

The Study Tour of Japan for European Youth 2009

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It was privilege for me to go through Study Tour of Japan for European Youth. I am very glad that I was chosen by the Embassy of Japan in Prague for this program. It is very difficult to describe all the feelings and all experience which I gathered from the Tour, but I will try.

Japan is well known develop country in the world and belongs to the one of the powerful group of states called G8. I have visited several countries in the Asia, I lived one year in Istanbul, I lived half year in Moscow and I lived in New Delhi as well, however none of this countries and others where I have been did not make on me so good impression as Japan did in such a short time. I was surprised by urban plan of the Tokyo and order on the streets.

When I was sitting in the bus coming from the airport and I saw Tokyo first time in my life, I was thinking that is same like other mega cities in the world. However after I came closer and get in touch with city I have to say it is very different. Genius Loci of the town is breathtaking. There were a lot of people in the street, like in Istanbul or Moscow, nevertheless I still felt one there I felt my personality and human being, but still member of society. I really like that Tokyo was built for people and town planers were thinking a lot how to make it effective. I rate very high the clean streets with road for cars, road for cycling, side walk and many trees around. Remind me Ikebana, that Japanese people can connect natural and human creations in a harmony.

Japanese time management impressed me a lot I would say it is one of the biggest furors of Japan for me. I think Japanese perception involved whole group. I will tell you one short example. We decided to go to the fish market (Cukidzi) very early morning around 5am. One Japanese friend wanted to go with us and we settled meeting at 5:10 at the metro station. We were there one minute before meeting, but Japanese friend did not come on time. First time happened and last time in Japan during my visit. Time was passing and it was 5:12am and group started be nervous a getting chatting. In that time one guy from European group said loudly: "Come on it is only two minutes that is nothing." I think he was from south European country. And that is true perception of time in Japan is totally different than in other world and I like Japanese one very much. This was small example of interference on my European perception of time in Japan. Time management was excellent during all journey, there were any problems. Actually there was one problem. The problem was that day has only twenty four hours. We were trying to discover by ourselves to much, after official program, that we slept very short time however we did not feel tired. Was it because of delicious Japanese cuisine? I have never

tried so delicious and varieties of sushi and sea food before the Tour. Meal was fresh, healthy and not heavy. I felt full but in the same time fresh. I am trying to make my bill of fare in the same way.

The official program of the Tour was prepared very thoroughly. We could see and we tasted parts of Japanese culture, Japanese industry, Japanese politics, Japanese style of living, Japanese cities and countryside, Japanese history, Japanese fashion, Japanese religions, etc. It is very hard to point out one or two things which influenced me and do not forget about others. However, I think that the amazing city Hiroshima I will remember whole my life. I think that everyone should visit Hiroshima Atomic Bomb Dome and Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum to see what human misunderstanding can do, at least one per life. The city was totally destroyed in 1945 and it is not visible. It was compelling feeling walking in the streets. Your brain knows that people were dying there because of disaster of Atomic Bomb, but you can see charming city. It is hard to explain those feelings. The meeting with an Atomic bomb survivor was excellent idea. Next, what I will remember for sure is Japanese word "KAIZEN". We had brave lecture about Kaizen by presentment of Mr. Hikari Ishido, Associate Professor of Faculty of Law and Economics at Chiba University. His reading was not ordinary one it was more show full of information. It was good example of Japanese culture and in the same time great exemplar how to make a lecture. I like a lot Japanese Kaizen inventions. This can be future for cooperation between Czech and Japan. I think a lot of Czech would like to sit on the toilet and be warmed by sheet or some other great inventions can be sold in Europe. The mentality of Czech and Japanese people is little similar. The pity is that we are not hard workers as Japanese workers are. I found Japanese language very interesting and I think if I will have time I would like to learn it and practice it in Japan.

Japan impressed me a lot. Tour leaved part of Japan inside me. My friends and colleagues were amazed how I spoke about Japan. They were saying that they would like to visit Japan as well. However I know that Japan, even though is amazing has some problems like every country, for instance with poor people on the streets or sleeping in the park. I think we saw the best of Japan what we could see in this short time. There will be still a lot of things to discover. I am happy that I am in good friendship with Mr. Santaro Sakata and Ms. Natsuko Yumoto. They did great job and they were very helpful and kind to all of us.

Japan and Europe should be partners in the international community. We share similar value system, we have similar goals and we can understand to each other. The Tour made me understand to Japan better and I can give over to my students at the University of Ostrava.

Some of my short articles about my experience will be published at Czech local journal. If I will become a diplomat after finishing my PhD. studies I wish that one country which I will

be charge of will be Japan. I hope for the fruitful cooperation between Czech Republic/Europe Union and Japan. Thank you very much, for this opportunity to get in tough closer with Japan.

<http://www.ottmar.cz/japonsko.php>