and share stories.

The next morning, we woke up early and got ready, all set to go to Kyoto. We walked to the station and waited for the train. After we got in, there were no seats and we had to stand all the way to Kyoto. After we reached Kyoto we excitedly walked for the tea ceremony where we made their famous Matcha Tea. When we were done with the tea ceremony we had lunch at an Italian restaurant and walked around the shopping street of Kyoto. Later in the noon we took a bus to the famous temple, Kingaku-ji, The Golden Pavilion. After a photoshoot session at the temple we returned to the hotel.



We took rest for a while and met at the hotel lobby for an origami session, where all of us made cranes with origami. It was an exciting session and all of us had fun making cranes. Our guide Ms Yoko Torii san also told us that crane was a symbol of peace. We enjoyed the session a lot after which we went for dinner and then into our rooms.



Next morning was the day to go to Ritsumeikan University to visit our seniors studying in the university and to Kasugaoka High School. We got to know more about scholarships at Ritsumeikan University and even about the courses which we



could pursue after class 12. It was a fun learning experience at the university. When we went to the school, the children studying over there were very excited to see us and greeted us by saying “Namaste”. They sang a song in Japanese which was difficult for us to understand but was pretty fun to listen. We showed them a movie on our school and even invited them to visit us, they were thrilled and loved the video, from their faces we could see that they could relate to the video well.



After we were done, Mannat maam took us on the Ferris wheel in Osaka near our hotel from where we could see the entire city. Many of us were very excited to see the city from the top but some of us we scared too. The city looked pretty with high-rise buildings and lights from the top. All of us enjoyed having dinner after which we



had ice creams and then went to our own rooms.

The next day along with Mannat ma'am we were accompanied by our senior, Sneha Arora, who is studying at Ritsumeikan university to Universal studios. All of us had great fun at Universal studios. After returning to the hotel we changed our clothes and went for shopping to Daiso. We had dinner, thanked our senior and went to our rooms to sleep.

The next day which was our last day in Japan, we went to Kobe by train. We visited China town, and spent some time near the Bay. When we returned to the hotel, we went to sing karaoke and had fun singing although none of us had great voice! It was a 30-minute session where we were given a room and could sing whichever song we wished to. In the first 10 minutes of the session, we struggled to change the language

to English but the next 20 mins were fun singing songs. We had dinner, ate ice creams from seven eleven and had a good laugh discussing the day.

When we reached the hotel, we were given an hour to pack our bags after which we had a Circle time in Yashasvi's and Vaishnavi's room. In the circle time, we shared our favourite experience of the trip, a thing which we learned about ourselves and how positively others in the group impacted us. All of us got to know what the others find positive in each one of us. It was fun to sit and share experiences, all of us had different views about our favourite part of the trip. The next day we had to wake up early, catch a flight from Osaka to Tokyo and then to Delhi which was a long flight. None of us wanted to come back and wished to stay there for more days! But we had no other option, we bid Japan goodbye and came back to Delhi.



Thank you Koshi ma'am and Madhu ma'am for making this trip happen and Mannat ma'am for accompanying us.

- Ridhima

A Visit to Ritsumeikan University and A Government School

岸を見失う勇気がなければ、決して海を渡る事はできない

Kishi o miushinau yūki ga nakereba, kesshite umi o wataru koto wa dekinai.

This is a Japanese proverb for ‘One will never be able to cross the ocean if one doesn’t have the courage to lose the sight of the shore’.



This day of ours started a bit early, as Ritsumeikan was at quite a distance from our hotel the Hankyu Annex. One might think that this proverb is kind of dissimilar to our situation, I know this sounds a bit creepy but it precisely fits our circumstances. Leaving our cozy and homely beds on a nipping morning is no less than winning a war. But a self-adopted challenge of being all dressed and reaching the lobby for breakfast before the Shri

Ram School students did, motivated us to quit being lethargic and organizes ourselves as soon as possible. In the excitement of meeting the former students of our school, we hardly took 15 mins to get all set to go.

We hurriedly caught the metro to Ibaraki, and within 45 mins we reached our destination the Ritsumeikan University Osaka. And our first reaction was just wow, our eyes kept wide open. It was such an amazing campus and Student diversity is one of the most attractive features of Ritsumeikan. It consists of international students from 61 countries studying in the undergraduate and postgraduate programs. This university always gives a person a lot of chances to meet students from areas with very different culture. Student diversity for one makes university life exciting and contributes to your fruitful academic activities in Japan.



Here we also got an opportunity to chit chat with the Indian students and got to know about their experiences. We were privileged to be able to tour

the whole campus and learn about the different courses offered in English as well as in Japanese language and were accompanied by our former students of St. Mary's: Sneha, Aditi, Shiva and Manvi. While Sneha and Aditi dii staying there from the past 3 years were quite comfortable with the surroundings and hardly felt homesick, Manvi di a first year student had a bit problem in adjusting to the new environment.

After spending quality time with them we moved for our next venture. Due to shortage of time we picked up packed food from seven eleven and headed off to our next destination which was a government school. After walking for 5 minutes we reached the school all excited to see the proceedings. On the entrance we were warmly welcomed by the Principal and Vice Principal of the school to whom we gifted the handmade origami art pieces as a token of our love and gratitude.



As we went around visiting the various classes we observed that apart from the regular subjects taught in the schools, calligraphy was also being taught. We also got a chance to share classroom with the Japanese students. Amused to see the amount of happiness



that the students had on meeting us, our school and the Shri Ram School gave a short presentation teaching them about our diverse country India, after which we were thanked by them by singing songs which we could barely understand but were enjoying the melody and the way they were singing. Later on we also invited them to start an exchange program with our school. The most

attracting fact was that the schools in japan had no helper staff, they clean the school by themselves. But we as St. Marians could also proudly say that to as extent as possible we also took the responsibility of keeping our school clean and green.

At the end on behalf of the team that went to Japan and our teacher I'd like to thank the Principal, Vice Principal and the staff for their support as without which this wouldn't have been a success.

- Sanya

Universal Studios Visit



Today was the day we were supposed to go to universal studios, and as expected everyone was thoroughly excited. That day we were separated from the Shri Ram school's group that had accompanied us until then, our guide miss Yoko Tori ma'am had also not been present with us. We were accompanied by Mannat ma'am and a fellow St. Marian Sneha Didi, who had passed out years back and is now studying in Japan's prestigious Ritsumekan University that we

had previously visited. We were urged to hurry up by Mannat ma'am so we don't get late, she told us that only one train left for the studio and that we would have to wait another hour if we don't reach there quick, although it was a lie, it was enough to get us moving quicker. Sneha Didi was this sort of universal studios veteran, so we really couldn't have asked for anything



better to guide us, she gave us info on all the rides beforehand and whether it's worth doing. When we reached the studios, I and it's safe to say everyone else was awestruck, that place was beyond anything I had ever imagined, and I had already thought of flying ponies. Sadly, we were greeted by rainfall upon our arrival so we spent a good hour getting us raincoats, and

by then, wouldn't you know it, the rain had stopped, still we kept our newly bought raincoats on for good measure. We went inside and due to half of the group (myself included) were potterheads, our first destination was Harry Potter land, the line there was nearly as lengthy as the ones in Shirdi, but I must say it was well worth the wait, because while we were in line we saw Dumbledore... speaking Japanese!! We then realized that all the rides were going to be in Japanese and wouldn't you know it, we heard Harry scream out stuff in Japanese throughout the ride, which by the way was very scary and I screamed my lungs out when we went through Aragog's home, it was certainly an experience. We had small shopping sessions here and there in the



wizarding world of Harry Potter and minion street where we got many cool merchandises such as T-shirts, plushies and wands!

We also got to drink butterbeer which was arguably one of the best things I have ever tasted. We had seen rollercoasters go around the park from the beginning and honestly this was the first time I had *ever* been on a rollercoaster so my expectations were sky high, and to say the least they were met by far and large. I remember me and my seniors screaming their lungs out as the ride went ahead twisting and turning like a slithering snake. This was where Mannat ma'am felt sick so she didn't do any more rides. We had thought of toning down the



scale of the rides so that everyone could do them, so Sneha Didi suggested that we head to the Jurassic world water way, but sadly it was closed, so we didn't get to do that. But the daring bunch of our group saw a ride beyond the sign that was unbelievably awesome and seemed to invite us to come and ride it. It was also the ride that had

shut down a month ago so for safety purposes we were not allowed to go on it by any means.

After that we decided to go and do another water ride from the jaws franchise, where it was supposed to be a narrative experience, only we weren't necessarily fluent in Japanese so whatever the guide was speaking went 6 feet over our heads, but it was nice occasion to laugh a little. After we left Universals I was kind of bummed cause I wanted to stay a little longer, and do so much more!! But alas, we went back bidding Sneha Di goodbye back to our rooms.



- Anirban

A PLACE TO BE, KOBE

7th June 2018 was the day we had become a band of explorers in a foreign country and had to travel ourselves. It was the day we went to Kobe.



The day started like any other. Snoozing ten alarms, throwing tantrums but still managing to get ready on time. We were extremely bored of the breakfast at the hotel so we decided to have breakfast elsewhere. We walked to the Osaka-Umeda station and after several attempts at getting the tickets out we went on to reach Kobe. We had to change trains twice in between and were flustered at first but Mannat Ma'am and Aryan managed to get us there by hook and by crook.

We first went to our spot, the seven eleven store and had a hearty breakfast. Then headed to the Kobe Ōji Zoo where we saw many interesting animals from pandas to koala bears. We also did a few rides in the zoo's amusement park.



Next, we walked around and reached motomachi shopping street and moved around for a while. We were supposed to have lunch in China town but couldn't find a suitable restaurant and the fragrance of their food didn't appeal to our palate, so we went to a McDonald's nearby and ate to our hearts content.

Lastly, we went to the Kobe bay and saw the earthquake memorial and clicked a few pictures. We sat there for a while soaking in the fresh breeze, admiring the view and introspecting. We then walked to the train station. We kept looking for it just to realize that it was right in front of us. We had a good laugh about that and soon reached the hotel.



Since a few of us were tired and some of the others wanted to shop, some went with Mannat maam but some stayed back.



Once everyone was back, we left for karaoke followed by dinner.

The karaoke place was awesome. We got personal rooms but it took us time to figure out the controls but we finally achieved it and sang four songs (although we weren't any good). But our first Karaoke experience had to be in

Japan, we can share this story with our family and friends.

We had dinner at a restaurant called Bindu where everyone indulged in the Indian food they had been missing for long, naan, chicken tikkas and what not.

Our day ended with an amazing closure activity, a circle time conducted by Mannat mam.

We were supposed to talk about our best experiences, what we learned about ourselves and something positive we saw in everyone else. It was a fun session where we really got to know ourselves.

Lastly, I would like to thank Koshi maam, Madhu maam, Mannat mam and the school for giving us this opportunity. *It was a great trip and we had loads of fun.*

- Vaishnavi

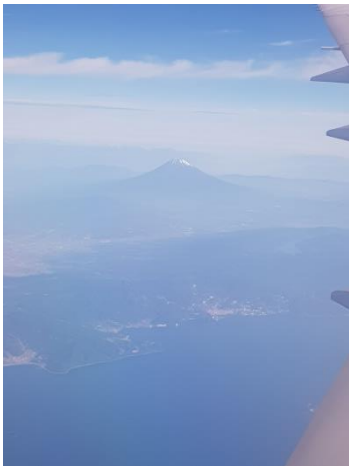
Japan at a Glance

If Freud was to do a free association test and give me the term Japan, sushi or Sakura is what I would have *said*

But there is much more to it *instead* (Vending machines, Toto Toilets, Bullet train, Multiple flavors of Kit-Kat)

In June team St. Mary's geared up for an educational cum sightseeing *tour*

With comfy shoes on, everyone was ready to *explore*



Tokyo was marvelous where we saw the Asimo robot, Asakusa Sensoji Temple, Nakamise Street, Hachiko memorial and the famous Shibuya *crossing*

And trust me; about all this we just couldn't stop *talking*



The next day we did the cruise on Lake Ashi and the ropeway up to see *Mt. Fuji*
Where our faces lit up with playful *glee*



Excited we all were for the Bullet train and was an astonishing *experience*
Which took us to Osaka in no time and their station had a strong coffee *fragrance*

In Kyoto we experienced the famous tea ceremony and visited the Golden Pavilion – Kinkauji *Temple*

After all this we had a session of origami in the hotel, so on time we had to *assemble*

Visiting the Ritsumeikan University and the School was the *highlight*

Where meeting our students studying there was a *delight*



Then it was the day for Universal studios which was enjoyed by *all*

And guess what! By now we had even experienced the Japan *rainfall*

Visiting the Kobe zoo, Motomachi and the Bay was the cherry on the *cake*

With a circle time we brought closure to the trip where memories, learning's and experiences of Japan we were happy with us to *take*

- Ms. Mannat Shergill



Thank you dear Dr. Annie and Madhu maam for making this trip happen.