

## **The 39<sup>th</sup> START Program (Thailand)**

For around two weeks from February 28th to March 16th 2017, twenty-four first-year students along with Lecturer Hisashi Kuwayama (Graduate School of Education) and two other supervising faculty members participated in the 39<sup>th</sup> START program, studying at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, the Kingdom of Thailand. On top of attending lectures, the students visited Japanese companies based in Thailand and other educational facilities.

At Chulalongkorn University, other than taking Thai language classes students attended lectures held in English regarding Thailand's economy, politics, history, culture and also techniques required when making presentations in English. While most students had no prior experience with Thai, they studied the basics of the language in class and through interactions with local people learnt about the importance of local-language communication. During the lectures taken in English, students initially struggled to understand the content. However, through everyday interactions with Chulalongkorn University students and collating information with fellow participants, students soon become confident in expressing in English any questions they had about lectures or Thailand.

Outside of lectures, students interacted with Chulalongkorn University students on and off-campus, discussing their countries' respective cultures and deepening cross-cultural experience. During their visit to Thailand-based Japanese industries and other educational facilities, they attended lectures regarding the joys and challenges of working overseas and fostering of global human resources, giving them the opportunity to consider the possibilities for their own futures. On top of this, students visited a temple in the suburbs of Bangkok and the world heritage site Ayutthaya Historical Park, and through touring these historical structures were able to experience the diversity of Thai culture and history.

On the final day, students gave group presentations regarding themes they had a special interest in (including Thai politics, economy, society, education, and culture). These presentations were given in English and were a culmination of their study prior to arrival in Thailand, their study during the program, and the results of interviews with Chulalongkorn University students.

At the farewell party, students conveyed their gratitude to the teachers and students who had taken care of them and enabled them to experience an enriching two weeks of study, and also expressed sorrow at their parting.

During the post-study session after returning to Japan, students gave presentations about what they had learnt during the program, and how they would utilize this experience during their student lives and in the future. Through these presentations, students were able to articulate their future goals and express clearly what they needed to do in order to achieve them.



Discussion with Chulalongkorn University students



At Ayutthaya historic remains



Workshop session during company visit



Presentation of learning accomplishments