

DAY FOUR (November 28)



Mayuko Sasaki

It was a chilly day. We were going to do our presentation on that day. At the entrance, there was a large banner saying "HNU-ICU KOREA-JAPAN PEACE FORUM & STUDY TOUR" as if it were a national conference. I was getting nervous about being a presenter. Still, I was looking forward to listening to the presentations of the other groups and discussing with Hannam University students at the same time. We were divided into three groups: history, diaspora, and peace education. Compared to the ICU team, the HNU team included more international students. My team presented about the role of school field trips to Nagasaki, Hiroshima, and Okinawa as part of peace education. We struggled to narrow down this topic from peace education because we found it too difficult to define peace education. However,



we decided to connect field trips and peace education in order to make the concept more tangible and easier to grasp. I now firmly understand the importance of it through this field trip to Korea. HNU's peace education group presented the connection between peace and *hallyu*, Korean cultural products such as K-pop and K-dramas. It was their opinion that *hallyu* could be used as soft power to overcome conflicts between nations, but that it was not enough. Culture is only one of the factors that can trigger interest in a country. After that, we have to learn about the history, politics, and social issues from both our own and the other side's perspectives. This forum was an excellent opportunity to consider the same topic from a different approach.

After finishing the presentations, we went on a Daejeon city tour with some Korean students from HNU. When a Korean guide presented us with some historical information about Daejeon, one of the students translated it into English for us. Every student was very nice, and we talked about Korea and Japan. Daejeon is famous for its historical places. Firstly, we visited Uamsajeok Gongwon, which is a historical park. Uam Song Si-yeol is well known as a poet in Korea. Uam is actually his pseudonym. He devoted his life to the study of Confucianism. Buildings in the

park, such as Heungnongseodang and Namganjeongsa were built by him as places to study with his many disciples. The park was created in order to commemorate Song Si-yeol, his integrity and patriotism. We can understand the extent to which he had a significant impact on Korean history by looking at his portrait of the 1000 won Korean banknote.

Keita Abe



It was finally the day of the peace forum, so we had to get up a little earlier than usual - not an easy task after a late night spent working on our presentation. Nevertheless, we hopped on the bus and headed to Hannam University. It was quite an exciting moment entering the university, particularly after spotting a

banner promoting the peace forum, which really cemented that feeling of "oh, we're actually doing this." We arrived at the main building and entered the conference room, and after getting our name tags and some sort of gift bags (I unfortunately did not receive one, which was quite saddening but that is life I suppose), we seated ourselves accordingly and waited for the introduction. After the initial remarks, the forum began with presentations followed by discussion sessions. The forum itself was not quite what I expected. Due to some technical difficulties and time constraints, much of the discussions were restricted to short Q&As without much in-depth discourse. I had joined this peace trip in order to really gain an understanding of how Korean people, particularly Korean people my age, feel about the issues between Japan and South Korea, and how they view the possible solutions or ways of resolving these issues. Instead, there seemed to be a gap between our schools as to the depth of the forum and the topics we would be discussing, and as a result, the "issues" discussed, I felt, were superficial at best and had no real impact on working towards a peaceful solution. After the forum ended, we were taken on a city tour around Daejeon with the Korean students and a few of the remaining international students, which in many ways was a far richer learning experience. It was also quite fun to simply chat with the local tour guides and Korean



students, and I managed to gain insight on the informal feelings that Koreans have towards Japan separate from their political views on the Japanese government. Being able to create this connection not only with people my age, but also from older generations, was perhaps the most meaningful portion of this trip for myself and only furthered my desire to interact with them more in the future.

Rachel Lim

Prior to this trip, I spent a month with my groupmates to prepare for a presentation that we would make in front of students at Hannam University. Our school mates were divided into 3 groups: “Diaspora”, “History”, and “Peace Education”. I was placed in the “Diaspora” group along with Kim, Airi, Sakiko, and Keita. Despite having very different schedules, as well as final exams overlapping with our preparation time, we all did our best to contribute to the development and the solidification of our research question. After going through many revisions with the help of advisors, we managed to come up with a research topic, “Social Status of Zainichi Koreans in Japan”, a subject that got all members’ interest and that we wanted to learn about from the Korean students’ perspective. It was crucial that throughout the entire process, we would be able to formulate an argument, a conclusion, and some questions that would allow both sides to engage in further discussion.

Even the night before the presentation, we ended up staying up until 2 am in one of the team member’s room in a last attempt to perfect and practice our presentation. Needless to say, I left the hotel quite tired the next morning as well as nervous and cold. We arrived at the university in less than 15 minutes and were welcomed by a massive banner announcing the peace forum hanging above the middle of the driveway. We hurried into the conference room where students, teachers and representatives of the Hannam university warmly welcomed our arrival. After a short welcome speech by the professors, with little to no time to dwell on my anxious thoughts the first section of the presentation began.



Overall, the presentations conducted by the students from Hannam University were individually unique and interesting; all attempting to shed light on the relationship between Korea and Japan by featuring Korean and Japanese cultures as stepping stones to better the relationship. Some groups compared Korean and Japanese cultures by looking through different forms of media that are enjoyed by their neighbour, while others discussed the fundamental differences in the everyday life of both Korea and Japan. In contrast, ICU students based their presentations on what are considered “controversial” issues, in order to use this opportunity to express our understanding of Japanese history while acknowledging Korea’s perspective. Many of the students from Hannam University were actually first term exchange students from abroad who were not as knowledgeable of the current political situation between Japan and Korea. That being said, some of them were able

to provide us with examples from their home country, which made their take on how they felt about the issues at stake refreshing to hear. However, there were definitely moments that I felt some tension between Japanese and Korean students, especially when ICU students opened the floor to questions following their presentations. It was the first time that I was able to witness firsthand that there is a difference in how history is recognized and portrayed by each country, as well as the first time being confronted about it by Korean students. The discussion with the Korean students made me realize how poorly I was able to articulate my thoughts, and that I still had a very long way to go in order to fully understand this bilateral relationship. Although I felt like I personally was not able to eloquently articulate a solid answer to some of their questions, it motivated me to keep learning and try to understand both perspectives.

After the peace forum was over, Hannam University graciously offered to take us on a city tour of Daejeon during which we visited some historical monuments as well as a popular bakery. We then rode the bus back to Hannam University, where we had dinner with the Korean students at a nearby pasta restaurant. The tension and competitive energy that I had felt during the presentations were no longer present, and we all had a great time talking to the Korean students and learning about their life in Korea. After we bid our bittersweet farewells, we went back to the hotel and enjoyed some delicious Korean fried chicken while conducting an evaluation meeting. All in all, I can say that this day was one of the most exhausting yet fulfilling day I had in my life and will forever cherish it to remind myself about how I want to evolve as a student. I feel so lucky that I was able to be a part of it alongside my school mates, and would like to express my gratitude towards them, Dukin, Professor Sasao, as well as everyone involved in this trip.

Trinh Kim Ngan

Here comes the day that all of us looked forward to, the day of the Peace Forum. We spent a great deal of our time preparing for this important day for almost two months now. Coming all the way from Japan on this study tour, we look forward to the Peace Forum at Hannam University as an opportunity to share what we have been researching and learn more from the discussions with students from different backgrounds. And we did indeed have a fruitful day.



We already felt warmly welcomed the moment we arrived at Hannam University (NHU). Upon our arrival, a big banner hanging over the entrance of the main campus and saying “HNU-ICU Korea-Japan Peace Forum and Study Tour” greeted us. We were guided to the conference room where we received our name tags as well as gifts from the university. It just felt like home when we met our new HNU friends whom we had talked to and gotten to know more over the previous night’s dinner. The HNU students came from different backgrounds, different countries, in a mix of exchange students and Korean students that made me look forward to their presentations and the discussions we would all have at the peace forum.

The forum began with a welcoming speech from HNU, followed by a gift exchange ceremony between the two universities. We then moved on to the presentations and discussions revolving around three topics, namely Korea-Japan relations, peace education, and Korean and Japanese history and culture. There were three groups from each university. Our presentations covered various matters such as Zainichi Koreans in Japan, the depiction of “comfort women” in Japanese textbooks, the *Hallyu* wave as soft power, world peace and education, and cultural differences. My group brought up the discussion on Zainichi Koreans’ social status in Japan and how it has changed over the years as depicted in the coverage of the Asahi Shimbun, one of Japan’s leading newspapers. At first, we were nervous because the topic we chose could be a sensitive one. However, since we had spent the previous night carefully preparing for the discussion, all of us delivered the message well and received a lot of comments and contributive ideas from the audience. I personally regarded these comments as a chance for us to reflect on what we had been doing and as a contribution to how we should improve our research. I am also happy that the efforts of every group member paid off and that we learned so much from the discussion.

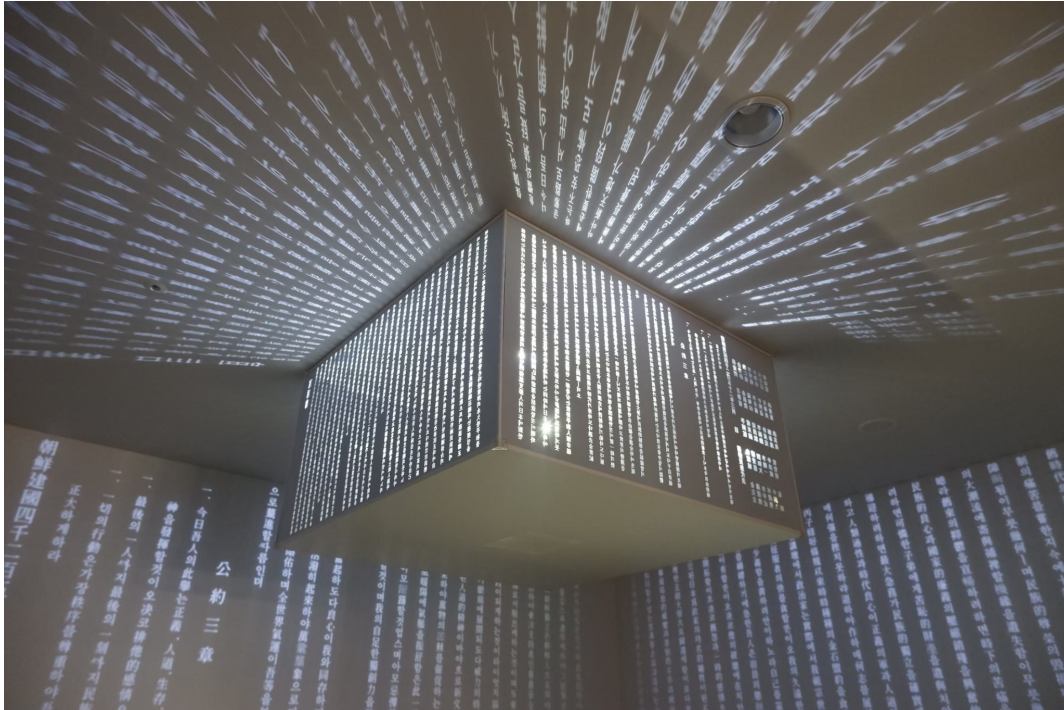
We also actively participated in all other discussion sessions. The overall takeaway was that through the exchange of ideas, we came to realize that education and mutual understanding are both crucial to the peacebuilding process. I believe that each of us was also able to gain a better understanding of ourselves as individuals within society and about how individuals from diverse backgrounds, through the bridge of education, can develop a mindful attitude towards various issues, no matter how controversial they can be.

After the Peace Forum, we enjoyed a lunchbox with the HNU students in a friendly atmosphere and then proceeded to a tour of Daejeon. There are many different tour routes when visiting Daejeon, but the tour we did was a historical and cultural one. With the help and guidance of HNU students, we had the chance to visit Dongchundang Head House, Sodaehon Hoyeon Jae’s Historic House, the Hoedeokhyanggyo Daeseongjeon (Confucian School), and so on. All these places were connected to the Joseon Dynasty. Walking this path of history, I felt so lucky to be enjoying and experiencing my first trip to Korea in such an amazingly exclusive way.

We went back to HNU at 5 pm and enjoyed dinner with the Korean students in one of the restaurants popular among them. They stayed with us until 8 pm and we took a group goodbye selfie and exchanged hugs before we headed back to our hotel. We ended our day with a short get-together to celebrate our hard work with a treat offered by Dukin’s family. Professor Sasao gave a speech, and we were all so happy to realize how amazing the people we had been working with were. I remembered how shy I had been on the first day and realized how far we had all come and grown since then.



DAY FIVE (November 29)



Giovanni Catino

On the morning of the 5th day, we woke up tired. The day before had been a long day, and during breakfast we discussed the presentation we made on the previous day at Hannam University. We were all relieved that it was done, but also satisfied with our performance. Later, we went by bus to a place called The Independence Hall of Korea in Cheonan.

The bus stopped in the parking lot and we walked across the vast plaza dominated by the incredibly large monument. The Independence Hall of Korea is the biggest museum in South Korea. Ever since its opening in 1987, it has attracted both tourists and locals interested in the country's history and development. There, one can learn about the various movements that have led the country to its independence and see exhibits spanning all the way back to prehistoric times to the present day. It is a beautiful place. The museum offers brochures in braille designed for the visually impaired.

On that day, a breeze was gently blowing and as a result thousands of flowers and Korean flags were fluttering about in the wind. It was sunny and clear; we could see the mountains surrounding us in the distance.

We had the opportunity to walk around and look at things. The museum has seven rooms or pavilions that provide interesting information on: The Origin of Korean People, National Crisis of Japanese Imperialism, Struggles for National Rights, March 1st Independence Movement, Patriotic Struggle for National Independence, Establishing the Great Korea, The Experience Hall of the Independence Movement. The whole place felt like some sort of treasure.



Finally, after taking pictures and creating other nice memories of this amazing study tour we jumped back on the bus to our next destination: Ahn Jeongun Memorial Museum in Seoul.

This is a very touching museum dedicated to the life of an important Korean martyr who opposed the Japanese rule on the peninsula and ended up killing the Japanese prince ruling over the country. It is a testimony to the struggles of the oppressed people and symbolizes the will of Korea to be free and its readiness

to achieve independence. I have to admit that although I did not know anything about Ahn Jung Geun before visiting this place, I felt quite emotional when I got out of the museum. His life is depicted as a story of strong belief and resistance until martyrdom. Most of the information in the museum is in Korean only, but a friendly man at the entrance was very helpful and gave us a small booklet in English about his life. Some displays were a bit nationalistic, but they gave me a better understanding of the feelings of the Korean people about their country.

So far, this trip had been an emotional trip through the history of South Korea. However, we had the perfect ending with a pork barbecue dinner that we enjoyed all together in the centre of Seoul. That is when we realized that we did not stop a minute for the entire trip, but at that moment, the happiness we felt overcame our fatigue.

Trinh Kim Ngan

We enjoyed our breakfast with a great view of Daejeon from the Lotte City Hotel. Now that the Peace Forum had been carried out, it was time for us to contemplate our experience of the whole trip in Jeonju, Gwanju and now in Daejeon. Indeed, each city has its own characteristics and unique stories to tell about the independence and democratic movement of Korea. In order to deepen our understanding, our program also included a visit to the Independence Hall of Korea in Cheonan and the Ahn Junggeun Memorial Museum on our way back to Seoul.

The Independence Hall of Korea was first opened to the public in 1987 and has since been the largest exhibition site in South Korea. The indoor exhibitions, with a lot of different themes and various facilities, depict and focus on the independence movement of the country led by secret societies at home and Korean expatriates abroad. We had two hours to explore the whole place so I decided to pay attention to the March 1st Movement, the strongest act of resistance against Japanese colonial rule, presented in two exhibition rooms, namely "The Korean People Cry Out" and "Meaning and Value of the Korean Independence Movement". I discussed with some of my Japanese friends during the visit about our feelings and experiences; we did learn a lot more on the topic than what we had in our history classes before. The tour ended at around 11:30 am and we took a group photo with the Tower of People in the background before leaving for Seoul.

We had lunch at a Korean restaurant specializing in *dak-galbi*, a spicy stir-fried chicken dish. I was so lucky to be guided by Dukin-san on how to enjoy the main dish and side dishes. It was the fifth day in

Korea so far and besides the history of the country, I was also learning a lot about Korean culture and people through food and the local eating etiquette.

We arrived at the Ahn Junggeun Memorial Museum in Seoul at about 3 pm. From the Museum, we could see the Namsan Tower from afar. We stopped to take a group photo with the statue of Ahn Junggeun at the entrance. To the Korean people, Ahn Junggeun is a man of courage, a patriot, and a national hero. For me, as a foreigner going on a trip with Japanese students to learn about peace and deepen my understanding of Korea-Japan relations, I experienced an eye-opening journey on how a kind



of “non-formal peace education” like a museum visit can really help in deepening one’s understanding and awareness of the issue. To me, and to many of my friends as well, Ahn Junggeun is not just the man who shot Ito Hirobumi, but also a man of courage and integrity. One can argue that museums may show us what they want us to see. Even so, the pieces of evidence of history are there, and the purpose of their presence there is not to convey hatred but to educate and foster understanding in every one of us, the lovers of peace.

Leaving the Museum, we checked into our new hotel and went on to have dinner. We enjoyed our last night in Korea in the Myeongdong area, where we immersed ourselves into the atmosphere of Seoul by night and bought some souvenirs for our friends and family.

All in all, the fifth day of the trip provided us with a more in-depth reflection on how strong and determined the people and peace lovers can be in their pursuit of the universal values that are freedom and peace.

Homari Masuko

At 8:30 a. m., we gathered at the hotel lobby and hopped on the bus to go to Cheonan. After a one-hour bus ride, we arrived in Cheonan, where we visited the Independence Hall of Korea. This museum displays some of Korea’s historical documents, mainly focusing on the independence movement that happened during the 20th century. The museum explains very well the road to Korea’s independence and how it was won from Japan after a long time of suffering. In the third hall, there is an animation which portrays Korean people marching for independence and shouting *bansei* on the streets. It is a beautiful animation, but more than that, it told me so much about the Korean people’s emotions and will for independence at that time. By visiting this museum, I could finally understand how meaningful and important their history of independence is for Korean people. Although it might sound

obvious to some people, this realization was significant to me as I could finally see history from a different perspective.



Therefore, having an opportunity to learn the Korea-Japan history at this museum and to imagine the Korean perspective was a meaningful experience for me. After visiting the Independence Hall, we went to have *dak galbi* for lunch and then got on the bus again to head to our final destination, Seoul. In Seoul, we first visited a museum dedicated to Ahn Jeongun, the man who assassinated the Japanese Resident-General of Korea, Ito Hirofumi, in 1909. The museum shows the life of Ahn Jeongun and the historical background of Ito Hirofumi's assassination. The handprints of Ahn Jeongun and his comrades, who had cut the last joint of their ring finger as a proof of their loyalty to the cause, as well as the "Independence of Korea," written in blood, shocked me on how strong their dedication and will for independence were. After the visit to the museum, we went to the hotel to check in and then headed to the dinner place. The restaurant was in Myeong-Dong, a lively area of Seoul with many street food and shopping places.

Our tour guide Jin, Ms. Dukin's brother and Professor Sasao's friend, joined us for dinner during which we enjoyed *bulgogi* and had a great time together. After dinner, we had some free time to explore Myeong-dong. We also went to Lotte Mart in Seoul station to buy souvenirs as well. I was glad to explore the city finally, but I also realized that I needed to come back again to Korea to explore and see more of it. After all the shopping, we went back to the hotel, had one last meeting, and went to bed. It was a busy day with many activities and happenings, but I was glad to have learned many new things and seen different parts of Korea.

Uroosa Mahmood

In the morning, we woke up and enjoyed a great breakfast with a city view at the Lotte Hotel. After breakfast, we met the team outside the lounge waiting to begin the exciting day ahead. We went to the largest museum in Korea, the Independence Hall of Korea where we learned about the journey filled with sacrifices made by Korean people, leaders and students to achieve the country's independence. As we went from one room to another, we could see the progress towards independence made through each generation. As we moved near the main entrance, we had a chance to take pictures with Korean soldiers.

We had the opportunity to listen to the explanations regarding the exhibitions in English through the audio device that was provided to us by the museum. Through the exhibition halls, we witnessed the path that led Koreans to independence. In Exhibition Hall entitled "Struggles for National Rights", there was a dark pathway with blinking lights on the floor highlighting the quotes of the leaders who gave people the courage to fight during the independence movement. After passing through that we saw an animated

summary depicting the struggles of the students involved in Gwanju's student movement. On the way back to the bus, we had warm walnut snacks. After we left the independence hall, we went for lunch and had grilled fish with water kimchi at a local restaurant.



In Ahn Jung Jun Museum, there was a screen which showed messages from visitors who had come to the museum to learn about the struggles of Ahn Jun during the independence movement. We had the chance to write our own messages in the museum archives sealed with an image of Ahn's handprint which, with the last joint missing from his ring finger, symbolizes the loyalty of Ahn Jeongun towards his country's. After visiting the museum, we went to the Koreana hotel in Seoul. At night we went for dinner in Myeoung-dong and spent an hour in the area shopping for souvenirs for our families. Kim and I enjoyed Seoul's famous double flavoured fifteen layer ice cream. We also went to Lotte Mart to shop for Korean snacks, and we bought a bunch of souvenirs for our family and friends.

Miwa Sakiko



After the relief from successfully completing our presentations at Hannam University the day before, the 5th day of our trip began with a relaxed mood. We first started with a one-hour bus ride to another city, Cheonan to visit the Independence Hall of Korea.

As one can tell by its name, this museum specifically focuses on the colonization of Korea by Japan, but it also covers most of Korea's history from prehistoric times, throughout the Joseon Dynasty to the present day. It is also important to note that this exhibition hall is

the biggest in South Korea. My first impression of this museum was that the displays were very much detailed and artistic enough to stir up the audience's attention and emotions. Not only the historical records, but depictions of important scenes were impressively well-used. Also, in regard to the information, it was provided on written material and by the audio guides in three languages: Korean, English and Japanese. One of the points that I value the most as a member of the audience when I visit a museum is the use of other languages as I believe that this increases the reliability of the material presented by the organizers of the exhibition. However, one of my travelmate who understands all three languages told me that the wordings and details often differed from the original Korean version

when translated to English and Japanese. Hearing this, I saw it as problematic, because it could lead to a gap in understanding among different audiences, depending on the language they use. Content-wise, the exhibitions provided me with the perspective of South Korea on most of its history. The exhibitions were mostly about how colonization by the Japanese was such a miserable time in the history of the Korean people, but ended with dynamic displays of the country's aspirations, and of South Korea's peaceful reunification with North Korea.

After a few hours on the bus and lunch, we arrived at another site, Ahn Jung-Geun Memorial Museum. Ahn Jung-geun is the Korean patriot who took leadership in the fight for independence from Japan and who is known for assassinating Ito Hirofumi in 1909. This memorial hall is dedicated to his life and pays respect to his courage and the efforts he made for Korea. I got a good impression about this museum for being very organised with a focus, however, the provided explanations were limited to Korean and English speakers or android phone users. In terms of contents, although the name Ahn Jung-geun was only familiar to me from history textbooks, but as I he, as an individual became realistic to me. This also made me consider another point about learning history. I've been educated through few different educational institutes on war history, and all of the contents were dedicated to be as neutral as possible. However, as a (future) anthropology major, I wondered about the value of looking at history from one person's perspective.



The last activities of the day took place at one of Seoul's most touristic areas, Myeongdong. I remembered the last time I had come to Korea, then I was only interested in shopping and Myeongdong looked like so much fun. But this time, after learning about Korea's history, my interest in shopping had scaled back. Then the idea that occurred to me was that it always comes back to the point that K-wave has made me hesitant to know more about Korea other than pop culture. I believe there is definitely a need for addressing these real issues with accordance of the culturistic things the soft power brings to us.

Sohee Yun

On our fifth day, we visited the Independence Hall of Korea in Cheonan, Ahn Jeongun Memorial Museum in Seoul, and finally had the time to shop in Myeong-dong.

What amazed me the moment we stepped inside the Independence Hall of Korea was the massiveness. It stands as the biggest exhibition hall in South Korea, and the whole area was so big that it took thirty minutes for us to actually enter the building to start looking at the exhibit. Looking around, I noticed that many of the visitors were quite young. I saw many children who seem to be elementary school students, and there were many military personnel visiting the site. I found it rather interesting that the people of the younger generation is visiting this site to learn about the Korean history.

Independence Hall of Korea had seven exhibition buildings. Unfortunately, I only had the time to visit four out of the seven buildings, but I had a valuable experience at the museum. Going through the museum and looking at the exhibit was an interesting learning experience because every time I learned something horrible that the Japanese did or felt a strong sense of grief for those who suffered from Japanese imperialism, I found myself not being able to fully immerse myself in these emotions, and

taking a little step behind and telling myself that this is just the Korean side of the story. I felt lost and confused; While I believe that personal emotions can be a burden to understanding history in a peaceful way, I hold that the suffering of the people in Korea during the colonial period were unbearable beyond words and must never be forgotten.



Ahn Jeongun Memorial Museum was another powerful museum, which focused not only on the assassination of Hirofumi Ito in 1909, but rather his whole life story. The museum depicts him as a hero who dedicated his life to peace in East Asia. Although I am sure that there are many different views on Ahn Jeongun and what he did, I can say that I was deeply moved by his philosophy. He had a strong passion, did what he strongly believed was right, and kept his belief until his death. I thought that it was naive to to merely call him a terrorist or a murderer.

From these two museums, I felt the need to learn more about the history and develop my own belief on the imperial past. In order to do so, learning Korean is a must. Although I have always thought so, I've always avoided it, listing up excuses not to. It is about time I get to work on things I've procrastinated on.

After these tense experiences at the museum, we had a great time having dinner and shopping in Myeong-dong. As much as I loved looking through Korean cosmetics, I very much enjoyed walking from Myeong-dong to the hotel. We came across a street piano, and we sang a few songs as my talented friends played the piano. We had a beautiful view of the city lights of Seoul, and it was purely a wholesome time. I am more than thankful for everyone who made this trip an unforgettable one.

DAY SIX (November 30)

Kaede Yamazaki



Finally, this is our last day in Korea. Looking back, it feels like we have visited a lot of places during this trip. Now, I think that I need more time to understand and think about what I have learned once we go back to Japan.

This morning, after we left the hotel, we went to Gyongbokgung Palace by bus. I had visited Korea twice before this trip. On both previous trips, I had also visited Gyongbokgung Palace, so I thought that there was nothing new for me to see there. However, I learned a lot of things from the stories told by our guide. I was surprised by the fact that there was no bathroom

in the palace. This is because the bathroom was brought to the king. The king did not have to do anything by himself, which means that he had absolute power over everything during his reign. It was interesting for me to learn the historical background of Gyongbokgung Palace.

After that, we visited the War and Women's Human Rights Museum. We learned about the comfort women. I think that it is difficult to completely understand the Korean perspective on this issue.

Though I have learned about the comfort women issue before I joined this trip, it remains difficult for me to understand it. It was interesting to me that the museum also explains about the activism of the surviving comfort women. This means that we should not forget those women. Also the museum highlighted that this issue is yet to be resolved. I want to continue to think about this issue from various perspectives. There are a lot of exhibitions about comfort women but also exhibitions about human rights all over the world. There is also a small exhibition about comfort women in Vietnam. In that case, the perpetrators were Korean soldiers. I would like to know if and how they have solved this problem between Korea and Vietnam. There is a serious problem between Japan and Korea because of the comfort women issue. I think that if the problem has already been solved between Korea and Vietnam, it could be a good example for Korea and Japan to follow.



Finally, we flew back to Japan. The last six days were filled with memorable experiences and life lessons. I will never forget those experiences. I would like to

express my gratitude for being able to participate in this amazing field trip and for meeting wonderful teachers and making new friends. I will continue to learn about various things and think about various issues.

Airi Nemoto

On the last day of our field trip, we left the hotel at 9 am. Sad to see our journey coming to an end. I woke up a little bit earlier than usual since I had yet to finish packing my suitcase, and couldn't believe it was the last day of the trip. It felt like we were still on the third day of the trip. The breakfast was buffet style and there was a lot of delicious-looking food there, but I was not hungry because of the previous night's dinner. After leaving the hotel, we headed to Gyeongbokgung Palace. It took less than 10 minutes to get there from our hotel. Gyeongbokgung Palace was the royal palace during the Joseon Dynasty. There were so many tourists from not only Asian countries but also European countries wearing beautiful Korean traditional clothes called *hanbok* walking around the palace grounds.



The next place we visited was the War and Women's Human Rights Museum. Personally, I was particularly interested in the comfort women issue before coming to Korea, so I was really looking forward to visit this museum. The reason why I am interested in this issue is because of the important role it plays in Korea-Japan relations. Moreover, to gain a deeper understanding about this issue, I believe that I have to understand different perspectives, others than the Japanese one.



The museum is located at the top of a hill. On the way to the museum's entrance, there are some pictures portraying the shadows of women on the wall. Unfortunately, I didn't understand the meaning of the messages written in Korean. However, our guide told us that those messages are filled with the emotions of pain and sorrow felt by the victims, whom the Koreans call *halmoni*. On the other side of the wall there are also messages written in both Korean and other foreign languages about praying for peace. When entering the building, I saw a message written on the wall by a *halmoni* that said "How bitter a life I shall live to bring back my youth." Those words made my heart ache. The *halmoni* were deprived of their youth. Every Wednesday, a protest takes place in front of the Japanese embassy in which demonstrators demand a sincere apology from the Japanese government.

Right after visiting the exhibition, we headed to Gimpo International Airport. We all said thank you and goodbye to our super supportive and great guide with a small gift, which one of our members, Sohee, had bought in secret. While waiting to board the plane, we had a mission to write thank you cards to Professor Sasao and Dukin-san without them noticing.

During the flight back to Tokyo, I reflected upon this trip with Kaede who was sitting next to me and we talked about this study tour was an unforgettable experience for us. Although we are still freshmen, we enjoyed this first academic experience abroad as an opportunity to gain deeper knowledge of the relationship between Korea and Japan. We reached Haneda International Airport in less than two hours, exchanged greetings, gave our thank you cards, and finally ended our trip with a big smile.

In the beginning, I chose to join this trip in order to learn more about Korea-Japan relations from a Korean perspective. Now, because of this trip, my interest has increased and I would like to deepen my knowledge even more. I think that we have to contribute to the peace process, so the situation between the two countries can improve. I feel so blessed to have been able to participate in this year's ICU Korea-Japan Peace Forum and Study Tour, and I would like to thank all members and staff who have made this trip possible.

Giovanni Catino

It was the last morning of the trip already, and I could not believe that one week had passed. It felt like we had just landed in Seoul the previous day to start our amazing journey. It was now time to go back to Japan, however, before that, we had our most emotional visit yet.

Hidden in the backstreets of Seoul is one of South Korea's most poignant and memorable museums, the War and Women's Human Rights Museum. This beautifully and thoughtfully presented museum reveals the distressing and largely untold story of the thousands of Korean women who were enslaved and abused by the Japanese Army before and during the Second World War. A must-visit museum for human rights supporters.



Throughout the War and Women's Human Rights Museum, there are hundreds of testimonials from former comfort women from all around Asia. Although the majority of them were Koreans, many women from the Philippines and Malaysia, as well as European women living in Southeast Asia, were also enslaved. Perhaps the saddest and most touching part of the survivors' stories is that many of them never made it home. Hundreds were massacred and many of those who survived were abandoned at the end of the war.

When we entered the museum, the staff approached us with such kindness and provided us with audio guides in English and helpfully explained in detail how to use them. The first part of the museum was immersive and took us through a small replica of the path the women had to go through when they were deported. The emotional experience of walking through this path was very powerful.



The exhibition was incredibly moving and brought both my friend and I to tears. My group particularly appreciated the emotional aspect of this visit, given that our research topic touched upon the promotion of ethno-empathy through school field trips. Indeed, our visit to this museum helped us share an emotional connection with the Korean people and thus, better understand how Koreans may feel about these atrocities that were perpetrated by Japan. Many of my Japanese colleagues and friends asked the museum's staff about how they could help create awareness about this issue in Japan.

"Start to talk about it with your friends" was the answer given by a member of the staff.

Finally, we played tourists by visiting the Gyeongbokgung Palace, the royal palace of the Joseon Dynasty: an enchanting place full of history. As soon as we entered, we felt transported back in time. It was interesting to see so many tourists dressed in traditional *hanbok* costumes, especially as they were taking photos of each other.

It was now time to go back to Japan. We were at the airport having mixed feelings. We had left Japan without knowing what to expect. Our journey had begun with the preparation of a simple academic presentation, but it was now wrapping up as a significant academic experience and emotional journey through both the ancient history and modern history of South Korea. An experience which not only helped us to improve our skills, but also one that made us more sensitive about other countries' past, which is crucial for building peace among nations.

Miwa Sakiko

Our last day began with a visit to another popular site for tourists, Gyeongbokgung Palace. With detailed explanations provided by our guide, we briefly explored the palace. During the visit, I learned that the palace was once destroyed by the Japanese during the Imjin War that took place during the 1600s. Although the examples of foreign invasions that are followed by the destruction of cultural heritages are commonly seen around the world even today, I still felt the sin of this act. Of course, what is right or what is not to destroy is a difficult question, the value of preserving memories from major and centric places would hold meanings for the descendants. Also noteworthy is the impression I got from this palace. It seemed that it lacked proper promotion, that is, the promotion of its historical value. Rather, it appeared to be mostly depicted in terms of its photogenic quality, which it seemed was the reason why most tourists apparently came for. Therefore, even though there were a couple of museums about the palace and folk history built on site, they did not draw much attention. Once again, this made me consider the power of K-wave and some possible ways to connect it with deeper education.

Last but not least, we finally visited the museum that exhibits the experiences of the comfort women during World War II. It was probably the smallest museum that we visited in South Korea, but it was impressively well-organised in such a limited space. Although the focus was mainly on Korean comfort women, one exhibit was used to present the stories of Vietnamese women forced into sexual

slavery by Korean military during the Vietnam War, and one whole floor covered issues of sexism around the world today. Through this and also the discussion session with the staff at the museum, I was able to finally understand the importance and purpose of voicing women's rights during wars/conflicts. Living in Japan and listening to news provided by Japanese media, I had somehow become narrow-minded and skeptical as to what this movement was really for and was under the impression that it was being used as a political tool by Korea with Japan, even though, as a woman myself, I had always supported the plight of the comfort women. That being said, politics cannot be excluded from this issue anyway, because the government's official apology is what survivors are demanding. I think this is a serious dilemma that could or might have been drawing people's attention in a negative way, one which pulls away from the real issue of women's human rights during conflicts. Another insight I gained through thinking about the comfort women issue was whether individuals' personal stories can hold validity as historical record or not. As explained to us by the museum's staff, one of the issues regarding the recognition of such historical events is the difficulty in gathering information that is both consistent and reliable from the surviving victims due to their old age. However, as a student planning to major in anthropology, which is an academic field that is mainly based on personal stories, I thought if this stance could perhaps support the further development of recognizing traumatic stories that are worthwhile to pass down to the next generations, including "comfort women" and other war-time memories.

