

International Affairs Department

Dear friends,

My 16th newsletter as a JICA expert reports Japanese high school students VISITING HANOI AND the currency of Vietnam.

1. A VISIT TO HANOI OF JAPANESE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Four students and their teacher from Nagasaki Higashi High School of Japan came to Hanoi on August 6. I helped Expert Ibaraki, a policy adviser, to attend them. Nagasaki Higashi High School is a public school in Nagasaki city, a combined middle school, and high school (from 7th to 12th grade.) Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology of Japan designated Nagasaki Higashi High Schools as one superglobal high school (SGH) in 2015. SGH program started in 2014 aims to cultivate promising youngsters through education to be global leaders interested in global issues, sophisticated, and have communication skills and problem-solving abilities. Their visit is to research the water environment in Hanoi as a part of SGH activities.

For water quality measurement, we visited lakes (West Lake and Truc Bach Lake), channels, and rivers (To Lich River and Nhue River). Students checked COD-Mn, ammonia nitrogen, nitrite nitrogen, nitrate nitrogen, and phosphate phosphorus with a reagent test kit (Photo 1). They shared roles in sampling, measuring water quality with a test kit, and recording measurements. They gradually got used to their parts, and the investigation went smoothly.



Photo 1: Students sampling by river

Students stopped over Bay Mau WWTP and toured facilities after a briefing. While some of them had never seen WWTPs, their eagerness



Photo 2: Q&A session at Bay Mau WWTP

impressed me. After the facility tour, students actively asked questions about the disposal of sludge generated through wastewater treatment and education or public relations for environmental conservation, including the water environment. They tried to understand

the wastewater situation of Hanoi city (Photo 2.)

I'm very interested in how the students finally report their research.

2. CURRENCY OF VIETNAM

Have you ever seen the Vietnamese Dong, the currency of Vietnam? There are twelve kinds of bills: hundred, two hundred, five hundred, a thousand, two thousand, five thousand, ten thousand, twenty thousand, fifty thousand, hundred thousand, two hundred thousand, and five hundred thousand. But, few small bills such as a hundred or two hundred Dong circulate practically.

Photo 3 shows the paper currency I have ever had. I actually got ten kinds of my hands, but I had only nine when I took this photo.

Since bills over ten thousand Dong have polymer forming surface which is tear-proof, they are OK even when wet. On the other hand, accounts of five thousand Dong and under are unprocessed and easy to get miserable.

Like Japan, Vietnamese bills have famous people on their faces.

Nevertheless, the outstanding figure in the Vietnamese Dong is only Chairman, Ho Chi Minh. Besides, Vietnam has no coins. Precisely, the country used to have cash, but it stopped issuing. There are few coins on the market, and I have never seen them since I came to Vietnam.



Photo 3: Vietnamese currency

Vietnamese paper bills have major industries or iconic attractions of the country on their reverse sides. For example, two hundred thousand has a famous world heritage site, Dinh Huong islet of Ha Long Bay. A hundred thousand have the Temple of Literature in Hanoi, a renowned tourist destination; a fifty thousand have a building in Hue, another world heritage site. Twenty thousand have Japanese covered bridge in Hoi An.

When I visited Ha Long Bay and joined a boat trip, many tourists took out their twenty thousand dong bills when the ship was approaching the Dinh Huon islet. They took selfies showing their accounts with the actual Dinh Huon islet behind them, which means many people know the island described on the back of twenty thousand bills is Dinh Huon islet.

Vietnamese dong bills showing bigger digits than Japanese yen bills are now my favorites because they make me feel rich. But they have some drawbacks. The conversion to Japanese yen takes time (1 yen is approx. 200 dong), and some bills with similar colors are confusing (e.g., five hundred thousand and twenty thousand, and two hundred thousand and fifty thousand.) So it would help if you were careful when you pay.