

An Interesting Tour

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I have been staying Japan for several months as a visiting research Fellow, Chiba is a modern, beautiful but very quiet city, everyday I go to work by bicycle, sometimes by bus if it is raining. I always want to have a talk with passer who passes by me, but I can't say a word because I don't understand Japanese language. Such is my life in Japan, I really hope a studying tour which announced by staffs of exchange division while I arrived at IDE.

Last Monday, on August 21, my dream realized. Our team set out for a studying tour of three days in Yamagata prefecture situated in the north-eastern part of the Japanese archipelago with a small population of 1,220,000 people. It's really a fantastic tour for me. Actually, Yamagata is a typical window for foreigners to observe how Japanese people live on site.

We take fast railway(新幹線),It's the first time for me to take one of the fastest railway in world, It is really very fast in speed, only after half and two hours tour we arrive at Yamagata prefecture, and then we visit the government of Yamagata prefecture. In a simple meeting, A speaker introduces us the situation of prefecture, such as percentage of manufacture, agriculture, service and tourism industries, he also talk about the challenges that the prefecture faces, such as population reduced in constant and ageing problem which troubled development of agriculture. We have cups of coffee, but no launch, no drinks, I think this is difficult to imagine for me, because in China local government always like to host a visiting delegation, especially when the team is consisted of foreigners. This is not mean that I want to have a wonderful launch in Yamagata's government, I just show you the different respects between two nations(China and Japan).China's government always do their

best to let visitors feel their enthusiasm, this will make it put more money and time on building good relations with visitors, it always pay very high cost to run the government, however, Japan's local governments are very normative, this makes them very efficient and low costly for running the government, I think the most important point China's local government can learn from Japan is how to build normative, low cost and incorruptible frameworks.

What the most shocking experience in Yamagata is to visit their garbage process factory. During the second morning, we followed two workers and see they how to make barrels of garbage together one station after one station and carry barrels of garbage to the factory, then, we arrive at garbage process factory, stand by there, simultaneously see several ageing workers unload barrels of garbage and put into a pool, I think it is really a unordinary job, actually I can't tolerate very rank smell for several times, but the workers do this kind of job every day, I really respect them, if without their hard work unknown to the public, of course without good environment in Japanese cities.

We also visited an agricultural community, the head of the community introduced us his famous training program, every year there are many students from universities in Tokyo come to the community and learn how to cultivate on rice land, understand importance of agriculture, especially, this program make very nice exchanges between metropolitan and farmer, as the head put it, farmer grow safe grain and rice for city people, and city people pay a high price for products of farm, this is a very key step for two kinds of people to survive. In order to grow safe grain, farmers don't use chemical insecticide, they feed birds and ducks to wipe out insects, It really sounds fantastic for me.

Finally, we went to Wakuwaku Kan and tried to do the safflower dye, safflower is a kind of plant which contains a red and yellow pigment, a yellow pigment can be used to dye silk, a red pigment can be used to dye silk and cotton, I remember this kind of

flower also grow in my homeland. In Wakuwaku Kan, the keeper of shop explain how to dye a silk handkerchief, and then we do the safflower dye by ourselves, after around half a hour of practice, every person have got a beautiful handkerchief with red or yellow patterns, every one show off his/her skill and is really very happy.

Three days tour passed very quickly, but several things impressed me. First, Japanese people is strongly aware of environmental protection; Second, farmers pay much attentions to grain of safety, and try to build confidence with city people; Finally, in agricultural region, not only population is reducing, but also becoming aged in constant.

Monday, August 28, 2006