Homestay Program
Toh Shun Gui

The time is 1050am, and I am still in my hostel! I AM GOING TO BE LATE!!!

I remember somebody saying that when a Japanese says to meet at 1115am, he means to meet AT 1115am. Therefore I ran to the bus stop and luckily, the bus arrived just as I reached the bus stop.よかった。

Once I arrived at the destination bus stop, which is outside the Japanese Primary School opposite NUS School of Engineering, I saw a lady and 2 kids. As they matched the description of the family members that I was provided with, I approached them to ask them if they are the host family.やっぱり、they are. Luckily, the head of the family, S San, has not arrived yet, which meant that I was early.よかった。

As we introduced ourselves, we begin to walk to NUS as requested by S San as he wanted to explore NUS. My gift to them was Bah Kwa, because I know that they will definitely enjoy it, and I do not think they have eaten it before. I brought them to my favourite place, SUKIYA, at NUS, to eat my favourite food, Chicken Mushroom Cream Pasta. Haha.

Of course, that was my recommendation because it is very delicious. So we ordered like tons of stuffs for the whole family to eat. After that, we proceeded to the museum at University Cultural Centre to appreciate the art pieces of famous artists……….no, actually we went there to enjoy the air-con as the weather was extremely hot that day. Haha.

So after the appreciation of the art pieces at the museum (read: appreciation of the air-con at the museum), we went to the S San’s house.

I learnt that because they were not Singaporean, therefore, they could ONLY rent Condo and private estate. That is good news for me.

As I entered the house, I remembered to say “しつれいします”。As expected, their house was extremely tidy and neat and well decorated. I was showed to my room and I went “Whoa“, because the room and toilet is hotel quality. You know those white colour thick hotel towels? They provided me with those.

After I changed up, S San and I had a long chat at the amazing living room until it was dinner time. We literally talked about everything under the sun. While we were having the conversation, the 5 year old child of S San was showing off to me his arsenal of toys. He has A LOT of different toys and he just kept bringing them out of the room, endlessly. His room was like Doraemon’s pocket.
Shortly after, S San took out this Japanese card game (sorry I forget what is it called), whereby you have find card whose description is read, like the “smiling ninja” ( ninja nikoniko or something, sorry I cannot remember! ) Through this VERY useful game, I learnt a lot of new words such as the names of animals and some verbs.

At about 6pm, we started to have dinner.

Of course I said “いただきます” before eating. Just as expected of Japanese meals, the quality is amazing. Just the sight of the meal alone is enough to make my mouth water. By the way, I ate 2 bowl of rice as the rice is too delicious for me to pass up. (Well, I was not THAT hungry). Likewise, after the meal, I said : “ごちそうさまでした”.

After dinner, it was time to play with the kids. We played those very lame but fun ball games. The game was just throwing the ball here and there but it was very fun nonetheless. It was a versus game, so the kids tried their very best to win, but of course, I won. Haha.

At about 9pm, S San asked his daughter to take out her Primary 4 level Japanese textbook. Although it is an elementary level Japanese textbook, it proved too much for me to handle. I could understand maybe 40% of the text AT MOST. Again, my list of Japanese vocabulary increased by a few words after S san painstakingly explained what the words meant. Really thanks to S San!

Right after the brain torturing Japanese learning session, S San and his wife and me had a chat about Singapore and Japanese culture in the living room. By this time, the kids had already gone to bed. It was about 10pm.

I learnt that Japanese frequently eat dinner or lunch with beer !! This is totally different from the way Singaporeans eat. They learnt that Japanese curry and Indian curry, are TOTALLY DIFFERENT. I learnt from them that, if one is in Japan, its best that he asks questions or directions in Japanese, as Japanese will be shocked when being asked
questions in English. And they will refuse to answer you by saying “no, no, no!” or something like that while doing the Ultraman “dame” handsign.

At about 11pm, it was time for me to bath. I must say, their toilet is just like a toilet in a hotel room. And the room that they provided, it was just like a hotel room. Amazing.

Finally, I lied on the bed and went to sleep, thinking what was for breakfast the next morning.

Day 2

I woke up at about 822am, which was a good one hour later than the member of the family who woke up the latest.

I started the day with, you guessed it: “おはようございます”. I even said that to the kids, instead of just: “おはよう”, you know, just to play safe.

Breakfast was another amazing meal, Japanese porridge. As much as I don’t really eat porridge, I found their porridge quite delicious. We had more general chat after the breakfast and at about 10am, S san and his two kids brought me to view his younger child’s childcare. After walking 15 mins under the hot sun to the childcare, we found out that it was closed on that day. Great.

Tired, S san brought us to the ice cream shop and we got ourselves some ice creams. We ate at the park and just as expected, after the ice cream, the adorable 5 year old child ran over to the nearby playground, signaling me to go over too.

We tried to play swing but the 5 year old child was scared, which was unbelievable as I thought he would love it.

At about 12noon, we went to back the house to have lunch. This time, it was curry rice and Nikujaga (grilled meat), and they are really really very delicious. I had 4 bowls of rice this time round as it was too delicious.

Finishing lunch, I went to changed up and we took lots of farewell picture. Before going to Japan to have a Japan homestay program, this is the best that I can experience while being in Singapore. !!!!!