Day 1 was meaningful as we went to visit the Hiroshima Institute of Technology Senior High School. The various student representatives and teachers went out of their way to help us feel welcome by presenting their speech in English despite their lack of command in Singapore’s lingua franca and by also utilizing it in their slides for the ease of comprehension. Their booklets and pamphlets were also English translated. I feel that they have really outdone themselves just for a small batch of 13 non-native Japanese guests. Their efforts are shown in their speech, presentation slides and booklets/pamphlets. They really tried their best to make sure we weren’t left behind in any conversation or understanding of their school history and philosophy. Also, their frequent questions on whether we followed the conversation gave me a sense of relief and belonging that they were really accommodating.
Day 1

During the visit to the Senior High School, they also encouraged us to try some of their traditional sports such as Kyudo, Kendo and Judo which represents Japanese Archery, Swordsmanship and Martial Arts respectively. I joined the Kendo club for a short while and the Instructor and Assistant tried very hard to explain the steps and procedures of the different techniques despite the language barrier. They also used multiple body language and gestures to complement for the difficulty in communication. I feel that they have done a great deal in exploring different methods to enable us to fully understand the way of the Sword and I also feel that they’ve been able to cater to our needs whenever we had repetitive mistakes in our movements. They had utmost devotion and patience in that short time. I am really grateful and appreciative of that. I apologise for the image on the left as it does not depict the Kendo club but Judo club. I wasn’t able to find a picture of the Kendo club.
Day 1 Reflection

With regards to the visit to the Hiroshima Institute of Technology Senior High, I would like to proudly state that the hosts (teachers and students alike), have given us a very warm welcomed visit to their campus. As stated in one of my previous slides, they have outdone themselves by using English in their speech as well as their presentation slides and booklets to enable ease of comprehension for us who are non-native speakers of Japanese. I really appreciate this initiative of them. I also feel that they did their best during the tour of different clubs. As for the experience with the Kendo club, I had a very satisfying time as the Instructor and Assistant taught us very well by complementing their speech with strong use of body language movements and gestures to get things done and conveyed properly. As what they say “Actions speak louder than words”. I would like to proudly say that the hosts of the HITP Senior High did an excellent role in making our very first visit a memorable one.
We went to visit the A-bomb Dome and Peace Memorial Park. The historical tour became something significant to both Japanese and non-Japanese alike. The A-Bomb dome became a monument that was the proof of World War II itself which scarred everyone across the globe. But the bombing of Hiroshima and the epicentre which was the A-bomb dome affected more of the Japanese emotionally, physically, socially and economically. I understood the great emphasis and importance of world peace after visiting both the A-bomb dome and the Peace Memorial Park. The deep scars left by the post-war was immensurable as most that passed away during the bombing at Hiroshima were innocent people and children. A monument such as on the bottom-left of the slide was made to signify the need for world peace after the bombing incident and that the monument itself also represents the voice of the Japanese people who cry for peace for their land and a plea that the horrendous incident does not recur.
As portrayed by the pictures on the left, these became the aftermath of the bombing. The huge cloud of smoke and the wide damage leaving only rubble and debris were only one of the many damages Hiroshima and the people faced at the time. I could only feel sympathetic and empathetic whilst taking these pictures but what I know is no matter the amount nor weight of sympathy and empathy I feel, it can never amount to what the people of that time actually felt when their families, houses and close friends were gone within seconds. After coming to know the truth and reality of this incident, I have felt an even stronger need for world peace. That we should not solve things with violence but with words, because what would violence achieve? Only anger, grief, remorse and other mixed emotions will follow. Now we have the United Nations and world leaders. They should learn from this and open their eyes to matter and not look away from the past. The past is what shapes and defines us to this day. Just as how our forefathers shaped Singapore, we have to protect the peace of the people “regardless of race, language or religion to build a democratic society”. Just like our national anthem, I quote this on a larger scale and to a wider audience; people all over the globe. I would also like to bring in and quote Ms Tsuru’s father’s saying “A peaceful society is born where different opinions coexist.” He is right, we can always talk it out with different opinions on the topic and not always use one answer to everything when our different opinions do not coexist. We are humans and have the brain and heart to understand each other so why use violence?
Day 2 Reflection

After the visit to the A-bomb dome and Peace Memorial Park, I have instilled in myself the strong need for world peace not only because of the past incidents of the World War but also because I know that violence itself is not the way to go in solving problems. It only shows that there is no understanding between different parties and that they have failed to respect each other’s opinions. It’s not so hard to coexist with the use of words, I mean yes there will still be misunderstanding and disagreements but why not compromise for each other’s sake? The civil war in Syria which is still to this day has many casualties and victims including innocent children. What has the innocent done to the government? The presidential debate in the US is a heated battle. Why do politicians have to fight just for one seat? Why can’t two minds coexist? Two heads are better than one right? Why can’t two people work together to give more solutions that are innovative and effective? I still ponder onto these questions everyday.
The visit to Miyajima Island was a really memorable one as it was a fun place to be with many people from all walks of life. There were a lot of shops that featured their signature such as the Momiji Maju and that there was a shrine. I learned some basic etiquette before entering the shrine. People would need to wash their hands upon seeing a basin known as a chozuya. This action is known as cleansing or purifying yourself before entering a sacred place. There is also a way of washing the hands. The left hand is cleansed first before the right hand.

Upon entering the shrine, there were a lot of people and some were praying and there were even some painting. It was teeming with people and at the very end, there was a stall where the shrine maidens were selling their good luck charms known as “omamori”. There was a lot of different omamori that had different charms and meanings. Some were for good fortune, good health and luck for passing studies. But the one with more designs and was more costly was the charm for traffic. It was quite interesting as to why this good luck charm was more costly and widely displayed in contrast to the other good luck charms. Perhaps, the people emphasised a lot on road safety. But it was quite nice to see that they care for the safety of their loved ones.
Walking around Miyajima, there were a lot of residential areas with the first floor being shops. I was quite intrigued and a bit surprised when I learned that there were people living on this tranquil island. I respected how their way of life is different to those on the mainland. Being a small island, there is not much stress of civilization and the introduction of advanced technology. The people in Miyajima live in traditional houses and there are no tall buildings or skyscrapers. They are surrounded by nature and deer. The people make a living through us tourists who come to enjoy some of their local delicacies and small little handicraft and souvenirs. This exhibits how the people cleverly find ways to survive on this small island. The people are also kind and cheerful. You can see it on their faces and the way they interact with people.

Eating lunch in a restaurant with my small group, I saw a nice elderly woman who is part of the crew, give a napkin to a little boy to a table which she served cold water. It was nice to see her extend out an extra hand even though it wasn’t necessary.
Day 4

The visit to Nagisa-koen Elementary was very fun and interactive as the kids weren’t shy and enabled us to feel like them in their classrooms. The origami session and play time was very fun as it enabled us to interact more with them. The duet performance using the kendama was really entertaining as playing the kendama requires great patience and skill and of course the repetitive use of the knees but I only learned these later when we ourselves got to try the kendama for ourselves.

During the origami session, there was this girl who had great flair in folding and whenever she saw me get stuck, she would always guide me till the finished product. I really appreciate her initiative.

For the finale, the kids sang for us after our cultural dance. The song was very nice and in that song, the kids put in all their heart and voice for us so it was really nice for the receiving end. After giving the kids some souvenirs, the class reps made sure to share and split it up with their classmates. I like that the class reps did their job well to make sure every child had their share. I also realised that the kids have packed lunches and that most of their food had an equal balance of fruits and veggies. This clearly displays the discipline they have when eating food and that most of them aren’t picky eaters. It looks like their parents played a crucial role in ensuring their kids get a balanced diet at an early age.
Day 5

Doing woodwork and cooking pizza was a pleasant experience as both required some basic skill.

For woodworking, we needed to have patience when smoothing out rough surfaces of our raw wood materials for the frame. Using the sandpaper to file the edges to an equal and even smoothness was not an easy task for me as I tend to be a person with OCD. Slowly but surely I got all four wooden sides with the same smoothness.

The next mammoth task was the smoothing of our rabbits. We were given five different choices and we had to figure out the pieces and assemble them before filing them with sandpaper to smoothen their edges. Because with one wrong move, it would affect the outcome of the finished product. Though I tend to be very impatient, I got the sides smoothened up though not as perfect. I got the help of Siqi to help me assemble the pieces as I couldn’t tell which complemented or fit the other part.

For the pizza making, teamwork was needed as rolling out the dough onto the pan required some labour. It was a little hard but got it done with my partner. The decorating and putting of ingredients was the fun and anticipating moment. I went creative with the different toppings I put and put a generous amount of tomato base.

All in all, it was a very nice experience.
The programme with the mechanical engineering students was memorable. I myself am not an engineering student. The teachers and students tried their best to explain their project and how an electric circuit works. Some of them were working on the design of the electric circuit by adopting a current design and by adding in more adjustments.

There was a project concerning digital sound recording and we got to experience that with the volunteer of some of us.
Learning calligraphy was not easy for me because firstly the correct usage of the brush was to hold it with my right hand but unfortunately I’m left-handed. Secondly, I had difficulty with the ink flow by controlling the balance of my hand. A few of these difficulties were overcome when the teacher coached me patiently with words of encouragement.

I learned that calligraphy is the reflection of yourself. What you write and how you write represents my current self. I had to understand the brush and my hand movements in order to portray how I felt.

Despite the frustration and difficulty of learning calligraphy, I am very grateful to the patient instructors. We were also given choices on which character we would like to write on our final piece. The teacher was patient enough to explain to us the different meanings of the characters.

I chose “yume” which means dream. I feel that I still haven’t found the dream that I want to pursue in life, which is why I chose this character to aid me in finding it.