

Report of Kochi Trip (July 16-20, 2018)

Hello! My name is Delisya van Friderici and I came in second in the Japanese Public Speaking Contest in March earlier this year. I participated with the expectation of not winning a single thing (once the smaller prizes had gone, I had already started checking my phone), so coming in second made me frown in confusion. This was a mistake, right? There was no way that *I* won a 3 day long trip to Japan.

However, on July 16th, I boarded my plane to Kochi prefecture and after 14 hours I set foot on Haneda airport. It felt good to be back, but right after passing through security, airport attendants told me my luggage hadn't arrived yet and wouldn't arrive in Kochi until my last day there. Most of my money was stored in there, so if it wasn't for the wonderful staff in Kochi providing me with money to buy clothes and toiletries, I don't know what I would have done.

Mr. Hayato came to pick me up from the airport and we met up with Mr. Yamamoto, who took me to have lunch. I had only spoken to Mr. Yamamoto online, it was nice to finally meet him. After lunch it was time to meet the people responsible for this opportunity. As they were government officials I was impossibly nervous, but everyone was very friendly and welcoming.

My second day in Kochi started early (much to my discomfort) as the drive to Sukumo city was a long one and arriving before noon was crucial to escape the impossible temperatures of Japanese summer. In Sukumo I had the honour of meeting the mayor of Sukumo city. He told me a lot of interesting things about Sukumo's relationship with The Netherlands. I just wish I hadn't been so nervous. I'm convinced I messed up all my formal Japanese and ended up looking like an idiot. How embarrassing...



Right after my meeting with the mayor, we drove to the middle school where I was to teach the kids a little about The Netherlands. I was supposed to do a speech, but I had turned it into a quiz to make it more interesting for the children. The presents I had brought from home were also in my luggage, but I promised

I'd have them delivered as soon as possible. I hope they enjoyed the stroopwafels.



Mr Yamamoto took me to a “ryokan” in which we were to spend the night (in different rooms, of course). It was luxurious with spacious rooms and hot springs... which we were both too tired to use, haha.

The third day also started early, but driving with Mr. Yamamoto was very enjoyable, so I didn't mind. We were to visit an agricultural university and I was surprised The Netherlands had such influences in Japan. I'm from the city and have no knowledge on agriculture, so it was interesting to learn about all sorts of things. Unfortunately it was very hot and I couldn't enjoy it as much as I would have liked.

At night, Mr. Yamamoto, one of his colleagues, and a girl I met at the university went out for yakiniku. My suitcase had arrived, so I was able to change into my own clothes and give Mr. Yamamoto the souvenirs I had gotten him. I also introduced everyone to the infamous Dutch candy called 'drop'. They all hated it and were surprised I could eat it so casually, haha!

On the fourth and final day, before taking me back to the airport, Mr. Yamamoto indulged my love for Japanese pop-culture. He drove me to Super Freaks, a secondhand merchandise shop, and Hobby-Kan, a museum for Japanese toys, manga, and anime. I spent more money than I can tell my mother about without her shaking her head at me.



I'd like to thank the staff at the Japanese embassy in The Netherlands and Kochi for this experience. Even though Kochi is very different from Amsterdam, it's a very nice city and I would like to visit again in the future!