



Organised by
Nihongo Kaiwa Kyookai Society

23rd India Japan Students' Conference

Tokyo, Japan
2019



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The 23rd India Japan Students'
Conference

Held in Tokyo, Japan

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Message from the Coordinator of Nihongo Kaiwa Kyookai Society

Partha S. Mitra
Coordinator-23rd India-Japan Students' Conference

As a coordinator, I take the pride in welcoming all the participants for another successful completion of India-Japan Student's Conference.

Congratulations for presenting an eventful and memorable conference! You all have made us proud. Your good work and hard work has truly paid off.

All of you deserved to be appreciated for your hard work, honesty and utmost dedication. You have a right mix of perseverance and enthusiasm, so I would request you all to keep it up. Remember your collective efforts contributed substantially to the quality of the conference and the same will go a long way to strengthen the cultural friendship between India and Japan.

'To lead a life that is both successful and fulfilling, our standard of success must be realistic, and we must be able to enjoy and be grateful to our achievements'.

I once again applaud your efforts in showing the world about what all of you are capable of doing and achieving.

Thanking you for making the conference an outstanding success! May this success lead to greater achievements in the years to come.

Message from Chief Patron of Nihongo Kaiwa Kyookai Society

Kazuko Nigam

It gives me immense pleasure to congratulate the students of both countries of the 23rd India Japan Students' Conference.

It must have been very difficult for the members of the Japan side to organize this conference with limited hands.

I am very sure that the friendships which the participants have made through this conference will be everlasting.

Like every year Nahagama Sensei, founder and adviser of Japan India Student Conference, has taken a lot of care for the smooth operation of this wonderful Conference. I express my sincere appreciation for her.

Message from Founder Member and Advisor of the Japan-India Student Conference

Hiroko Nagahama

To the 8 participants in the 23rd Japan-India Student Conference in Japan: Have you enjoyed your stay in Japan?

The 23rd Conference was essentially supposed to be held in India, but due to a strong desire expressed by the participants, it was held in Japan.

Next year, in the 2020, the Summer Olympics, or the Tokyo 2020, will be held, and everyone will watch the games on TV. At that time, please enjoy your memories of Japan.

I hope that the time you have spent in Japan will remain 'a lifetime treasure' that will never be forgotten. The Japanese side had few members and activities, but we have made preparations so that the Indian side can continue to sustain their interest and love for Japan.

I hope that in the next year, the 24th IJSC will be a student meeting where they can exchange opinions as earthlings who live on the same planet.

Last, but not the least, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to all the members of NKKS, starting from Mrs Kazuko Nigam of the NKKS, and all those who have supported this Conference.

Message from the Student President of Japan

Haruhito Mochizuki

JISC is a partnership between students from both Japan and India, offering a sustained academic program and a forum of exchange to facilitate discussions of the most important economic, political, and social issues relevant to these two countries. The academic program offered by the organizing committee of the host community comes in various formats each year. Company and institution visits are carefully organized so that delegates and the host could make the most out of the program. The Indo-Japan society also expects some results that can prove the visit has enlightened the minds and understanding of the topic which the delegates have been working on before and throughout the conference.

Likely, “Education” has been chosen as the main theme of the 23rd Japan-India Student Conference. Delegates have examined, and compared, the strength and weakness of respective educational systems, such as, the social settings of schools and universities within each country, key authorities that develop and maintain disciplinary procedures and actions against youth, and of course the Japanese style moral education which Prime Minister Narendra Modi is also fond of. Table discussions have been arranged to meet certain academic criteria, and it has long been the passion of the students from both countries to apply for this conference. However, apart from what I have explained, there are reasons why JISC has emerged as the most sustainable annual event at the student level.

Over the years, our philosophy and program has been carefully arranged to be aligned with the purpose and passion of each delegate. In the attempt to enlighten future leaders, the main activity during the conference has been dedicated to the table meetings. However, we, the committee members, have promised to organize this year’s conference to help participants explore new perspectives, including a whole range of other networking sessions such as cultural workshops, homestay, sightseeing, and university visit. With this, participants have been provided an opportunity to take off for an adventure to explore different parts of Tokyo. We, the organizing committee, are also students, and students are expected to show dedication and responsibility as representatives of their respective countries as this Student Conference may influence the minds and souls of potential future leaders. Therefore, the 23rd Japan-India Student Conference has worked and paid close attention not to impose our opinion, as good teachers of school wouldn’t either.

This dramatic shift in the mindset of the program would not have been possible if it wasn’t for the dedicated and responsible students, selected through our competitive process to attend this conference and win an opportunity to explore cultural and social differences. It is only through the active participation of highly qualified delegates. Now it seems fair to say that the hard-working and courageous effort of the delegates has changed our image of India, and with the strength and potential of the Indian Individuals been recognized domestically and internationally, Japanese students have much to learn from them. And the 23rd Japan-India Student Conference organizing committee is very grateful to promise that this year’s participants have done a wonderful job to foster the relationship with the Japan side.

Here, I would like to answer to the calls for an international forum of exchange by our sponsors. On behalf of The Japan India Student Conference (JISC) organizing committee, I am sincerely thankful for the people and sponsorship from many understanding individuals that this organization has prospered for over 22 years. Again, I would like to express my sincerest appreciation to those who shared our philosophy.

In conclusion, we have been seeking a better future by exchanging ideas and opinions and looking at things from different viewpoints, and we believe that we can create strong relations between the two nations by participating in this conference. In the attempt to strive for continuous improvement, to make sure that this future conferences can be held even better, the 23rd Japan-India Student Conference committee members will be more than pleased to support future delegates who share our philosophy.

Message from the Student President of India

Anusha Banerjee

The 23rd India Japan Students' Conference, held in Tokyo, has been one step amongst many in strengthening the relationship between India and Japan- two countries who have shared a rich history rooted in strong cultural ties.

The theme of this year's conference was "Education and Moral Values"- something all of us are well-acquainted with, being students ourselves. Even though the terms *education* and *moral values* are intimately associated with one another, we often forget that having a fancy degree is not all-inclusive; good morals are, *per se*, the result of a good education. The table discussions held during this year's conference explored and debated on various methods by which moral values could be incorporated into children. We also visited Tokyo University to delve further into the topic of education in Japan.

The India Japan Students' Conference has not only been a platform for thoughts and ideas, but also of culture and lifestyles. This year's conference saw a multitude of cultural exchanges- starting from a Kabuki experience to cooking Japanese food, and visiting an artificial onsen, to home visits and kimono-wearing sessions. We also visited a temple dedicated to Shri Subhash Chandra Bose on his death anniversary. This enlightened us on the richness of the history shared between India and Japan even further.

Althroughout the conference, the members of both the Japan and India side worked hard. On behalf of the members of IJSC, I'd like to heartily thank the members of JISC for taking care of us during our time in Japan. We'd also like to thank Nigam sensei and Partho-san for giving us this golden opportunity.

To be a part of the 23rd India-Japan Students' Conference as the President of such a dynamic team, I am eternally grateful. The experience has been nothing less than a life-changing one- something which has given more clarity to all our dreams and pushed us to strive towards it. As another conference comes to a close, we look forward to hosting the Japanese members next year in hope that it will reinforce our bond further and lead to even better experiences.

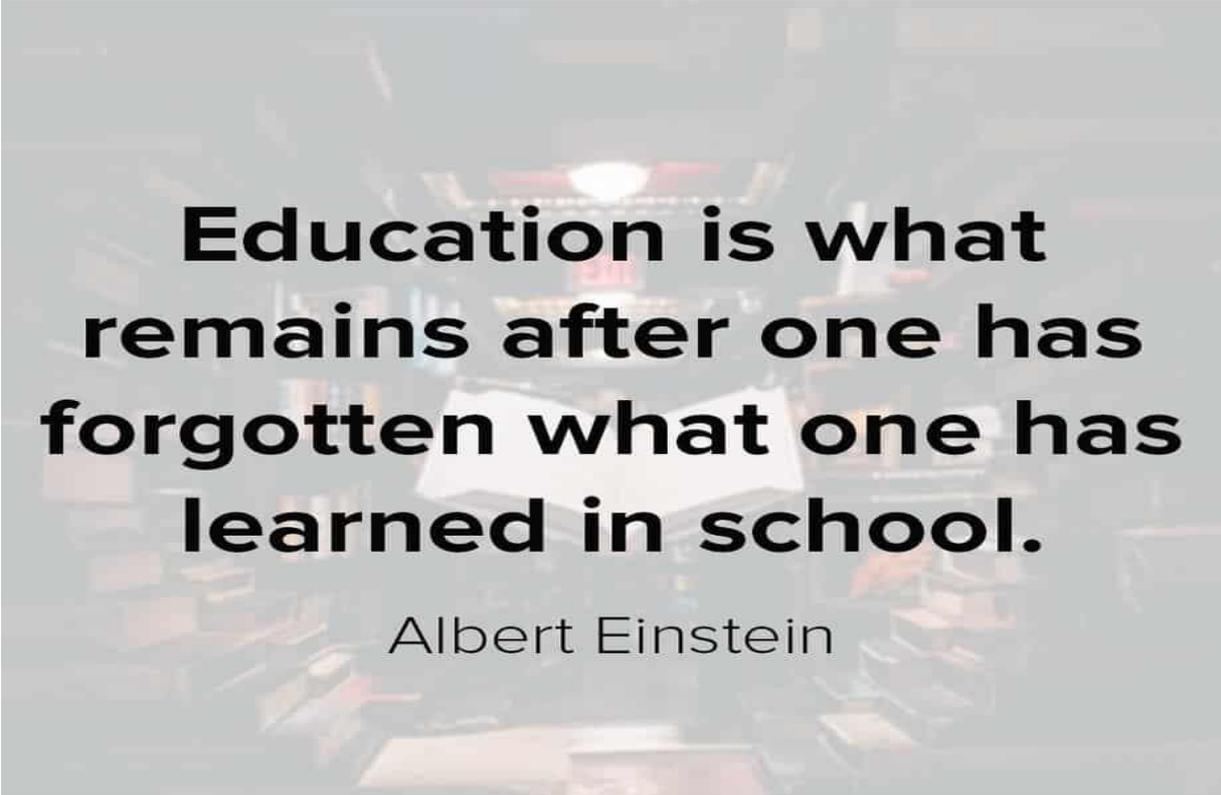
Finally, to all members: お疲れ様でした！

Schedule

Date	Morning	Afternoon/Evening
13th August 2019 (Tue)	Arrival at Haneda Airport	Relaxation & Meeting (Oedo Onsen Monogatari)
14th August 2019 (Wed)	Preparation & Meeting (National Olympic Memorial Youth Center)	Opening Ceremony (National Olympic Memorial Youth Center)
15th August 2019 (Thu)	Cultural Exchange: Kabuki	
16th August 2019 (Fri)	Official Embassy Visit	Table Discussion 1 (National Olympic Memorial Youth Center)
17th August 2019 (Sat)	Cultural Exchange (Home Visit)	
18th August 2019 (Sun)	Visit to Renkō-ji	
19th August 2019 (Mon)	Cultural Exchange: Cooking (Yotsuya Civic Center)	Table Discussion 2 (Yotsuya Civic Center)
20th August 2019 (Tue)	Visit to Asakusa	Visit to Akihabara
21st August 2019 (Wed)	Visit to Tokyo University	Cultural Exchange: Wearing Kimono
22nd August 2019 (Thu)	Free Time	Closing Ceremony/Departure (Haneda Airport)

Objective of the Conference: Education

Why does Education play a vital role in our daily life?



**Education is what
remains after one has
forgotten what one has
learned in school.**

Albert Einstein

The first thing that strikes us about education is knowledge gain. Education gives us a knowledge of the world around us and changes it into something better. It develops in us a perspective of looking at life. It helps us build opinions and have points of view on things in life. People debate over the subject of whether education is the only thing that gives knowledge. Some say education is the process of gaining information about the surrounding world while knowledge is something very different. But then again, information cannot be converted into knowledge without education. Education makes us capable of interpreting things, among other things. It is not just about lessons in textbooks. It is about the lessons of life.

The discussion in the 23rd India Japan Student Conference ideally focused on how a certain method of education and inculcating moral values can affect the conscience of a teenager in school.

List of Members: Japan Side

Name	Designation	Affiliation/University
Haruhito Mochizuki	President of the Japan Side	Dokkyo University Foreign Studies Club Graduate
Akane Akita	Vice President	Aichi Prefectural University
YingTong Chen	Public Relations Bureau	Tokyo University of Foreign Studies
Maria Isa	Academic Planning Bureau	Aoyama Gakuin University
Yotsuka Oshika	Financial Bureau	Tokyo University of Foreign Studies
Shota Kondo	Academic Planning Bureau	Graduate School of Tokyo University
Hiromu Arika	Academic Planning Bureau	Kanda University of International Studies
Minaho Nakamura	Public Relations Bureau	Dokkyo University
Mio Shiozaki	Participation in Table Discussions	

List of Members: India Side

Name	Designation	Affiliation/University
Anusha Banerjee	President of the India Side	Presidency University
Deepro Banerjee	Communicator	Meghnad Saha Institute of Technology
Pratyay Kumar Mullick	Academic Team	University of Engineering & Management, Kolkata
Ratula Datta	Academic Team	Amity University
Rupkatha Majumdar	Cultural Team	Jadavpur University
Koyel Mukherjee	Cultural Team	Jadavpur University
Tuneer Chakrabarti	Events Team	Presidency University
Subhojeet Mookherjee	Events Team	South Calcutta Law College

Arrival

13th August 2019

Anusha Banerjee

After a 16-hour long layover and another 7-hour flight from Singapore to Tokyo, we finally touched down at Haneda Airport, Tokyo at 6:30 AM on the morning of the 13th of August 2019. Alas, the weather was cloudy or else we could have witnessed the sunrise, at the land of the rising sun itself. Extremely tired and sleepy, most of us hadn't even registered the fact that we were really in *Japan*—the land of our dreams. The conference that we had been preparing for, for the past two months, had finally begun.

Soon after we crossed immigration, and collected our luggage, we found the Japanese members waiting for us. It filled our hearts with joy to see them in such a long time. After welcoming us, we were given our Suica cards—the cards we were to use for the rest of our conference to commute by train or bus. We were taught how to refill our Suica and divided in groups of two Indians and one Japanese for ease of movement and transportation. Consequently, we set off towards what was to be our home for the rest of the conference—National Olympic Memorial Youth Center or simply *OriSen*. We took the Keikyuu Airport line towards Shinagawa, then the Yamanote line to Shinjuku, and finally the Odakyuu Odawara Line to Sangubashi station. We realized that the trains were going to be our lifeline in the next 10 days, for what was to be the trip of our lifetime.

Oedo Onsen Monogatari

13th August 2019

Anusha Banerjee

Right after keeping our luggage at National Olympic Memorial Youth Center, we set off towards Oedo Onsen Monogatari—a hot spring complex and theme center for experiencing traditional Japan from the Edo period. We first took a train to Shinagawa station, and subsequently took a free shuttle bus to Oedo Onsen Monogatari. Upon reaching, we kept our shoes in a shoe-locker, and proceeded to collect our yukatas from the front-desk. Here, we were also given a wristband-key—an innovative way of making sure we don't misplace our locker keys. It was difficult to choose one Yukata out of so many colourful ones, but we made our decisions. The Japanese members helped us change into our yukatas, and soon after that we entered the premises. On stepping into the main hall, it almost felt like we were transported to a Japanese summer festival—the kind we had only read about or seen in movies. The sweet sound of *furin* (Japanese glass wind chimes) ringing, the lanterns, and the overall atmosphere was enthralling. Soon, we had our lunch at the food hall—many opted for Soba noodles, and ramen, whereas others opted for *domburi*. Our first meal in Japan was full packed, and delicious.

After the lunch, everyone was ready to experience their first culture shock in Japan- the bath. While most of the members went inside the onsen, me and two Japanese members couldn't. We decided to have some fun while playing games and going to the *ashi-yu* or foot bath.

The open-air foot bath was beautiful—colourful paper lanterns, a bridge crossing over the hot water and pebbly feet massage area. We couldn't enjoy the foot bath for a longer time as the weather was hot. Coming back indoors, we played a taiko-drum game, and whack-the-mole game. Time flew by very swiftly, and soon all the members assembled once more at the main hall.

After watching a very amusing stand-up comedy show in Japanese, it was time for us to leave. We returned our yukata, changed our clothes, and took the shuttle bus once again to Shinagawa Station, and subsequently two trains to Olympic Center.

Onsen Experience

After a hefty lunch at the cafeteria in Oedo Onsen while wearing our yukatas, some of us headed towards the public bathing area. Our friend Akane guided us to ladies' locker room where we had to disrobe and head towards the bathing area. We were extremely shy initially, but we were also excited about the experience which lay ahead of us. On entering the bathing area, we had to pour hot water on ourselves from a well-like structure, after which we were guided to the showering area. After cleaning ourselves, we could choose to enter into any bath, which were a lot in number and of varying sizes with water of varying temperatures as well. There was an outer bathing area too which had a natural hot spring like set up, which looked pleasing to the eye as well. After a long relaxing bath, we headed to the sauna which added on to the relaxation.

Opening Ceremony

14th August 2019

Tuneer Chakrabarti

In the middle of drizzling rain and muddled hearts and the general aesthetic of an unnerving calm preceded through lenses of transparent umbrellas and the restlessness of a country more than a thousand miles away, the day began like any other. The second day in the city of Tokyo started with a trip into the hustling conclave of Harajuku via metro right after the introduction of the newer Japanese members Shota Kondo and A. Hiromu. Returning from the same, the Indian members changed into Indian attire and sat down in room 404 of the central building to begin the proceedings of the Opening Ceremony of the 23rd India Japan Student Conference. After a short introduction by the President on either side of the Japanese and Indian teams, the India team presented an Indo-Japanese rendition of the Rabindra Sangeet “Akash Bhora Surjo Tara”, which was followed by an address by Prof. Siddharth Singh, the Director of Vivekananda Cultural Center. Mr. Satoshi Hata followed next with an address on the ties between India and Japan and how the two countries call forth for closer ties and knowledge sharing and an interchange of students and workers.

After the formal aspect of the meeting, a riveting performance by M. Shimizu was made using a Shamisen which moves us thoroughly. Further, a quiz was held by the Indian side on India trivia which ensued a lot of participation from the Japanese side—bookmarks and chocolates were handed out as prizes. A session was held on Japanese calligraphy by Ms. Nagahama-sensei, where everyone wrote the Kanji for the new Japanese era Reiwa 令和, and the same would remain immortalised as a group photo that was repurposed at the time of leaving as a parting gift to the Indian side. The Opening Ceremony ended with a few gifts given to the Japanese side reminiscent of the everyday items of India such as a few candies and rudimentary toys which were accepted with joy and tremendous showers of thanks. Under the slightly setting sun of Tokyo, the Opening Ceremony drew to a close as the members retreated to their own friends and followed through on a walking trip to Meiji Jingu, while still donning Indian traditional attire on the streets of Tokyo.

A Short Trip to Harajuku

14th August 2019

Ratula Datta

On the second day of our stay in Tokyo, before the opening ceremony of our conference, we decided to take a quick trip to Harajuku. The morning started with meeting new members, Shota Kondo and Hiromu Ariki, who also guided us through the streets of Harajuku. After a hearty breakfast at the cafeteria in Orisen, we headed out for Harajuku through our regular route, which was the Sangubashi station.

Our first impression of Harajuku turned out to be more interesting than we had thought. There were flocks of people, locals and foreigners alike, some dressed in the typical Harajuku fashion in vibrant skirts and shoes. We were in awe of every store that mostly resonated the fashion of Harajuku, selling clothes of the same kind. There were several other stores which only sold clothes of Gothic fashion or only pastel coloured

clothes. We also noticed the famous ACDC Rag shop which was the shop that started the whole idea surrounding Harajuku fashion. The crepe shops, also being extremely colourful, did not fail to catch our attention. We also spotted the famous Rainbow Sweets Shop of Harajuku which sold cotton candies in various colours and were of a generous size. However, due to laxity of time, we had to rush back to Orisen and we promised each other that we shall be back another day to explore the place more and perhaps also shop a little from the Harajuku stores.

Kabuki at Kabukiza Theatre

15th August 2019

Pratyay Kumar Mullick

The location for the day was Kabuki-za (歌舞伎座) in Ginza. The show was to start at 11:00. Since everyone was early, we did souvenir shopping at Higashi-Ginza station—postcards, lucky charms, seals, stamps, kabuki masks, etc. It was a delight to explore the kabuki-themed souvenir shops.

It is always packed at the Kabuki-za Theatre—where people would normally queue up for hours outside. There are 1,928 seats in the theatre excluding the top row for audience who are willing to watch the play while standing. The tickets start from ¥15,000 for First Class Reserved Seat to ¥1,600 for Single Act Seat. There are many strict rules and regulations to be followed while the play is going on such as not using mobile phones, not getting up from seats, not consuming food or drinks and maintaining silence throughout. People could be seen using instant translator devices which could be rented for ¥500 apiece per act.

The play for that day was 伽蘿先代萩 (*Meiboku Sendaihagi*, Precious Incense and the Bush-Clover of Sendai). The cast was Nakamura Shichinosuke, Matsumoto Koushirou, Nakamura Kantarou, Nakamura Chouzaburou, Bandou, Minosuke and Nakamura Senjaku. The story in brief is: The new and young head of the clan, Tsuruchiyo, is in danger of assassination; for which he is kept in the women's quarters such that he is not in contact with outsiders and males who may portray danger for him. The play explores the different scenarios which Masaoka (lady in charge of the palace) protects Tsuruchiyo against poisoned cakes, prepares food, loses her son Senmatsu to punishment, and more. The last scene is in *aragoto* style (bombastic and exaggerating portrayal of warriors, gods and demons) where Arajishi Otonosuke fights Nikki Danjou who is disguised as a rat. The act one (of three) ended at that point and the audience roared at the incredible performance.

Even if the play as a whole was a bit difficult for us to understand, everyone appreciated the other aspects of kabuki—acting, make-up, costumes, props and dialogues. It was really fascinating to see the child actors performing so well in front of 1000s of people—so well that their voice and expressions were clear from the top row. We were also enthralled by the shamisen performance that accompanied the act. Not only that, the drums, flute and other instruments were impeccable and appreciated by everyone.

A Visit to Kura Zushi

15th August 2019

Subhojeet Mookherjee

One of the most sought-after dishes in Japan is none other than sushi. Having gotten a taste for it back in India, I always wanted to try sushi in Tokyo. During this year's conference, my wish was finally fulfilled. We went to Kura Zushi after we finished watching the Kabuki show. Kura Zushi is a renowned restaurant, the specialty being the conveyor belt sushi where each plate of sushi is sold for ¥100. This was something I had only seen in shows and read online, but actually seeing it with my own eyes was an entirely different experience altogether. We were all divided into groups, each group consisting of Indian and Japanese members. I was joined by Tuneer and Rupkatha, and Haruhito-san and Yoshika-san from the Japanese side.

The sheer variety of the sushi from the extensive menu left me spoiled for choice. From the classic salmon roe sushi, to the more nuanced pork and cheese sushi, I just could not decide what to have. So, we all

decided to try almost everything on the menu. I especially loved the salmon sushi and the fried chicken sushi. After every five orders, a gacha game was played where if we were lucky, we would get a random toy. After a few failed attempts, we managed to get a token badge as a prize. It was a nice little touch that kept us engaged. After everything was said and done, we had finished over 41 plates which included desserts as well. I had an amazing time at Kura Zushi and I will remember this experience my whole life.

“Donki” and “Purikura”

15th August 2019

Tuneer Chakrabarti

Since coming to Japan, the number of people I’ve seen walking around with selfie sticks has been very low. Heavily taking photos with your camera or phone (especially out in public) didn’t really seem like a thing either. I was surprised to see a certain lack of “photo culture” that I was used to back home—people constantly taking a bunch of photos then uploading them on Snapchat or Instagram. But as it turns out, a big portion of the image heavy culture is located somewhere else, and that place is purikura! Purikura is a photo booth machine where you can take photos with your friends and then get a print out of it afterwards. Fun fact: “Purikura” is the abbreviated way of saying “Print Club” in Japanese. Japan has taken the “photo and print” concept and evolved it into an affordable and fashionable photoshoot! Purikura machines originated in Japan and have maintained huge popularity since their initial debut in the 1990’s. And in my opinion, purikura’s popularity continues to skyrocket as the machines start to offer more digitized features. For example, there are automatic photo filters, in-booth editing systems, and even the option to send photos/clips sent directly to a smartphone. All this is available at about 400 yen per session on average.

Donki or *Don-Quijote* is a big discount chain store in Japan that sells almost everything with a great deal. Starting from *food, snacks, cosmetic, souvenirs, cooking ingredients, cosplay costume, fashion items, electronic, travel items*, etc Don Quijote has over 160 outlets throughout Japan including Tokyo, most of the stores are open until late or even open for 24 hours. There are two Don Quijote outlets the India team have visited, Shinjuku and Shibuya.

Table Discussion I: Video and First Discussion

16th August 2019

Pratyay Kumar Mullick

The venue for discussion was the National Youth Olympic Memorial Centre. A total of 18 students participated in the discussion, including both Indian and Japanese students.

The topic of discussion was to watch and analyze a video documentary of a school in Fukuoka, Japan. Kouji Manabe teaches his students the importance of life through the method of “the raising, dissecting, and then the eating of chicken”. It is an endeavor to raise awareness and to draw attention to the high rates of bullying and suicides in the Japanese society. Each child is given an egg to raise into a chicken—which they would have to put down and consume by saying 「いただきます」 (itadakimasu) in the subsequent months. It was an educational video of twenty minutes. Many of us were left poignant watching the students in the school cry during the last class.

After watching the video, everyone divided into groups of four to discuss about the case. We were given a paper and some pens to write our views and opinion on. Everyone wrote points, drew diagrams and became creative with it. Each group presented their paper with their opinions on the topic. All opinions were appreciated and heavily applauded.

The next stage was the debate, whose topic was “Is this lesson effective and sufficient to handle the situation at hand?”. The room was divided into two groups for “for the notion” and “against the notion”. But since there was not much time left the debate had to be rescheduled to the next table discussion. However, each group wrote down their arguments and rebuttals in preparation for the next day.

Amey-san and Shibasaki-san also joined for the discussion. Amey-san is a teacher and from University of Tsukuba. Shibasaki-san is an acquaintance of Amey-san and she introduced the Prema Metta School to us. Prema Metta School is an officially approved elementary school in Bodhgaya, India. The school was established in 2006 and is successfully helping underprivileged children acquire education. They provide children with everything they need for education such as textbooks, uniforms, activities and food. Shibasaki-san encouraged us to visit the school and volunteer in teaching, preparing food, etc. We wish their effort is in great success and we wish to visit the school soon.

Embassy Visit

16th August 2019

Rupkatha Majumdar

16th August, the day after India's Independence Day was the perfect day to visit the Embassy of India in Tokyo. It felt humbling to see the Indian flag hoisted on a foreign land. All the participants of the conference, from both the Indian and Japanese sides were welcomed into the embassy by Nagahama Hiroko sensei and other officials.

Shri Sanjay Kumar Verma, ambassador of India to Japan addressed the participants of 23rd IJSC at Embassy of India, Tokyo. Prof. Siddharth Singh, Director, Vivekananda Cultural Centre of the embassy was also present. During the interactive session with the participants over some Japanese tea, issues pertaining India-Japan bilateral relations came up for discussion.

Mr. Verma briefly touched upon the Indo-Pacific vision of security, people-to-people connectivity and innovations. Trade was undoubtedly recognised as a pillar for a country's existence and keeping the sea-link open for all with adequate self-defense is important. Better understanding of the Indo-Pacific vision will help create a peaceful region. ASEAN: Association of Southeast Asian Nation also has a role in the development of India-Japan relations.

The recent trade figures were discussed: export to Japan from India amounted to \$4-5mn in 2017-18, whereas investments of Japan in India totals to \$29mn. Overall, India and Japan has always had a symbiotic relationship. Indo-Japan friendship dates back to Justice Pal and Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose.

In the education sphere, many institutions of India and Japan have partnered with each other to facilitate cross-country and cross-cultural interactions among students. Japan sponsors India's endeavours through programmes like the SAKURA action programme. The JLPT: Japanese Language Proficiency Test takes place in India twice every year and the takers are only increasing in number. Japanese students also express interest in Indian languages.

In conclusion, Mr. Verma said that the key to sustaining a healthy two-way relationship between the two countries lies in the connections we make—the partnerships and new ideas of collaboration and innovation. People with ideas can come together and work wonders and help both countries advance. Prof. Singh ended with the thought that we should now explore new ideas and new avenues of collaboration, and try to think of creative ways in which the two countries can establish newer and stronger connections.

The whole discussion was very informative and thought-provoking. Everybody interacted and asked relevant questions. In the end, we took pictures with everyone.

Shibuya and Scramble Crossing

16th August 2019

Deepro Banerjee

On the evening of 16th we went to the famous Shibuya Crossing. After having our dinner at Olympic Centre, we walked to the bus stop outside Olympic Centre and waited for the bus which will take us to Shibuya. The bus took around 15 minutes to reach Shibuya from Olympic Centre. All the Indian Members were excited to be able to see the place which they've seen in videos, with their own eyes. We gathered near the memorial statue of Hachiko, clicked pictures with the statue while two other members joined us. Being able to cross

the Shibuya crossing was really exciting for us. Everyone was busy taking pictures of the beautifully lit Shibuya Crossing. We then went to the Magnet store by Shibuya 109, a building overlooking the Crossing. We went to the rooftop from where we could see the hundreds of people crossing at Scramble. After that the Japanese members took us to a ¥100 shop from where the Indian members did a lot of shopping. After shopping and roaming around the neighborhood for a while, we planned to return to Olympic Centre by bus, but we got to know that the scheduled bus was cancelled due to the summer holidays in Japan. We then took the Yamanote Line train from Shibuya station to Shinjuku and then the Odakyu line train to Sangubashi Station and then walked till Olympic Centre. It was one of the most enjoyable evenings of the Conference.

Home Visit - Ohata Family

17th August 2019

Pratyay Kumar Mullick

Ohata family lives in Higashi-Nakano in an apartment. The family consists of Shouko-san, her husband and a baby boy Kouta who is 2 years old.

We were greeted at the station by Shouko-san with her friends Yurie-san and Sakina-san and none other than the small Kouta-kun. Shouko-san, Yurie-san and Sakina-san were members of the 18th JISC held in Japan. They visited India the succeeding year to meet the friends they made last year.

We went to a supermarket to get groceries. The supermarket was very clean and organized. We bought okonomiyaki flour, bacon and cabbage. It was clear that we were cooking okonomiyaki (お好み焼き).

The Ohata residence is not very far from the supermarket. The house is located on an inclined street. When we entered the house, we were instantly taken aback by the spacious playing room for Kouta-kun which also had double carpets on the floor. Right when he entered the room, Kouta-kun got playful. But first we had to fill our tummies.

Yurie-san blanched edamame (枝豆) to go with the black coffee. Sakina-san started preparing the sides: dashimaki tamago (だし巻き卵), salad. And Shouko-san started preparing the okonomiyaki batter. Deepro and I cooked one okonomiyaki each. Everyone was served hiyashimen (冷やし面) to go with the rest of the food. The food was as homely as it gets and we were full before we even knew it. Kouta-kun started getting comfortable with us and shared his toys and snacks with us. Kouta-kun is a very big Anpanman buff and it was evident from the several toys he showed us. He also liked Soan Papdi, which is a popular Indian sweet.

We headed out to go to Sanukiya, a Japanese sweets (和菓子, wagashi) restaurant located along the Kanda River. It was a peaceful walk and a pleasant restaurant. We had *tokoroten* and *anmitsu*. *Tokoroten* is made of agarophytes and it is eaten with *kuromitsu* (black sugar syrup) and *kinako* (roasted soy bean flour). *Anmitsu* is a dessert made of small cubes of agar jelly and it is eaten with *anko* (sweet azuki bean paste) and a variety of fruits. Both of the dishes were unique and a delight to savour.

We walked back to the residence and took a small rest since it was really humid and hot outside. We had small conversations about their friends in India, climate, food and more. Kouta-kun was still very energetic and ran around at the entrance of the house as we were leaving. After taking photos, we exchanged souvenirs and bid our thanks with お世話になりました (thank you for looking after us). We are very thankful to Ohata family and the company for having us for the day and wish to visit them soon in near future.

Home Visit - Imazumi Family

17th August 2019

Ratula Datta

On the 17th of August, 2019, my friend and team mate Koyel Mukherjee and I were privileged to be hosted by the Imazumi family for a home visit, as a part of the 23rd India-Japan Student Conference being held in Tokyo.

The Imazumi family was really generous to pick us up at Orisen. They were extremely approachable and friendly from the first meeting itself, and told us that it will take about an hour to reach till their place. The walk with them during our ride in train was also extremely interesting as Mr. Imazumi was a law student himself—with whom I resonated a lot being a law student myself. The view through the train till their house was extremely picturesque as well as their house lied in the outskirts of Tokyo, in Fuchu. Whilst looking at tiny houses, we arrived to their apartment, which gave a very minimalist and neat vibe.

On reaching, Mrs. Imazumi told us that she will be cooking tempura and other authentic Japanese delicacies for us. They cooked fried pumpkin, shiitake and tempura for us with a traditional Hokkaido miso soup and rice, which Mr. Imazumi said is a specialty from his hometown.

Post that, Mrs. Imazumi made o-chaa or green tea in the traditional way as well as taught us how to hold the tea bowl in the traditional manner and drink it. We were also offered some Japanese jelly to eat along with the tea, during which we gave our gifts to the family which included some Indian candies, incense sticks, an Indian handicraft and Darjeeling tea.

Mrs. Imazumi also, right at the inception of the day had told us that she'll give us an yukata trial, and just like she promised there was a session of wearing yukata and photos which was probably our most memorable and favourite part of the day.

After a bit of discussion and talking regarding India and Japan relations, we decided to leave. On the way, the Imazumi family was also extremely gracious to take us to an Anime Merchandise Shop in Shinjuku. Post the shopping, the Imazumi family dropped us back to our staying place, Orisen, by 6 pm and we bade farewell and parted ways. Also due to their kindness, Koyel and I were able to take a cab ride in Tokyo, which we really wished for but were not sure about it happening.

It was a very eventful day and it helped us get an insight on how a regular day in Japan is for the ordinary Japanese family. We also hope to keep in touch with the Imazumi family and always be grateful for their immense kindness on that day.

Home Visit - Okumura Family

17th August 2019

Rupkatha Majumdar

I was supposed to visit the 奥村 family on Saturday. The Okumura family has four members: the couple, their son Atsushi and their daughter Erika. On 17 August, Saturday, Mr. Okumura Jun came to the Olympic Center to pick me up at 10 in the morning. After getting introduced to each other, we set off. We spoke in a mixture of Japanese and English.

While briefly talking about his family, it turned out that Atsushi-san and Erika-san were close to me in age. Hence we decided that I call Mr. Okumura お父さん ! お父さん told me that he has got to know how much I love stationery items and little knick-knacks. So he has decided to take me to Tokyu Hands, Shibuya. Upon entering the huge building, I was thrilled. There was so much to see! お父さん showed me around the store. After shopping there, we walked through the pretty streets around, talking about our life in general and my experiences in Japan. He has been to India a few times for his job and is involved in Indo-Japan activities! We visited 宇田川町 (Udagawacho) Spanish Street, and it was a very beautiful nook near the busy Shibuya. We clicked pictures and quickly checked out a few more stores. Soon we took the train from

Shibuya to Jiyūgaoka. Next, we would take a bus to the Okumura residence. There was some time for the bus to arrive, so we went to a Starbucks in 世田谷 (Setagaya) City near Jiyūgaoka station. お父さん talked about his work, about my university, life in India and Japan, administrative differences between the two countries, educational atmosphere in the university levels of Kolkata and Tokyo, and much more. We were so immersed in our discussions that when it was time for the bus to arrive, we noticed just at the nick of time.

The road we took on the bus through the streets of Jiyūgaoka to the Okumura residence was very picturesque. It was a slightly hilly area with beautiful roads and buildings, big and small houses that were one of a kind and trees all over. We got down from the bus and walked for about 2 minutes.

The Okumura family lives in a big residential complex. Upon entering, we went up the elevator, and I was greeted by お母さん, Mrs. Okumura, at the apartment door. She is a very sweet lady. I took off my shoes at the genkan and put on the home slippers. お母さん was a very amicable. She helped me get comfortable in their home and showed me around. Their balcony provided with a breathtaking view of Jiyūgaoka, its surroundings and Tokyo City. Tokyo Tower, Skytree, Roppongi Hills were all visible in the distance. After taking some pictures, it was already lunch time. We sat down to a sumptuous meal of Japanese カレー, rice, vegetables, salads and tea, lovingly prepared by お母さん. I got to know that since they were not sure whether I would be non-vegetarian, they prepared a vegetarian meal for me! It was very considerate of them. お母さん informed me that Atsushi-san was busy with his sports and Erika-san was away in Australia, with a home-stay family. Hence I couldn't meet them. But I used the opportunity to have a great long discussion with お母さん and お父さん. お母さん talked about all the times they have lived abroad, their children who were born abroad, and how the kanji-s of all of their names were somehow related to each other or to the places they were born. This fascinated me a lot. I showed them how I write my name in Bangla! It was a great discussion over lunch. I wanted to keep talking to them. We talked about their daily lives. We have also spoken about Japanese history, Indian history, and India-Japan relations. In the afternoon, it was time to leave again. お母さん gave me a lot of snacks, tea and gifts. I gave them some Indian snacks, a note, a few things from Kolkata and some handmade items as a token of appreciation. I bid Mrs. Okumura goodbye. We took a lot of pictures. I gave my best wishes to Atsushi-san and Erika-san, and set out. Jiyūgaoka is a very picturesque place. We went to Little Venice. It was a pretty corner in the town that is built to look like Venice. It had a European charm and was very beautiful overall. We saw some cute dogs and cats and clicked a lot of pictures. We visited 自由が丘スイーツフォレスト (Jiyūgaoka Sweets Forest) too. Soon after, it was time for dinner. We went to a quaint farmer's cafe and met one of お父さん's Indian friends. The cafe had a great ambience, and we had a delicious dinner. It was a very new experience for me.

The day was coming to an end. While heading off for our return journey, we saw a very colourful festival on the road. People were dressed in costumes, carrying flags and instruments, making music and dancing on the roads. It was a nice surprise, and an energetic way to end the day!

I had a very nice time with my host family. They were really kind and considerate people, and ready to welcome me with open arms. It is as though I have my Japanese family in Jiyūgaoka. I am fortunate to have experienced Japanese family and hospitality. Hope we can meet again in the future!

One Piece Museum

17th August 2019

Subhojeet Mookherjee

As one of the most famous and longest running manga and consequent anime, One Piece deserves its own theme park and lo and behold, here we have it. Undeniably a number one spot to visit in Tokyo if you are a fan of the show! My co-delegate and I chose not to watch the Live Show as we found it a little strange seeing our favourite characters as people. Didn't really see the attraction. Apart from that, the park was great and we particularly enjoyed the exhibition showing the progression of the series as an anime from page to screen. The initial light and sound show was amazing and was reminiscent of the episodes that we had read in books and TV shows. There are arcade games/tours which are themed after some of the main characters. My favourite was the slingshot arcade game themed after Usopp. The other games were also well worth the investment and lines vary from 5-20 minutes when we went.

Outside of the main theme park you are able to visit the Mugiwara store with merchandise as well as the Cafe and Restaurant for free. I found that figurines were cheaper in the markets of Akihabara however there were some souvenirs I didn't find elsewhere like Luffy's hat hair clip and a decorative towel with some exclusive designs. Otherwise I would highly recommend going to the two eateries as the food was not only delicious but adorably One Piece themed. Restaurant Baratie may seem a little expensive but what else do you expect for genuinely Sanji-quality meals? Well worth it.

A visit to a Geological Museum

17th August 2019

Anusha Banerjee

It was a particularly bright and sunny Saturday. Officially, it was the day of the home visit, but sadly, not everyone could be accommodated in a home. I was one of them. However, it was for a reason that I volunteered out- to allow my fellow members to participate in the home visit program; and to try and fulfil my desperate wish to visit a geological museum, located around 74 km off the city of Tokyo, in the town of Tsukuba, Ibaraki Prefecture. This wish was a little difficult to come true, for Tsukuba was quite far, and most Japanese members had past engagements, so they couldn't accompany me all the way. Even though the Japan side wasn't very inclined to let me go alone, with the help of a hand-held WiFi device (Sushi WiFi), and some self-confidence I convinced them to allow me.

I set out early in the morning from Olympic Center, towards our destination- Tokyo Station. From there, I needed to take a bus to Tsukuba. Akane-san accompanied me to the bus stop to see me off. Taking the 10:30 AM bus to Tsukuba, I was feeling exhilarated, and nervous at the same time. It was my first time in Tokyo, and to make a solo trip to Tsukuba was unimaginable up until that moment! Nonetheless, the adventure began as the bus moved through the city of Tokyo- showing a fantastic view of its skyline, roads, buildings and rivers - and eventually to the highway. Soon, I could see green paddy fields, rivers, empty plots, and traditional Japanese houses scattered around the highway. It was beautiful, and awe-inspiring. After an hour's journey, my stop finally arrived- Namiki-2-Chome.

After getting out from the bus, the first thing I did was use Google maps to locate myself. The geological museum was situated in the Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (AIST) campus, Tsukuba. I walked in the direction of the museum and asked for directions on the way to make sure I was on the right path. The kind man I asked directions for handed me a map of the location of the museum. Following the map, I spotted large specimens of rocks. Following the very trail, I finally found the main entrance of the geological museum. It was a dream come true!!

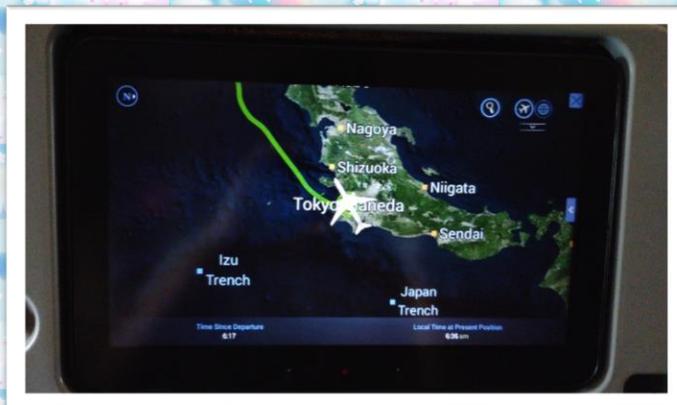
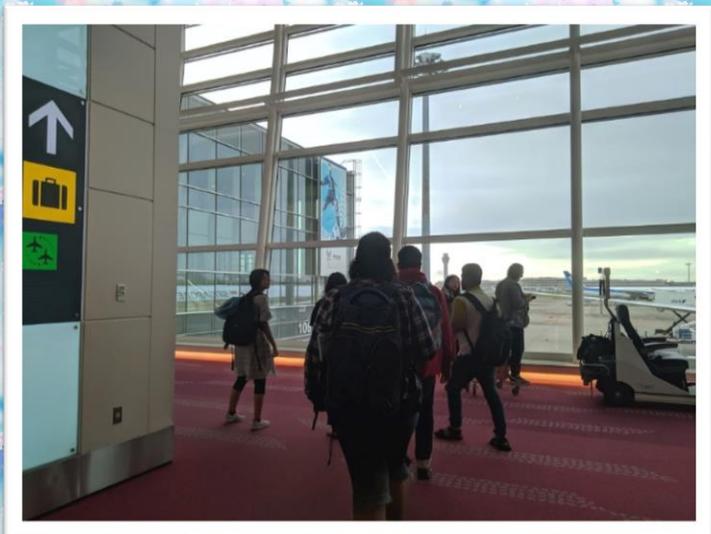
Stepping inside, there were various exhibits- learning modules, mineral, rock, and fossil specimens, working models, video and computer learning stations, among many. My favourite amongst them was a humungous model of a Jurassic fold, and the exhibit of the florescent minerals. It took me around 2 hours to explore the museum. Being a student in geology, I studied everything minutely. QR codes at every exhibit also allowed to read the technical terms in English. It filled me with joy at every moment to see the detail with which each exhibit was presented. Right before leaving the museum, the manager of the museum was kind enough to give me souvenirs- a dinosaur origami and a few geological cards.

Since I was done very early, I decided to give the "science square" museum nearby a visit too. This museum had exhibits constituting new inventions and discoveries.

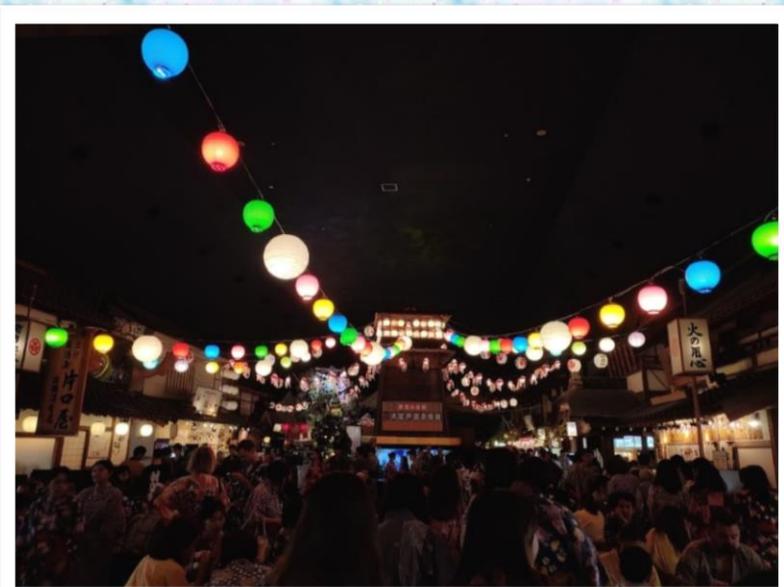
After exploring both museums, I was tired and hungry. So, I set out to find myself some lunch. Googling up, the nearest 7/11 was 2.7km away, and I started walking towards it. On the way, I spotted an elementary school where students had "pet" plants- plants they had named. I found that very adorable! Finally, I reached 7/11, and had the famous Egg Salad sandwich.

Subsequently, I walked to the nearest bus stop, waiting for the bus to take me to Tokyo Station. My heart was full, and I was extremely happy and content with this short daytrip to Ibaraki prefecture, and Geological Museum.

23rd IJSC Photo Gallery



Arriving at Haneda Airport



Experiencing Edo period Japan at Oedo Onsen Monogatari





A few scenes during the Opening Ceremony



At Meiji Jingu



Experiencing Kabuki



Sushi at Kurazushi



At Shinjuku



At Shinjuku



Purikura

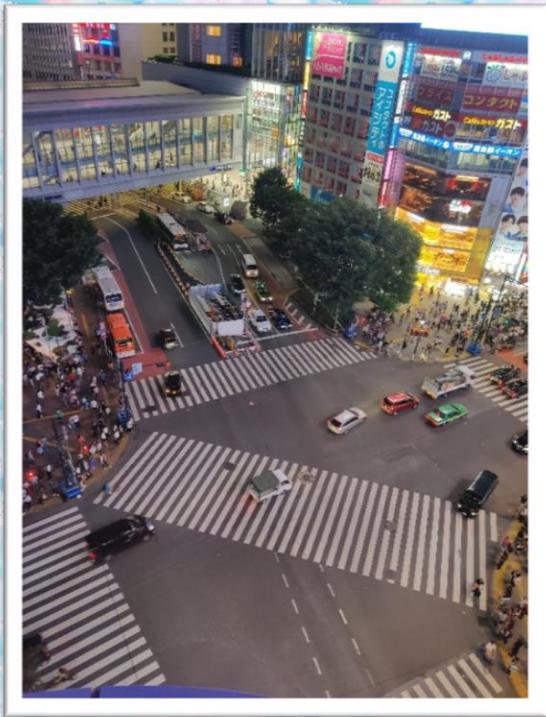


A visit to the Indian Embassy



Table Discussion Day 1

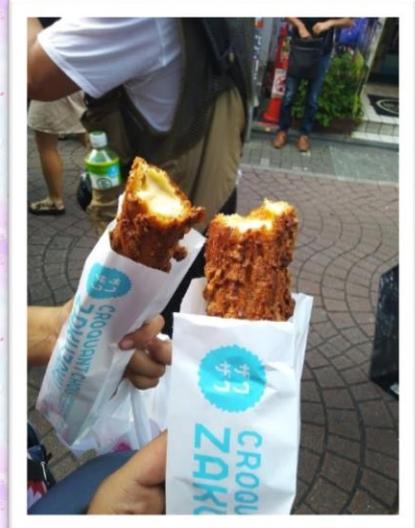
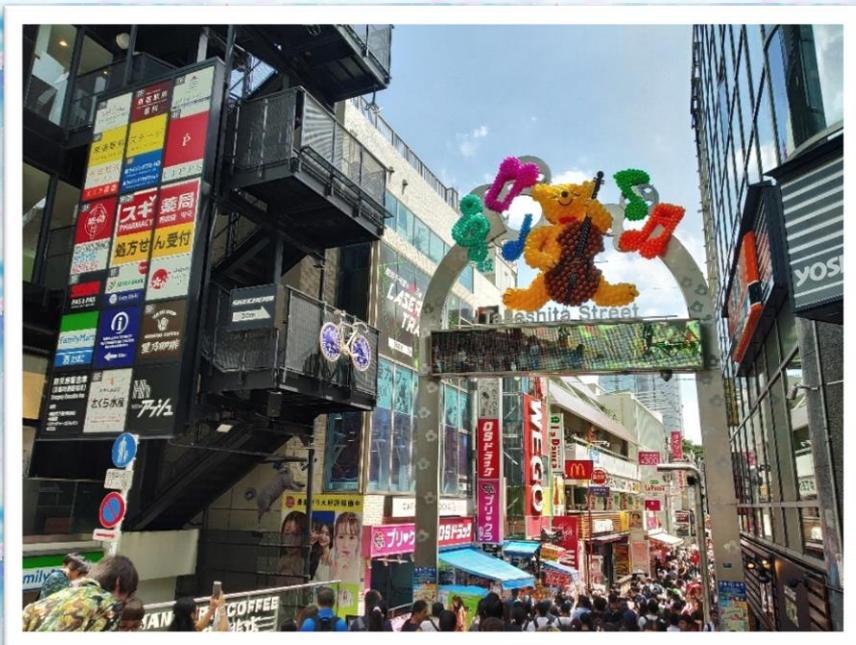




Experiences at Shibuya

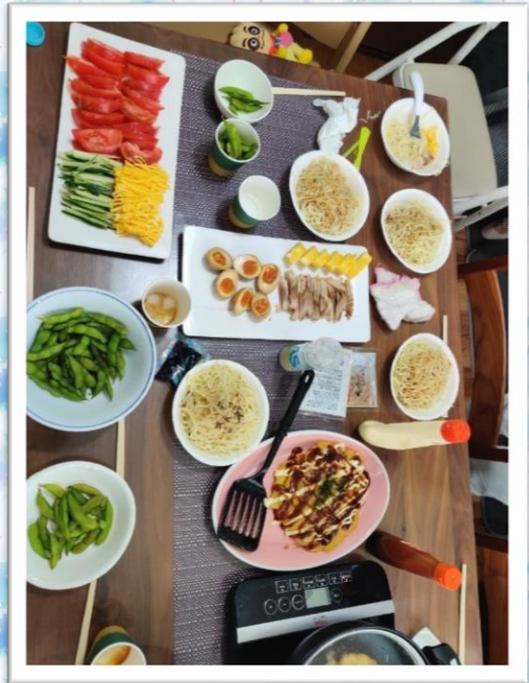


Table Discussion Day 2



At Harajuku

Home visit experiences!





*Geological Museum
and
One Piece Museum*



At Renkoji Temple

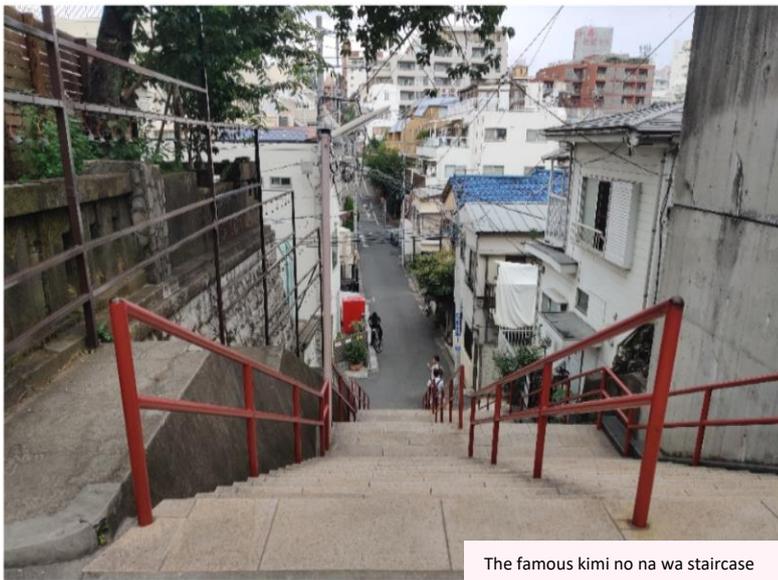


Shibuya Summer Festival

Cooking experience



いただきます



The famous kimi no na wa staircase



At Sensoji Temple



← Akihabara

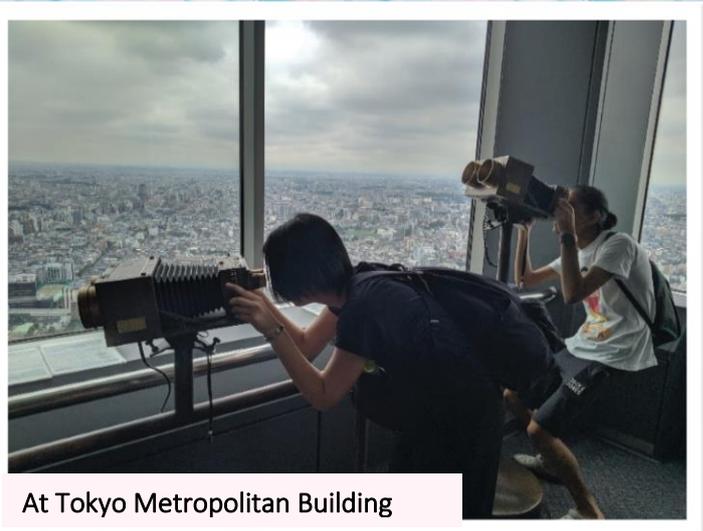




A visit to Tokyo University



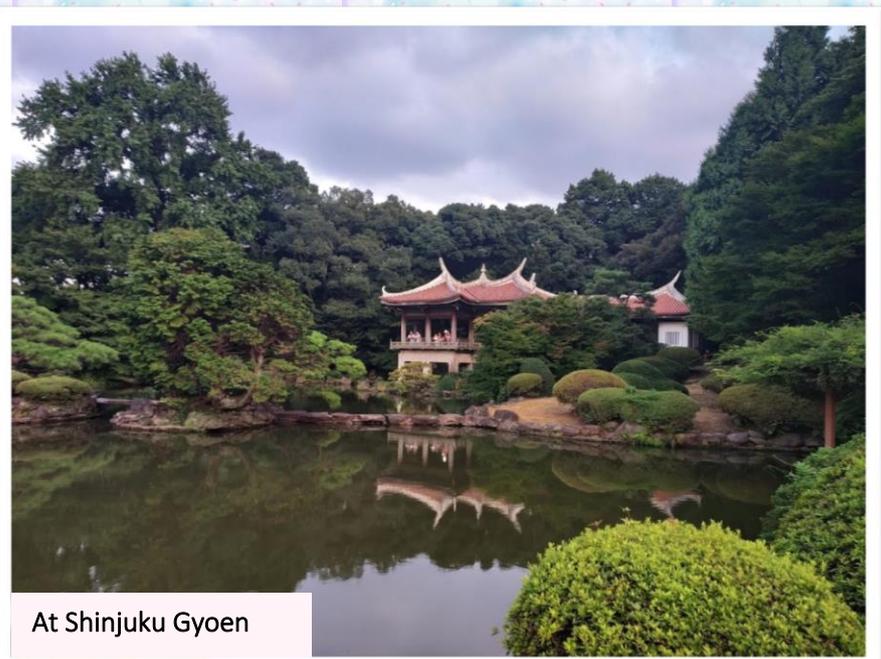
Kimono-wearing experience



At Tokyo Metropolitan Building



Diet Building



At Shinjuku Gyoen

Scenes from our last day in Tokyo

Visit to Renkoji Temple

18th August 2019

Koyel Mukherjee

The India Japan Student Conference facilitated us to visit the Renkoji at Tokyo, Japan on the 5th day of our stay at Tokyo.

It was a cloudy morning with occasional sunshine. Our trip to Renkoji was previously planned and we were looking forward to the visit. We left orisen early in the morning, and taking the metro we arrived at Renkoji. Renkoji is a very important place for Indians, especially if someone is from Kolkata. It is the place where one of the most prominent freedom fighters of India, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose visited and there is a memorial for him as his ashes are said to be preserved there.

When we entered the temple, we were in awe of the building and the decorations. After filling in our names and some details into the register and removing our shoes, we were led into the place of worship. The place of worship being a Buddhist temple, had dim lighting making the interior decorations look more beautiful. Placed on the pedestal was also an image of Netaji which also got worshipped. We formed a line with the other visitors to go near it and pay our respects using the sacred ash.

We also met with Nagahama Sensei and others who were involved with the India Japan Student Conference who welcomed us warmly. There was a room where delicacies were being served, while one of the authorities gave a brief on Netaji's stay in Japan.

Outside, there was another statue of Subhas Chandra Bose decorated with flowers where we clicked a few group photos. Renkoji was a very good experience for us all as it links India and Japan historically and we were able to learn a lot of facts about the same. In fact, it is a well-known tourist spot as well. Overall, it is a place which is both, historical and peaceful.

Making a Return to Harajuku

18th August 2019

Subhojeet Mookherjee

Harajuku is the fashion hub of Tokyo, where certain offbeat clothing, also known as 'Harajuku Fashion,' are up for sale, for reasonable prices. We had a small taste of Harajuku during the early days of the conference but did not get to explore it properly. However, we finally managed to get proper time to explore and shop there later.

After being given a couple of hours, we wasted no time after reaching Takeshita Street. My friend, Tuneer and I explored various t-shirt shops that were full of pop culture references and included many Anime tees as well. From the likes of JoJo's Bizarre Adventure, Rose Of The Versailles to Mobile Suit Gundam and so many more. There was an entire store dedicated to Godzilla and another one full of gothic clothing, which was very new to us, but also expectantly stylish. We then went to have the famous tapioca at a nearby shop. I had the Earl Grey tapioca, while Tuneer had the Matcha tapioca. I finally understood what the hype was all about and I definitely liked it. I bought myself a shiba t-shirt and a yukata as a gift, while Tuneer bought a bunch of other t-shirts. What really caught my attention were people who walked on very high stilts and flipping signboards, trying to get people's attention. Finally, we did some quick shopping at Daiso before grouping up for the next event that day.

An Evening at the Shibuya Summer Festival

18th August 2019

Ratula Datta

After a visit to the Renkoji temple to commemorate Subhas Chandra Bose's death anniversary, and a second visit to Harajuku to explore around the area more, we decided to go to the Shibuya Summer Festival. A small walk from Harajuku, we reached the grounds of Yoyogi park around 5:30 PM, and were welcomed with small shops selling Japanese souvenirs and crowd of people dancing to authentic African music, where we joined in for a bit as well. Immediately after, we were guided into the center of the festival which had a stage set up, decorated with beautiful red lanterns, where a boy band was performing at the time of our arrival. Amidst the gleeful cheers from the audience, we also noticed that we were surrounded by several food stores which had a wide range of Japanese to international delicacies. After a bit of exploring the grounds of the festival in Yoyogi park, we all decided to split and meet at a common place after buying delicacies to eat of our choices.

The most interesting part of our visit to the Shibuya Summer Festival was engaging in the Bon Odori dance with the locals on stage. Dancing while following the traditional rhythm and steps involved in Bon Odori, under the beautifully lit canopy of red lanterns on stage, truly turned out to be one of the best cultural experiences in Japan. After the dance, we decided to head back to the main staircase in the middle of the park, where we relaxed and engaged in some casual conversations for a bit, while looking at a dance battle which went on the grounds of Yoyogi, surrounded by a magnanimous crowd. As we started to get up, for making our way back to the Orisen, the sight of colourful yukatas and vibrant happi coats amidst the sound of the traditional bon odori music and beautifully lit lanterns made our heads turn, and also made us experience a little heart break as we remembered that another delightful day in Tokyo came to an end.

Cooking Experience

19th August 2019

Deepro Banerjee

One of the most memorable experiences of this conference for me was the day of cooking food with the Japanese members. The day started off from Olympic Centre, from where we walked to Sangubashi Station and boarded trains to the station Shinjuku Gyoen-Mae, with three Japanese Members. A brief walk from the station took us to a nearby Supermarket. We were right on time at 10:00 am, when the store opens and were the first customers of the day. We bought cooking ingredients like meat, soy sauce, mirin, sake, vegetables and many more which were to go into the dishes the members planned to cook. From the supermarket we walked to the Yotsuya Civic Center, where the cooking was planned to be done. We were welcomed by the other Japanese Members to the Kitchen where they had already begun preparing for the cooking. Four Dishes; Rice, Miso Soup, Teriyaki Chicken and Ohitashi were planned to be cooked and the members were divided into teams and given specific dishes which each team would prepare. The Japanese Members guided us through the procedure of each dish and soon all the dishes were ready to be served. Drinks like Ocha and Ramune were poured to go along with the delicious looking dishes we had prepared. With an allied uttering of "Itadakimasu, all of us started to have our food. The teamwork and the expertise of members were showcased in how delicious each and every dish was. We finished our food, washed the dishes and bowls and cleaned the entire kitchen. This experience not only taught us how to make some authentic Japanese Dishes but also taught us how to work in a team and the importance and beauty of cleanliness.

After the cooking session all of us had a short leisure walk through the neighborhood and we also went to a very famous place from a famous movie scene which was nearby. After the walk, we returned to the Yotsuya Civic Centre where our Second Table Discussion was to take place. This day, according to me, was one of the most enjoyable and enriching day of the conference.

Table Discussion II

19th August 2019

Pratyay Kumar Mullick

The venue for the table discussion was Yotsuya Civic Center. A total of 13 students participated the discussion.

The discussion was a continuation of the last one where it left off. It was a debate on “Is this lesson effective and sufficient to handle the situation at hand?”. Everyone divided into two groups which were “for the notion” and “against the notion”. Everyone used notes of the previous day as reference.

Some points from “for the notion” group:

1. First-hand experience is more valuable than stories and experiences.
2. Hardships build the character of a person.
3. The children tried their best bringing up the chicks leaving no compromises.
4. Gives meaning to 「いただきます」 in the grand scale of nature and food chain.

And some points from the “against the notion” group:

1. It is a gruesome experiment against animals—concept of “betrayal” towards the chicken.
2. Not effective or as accessible in urban or metropolitan cities.
3. Might induce trauma in children.
4. Not effective in dealing with mental health issues like suicide and bullying.

The outcome of the debate was as follows:

1. For urban cities, we can look into therapy and self-help.
2. Taking students to suicide prevention centers and talking with the counselors as to how they assist individuals with mental health issues.

A Day in Asakusa

20th August 2019

Ratula Datta

Asakusa is one of the most popular places for visitors to Tokyo with over 30 million visitors a year. Images of the famous Kaminarimon Gate have been seen by us in media and tv shows about Japan and Tokyo. During our visit to Asakusa, we covered the shopping streets and restaurants in Asakusa area, Nakamise Shopping Street Sensoji Temple and had a different experience surrounding Tokyo itself.

On reaching Asakusa, it felt like as if we had reached a different era as most of the buildings still had an aura that resonated with Japan from the 20th century. After a tad bit of walking, we reached the Kaminarimon Gate and from there we started walking through the shopping street and were in awe of the number of authentically Japanese things been sold. As we reached Sensoji temple, we saw the traditional way of ‘purifying oneself’, where everyone took a ladle and poured some water on their hands before entering the Kannondo Hall inside the temple. We then moved towards the Sensoji pagoda for taking some pictures, and from there we all decided to walk around the stores and also taste some traditional Japanese food throughout the way. We tasted some traditional dishes such as dango, taiyaki, melon pan, and wagyu beef ramen, all of which were extremely delicious and food we have longed to eat.

Asakusa turned out to be a personally favourite location for me due to the presence of the vintage culture of Japan, with the presence of hand pulled rickshaws making it an even better experience. Walking around the streets of Asakusa truly made me feel like I am in Japan from an older era, and it was an experience I will never be able to forget. After shopping for authentic Japanese handicrafts such as kokeshi dolls and block print art, we all headed towards Akihabara after our day in Asakusa.

An Evening in Akihabara

20th August 2019

Deepro Banerjee

On the evening of the 20th, we went to Akihabara after Asakusa. All the Indian members wanted to buy books and so the Japanese members took us to “Book Off”, a chain of used and new books seller, at the Akihabara shop. After spending some time looking through, buying comics and books from Book Off, a few members went to buy some Anime Figurines while the others including me set off to take an inside look at the Akihabara electronics market. We explored lanes of old electronics shops selling old, mint condition pieces of Electronics history. We also went to “Super Potato”, a famous electronics and video game shop. The visit to Akihabara ended in front of “Book off” where all of us were supposed to meet together at the end of our neighborhood walk. We were lucky enough to meet and click pictures with a very famous internet celebrity at Akihabara. The visit to Akihabara ended with a smile on everyone’s face.

A Visit to Tokyo University

21st August 2019

Anusha Banerjee

With the main topic of this year’s conference being ‘Education and Moral Values’, a visit to Tokyo University came like a blessing to us. To be able to visit Japan’s premier university, as well as one of the world’s best universities, we were extremely fortunate.

We set out towards Tokyo University, Hongo Campus, early in the morning. After two trains and a long walk we reached the famous Akamon (Red Gate) where we waited for Mr. Hiroshi Yoshino, who was very kind to acquaint us with the university. Shortly after his arrival, we went inside the campus. It was like a town within a city itself! Mr. Yoshino gave us a short introduction about the University of Tokyo in general, and about the India connection. In the October of 1957, India’s first prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru gifted a portrait of Rabindranath Tagore to the university. Since then, it has been kept in the general library in the very campus.

Soon, we visited the general library, and saw the humungous portrait for ourselves. The general library was three storeys, and as beautiful as it was elegant. After that, we explored the rest of the campus along with Mr. Yoshino- the arts building, the science building, the koi pond. We were surprised to see so much greenery in the campus premises itself- so much that we felt as if we were on a hiking trail!

A table discussion ensued after a tour of the campus. A few presentations were given by the students of Tokyo University. Mr. Kunal Kumal and Mr. Abhishek Gupta of chemistry department gave a presentation about the admission process, and the university in general. This was followed by a presentation by Mr. Shota Kondo on his department.

After the presentation and table discussion, we were famished. A grand lunch awaited us at the cafeteria. Post lunch, some of us bought Tokyo University merchandise from the official ToDai convenience shop.

Since a lot of us are interested in pursuing higher education in Japan, a visit to Tokyo University was very important. There’s no better way to get acquainted to the admission process than through someone who already studies there.

Kimono Wearing Session

21st August 2019

Koyel Mukherjee

One of the most popular and noticeable thing about Japanese Culture is their attire. The India Japan Student Conference gave an opportunity to their delegates, to us, to experience the same during our stay in Tokyo. We arrived at Hiroko Kitazume san’s place in the afternoon, accompanied by Mochizuki san and Akita san, who was kind enough to invite us for trying on kimonos.

We were really excited for this day and as we sat down, while Kitazume san personally decided to do our hairstyles. She made us sit and even selected the best accessories to go with our outfits. We were also offered green tea and some delicious snacks, while she did the more difficult task about deciding which outfit would look good on us. We were accompanied by Nagahama Sensei shortly, who brought us souvenirs, which were mainly antique items.

Once the dressing up began, we were also handed down accessories that would go best with our dresses, including hand-fans, a toy katana sword, and some tea ceremony instruments. We were made to wear yukatas, and not kimonos as the yukata is a lot simpler in design and easier to wear. In fact, it is the yukata is worn by the people on a regular basis. The kimono comprises many more layers and is a little more complicated to wear within a short span of time.

The yukatas given to us were extremely pretty and of different colours and patterns. Also, it was taken care that there were different sized clothing to fit all of our heights.

After the dress up was done, there was a photo session which took quite a while but was interesting nonetheless. We clicked quite a number of photos of ourselves, which included single photos of all members as well as numerous group photos. Both Nagahama Sensei and Kitazume san took many of our pictures personally and made sure we looked great and told we look *kawaii* every time they tried some new accessory for us. After that, we were helped to undress and given our souvenirs, which we received with gratitude. We left along with Nagahama Sensei in the evening while it was raining very heavily outside, so we shared our umbrellas as we made our way back.

We got to experience one of the most popular dressing attires in the world that day and we thoroughly enjoyed every bit of the day.

A Visit to Tokyo Metropolitan Building

22nd August 2019

Pratyay Kumar Mullick

Tokyo Metropolitan Government Building or 東京都庁舎 (東京都庁, Tōkyōto-chōsha) is located in Nishi-Shinjuku, Shinjuku, Tokyo. It is the headquarters of the Tokyo Metropolitan Government. The building splits into North and South Towers at 33rd floor. There is an observation deck at the 45th floor of each tower which is at a height of 203 meters. Admission is free of charge to visitors to these observation decks. Security check is mandatory, and it is important to maintain order when entering the building.

There are numerous skyscrapers leading to the building like the Shinjuku Sumitomo Building, Shinjuku NS Building. It was hard to maintain a stable head posture while admiring the sheer architecture of these buildings. After lining up for some minutes at Main Building No.1, the guards escorted everyone to the lift which went to the 45th floor. But since we entered from the South gate we were escorted to the South Observation Deck. Many foreigners as well as Japanese families could be seen enjoying the views. Buildings and locations like the Tokyo Tower, Tokyo Skytree, Mt. Fuji could be from the wide porch. Unfortunately, the sky was too hazy and cloudy for Mt. Fuji to be completely visible if not the blurred shape.

We were taken aback by the vastness of Tokyo city in its residential areas, skyscrapers, parks and mountains. Our location of stay, National Olympics Memorial Youth Center was visible from the deck, as well as Yoyogi Park, which was right beside it. It was encouraging to see the city maintaining harmony between nature and civilization.

We experienced Virtual Reality in booths. The device showed the Tokyo skyline in three different times: Past, Present and the Future. When viewing the past, the device displayed the history of the Tokyo region, its culture, tradition and people. Domes, flying cars, etc. could be seen through the Future lens.

It was planned to visit the Tokyo Metropolitan Building at the beginning of the conference but looking back, it was not a bad decision to visit it on the last day. As we had explored almost entirety of the city, gazing at Tokyo from one of its highest buildings was an emotional and enriching experience.

Visit to the Diet Building

22nd August 2019

Ratula Datta

On the last day of our stay in Tokyo, we all decided to choose a place that we have longed to visit for a long time, but were unable to due to lack of time and a plethora of other things to engage in. After we had packed our luggage and kept them in the lobby of orisen, and everyone seemed to be in a fix about where they wanted to go, as it was the last day in Tokyo, a final chance to see and experience the city we have longed to visit for so long. As we reached Shinjuku by the train, we decided to split into groups as everyone wanted to visit places of their choice.

Being a law student, I have always been interested in the governmental bodies of different countries and being Tokyo made me want to visit the parliamentary bodies and buildings all the more. I was fortunate enough to have Ms. Yoshika Otsuka, a member from the Japan side, accompany me for this day. Yoshika san and I took a train till Chiyoda-ku, and on reaching the same Yoshika san informed me that the entire area is mostly government and official buildings, and after a short walk we reached the Diet Building or the House of Representatives of Japan. There was a short security check and there was a brief wait before the guide for the tour of the Diet Building called everyone to form a line and follow him. We all walked in a queue and suddenly we were inside the grand hallway of the Diet Building, which had a red carpet that went as long as 4 kilometers. The building also had interesting places to look through such as the Emperor's sitting room, the central hall with three statues of first prime ministers of Japan, and the guide also told as the that walls in the Diet Building have a very special connotation to it as the walls were made of stones that were infused with fossils. After this, we were guided outside the building to take a picture of the whole building, where everyone took pictures. One of the most beautiful rooms for me in this building was the Chamber of the House of Representatives, which had innumerable tables in a semi-circular manner, and had the seat for the Prime Minister and the Emperor.

After a photo session and being satisfied after waiting for days to visit the Diet Building, we went to a local ramen shop at the station, where I had a karaage ramen, which was one of my favourites in Tokyo.

Departure

22nd August 2019

Koyel Mukherjee

Finally, the day arrived which we were not too keen about from the inception of our journey. Our Conference was at an end, and it was the day we had to leave Tokyo and go back home.

It was a very cloudy morning and since our flight was at night, we decided to enjoy our last day of stay here. After submitting our luggage and bags at the reception of Orisen, we decided to split into groups and go to the places we have wanted to see but had not been able to due to a tight schedule.

Two of our Indian members Tuneer and Subhojeet went to Starbucks near the Shibuya Crossing, where there is a beautiful view of the famous scramble crossing. Another member Ratula went to the Diet building with Yoshika san while the rest of us went to see the Tokyo Metropolitan Building.

The first thing that anyone would notice about the Metropolitan Building is the magnanimous size of the building, and all in its magnificent glory. We took the elevator to the 45th floor from where we could see the entire city from a vantage point. We also saw the graphic effects through the lenses where we could see the past, present, and future vision of the city. It felt like time travelling, and I'm really looking forward to the day when the future vision of Tokyo will become a reality.

After that we had a delicious lunch of Takoyaki. Japanese restaurants have always come across to me as very considerate for their customers and this particular place had baskets to put our bags and umbrellas under our tables.

We had planned on a picnic in the afternoon at Shinjuku Gyoen. That also happened to be the rendezvous point for all our members. We selected a warm spot on the field and decided to hold our picnic there. We played cards and with rubber balls. The park was quite big so we could wander off and explore as well. I remember us blowing bubbles into the air and taking loads of photos so that one day we could look back to this day filled with laughter and fun.

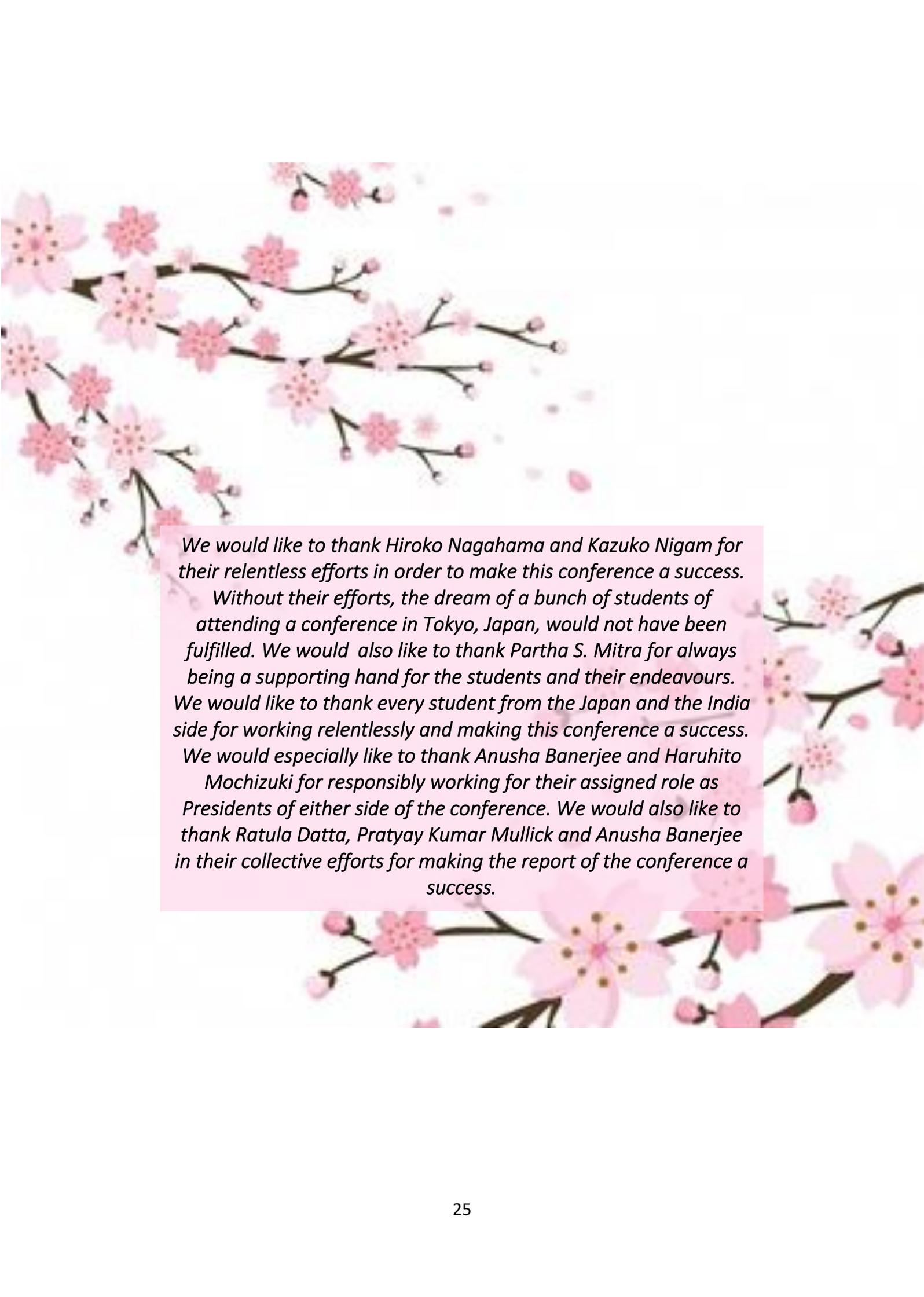
We also met Toshiaki Oshima san, one of the former IJSC members from last year and the year before that. He brought us ice cream and spent time with us and he also, accompanied us to the airport to see us off. We made our way back to the Orisen in the evening, and collecting our bags and luggage from there we took the metro rides to Haneda Airport, from where we would finally depart.

We met Morita san at the airport, another former IJSC member who also made the time to see us off. We received our certificates from Mochizuki san, the president of the Japan side of the conference; along with a group photo of us with our calligraphy papers. The most remarkable thing about the photo frame were the little notes attached behind the photograph. They were handwritten and each of the members received something personal, and written exclusively for them.

We said our goodbyes with heavy hearts and hugs. We had to part before the check in of our luggage. The Indian members then entered the check in section and then we had to wait a little longer before boarding our flight. We wished we didn't have to leave but we had to. Singapore Airlines would take us Singapore the next morning, from where we would again board another flight to Kolkata after 10 hours more.

The day of departure has mixed emotions. We were sad that we were leaving and yet we were also looking forward to seeing our families again back home, and our siblings and friends. We were also anticipating how they would react to the gifts we were taking back for them.

Yet, the best part of Japan was Japan itself. It was an entire dream come true



We would like to thank Hiroko Nagahama and Kazuko Nigam for their relentless efforts in order to make this conference a success. Without their efforts, the dream of a bunch of students of attending a conference in Tokyo, Japan, would not have been fulfilled. We would also like to thank Partha S. Mitra for always being a supporting hand for the students and their endeavours. We would like to thank every student from the Japan and the India side for working relentlessly and making this conference a success. We would especially like to thank Anusha Banerjee and Haruhito Mochizuki for responsibly working for their assigned role as Presidents of either side of the conference. We would also like to thank Ratula Datta, Pratyay Kumar Mullick and Anusha Banerjee in their collective efforts for making the report of the conference a success.



Departure at Haneda Airport

