

SPOTLESS STREETS, RESERVED MENTALITY AND OMNIPRESENCE OF CLOCKS: CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN JAPAN

英文電子報

In October, as part of increasing the global vision of TKU faculty and students, 6 out of the university's 9 colleges have sent representatives to visit Tamkang's sister universities in Japan. The other three colleges will set off in December.

Colleges of Liberal Arts and Education visited Nagasaki University and Nagasaki University of Foreign Studies. Colleges of Business and Management visited Asia University and Reitaku University. Colleges of Science and Engineering visited Aoyama Gakuin University and University of Electro-Communications. Colleges of Global Research and Development and Entrepreneurial Development will visit Waseda University and Aoyama Gakuin University.

Nearly every student who has made the trip appreciated this opportunity. Wu Chi-Kuan, a sophomore in the Department of Mass Communication, for example, was impressed by the diversity of Nagasaki University of Foreign Studies where he saw international students accounted for half of the campus' student population. "It's like walking into a United Nations!" he said. He and his group were well received as the university dispatched Chinese speaking students to show them around and TKU's exchange students there also took them out for a bit of sight seeing, visiting shrines and sampling local food.

Liu Fang-wei, the chair of the Banking and Finance Student Association, on the hand, was mesmerized by the automatic bookshelves she saw in the Asia University library! There are other things in Japan she finds equally impressive, in particular, the country's efficiency and tidiness. For instance, even there are not specific signs saying you can't eat on trams

or drop litter in public places, no one does it anyway. Japanese people also take recycling very seriously as they indeed separate their trash, she pointed out. Above all, she admires its urban planning that takes public space, such as parks into consideration. Parks are big, she noticed. She thinks it's great to have such abundant public space in crowded cities. She concluded that these features demonstrated the law-abiding citizenship of Japanese people. However, she finds that people seem to live a very busy life there as they walk fast and look fairly distanced and reserved. "They appear not to be as expressive as Taiwanese!" she sighed.

Tsai Chio-mei, the chair of the International Trade Student Association, visited Reitaku University and likes the small class teaching she witnessed in their Chinese classes. In small classes, she observed, there are a lot more lively interactions between students and teachers. Small classes aside, she was amazed by people's punctuality. The professor who accompanied them stated beforehand that they needed to be on time whenever they had an appointment with the Japanese. No wonder, she muses, that there are clocks everywhere in Japan. (~ Ying-hsueh Hu)

