

Experience in Japan

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13-21 September 2014

The Summer study session at Kyoto University was an informative and interesting look at the history, structure and legacy of ASEAN- Japan relations as seen through a multi-disciplinary approach involving history, political science, International Relations, economics, and political economy. As I studied in the program my motivation to understand the significance of the ASEAN- Japan bilateral relationship was enhanced. In addition the distinguished professors who taught our program included new information and unique perspectives on how Japan and ASEAN have been in contact and cooperated over the years and how the relationship has evolved. I was intrigued to learn about Japanese corporate models and how at the same time as the Meiji restoration ASEAN countries were beginning to form national identities and to form the precursors of their modern economies. I was fascinated to learn how Japanese culture is making a strong impact on the societies of Southeast Asia and the ASEAN region even as Japanese overseas development aid is doing the same thing. The professors who lectured us offered interesting perspectives with which to view not only the economic and political relationships of ASEAN and Japan but also on how to view the contemporary world including modernity and globalization. I feel inspired to take this knowledge back to Thammasat University where I can apply it to my own understanding of ASEAN relations with Japan and other dialogue partners. I also cherish the time I was able to spend learning from an international group of students and professors from an array of countries. Whether from Thailand, Laos, the Philippines, Japan, Turkey, or Switzerland I was inspired by their distinguished learning in their fields.

I also enjoyed how Kyoto University shared the rich history of their campus and the Kyoto region which can truly be said to be the cradle of Japanese civilization. The lovely campus and city were a wonderful backdrop for our intellectual and cultural journeys and exchanges. I enjoyed being able to visit the shrines, shops, cafes and wonderful sights of Kyoto with a diverse group of friends and colleagues who truly opened my eyes to the possibility of intercultural exchange and dialogue and the impressive power of learning to open doors to the heart and mind. I return to Thammasat University invigorated by my trip and look forward to apply my knowledge to this field of research.