

Discover Social Innovation in Singapore

First of all, I would like to thank the staff and professors of Waseda University, Korea University, Peking University, and Nanyang Technological University for providing me with this wonderful opportunity. I have experienced and learned so much at the Social Innovation Forum held in Singapore in 2023.

Day1

After arriving at Changi International Airport, we took a bus to NTU. On the way, a guide told us about the local housing and lifestyle.



View from the bus (photo by author)

My first impression of Singapore was that the city and nature coexist in a good balance. There are large skyscrapers and luxurious buildings, but there is always some nature left. Japanese cities are often lined with buildings and gray landscapes. I found it very pleasant to see trees like this.

After arriving at NTU, we had lunch! It was my first time to try Singaporean food, and it was spicy and delicious!



Welcome Lunch at NTU (Photo by SIF staff)

After listening to the explanation about SIF, we had a tour of NTU campus.

It was hard to walk around the huge campus, but it was nice to see a lot of greenery.



The rich greenery of the NTU campus (photo by author)

The campus was so eco-friendly!

All the terraces and benches are sunny and do not use much electricity. Also, there are few elevators, so students have to take the stairs to get around. It takes some getting used to, but it is good exercise and good for the

environment!

After visiting the campus, we went around the city of Singapore.

We used buses and trains to get around, and here, too, there was Social Innovation.

First of all, the escalators at the train station are very fast! I and all the students from Korea were amazed at how fast they were. I think it is a great way to relieve rush hour congestion in a small country.

I was also surprised at the height of the buses. Most buses in the city were double-decker and could accommodate many people. At first I was worried that the buses would fall over because they were so high, but they were safe. I think this is also an innovation for efficient movement of people in a small country.

While exploring the area around Raffles Place Station, I noticed that there were many statues!

I don't know why there are so many statues, but I loved the quaint riverside scenery.



Boys Jumping into the River (photo by author)



Bronze statue of Singapore's historical background (photo by author)

Day2

On the second day, we had a discussion based on the lectures given by the professors of each university.



Lecture by Associate Professor Nam Kyu KIM, Korea University (Photo by SIF staff)

About 6~7 students from each university gathered for discussion. To tell the truth, I was most nervous about this discussion. I was nervous about discussing political topics with students of my age. However, everyone actively exchanged their opinions based on what they had learned, and we were able to reaffirm that our goal is peace.

Day 3

On the third day, we went on a heritage tour to Kampong Glam, Little India, and Chinatown to experience firsthand the unique characteristics of Singapore, a city where people of different ethnic backgrounds live together.

While there are Chinatowns in Japan, Singapore's Chinatown was a little different. In Yokohama's Chinatown, there are always many Japanese tourists because the Chinese food is arranged for "Japanese tourists. On the other hand, Singapore's Chinatown is not "for tourists," and the atmosphere is as if you are really in China.



China Town in Singapore(photo by author)



China Town in Yokohama with many Japanese tourists(photo by author)

Little India was very nice! The vibrant markets and unique smells made me feel as if I was really in India. I have never actually been to India, but Singapore makes me feel as if I have been to several countries.



A market in Little India (photo by author)

Day4

After the Closing Session, we enjoyed free time for sightseeing in the city!

I went to Starbucks in Rochester Park with my friend. Unfortunately, it was raining that day, but the white distinctive building was very nice. Another thing that makes Starbucks in Singapore different from Starbucks in Japan is the wide variety of food. I went to Starbucks three times in Singapore, and all of them had a wide variety of food. I was a little surprised to see the difference even in the same Starbucks because Starbucks in Japan has few food items and many drinks.



Food lined up in the showcase (photo by author)

There were many interesting discoveries in Singapore that were different from those in Japan!

Moreover, not only did I learn a lot about Singapore in this program, but I also made many precious friends. I hope to visit Korea or China someday and meet my friends again.

Of course, I would like to go back to Singapore again to enjoy the wonderful scenery and food!



(photo by author)



(photo by author)