



~Youth International Exchange in Mongolia- Impressions Yamauchi Kotoha~

(Miyakonojo City Iwayoshi Junior High School First year)

Thanks to this time's Youth International Exchange in Mongolia, I was able to experience things that I never could in Japan.

Before arriving in Mongolia, I pictured it as mostly grasslands and yurts. However, Ulaanbaatar, the capital, surprised me with its many tall buildings, exceeding my expectations and impressing me with just how urban it was.



I had lot's of new experiences in Mongolia, like being taken aback by Ulaanbaatar's metropolitan traffic, lodging in Terejl National Park, horse riding, and even participating in the Naadam festival. However, right after finishing our horseback riding adventure at Terelj, the event that I especially won't forget experiencing in Mongolia was seeing hail fall. Big clumped balls of ice that I had never even seen fell from the sky. We all ran and fled together to the yurts. Differing from Japan, the Mongolian air gets dry and hail falls from the sky. Despite both being Asian countries, I was able to experience firsthand the stark difference in climate.

I was able to experience many things, but the best part was being able to make many friends. Within the program, I spent time with people from four countries: China, Korea, Russia, and Thailand. I learned about both the fun and importance of human to human exchange.

Before this opportunity arose, I hadn't had many chances to interact with people from other countries, so I felt a bit anxious about the idea of cultural exchange. However, during this program I was always around people from foreign backgrounds. We even shared the same hotel and stayed up late every night talking and playing games which helped me get close with everyone.

The day before returning to Japan, at the farewell banquet, I spent time with everyone who came from four different countries. Although we had only known each other for a few days, memories of our time together kept running through my mind. Parting ways from my precious friends I had just met was incredibly sad and I couldn't hold back my tears. In all my life, this was probably the time that I cried the most.

Of all the people I met, I became closest with a Korean student named Dawon. On the first day of self-introductions, we grew close as a result of Dawon introducing themselves in Japanese. I love K-pop, have an interest in Korea, and have even been to Korea once. From being able to meet Dawon, I've come to want to know even more about Korea.

Even now, after 2 months have passed since returning from Mongolia, Dawon and I still exchange messages everyday through Instagram DM's. We send each other things like pictures of our meals and slowly but surely we are learning about each other's cultures. The other day, Dawon sent a picture of Korean udon so I sent a picture of Japanese ramen.

I want to become closer and closer with Dawon and talk about many more things, so I plan on continuing my Korean studies.

At first, I had lot's of anxiety about going to Mongolia but by challenging new things I was able to experience events I never thought I could and thanks to that I feel like my world has expanded.

With this time's Youth International Exchange, I was able to exchange with people hailing from different countries and formulate invaluable experiences. I came to know that the Japan that I am living in isn't everything, there are many different cultures, and the world is extremely wide. I want to make the most of this experience for my future self.

Movies In Theaters

C-Plaza Cine-port (Tel: 0986-24-2571) 17-9 Nakamachi, Miyakonojo, Miyazaki

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| ● Venom: Last Dance | ● 11REBELS |
| ● Joker: Folie à Deux | ● Kingdom- Daishogun's Return |
| ● Muroi Shinji Yaburezaru mono (Part 1) | ● |