

22nd India-Japan Students' Conference

KOLKATA REPORT



Organized by:

Nihongo Kaiwa Kyookai Society

Supported by:

Consulate General of Japan in Kolkata

2018

The 22nd India-Japan
Students' Conference

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Message from the President of Nihongo Kaiwa Kyookai Society

Jayanta Kumar Saha

During the 22nd IJSC which was held in India this year, the Japanese students were eager to learn more about our country, with special interest in our rich cultural background, and the Indian students were eagerly waiting to interact with students from the Land of the Rising Sun. Both student bodies did a great job to make this year's IJSC successful.

Topics which are pertinent in the present age were discussed, and the message of this conference was to spread their importance to more young minds across the globe. Apart from academic and scholastic events, the conference schedule had additional flavors like a village trip, sight-seeing, factory visit, and a visit to an old heritage building of Kolkata..

When I met the president of this year's JISC, Ms. Hina, I came to know about the sad demise of Mr. Ishizu Tatsuya. On hearing this, I was grief stricken, and became nostalgic. Way back in 1997, I met him along with Ms. Chiye Goto, and Ms. Hiroko Nagahama in (then) Calcutta at Nigam Sensei's residence for our first meeting with them for IJSC & JISC. I still remember when Ishizu - san came to us with a proposal of having such conference. I pray to the Almighty for his soul to rest in peace. We pay our homage to him by continuing the light of IJSC & JISC which he had lit.

This year we are proud to have been associated with the Indian Statistical Institute, Govt. of India. They invited us to their campus to hold a one-day table discussion including overnight accommodation of the Japanese students. Mr. Dipti Prasad Mukherjee, the Deputy Director, of the Indian Statistical Institute took the initiative for making it happen. We are grateful to him.

Our students had an enjoyable 'Village Visit' at Waliur, Alor Thikana, near Kharagpur, and accommodation at the hostel of Midnapur Law & B.Ed College. Sri Tanmoy Ghosh , Sri Prabhakar Mukherjee took a lot of initiative to organize everything including lunch, dinner, as our Local Guardian. Sri Alok Singha, owner of "Alor Thikana" enjoyed with us by offering his village resort and we were enjoying the comforts of the resort as we felt like. Our students were the special guest at the Flag Hoisting Ceremony of our 72nd Independence day at the college campus and a Japanese student also narrated how 15th August is a memorable date for Japan. Prof. Mukul Ranjan Roy, Principal-Founder of Midnapur Law & B.Ed college welcomed us and we are grateful to him for his kind consent.

The students greatly enjoyed the visit of 'Marble Palace' at Kolkata. My friend, Mr Brotindra Mallick, gave us permission for such a large group to enter to his Palace. Kudos to Brotindra.

Our efforts can only be meaningful when the students carry the message of the conference and apply them in their daily life by expressing their thoughts with a large section of students. My special thanks to all our students of two big nations of Asia for making another successful conference. I wish for them all the best for their long and prosperous life .

Message from the Chief Patron of Nihongo Kaiwa Kyookai Society

Kazuko Nigam

I am happy to see that the 22nd India Japan Students' Conference has concluded without much trouble. Each of the 11 students from Japan and 21 Indian Students must have had a very enjoyable and great learning experience during the 14 days of interaction. The Indian side President, Shreya Bose san, must had a tough time organizing all the 33 students. "Otsukaresamadeshita."

The previous Consul General of Japan had said that this conference, without any political or economic objective, is a meaningful grass root cultural exchange. I am sure that all 33 students will have strong friendship ties and warm memories of this conference throughout their lives.

I end by praying that this conference will grow from strength to strength in the coming years and also some of them will contribute to the growth of the Nihongo Kaiwa Kyookai Society.

Message from a Founder Member of the Japan India Student Conference

Hiroko Nagahama

The 22nd Indo Japan Students' Conference, 2018 ended successfully in Kolkata. I think that it was a learning as well as an enjoyable experience for the participating students of both the countries.

Last year Indian students had come to Japan to participate in the 21st JISC. This year they welcomed the Japanese students in their own country. It was like a reunion for them. The conference became more fruitful, under such circumstances.

I'd like to convey my gratitude to Nigam Sensei and all the members of NKKS for continuously supporting IJSC for the last 22 years. It is because of the extreme care taken by the members of NKKS, from receiving the students at the airport, right up to their departure; we were assured of the safety and wellbeing of the students. Money cannot measure up to this kind of care and concern. This is the reason for the conference to have come so far. Although this is a student based activity, it is to be remembered that everyone has to work to upkeep the ideals of its establishment.

I pray that with good will from all we can progress in the path of friendship and understanding. This understanding and cooperation shouldn't be limited to students only, but take this opportunity and make it a part of international cooperation and understanding.

I pray and wish that the distance between the minds of students of Japan and India will come closer through understanding. I shall continue to endeavour to make other countries of the world to say "I love Japan", "I love India".

First of all, I must express that I love and value all my friends and everything in India.

I shall always remember the words of the prior Consul General of Kolkata, who said that this Japan India Students' conference would be remembered and become a part of history.

Message from the Student President of Japan

Hina Watanabe

The 22nd Japan India Student Conference was held in August at Kolkata, Santiniketan and Delhi. The student committees from both sides relentlessly worked hard, bringing in a successful conference.

This year's theme was “Deepening our understanding about Japan-India relations through Sustainable Development Goals”. The 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), otherwise known as the Global Goals, are a universal call to action to protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity. As the world changes with unprecedented speed, many people are also left behind from the society.

This year's conference concentrated on Education, Poverty, Gender Equality, Environment and Sustainable Cities, and Climate change from the SDGs. Each group had a great discussion about the topic. Comparing Japan, India, and the world, realizing the differences as well as the similarities. We also focused on the topic from different angles by doing field work, going to villages, and undertaking action based on our knowledge.

Today, more than 3 billion people, nearly half of the world's population are youth. One of the most important outcomes of the Conference was that we, the youth, play a key role in achieving the sustainable development goals as the future is in our hands.

On behalf of our organization, I'd like to sincerely express our appreciation to everyone who kindly supported us. The conference has ended successfully thanks to everyone.

Message from the Student President of India

Shreya Bose

This was my last time participating in the India- Japan Students' Conference which has also proved to be a huge learning platform for me. I feel privileged to have been a part of such a creative gathering and would like to convey my sincere most thanks to the teachers and members of the Nihongo Kaiwa Kyoukai Society for presenting me with this opportunity. Although our Indian team meet with a few challenges this year, we tried our level best in each and everything we did and I feel like our dedication and teamwork has worked wonders and made this conference a memorable one. I look back to all those previous times when I had been a participant and I definitely feel more confident about myself in many ways, not to mention being independent too.

Japan and India have been in very good terms with each other recently, ever since the "Japan-India Friendship Year" in 2017. The newcomers in the Indian team this year are eagerly looking forward to the Olympics, which is scheduled to take place in Japan in 2020 and hence we send our best wishes to them. The students from the Japan side were very friendly and fluent in English which ensured a steady communication between the two sides. It was a real pleasure to have known them and being with them for a two week duration. A beautiful friendship has blossomed within the Japan and Indian students and we hope that this unbreakable bond will gradually strengthen as time passes. Lastly I would like to say "otsukaresamadeshita" to everyone who made this conference so eventful!

Schedule

Date	Morning/Afternoon	Evening
5th August 2018		Arrival
6th August 2018	Volunteering Registration	Interaction
7th August 2018	Free Time	Opening Ceremony
8th August 2018		Table Discussion
9th August 2018	NGO Visit	Visit to Residence of Honorable Consul General School Visit to Deeksha
10th August 2018	Volunteering	Company Visit.
11th August 2018	Undokai	Homestay
12th August 2018		Homestay
13th August 2018		Visit to Indian Statistical Institute
14th August 2018		Village Visit
15th August 2018	Flag-hosting Ceremony Factory Visit	NKKS Foundation Day Celebrations
16th August 2018	Table Discussion	Final Presentation
17th August 2018	School Visit	
18th August 2018		Sightseeing
19th August 2018	Free Time	Closing Ceremony Sayonara Party
22nd August 2018	Departure	

Sustainable Development Goals



In 2015, the United Nations came forward with 17 Sustainable Development Goals, or SDGs to protect the planet, and to ensure that all the world's people can live in dignity and freedom. The year 2030 has been set as the year of achievement of these goals. These goals include the elimination of poverty, hunger, and societal inequalities; it is to be able to provide clean water, proper sanitation, good health and a quality education to everyone; it is to enable a decent economic growth for all countries; it is to be able to build sustainable and environment-friendly cities; and it is to be able to provide peace, justice, equal human rights and effective governance to all. The centrepiece of the 22nd India Japan Students' Conference is our discussion on Sustainable Development Goals, what their status in the world is, and how we can achieve them as citizens of the world. We explored these SDGs through intricate research, brainstorming, and discussions, and fieldwork to certain notable establishments around the city to have an idea of their present scenario. The companies/NGOs/Schools we made visits to are as follows:

Group A: BanglaNatak.Com

Group B: La Martiniere for Girls

Group C: Jabala Action Research Foundation

Group D: BanglaNatak.Com

Group E: School of Oceanographic Sciences, Jadavpur University

List of Members



Group A (SDG1: No Poverty)

What's the goal?

To end poverty in all its forms everywhere by 2030.

Name	Position	University/ Major
Mr. Taishi Yoshida	Domestic Liaison	Hitotsubashi University/ Economics
Ms. Akane Akita	International Liaison	Aichi Prefecture University/ International Relationships
Mr. Yutaro Morita	International Liaison	Waseda University/ Commerce
Ms. Shirsha Majumder	Events Team	Calcutta University/ Masters in History
Ms. Utpalparna Chakrabarti	Events Team	Jadavpur University/ Masters in History
Mr. Tuneer Chakrabarti	Academics Team	Presidency University/ Bachelors in Sociology



Group B (SDG4: Quality Education)

What's the goal?

Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Name	Position	University/ Major
Ms. Chinatsu Yokoyama	Vice President/ Public Information	Tsuda Juku University/ English Literature
Mr. Atsunari Mizuno	Financial Bureau	Tokyo University of Foreign Studies/ International Sociology

Name	Position	University/ Major
Mr. Pratyay Mullick	Academics Team	University of Engineering and Management/ Bachelors in Computer Science and Engineering
Ms. Trinetra Paul	Vice President (Cultural)	St. Xavier's College / Bachelors in English
Mr. Kaustuv Sarkar	Academics Team	Heritage Institute of Technology/ Bachelors in Electrical Engineering
Ms. Pratnoja Das	Cultural Team	Teerthanker Mahaveer University/ Bachelors in Dental Surgery
Mr. Debashish Mondal	Events Team	Barasat District College/ General Studies



Group C (SDG5: Gender Equality)

What's the goal?

To achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

Name	Position	University/ Major
Ms. Chen YingTong	Academe& Planning	Tokyo University of Foreign Studies/ Language of Culture Studies
Ms. Maria Isa	Public Information	Aoyamagakuin University/ Marketing
Ms. Anusha Banerjee	Vice President (Academics)	Presidency University/ Masters in Applied Geology
Ms. Tripti Gagrai	Academics Team	National University of Judicial Sciences/ B.A./LLB
Ms. Arpita Samaddar	Cultural Team	Calcutta University/ Bachelors in English
Mr. Ayan Sarkar	Finance Team	St. Xavier's College/ Masters in Computer Science
Mr. Naiwrit Das	Events Team	Calcutta University/ Bachelors in Accountancy



Group D (SDG11: Sustainable Cities and Communities)

What's the goal?

To make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

Name	Position	University/ Major
Mr. Toshiaki Oshima	Financial Bureau Head	Meiji University/ Information&Communication
Mr. Haruhito Mochizuki	International Liaison Head	Dokkyo University/ Transnational Studies
Ms. Deepsha Saha	Co-ordinator	Amity University/ Masters in Mass Communication and Journalism
Mr. Arunasish Sen	Vice President (Finance)	Calcutta University/ Masters in English
Ms. Koyel Mukherjee	Finance Team	Jadavpur University/ Masters in Linguistics
Mr. Subhojeet Mukherjee	Events Team	Calcutta University/ B.A./LLB



Group E (SDG13: Climate Action)

What's the goal?

To take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.

Name	Position	University/ Major
Ms. Hina Watanabe	President	Sophia University/ Foreign Studies
Ms. Kako Kinuya	Domestic Liaison Head	Sophia University/ Global Studies
Ms. Shreya Bose	President	Calcutta University/ Masters in Applied Geology
Mr. Duke Pande	Vice President (Events)	Calcutta University/ Bachelors in Business Administration
Mr. Deepto Banerjee	Cultural Team	Maulana Abul Kalam Azad University of Technology/ Bachelors in Electronics and Communication
Ms. Rupkatha Majundar	Finance Team	Jadavpur University/ Bachelors in Economics

Daily Reports

Arrival

Opening Ceremony

Interaction

Table Discussion

NGO Visit

Visit to the Residence of the Honorable Consul General

School Visit to Deeksha

Volunteering

Company Visit for Group A (No Poverty) and Group D (Sustainable Cities and Communities)

Company Visit for Group B (Quality Education)

Company Visit for Group C (Gender Equality)

Company Visit to Group E (Climate Action)

Undokai

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Visit to Indian Statistical Institute

Village Visit

NKKS Foundation Day Celebrations

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School Visit

A Match Made in Heaven

Sightseeing Day

Closing Ceremony

Sayonara Party

The Volunteering Experience

Departure

Arrival

5TH OF AUGUST, 2018

By Duke Pande

It was the 5th of August, a Sunday, but instead of the lethargy and laid back attitude commonly seen on Sundays, we were pumped up and jumping because today was finally the day when *they* arrive. The Japanese were boarding a flight from Tokyo to New Delhi and then a flight from the capital to the NSCBI Airport. They were scheduled to arrive here at 10:10 PM. Five of our members- Anusha, Deepsha, Trinetra, Shreya, and I- had agreed to go the airport with our cars to receive them and bring them to Ramkrishna Mission, Golpark, where they were to stay.

Their eventful arrival started off from our homes, where we could not stop ourselves from expressing our excitement, and planning where to park our cars for their convenience and meeting spot. Once it was time, we left our homes. The journey to the airport was fun as well, because Deepsha and Anusha, who are practically neighbours, were cracking jokes and giving commentaries on the others' car like a game of "I spy". On reaching the airport, we all parked our cars close to each other for ease of access for the Japanese. We reached the airport by 10:10 PM and we awaited our foreign friends to come out of the arrival gate with bated breath. Meanwhile, back in the homes of other IJSC members, their excitement was directed at us via social media, demanding periodic updates of events along with pictures.

And then it was time.... They finally walked through that door. We were *so* excited we almost spilled a few wrong greetings! The Japanese, although extremely tired, were really courteous and patient with us. After some introduction, we decided who was hopping into whose car. We, then, loaded the luggage, and set off for their temporary home in our city.

It was 10:45 PM by the time all of us had left the airport. Although the Japanese were tired after their long journey, they were conversing with the Indian members and enjoying the late night tour of the city. We all reached RKM at around 11:30 PM, a relatively short trip, owing to little traffic at that hour. Everyone got their registration forms, and their room keys, and gradually retired to their rooms, after some formalities at the reception.

Interaction

6TH OF AUGUST, 2018

By Shreya Bose

The sun had already set when Arunasish, Deepsha and I arrived at Ramakrishna Mission, Golpark, accompanying the Japanese. Everyone else from the Indian side had arrived early at the guest lounge in anticipation of meeting the Japanese members. Once we entered the guest house, everyone welcomed the Japanese with open arms. As we all engaged in talk, the conference files were distributed among the Japanese, which they really appreciated due to its intricate Indian design. There was a brief ice breaking session where all the members from both Japan and India side shared a few things about themselves.

After the introduction, we all interacted with each other and gossiped like we were some long lost friends. The heads from the Japan side also talked about the upcoming events for the conference. Plenty of pictures were taken together to capture all the precious moments between the Japan and Indian team members. The Japan team showed a keen interest in the lifestyle of Bengal and we were overjoyed to learn that some of them knew about “Durga Puja” which is one of the most important festivals in Bengal that is celebrated with great enthusiasm by Bengali people. They also expressed their desire in wanting to taste Indian food, especially the spicy ones. As dinner time approached, the interaction had to be concluded.

We all bid our goodbyes to our Japanese friends and promised to see each other soon. The evening was a memorable one for both sides.

Opening Ceremony

7TH OF AUGUST, 2018

By Pratnoja Das

The cozy monsoon afternoon of 7th of August 2018 draws its presence in its vigors, with bundles of emotions buckled up in the opening ceremony of THE 22ND INDIA - JAPAN STUDENT'S CONFERENCE, organized by Nihongo Kaiwa Kyookai Society, supported by the Consulate General of Japan in Kolkata, the venue being, Dr. Triguna Sen Auditorium, Jadavpur University, Kolkata. The ceremony brought in the true essence of cultural exchange in and amongst the students from both the nations. The program started off at 5:30 PM with the inspiring speeches of Mr. Jayanta Kumar Saha, President of the Nihongo Kaiwa Kyookai Society, Prof. Dipti Prasad Mukherjee, Deputy Director of the Indian Statistical Institute and Mr. Masayuki Taga, the Consul General of Japan in Kolkata. The wonderful speeches by our guests of honor were followed by welcome speeches by Ms. Hina Watanabe and Ms. Shreya Bose, the Student Presidents of Japan, and India, respectively. The event was hosted by Duke Pande and Rupkatha Majumdar from India who added an extra essence to the entire ceremony. The opening song, a Rabindra sangeet - all draped in ethnics-warmed the hearts of its listeners. After this, an upbeat band performance was put up by the Indian members - the Japanese of Country Roads by John Denver. The next program had the audience interact with the Japanese members as they performed a daily morning exercise routine important for the wellbeing of the mind, heart, and soul. This was followed by the sparkling and brilliant classical dance recital by the Indian members. The next event was the centerpiece: A fashion show! By both the Indian and Japanese side. While the Indian side showed the beauty and colors of various states, the Japanese side portrayed famous elements from Japan as well as how the costumes of man change through their ages.

A “Boron” or welcome ceremony was held after this to welcome all Japanese members in an Indian way. To end the Opening Ceremony on the note of harmony, and togetherness, the Indian and Japanese side performed a song called “Himawari no Yakusoku” *together*. The song is charged with emotions such as friendship and teamwork, and has made its way to become the theme song of this year’s IJSC! Finally, the Japanese members presented everyone with a souvenir. And this marked a sweet end to this event.

Table Discussion

8TH OF AUGUST, 2018

By Shirsha Majumder

For the first day of our table discussion, the students of both Indian and Japanese side, divided into their respective SDG groups, gathered at HL Roy Auditorium in Jadavpur University campus on the 8th of August. The students sat with their respective teams accordingly in table and chairs arranged across the hall. Each of the group started off with the member introduction and consecutively proceeded with the preliminary discussion of topics. They discussed about the detailed approach and points regarding the different sustainable development goals to be represented by the groups. Members of both sides coordinated with each other through their opinions and views about the issues. The discussion period lasted from 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM and thus, ended with a lot of interaction. Next, all Indian members decided to take the fellow Japanese participants to visit Rabindra Sarovar lake for some recreation.

It was around 5pm all of us took a bus ride towards Dhakuria. At first, we visited the NIPPONZAN MYOHOJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE, a small Japanese monastery in the vicinity of Sarovar lake. Then, we went to the lake and had a lot of fun walking together and enjoying the evening, which finally brought us to the end of the first day of TD on a happy note!

NGO Visit

9TH OF AUGUST, 2018

By Tripti Gagrai

9th August was scheduled for visit to the NGO Jabala Action Research Organization which works on issues of Human Trafficking, HIV/AIDS, Child marriage, Child Abuse & Migration etcetera. As scheduled we arrived at the NGO at 10:30 AM where we were greeted with a warm welcome. After a brief introduction we were given a presentation on various works done by the NGO, their success stories, on how they get help from outsiders such as journalists, musicians and their various achievements. As this information about India was very new to the Japanese member, Ms. Hina Watanabe provided us with the information that prostitution is in fact legalized in Japan and she further asked about the position in India in this respect. The answer given to us was that the legality of prostitution has not yet been addressed by the Indian Legal system.. After this we were asked to move to the chamber of Ms. Baitali Ganguly who is the head of this institution, to have further conversation with her. There we were served snacks and beverage and Mr. Haruhito Mochizuki asked, ‘since female deities have been much respected in India, what is the position of modern day values in this respect?’ Ms. Ganguly answered that, although female deities are worshiped, in reality women are discriminated and looked down upon and she gave us the example of Kumari Puja and Durga Puja. Ms. Ganguly asserted her opinion that “*Women do not want a superior status but they want equality in the society*”. At the end Ms. Ganguly talked to us about her inspiration to start this NGO, how she started working in this field and her passion to continue working for a long time.

This visit to the NGO turned out to be very informative for both Japanese as well as Indian members as we receive a lot of new information on these issues. Due to the time constraint not all of our queries could be answered nevertheless, it sure gave rise to curiosity and an incentive to garner more information on these issues making the visit a fruitful one.

Visit to the Residence of the Honorable Consul General

9TH OF AUGUST, 2018

By Arpita Samaddar

I still remember from my school days, how I would stare at the pristine, white and heavily guarded house on my way to school. Then someday I got to know that the house is actually the office of the consulate general of Japan, as by that time I was already keenly interested in the Japanese culture, courtesy to my love for anime, that little piece of information was oddly fascinating to me. After that everyday I'd pass the office which is situated just beside my school and wonder what it's like from the inside. Hence, even when I got to know that we'd not visit the office of the Japanese consulate but his residence, I was beyond contended and gratified. So, I would like to share my experience and understanding of visiting the consul general, Mr. Masayuki Taga in his residence which previously I could only think of. The honorary consul general's house is situated near the Birla Mandir, and is part of a calm and serene neighbourhood. I got slightly intimidated by the security and the protective ambience of the residence but obviously it is completely normal, considering the prestige of a foreign country's consul general.

By the time I reached there, most of the participants of the India Japan Student Conference (IJSC) both from the India side and the Japan side had reached. Chairs were arranged in the parlour for all the IJSC participants and the consulate general presented us with a knowledgeable presentation on the India and Japan relations.

The consulate general informed us about many interesting facts concerning India and Japan. He started with the historical connections among both the countries specifically in mythology and Buddhism. We were informed of the influence of Bodhisena, an Indian Buddhist scholar and monk, in the spreading of Buddhism in Japan. He also pointed out many influences of Indian art style on Japanese paintings and vice versa. The visit of Indian polymath Rabindranath Tagore to Japan and the coming of Japanese scholar, Okakura Tenshin in India was specially highlighted. Obviously, he couldn't leave the deep ties of Subhash Chandra Bose with Japan at the time of World War II. The consulate general also laid out the frame of Japan's relation with India in economic, social and political platforms and how it is expected to further prosper in the near future.

After this brief interactive session, we were generously served with a traditional Japanese sweet called Mizu Yokan made of red bean paste and some authentic Indian sweets with some refreshing Japanese cold tea- mugicha. Over these delicious treats we also asked many questions to the consulate general and he graciously answered all of them.

After the presentation we took group photos with the consulate general and we also admired the grandeur of the residence. The consul general and his staff had been nothing but extremely hospitable and caring towards us. The general actively interacted with all of us even when we were leaving. This was an experience for me that only came true because I was a part of the India Japan Student Conference and I'm extremely indebted to the consul general for giving us a chance to enjoy such an important session. I'm also thankful towards the organizers of the conference for letting me be a part of such a diverse program through which I was able to acquire new friends and also was able to broaden my horizons.

School Visit to Diksha

9TH OF AUGUST, 2018

By Utpalparna Chakrabarti

A school visit was programmed after the visit to the residence of the Consul General on 9th August, 2018 at the evening. Organised by the Young Horizons School, *Diksha* was one of the initiatives of *Young Men's Welfare Society* which ensures free education to children of economically backward classes irrespective of social boundaries. This evening primary school allowed the IJSC members to have an interactive session with the students. All the Japanese members of the conference accompanied by Shreya Bose, Anusha Banerjee and me set out for the school after the end of the previous event accommodating ourselves in the two cars arranged by Nihongo Kaiwa Kyōkai Society for us, that would take us to the school and bring back to Ramakrishna Mission Guest House. Reaching the school we were guided by the Principal madam to our assigned classroom, after stopping and listening a music lesson. The interaction began with a short introduction and was followed by Hina-san's informative illustrated board work to provide a geographical idea of the location of Japan and India respectively. *Mottainai Grandma*, the book was then read by Haruhito san, Eido san and Akane san being each of the character of that book. Students listened with undivided attention and participated willingly to their interactive session. Judging from the joyful expressions of the children it can be concluded that they enjoyed learning origami, the paper folding art the most. Splitting into groups the Japanese members sat down with the students and made various structures together. This programme ended with the happy faces of the children holding their own creations.

Before leaving for Ramakrishna Mission Guest house, we were served with food and refreshments arranged by the school. The teachers enlightened us with facts about *Diksha* in that time. Then we left *Diksha* and reached Guest House before their dinnertime.

Volunteering

10TH OF AUGUST, 2018

By Shreya Bose

The Japan side had their first volunteering day scheduled on the 10th. It was early in the morning at 6:45am when Utpalparna and I had gone to Rama Krishna Mission to pick them up. Kakosan, Hinasan, Mariasan and Eidosan were waiting for us at the lounge. They greeted us with a smile and seemed to be very excited about the volunteering. An uber cab had been booked to make sure we reached the venue on time. By the time we reached the volunteering venue which was Shanti Dan it was almost 7:30am. The Japan side conveyed their thanks to us for dropping them and notified us about the timings. After the volunteering was over at noon Arunashish, who had gone to pick them up from Shanti Dan took them back to the guest house by bus.

Company Visit for Group A (No Poverty) and Group D (Sustainable Cities and Communities)

10TH OF AUGUST, 2018

By Arunasish Sen

On August the 10th, at about 1330 hours, I reached the Ramakrishna Mission guesthouse. This was the day for the company visit. The Japanese and Indian teams had been reshuffled into five small groups for this purpose. Along with my group, another group was to visit the same company, so there were eleven of us: when I entered inside the lobby, almost all of them there were waiting for me. Two members arrived a few minutes later. Unfortunately, due to a sore throat, Toshiaki would be unable to attend the visit, and Deepsha would join us later. So we left, nine in number, at 1400 hours, for the company.

This year, it was decided that the table discussions (an integral part of the conference) should revolve around some of the Sustainable Development Goals conceived by the United Nations. It was using this basis that our groups had been formed, with each to discuss a certain SDG. The SDG for my team (led by Deepsha) was *Sustainable Cities and Communities*. For the other team coming with us (led by Utpalparna), the SDG was *No Poverty*.

The company we had chosen to visit was called BanglaNatak.Com. I was familiar with this company because a cousin of mine used to work with them. This company was dedicated to preserving and promoting worldwide the traditional arts of eastern India, while also providing a platform for foreign artists to perform in this country. We reckoned that this would be a suitable place to visit.

We took a bus from Golpark to Lords More, near South City Mall. From there, a man led us to the office of the company. The site of the company was a block of flats, or an apartment building. Over its floors were spread the various departments of the company. In one of the lower floors we met Mr Amitabh Bhattacharya, one of the directors of the company. Then we were ushered into the top floor, where the interactive session would take place. The session was hosted by Ms Shalini Majumdar and Mr Devdan Mookerjee. The manner of the presentation was commendable. They would play small clips of artists and craftsmen at work, or in interviews, from where we got a fair idea of their work, and the work of the company. After every clip was played, we had a brief discussion.

In West Bengal itself, we have many traditional arts, in the form of several kinds of handicrafts, pottery, fine arts, dance and music, each particular to a district. Since these arts were disappearing in the wake of rural poverty and the ensuing growth urbanization, companies like this one started hunting for the artists and dissuade them for abandoning their culture. Instead, they were provided the means to harness their raw talent and be experimental to create more variety. Then they were given space to display their works, and finally provided with a market to sell them.

The experimental nature alluded to earlier may be illustrated with an example: *Pata chitra* is a form of sequential art where several ornate pictures were painted on scrolls, arranged in a specific order, to tell a mythological tale. The story was then told by mouth with the aid of these paintings. Originally, these scrolls would be enormous. To the modern buyer in want of space, this would be a deterrent. So the *pata chitra* artists decided to adapt by starting to convert modern short-stories or small poems, into their art.

So the work of the company is like that of a publisher or a film producer: find an artist with a story to tell, or in brevity a thousand words to communicate; then make them and their work known to the world.

The visit must have been eye-opening for all the students; I, for my part, had been completely unaware of the multifariousness of folk art concentrated in just one state of this country. It was also heartening to see the sincerity of efforts to preserve these cultures, thereby preserving entire communities while also alleviating poverty.

At the end of the presentation, we were each provided with an audio CD consisting of the works of folk musicians. We then had a chat over tea, and finally left with plenty of research material for our SDG discussions.

Company Visit for Group B (Quality Education)

10TH OF AUGUST, 2018

By Trinetra Paul

"Change is the end result of all true learning" - Leo Buscaglia.

Arriving at La Martiniere For Girls, as the company visit for the SDG of Quality Education was something more than just enriching and educative. Right at the beginning we were greeted by the Principal, Mrs Rupkatha Sarkar who presented the Japanese members, Chinatsu Yokoyama and Atsunari Mizuno with mementos. She took great interest in our conference and was delighted to have hosted a part of the conference.

We then headed towards the Audio Visual Room where a group of 25 Students from class twelve of various fields were waiting for us. All the members of the SDG groups interacted and we got to know about their feelings of the education system, their modes of studies, the school-student relation and of course their opinion about the wide education gap in the rural and urban zones of the country. We shared our views as both Chinatsu and Atsunari spoke of their school life in Japan and the differences in the education systems of the two countries that they had observed.

The students were very vocal about discussing and suggesting ideas by which students can take small steps to bring about change in this field to make the goal of Quality Education be a reality for all. The students told us of their various club activities and how rural teaching programs, intra and inter school fests, natural awareness and other activities are highly encouraged.

The visit was truly an experience in itself as all of us saw the 156 years of heritage of the school and how, though complete different people from different countries can come together with similar interests and make this world a better place.

Hence following the words of Leo Buscaglia, we the members of SDG group of Quality Education- Chinatsu Yokoyama, Atsunari Mizuno, Trinetra Paul, Pratyay Mullick, Kaustav Sarkar, Pratnoja Das and Debashis Mondal, we realised that maybe we cannot alter the system and bring this change but our efforts and cooperation among nations will definitely strive to make this happen .

Company Visit for Group C (Gender Equality)

10TH OF AUGUST, 2018

By Tuneer Chakrabarti

Exasperated and heartbroken from not being able to participate in my own SDG's company visit, I plodded home from the university as some heavy drops of rain fell in the background. The plan was simple, I would take a metro where I would listen to some tunes being swayed by the sheer number of people and again walk home in my own little cocoon of solitude.

Right as I let out a sigh going towards my metro station, there's Group C, standing right there waving to me. My bewildered eyes stare into the void as if dazed by the sheer coincidence of the entire event, while my feet sprint automatically towards them. Time has stopped and the entire world has turned into mush as dopamine rushes inside my brain making a firework of neural concoctions.

After the initial shock, I find myself accompanying these amazing people, Anusha, Nawrit, Ayan, Arpita, Maria-san and Eido-san. The visit was to a shelter for the children whose mothers worked in the Red Light Area nearby. The shelter was one of the hundreds of shelters owned by the NGO, Jabala Research Action Foundation. We talked about a plethora of topics *en route*.

Then, an associate of the shelter picked us up and we were led through winding streets and taken up unlit flights of stairs to a room on the first floor where the children and their teachers were dressed in colorful clothes, albeit their best. They seemed very happy to see us. Nawrit quickly picked up the pace taking the mantle of the emcee while interacting with the children, and Anusha and Eido-san asked pertinent questions to the faculty in question as they had expressly forbidden asking any personal questions.

The Indian-side translated bits and pieces of information for the Japanese-side who were equally grateful for the help. The children then performed for us, in the form of song and dance, in which Eido-san, Anusha and even I joined in without any further comment on our competence in the same. When we left the premises, majority of the members had taken a wrong turn, when we were causally informed that the other side was the one closer to the station and that a red-light area was nearby.

We came to know of a few awe-inspiring facts. The NGO has been running the shelter for 20+ years, and in these years every child from this shelter has been empowered. The children stay with the shelter till they've got a job. In several instances, the NGO helps children get admitted to certificate courses. What we were most amazed to hear was that no child had to take to their mothers' profession.

Lastly, the day was yet to be over as the journey back to RKM mattered too, for which we took a metro from Central to Kalighat, there is little to say about the tsunami of people who inhabit our public transport system at rush hour, but in was a perception changing event, where Eido-san brushed off our repeated questions of if she was fine, by comparing the packed environment to that of the Tokyo Metro with an anecdote of actual people in service who push people into the trains at rush hour.

But it would appear as if even our professional commuters had difficulty in coordinating our landing and thus the Japan-side, Me and Arpita got off at the next station, I.e. Jatin Das Park, where we had to take an adjoining train back to Kalighat. While Eido-san repeatedly tries to make the Indian side believe that this was her best experience in India, we still have our doubts.

Company Visit for Group E (Climate Action)

10TH OF AUGUST, 2018

By Rupkatha Majumdar

"Company Visits" were planned for each Academic Group to help familiarise us with our assigned goal in terms of related real-world scenarios and activities. We were team 5, with the Sustainable Development Goal "Climate Action". Through interaction and discussions we were able to connect our academic research and information to the present day world.

For Climate Action, we had organised a visit to the School of Oceanographic Studies, Jadavpur University. The said department is currently a part of the Deltas, Vulnerability and Climate Change: Migration and Adaptation (DECCMA) project under the Collaborative Adaptation Research Initiative in Africa and Asia (CARIAA) programme. The Indian Case Study Areas for the DECCMA project focussed it's research on two deltas: the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna (Bangladesh and India) and the Mahanadi. Since we had selected our case study area as the Sunderbans in India, selecting this department was appropriate.

Our team members present were Shreya Bose, Deepro Banerjee and me, Rupkatha Majumdar from Indian side, Kako Kinuya and Hina Watanabe from Japanese side.

To begin with the discussion, Tuhin Ghosh, Joint Director, Project Lead, School of Oceanographic Studies, Jadavpur University, introduced us to the delta regions of Sunderbans (in India). He described it's geographical features- how the deltas have formed at the mouth of the Ganga-Brahmaputra rivers, the flora and fauna of the region. We got to know that the Deltas are in fact a very dynamic feature, the physical characteristics differ from time to time with the periodic change in behaviour of the rivers. He elaborated on the demography and population of the region. Most people living here have been here for generations, and the economy of the region is mainly restricted to the traditional skills, very specific to this region. These include fishing, honey collection and crab collection. This region is very vulnerable to the elements of nature. Sir shared with us some of his personal experiences from the time when the disastrous cyclone Ayla struck this region and disrupted life of thousands. He briefly mentioned some rehabilitation programmes that were arranged at the time. This entire discussion was aided by an on-screen presentation throughout.

Next, the presentation was continued by Sumana Banerjee, Project Coordinator, School of Oceanographic Studies, Jadavpur University. She gave us an overview of the DECCMA project, broadly classifying it into the categories of Introduction, Vulnerability, Migration, Adaptation, Journey so far and Plans ahead. The important points that arose in this discussion were how to restore life as close to normal as possible in case of major environmental disasters.

The most interesting insights pertained to the phenomenon of migration. Different families had different reasons for migrating, or not migrating at all. Migration rates were skewed for men and women. Some families were seasonal migrators, and came back to the deltas whenever situation was conducive. But on an average, migration hotspots were narrowed down to the urban and peri-urban regions of Kolkata.

The course of this discussion led to identification and evaluation of some Adaptive policies by the government and non-governmental organisations.

In this regard, we were provided with insights on the participatory programmes, aims of the DECCMA project, case study areas, and identifying as well as tackling some key questions that have cropped up during the course of undertaking something so crucial and massive.

After this information-rich presentation, we had the opportunity to clear our doubts and got our questions answered. It was truly enriching to experience this interactive session. It helped us gain a deeper understanding and get acquainted with the current climatic scenarios of a region so close to home.

In the end we presented flower bouquets to Tuhin Sir and Sumana Ma'am, as a token of appreciation for arranging such an informative and engaging way to convey this pertinent perspective.

Undokai

11TH OF AUGUST, 2018

By Pratyay Kumar Mullick

Time: 11AM to 5PM

Location: H.L. Roy, Jadavpur University

List of sports:

- Quiz – A short quiz on sports of India and Japan
- 玉投げ (Tama-nage) – Ball throwing
- 障害物レース (Shougaibutsu Race) – Obstacle Race
- 〇抜ゲーム (Marubatsu Game) – True or False
- 伝言ゲーム (Dengon Game) – Chinese Whisper
- 人間知恵の輪 (Ningen Chie no Wa) – Human Disentanglement Puzzle
- チューチューポーポーじゃんけん (Choo Choo Poo Poo Janken) Rock Paper Scissor Train
- 卵リレー (Tamago Relay) – Ping Pong Relay Race
- 新聞バスケットゲーム (Shinbun Basketball Game) – Basketball in a Newspaper Game
- 紙飛行機ゲーム (Kamihikouki Game) – Paper-plane Game

As the first week of IJSC was about to pass — a packed schedule of volunteering, NGO visits and table discussions — it was about time to start the ball rolling for recreational activities. By the courtesy of the IJSC members, a sports festival or Undokai in Japanese was arranged. All the members were divided into three teams — red, black and white. All the team members lined up according to their jerseys and the inauguration ceremony of the Undokai officially started. Team leaders gathered up with the sports heads and pledged,

“We solemnly affirm that we will take part in our sports event, regarding the regulations that govern them, in the true spirit of sportsmanship.”

Before starting the main event, everyone was directed to participate in the ラジオ体操 (Radio gymnastics) to warm up for the main event. The first event, 玉投げ (Tama-nage, Ball throwing) started. Four members get a chance each to throw a ball at plastic bottles and the last one would have to shoot a football at the same set of bottles.

Black team won with a huge lead in this event.

障害物レース (Shougaibutsu Race, Obstacle Race) was a race with numerous obstacles like spinning around, running around plastic bottles, fetching food off a hook and taking someone from the audience and finishing the race.

○抜ゲーム (Marubatsu Game, True or False) was the most polarizing event (literally!). Basically, the head would say a statement and the players who thought it was true accumulated on the left and vice-versa. The ones with the right conclusion stay back for the next question and the rest are said to be disqualified. The red team, with sheer intellect (and a bit of confidence) single-handedly won this event!

伝言ゲーム (Dengon Game, Chinese Whisper) as the name suggests, is the game of Chinese Whisper. White team shone in this event!

人間知恵の輪 (Ningen Chie no Wa) was played among all members of a team. Players joined their hands with others in random, and then instructed to disentangle themselves to form a circle.

チューチューポーポーじゃんけん (Choo Choo Poo Poo Janken) is an interesting take on Rock-Paper-Scissor where the loser in a one versus one match sticks to the back of the winner and it goes on and on until there's a single line of players. The one at the front is declared the winner!

卵リレー (Tamago Relay) is similar to spoon race in India except the lemon is replaced with a ping pong ball. The one to finish one lap hands over the spoon to the next player. The team with the least total time wins!

紙飛行機ゲーム (Kamihikouki Game) encouraged team members to work together and devise a blueprint of a paper plane. The plane which went the farthest wins. All teams showed innovation but alas, White team with their simplicity flew the farthest!

Exhausted with all the different exciting and engaging events, the results were the most awaited. Well-thought of the sports heads, a unique Fair Play Award was given to the black team. After the event, Red team stood out as the winners. But after all it was a fun event, so everyone is a winner! All teams won packets of Japanese confectionery (ramen furikake, cream biscuits, caramel toffees).

Homestay

11TH AND 12TH OF AUGUST, 2018

By Utpalparna Chakrabarti

Homestay was one of the events in 22nd IJSC which I was really looking forward to. With the consent of my family I volunteered to host members of the conference who would be coming from Japan. Two days before the opening ceremony at Triguna Sen Auditorium on 7th August, we received the names of our respective guests. I came to know that I will be hosting Taishi Yoshida and Atsunari Mizuno for two nights dating 11th and 12th August, 2018.

After the undokai ended on 11th evening I brought them to my home and they saw my delighted family waiting at the entrance to greet them. My grandmother being the eldest welcomed them in a traditional Indian gesture with sandal and lit joss sticks, while I explained

the custom. I intended to introduce each other after the custom was done but it happened without me saying a word. In India guests are considered as God, like , the saying goes, “*atithi devo bhava*” . Elders of my family transcended this conceptual sphere and treated them like their own children and the young members made them friends. The cultural interaction started when Taishi and Atsunari surprised us with a kaleidoscope they brought analysing the kanji words and meaning of those to me. My father amazed them by presenting a small souvenir essentially baring India's one of the localised traditional art form. Through this understanding of presents we began to interact with each other’s culture.

In understanding a culture, food and its authentic as well as changing and evolving preparations, play an unavoidable role. They came across the regular Bengali dishes we generally have in home at night when the dinner was served. And at that time we came to know about a Japanese fish preparation similar to ours! Finishing Bengali food they tasted the flavour of Bengali ‘*adda*’ . Sitting comfortably with pillows in a circle we all started chatting on random topics. My family is a liberal family. For that the topics were not restricted to any particular genre and the ongoing chit-chat was filled with limitless humor and laughter. After awhile they became more free to interact with my family. The next day started late as it was a holiday. The idle day began with a short visit in our local market. They roamed with my father and me to recognise the various fishes the local people usually buy. Returning home we resumed our conversations that we enjoyed last night. Only this time the participants were my brother and my cousin sisters from my family and Kaustuv Sarkar, another IJSC member who joined later. We talked about youth culture, their practices along with their language of both the countries and some religious-politico issues of India which ultimately led us to rituals and then festivals. As they came to know about the biggest festival of Bengalis i.e. *Durga Puja*, we decided to show them Kumartuli. The place known for making the idols during festivals. After lunch Taishi, Atsunari, Kaustuv and I went to Kumartuli. We walked through the narrow lanes of North Kolkata. They stopped at workshops to see the ongoing making of the idols. We described the festival and how people prepare themselves for the consecutive four days. Some wait for enjoyment, some for holiday and some for income. Both being in the same SDG group, i.e ‘No Poverty’ Taishi and me related this economic aspect to that. Overwhelmed by the sight they went to see Ganga. Sitting for sometime on the steps we watched ferries crossing the river. Then they touched the river and clicked pictures. On our way back home we took a short glance of Victoria Memorial from outside. At home they played card games with my brother and cousins. Even though none them were familiar with Japanese language they had no problem to established a bond with Taishi and Atsunari where they started to tease each other. From childhood I have heard that language is a barrier in communication but it can be overcome by love and I visualised that when I watched my family and them saying they would miss each other and making promises to meet again in India and in Japan over and over again in the next morning before leaving for Indian Statistical Institute at 7 am. In the midst of cultural interaction and understanding we became a greater family.

IN MEMORY OF THE 1ST INDIA JAPAN STUDENTS' CONFERENCE



A photograph taken during the Opening Ceremony of the 1st India Japan Students' Conference, held in August 1997.

Giving the speech is Mr. Tatsuya Ishizu, who first proposed the idea of IJSC to everyone at NKK. From left to right, the persons of the dias are Ms. Sudakshina Mitra, the President from Indian side, Mr. Mohan Ghosh, the Vice President of Nihongo Kaiwa Kyookai Society and president of the 1st IJSC Organising Committee, and Mr. Shankar Sen, the then Power Minister of West Bengal. In the extreme right is the President of IJSC from Japan side, and beside her is the Vice Consul of Japan in Kolkata.

22nd India-Japan Students' Conference Picture Gallery



Some scenes from the Opening Ceremony held on 07/08/2018



Top: NGO Visit on 9/08/2018
Bottom: Table Discussion on 8/08/2012



White and Red teams for Undokai on 11/08/2018



Honourable Consul General, Mr. Masayuki Taga, with the students of IJSC-JISC at his residence on 09/08/2018.
Inset: Honourable Consul General, Mr. Taga, giving his speech during the Opening Ceremony on 07/08/2018



A



B



C



D

A and B: Group B (SDG4: Quality Education) interacting with students of La Martinere for Girls on 10/08/2018C
C and D: Group A (SDG1: No Poverty) and Group D (SDG11: Sustainable Cities) interact with members of Bangla Natakdot.com on 10/08/2018



Group E (top) and Group C (bottom) during their company visit to JU, and Jabala Research Action Foundation respectively, on 10/08/2018.



Lunch Time at Indian Statistical Institute on 13/08/2018



During the Village Visit on 14/08/2018



During the Final Presentation at RKM on 16/08/2018



During the School Visit at Loreto Day School, Sealdah on 17/08/2018



Scenes during the Sightseeing day held on 18/08/2018



Scenes from the Cricket Match held in Vivekananda Park on 17/08/2018

Visit to Indian Statistical Institute

13TH OF AUGUST, 2018

By Koyel Mukherjee

The India Japan Students' Conference facilitated a visit to the esteemed Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata for a group discussion regarding the various UNITED NATIONS goals that the students were making presentations on. We were very excited about the visit and we were asked to assemble before the gate at 8:00 AM. As we entered the premises we were asked to enter the guest house building. Our Japanese friends were invited to stay there overnight. As they filled out the necessary forms we took in the essentials of the building we were in. The ISI campus was huge in terms of land area. There was lush greenery around each building that were soothing to the eyes. We had to walk long distances just to get from one building to other! But the walks were comfortable with a sunny weather and occasional rain.

All of us were led into a room which has been prepared especially for our conference. The staff and members present there were very friendly and helpful. The deputy director, Prof. Bimal Kumar Roy took time out of his busy schedule to speak to us. He told us of his experiences in Japan and about his good impression of the country. There were some other senior professors too who had been kind enough to take out time and speak to us about their visit to Japan. We were taken to see some of the esteemed museums of the Indian Statistical Institute. Our first visit was to the museum depicting the life of Mr. Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis, the founder of Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata. We saw different pictures that showed his lifelong achievements and when and how the ISI was formed and how it reached its peak. After that, we were also taken to the Geology museum where the fossils of a dinosaur- a juvenile *Barapasaurus tagorei*- from the pre-historic (Mesozoic) ages has been brought and preserved. We also saw fossils of other vertebrates and rocks depicting glaciation periods.

The visit to the institute was mostly for educational purposes but we all had a good time overall. The staff were kind and gave us snacks during our visit. We had to leave our Japanese friends at the guest house for the night as we, the Indian students had to head back home. It was a day well spent.

Village Visit

14TH AND 15TH OF AUGUST, 2018

By Deepto Banerjee

On the morning of 14th of August, all the members of the Conference gathered at the Guest House of Indian Statistical Institute, ready to leave for the Village visit to Kharagpur and Medinipur districts of West Bengal. Twenty six participants from the India and Japan side left from the Indian Statistical Institute in a Traveller bus, singing and enjoying along the beautiful journey. On the way, we stopped at a roadside dhaba to feast on delicious, freshly made "kochuri". A few of had tea. Those who had nothing stepped out of the bus to stretch a little bit.

On reaching the Bungalow at Kharagpur, a warm welcome was given by the spirited owner of the Bungalow and the people in charge of taking care of the Bungalow. The

estate was huge. There were several ponds for fishing, and the greenery spread far and wide. All of us were very happy to see the free roaming chickens and the ducks swimming in the pond. Being able to do fishing was very exciting for all of us. The estate also housed cows. Soon after arriving, we were served tea, which used the milk from those cows.

Our lunch consisted of an amazing array of Bengali food, and sweets. Even though it was a little spicy for our Japanese friends, we enjoyed the food very much. After the hearty lunch, we visited river Kansavati nearby. In the evening, there was a Bonfire with different foods and drinks to have. Some of us performed songs. At night, all of us stayed at the Hostel at Medinipore Law College and all of us enjoyed the experience and the delicious dinner.

On the morning of 15th August all of us were invited to attend the Flag Hoisting Ceremony for the occasion of the Independence day of India at the campus of the college. Afterwards, we went to a Ductile Steel Plant Factory. Each of us was given a helmet for safety, and a face mask for protection against dust. We witnessed glowing, molten iron as it was being poured from a ceramic tub into a reaction chamber. The sight was truly enthralling. After the visit to the plant and a quick goodbye to the people at the bungalow, we had to return to Kolkata to attend the NKKS Party. It was beautiful to be able to see and experience nature so closely which isn't possible for city dwellers.

NKKS Foundation Day Celebrations

15TH OF AUGUST, 2018

By Ayan Sarkar

As the day started, we woke up around 7 am, and freshened up, as it was 15th august and we had a flag raising ceremony to attend. There we witnessed some fine speeches, and they were followed by a solo dance performance, as well as a chorus of Vande Mataram. Then, we had breakfast inside the Law College, and a group photo was taken. After this, we came back to the hostel to collect our belongings as we were to set off to a nearby Steel Factory, thanks to the President of NKKS, Mr. Jayanta Saha. It was a very informative experience for all of us. It was a Ductile Steel Plant, where steel pipes are manufactured. Then, we got on our bus again, and just like that the time had come to bid the village life farewell, as we returned to Kolkata, during which many of us enjoyed a peaceful sleep.

As we returned to Kolkata, there was still some time before the NKK anniversary party. So we spent some time inside the Gupta Brothers. We had sandwiches, South Indian Vadas, and milkshakes.

At the party, several IJSC members who couldn't go for the trip joined us. All the IJSC/IISC members were equally exhausted, but we still went on to cheer the activities and events which took place at the party. At the beginning, the Japanese members were introduced, after which we had some brilliant song performances from Aratrika, Riddhima and Shreyashi, who are members of NKKS and students of Japanese Language. We also performed the song 'Himawari no Yakusoku', together. As the anniversary cake was revealed, we chanted the birthday song and wished NKK to have many more such days to come. After the anniversary cake, we were given delicious food packets from Mio Amore, which we all enjoyed.

After the party came to a wrap, most of the members got on the bus to accompany the Japanese members to the RMIC guesthouse, except me and Arpita, who went to the metro. All of us went to home that night cherishing the days spent on the trip, reminiscing the happy memories.

Final Discussion and Presentation

16TH OF AUGUST, 2018

By Anusha Banerjee

The conference had been moving at the speed of light and the day of the final presentation had arrived faster than any of us could have comprehended. It was the 16th of August, 12:00 PM, and we were at H.L. Roy Auditorium, Jadavpur University buckling up for the final performance with very little time on our hands. Since we did not have a number of table discussions, most of the teams were struggling to complete their PowerPoint Presentations or deciding which group member speaks which part. It was difficult, but by 2:45 PM, we could successfully (or maybe not) wrap things up and move to Ramakrishna Mission, Golpark. Everyone was tensed because somewhere or the other we all felt like a little more time would have been appreciable.

Upon reaching Ramkrishna Mission, we swiftly made our way to the Audio-Visual Room in the School of Languages where Nigam sensei had been patiently waiting for us. Our anxiety faded away when we realized we were to present to our friends (who were equally anxious) and to Nigam sensei herself. We set up our laptops with the help of an associate from Ramakrishna Mission, and the final presentation began with Group A.

Group A (SDG1: No Poverty) discussed their goal, which was the eradication of poverty in all forms everywhere. I was mildly amused to know the different types of poverty which existed, and how deep-rooted this problem was, not just in India, but in other parts of the world as well. The members shed light on how SDG1: No Poverty was one of the goals to have made significant progress in India. For example, extreme poverty percentage came down to 5% in 2018, as contrasted to the 42% in 1997, and is expected to drop to 3% by 2021. The presentation was followed by a discussion, where we discussed government schemes seeking to eradicate Poverty, and how they fail to do so because of the ongoing corrupt practices in our country.

The next team to present was the team I belonged to, Group C (SDG5: Gender Equality). We talked about a number of problems which posed as barriers to the achievement of this goal, like sexual harassment, domestic violence, inequalities in jobs, etc. At the current rate, it would take another 70 years for the goal to be achieved, far from its set expiry date by the UN, which is 2030. A heated discussion followed our presentation where we talked about the importance of men for the achievement of our goal. Our point was this, that if men were not forced to be “strong” and “aggressive” in order to be accepted, the women won’t be compelled to feel “weak” and “submissive”. We saw sensei smiling to herself when we received positive feedback on the question, “How many of you here were told ‘boys don’t cry’?”

Following this, was the presentation of Group B (SDG4: Quality Education). They discussed the various ideas through which children could be given a *quality* education, and how education was not just studying, and getting A+ on your report cards, and that it was a balanced meal, and sports, and imparting of moral values too. A quality education is also, perhaps, the most important pre-requisite to achieve the other goals. The discussion which followed the presentation enlightened us about the differences in school and classroom environments in India and Japan. We were surprised to know about the “group” system of

education in Japan. The Japanese, on the other hand, sounded relieved to know the pressure of cram schools (coaching classes, in India) existed here too!

Group D (SDG11: Sustainable Cities and Communities) discussed smart and effective ways of waste management and disposal, and eco-friendly transportation as the building blocks to build a sustainable city. The discussion for this involved interesting thoughts such as the possibility of futuristic self-recycling dustbins, etc.

The *final* final presentation was presented by the members of Group E (SDG13: Climate Action) where they discussed the various effects and changes which we see in the world due to Climate change. They talked about natural disasters like earthquakes, and how humans had little to no control over them. It doesn't come as much of a surprise, but it is true to assume that by the current rate of things, climate action is (or should be) our top-most priority as it's not just a mere issue anymore, it's an emergency.

With this, the final presentation came to an end. Our discussions proved to be educative and immersive. We walked out of RKM with happy faces, only thinking this: if our discussions were this good without proper time to prepare, how much better could it have been if we really did have time.

School Visit to Loreto Day School, Sealdah

17TH OF AUGUST, 2018

By Shreya Bose

With the conference slowly drawing to a close, all of us were in low spirits. We were scheduled to have a school visit in Loreto School at 8:50am in the morning. The Japan side was eagerly looking forward to this visit because they had cited their preference about Loreto, one of the most distinguished schools in Kolkata. On our arrival, we received a warm welcome from the teachers and students. The Japan side introduced the concept of "Rajio taisou" to the children where they exercised in accompaniment to slow music and the Japan side made it very lively for the children who thoroughly enjoyed it! The next event was a story telling session that aimed to spread awareness about minimizing waste and using our resources efficiently in the best way possible. The Japan side read out a story named "Mottainai Obaasan" which revolves around grandmother who says "mottainai" whenever she sees her grandchild wasting food, water and other things. The children found it very interesting and screamed "mottainai" in unison with the Japanese.

Shortly after the story telling session the teachers sent the children to fetch their crayons and colour pencils for the drawing session that was about to commence. The children were divided into small groups and asked to draw about the message they had received from the story. As we took rounds to check their drawings we realized how creative they were and seeing them draw made us reminiscence about our schooldays. We were taken aback by their dedication and hard work for the children had drawn so beautifully in such a short time. The drawings were collected and the Japan side made a promise to the children that their drawings would be published. The students offered chocolates to each one of us as a token of thanks for coming to their school. As the event drew to a close we expressed our gratitude to all the students and teachers for their cooperation and organizing the interaction with the children. The Japan side said goodbye to all the students wishing them the best for their future and encouraged them to visit Japan someday so that they could meet again. We left the school around 10:30am and took a bus back home.

A Match Made in Heaven

17TH OF AUGUST, 2018

By Subhojeet Mukherjee

The Indian students had decided to have a cricket match with everyone involved, including the Japanese students on 17th August, 2018. It was held at Vivekananda Park, in the afternoon. During the Undokai, a few of the Japanese expressed their interest in playing an actual cricket match after playing a bit during that day.

On the day of the match, I arrived a little after 4 PM. The others had gathered by 5 PM. Firstly, captains were chosen for each team. Each had a male and female captain - both from the Japanese side. Toshiaki-san and Eido-san were captains for Team A. Taishi-san and Hina-san were the captains for Team B. Apart from the captains, Team B comprised of Duke, Kaustav, Tripti, Utpalparna, Pratyay, Deepro, Rupkatha, Maria-san. Team A had apart from myself, Tuneer, Ayan, Arunashish, Shirsha, Naiwrit, Trinetra, Kako-san, Akane-san.

Team B won the toss and elected to bat first. While the match itself was not exactly a proper one, since no one could be out in any way. No pacing was allowed, only overhand bowling. Every bowler had to bowl six balls. And most importantly, everyone got a chance to play. So those who did not bat or ball, would get a chance to do so. It did not matter who won or lost. What mattered was that everyone had a great time playing, especially the Japanese since it was their first time playing cricket. But it really did not seem that way, from their performance. Toshiaki bowled very well, thanks to his experience in baseball. Taishi hit every single ball with ease, to resounding applause. Hina-san was throwing yorkers like it wasn't anybody's business. From the Indian side, Arunashish bowled brilliantly, not conceding any runs whatsoever. Ayan showed his batting prowess, skillfully hitting every ball with finesse. I did an adequate job, if I do say so myself. Everyone was in high spirits throughout the match. It lasted well into the evening, finishing at 6:30 PM. After that we all had a merry time, chatting away and then we all made our way back home.

It was one of the best days I have had in long and was a huge success, as we bonded over the match, displaying camaraderie. I will remember this day for the rest of my life.

Sightseeing Day

18TH OF AUGUST, 2018

By Anusha Banerjee

The preparations for the sightseeing day began a week before the set day, when my friends and I decided to give our pre-decided route a run-through to figure out its pros and cons. The Japanese had two requests- they wanted to see British architecture, and have a local experience. And, B.B.D Bagh, or the erstwhile Dalhousie Square was the first place which came to our mind. Our plan initially revolved around only Dalhousie Square, but thanks to Mr. Jayanta Saha and Mr. Brotin Mullick, we could add Marble Palace to our list as well.

The sightseeing day arrived faster than we expected it to. The morning of the 18th of August began with a few Indian members picking up the Japanese from their guest-house,

Santana, and reaching Esplanade, from where they took a metro to M.G. Road and walked to Marble Palace. Unfortunately, a few could not make it, having fallen sick. Two groups had been made beforehand, as instructed by the owners of Marble Palace. While the first group went inside the Marble Palace, the other group would explore the zoo encircling it. The interior of Marble Palace is breathtakingly beautiful- from a magnificent ballroom with floor to ceiling high mirrors and a rare collection of paintings adorning the walls, to an awe-striking Billiards Room with extravagant statues of Marble imported from Italy and intricately-detailed, ancient vases from China. Every room had a different flooring- 17 different types, each imported from the best of its kind in Italy- and a different aura about it. Not to mention, the façade of the monument, along with the surrounding gardens and zoo was exquisite too. The zoo had different species of birds, deer and monkeys kept in it. Even though the other animals didn't look particularly interested in us, the solitary monkey (a *Macaca mulatta*) seemed particularly excited to see new faces. Thankfully, photography was prohibited and so everyone had to observe the beauty carefully and store it in their memories, and not memory cards.

After the memorable trip to Marble Palace, everyone was famished. And so we split into two groups again, and took two public buses to Dalhousie Square, to our next destination- The Bhoj Company, a restaurant serving Bengali food. 26 of us fully occupied the second level of the restaurant. We were served the pre-ordered food- Chicken, Special Veg. and Fish thalis. The food was delicious and everyone enjoyed it.

On the way, I showed the Japanese a few of the most beautiful buildings in Dalhousie Square- General Post Office, Writers' Building, Standard Chartered Insurance Building, Royal Insurance Building, to name a few. At the Millennium Park, most of us got on rides, and relished overpriced ice-cream. My fear of fast vehicles, however, prohibited me from getting myself an amusement park ride.

The time wafted quite like the lazy Ganga flowing in front of us. We didn't even realise when hours passed by, and the sun had already begun to set. Before it was completely dark, everyone wanted to shop at New Market, it being so close. And so, we began walking towards New Market. Upon arrival, New Market was, as usual, crowded, and chaotic. We decided to split up, as moving together in a group posed to be a difficult task. As per our requirements, we moved to different parts of New Market. Some went to Shreeram Arcade, or Simpark Mall. The rest went to the good old St. Hoggs Market. A few Japanese members even bought traditional Indian clothing, and a few learnt bargaining skills too! By the time we got done, it was late. And we were hungry. We satiated our hunger (and thirst) at KFC. A few Indian members dropped the Japanese members to Santana, after this.

Even though the sightseeing day saw comparatively less "sightseeing", it was a great day, and will forever be etched in our memories as a day we'd love to look back on.

Closing Ceremony

19TH OF AUGUST, 2018

By Deepsha Saha

The Closing Ceremony of the 22nd IJSC took place on the 19th of August in the Commune hall, close to Elgin Road.

To begin with, the day was tiring since we had volunteering in the morning. But everyone anticipated the concluding ceremony. The Indians along with the Japanese got to Commune Hall by 5:30 PM. The ceremony began with a few speeches. First, the finance head from the Japanese side, Toshiaki Oshima gave a speech talking about his experiences- how it was his first time here, and how he's definitely coming back next year to witness Durga Puja! This was followed by Akane Akita, the team liaison. She went on to talk about the conference, and how it will remain a happy memory for her. From the Indian side, Tripti Gagrai and Pratyay Mullick gave a speech on their experiences. Finally, the president of the two sides, Hina Watanabe and Shreya Bose talked about the conference, and how great of a time we spent together. The certificate distribution had an added bonus to it when members of the Indian side tied a rakhi to each Japanese member. Both sides had a small cultural performance planned. The Japanese side sang two songs and the Indian side had a very talented duo of a beat-boxer (Deepro Banerjee) and rapper (Tuneer Chakrabarti) perform followed by a few other songs. After that, a few other impromptu performances like a dance by Trinetra Paul and a song by the Indian members were performed. It was a beautiful evening.

Sayonara Party

19TH OF AUGUST, 2018

By Deepsha Saha

After the enjoyable closing ceremony, followed the Sayonara Party. It started off with a wide number of starters like Tandoori Prawn, Crispy Chili Babycorn, Chicken Pakoras, and moved on to Fried Rice, Chili Fish and Butter Paneer for main course.

The shining bonus of the Sayonara Party was the celebration of the birthday of one of the Japanese members, Chinatsu Yokoyama, a preparation that had been done in secrecy for which special credit needs to be given to Debalina Saha, member of the last IJSC and one of the biggest help in this year's IJSC. We cut the cake, sang the happy birthday song in English and Japanese, and spent time talking, after that.

We promised each other than we'd visit them in Japan, and they said they'd do the same, some day or another. A few of us dropped them off at Santana, later that night.

It's as the saying goes, all's well that ends well.

The Volunteering Experience

AUGUST, 2018

By Deepsha Saha

The 22nd IJSC had almost 4 days of volunteering in its schedule. The fact that the Japanese delegation earnestly insisted on more days of volunteering had surprised most of us. While I personally had never gone for volunteering, I'd heard of it several times. So when it was being talked about, I knew it was no child's play. Even when the Japanese delegation was informed of this, they were firm with their requirements and we figured if they were okay, we were okay with it as well. We had finished our volunteering registration on the 2nd day after the arrival of the Japanese delegation in India. The Indian side president, Shreya and I along with the Japanese were led to Mother's House very efficiently by the finance head, Arunasish. We had to wait there for a while to get the registration because there were dozens of other people waiting to register before us. The strength of the foreigners had surprised me.

The volunteering at the Mother's House is a learning experience of a different and a higher calibre. It showed me a different side to life and I met so many different people from different nationalities. On the days of Volunteering, Volunteers were to gather at the Mother's House at 7:00 AM, sharp. Even though waking up and getting there was a bit of a task, that did not deter the members from their goal ahead. We were served Tea, bread and banana at Mother's House, and after a brief prayer, we were divided into groups. There were two places the actual volunteering took place in- Shanti Dan and Prem Dan. Shanti Dan was exclusively for Women and that was where we were to go. The boys were to go to Prem Dan.

Shanti Dan was around 40 minutes away from Mother's House. The group we were part of had 6 Spaniard girls and our Japanese girls (and me). It was a 15 minute walk to the bus stop, from where the bus bound to the Shanti Dan stop left at regular intervals. The bus took around 20 minutes to reach Shanti Dan bus stop. From here, the place itself was a 10-minute walk away.

I was surprised to see that the foreigners knew the way MUCH better than I did as they rushed through the crowds to get to the destination. Shanti Dan was home to a number of women suffering from mild to severe autism. It was divided into two sections. One was for women and one was for girls. Our group got divided into two separate groups where one group was to help out in the women's section and the other group was to help out in the girl's section. I was to help out in the girl's section.

The work primarily included laundry. Some helped out downstairs at the washing area, a room towards the inside of the building, right after where the girls are bathed and clothed. There were three separate cement tubs in the washing area where the clothes were dipped and washed in detergent and then clean water respectively, in batches. Another group of girls then loaded these wet clothes on a number of smaller tubs which were then carried to the terrace where a group of girls were hanging the clothes from rows and columns of rope lines and metal lines. Sometimes there was heat and sometimes there was rain, but each of the volunteers worked on tirelessly. Towards the end, I remember my arms hurting several light burns from the wringing process.

The rest of the hours were spent hanging out with the girls. Some of them had mild autism which is to say they could comprehend what's going on and even talk in one or two cases. Some of them had serious autism which meant they had to sit in their wheelchairs, their body twisted in different directions. One thing that amazed me about these girls were that, despite the constant bodily pain and discomfort that they were going through, they were so easy to laugh and be happy. All we really needed to do was to smile at them for them to smile back shyly and you could see the happiness glowing in their faces.

I've rarely seen a smile that innocent and strong outside of Shanti Dan.

Volunteering started from 7:00 AM and concluded at 12:PM, everyday. These were 4 hours of physical hard work and learning.

The next place we were to volunteer at was the children's ward which was in Mother's house itself from 3 pm. The children's ward consisted of babies which was another experience in itself. These were babies that did not have a lot of understanding but their bodily pain had already started. Some of the babies were twisted in odd angles, some were so small that they looked like premature babies. Personally, since I like babies, I loved volunteering here even though by the end of trying to feed them and walking around with them in my arms, my waist felt like it could break any moment, I enjoyed playing with them thoroughly. Given the time and the opportunity, I would like to keep going back in there.

Departure

22nd OF AUGUST, 2018

By Kaustuv Sarkar

After the conclusion of the 22nd India-Japan Student Conference on the 19th, the Japanese delegation was scheduled to leave Kolkata for Shantiniketan on the 22nd of August. All the members from the Japanese side were ready to depart, except Mizuno-san. He was running a high fever and needed immediate medical help. So it was decided that the rest of the members carry on without him and board the train to Shantiniketan from Howrah junction. Mizuno-san was taken to a hospital by two of our members.

Because of the quantity of luggage, it was decided that one Uber should be booked which will carry all the luggage along with two members, one from each country. The rest of the members would come afterwards on separate cabs. Me and Morita-san volunteered to take all the luggage to Howrah and wait for the others to arrive. It was a very hot afternoon and handling the luggage was a tiresome ordeal. After everyone had assembled, we went to the food court to have some lunch and also to temporarily escape the heat. We were constantly getting updates about Mizuno-san's condition and we got to know that he'll have to be left behind at Kolkata for the time being. After lunch, the party took off for boarding the train. It was the Howrah-Malda town "inter city express" which was to depart on 1525 hours from platform 12 of the old station complex. The Japanese side with the help of some of the Indian members carried and heaved all the luggage to the compartment and finally boarded the train. The train was scheduled to arrive at Shantiniketan at 1830 hours. There the Japanese side would stay for two days before returning to Kolkata and boarding a flight for New Delhi. With heavy hearts, we said farewell to the Japanese side as the train departed for Shantiniketan.

The India-Japan Student Conference 2018 has become a success because of the combined effort of each and everyone involved. Immense gratitude to Nigam sensei, and Mr. Jayanta Kumar Saha for giving us the opportunity to be a part of it. We would like to heartily thank Dr. Deepti Prasad Mukherjee, Deputy Director of Indian Statistical Institute, the associates of Medinipur Law College and all the village officials for all the arrangements they made during our visit. We also extend our gratitude to Mr. Anupam Das, former President of the 14th IJSC for his constant help and support.

While each student of the conference has played his/her parts, a special mention needs to be made. First of all, each member of the 22nd IJSC would like to thank Debalina Saha (member of the 21st JISC held in Tokyo, Japan) for her constant support even though she couldn't participate this year. She was at our beck and call over the complete duration of the conference and worked almost as hard as the six heads despite her extremely tight schedule. Rupkatha Majumdar, Utpalparna Chakrabarti, Pratyay Mullick, Deepto Banerjee, Duke Pande, Deepsha Saha, and Anusha Banerjee need special mention because of their amazing capability to handle emergencies. They showed great initiative when a member of the Japanese delegation had fallen sick during the conference. They handled the little complexity with great efficiency and presence of mind. A big pat on the back of Anusha Banerjee for single-handedly taking care of all the designing requirements of the 22nd IJSC.



After the conclusion of the closing ceremony

