



INTERNATIONAL BENCHMARKING



TOKYO, JAPAN

By: Ma. Liza C. Pelagio

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Japan, the land of rising sun, is where we can find the best of technology and innovation. The origin of the popular ramen and one of the top producers of quality make-up and facial-body regimen. It's been quite a while since I last visited the amazing country. PAARL chosen Tokyo as the tour destination for their 2015 Library Tour. It consist of visits to Libraries, Museums and important tourist destination in Tokyo. October is really a good weather in Japan as autumn just started as leaves are turning into red, orange and yellow and as the weather is trying to be cooler.

We arrived in Tokyo in the afternoon with a very good and relaxing flight by one of the best airline around the globe: ANA. The group are welcomed by the energetic Tour

guide named Aimee. She is very accommodating with a good sense of humor. Normally, it's hard to meet Japanese with good English skills but with our tour guide, she is fluent in the language and can be understood by everyone. She loves to talk and share us stories about the Japanese way of life. Japan is separated by prefectures and Narita airport, where we landed, is in Chiba prefecture, 50 km away from Tokyo prefecture. The temperature during our visit is around 20° c but it rises up to 40° c during summer. The Famous and busiest month in Japan is during March where Sakura festivals are happening. Sakura is the event of Cherry

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Blossom trees where leaves are turning to pink. It normally lasts about a week before they fall on the ground. The most popular that has been introduced by the tour guide was their hightech toilet. It consists of several buttons that can give the best experience that anyone can have.

Our first day is free time, so everyone is open to discover the city by ourselves. The hotel is located in the shopping area Shinjuku and we were very happy because all the shopping outlets were accessible in the area. We did try the famous Ramen in town, the Ichiran Ramen, where we found a very long queue because of its very creamy Ramen soup. We were able to experience ordering, thru a vendo machine, the particular ramen that we like plus other additional orders. There are separate tables for privacy to be able to enjoy the sumptuous meal. After a great meal, we started to check the different shops for our “pasalubong”, and one of the most popular and cheapest finds is the Don Quijote shopping mall. Along the way, we tried the Puri shop where took pictures with our friends. It has a very nice machine in Japan where we anyone can edit pictures like a pro! Like what we have in the Philippines, karaoke is also common to them. We did not let the night pass without trying one. They even have choices of English and Filipino songs. We ended late but no regrets for the amazing experience on our free day.

The remaining days were scheduled for library tours in Tokyo city. On our second day, the call time was 8:30 a.m. and eve-

ryone woke up very early. We had our breakfast in the hotel and everyone was very happy with the buffet meal. Our first stop was the famous Tokyo Tower. The group came very early and we were the first in the line. We went to its main observatory which is 150 meters from the ground. The view in the area is the entire Tokyo City and if there is a good weather condition, the Mt. Fuji can be seen. There is a part on the tower which has a glass floor where one can view the ground and everyone took pictures while viewing and stepping on the glass floor. Everyone was fascinated on how Japan was able to create such a great structure.

Our next destination was the National Diet Library. This is the counterpart of the National Library of the Philippines. We felt sad when we were not allowed to take pictures of the library. Probably what they want for us was not to miss the experience and treasure every beautiful moment in our memories. As we entered the building of the National Diet Library, we were given IDs to gain access to the facility and the restricted areas. The organizers briefed us about the origin and basic functions of the library. According to our tour guide, the main library has a total collection of 4.5 million whereas the annex has 7.5 million collection and the Kansai-kan has 6 million capacity which is currently being developed to have a capacity that can accommodate up to 20 million collection. We first visited the main building and I find the area vibrant with good ventilation and gothic architectural design. It has a high ceiling and a

very welcoming area for the readers. The library adopts a closed stack system and implements a policy for the circulation of materials in three easy steps. The tour guide mentioned that the library has an estimated 1,800 visitors per day and we have noticed that old Japanese people aging 75 to 80 years old are still using the library and know how to tinker with the computers despite their age. The library provides free access to those who have reached 18 years old. Like in other libraries, personal belongings are not allowed within the premises but the library provides a plastic bag for those who do not want to leave their valuables. As we walk through the area, we saw some smoking areas inside the library. Japanese men are very much into smoking and probably this is the reason they have a separate area for them. The annex building has similar design with the main building. But the distinction between the two is that the circulation counter in the main library is intended for books while the one in the annex is for the periodicals. We also had the chance to enter their restricted area. This is where they house all their materials for circulation. The area is situated in the underground because according to them, it has the best area for good preservation. We also had the chance to visit their basement 8, the second deepest area in Tokyo and actually 30 meters deep. They consider it as the busiest area because this is where they get all the materials. The tour guide also shared that up to 140 meters

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deep is still acceptable for preserving books. The entire basement area has a restricted and controlled 22°C humidity in order to maintain the quality of materials. The lights in the area are movement sensitive and automatically open when someone walks along the corridor. We also observed that the Japanese librarians and staff are very serious with their work. This can probably be attributed to their deep-rooted passion for whatever task at hand. In the end, everybody was hopeful that the time will come the National Library of the Philippines will also

each side with one entrance. While all trees cover all sides of the palace. The Imperial Palace where the Emperor and Empress reside is off limits to visitors and tourists. Everyone can only reach up to the boundary near the land and lake. The palace is well-secured and the whole vicinity is well maintained with a professional bonsai gardener who maintains the bonsai rock pine trees.

We headed to Hamarikyu to take a river cruise. This is to see and appreciate more the city of Tokyo while enjoying the cold breeze. The cruise is a very simple ship

guide showed and taught us how to pray to Buddha and make a wish on whatever we wanted to have. There is also a well where everyone can take a sip of their natural spring water. Outside the temple is the Nakamise, the shopping area where anyone can buy souvenirs ranging from magnets, key chains, lanterns, authentic Japanese food and Kimono dress. Although a little bit costly, it is a one stop shop where people can buy souvenirs for loved ones. We stayed there until evening when the temple started lighting their lanterns and temples. The area became livelier and one can definitely feel the Japanese vibe in the place. The dinner is in a Yakiniku restaurant. We had smokeless grill of meat, pork beef and chicken with Japanese rice. I find the food in Japan very fresh, delectable and really good.

On our third day, the group started in preparation for our transfer to another prefecture. We went to Yokohama where we stayed for one night prior to our departure to Manila. We started our tour by visiting the Meiji University. The aforementioned school has four campuses and went to the classroom of first and second year students who study literature. The library serving the students in the campus is the Izumi Library. The Library is very new and only constructed last May 2015. I noticed that all the facilities and equipment are new and modern. We were very fortunate to have a Filipino-Japanese tour guide named Mariko. She is very fluent in using the Filipino language since she lived in...*(continued on page 4)*



be competitive like our neighboring countries.

Another important tourist destination that we toured in Tokyo is the Imperial Palace. As we arrive in the location, the entire Palace was covered with rock pine trees, the national tree of Japan, considering that the size of the full area is nearly three square miles. The commonality about the palaces in Japan is that they are built at the center surrounded by water on

with a restaurant and restrooms for passengers. There is also an upper deck area so that everyone could clearly see the view outside. I guess it's better if we tried this one during the night with the city lights around us.

Our last stop is the most visited place in Tokyo, Asakusa Temple. This is one of the temples visited by Japanese and tourists as well. A huge temple with colorful lanterns surrounds the area. The tour

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Mindanao for couple of years before she went back to Japan. Another distinctive feature of the library is the zoning of noise from the lowest floor to the uppermost. The higher the floor, the lesser noise the library users should make. Each floor is also color coordinated. Lower floors has colorful furnitures while higher floors have hues of nude to black and white colors. The library has high tech facilities such as self-operate photocopying machines, self-check machine, touch screen information machine, and digitized newspapers that can be viewed using a 50- inch television. The library has an estimated holding of 32,000 books. Students can borrow 15 books for 15 days without incurring overdue fines. The library which has 32 staff and a 1,200 seating capacity serves a student population of 10,000.

After our amazing tour in the Meiji University, we went to another institution that caters specifically to the arts. The Musashino Art University is a specialized university for art education. The students were busy preparing for an art festival when we arrived there. We were amazed on how the students created a magical world of Harry Potter with a beautiful structural design. I was in awe with how the Japanese students have this passion for arts that everything that they do is impressive. We went directly to the MAU M&L (Musashino Art University Museum and Library), a state-of-the-art building. It is a new library built last 2010 that has almost 280,000 books related to arts and one of the largest librar-

ies in Japan. As we enter the library, everything was artistically designed especially the library's interior design. The area used minimalist colors with an inviting area for reading and studying. The library designed the walls with shelves as high as the ceiling. There are also specific areas intended for exhibits. I also find the furnitures very unique and comfortable for use. Actually, there was no library tour conducted but they let us discover the beauty of the library on our own.

The last stop was the Tokyo National Museum. The museum is one of the oldest and largest museums in Japan. We had the chance to visit the main Honkan building. In spite of the limited time allotted for our tour, we definitely enjoyed the artifacts preserved in the museum. There are three floors in the building with a basement and a museum shop for souvenirs. The first floor caters to the general exhibits organized by genre such as Japanese sculptures, swords, records of history, and many others. Most of the exhibits on the second floor highlight the Japanese art. The entire architectural design of the building has resemblance with the Imperial Palace. It is a very refreshing place serves as reminder of the Japanese culture and traditions. In front of the Museum is the Euno Park. During spring, particularly Cherry Blossom Festival, the entire park is filled with pink blossom of Sakura. Many people are visiting the area to watch the full bloom of the Cherry blossoms. After the tour, we went to Yokohama. It is another city

outside Tokyo that takes one hour travel time.

We had our buffet dinner in a mall with the lovely view of the Cosmo World theme park. We ended our night with last minute shopping before our flight back to Manila scheduled the following day.

The last day was saddest day for everyone. It seems like the days of our visit was not enough to explore the entire city. Yet overall, we were very happy and satisfied with our tour. We visited two



more places. Firstly is the Miraikan, the national museum for emerging science and technology. This is the very interesting place where we saw many of the inventions ... *(continued on page 5)*

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of Japan. It houses a very big image of the Earth called the Geo-cosmos. It is a high precision globe using LED panels. Robots world which is the famous technology in their country shows the otomoid and komodoroid, the human robots. It is unbelievable to look at them and I had goose bumps while seeing them talk and move. The life in space is also featured particularly the interiors of a spaceship. Interactive play is also available specifically topics about life, the universe and the Earth. It is admirable to see how technology became a natural part of the

Japanese way of life. Our last destination was Odaiba, the popular shopping and entertainment district. This is where the famous Gundam robot, replica of Statue of Liberty and the overlooking rainbow bridge are located. We were also lucky to witness an festive event in Odaiba where thousands of Japanese wear cosplay outfits. Cosplaying started in Japan and very popular during Halloween. This is where I saw the authentic cosplayers and I am very much overwhelmed. Odaiba is also a shopping destination especially for tourists obsessed with clothes and shoes.

As we headed our way to the airport, I realized that this trip is one awesome adventure. I was able to reunite with my former professors and meet new librarians along the way. I will never forget the memories and new learnings I had on library methods and the latest technology. I intend to share my experiences to my colleagues and apply them in improving our library services. I will never trade for anything my adventures in Japan for it opened my eyes to the many possibilities that we can also achieve as a nation.

5th Marina G. Dayrit Lecture Series

Best Research Award 2015

By: Angela Maria S. Llantino

The 5th Marina G. Dayrit Lecture Series with the theme "Recognizing Best Researches: A Colloquium on Philippine Libraries and Librarianship" was held on the 23rd of November 2015 at the Technological Institute of the Philippines, Cubao, Quezon City.

In this meaningful event, the authors of the best three (3) research papers delivered an oral presentation of their works. The research paper titles and authors were the following:

Reference and Information Services in Selected Philippine Academic Libraries: Trends and Future Prospects by *Ana Maria B. Fresnido*

Advancing Library Profession through Regional Cooperation: Opportunities and Challenges for Academic Libraries in the 2015 ASEAN Integration by *Sharon Maria S. Esposo-Betan; Jonathan F. Santos; Audrey G. Anday*

The Readiness of South Manila Educational Consortium (SMEC) Librarians in the Adoption of the RDA Standards by *Marita G. Valerio, De La Salle University*

The mechanics of presentation give each author twenty (20) minutes to present, after each presentation, audiences are encouraged to post their questions, clarifications, comments and other concerns on the presented research.

This year's Call for Submissions was an opportunity for everyone to participate and submit a paper, since it was made open to all library practitioners/information professionals. Additional cash awards were provided in recognition and appreciation to the winning second and third best research papers. The cash incentives are as follows, for the author (s) of the winning paper, he/she will receive Php10,000.00 and Php5,000.00

each for the authors of the other two (2) winning papers. Awarding shall be held during the Association's General Assembly on January 2016.

The best three (3) research papers were selected from the total of 10 submitted papers that were received and evaluated by the Committee on Best Research, headed by Prof. Corazon M. Nera, and members Prof. Susan O. Pador and Prof. Ruben P. Marasigan.

Indeed, this is another successful colloquium, an activity that we should not missed every year.

We learn new things in every forum, seminars and conferences, but listening to a research presentation also gives us a lot of ideas. Ideas that can help improve the so many aspects of librarianship in our country.

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A Christmas Lunch Gathering

By Angela Maria S. Llantino



It is that time of the year when people feel so happy because of the thought of Christmas that brings to our hearts. Gatherings, feasts and exchange gifts, whether big or small brings smile to everyone.

On the 10th of December 2015, the Philippine Association of Academic/Research Librarians celebrated its Christmas Party at the Four Seasons Buffet and Hotpot Function Room in Manhattan Parkview, Cubao, Quezon City. The present Executive Board was joined by the incoming Board for 2016 and some past presidents like

Ms. Susan O. Pador, Ms. Teresita C. Moran, Dr. Teresita G. Hernandez-Calma, Mrs. Corazon M. Nera, Ms. Sharon Maria Esposito-Betan, Ms. Elvira B. Lapuz, & Mr. Sonny Boy T. Manalo.

It is also during this gathering that the election for the position in the Board took place, which was facilitated by the NOMELEC Chair 2015, Ms. Susan O. Pador.

Everybody enjoyed the excellent buffet, exchange gifts followed, raffle draw and photo opts. And of course, congratulations to our lucky

librarians who won in the raffle draw. PAARL's Christmas party celebration has always been an avenue to meet new and old faces of office holders and the pillars of the Association.

Also, thank you to the following sponsors who helped us make this gathering full of surprises: Consistent Solutions, Creative Mind Books Center, Mind Mover Publishing House, Inc., Travel Warehouse Inc., Golden Books Services, Inc.

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By Angela Maria S. Llantino

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