

Rotary International

Group Study Exchange



Rotary District 2390, Sweden

visiting

Rotary District 2660, Osaka, Japan

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Dear GSE friend!

It is of course impossible to include in this report everything that we really would like to tell from our five weeks in Osaka. It has truly been an unforgettable experience for everyone in the team and our “thank you very much – domo arigato gozaimashita” to all involved in arranging our Group Study Exchange, comes from a genuine feeling of gratitude and is truly deeply felt from the bottom of our hearts.

We hope that our report not only will give you an insight into our intense and diverse program, but also convey some of our thoughts, reflections and conclusions from our stay. Our gradual understanding of some aspects of Japanese life, society and culture also created intensive and rewarding discussions within the team about a multitude of issues. A great additional benefit from spending such a comparatively long time together in a new and fascinating cultural environment!

As GSE team leader, I must say that I have had an easy job. Not only because of the meticulous preparations by D 2660 in Osaka under the leadership of GSE Committee Chairman Katoh-san and Program Coordinator Matsuoka-san, but also due to the attitude and personalities of the team members, supplementing each other and developing a strong and positive team spirit. I definitely feel that the intentions of the GSE program, *“To give the participants the opportunity to experience the host country’s institutions and ways of life, observe their own vocations as practiced abroad, develop personal and professional relationships, and exchange ideas”*, was to a very great extent fulfilled.

We have chosen a theme-based approach for this report and all of us have contributed with texts, pictures and comments. It is thus a joint team product, but I would nevertheless like to extend my special thanks to Lisa for doing a great job editing the report and to Ingemar for taking care of everything related to the pictures.

We hope you will enjoy reading this report and also hope that you too will feel some of the great excitement that we felt during our unforgettable time in Osaka.

Malmö in June 2005



Mats Bruzæus
GSE Team Leader 2005
D 2390 to D 2660

Mats Bruzæus

After many years in executive positions at several international Swedish companies – heading up production units, product development departments and marketing organizations – I am now working as an independent business consultant with special focus on Japan. My six years as science and technology counsellor at the Swedish Embassy in Tokyo, and later on two years as president of Anoto Nippon K.K., have given me a fair understanding of Japan and Japanese business conditions. I now try to use it for the benefit of companies interested in entering the Japanese market with products or services.

During many years I have also been dealing extensively with human relations issues and I have recently agreed with a Danish company, Garuda Aps, to establish and head up a subsidiary in Japan. Garuda Japan K.K. will sell and license a broad assortment of very qualified, work-related psychometric analysis tools for human resource management and development (HRM&D) to Japanese companies and organizations.

In my spare time I play music in a couple of concert bands and jazz orchestras, have had my own band for many years and also perform in Japan regularly with a Tokyo based jazz band. As both an army and a private pilot during many years, I have a deep fascination for aircrafts and flying. Since childhood I have also had a keen interest in electronics and still keep a valid Radio Ham operator's license with the station signal SM7CPN.



Jens Ingemansson

For the last two years I have been working in the medical industry with production of devices in plastics and other polymeric materials. This is quite different from my first job, which was within the energy sector, mainly with district heating systems. I worked for four years as a sales manager for central Asia and eastern Europe. I like to work in this region because you always feel you have a good chance to make a major change for people, and you normally get a very open and positive response to what you do.



Before I began my professional career I spent several years at Lund University, the second largest University in Sweden, and one year at ETH in Switzerland, studying a wide variety of subjects. I focused on economy and technology/physics but I also studied arts subjects, like archaeology and the German language. I hope this wide mix will give me opportunities to work in many different fields during my future life!

My spare time I like to spend in nature. Hiking is one main interest; I use to walk in the Alps a few times a year. Kayaking is another interest of mine, as is orienteering. I have just begun to play golf (not very well) and I do several in-door sports, such as floor-hockey and badminton.

I believe the five week stay in Japan gave me a very important personal experience of a very interesting and generous society. I strongly believe that this trip will be of use in my professional career, especially if I will work with issues concerning Japan!

Lisa Kirsebom

My name is Lisa Kirsebom. I am 29 years old. Since four years I work in my own company as a freelance journalist, mostly focusing on science topics. The articles I write, I sell to different newspapers and magazines in Sweden. I cover university research, as well as research in commercial companies, and general science issues. My main fields are medicine and biotechnology, but I also write about chemistry, physics, biology and technical science. I have the chance to learn something new every day, and stay as broad as I like, looking into all sorts of topics that I find fascinating. Needless to say, I am very happy about my work!



When I don't work, I enjoy spending time with good friends and family. I also like reading, cooking (and eating!) and listening to, as well as practicing, music. I sing in a choir and have been involved in student musical theatre for many years. Travelling is also a big interest of mine. Some of my personal "highlights" the past few years have been a three week trip to China, a month long drive coast to coast in the USA, a two week internship in London and a number of shorter trips in Europe, to places like Brussels, Rome and Dresden.

I live in Lund with my husband Andreas Ekström. This year, we are expecting our first child. The little one has been a "bonus team member" during the trip to Japan, a fact that engaged not only myself but also my team, host families and people I met, in a way that made me very happy and moved.

Ingemar Larsson

A couple of years ago I co-founded a company called Albireo AB in which I currently work. My background is a Masters degree in electrical engineering (MScEE) and my prior work experience include positions in the telecommunications and mobile phone sector.

My work encapsulates both the role of the company manager and the role of the engineer. Our company has up until recently primarily focused on consulting services, and we are now changing the business to market our own ideas. We have developed a group of technologies and applied for patents. These technologies will be available for licensing to our customers. Eventually we will also develop in-house products of our own.

On the technology side of my work, I have been involved in research and development of digital cameras and camera systems for approximately four years. Some camera systems have been targeted at portable devices such as mobile phones and PDAs, and as such they have been very small in size.



In my spare time I have many different interests. I practice several sports, including scuba diving, swimming and aikido. Other interests include travelling, photography, cooking, playing musical instruments such as piano and guitar, reading books, using computers as well as learning languages.

I have many personal interests that made me apply for the Group Study Exchange to Japan. One obvious thing is of course my job area – digital cameras – a field in which Japan has been the leader since many years, but also the exotic culture, the fascinating people, the very different language and the long history to learn from. I had great expectations before going, and now afterwards I see that the fantastic time in Japan surpassed them all.

Sofie Qvarfordt

My name is Sofie Qvarfordt and I work as an international coordinator at Region Skåne in Malmö. Region Skåne is the highest regional political decision making body in the province of Skåne. My main responsibilities include preparing proposals for the decision-makers concerning European affairs and international cooperation. I also give information about the EU and the many programmes for EU funding that are available for projects in the region. My tasks also include analysis and evaluation of different regions in order to identify cooperation-partners and possibilities for exchanges.



I am 29 years old and grew up in the coastal town of Helsingborg, but I have lived, studied and worked in many different countries. I have a Master's degree in Political science from Lund University and I have also studied French and European Law. In my spare time I like to practice sports such as swimming and aerobics and in the summertime I love to scuba dive. I also enjoy cooking, music, being out in nature and spending time with my family and friends.

To travel internationally and to learn about different cultures and languages has always interested me. The best thing with our trip to Japan was the possibility to meet so many wonderful people and to stay with host families. The hospitality, generosity and kindness that the families showed us was overwhelming.

A snapshot of Osaka

Sofie Qvarfordt

Looking out the window of the airport shuttle bus, we got our first glimpse of the city of Osaka with its skyscrapers, busy traffic and many rivers and bridges. This thriving city, also known as the “water capital”, is home to over 2.6 million people, and Osaka Prefecture is with its 8.8 million people the second most populated prefecture next to Tokyo. This amount almost corresponds to the whole population of Sweden!

On our second day of arrival, we strolled around downtown Osaka, accompanied by GSE alumni. The most obvious first impression was the amount of people and the bustling activity on the streets. The alumni introduced us to the city and showed us many interesting things, including temples, shrines, restaurants, and shopping boulevards, and as we zigzagged through the shops we enjoyed looking at handmade items and tasting all the local specialities.



The city of Osaka lives up to its reputation as a city of commerce and industry with a high concentration of companies, universities and research institutions. Osaka City University plays a leading role in enriching and diversifying the city’s international exchange. Osaka is home to Japan’s largest number of manufacturers, including such world-famous top companies as Matsushita Electric, Sharp and Sanyo Electric. During our five weeks we were able to visit some of these companies and we also discovered that Osaka is known for its enterprising spirit and has a large number of small and medium-sized companies renowned for their unique ideas and technical know-how. We found out that many new products like mechanical pencils, instant noodles and rotating sushi bars were born in Osaka.

Although Osaka is known primarily as a commercial and industrial centre, we noticed that the city has plenty of tourist assets, including historic sites and interesting museums. Osaka and its environs are blessed with a rich and beautiful natural setting and there are



many parks and modern amusement facilities. Located next to our hotel was the beautiful Osaka Castle Park, where we spent many of our Sundays relaxing.

Osaka is also the core of the Kansai economic zone where 23.3 million people live, making it a huge market. The term Kansai refers to an area centring roughly on the cities of Osaka, Kyoto and Kobe, and Kansai is used in a cultural and historic context. The GSE team was given the fantastic opportunity to explore the economic life, society and culture of this whole area!



With Rotary in Osaka

Lisa Kirsebom

Not being Rotarians, the acquaintance with Rotary in Osaka was of course an important part of the Japan experience for the four team members. For our team leader Mats Bruzæus, it was an extended chance to see Rotary in Japan in a new and different way, after having been a member of the Tokyo Rotary Club for two years.

Our Rotary experience in Osaka can be divided into four parts; the formal club meetings, the parties arranged at the beginning and end of the stay, our everyday company of anything from one to six (or eight!) Rotarians on our study visits, and finally, of course, the host families.

Our families have a chapter of their own in this report. Suffice to say, that staying in Rotary families probably had one general consequence: We had a lot more living space than the average Japanese... We had read and heard that Japanese homes are usually very small compared to Swedish ones, and we were prepared to maybe sometimes have to share a bedroom with our families. That never happened. Rather, we many times experienced having our own toilet, or a whole floor – or house! – to ourselves.

Most of the formal club meetings were part of our schedule. However, we also sometimes found ourselves having lunch with a club during a study day (not



being aware beforehand that this was planned), and we all occasionally visited meetings on our own, together with our host parents. What struck us most was the great interest and excitement with which we were met at the meetings. We had prepared a 20–30 minute presentation about Sweden, and got a lot of positive feedback on this. But even just arriving at the meetings, sometimes

with the club applauding us as we entered the room(!), or being introduced to the whole club and standing up to bow, was a new, surprising and often overwhelming experience to us.

At the meetings we noticed especially...

... the flags and songs. Usually, the room was decorated with the Japanese and Swedish flags, as well as the symbol of Rotary International. Almost every meeting started out with singing the two national anthems, and then often one of several songs honouring Rotary. At some occasions, people also joined hands in a big circle to sing and swing their hands to the beat. We were amazed as well as amused. This is, as far as we know, something that is never done in Swedish Rotary meetings.

... the gifts and banners. We very often received gifts as a memory of our visit, something we learned is an important part of Japanese culture. In almost every meeting, banners were also exchanged between the local club and one or several of our hosting clubs at home.



Jens Ingemansson at a Rotary lunch, with one of our kind interpreters.

... the money donations. In Japan, it is common to donate money to the club's activities at special occasions. Sometimes, we were this occasion – and money were donated to the club by members thus celebrating our visit.

... the age and gender ratio. Rotary in Osaka is dominated by members over the age of 40, or even 50. This is hardly surprising, considering that the membership often is associated with reaching a certain leadership position in the community. This is the case also in Sweden. In Sweden, 11 percent of the Rotary members are women (16 percent in our district, 2390). We had been told that in Japan, this figure is about 5 or 6 percent. That sounded quite high, considering how many Japanese women in "Rotary age" are not active in the work market at all. We noticed during our club meetings that these 5 percent were rather unevenly spread. In clubs with women, there were usually more than 5 percent ladies. On the other hand, in many clubs there were no women at all. We were told in a few of these clubs that there are some members strongly opposing female memberships, while other members are interested in inviting women.

The involvement and dedication of our "every day company" was something that none of us had quite foreseen. Sometimes the accompanying Rotarian(s) acted as our interpreter, but often they just came along to keep us company and introduce us to the day's events. (In Kyoto we even had one Rotarian assigned to each of us, so that we wouldn't get lost in the food market...) Time and again, we were surprised and touched by the efforts of our new friends to make the day interesting and pleasant to us – offering us snacks on the bus, buying us special local treats in market places, inviting us home for a tea ceremony and kimono



Wadaiko drum lesson at a Rotary meeting with a cultural touch.

show, or simply patiently considering our needs and wishes during the day, whether it be a change of schedule to slow down a high tempo, or just taking a break for a visit to the men's/ladies' room...

The welcoming and final banquets, as well as the welcoming party arranged by the GSE alumni of Osaka, were great experiences. We were all touched by the generosity and cheerfulness of our hosts at these well planned events.



With friends at the GSE alumni welcoming party.

A great "bonus" was the relaxed sight seeing of central Osaka on one of our first days, in the company of GSE alumni, most of whom had been to Sweden on their exchange. Thank you, friends – we had a terrific time!

Vocational days, Mats Bruzæus

Based on my rather wide and somewhat peculiar requests for vocational visits; human resource issues, management, technology, sushi making and sake brewing, I had quite a varied program with some very different experiences. Even with some basic knowledge in Japanese, it is always difficult to get a deep and comprehensive understanding of actual professional situations and working conditions. Nevertheless I found the vocational visits interesting, giving some kind of insight in both working life and culture.

At March 14, I visited K-CATV in Hirakata, learned about the Cable TV structure in the Osaka area, and looked through the company premises – including the studio and control room. It is always of general interest to follow the development of the media sector, but maybe this visit was somewhat less meaningful as a vocational experience for me.

Keihan Railroad Co. gave me a very good run-through of their operations and with the help of Sakai-san from the personnel department I could grasp some features of the HR work within the company. We touched upon areas like recruitment procedures, personnel training, management development etc. Great openness was shown all the time and in spite of the language barrier, I got quite a lot of interesting and useful information from a professional point of view.

The vocational day March 24, in the following week, was nice but maybe not really focused on a professional level. The walk through the Canon showroom and Yodobashi Camera would have been enhanced by additional, concrete information about technology and business practice. The overall understanding of technology and innovation level in Japan was however reinforced by this vocational day in the wonderland of electronic gadgets.

On March 29 the whole team visited Osaka University. We had a very nice chat with the president and an interesting and impressive tour of the robotics department. A visit together with team member Sofie Qvarfordt in the afternoon to another Cable TV station, Suita Cable TV, gave as a result a news flash about the Rotary team visit to Asahi breweries. But as a vocational experience, the purpose of the visit was not really clear.

A visit to Ozeki Sake Brewery, on April 5, gave a very broad and on some points also a detailed insight into sake brewing from both a process and a chemical point of view. With some basic knowledge already acquired, I could deepen it and understand much more of the complexity and craftsmanship that is involved in sake brewing. The visit in the afternoon to Yodogawa Techno-High



School and their Brass Band rehearsal was both a cultural and musical experience that I, as a long time amateur musician, also appreciated very much.

My last vocational day was devoted to human resources and to delicatessen. A very focused and extremely rewarding morning at the Pack Corporation gave not only a good understanding of the company history and successful business development, but also a deep insight into many aspects of the company's work with human resource issues. As a practical, cultural and very tasty ending of my vocational program, came a short but intensive apprenticeship at Sushi man. I could after superb instruction by the veteran sushi chef and the company president, learn the basics and make a set of fairly acceptable Osaka sushi. I now realize with amazement and even greater respect, how profound and complicated the art of sushi making really is.



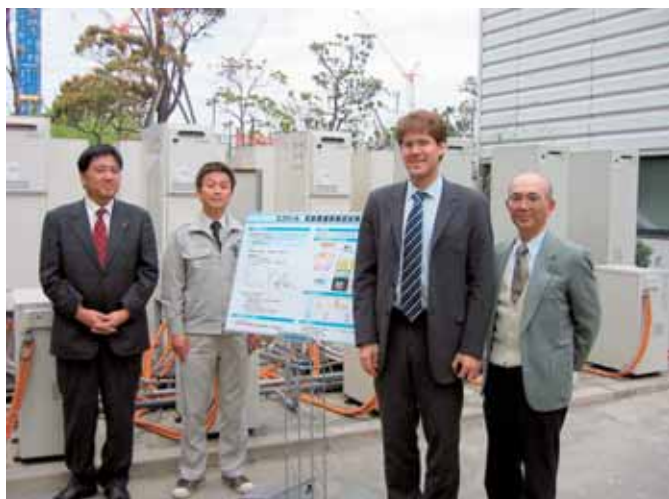
*Sushiman
President,
flanked by
his veteran
chef and the
apprentice.*



*A perfect(?)
Osaka sushi
made by
Mats.*

Vocational days, Jens Ingemansson

My background is quite diverse and not very focused on any special subject; it might therefore not be easy to arrange a good “vocational day”-program for me. However I think our Japanese hosts succeeded very well, especially in satisfying my interest in the field of energy. Although, to improve the program further I would have appreciated more visits with real depth – like my last week visit at Osaka Gas.



*Jens visiting
Osaka Gas.*

The first week I started with a Monday visit to AIST (National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology). AIST is an R&D network mainly financed by the Japanese state, which is focused at new technologies and young scientific areas, like nanotechnology, biotechnology, genetic research, etc. There are 15 different research sites around Japan with 3 200 employees totally. The site I visited in southwest Osaka is focused at energy questions. Their two main areas are rechargeable batteries and fuel cells,

with a focus on the chemistry behind the processes. A lot of research was done specifically on different kinds of polymer materials, with the purpose to enhance and control the electrolytic process.

The visit was very interesting, especially since I have not studied too much chemistry before and I am not fully aware of what can be achieved with different kinds of chemical methods. The visit helped me to get at least some more understanding of the possibilities.

The following Thursday, I made the only visit directly connected to my present profession. The visit to Dai-ichi Plastics was interesting, since one of their products is plastic shells for mobile phones – a product my company (Nolato) is also producing. Japanese companies seem to be able to use less space for everything. This is off course closely related to the size of the people (Swedes are somewhat larger), but I also believe it is more productive to work close to each other. Communication becomes more efficient, and different ideas are more easily exchanged.

Tuesday the third week we had a fun visit to Osaka University, although this was more similar to a normal study visit and less like a vocational day. We had a good discussion with the President and two fascinating visits to the robot laboratory and the cybernetic media centre. Japanese people seem less reluctant to robots than Swedes – they look upon them as opportunities for a future life with comfort, rather than as a threat.

The afternoon was spent studying what can be done with laser. Most interesting from my perspective was the laser fusion installation, which gave hope for a brighter and cleaner future.

In the fourth week, my vocational day took place at Maruishi Pharmaceuticals. This company mainly produces inhalation anaesthetics and anaesthetic sedatives, used to help people sleep during surgical operations. My reflection after the meeting was that it is impressive how many small and middle size companies there are in Japan. It seems Japanese people need less money besides the good idea to start a company.



Laser fusion facility at Osaka University.

In the afternoon we made a very interesting visit to the Yodogawa Techno High School and the practice of its Brass Band. I got a very good view what Japanese schools look like and how Japanese pupils behave – although I am not sure that this extremely well behaving class is representative for other high schools in Japan.

The last week I had my best prepared and most interesting vocational day. At Osaka Gas I got very useful information about the global as well as national energy markets, their development and possible future scenarios. I also got overview information about Osaka Gas, its different business areas and how they are working in general. Finally I received detailed information about their fuel cell projects, their different research paths, and I saw the concrete results of their work. The visit made me think a lot about what can be done with fuel cells in the Swedish market, with our different energy need (more heating – less cooling) and different system of energy-taxes.

As a whole, I believe I will have good use of the information I received in my vocational days. The information I received about the energy sector and different energy sources will most certainly be useful.

Vocational days, Lisa Kirsebom

Before the trip I hoped that during my vocational study days, I would learn more about Japanese media, and about scientific research and development in the Osaka region – with a main focus on the research, rather than the media. As a whole, I was very happy and satisfied with the program that was arranged for me. It ran as follows:



Day 1 – The Kinryou Temple, to learn about the Japanese tea ceremony (something I had also expressed a great interest in), and Kansai Medical University, to meet with Professor Ikehara who told me about his research on stem cells and bone marrow transplants.

Day 2 – Short visit to the broadcasting company NHK, visit to Osaka Historical Museum, and finally to Tanabe Pharmaceutical Company, to learn about their environmental policy and research on embryonic stem cells.

Day 3 – Visit with the whole GSE team to Osaka University to meet President Miyahara,

and see the robot laboratories and the language computer centre. After that visits with two of the team members, Jens Ingemansson and Ingemar Larsson, to the Institute of Laser Engineering and the Nanoscience and Nanotechnology Centre.

Day 4 – Yomiuri newspaper, to meet with a number of their science writers.

Meeting with Mr. Tani, President of the company incubator (support facility) Bio-Sight Capital.

Day 5 – The biotechnology company Toyobo, and a round trip of the Osaka City University Hospital.

Most of the points on my schedule were quite in line with my interests and wishes. (Possibly with the exception of the historical museum – which I got to see two times, since the whole team had a planned visit there in the fourth week – and NHK, where I didn't get to meet any representative of the company, but just saw the small public exhibitions.)

The only thing that occasionally kept me from getting the full learning experience of my vocational studies, was the language barrier. The more initiated I was in a certain field, the more difficult it was to get the adequate information – simply because it was often impossible to communicate my questions properly to the people I met. My interpreters, as well as my guides at these occasions, always made great efforts, but it's very hard to translate properly in a scientific field that is not your own. This sometimes made me feel that I reached 75 percent, rather than 100... However, the meetings always felt meaningful and interesting, and I greatly appreciate everything the receiving committee has done to make these vocational study days possible.

Vocational days, Ingemar Larsson

With my work as a basis, I had a very specific area of interest when it comes to the vocational part of the exchange program. Since I work with development and research in the digital camera field I wanted to see companies and talk to people working within the same area. This clear definition of interests would show to be more of an obstacle than an asset.

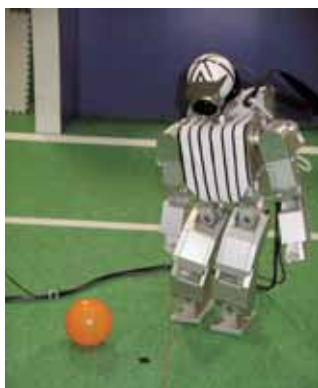
The high technology development of a company is a very sensitive part in some aspects and something that often is kept behind closed doors. Such is the case also in my area, and I was told that it had been particularly hard to arrange any vocational days in my field due to company secrecy.



Ingemar at the 3D animation studio of Osaka Electro-Communication University.

On my first vocational day I had a full day at the Osaka Electro-Communication University. The university covers a wide range of topics and I saw many different things ranging from various particle accelerators used in the study of new materials for transistors (fundamental physics and electronics research), via computer rooms, 3D animation studios and video editing rooms, to biomedical departments. I found it quite diverse and interesting.

My second vocational day brought me and Mats to the Canon show room where the company's products are displayed and demonstrated. The show room has many visitors and quite surprised we learned that the majority of visitors are above-middle aged women. They represent a consumer segment that often has much time and are considered to be financially strong. This day also included a visit to the Yodobashi Camera store. It is an enormous electronics and households store and was quite overwhelming.



Much of the third vocational day was spent together with the team at Osaka University. We visited the robot laboratory and saw walking robots as well as wheel-based robots playing soccer. A very human-looking robot was also briefly demonstrated in the cybernetics media center. It was built with a female news anchor in the Japanese TV news as a model. In the afternoon we visited departments of nano technology and laser engineering. The huge facility for laser fusion research was very interesting and impressive.

During my fourth vocational day I visited K-Opticom and NTT DoCoMo. The first part of the day was spent at K-Opticom and I was introduced to the

company and its infrastructure with an impressive 65.000 km optical fibres in the Kansai area. I learned about different methods for distributing voice and data content to the customers. I also went to one of the network control centers that monitors transmissions and failures in the networks, as well as handles support and maintenance requests.

In the afternoon I went to the NTT DoCoMo service center and its exhibition hall. I saw how procedures are run when a customer complains about an

erroneous phone. In the exhibition hall I was shown various new phone models that was up for sale. I was also demonstrated the network connected tea water heater, something I had not seen before.

On the last vocational day I visited SHARP. In the morning I had a very nice tour of the SHARP Memorial and Technology Hall and learned a lot about SHARP's history. After lunch I visited SHARP's solar cell plant. This was quite interesting and I got many answers. I also got to visit the Horyuji Temple which

is the oldest wooden temple in the world.

To summarize my vocational days I found them very interesting and I learned a lot. If I could have wished for something more, I would have liked to see more things directly related to my work. Being interested in all kinds of technology, I still found it very rewarding and appreciated it very much.



Visiting SHARP's solar cell plant.

Vocational days, Sofie Qvarfordt

The organisation that I work for (Region Skåne) is responsible for health and medical services but also regional development questions. It also has a lot of international cooperation agreements within these fields. Therefore I was interested in learning more about the responsibilities of the local and regional authorities in Japan, and especially how they work with international affairs. Since I monitor what we can learn from other regions, I was also interested in obtaining more information about cooperation between the public and private sector, preventive health care and culture and design.

It was very interesting to visit the International Affairs Division at Osaka Prefecture. I found out that we share a lot of similarities: coordinating cooperation agreements, organising different international events and conferences as well as receiving international delegations. I was fascinated to find out that two countries so far away from each other have such a similar way of organising their international work. I also visited The Osaka International House foundation, which was created to be the focal point for international exchange and cooperation activities in the Kansai area. By providing a venue for citizen level international exchange, it is hoped that international mutual understanding focusing on history, culture and other societal aspects can be promoted.

Concerning the cooperation between the public, private and university sector, I learned from my visit at Osaka Prefecture Economic Department that there are a lot of projects dealing with this type of cooperation in Osaka area. Organisations from Skåne had actually visited the Saito Life Science Park in Osaka some years ago, and there is a lot of potential for cooperation in the field of life science between my region and Osaka region. At the Chamber of commerce and industry we discussed partner search possibilities between companies in Osaka and in my home region Skåne.

Another example of cooperation between the public and private sector was Universal Studios Japan (USJ). Besides the fun of being able to spend a day at USJ, enjoying the water world show and looking at all kinds of attractions, I also appreciated to learn about the background of the USJ, which is a joint partnership between the City of Osaka, Universal Studios, Inc and numerous influential companies and financial institutions throughout Japan. One of the reasons for locating USJ at Osaka Bay Area, is the desire from Osaka city to redevelop a typical industrial area to an attractive place for visitors – this kind of redevelopment is something we are undergoing in my town as well!



*Sofie at
Universal
Studios
Japan.*



At Daito City hall I was given very interesting presentations about all kinds of aspects of the city's work and one very successful project within preventive health care was a project where a combination of the ingredients exercise, cultural events and functional foods helped the elderly to stay healthy and prevent illness. This is something we could develop more in Sweden. I myself was given the privilege to participate in some gymnastics together with some of Daito City's senior citizens!

I was a bit surprised when I was brought to the Osaka City Incineration factory because this has very little to do with my work. Soon I discovered that it was my request to discover design that was fulfilled. The plant was built for the express purpose of dealing appropriately with waste treatment and environmental conservation. In order to preserve the environment, the famous Austrian environmental conservation architect, Friedensreich Hundertwasser, was engaged to design the exterior, making this plant a popular Mecca for study tours. You can see the amazing design on the picture!



During one of my vocational days, Mats and I visited the Suita Cable Television company. Thanks to the very kind staff, the GSE team's study visit to Asahi Beer Suita Brewery the following week was broadcasted to the citizens in Suita!

A society close to its history

Jens Ingemansson

There is an obvious difference between the Swedish and Japanese way to look at history and historical buildings and places. Swedish people often value old buildings and places highly just because they are old; we seem to be fascinated by the age of historical facts and places. Many Japanese people, on the other hand, seem to not care too much about the actual age of a building, but be more interested in the symbolic and traditional value of a place, like what ceremonials and traditions were founded and are taking place in a certain place.

After staying five weeks in Japan, visiting several historical places and museums – like Ibaraki Cultural Properties Depository, and Osaka museum of history – there are two historical periods that stand out as more important than others.

The first is the Edo era, lasting 1603–1868. The emperor and different military regimes (bakufu) had at that time been fighting about the power for almost 1 000 years. Nara and Kyoto, present day Osaka prefecture, had both at different times been the political capital. Osaka was the centre of trade and business in Japan.

However, in 1603 Tokugawa Ieyasu took power and moved the capital of Japan to Edo, present day Tokyo. A feudal system, which placed the warriors – the samurais – in the top social class, was introduced. Simultaneously, as Japan developed into a society with strong control, the previous openness to the surroundings, especially to China and the Korean peninsula, was put to an end. For more than 200 years the Japanese people had very limited communication with the rest of the world. Furthermore Christianity, introduced to Japan by Francisco Xavier in 1549, was prohibited.

To be a closed society with strong control not very long ago has probably given the Japanese people many of those characteristics they carry today; strong efforts to do everything right; a strong focus on details; large interest and curiosity in new things and knowledge, and perhaps also the fascination with ceremonials and symbolism described above.

The second important historical period is the Second World War. We experienced the tragic and horrifying consequences of the war during a one-day visit to Hiroshima. We saw the Atomic Dome and visited the Peace Memorial Museum. After the Meiji restoration in 1868, when Japan opened up to the world, the country unified under the force of nationalism, which led to the wars in Russia and Manchuria and the annexation of Korea. With the historical roots from the



Osaka Castle, a 1931 reconstruction. The original was built in 1583.

long lasting Edo era, one can imagine that it was at this time a small step to turn Japan into the military state that attacked Pearl Harbour, and on December 8, 1941 declared full-scale war with the United States and other countries.

At 8:15 in the morning of August 6,1945 the atomic bomb put a tragic end to the war but was also the hopeful beginning of the new Japanese society. Thanks to a modern constitution, many entrepreneurs and the samurai spirit, Japan has had an outstanding economic growth for several decades. This has made Japan one of the richest countries of the world in just about four decades!



In front of the Hiroshima Atomic Dome, one of few buildings preserved since the detonation in 1945.

Temples, shrines and gardens – impressions and reflections

Mats Bruzaus

Religions and philosophies are always important elements in the cultural heritage of all societies. So, for our GSE team to grasp as much as possible of Japanese culture during our five weeks in Osaka, we really wanted to encounter both Shinto and Buddhism in several ways. Not only as onlookers, but also to get the opportunity to experience some of the spiritual content and try to see how these co-existing religions influence the daily life of an ordinary Japanese. We were also aware of how religious teaching and symbols are present and woven into the design and layout of common places and were therefore looking forward to visiting some famous Japanese gardens.



Already the first week we had some great experiences. In The Katano-Tenji Shrine, the priest and his female assistant held a special ceremony for us and our safe journey back again from Japan. We all participated and interacted one by one in the ceremony and felt not only invited but welcomed into this ancient, natural religion. Quite a strong and very solemn experience. We still keep the sealed envelopes with a blessing on the wooden stick inside!



Hot sake being served at the end of the shinto ceremony.

A visit to the ancient capital of Japan, Nara, is certainly not possible without seeing the Great Buddha in the Todaiji Temple, but during our day there we also saw many other beautiful temples and shrines – as well as hundreds of sacred deer in the parks. Jens almost crawled through the famous narrow hole in the big wooden pillar, so his soul is now at least partially clean. I feel that we learned quite a lot about Buddhism that day in an implicit way and we were also accompanied by guides with good answers to our questions.



The day in Hiroshima gave us a very strong and shaking experience in the morning at the Atomic Bomb Memorial museum, and in the afternoon, as a contrast, a wonderful stroll through the beautiful Shukkeien garden originally created in 1620, looking at all the small islands in the Takuei pond and walking over the steep Koko-kyo (rainbow bridge).

The Shitennoji Temple and its garden was visited two times, once in drizzling rain and once in warm spring sun. The temple was founded 593 by Prince Shotoku, who is credited with introducing Buddhism to Japan. That story is also visible on wall paintings in the temple. The garden is also beautiful and with a wise choice of road, one can come one step closer to

Buddha. A teahouse is also situated in the middle of the garden with an unusually wide and grand view from inside. On our second visit, we also learned about the firefly sanctuary that Osaka Jonan RC is making in the garden.

The Zen experience at Kapusanji Temple that Rev. Kondo gave us is covered separately in this report; it was certainly a highlight during the whole GSE trip and worth it's own chapter.



To cover all the gardens, temples and shrines in Kyoto would certainly require many weeks. During our day in this former capital of Japan, we had a focus on two places; the Ryoanji



Temple with the famous stone garden, to start with. To stay there for a while, contemplating what the garden signifies is a kind of Zen experience and gives a multitude of possibilities when the observer's imagination is let lose. The other "must" in Kyoto is of course the Golden Pavilion of the Rokuonji temple. This elegant building in several different styles was recently re-gold plated and now reflects itself beautifully in the "Mirror pond" in front of the pavilion.

I personally also had a very special experience, staying at Sojiji temple with the head priest family, participating in the morning prayers and getting a very close insight into the life in a Buddhist temple. The beautiful and varied temple area with many buildings gave also some understanding of the symbiosis between Shintoism and Buddhism in Japan. During the last 1 400 years, these religions seem to a certain point to have almost merged – at the same time as they remain independent from each other as organizations. But Shinto elements and thinking can be found all the time in temples – and vice versa at shrines.



In Myoukokouji temple, where once upon a time eleven samurais were ordered to commit suicide after a hostile encounter with French citizens.

By visiting and participating in activities at temples, shrines and gardens, we obtained a wider and in some ways deeper understanding of these fundamental elements of the Japanese culture.

Zen meditation

Ingemar Larsson

Zen is a Buddhism branch that originates in India. Meditation is an important part and some of the main goals include enlightenment, wisdom and an ability to see the world with a clear and open mind.

Zen has influenced many parts of the Japanese culture, including the tea ceremony and art of flower arrangement.

Zazen is the practice of meditation in a sitting position. The inner being is focused upon by controlled breathing that allows the mind to settle.

One day we were invited to the temple Kapusan-ji, where the highest priest, Kondo-san (in orange robe below), instructed us in zazen meditation. After an initial session where we were shown how to sit properly and use a counting technique to control our breathing, we moved to a roof-covered pass-way in the temple.



Hearing the dripping rain and feeling the fresh outdoors air, we sat on small round pillows meditating for about 22 minutes. We were all very proud, but also aware that Buddhist monks sometimes meditate for 24 hours. Some of us had problems with staying focused and asked for help, as one can do. The help was delivered by hard and strong hitting on our backs with a wooden stick. It actually helped and did not really hurt.



The experience showed us the importance of giving yourself the appropriate time, even if your daily schedule is very stressful.

Calligraphy

Ingemar Larsson



In the city of Nara we were given a calligraphy lesson. Our nice teacher showed us how the ink-stick was produced and after that how we should use it on an ink-stone with water. The ink (sumi) is made by rubbing an ink-stick on a plate after having dipped it in water. The ink-stick dissolves by the rubbing and black ink is formed. Ink-sticks are formed from soot of burned plants, seed oil and pine wood.

The writing brushes (fude) are made of hairs from for example Japanese raccoon dogs, deer or other animals. The brushes are often manufactured in a complicated process, typically involving more than 140 steps.



Although calligraphy is taught in the schools it is mainly used for writing on celebration signs and cards.

The symbol for spring was our single letter to learn. Consisting of nine strokes, it came to be a challenge for us all. It was a fun event that gave us insight in the art and skill that takes a lifetime to master.

The irrational but powerful tea ceremony

Jens Ingemansson

Already the first week, we all experienced the Japanese tea ceremony for the first time. Over the following month, we averaged more than one ceremony a week, but often without getting much explanation of the ceremonial act. It was many times difficult to understand what was going on. Why did we have to do all these different movements, bowings, circulation of the cup and so forth?



Step by step we began to understand the meaning of the ceremony, or at least get some feeling for it. As guest in a family of one tea ceremony master and one tea ceremony teacher (mother and daughter), I had a very good opportunity to get a deeper insight in this fascinating art.

The tea ceremony was initiated in the end of the 15th century by Murata Jukoo, who developed the everyday act of drinking tea into a form of art. The ceremony normally takes place in a Japanese room with thin paper walls and tatami floor (traditional Japanese matting), helping you to focus and concentrate. All participants sit directly on the floor, preferably on their knees, but sometimes when it gets too painful, or if you are a foreigner, you are allowed to sit in a more relaxed position!

An important element in the tea ceremony is that the host, and to some extent the participants, has to follow many various rules of manners and etiquette in preparing and drinking the tea. There are exact rules for how to set the fire, stir the o-cha (Japanese tea), serve it to the guests, etc. To become a tea ceremony master, you normally have to practice for many, many years.



To learn a huge number of rules just for serving tea may seem meaningless for a “rational” Western European. However, the goal of the rules is not to teach you how to serve tea, but instead to help you concentrate on the present and increase your ability to communicate with the surroundings. By creating the right harmonic and balanced spirit, the purpose of the tea ceremony

is to increase your mental strength and your ability to understand and connect

The whole team got to try on traditional kimonos in connection with a tea ceremony.



with people and nature. In this, the tea ceremony is closely related to other Japanese arts, such as ikebana (Japanese flower arrangements) and calligraphy. Also Zen Buddhism has similar elements and goals.

A serious and correctly performed tea ceremony is a very interesting and powerful mental experience!

Sumo wrestling

Sofie Qvarfordt

One Saturday evening, we all went to a Grand Sumo Tournament in Osaka city together with our hosts. It was a fantastic experience. We had to sit on our knees for almost two hours in a narrow spot, but we had a great view of the *dohyo* (the sumo ring). We watched the impressive wrestlers while eating delicious snacks consisting of salty green beans and yakitori (grilled chicken skewers). The room was filled with people and we were surprised to find out that in the audience was no one less than the French president Jacques Chirac!



Sumo wrestling is a traditional combative sport, referred to as a national sport of Japan. In ancient times, it was held as an agricultural or Shinto ritual, and continues to follow the traditional rituals today. At the beginning of the game we enjoyed the “entering the ring” ceremony. The team of sumo wrestlers walked in a row wearing ceremonial aprons and traditional sumo hairstyles. The hairstyles that the wrestlers wear are adopted from those fashionable in the Edo period and have been preserved not only because of tradition, but also because they serve as head protection in the event of falls!



Every game only lasts for a few seconds, but what we thought was especially fascinating was the psychological ritual that the sumo wrestlers perform just before the game. Some of them seemed more like actors than sportsmen and we could tell they were popular from the cheering of the audience. The wrestlers stare into each other's eyes, raise their arms to

the side, spread their legs with their hands on their knees, bringing up and down their feet one by one as if they're stamping. Each wrestler also scatters a handful of salt in the ring. This is done to purify themselves and the ring from evil before the collision. During the grand sumo tournament circuits held six times a year, approximately 45 kilograms of salt is used per day!

The young Mongolian sumo wrestler Asashoryu won the tournament and the audience was wild with excitement when he made his final move. We were surprised to see that in the end of the game people started throwing the cushions from their seats towards the stage (but landing in the audience) – some out of happiness and some out of anger! We were busy protecting ourselves from the flying cushions!

A few weeks after the tournament, I was fortunate to be able to visit a traditional sumo restaurant together with my host family. The restaurant had a very cosy



atmosphere and I ate the traditional sumo food called chanko nabe, meaning mixed pot, which was heavenly. My hosts told me that the sumo wrestlers eat this food and then go directly to sleep and this is how they build up their size. I was careful not to go to sleep afterwards! With all the pictures displaying famous sumo wrestlers from past to present, the restaurant served as a museum as well, attracting not only sumo wrestlers but all kinds of people. I was very lucky to be brought to this place and I can highly recommend it to others!

Hanami – cherry blossom viewing

Lisa Kirsebom

The cherry tree, *sakura* in Japanese, and cherry blossom are some of the most well-known symbols for Japan, and are deeply loved by the Japanese people. It has been said that the shape and colour of the petals reflect people's ideal notions of purity and simplicity. Another reason for the fascination is probably the flowers' short lifespan – the sakura blooms for only about a week before the flowers fall off, and throughout that week the ground under the trees is covered in pink petals, torn off by the breeze.



The blooming starts in the south, usually in the second half of March, and spread northward, reaching Osaka in late March or early April. Every day the TV news show where the "cherry-blossom front" is moving, and newspapers report the process from first flowering to full bloom. The spring of 2005 happened to be an unusually cold one, which had certain effects on our schedule...

People in Japan celebrate the flowering by moving outdoors, holding picnics called *hanami* under the trees, with family, friends, or colleagues. The tradition goes back to ancient times when aristocrats wrote poetry and sang songs under the trees, and has been widespread for at least the past 150 years. Today poetry is less common, and instead drinking beer and sake, and taking photos of the flowers with your mobile phone, is more in style... But there are still special songs sung to celebrate the sakura.

A hanami was planned for us already before we arrived to Japan, to be held on March 31st – a date when the flowers were in full bloom last year. Unfortunately, due to the cold weather, this year there were still only sakura buds to be seen... However, Senri-Maple Rotary Club threw us an outdoor party all the same (in the Expo '70 Commemoration Park, where the Japan World Exposition was held in 1970), with lots of barbecued food, fruit, drinks and singing! We had a lot of fun, and the team agreed that the weather and general atmosphere reminded us a lot of the celebration of Walpurgis night in Sweden. This is also an occasion when people tend to arrange outdoor parties,



no matter how cold or windy it is, and have a lot of fun resisting the powers of nature!

Our last weekend in Osaka, the flowers were finally in full bloom and the weather was fantastic. We brought picnic food with us and walked out in Osaka Castle Park. The number of people out to watch the flowers was completely amazing. There was literally a traffic jam in some parts of the park (and this is a BIG park), were we could move neither forward nor back because of the crowds. Finally we found a nice and quiet spot – right under the plum trees, whose blooming season was over. We assume that the reason we were alone there, was that no Japanese with any sense of pride would ever consider having his or her hanami anywhere else than under an actual cherry tree... Mats Bruzæus also told us that the absolute highlight of a true hanami, is if a flower petal comes floating down, landing in your glass of sake. This was of course impossible in the spot we picked. But we had a good time anyway!



Meeting the Japanese people

Lisa Kirsebom

There are truly many similarities between the people of Sweden and Japan. For example, in both countries it is considered important for a person to function well in a group – often more important than to be the one to challenge the group’s views and contribute something new and different. It is considered polite to not emphasize one’s own strengths and advantages too much; better to keep a low profile, and play down what you have achieved.

However, there are of course also differences between the Swedes and the Japanese. All of us in the GSE team experienced these differences time and again, and were confused, fascinated – and sometimes frustrated by them.

“It is interesting with the Japanese people’s focus on inner harmony, to get the soul in balance. In Sweden this is a quite new area of interest and it is mostly women that are open enough to understand and make use of it. In Japan the training of the mind has gone on for several hundreds, perhaps thousands, of years and many occupations in this field have originally been reserved for men.”

Jens



A Buddhist monk walking through the garden of Gokuraku-jodo.

Language and communication

“Despite that the language was an obvious barrier, communication was still possible to maintain. Many Japanese people have studied English for many years in school, but the ability to speak is not so good. However, if there is a will there is often a way, and many conversations included both pointing at signs and drawing pictures in order to make oneself understood.”

Ingemar

“The four of us took a couple of lessons in the Japanese language before our journey. The Japanese language is very beautiful but also difficult. Not only is it written with three different sign systems, we also discovered that it contains a lot of ambiguity and implicity.”

Sofie

In Swedish, it is common to wrap criticism in polite phrases, and work around the topic until (hopefully) the point is made. However, in most other situations,

Swedes speak in a fairly straightforward manner, and clearness and unambiguity is appreciated. In Japan, on the other hand, we learned that stating something positively, even if it is quite factual and non-sensitive, is often considered blunt and arrogant. The words "maybe" and "perhaps" are frequently used, and on numerous occasions we misinterpreted our Japanese friends, simply because we put too much meaning into these two words. This ambiguity in Japanese is called *aimai*.

When a Swedish driver says to his passenger before they leave the car; "Perhaps you'd better bring your sweater along," he probably means that it might get cold. The phrase is more of a suggestion, and the passenger might reply "No, thank you, I'm sure I'll be all right without it". When the Japanese driver says the same thing, he could very well mean "Bring your sweater, because you will not be riding in this car again". (That would, however, not be a polite way to express oneself.) This difference occasionally put us in confused situations, which, naturally, our hosts in Japan always helped us out of in a most polite manner.

"The Japanese think that it is impolite to speak openly on the assumption that their partners know nothing. They like and value *aimai* because they think that it is unnecessary to speak clearly as long as their partner is knowledgeable. To express oneself distinctly carries the assumption that one's partner knows nothing, so clear expression can be considered impolite. --- *Aimai* can result in misunderstandings, and people from other countries sometimes become irritated because the Japanese seem unable to answer yes or no directly."

The Japanese Mind, p. 11. Ed. Roger J. Davies and Osamu Ikeno

But occasionally it wasn't just the language, it was something else, that stood between us and the person we communicated with. Something inside our minds, hard to understand and even harder to overcome. It seemed... like if our Japanese friends *expected* us to ask about something else than we actually asked for, and it could take a long time to sort that misunderstanding out. Or we could be confused by the fact that one minute, we're sitting by the dinner table keeping a fairly fluent conversation about for example national support systems for unemployed, and the next minute it seems close to impossible to figure out if we're *leaving* 9.30 the next day, or if we're supposed to *reach our destination* at 9.30 (and thus leave much earlier). None of us could quite figure out what this difference in thinking, in "thought patterned", consisted in – but it was definitely there, no question about it.

"Sometimes, but not very often, there could be a silence in the beginning of a meeting and we didn't know if it was our hosts who should begin or we. We understood later on that we have a different understanding of silence. For the Japanese, we learned, silence is considered rather good and indicates deep thinking or consideration, whereas in Sweden, it can make people uncomfortable. We improved our Japanese during our stay and we managed to give some short self-presentations in Japanese."

Sofie

Responsibility and independence

We were told before arriving to Japan, and this was proven to us many times, that a host's or arranger's responsibility is a very important thing in this country. The personal responsibility for making the guest happy and satisfied, as well as keeping her or him comfortable and safe, can never be compromised or disclaimed. This meant that our hosts, be they host families, accompanying Rotarians or welcoming committees at companies or museums, always did their uttermost to take good care of us. They made us feel like royalty.

But just like royalty, we were also too valuable to be allowed to run off on dangerous adventures of our own. The foundation for this "problem" was always the most kind concern for our welfare, but that didn't altogether prevent us from feeling a little shut in at times...



Kimono try-on and tea ceremony at a Rotarian's home.

At home, all the GSE team members live in their own households, not with their parents. It was challenging at times for us to have to struggle to be given the freedom to take the subway, or a walk, alone. Maybe this was slightly more noticeable for the women than the men, and for the pregnant woman a tiny bit more than for the rest – but we all experienced it.

“We thought that one big difference between our two countries is that young people in Japan live together with their parents and remain dependent on them until quite late in life. Dependence plays an important role in Japanese culture. This contrasts to Swedish culture, where young people generally try to achieve independence from their parents at a relatively young age.”

Sofie

Host families

“The everyday life in the host family homes was very interesting to experience. Coming from a different country and even a different continent, we are accustomed to other traditions and ways of life. All of us in the team have travelled quite a lot, but most of us have not had the privilege of living with host families for weeks. It was during the moments with the host families that the true Japanese kindness and openness became clear. We felt very welcome and appreciated.”

Ingemar

Sometimes we were offered exclusive and expensive gifts – but even more important was the families’ generosity with their time, space and personal thoughts and opinions. Communication was often a problem, but one that was always solved. In some cases, a friend, relative or acquaintance was invited to help translating during a meal, and these people occasionally travelled a long way and spent many hours just to make life easier for us and our families. We were always very grateful for that.

However, even though the time with the families was quite possibly the most important part of the whole trip, the one-night weekend stays at the Hotel New Otani did a great deal to help us through the intense program. To just have time to ourselves, completely free from any feeling of obligation, was heavenly. (That the hotel was such a luxurious one was certainly a fantastic bonus – but any place where we could have private time would probably have felt great...)

It could be very difficult to explain in a polite and gentle way to the host families how eager we were to be dropped off and picked up at the set times on Saturday and Sunday, not dropped off late and picked up early, like many families suggested. Some families ambitiously planned a full day of activities and outings on the Saturday, and however kind and generous this was, such an arrangement also meant that our ”scheduled week” suddenly stretched all the way into Saturday evening. This could be tiring, however fun and interesting the activity was. We are very eager to pass this on to future GSE teams and their hosts (clubs as well as families); the private time is necessary to recharge the mental and physical batteries for the next week. Please don’t compromise it, no matter how good the intentions are.



Lisa with host mother and her Rotary friends, throwing her a welcoming party at a restaurant.

“Lovely welcoming parties were often organized for us in a new family, and the families’ children, grandchildren, friends and neighbours all gathered to greet us. This warm greeting made us feel very welcome, which is important when you come to a new country with a completely different language and culture! Some of the children were very unaccustomed to foreigners, and their curiosity about us was very charming. Spending time with the host families was also a good way to get to know the different customs and traditions in

Japan. To sleep on a futon, to eat with chopsticks while sitting on our knees and to take traditional Japanese baths in the evenings, were new experiences.“

Sofie

Finally

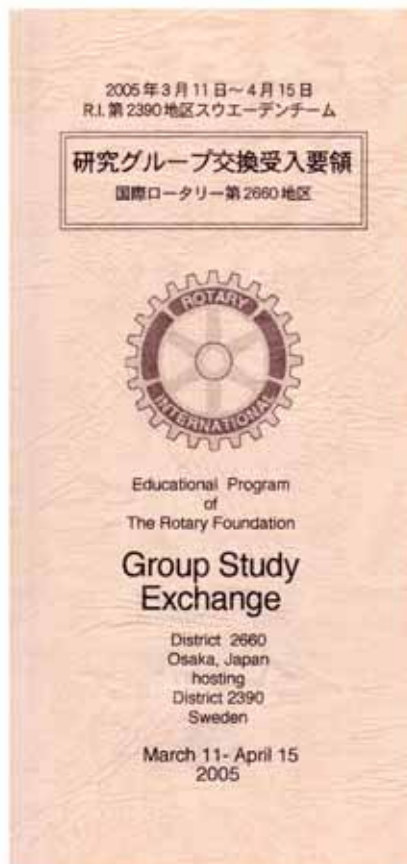
The opportunity to spend these five weeks in Japan meant more to us in the GSE team than we can ever express. The experiences and encounters we had will stay with us for the rest of our lives, and affect us both privately and professionally.

From all of us – a deeply felt thank you to Rotary International, the Rotary Foundation and the people involved from Osaka District 2660, for making all this possible. We are proud and grateful to now be among the many GSE alumni around the world, and we hope to be able to pass our new cultural knowledge along to others.



Our very first minutes in Osaka, with the GSE welcoming committee at the airport.

Our original schedule (some details were changed)



Itinerary

March 11 (Friday)
(GSE Subcom in charge.)
8:35 am GSE team arrives at Kansai International Airport on LH740.
Governor, GSE Subcom members and host club representatives will meet the team.
Transfer to Hotel New Otani.
Lunch with Rotarians.
Stay at the hotel.

March 12 (Saturday)
Breakfast and lunch at the hotel.
D-2660 GSE Alumni members will meet D-2390 team to give information on Osaka and take them to a relaxing tour of downtown Osaka.
Welcome party hosted by GSE Alumni
Stay at the hotel.

March 13 (Sunday)
Breakfast and lunch at the hotel.
15:00 briefing by GSE Subcom members at the business center of the hotel.
18:00 **Welcome Banquet** at Hotel New Otani (Program by D-2390 team)
Move to 1st week host families.

The 1st week (Host: Hirakata RC)

March 14 (Monday)
Vocational Study Day.
Independent itinerary for each member
Mats Bruzaeus; K-CATV
Keihan Railway personnel Dept.
Sofie Qvarfordt; City Hall of Daiso-shi
Lisa Kirsebom; Tea Ceremony at Kinryuji, Kansai Medical University
Jens Ingemansson; San-So-ken Kansai Center (fuel cell laboratory)
Ingemar Larsson; Osaka Telecommunication College

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March 15 (Tuesday)
(Hirakata RC in charge)
AM: Old Inn "Kagiya" museum
Yodogawa River Museum.
Mitsukan Vinegar factory

March 16 (Wednesday)
(Hirakata-Kuzuha RC in charge)
Hirakata City Hall
Lunch and Rotary Meeting: **Hirakata-Kuzuha RC**
Program by GSE team
Katano Tenjin Shrine and Tea ceremony

March 17 (Thursday)
Hi-Tech Day
(Kadoma RC in charge)
AM: Visit to Matsushita Electric Technology Museum.
PM: Sanyo Electric Head Quarter

March 18 (Friday)
Nara Day
(Hirakata RC in charge)
Todaiji Temple and great Buddha, Nara National Museum, Wakakusa Hill, Japanese calligraphy.

March 19 (Saturday)
Free activities with host families.
Hotel New Otani check-in.
Dinner of each member's choice.
Stay at the Hotel.

The 2nd week (Host: Higashi-Osaka-Chuo RC)

March 20 (Sunday)
Free activities all day.
Hotel checkout.
Pick-up by 2nd week host families at the hotel. PM 4:00

March 21 (Monday)
Hiroshima Day
(Higashi-Osaka-Chuo RC in charge)
One day trip on Shinkansen to Hiroshima. Visit to Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum and Atomic Dome

March 22 (Tuesday)
AM: Higashi-Osaka City Hall
PM: Creation Core (help for industry)

March 23 (Wednesday)
(Higashi-Osaka RC in charge)
Osaka Castle and tea ceremony
Lunch and Rotary Meeting: **Higashi-Osaka RC**
Program by GSE team

March 24 (Thursday)
Vocational Study Day.
Independent itinerary for each member
Mats Bruzaeus; Toshiba Information Equipment, Cannon Show Room, Yodobashi-Camera
Sofie Qvarfordt; Industrial collaboration organization
Lisa Kirsebom; Tanabe Seiyaku Kajima lab.
Jens Ingemansson; Plastic molding factory
Ingemar Larsson; Same as Mats Bruzaeus

March 25 (Friday)
Cultural Exchange Day
(Yao-Higashi and Kashihara RC in charge)
Yao-Higashi RC and Kashihara RC reception
Program by GSE team

March 26 (Saturday)
Free activities with host families
Enjoy Sumo Tournament
Dinner of each members choice.
Hotel New Otani check-in.

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The 3rd week (Host: Ibaraki RC)

March 27 (Sunday)
Hotel checkout.
Pickup by 3rd week host families at the Hotel. PM 4:00

March 28 (Monday)
(Ibaraki-Higashi RC in charge)
AM: Tour in Hokusei Area
(Takatsuki RCs in charge)
PM: Zen Experience

March 29 (Tuesday)
Vocational Study Day.
Independent itinerary for each member
Study and Talk with Professors in Osaka University

March 30 (Wednesday)
Kyoto Day
(Ibaraki-Nishi RC in charge)
One day excursion in Kyoto

March 31 (Thursday)
(Suita RC in charge)
Asahi Beer Suita Brewery
Lunch and Rotary meeting: **Suita RC.** Program by GSE team
Cherry Blossom Outing and visit to Senri-Maple RC

April 1 (Friday)
(Toyonaka-Kuko RC in charge)
Osaka International Airport
(Ikeda RC in charge)
Daihatsu Motors (Environment Friendly Cars)

April 2 (Saturday)
Free activity all day.
Hotel New Otani check-in.
Dinner of each member's choice. Stay at the Hotel.

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April 8 (Friday)
(Osaka RC in charge)
Osaka Venetian Business Museum
Lunch and Rotary meeting: **Osaka RC.**
Program by GSE team
Osaka Historical Museum

April 9 (Saturday)
Free activities with host families.
Hotel New Otani check-in.
Dinner of each member's choice.
Stay at the Hotel.

The 5th week (Host: Osaka-Ionan RC)

April 10 (Sunday)
Free activities all day.
Hotel checkout.
Pick-up by 5th week host families at the hotel. PM 4:00

April 11 (Monday)
Vocational Study Day.
Independent itinerary for each member
Mats Bruzaeus: The Pack Corporation Personnel Department. Sushi-Man (Sushi Osaka-style)
Sofie Qvarfordt: Osaka International Exchange Center and/or other institution
Lisa Kirsebom: Toyobo, Osaka City University Medical Dept.
Jens Ingemansson: Osaka Gas (fuel cell)
Ingemar Larsson: Sharp

April 12 (Tuesday)
Takashimaya Department Store
Den-Den (electronic gadget) Town
Kuromon Market etc. Bunraku Puppet Theater

April 13 (Wednesday)
Myokoku-ji, Ishin-ji, Kinetsu Department Store
Farewell Party at Tennoji Miyako Hotel

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The 4th week (Host: Osaka-Tsurumi RC)

April 3 (Sunday)
Free activities all day.
Hotel checkout.
Pickup by 4th week host families at the Hotel. PM 4:00

April 4 (Monday)
(Osaka-Nishi RC in charge)
Hanshin Department Store
Lunch and Rotary meeting: **Osaka-Nishi RC.**
Program by GSE team
Kaiyukan Aquarium

April 5 (Tuesday)
Vocational Study Day.
Independent itinerary for each member
Mats Bruzaeus: Ozeki Brewery (sake), Yodogawa Techno High School (Brass Band Medalist)
Sofie Qvarfordt: USJ (the 3rd sector operation), Osaka City Incineration Factory (Hundertwasser design)
Lisa Kirsebom: Talk with science writers at Yomiuri Newspaper. Visit to Biosite Capital
Jens Ingemansson: Maruishi Seiyaku and others
Ingemar Larsson: K-opticom or Imedio, Aikido School

April 6 (Wednesday)
(Osaka-Sonezaki RC in charge)
Courtesy visit to Mayor of Osaka City
Lunch and Rotary meeting: **Osaka-Sonezaki RC.**
Program by GSE team
Kimono Wearing

April 7 (Thursday) Kobe Day
(Osaka-Tsurumi RC in charge)
Akashi Kaikyo Ohashi and its Museum
HAT Kobe Earthquake Museum

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April 14 (Thursday)
Freedom for shopping etc.

April 15 (Friday)
Departure from Kansai International Airport at 9:30 AM (LH741)
GOOD-BYE and WELCOME BACK!

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To the sponsors of this report – thank you very much!



Rotary International



Region Skåne