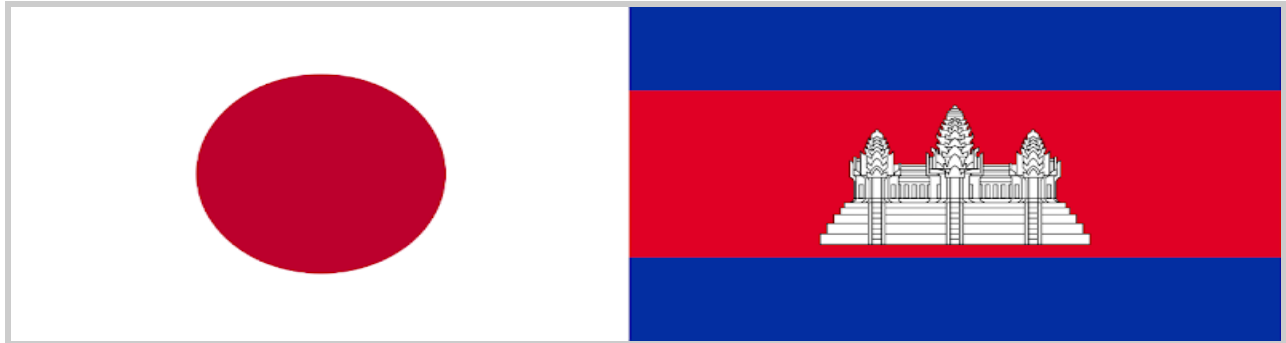


The Kobe Shoin Cambodia Times

Spring, 2019

Cambodia and Japan: Visits and Views



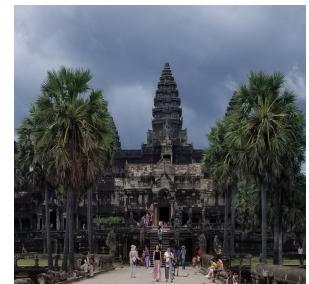
Wendy Kwok (Kobe Shoin Student Ambassador): My Study Trip to Cambodia

We travel for many reasons. Some want to escape their daily routine, some want to see the world and how others live, some want to go and challenge themselves by living frugally, or some just for food or shopping etc.

On a recent trip to Cambodia, I desired to do all of the above. I'd never been to Cambodia before, so I was a bit concerned about how safe it would be. However, ever since I left the country, I have been dying to go back again.

In the summer vacation, I went to Cambodia for ten days as the ambassador of Kobe Shoin Women's University with Professor Shiobara and one other student, Kazumi. For the first six days, we stayed in a really amazing hotel in Siem Reap. Siem Reap is a sleepy ancient city where historic culture dominates, and it is also the home of the legendary Angkor Wat. It was

an impressive place. We also had the opportunity to visit one of the floating villages in Siem Reap and could see the standard of living of the community. The houses in the floating village are settlements on the surface of the water. In Cambodia, there is lots of heavy rain in the summer season.



In order to protect their houses, people build their houses high enough to avoid flooding which would damage their houses.



One thing that surprised me was that the Cambodian children can speak more than three languages. They didn't learn the languages for education; it's for their daily lives. Siem Reap is a place of tourist spots, so

the children can sell their things to travellers and earn their living.

As I was the ambassador of Kobe Shoin Women's University, this trip was not a trip only for sightseeing, but also an educational trip for me to learn a lot about Cambodia and have a chance to communicate with local people there.

Before the day we flew to the capital city, Phnom Penh, we went to a rural area near Siem Reap, and visited some students who are supported by Shoin to go to school and have their education. I talked with the students, and they told me about their lives and explained how grateful they were to have the chance of an education. They believed that education could change their living situation to be better one day.

Flying into Phnom Penh, all I could see were bikes and motorcycles everywhere. The traffic in Phnom Penh is very bad. There were so many bikes and tuk tuks around, and no one paid attention to the traffic lights!

The food in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap was very nice and very reasonably priced. In Cambodia they eat a lot of rice, curry, fish and lemongrass. The other great experience I had was when I went to visit a local family in Phnom Penh. They cooked me a dish with meat mixed with vegetables and chicken soup. It was a very delicious meal.



During our stay in Phnom Penh, we also went to the Royal University of Phnom Penh to observe a speech contest. In their speeches, students talked about the hardships in their

lives and about their goals for the future. I learned a lot from their speeches.



In Cambodia I also observed people's lifestyles. I noticed a big gap between the rich and the poor from their houses and their fashion. However, even the students from poor families told me how their parents tried very hard to live a model life. They try their best to have their children go to school, in the hope that one day those children can change their living situation for the better. During this trip, I came to understand more about the meaning of "No pain, no gain." I understood that nothing can be achieved in life without making an effort and there is no shortcut to success. Both the students in the rural area and in the capital city have the same dream as their parents. They are studying extremely hard and strongly believe that education can change their life one day. Some want to become teachers, scientists, or business people.

As I am from a developed country, I can get what I want or what I need easily. Before my experience in Cambodia, I just took my easy life for granted, and I didn't even consider about the hardships of others. Now, however, I am grateful for what I already have, and thank the people who have helped me to have such a nice place to live, to study, to eat and to pursue my dreams.

There is an interesting comment made by the successful businessman, Jack Ma, the president of Ali Baba. He said "There is no rehearsal in one's life. We are all living in a live show every single day." It is a great reminder

that there are no second chances and we only get one shot at life. We only have a limited period of time on this planet and we're not practicing for something else. Our time is now, and we have to make the most of it, just like the Cambodian students. In order to change their living situation, they study very hard and they try a lot of things to improve their quality of life.

To visit Cambodia, or any other developing culture, is to witness stark contradictions. I saw two different places, two different lifestyles. You can see that in Siem Reap children go out on the street to sell things for their living. In the capital city, Phnom Penh, on the other hand, you can see young people go to Starbucks and have a nice cup of coffee.

Cambodia has left its mark on me; the warmth and generosity of the Khmer people is something I'll never forget. My study trip to Cambodia really made me see things from a different perspective, and made me think about my life.

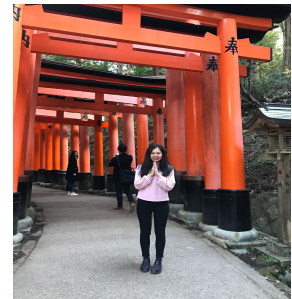


Sok Mey (University student of RUPP): My Study Trip to Japan

Kimono, Ikebana, tea ceremony, winter and many other things that I have never thought of experiencing, finally happened in December 2018. I cannot show my gratitude enough to Shoin for giving me this lifetime opportunity of spending two weeks stay in Japan. I am really grateful for all the professors, host family and

friends I made in Shoin for making my stay in Japan very enjoyable and memorable.

Within these two weeks stay in Japan, I have travelled to countless of places in Kobe, Kyoto, and Osaka. The first place I went to apart from Shoin was Fushimi Inari-taisha. I have only seen it through my computer screen before, never expecting the site of it in real life. I also went to many other places such as Osaka Castle, Kobe Luminarie, and Arashiyama.



I was, and still am utterly speechless by the sight of Japan. Every random snap of the view I took in Japan can be printed and put into a frame because it is so beautiful. Moreover, Japan is really clean as well, even if public trash cans are limited. People would put all their trash in their bags or pockets, unlike in Cambodia where in many places you can still see litter scattered all over.

On top of the beautiful scenery, food is extremely delicious in Japan. Japanese cuisine ranging from the food in the restaurants, street vendors, home-cooked food, and even food in Family mart are all my favourites. The food are tasty and are always fresh. One thing I noticed in Japan is that, people prefer finishing up their meals before moving to the next destination. This kind of act shows respect and is at the same time hygienic. I am also mesmerized by Japanese vending machine. There are variety of drinks to choose from and even SOUP! This is very different in Cambodia as vending machine are still very little around the city and drinks are limited.

Furthermore, my homestay experience is beyond what I could imagine. My host family are all so nice to me. After their busy day at work, they would still welcome me with a big smile on their face and even spend their time cooking me delicious meals. We also had tea time together after meal and often spend the whole evening chatting about the differences between our cultures and lifestyle. I am also very lucky to experience sleeping in Traditional Japanese style tatami rooms. Sleeping in tatami room feels really calm and peaceful.

Through this homestay experience, I deeply learn the Japanese culture and way of life. I love how every of my host family are very polite within themselves. They always say thank you before and after meal.

“*Itadakimasu*” and “*Gochisosama deshita*” are words that I learnt from my host family. I tend to make use of it every time I moved to a new host family. Back in Cambodia, I have always taken the food on my table for granted. I have always overlooked the efforts behind every meal. However, I have been taught a lesson through this program.



In Shoin, I loved taking tea ceremony and Ikebana class. I never thought that making tea and arranging flowers requires so many complicated procedures. This is a picture of the first flower I arranged, guided by my Japanese teacher.

This two weeks stay in Japan has taught me a lot of lesson. It is like an eye-opener for me. The ways I see things shifted. I hope more

Cambodian people will get similar opportunity to experience the things I did and learn a thing or two. If someone asks me whether I would like to come to Japan again, it would be a million times “YES”!



Looking forwards: Events and Exchanges in 2019 and 2020

The Kobe Shoin Poster Presentation Contest is held in July each year, towards the end of the first semester. Poster presentation topics are not limited, but the better posters generally relate to a particular ‘issue’ - a local or global issue. Participation is open to all students, while being a particular focus of certain classes.

There are multiple prizes to be won, and this is a great opportunity for students to practice their public speaking skills, supported in preparation and practice by teaching staff, with a real audience.

The next Kobe Shoin Ambassador is chosen from this contest - the winner receives this accolade, and is invited to visit Cambodia in 2020.

We are looking forward to receiving our next visitor from Cambodia also in 2020.