

The 34th START Program (Taiwan)

For a little over two weeks from August 21 to September 5, 2016, 30 first-year undergraduate students took part in the 34th START Program. Led by Associate Professor Naoki Maeda (Graduate School of Social Sciences) and two other faculty members, the students went to National Chengchi University in Taiwan.

In Taiwan, the participants were divided between four classes and attended Chinese language lessons and listened to lectures on “The history of Taiwan”, “Japan-Taiwan relations” and “Human rights”. Learning Chinese is new to some students, but through the preparation and review of lessons they felt the joy of communicating using a foreign language. During lessons, participants were also able to actively discuss and compare their observations about what they learnt beforehand and what they were learning there and then.

Other than that, the participants went on a field trip to the 228 Memorial Museum, the Republic of China Armed Forces Museum, and the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall. They also visited the Deng Nan-jung Memorial Museum guided by students from the National Chengchi University. During the visit the HU students deepened their knowledge by asking questions about the exhibitions and exchanging information on various topics such as history, culture, and individual hobbies with students from the National Chengchi University.

On the last day of their stay at the National Chengchi University the participants divided into six groups and made group presentations about Taiwan. Understanding the difficulty of creating a comprehensive and well thought-out presentation, they had prepared thoroughly and gave high quality presentations based on what they learned through their field study and lectures.

On the weekend, the students participated in a tour to Quemoy, an island which was at the forefront of the battle with the Chinese mainland during the Chinese Civil War. They visited the Chiunglin Tunnel where traces of war remained, the Mashan Broadcasting and Observation Station, and the August 23 Artillery War Museum. The START participants received a warm welcome from the Vice-President and students at the National Quemoy University, and together learnt about Japan-Taiwan relations. Additionally, guided by students

from the National Quemoy University they visited the Jhaishan Tunnel (another war-related site), Shuitou Village, and the Overseas Chinese Culture Exhibition Hall where they could learn about the emigration history of the people of Quemoy. The students enjoyed interacting with each other to the fullest using Japanese, English, and Chinese.

At the follow-up session after the program participants made a wide range of remarks on their experiences, such as the difficulty of communicating with others in a foreign language, the importance of conveying one's intention to others, their awareness towards their major, and their interaction with local students. This shows how much they have gained from this two-week program.

For many of the students the START program to Taiwan was their first experience in learning Chinese, but they prepared for and reviewed their lessons properly. Using what they learned at school for shopping or other activities in daily life, their Chinese improved day by day. Interaction with local people made them feel the importance of language study, and at the follow-up session many students displayed high motivation to continue studying a foreign language. Comments included: "Next time, I would like to study abroad for a longer period of time" and "I realized the importance of acting proactively on my own initiative. I would like to use this experience for my future student life." The experience gained through this START program inspired participants to strive for their goals and to take on new challenges.



Group photo at the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall. Watched the changing of the guard ceremony



Lectures on the history of Taiwan and Japan-Taiwan relations



At Chinese language lessons, using Japanese was prohibited.



HU students demonstrated *Kendo* in front of the National Quemoy University Students.