

Campus Asia Study Abroad Experience: Nanyang Technological University (AY2025)

Motivation for Choosing Singapore

I have been concerned about the recent sluggish economic growth in Asian countries, particularly Japan. This concern led me to choose Singapore for two main reasons. First, Singapore achieved rapid economic growth despite its lack of natural resources. I was curious to understand how the country overcame its challenging circumstances to become a thriving global hub. Second, I wanted to examine how Japanese companies successfully expand their businesses abroad. Given Japan's shrinking population and economy, international expansion is essential. Since many Japanese firms have tapped into the Singaporean market, I wanted to learn how they successfully integrated into the local culture.



Courses at NTU

In line with my first objective, I took a course on the Chinese economy at NTU (as a course specifically on the Singaporean economy was not available...). This was the most impactful course I attended. We explored the factors contributing to China's economic expansion, as well as the challenges and side effects of such rapid growth. Beyond China-specific issues, we made group presentations to analyze how these observations could be applied to Japan or Singapore. My assigned discussion topics were: 1) how distortions in the geographical distribution of population impede economic growth, and 2) whether

reducing income tax rates helps achieve a more equal society.

Both topics were highly relevant to my interests and helped deepen my understanding of macroeconomic issues.



Waseda Alumni Meet-up

To pursue my second interest, I attended a Waseda alumni meet-up in Singapore. I met several alumni working for Japanese companies that have expanded into the region.

They shared to me the challenges they face, such as collaborating with Singaporean colleagues who hold different cultural backgrounds and values, and developing business strategies tailored to Singapore's unique characteristics, such as its small domestic

market and multi-ethnic society. Conversely, I also learned that building relationships with Singaporeans is often seamless due to their approachable nature. Hearing these firsthand perspectives was very informative.

Travel and Social Experiences

Beyond my studies on campus, I fully enjoyed the exchange program by exploring downtown Singapore and visiting several countries with friends I met at NTU. During my first week, we watched the 60th National Day celebrations. While I enjoyed the military demonstrations and fireworks, I found myself questioning why Singapore places such a strong emphasis on its military strength, as there seemed to be no



immediate external threats. A local friend offered an intriguing perspective: that a primary role of the military is to maintain internal stability and deter domestic unrest. This was a new viewpoint for me as a citizen of Japan.

Additionally, traveling to Kuala Lumpur, Thailand, and Taiwan with international friends provided me with unforgettable memories.



Future Goals

This exchange program will be invaluable for my future, particularly for my graduate research. I plan to study macroeconomics, focusing on the relationship between innovation, economic growth, and wealth inequality. Before this program, I had intended to focus solely on innovation and growth. However, I witnessed the reality of widening economic inequality in Singapore, which I was less aware of in Japan. I realized it is just as important to consider how the economic pie is divided as it is to consider how to grow it. I believe my experiences in Singapore will significantly deepen the quality and scope of my future research.