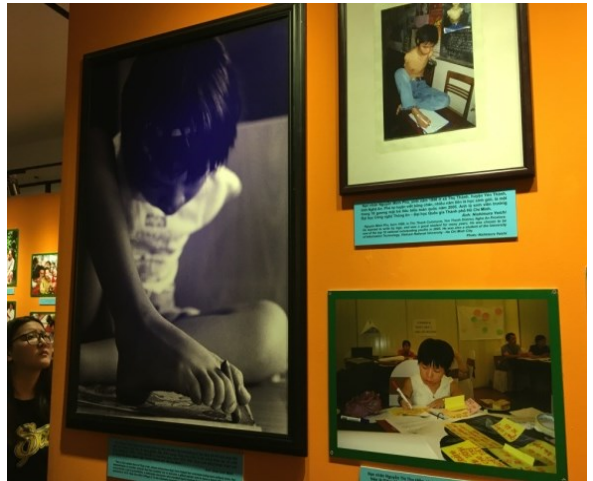


Vietnam Field Work August 2nd~4th Peace Group Report

Four international course students, (Mr. Iimoto, Miss Otsu, Miss Okubora, and Miss Tamura) conducted fieldwork in Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam from August 2nd to 4th.

Day 1 (The War Remnants Museum, Peace Village, Dinner with Mr. Duc)

At the War Remnants museum, there are photographs of the Vietnam war, combat planes, weapons, and an execution chamber displayed. Pictures that we have seen in textbooks were displayed too. So we were able to truly feel the things we have seen so many times in pictures. Looking around the museum, there are not only Asians but also Europeans and Americans too. We thought that it is good for people to come from all over the world to be in a place to learn about the past. My best memory was seeing a picture drawn by children using only their arms and legs. We were very moved by the photo of children also studying hard by using only their feet. We thought that these children would suffer all their life. Also, we were shocked by a story that three children who were found hidden in a well were killed by an American soldier. They were descendants of powerful people, so they were killed without it being a crime. There were many displays about the Vietnam war. This museum was not only for listening but seeing with our own eyes. We felt the true horror of war and fully understood how peaceful of an environment we live.



In the afternoon, we visited the Peace Village. It is a facility for children who have disabilities caused by defoliants. People ranging from sixteen months old to thirty-seven years old live there. Peace Village doesn't only raise children, but also supports them to live by themselves. After an exchange with the children, we couldn't hide our surprise that their trouble is more serious than we had imagined. A teacher in the Peace Village told us that he doesn't know how to stop the effects of defoliants. We felt that the war hasn't finished yet.

At night, we had dinner and an exchange of opinions with Mr. Nguyen Duc. Mr. Duc has been to Japan 46 times and has done many activities for peace. He told us about very important topics. We were moved by his comments, "health is the most important thing" and, "the importance of spiritual support for people who have trouble". He answered all of our questions very carefully. We also learned his thoughts of Japan.

Day 2 (Opinion Exchange with local university students, Cu Chi tunnel)

In the morning they did an opinion exchange with Ms. Tao and local university students. She is a college student who goes to the University of Ho Chi Minh. She originally got interested in Japanese anime and comics. Then she got an interest in Japan. Now, she studies Japanese culture. The opinion exchange was helped by an interpreter, though they fully understood our poor English. Ms. Tao can speak Vietnamese and English and she is currently studying Japanese. Many young people like her can speak more than three languages. To advance in society, we felt it is necessary to have an ability of languages even if it's just speaking English. We asked her, "Are you prejudiced of any other faiths" and she responded "I don't understand why people have prejudices against any other faiths". People in Japan aren't interested in faith. But for people in Vietnam, ordinarily, faiths are jumbled together and they live naturally with other believers. For example, food in restaurant is cooked, served and eaten without concern of the chef's personal faith.

In the afternoon, they did a field trip to Cu Chi Tunnel which was housing for village people during the Vietnam war years. This tunnel is 250 kilometers long in a thickly wooded area. There were some rooms three levels underground just like an ants nest. There are not only places to take part in a military meeting, treat wounded soldiers, hand make weapons, ammunition and military uniforms but also a school, a theater and an amusement facility for children. About 10 meters were open for tourists and we actually got into the tunnel. It was very narrow, so we walked with our bodies crouched down. We thought that the tunnel was never invaded by an armed army. And we were surprised at the villagers who lived underground for nearly 25 years. The ground was scattered with defoliants by the American army and was often under machine gun fire, so the ground was very dangerous. When villagers cooked underground, they devised a room to hide the smoke in order to prevent being found by the opposition army. We understand that all the villagers survived by scooting about in the day and engaging in farming at night and also disarming unexploded American bombs by themselves. A pitfall near the roadside was used for security and was lined with poisonous needles in it. And the crater near the roadside was carved by a bomb planted by the American army. We felt strange because this place was so damaged by war.



Day 3 (Visiting a local Japanese language school)

Many students are from farming villages. We asked them, "Why did you want to study Japanese"? They replied, "We want to work in Japan". They answered questions for us stating that they want to be productive. We thought that we want some of their assertiveness. We were given many valuable experiences. We will definitely make good use of this study trip.

