

# 3

## 3-week training in South Korea (Seminar in Understanding Foreign Culture I/II)

Professor Setsuko Onoda and Assistant Professor Aki Yoshihara, Department of International Cultural Studies, Morioka Junior College, Iwate Prefectural University

Applicable principle

- Principle 6: A commitment to encouraging global citizenship through education
- Principle 10: A commitment to promoting inter-cultural dialogue and understanding, and the “unlearning” of intolerance, through education

### 1. Activity overview

The Department of International Cultural Studies has incorporated study abroad programs as part of its regular curriculum and offers two programs, one in the US and one in South Korea. Both programs were cancelled in 2020 due to the pandemic but the South Korea program was hosted online in 2021 and 2022. In 2023, 8 students participated in the three-week study abroad program, just like before the pandemic. Students who participate in the South Korea program study Korean history, culture, and its social landscape in the first semester in preparation for their time in South Korea. Afterwards, they stay at Kyung Hee University's Educational Center for International Students in Seoul for three weeks during summer vacation, and take Korean language and culture classes with students from all around the world. In the second semester class upon returning to Japan in the

second semester, they write comparative reports based on their fieldwork, and participate in study abroad presentation on campus to share what they've learned.

### 2. Activity details

The objectives of the South Korea program are to learn Hangul, South Korean culture and history, and to understand other cultures through interactions with South Korean students. The four goals of the program are as follows.

- Learn Korean
- Learn South Korean history and culture
- Learn about modern South Korean society
- Interact with South Korean college students

Students were given a placement test, and their classes were decided based on the result. In the morning classes, students learned basic grammar and speaking. In the afternoon



Students participating in the 2023 program, at the Kyung Hee University's Educational Center for International Students

classes, students learned about various aspects of South Korean culture such as K-pop, Korean dramas, and Hangul calligraphy. They also visited cultural sites around the city. Kyung Hee University also offers a program called “doumi” where people can interact with Korean students of the university one-on-one. It is a program available to short-term international students, and the program allowed students from Iwate Prefectural University to deepen their friendship with Kyung Hee University students.

Students were able to experience Seoul's lifestyle, culture, and social landscape through their dorm life, outings with their doumi, and in their free time.

### 3. Activity outcomes

The following is an excerpt of one student's reflection of their study abroad experience in South Korea.

“I felt the differences in culture, thinking, and environment through the three-week stay in South Korea.

All classes were held in Korean, so I really enjoyed reading, writing, and even listening. My pronunciation was poor before studying in this program, but I was able to greatly improve my pronunciation through the lessons. In the afternoon lessons, I was able to learn Korean with dramas and music. In particular, I enjoyed playing traditional Korean games and actually learned about a foreign culture. In South Korea, I was able to experience things that I could never do in Japan. I had a great time.

During our field trips, we were able to visit museums and watch performances, and I really enjoyed Korean-specific things.

Also, being in an all-Korean environment, I feel I have improved my Korean language skills. On the first day, I couldn't catch words and couldn't understand what people were saying instantly, but I gradually got better at figuring out what they were saying. When I went into shops, I was able to have a simple conversation with the staff by asking questions and talking to them, rather than just listening. Such interactions with people left a very strong impression on me.

While walking around the streets, I saw flags criticizing Japan's discharge of contaminated water from the nuclear power plant in Fukushima, and various things related to Takeshima and Dokdo. I saw the Korean people's criticism and way of thinking about the problems in the Japan-Korea relationship in my daily life.

The three weeks were a valuable opportunity to learn not only languages, but also many other things. I think that studying abroad was a very meaningful time.

The titles of the students' reports are as follows. In addition to the presentation in December 2023, the reports were also compiled into a booklet. This booklet will serve as a useful study reference for students in years to come.

“Comparison of movie theaters in Japan and South Korea”

- “Comparison of supermarkets in Japan and South Korea”
- “Comparison of restaurants and meals in Japan and South Korea”
- “Comparison of food culture in restaurants in Japan and South Korea”
- “Cross-cultural comparison of demand for internet cafes in Japan and South Korea”
- “Comparison of karaoke in South Korea and Japan”
- “Differences in bathing facilities in Japan and South Korea”
- “Comparison of food delivery services in Japan and South Korea”

As shown in the titles above, actual fieldwork in South Korea encouraged students to understand a different culture with a comparative perspective and presented an opportunity to think about social issues and international affairs.



Entrance hall at the Kyung Hee University's Educational Center for International Students



Kyung Hee University auditorium