

## “Ise” and Japan Study Program Report

Yesterday I took a book from my bookshelf. The author's name was 伊能. I instantly thought of Ise and marvellous days I spent there. The reason why was that the first kanji is totally the same for Ise city - 伊勢.

Nothing will be enough to express thousands thanks to the programme and people who were in charge of this project - those who were hearts, who made everything into action, who united participants into one mechanism.

Speaking of advantageous of the programme, there might be a few. I will be precise and accurate.

1. **Culture** (particularly, Ise and its gems - hundreds of shrines that are scattered throughout the city). The schedule was overwhelming. Everyday participants had up to four classes, or two classes in the morning and after field trips on the base of Ise-jingu, outskirts of Ise that have their own unbelievable history, small atmospheric towns, or even more fascinating - trip to Kyoto and Nara. Classes at Kogakkan University were devoted to history, culture of rebuilding Jingu, specific language of Ise, and undoubtedly, lectures on Shinto. The knowledge students gained throughout the programme was practically applied to field trips and field works, such as a guided tour around Ise, visits to Naiku and Geku, shrines in Kyoto and Nara (Yasaka Jinja, Kasuga Taisha), etc. In other words, after each visit to a shrine participants were turning into pilgrims (in a good way, certainly). They were blinded and engaged in Shinto phenomenon. And it truly became a part of their lives. To confirm and certify that, they were given special books that are made for stamps and special signs that a pilgrim can get after a visit to Jinja.

2. **Friendship**. Having spent three amazing weeks in Ise, people were bound to become good friends. Not just good, but true! They were ready to help out no matter what, cheer up when needed, make a good company if instantly it felt a bit lonely. Moreover, participants made friends not only within their international community but also with lecturers. There were no boundaries for students to contact teachers to ask for help, to clear up the information, or just to say "hello" and receive a warm smile back, and have a nice chat just about this and that.

3. **Enthusiasm**. Personally, I was infused with hope and determination. I have got a second wind. Right after coming back, I changed my job that is directly connected with Japanese. I go ahead with studying Japanese reviving everything that is forgotten and hidden in my murky corners of memory. I do believe that one day I will make to Japan once again. Without any hesitations, I can say that I am eager for obtaining my Master's in Japan.

4. **Understanding**. Japan is undoubtedly a great nation. However, there is no such a word in English, or any other language, to explain and express its might and power. To be precise, not a military power, as you might think, but sacred and spiritual. Probably, the key is deeply hidden in religion. And none of us is able to receive it. Each corner of this country is zealously preserved, remarkable things that carry deep meaning, movements during tea ceremony are strict and gracious, short-term beauty of Sakura blossoms is breathtaking and sad at the same time - Japan is wonderful. It must be in a bucket list of "places you should visit in your life time".

Thank you for the opportunity to dive into culture again. I would love to do that again and again, though.

3週間の「伊勢」と日本スタディプログラムが終わってしまった。昨年12月上旬に「厳正なる審査の結果、あなたの参加を決定しましたのでご連絡いたします」というメールを受信したときの感激を思い出した。私は飛び上がるくらい嬉しく、すぐにでも伊勢に行きたいという気持ちになった。2月に入り、伊勢への出発が近付くと、出発が待ち遠しくてたまらなかった。

伊勢の市民、皇學館大学のスタッフ、先生、サポーターの学生たちはいつでも熱心に支援してくれ、いろいろと教えていただいた。もちろん伊勢や日本についての学びを深めることもできた。

日本とウクライナでは文化が大きく異なるが、なかには共通点を見出せるものもある。今回は神社や寺を訪問することで、伊勢や日本の歴史に触れ、日本人の宗教観を深く理解することができた。

このプログラムに参加できたことは私の生涯の中で千載一遇の機会であったように思う。帰国して振り返ってみると、今回の伊勢訪問は私に自信を与えてくれ、日本に関する学習意欲は今までよりも高まった。今後は目標を新たに定め、日本研究により勤しみたいと思う。

筆舌に尽くしがたいとはこのことで、今は本当にただただ感謝するだけである。「参加させていただいて誠にありがとうございました！」