

JENESYS2018 ASEAN Inbound Program 9th Batch Program Report International Poetry Exchange Program (IPEP), Country: Philippines

1. Program Overview

12 high school students and supervisors from the Philippines visited Japan from October 29 to November 4, 2018 under the scheme of “Japan Friendship Ties Programs: JENESYS2018”, and participated in the “International Poetry Exchange Program (IPEP)” held in Okinawa Prefecture on November 1.

This delegation experienced an interaction with high school students from the US, Korea, the Philippines, and Japan through poetry. In addition, they had opportunities to understand Japan widely through listening to a lecture on understanding Japan and a lecture on war experiences, visiting places such as a peace memorial museum and local sightseeing spots, experiencing the traditional culture EISA dance, having homestays, etc., and they externally disseminated information on each one’s interests and experiences through Social Media. Based upon their findings and learning in Japan, they made a presentation in the final session and reported on the action plans to be taken after returning to their home countries.

【Participating Countries and Numbers of Participants】 Philippines 12

【Prefectures Visited】 Tokyo, Okinawa

2. Program Schedule

Oct. 29 (Mon)	【Arrival in Japan】
Oct. 30 (Tue)	【Orientation】 , 【Cultural Observation】 Imperial Palace, Edo-Tokyo Museum 【Lecture on Japanese Culture】 Mr. Hideo Kimura, Strategic International Management Associates (SIMA)
Oct. 31 (Wed)	Move to Okinawa from Tokyo 【Cultural Observation】 Gyokusendo Cave, Traditional Crafts Village 【Cultural Experience】 Traditional performing dance in Okinawa “Eisa”
Nov. 1 (Thu)	【School Exchange】 Okinawa Prefectural Shuri High School 【Participation in the International Poetry Exchange Program (IPEP)】
Nov. 2 (Fri)	【Cultural Observation】 Shuri Castle, Peace Memorial Park, Okinawa Prefectural Peace Memorial Museum 【Lecture on War Experiences】 【Homestay】 Yaese Town

Nov. 3 (Sat) **【Homestay】**
 Nov. 4 (Sun) **【Homestay】**
 【Farewell Party with Local Residents and relevant Officials】
 Return to Tokyo
 【School Exchange】 Gotemba Nishi High School, **【Workshop】**
 Nov. 5 (Mon) **【Cultural Observation】** Meiji Shrine, Harajuku
 【Reporting Session】
 Nov. 6 (Tue) **【Cultural Observation】** Sensō-ji temple, Asakusa, Departure

3. Program Photos

	
<p>Oct. 30 【Lecture on Japanese Culture】</p>	<p>Oct. 30 【Cultural Observation】 Imperial Palace</p>
	
<p>Oct. 31 【Cultural Experience】 Traditional performing dance in Okinawa “Eisa”</p>	
	
<p>Nov.1 【School Exchange】 Okinawa Prefectural Shuri High School</p>	<p>Nov.1 【Participation in the International Poetry Exchange Program (IPEP)】</p>

	
<p>Nov.1 【Participation in the International Poetry Exchange Program (IPEP)】</p>	<p>Nov.2 【Lecture on War Experiences】</p>
	
<p>Nov.4 【Workshop】</p>	<p>Nov.4 【Farewell Party with Local Residents and relevant Officials】</p>
	
<p>Nov.5 【Reporting Session】</p>	<p>Nov.6 【Cultural Observation】 Sensō-ji temple, Asakusa</p>

4. Voice from Participants

◆ Philippines students

The lecture was a wonderful one to understand Japan from a viewpoint such as the battle of Okinawa. “War starts from humans. Creating peace is different from feeling the peace.” I have never had a chance to know such deep content until now. School exchange was a challenge. However, even though there was a language difference, I had a fun time through a Bingata dyeing experience and exchanges. Poetry sharing

was an incredibly wonderful opportunity. By connecting with words, we will be able to solve the problems we are having today. I believe that we can encourage the next generation in this way. The homestay was also a wonderful experience. We came to understand Japanese culture by getting exposed to not only the Japanese culture but also the lives of the Japanese people. Cultural differences do not affect our ties. It is a door to know different cultures and lives.

◆ **Philippines students**

The lecture was very beneficial because I was able to learn facts about Japan that are not well known. I had long thought that Japan is a very competent country that can do everything on its own and I had never thought that Japan has a field that needs assistance. The story of the battle of Okinawa has broadened my horizons and given me different perspectives. In the school exchanges, I liked the attitudes of students from different countries trying hard to learn each other's culture in order to understand each other. It was an honor for me to make a courtesy call on the Japanese government. The homestay was a wonderful experience that let me immerse in real Japanese culture.

◆ **Philippines students**

The lecture has enriched my knowledge such as Japanese history and culture. In the school exchanges, it was interesting to meet students of the same age and to learn the differences, and I was happy to know that we have similarities with them as teenage students. Making a courtesy call on the Japanese government is an experience that I did not expect to happen in my life and I will never forget. The host family were truly wonderful people. I was glad that they welcomed us warmly. It will stay in a special place in my heart forever. Finally, I thank everyone who made it possible for me to come to Japan. I will cherish this once-in-a-lifetime encounter for the rest of my life.

5. Voice from Japanese Locals

Japanese student

I really feel glad that I participated this time. I was able to see various aspects of others such as how they express in each country and what they normally feel. After the presentation, as we discussed the impressions of each other's poems and listened to their comments, I came to feel that it was so fun that I wanted to hear more and know more about their countries. There were also a lot of difficulties and unexpected happenings, but I would like more people in the future to participate in this exchange, which changed the way I think, and to feel the joy of reading poems and the pleasure of interacting with people from different countries.

Japanese student

In this poetry exchange, I was able to interact with people from many countries through poetry. During the exchange, what I learned is that it is difficult yet very important to make our own thoughts tangible because not only the language but also the way of thinking is different in different countries. The language barrier was so high that I was

not able to overcome it soon, but this time, I was able to enjoy it very much in an atmosphere where various people are active and it was easy to go with the flow unintentionally. Also, I think it was a place for enjoyable communication. Through poetry in the future, I hope (from now on, too) that I can have opportunities to interact with students from various countries.



Host family

They worked on everything with a voluntary attitude to help us. It was great to know they opened up their hearts as they were singing songs while traveling by car. Also, I was glad that they introduced us to their family while they were talking to other family members on the phone.

Host family

I am glad that the group had fun in homes in Okinawa and they felt glad to have interacted with families here. It is a good stimulation for the community and homes. I am glad that they called us “papa” and “mama” as if they had become a member of our family.

6. Dissemination by the participants

	
<p>I spent a whole day with my host family in Japan. There was a language barrier, but it was so much fun. (Laugh)</p>	<p>Traditional performing dance in Okinawa “Eisa” welcomes the spirits of their ancestors that come back during the Bon festival. I had a feeling of awe in the sound of taiko drums and the dance. What is noteworthy is the rhythmic drum sound and graceful dance moves. In the second half of the dance, a young male travel agency worker, who is an alumnus of Okinawa University and a former member of the Eisa dance club, participated in the dance. That breathtaking cultural experience is a valuable memory today.</p>

7. Action Plan Presented by Participants at the Reporting Session

<p>IPEP Philippines</p> <p>Growing up in an Asian country with only a few stretches of sea separating us, we were raised learning about Japan in our classrooms. There is only so much we can learn about this country from our textbooks; but now we see that there is a difference between how other people describe Japanese culture and what you experience firsthand.</p> <p>We were able to see how hospitable and welcoming the Japanese people are. We were in awe every time we saw them lining up on the street to wave us goodbye. While staying with our host families, we saw how incredibly loving, respectful, and family oriented the Japanese are, so similar to us Filipinos. We enjoyed the authentic Japanese food full of emotions, the cultural performances especially the Elsa dance, which were so different from our own, and their own personal traditions that we will keep with us forever.</p> <p>Looking around, we see that society is rife with exclusivity. We've accustomed ourselves to closing each other off rather than "being the first to hold out our hands in friendship and forgiveness," much like what St. Benedict taught us, one of our school's patron saints. Realizing this, we must become the catalysts for <i>positive</i> change during times of conflict. Though these seem like grand ideas, we can always start with the simplest of actions to create a culture of peace. In bringing these lessons with us from experiencing Japan, we have come up with three ideas to share with our school. The first is to encourage an open and accepting environment by celebrating our vulnerabilities, to see less of an enemy in each other. Secondly, we will incorporate what we've learned in our classes to better understand the true stories of our circumstances. Lastly, we will include these lessons in club activities through peace-building centered projects. Through these, we aim to uphold a new era of peace and understanding for our time, and hopefully, the future.</p>	<p>Utilizing the experience in the program, we will carry out the following three things in our school.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We will open our minds to people with different environments and cultures and promote mutual understanding and friendship. 2. We will promote understanding of the current circumstances surrounding us war/peace. 3. We will incorporate the above two points into our club activities and implement plans focusing on peacebuilding. <p>Through such activities, we would like to promote peace and mutual understanding for the better future and to establish our new era.</p>
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