

YOKOHAMA-SXIP 2023

Place: VIT Chennai in India

Period: Februari 23 - March 9, 2024

College of Science and Technology F.S

## 1. Overview

- From February 23 to March 9, 2024, I was dispatched to VIT Chennai Campus. From February 26 to March 5, I took two classes. From March 6 to March 9, I participated in a cultural festival called "Vibrance".
- Classes consisted of 30 hours per subject (50 minutes per session). The classes were taught by VIT Chennai teachers.
- The festival was attended by VIT students and 30 international students from Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Brazil, Malaysia, Ethiopia, Vietnam, Scotland, Cambodia, Indonesia, Poland and the Philippines.
- On weekends (March 1 and March 2), sightseeing was carried out under the guidance of the teacher.

## 2. Classes

I took two courses: Indian Culture and Smart and Sustainable Building Materials.

Seven students (2 from Sri Lanka, 2 from Myanmar, 1 from Brazil and 2 from Japan) participated in Indian Culture. Using slides and videos on YouTube, lectures were given on poetry, art, geography, film, Hinduism, yoga, and more. At the end of the class, students were required to give a presentation of about 5 minutes. The content was to select one of the 28 states of India and introduce the culture of that state.

On the weekends, a teacher and three VIT students led the group for sightseeing (Mahabalipuram and shopping). Classrooms, class materials, and notification of late arrivals were shared in a group on WhatsApp, an application that has almost the same functionality as LINE. In Sri Lanka and Myanmar, listening and speaking skills were very high, probably because university classes were conducted in English. The teacher also spoke at a level which fits into their skill, so there were times when I felt that it was difficult to hear. Therefore, I tried to understand it by asking questions to the teacher and students afterwards.

Three students (1 from Brazil and 2 from Japan) and one teacher (Brazil) participated in the Smart and Sustainable Building Materials. Using slides and videos on YouTube, a lecture was given on building materials (new materials such as waste-used-concrete and transparent wood). The class did not delve into detailed theory but was at the level of an overview. They

also toured laboratories (environmental engineering, geotechnical engineering, concrete engineering) and observed sustainable initiatives on campus (rainwater storage, waste –used- concrete, water treatment plants, etc.). At the end of the class, students were required to give a presentation of about 5 minutes. The content was an introduction to sustainable buildings in Japan. In this class, information was shared using WhatsApp. The speed at which the teacher spoke was fast, but I felt that I was able to understand a lot of things, probably because I had knowledge about the materials to some extent.

### <Classes>



Library



Presentation



Presentation



Certificate

### <Sustainabilities in the Campus>



Recycling of water by purification



Use of ash in concrete



### 3. Cultural Festival (Vibrance)

During the day, about 10~20 events organized by the club were held, and in the evening, concerts by professional artists were held. Due to poor health, I was barely able to participate on the first and second days, but I was able to participate on the third day. In addition to VIT students, the event was attended by 30 international students from 12 countries. It was the first time I had interacted with people from several countries. Nonetheless by researching each country and actually talking with them, I became familiar with each country.

### <Cultural tour and campus>



#### 4. Daily life

The dormitory was a hostel where VIT students also stayed. There were 2 Japan students and 2 Sri Lankan students, for a total of 4 students. The water area (sink, toilet, bath) was shared. There was no shower in the bath, and the style was to store hot water and water in a bucket and pour it on the body. Meals were served in the dormitory cafeteria and could be eaten at any time between 7:00~9:00 in the morning, 12:00~14:00 in the afternoon, and 19:00~21:00 in the evening. There was also a small supermarket on campus where we could buy water, snacks, and daily necessities. Permission was required to go outside the university, and I spent all my time on campus except for weekend sightseeing. There were about 3 guards at the hostel and the curfew was 21:00. I was able to live almost the same life as a VIT student.

I was able to interact a lot with the Sri Lankan students who shared my room. For example, we had the opportunity to talk about each other's university life and careers. I was surprised to learn that many students in Sri Lanka want to pursue master's and doctoral degrees in Japan. In fact, one student was considering pursuing a master's degree in Japan. There were also opportunities for cultural exchanges. They taught me Sinhala, the language of Sri Lanka, and showed me the currency. They were very happy when I taught them about the culture of bowing and to show them how to fold shuriken (throwing star) with origami.

I also met a VIT student who could speak Japanese well enough for everyday conversation. I was very surprised to hear that he had not taken Japanese classes and was able to converse by watching anime. When I had a fever, the dormitory manager and the students took care of me. I was also able to get a medical examination and a prescription for medication at the clinic on campus. Consultations and medications were free of charge.

## 2024 YOKOHAMA-SXIP

### Voices of Students Participating in the Dispatch Program

Name: Kentaro Ogawa

Affiliation: Yokohama National University Graduate School of Engineering Science

Academic year: 2nd year of graduate school

Destination: Vellore Institute of Technology Chennai (VIT Chennai)

Period: February 28, 2024, ~ March 9, 2024

#### **1. What I learned in terms of training and language at the host university**

At the university where I was dispatched, I took a lecture on Smart and Sustainable building materials. In this lecture, we learned about various cutting-edge materials in the fields of civil engineering and architecture. In addition to India and Japan, the students also learned about the current state as well as future issues of civil engineering and architecture in Brazil, the home country of the international students who participated together.

In terms of language, I was able to improve my English listening and speaking skills by communicating with international students from various countries as well as local Indian students. English is one of the official languages in India, so you will communicate in English. I am not good at listening and speaking English, and there were many times when I could not understand English and could not accurately convey my opinions in English. However, the Indian people were kind and tried to communicate with me many times, so I felt that my English skills naturally improved. I felt that even people who are not good at English can participate in the SXIP program.

#### **2. What I learned about the lifestyle, culture, and society of the host country**

I learned a lot about religion in India. In India, Hinduism is the most common, followed by believers of Islam, and various other religions such as Christianity and Buddhism. In some areas, such as India and Pakistan, there are conflicts due to religion, but I learned that people of various religions coexist in the university and in the city. I also learned that there are various sects of Hinduism, and that beliefs and rules differ depending on the sect. There were times when people in India asked me questions about my own religion and Japan's religion, but I couldn't answer them well. I don't think it's a bad thing that there is a lack of awareness of religion in Japan, but since religion is important in the world, I felt that I should have learned more about religion in Japan. I felt that I was able to have a valuable experience in India that I could not do in Japan.

### **3. For students who are considering participating in the program next year**

I feel that India is not often chosen as a destination for overseas travel or study abroad for Japan, and many people may feel that going to India at their own expense is a high hurdle. So, I recommend you join the SXIP program and go to India. When you hear the word India, many people think of insecurity and hygiene issues. However, VIT has good security and I did not encounter any problems on campus. In addition, when sightseeing in the city, VIT teachers and students guided us, so we were able to go sightseeing with peace of mind. As for hygiene issues, I don't think there will be any major problems if you don't put tap water in your mouth and clean your hands with alcohol-disinfecting wet wipes before eating. Living in India, you may feel confused or inconvenienced by cultural differences. However, you can experience many things that can only be experienced in India, so please join the SXIP program and go to India.

