



Voices from "Explore Japan" Tour to Toyota and Aске (19 April, 2025)

What kind of day was it? Here are some comments from the international students who participated!
In parentheses () is the country of origin of the participant.

Explore Japan: Why did you join?

- I just arrived to Japan and I want to discover as much as possible during my stay. (Canada)
- I was interested to know more about the beautiful places around Japan and to meet new people. (Philippines)



How was the day?

- First of all, nature made everything very beautiful reminding me of the importance of preserving the environment. The gardens, artifacts, and buildings capture Japanese culture and traditions giving a lasting impression of preserving culture. The artifacts with the influence of Korean and Chinese culture gave importance to human connection and cultural appreciation. The old village and its history preservation were very inspiring and highlighted the importance of preserving skills and knowledge that contributed to civilization. (Kenya)



Exploring Traditional Crafts at the Toyota City Folk Craft Museum



- The teachers took us to visit the textile museum, where we learned about the history of traditional pottery and weaving, witnessed the sophistication and colour blending in each pottery and fabric product, I was especially interested in the jade green ceramic products. We were also taken to Korankei, a place with majestic beauty. At this time of year, the places are beautifully decorated with colourful fish-shaped kites. I hope to be able to return to this place in the fall as the professor recommended. (Vietnam)



Walking Through The Street of Aске



- I like the idea mingei and zakki coined by Yanagi, giving meaning and value to everyday practical objects made by anonymous craftsmen. The Sansyu Aске Yashiki craft village and Aске old town is also interesting as it was able to preserve the life and crafts of old Japan along the salt road. (Philippines)
- The town is quite peaceful, but I was curious about how the shopkeepers manage to make a living with so few people around. However, I later learned that during festivals and the fall season, the town actually attracts a lot of visitors. (China)
- Visiting Aске Village for the first time was like stepping back in time, the preserved charm of the old village, nestled along the ancient salt route was truly captivating. I am amazed to know the history behind everything like Japanese yen banknotes are made from a plant. This use reflects Japan's deep connection to nature but also its dedication to craftsmanship and tradition. I use money every day but now to me, Every note is more than just a currency because it's a blend of art and centuries of papermaking heritage. (Pakistan)



After the Event, How Did You Think About Your Own Country?

- We also have Heritage museums, old buildings to present our culture in my country. But seeing Japanese heritage and live process of making some beautiful crafts was amazing. It truly remind me that it is very important to save our culture for the next generation. (Pakistan)
- Unfortunately in my country the Philippines, many old villages were forced to modernize. Another challenge is the Philippines is home to hundreds of indigenous tribes and ethnolinguistic groups and each have their own traditions, art, and villages. Only a few had the means to preserve these cultural heritage. However, the good news now is each locality are now encourage to promote local history giving them opportunity and financial aid to develop old towns, traditions, crafts and art. Some good examples are Igorot tribe of Northern Luzon and the Maranao tribes of Mindanao. (Philippines)
- Yes, the event helped me to think about my country's folk art, old villages, and historical sites and how it is important to preserve them. (Kenya)

