

# A Trip to Tokyo

NT BUZZ

Ten students along with two faculty members from Chowgule College, Margao visited Waseda University in Tokyo, Japan, recently as a part of the cultural exchange programme. During their two week stay in Tokyo, students were introduced to the local lifestyle and rich culture of the Japanese. From sightseeing to learning traditional dance forms, to cooking Sushi, the visit to Japan was an eye-opening experience for the students from Chowgule College. They returned to Goa with more than souvenirs and photographs - they returned with a bag full of memories. Yashodhara Roy caught up with the students Kimberly Pereira, Aiswarya M Babu, Ambika Kamat, Soniya Dessai, Saurabhi Prasad, Budkule, Valerie Jessica Rebello, Rachel Coelho Do Amaral, Dorothy Susanna Furtado, Roohi Khan and Ninoshka H Rodrigues, to chat about their experience.

**Trip to Japan! What was the first thought that went through your mind when you heard about the exchange program to Waseda University, Japan?**

We thought about the different culture we would be exposed to. Obviously, we were very excited to know more about a country we had no idea about, to meet new people and to travel and see new places. We were also keen to try out the cuisine there.

**What were your expectations? Did the reality match your expectations??**

We thought it would be difficult to communicate, but we blended in very easily with the students in Tokyo, despite the fact that English is spoken very less there. We used signs if we couldn't talk to them, but we still did not feel like we had any problems in getting our thoughts



across. The experience was much bigger and greater than we ever expected. At the university, there is a statue of their founder. The students bow before it when they see it. That is one of the first things we noticed at Waseda University. The level of respect shown to their elders is amazing. The campus was beautiful, it was autumn so the trees were so colourful! And the students there have a nice sense of style.

**Compare and contrast the two education systems as you saw it.**

The classroom teaching is pretty much like ours here at Chowgule College. They too use power point presentations and the audio visual medium like we do in Goa. Some classes at the Waseda University have TVs and students are allowed to use laptops and mobiles in classrooms. That's not the case with us in Goa. However, the teachers encourage the students to do a lot of things in addition to academics. The students have built robots all by themselves! They have separate labs and work stations for all their activities depending on specific needs, pretty much like we do in college.





Chowgule College  
Students in Japan as  
part of the cultural ex-  
change program with  
Waseda University

What's different is that the lecture timings can be chosen to a student's convenience. The flexibility to choose subjects and timings is far greater there than here and the education system is very student friendly. The students walk in and out of class whenever they want.

***How do you think such student exchange programs help students?***

We learn something new every day which helps boost our self confidence. We share our culture with others and we also learn from them about the culture and traditions in their country. We all went in a team from Goa, and well, the feeling of team spirit is wonderful. When we visit another country, many misconceptions are cleared, doubts are removed and we have a better understanding of their way of life. We learnt so much from the lectures at the Waseda University. A common favourite was the one on religion, but the lecture on business communication and sociolinguistics were also good. All the sessions were interactive.

***The most memorable moment from your trip.***

We learnt how to make sushi when we were invited to a professor's house. Prof Sadoshima from Waseda University had earlier visited Chowgule College last year. When we went for dinner to Prof Sadoshima's house, we got a real traditional Japanese home experience, along with authentic food. Easy to make and yummy is how we can describe the sushi experience. We brought back sea weed and sticky rice so that we can make sushi at home for our families. She gifted us thoughtful gifts like bookmarks shaped like Japanese dolls, and jewellery boxes shaped like kimono shoes. It was a wonderful day.

***One thing you have learnt from this trip?***

We learnt the difference in cultures and we learnt how acceptance increases when we understand the other person better. We learnt discipline. The students in Japan have an active culture of volunteerism, which we imbibed.