

Hannah Choi

1H170G120-7

Date of Submission: 08/01/2019

Thinking About the Environment Through Culture: Final Report

Introduction: Plastics, Kamakura and Takahata

It has been a problem throughout centuries on the use of plastic, and how plastics are destroying the world. Plastics are destroying not only nature but also ocean animals throughout the world. From several field trips, Kamakura and Takahata, I have learned many findings on how and what people think of the plastic issue and how the organic farmings are operated. From this course, “Thinking About the Environment Through Culture”, there were two main field trips. The first field trip was going to Kamakura on May 12th to perform and carry out the fieldwork to refer and survey others to check their perspectives on the issues of plastics for the ocean animals. The second field trip was held from June 28th throughout to 30th. From these field trips, I have gotten great chances to experience to recognize and understand problems through experiencing and discovering new farming approaches to prevent from using chemicals.

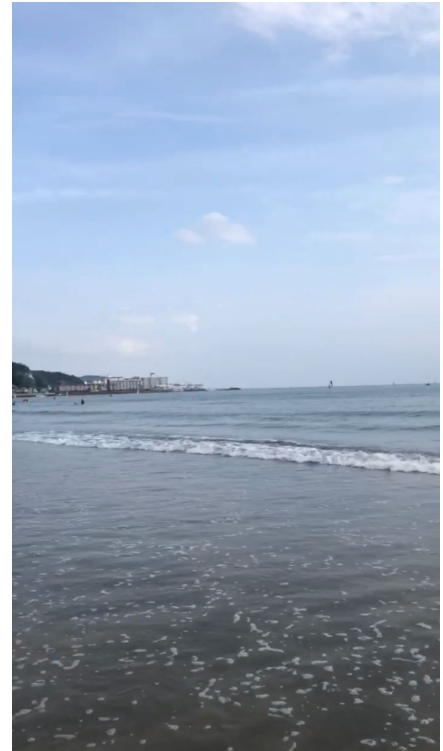
Kamakura, Plastics and Ocean animals

On May 12th, the whole class had gone to the Kamakura beach to conduct surveys that each group had prepared for weeks. In our group, the topic was the Ocean Animals and had prepared surveys that focused on the aspect and realizing the seriousness of the plastics for ocean animals. My first impression of the beach was surprising. Trash and other thrown away garbages were hardly found on the way to the beach, in the grass area. However, as our group got closer to the beach, I was amazed by the number of plastics laying on the sand area in the Kamakura beach. Although there were lots of people resting on the beach with nice food, garbage cans were hard to find. However, when our group went around to survey others, it was not too hard to find them with eating food that seemed to be bought from the convenience stores near the station. Also as our group walked through the beach when all the students were provided to get free time, it was shocking to find lots of plastics laying on the sand side of the beach. Because other group concentrated on how plastics could be harmful to the animals living in the ocean, later on, our group decided to pick up some trashes on the shores and throw away as much as possible as we leave the beach later. Although I have struggled a little bit on the way to Kamakura beach, which took more than two hours, it was an honorable experience to see the clear and shining ocean and warm sand. It felt like having a day off from my busy life. It was also nice to see the beautiful scenery from the sunset at the end of the field trip. At the end of the field trip, all together as a

group, it was a successful experience to achieve the purpose of the trip, which was to find out the awareness whether people are taking seriously of this issue. Also, it was an honorable experience to find out what others think of the solutions on solving to save the endangered wild animals in marine life.



Picture of “Ocean Animals” group surveying people on the beach taken by me



Picture of the clean Kamakura beach taken by me

Takahata in the Yamagata Prefecture and its organic farming

Due to my school schedule on how classes are held until Saturday, I joined with the class on the second day of the field trip to Takahata that is located in the Yamagata Prefecture. When I first arrived at the Takahata by the shinkansen, I was amazed by the beautiful green scenery that whole Yamagata Prefecture was all filled up with the organic agriculture. Also, it was a pleasurable experience in meeting all professors and talking altogether on the way to Sato’s house. Because I have always spent most of my life in crowded places in the city, I did not have many chances to visit farming areas. From the field trip to Takahata was an honorable and valuable experience for me to take a break and learn at the same about agriculture and farming. Also, it felt certainly nice for me to be in a part of nature and the moist air was welcoming.

The Takahata is located in Yamagata Prefecture of Northeast part of Japan, which is famously known for its organic farming. Their organic farming prevents from using harmful chemicals and pesticides, which provides organic products that all customers could trust the brand and eat without doubting. It was heartbreaking not being able to participate with visiting local schools due to joining with the class a day later. On the other hand, I have caught up with the important information about the local school though other students, such as how the educational system worked in the local schools. Right after I had arrived at the house, joining with my group which was Sato's group, our group gathered all together in the living including Mrs. Sato. As we all sat on the sofa closely to each other, we had a nice talk and it was genuinely impressive to get to know each other and how the agriculture is like in Takahata and what was hard keeping the agriculture clean from using pesticides. Mrs. Sato had given out a pack of lotus leaf rice, it gave out nice scent and taste which was a rare opportunity. The dinner on the second night was a cherry on top, all the food were produced locally and the white rice was pleasing. Also, vegetables and tofu were all well cooked organically, as well as the beef, they tasted delightful. I usually put a lot of seasoning into my food, but from the meal on this day, I have apprehended that food can be truly appetizing even without much seasoning.



Pictures of Takahata's beautiful green scenery taken by me



Picture of delicious dinner
taken by me



Picture of the ふれあい工房 group taken by Karen Hirasawa

On the third day, the last day of the field trip, the whole class had the chance to attend a lecture and visit the small local library that was filled with lots of books. It was surprising to hear that a lot of students come to visit for their graduating thesis and contained even some books were hard to find in urban areas. After visiting the library and taking the lecture, the class then visited the Hamada Hirosuke Memorial Hall. Hamada Hirosuke who is famously known for making children's book and one of the famous book is "the Aka(red) Oni". Although it was my

first time hearing about this story, it was very interesting to get to know about it. Inside the small movie theater, they had shown a video clip of the story of “the Red Oni that Wept”, which showed how the Aka Oni wanted to be friends with other people in the town. However, contrary to one's wish, people in the town did not look at Aka Oni as a friend but as a monster. To help Aka Oni, his best friend Ao(blue) Oni, had sacrificed for one's friend. From this clip, it had provided so many lessons to think about more what are priority things in my life and what to keep in mind. It had provided myself to think and thank about how hard farmers work to keep and preserve their years of natural history without using chemicals and pesticides.



Picture of the Mini-Lecture taken by me



Picture of the library taken by me



Picture of Aka Oni taken by me

Conclusion: What I have learned

From these field trips, I believe that our trip to Kamakura and Takahata this semester provided some valuable experiences to learn how Takahata has been producing organic farming for generations. It also delivered more important insights to understand this issue and coming up with more alternative solutions. Farmers in Takahata are putting their enormous efforts to keep their farms organic. Although it was my first time visiting the Yamagata Prefecture, it was a worthwhile experience to hear lectures directly from the local people. From the lecture, to manage and reach sustainable and a better society, it is beneficial not to use pesticides for both agriculture and health. This field trip was memorable for me overall that gave me opportunities to learn about organic farming.