

Urban Planning in Shanghai and Japan



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Chapter 1 - Introduction

During these five days, we, the 5E students, went for a study tour in Kansai, Japan and Shanghai, China. We are very glad to have this wonderful opportunity to both travel and learn. We have had built stronger bonds in the class and observed how people from other cultures live.

In the trip, our group focused on the urban planning in Japan and Shanghai, especially how the cities balance between urban development and rural conservation. From the tour guides' briefing, our group gained much information of urban planning in the two cities.

To briefly explain, the three cities, Hong Kong, Osaka and Shanghai, have a similar urban plan. By comparing the distribution of highways and roads, Osaka seems to have a more developed urban plan because Osaka rarely has traffic congestions. The dense network of highway in the city may account for this. Besides, the commercial area in Osaka is merged with the residential area. This provides more efficient commercial activities in the centre of the city.

Urban planning is the essential part to facilitate all kinds of activities in a city, from commercial to residential, even conversation and recreation.

It is really a precious learning experience, and this experience would always be our memories when talking about our secondary school life.

Chapter 2 – Methodology

2.1 Choice of Methods

Mainly 2 methods were used in the project, including literature review and photograph analysis. Some of the literature researches and the review were conducted before and after the grand tour. The review was done by reading articles online, watching and listening to programmes which introduce Shanghai and Osaka. For photograph analysis, observation was carried out to analyze the urban planning in the 2 cities through the photographs and videos.

2.2 Classification of the Studying Targets

Shanghai is one of the most economically advanced cities in China since a long time ago. In fact, Shanghai's urban planning can help the city adapt to and maintain its crucial economic status nationally and globally.

Besides, Osaka is the second largest city in Japan. It becomes a main preference for many tourists whom want to visit Japan. The planning of the city can actually attract tourists as it makes a good use of both traditional and modern elements.

Therefore, urban planning of the two cities is worth investigating. We aimed at observing and analyzing the building distribution, street design and conservation of traditional buildings of them, in order to look for reasons of the success of the two cities as well as the differences and similarities among Shanghai, Osaka and Hong Kong.

2.3 Observation Targets

The targets were the main streets in Shanghai and Osaka, such as The Bund and the streets around the Osaka Tower respectively. Also, some of the ancient buildings like Sassoon House near the Bund and the Todaiji, not to mention the Osaka Castle, were also observed to find out how the local conservation is conducted.

2.4 Problems Faced and Solutions

In Shanghai, the tourist spots like The Bund and Yu Yuan were crammed with tourists and locals. Also, there was time limitation at the Bund as the lights would be turned off at a certain time. Therefore, it was not easy for us to take enough clear photos or videos. To solve the problem, we took the photos of the buildings when the lights were still on. Then, we filtered out the photos that were suitable to use in the project.

In Osaka, the main problem is the language barrier. Some of the words on the buildings are Japanese, which we do not understand entirely so we may not figure out what the buildings were and what the usages are. To deal with the limitation, some of the group mates have learnt some basic Japanese. We also make use of Google Translate for complex words as well.

Chapter 3 – Literature Review

3.1 Urban Planning in Shanghai



3.1.1 China Art Museum

The China Art Museum, also known as China Art Palace, is a museum of modern Chinese art located in Pudong, Shanghai. It is one of the largest art museums in Asia, which attracts many tourists and hence improves Shanghai's tourism developments.

Construction for the China Pavilion of the Shanghai Expo began on 28 December 2007, and the building was completed on 8 February 2010. It was the most expensive pavilion at the Expo, costing an estimated US\$220 million. The 63-metre high pavilion, the tallest structure at the Expo, is dubbed "the Crown of the East" due to its resemblance to an ancient crown.

The museum is located at 205 Shangnan Road in Pudong, Shanghai. It has its own station, the China Art Museum Station, on Shanghai Metro Line 8. It is also accessible via Yaohua Road Station on Line 7 and Line 8, and more than a dozen bus lines.

3.2 Urban Planning in Japan

3.2.1 Kyoto Aquarium

Before our visit to the Kyoto Aquarium, we have done some research on how the Kyoto Aquarium is related to urban planning in Japan.

Surrounded by mountains on three sides, the Kyoto basin is blessed by abundant water resources brought by the rivers that flow from the mountains. More than 10 Class A rivers run through Kyoto, notably the Kamo, Katsura and Uji rivers. Being known as a city of Sanshisuimei, Kyoto has created a unique culture around its river. For example, in the Heian period (794-1185), river infrastructure was developed to transport goods, and classical Japanese waka poetry was written in connection with rivers.

Kyoto Aquarium recreates the connection of life from the source of Kyoto's rivers to the sea and the ecosystems where numerous life forms co-exist.

While the urban areas are developing rapidly, the government still tries to let the local people and tourists know more about the aquatic animals in the country. Therefore, the Kyoto Aquarium is built, and it is a famous tourist spot nowadays.

3.2.2 Nara Park

We have also found some information about how the Nara Park affects the urban planning in Japan.

Nara Park is a public park located in the city, Nara, at the foot of Mount Wakakusa, established in 1300s and one of the oldest parks in Japan. Administratively, the park is under the control of Nara Prefecture. The park is one of the "Places of Scenic Beauty" designated by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT). Over 1,200 wild Sika deer freely roaming around in the park are also under designation of MEXT, classified as natural treasure. While the official size of the park is about 502 hectares (1,240 acres), the area including the grounds of Tōdai-ji, Kōfuku-ji, and Kasuga Shrine, which are either on the edge or surrounded by Nara Park, is as large as 660 hectares (1,600 acres).

Chapter 4 – Photograph Analysis

4.1 General Information of the Photographs

The photographs were taken from tourist spots, temples and streets in Shanghai and Japan. The development and structure of the facilities in Shanghai and Japan are shown in those photographs. They indicate how well the urban developments in Shanghai and Japan are.

4.2 Details of the Photographs – Shanghai



Fig.4.2.1

This photo was taken in City God Temple of Shanghai, which is one of the popular tourist spots in Shanghai. The buildings there are full of Chinese traditional culture so a lot of tourists were attracted by the beautiful scenery and take photos there. Yu Yuan Garden, which is located near the City God Temple of Shanghai, also highlights the characteristics and features of Chinese culture. Instead of enjoying the beautiful scenery, tourists can also try Chinese food there, including juicy steamed pork buns, soup dumplings, stinky tofu and spiced beans. Moreover, small decorations, Chinese clothing and headwear can also be bought there. These show that City God Temple of Shanghai is a place not only can show the traditional Chinese culture, but also a place for tourists to go shopping. Shanghai put these two elements together so that City God Temple becomes a unique place in Shanghai.



Fig4.2.2 - Chinese food bought in City God Temple



Fig4.2.3 - the street and shops in City God Temple

4.3 Details of the Photographs – Japan



Fig.4.3.1

This photo was taken in Osaka ATC Green Eco Plaza, which is a comprehensive exhibition centre in Osaka. It is a permanent exhibition hall for environmental business which allows students to know more about the situation of the environment. In this place, a guide would introduce how bad the condition of the environment is to the students. Students could know and understand what the guide was talking about by watching videos. Moreover, the guide would also introduce not only the products that are environmentally-friendly, but also the methods to use less resources to the students, aims at raising the awareness of students to protect the Earth. From this exhibition, it shows that Japan puts more efforts on environmental business and the conservation of the environment other than economic business. This indicates the urban planning in Japan mainly focuses on the development of environment.



Fig.4.3.2 – Osaka Castle



Fig4.3.3 - Todaiji

These photos were taken in Osaka Castle and Todaiji respectively. They are not only the famous tourist spots in Japan, but also important heritages in Japan. Although they are ancient and old heritages, both of them remain in good condition. These indicate that Japan also focuses and makes a lot of effort on conservation and repairing of ancient buildings.

Chapter 5 - Conclusion

After the project, we discovered more about the urban planning of Shanghai and Japan. Even though some of us had visited Shanghai before, we paid less attention to its urban planning. Yet it was the first time for all of us to visit Kyoto and Nara in Japan. Therefore, through the tour, we really got deeper understanding of these glamorous cities.

To begin with, it is not surprising to see that Shanghai, one of the main industrial centres of China, is getting heavy pollution. Then how should the government plan for the city? Having the world busiest container port, and China's largest shipbuilding base, Shanghai is trying to maintain a balance between urban development and conversation. The public park system in Shanghai has done a great job to offer citizens some relief from city life. In 2012, Shanghai had 157 parks, with 138 of them are free of charge. Some of them have even become popular tourist attractions due to their unique location, history or architecture.

Besides, being one of the fastest developing cities, there are lots of skyscrapers in Shanghai, especially in the Pudong district. Many of them rank among the tallest in the world, including the Shanghai Tower, which is the tallest building in China, and the second tallest building in the world. When visiting Shanghai, we also visited on the Shanghai Tower.

Other than Shanghai, Japan also contributes a lot in preserving green areas while promoting her economic growth. With the effort of preserving the environment, Japan even stopped establishing one of their city plans, National Capital Regional Basic Plan in the past. The current regulation of land development in Japan is ensured through various acts, including Nature Conservation Act, Agricultural Land Act, and Forest Act. Therefore, it is not surprising to see that there are lots of green areas while travelling Japan. During the tour, we also visited the Osaka ATC Eco Plaza to learn more about the conversation in Japan.

According to the city plan, Japan not only pays effort on the environment, but also the heritage. Japan is rich in history and culture, and thus heritage conservation and preservation form important ingredients in the basic plans. Through visiting different tourist spots in Japan, including Todaiji and Arashiyama, we could see that the heritage sites are preserved well so that we could still view their beauty at the moment.

During the trip, we gained collective memory away groupmates, and also got a good chance to learn outside the classroom. Knowing more about the urban planning of Shanghai and Japan, it must is unforgettable experience for all of us.

Chapter 6 – Reflection

Day 1 – 22 March 2018

Before we left, all of us were excited. This is the first time that our class participate in an exchange tour to Mainland China and Japan. We gained a lot of memorable experiences in this tour.

When we arrived at Shanghai, the first impression we had was very cold. The windows of car were fogged. After a long distance journey, we arrived at the restaurant and had dinner with the other classes. The ambience of noisy and lively, as well as happy, was what we seldom experience at school.



After having dinner, we went across the Nanjing Road walkway and arrived at the Bund, one of the symbols in Shanghai. The night scene of the Bund is amazing as what Hong Kong Victoria Harbour does. We were excited and amazed by the Bund and we could not wait to take photos around. The Shanghai Bund has dozens of historical buildings, lining the Huangpu River, that once housed numerous banks and trading houses from the United Kingdom, France, and the United States. The Bund houses 52 buildings of various architectural styles, some of them are displaying predominantly Romanesque Revival, Gothic Revival, Renaissance Revival, Baroque Revival, Neo-Classical or Beaux-Arts styles, and a number in Art Deco style.

On the first day of the grand tour, although we visited a few the places only, we did learn a lot of history of the Shanghai Bund. The tour proves that it is better to travel far than to read voluminously.



Day 2 – 23 March 2018

It was the day for our school visit. During the visit, there were two students from their school union to bring the whole form to look around the campus. We were shocked by the long history of the school and appreciate that they can have innovation while keeping their traditions.

In the PE section, we were very amazed by the tai chi that the teacher taught us. It is rare for a school to teach tai chi in PE lesson. The steps of tai chi are easy to remember and all of us enjoyed the section so much.

Then we had DT lesson with the students of Shanghai Shi Bei Secondary school. During the lesson, the teacher gave a task to all of us. We formed a group of four and made two robots. We talked about the differences between Shanghai and Hong Kong and met more new friends.

We spent a great time there as we established a good relationship with the local students and some of us even exchange the contacting number. It is hoped that we can visit there soon.

After visiting the school, we travelled to China Art Museum, Shanghai. It is housed in the former China Pavilion of Expo 2010. It is one of the largest art museums in Asia. We saw different Chinese modern art work over there as well as the Along the River During the Qingming Festival, which is one of the most famous printings in China.

The Yu Garden was also one of the places that we visited. The architecture over there is laid out in the Suzhou style. We felt that we were just like time-travelling to Ming Dynasty at that moment. There were a lot of featured sculptures and they interested us the most.

We all had a great time in Shanghai.

Day 3 – 24 March 2018

After a two-hour flight, we arrived at Osaka in the afternoon.

Then we went to the Osaka International Peace Centre where we learnt a lot after visiting it. It focuses on the destruction of the city during World War II and the broader themes of the tragedy of war and the importance of peace. We saw a lot at the centre such as the comparison of Osaka between 1945 and now, the life of citizens in Osaka during and after World War II, and the printings from children in 1945 about the war and so on.



After visiting the centre, all of us feel the importance of peace and we have learnt that we have our own responsibility to maintain peaceful life with each other. We were with a heavy heart that we did not experience before.

Outside the centre, there is a park with a lot of cherry blossoms. The view was very

beautiful and made us feel that it was what peaceful should be like. Stay with the people you treasure and make each day count.

Day 4 – 25 March 2018



It was a sunny day as to welcome us to the Nara Park and Todaiji. The first impression that Nara Park gave us was that there were a lot of deer. We had to be careful when we walked because there was a lot of excrement on the floor in Nara Park. The deer were pretty and we felt sad that we could not feed the deer. The cherry blossoms in Todaiji

were a little bit different in terms of colour than that around the Osaka International Peace Centre. When we entered the Todaiji, we felt an instant of silence. We were standing aloof from the world and everything became very simple.

In the afternoon, we were having the Yodogawa Cleanup Volunteer Activity with the other two classes and the local students. When we first arrived at Yodogawa, we were shocked that there was much cleaner than Hong Kong as it was difficult to see rubbish there. We felt the wind that was gentle when we walked around to clean up Yodogawa.

We did think that Hong Kong should learn from Japan as to reduce the pollution and show the unpolluted environment to everyone.

After the cleaning activity, we travelled to the Osaka ATC Eco Plaza where we had lessons on air and light pollution, as well as how we can use technology to ease the pollution while bringing more convenience to citizens.

What we experienced on this day was to discover the beauty of nature and we should protect the environment. We hoped that every citizen in Hong Kong can be responsible on the rubbish and pollutants they made.

Day 5 – 26 March 2018

In the morning, we arrived at the Osaka Castle. The castle is one of Japan's most famous landmarks and it played a major role in the unification of Japan during the sixteenth century of the Azuchi-Momoyama period. The amazing building made us felt that how shrew people were. They could transport such a big piece of rock and designed the castle in orders to avoid invasion.

Then we travelled to Kyoto, a city located in the central part of the island of Honshu. All of us were very excited as we had a chance to be on the Saga-Arashiyama and ride on the train to go to Arashiyama. It was a remarkable experience for all of us as the view was awesome and we were all glad to share this view together.

Arashiyama is a nationally designated Historic Site and Place of Scenic Beauty. Everything in Arashiyama, for example, the bamboo forest, the "Moon Crossing Bridge", is full of colours of Japanese.

Besides, we were also addicted to the sea animal in the Kyoto aquarium.

At night, we visited the Sakai City Hall Observatory Floor. The night view of Osaka delighted our last night in Japan, as well as our memorable grand tour.

Day 6 – 27 March 2018

The last day of our grand tour and it was time for us to go back to Hong Kong, our hometown.

During these six days, we experienced a lot, including happiness, joy, embarrassment, and fear. Everything happened and this trip noted a bright page of our life. Time flies, we remember these days as if it was yesterday.

We have learnt a lot of knowledge as well as experienced different cultures that cannot be acquired through reading books. In this trip, we are just like family, making jokes on others, sharing unforgettable memories with others, and most importantly, supporting each other.

Thank you so much, 456E!

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