JAPAN - VANUATU KIZUNA PROJECT
9th - 22nd October 2012

By Jones Malnimben (Laucala USP Suva 2012)
Japan is an island nation in East Asia. Located in the Pacific Ocean, it lies to the east of the Sea of Japan, China, North Korea, South Korea and Russia, stretching from the Sea of Okhotsk in the north to the East China Sea and Taiwan in the south. Japan has a population of 127,817,277 people with diversification of cultures. Its official language is Japanese which enables them to communicate freely in all means of communication. Japan has various points of interest such as Mount Fuji, Tokyo city and others.

On the 11th of March 2011, an earthquake of 9.0 magnitude and ferocious tsunami waves had severely damaged buildings, roads and train railways and displaced homes in the eastern part of the country. Of course, it has been a great loss for the country. Due to this tragedy, people around the world have various negative perspectives about Japan. Therefore, the government through JOCA and JICE has implemented a project called Kizuna(bond) between Japan and Asia, North America and Pacific Island Countries. The purpose of Kizuna project firstly, is to send correct information to the international community and to let them know Japan’s powerful reconstruction and a number of attractions across the country in order to clear up misunderstanding about country. Secondly, is to contribute to regional developments and communities and support reconstruction of the disaster area through voluntary activities and programs. Thirdly, is to strengthen bonds with other countries through sharing and experience of suffering and recovery from disaster. Last and not the least, is to share experience of the unprecedented earthquake with international community and strengthen bond between the disaster area and other countries.

I am fortunate to be among the 22 members who had travelled from Nadi (Fiji) to Japan on the 9th of October 2012. Upon our arrival at Narita Airport in Japan, we were warmly welcomed by Mr. Teppie Nonaka Kizuna Vanuatu coordinator and Vanuatu translator Mrs. Mizusu Ninomiya. The first day was orientation program conducted by the Japanese Overseas Cooperation Agency (JOCA), Japanese International Cooperation Center and a lecture on Disaster Management. The orientation was focusing on the image of Japan when first heard of the earthquake and tsunami and lecture on disaster management. It was effective because we were working in groups and presenting images when first hearing of 2011 East Japan earthquake and tsunami. The afternoon session was interesting because we visited Edo-Tokyo Museum and view the displays of the transition from Edo to Tokyo, and had observed Edo commoners with nature, objects and other people. In the museum we discovered the exhibition of Great Tokyo in the period of 1912-1924 and the Great Tokyo Air Raid during the 1940s.
On the second day, we visited Tsuru University. It is a public university in the city of Tsuru, a historical town located at the south eastern foot of Mt. Fuji in Yamanashi Prefecture. The college was founded in 1955 as a two-year teacher’s training college. In 1960 it became a four-year college of Humanities. Currently, it is offering five undergraduate courses in elementary school of Education Japanese literature, English literature, Sociology and comparative culture studies. During our visitation to the school we visited different facilities including library and other faculties. We had a discussion on ‘how to prevent oneself from natural disaster’ and presentations were done after the discussion.
The third day was full of excitement because we had visited three places. In the morning we had a visit to Station Ozawabuchi – Disaster Prevention Centre. From there we learnt about history of earthquake and tsunami in Japan, and movement of plates which cause Japan earthquake and tsunami. The lecture concluded with a DVD depicting a story of a farmer who saved the life of an entire village on the coastal area of east Japan. The second part of the session was sightseeing of displays of earthquake simulator with six and seven magnitude. It was awesome to experience this innovation.

![Figure 3. Earthquake simulation Ozawabuchi-Disaster Prevention center 12 October 2012](image3)

In the afternoon we visited Suntory Hakusy Factory. This factory was established in 1889. Its mission is to bring happiness into the lives of their customers by providing a range of alcoholic beverages such as whiskies, beers, and wines, along with other soft drinks such as tea and canned coffee. We were astonished by the factory assembly lines which seen thousands of plastic manufactured within an hour. Eighty percent of the energy sources required for the factory operation is obtained from renewable energy such as solar energy and a mini hydro energy.

![Figure 4. Suntory Natural Mineral Water factory Japan, 12 October 2012](image4)
The day ended with a visitation to Museum – Chateraise Shirasu Factor. We discovered a river which in the past was separated by three people during quarrelling. We had a lot of discoveries in the museum. We discovered that 70 percent of their electricity generated by mini hydro power and solar power system.

![Figure 5. Chateraise Shirasu Museum Japan, 12 October 2012](image1)

Some people in Japan had realized the importance of living in traditional society. In the past they worked hard to be better and today they become the best. Some realized that they need so much and not satisfy. Most have moved interior and lived in traditional life. An Ancient House visited was 100 years old and handed down to two generation. Most material is 100 years old but it seems new. The style of living was of traditional living, depending on traditional food, firewood for cooking. In the afternoon we harvested soy beans from a garden. It was fun and exited especially the cooking of beans and making of traditional fire. The day ended with a bath in the spa; Japanese traditional swimming tub.

![Figure 6. Harvesting of Soy beans Japan, 13 October 2012](image2)
On the fifth day, we had whole day travelling from Tokyo to Kuji city. We experienced travelling on train and bus and we arrived at Kuji city late in the evening and had orientation on what to do and where to visit. The orientation ended with dinner.

Day 6 was another interesting discovery because we were divided into two groups. One group visited Amber mining while the other group has visited fisherman mans’ activities on the sea. I was with the fishing group. We discover effect of 2011 east Japan tsunami on the coastal areas. The tsunami had severely damaged fisherman’s boat and other fishing equipment. The fisherman resumed their fishing activities three months after the tsunami. In the afternoon we had a visit to Kuji city aquarium which washed away by tsunami and relocate to another area. Later during day we assisted by Sanriku Railway company to the 2011 east Japan tsunami site. The rubles are all removed only we identify heaps of debris which are being recycled. At the tsunami disaster site we had to pause and pray for those who lost their lives and those who are homeless after the disaster. Then we travelled far north of Kuji center and discovered a reconstruction of railway which had washed away by heavy waves on 2011. Reconstructions are underway. Roads were completely rebuilt three months after the tsunami strike. The railway is under construction and will complete within a year a half. Restoration work is being carried out under the full cooperation of the Japan Railway Construction, Transport and Technology Agency, in an effort to resume operations of the Minami-Raisu Line between Sakari Station and Yoshihama Station in April 2013 and full operation in April 2016. Their message is “tell your people that we are fine”.

Figure 7. Tokyo train station

Rail way
On the 7th day we visited a village and had a cultural food experience. We were shown by the three Japanese women on how to prepare and cook mamebu dumplings. This local food is usually prepared and eaten during special occasions. After demonstration we filled the dough with nuts and brown sugar and molded into circular shape called mamebu. We boiled the mamebu and had a lunch together. In the afternoon we had forest board painting. We were divided into groups and given instruction on how to use paints and other painting kit. We painted images of Vanuatu and other Vanuatu tourist attractions. The temperature was so dense that we unable to hammer the board in the forest path-way. The main objective for this activity was to enable the wheel chairs and baby pram to discover the forest and enjoy amazing view from the top of the hill without difficulties. The day ended with Farwell party and exchange of cultural activities from Vanuatu group, Palauan and the Japanese.
On the eighth day we spent half day travelled to Tokyo. In the afternoon we visited Ariake Water Reclamation Center in Tokyo. The reclamation center has 100 percent recycle because it collect waste water from sewage and Tokyo waterfront sub center and processed it in different treatments and later turn to be a clear hygiene safe water to consume. The tour begins with history and various findings of information and facts about water. Later we visited different treatment plant.

Figure 11. Painting on Forest board. From left to right, Jones Nimbwen, Cliff Ben, Paul Tagaro, Michael Maniel and Mrs. Renuka (Vanuatu supervisor Kizuna)

Figure 10. Mamebu dubling a Japanese Traditional food, Demonstrate by a Japanese woman, 16 October.

Figure 12. Ariake Water Reclamation Tokyo, 17 October 2012
On the ninth day, we had a workshop on the topic: **images of Japan during 2011 disaster, our discovery in Japan, and how to disseminate what we discover in our trip once arrive in Vanuatu**. It is also a guide to presentation at the ministry of foreign affairs later in the evening. In the afternoon we visited Prince Park. Hundreds of tourists visit the park every day. Later in the evening, we visited the most important office in this tour which is the Ministry of foreign affairs. Two speeches were delivered. The speeches highlight discoveries of Japan during the visit and how to communicate the findings when travel back to home country.

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**Figure 13. Presentation after the discussion on images of Japan during 2011 disaster, the discoveries and dissemination of information.**

During the tenth day, we visited Tokyo earthquake simulation seventy-two hour building. This unit was established to organize rescuer rescue people during disaster and even educate participant on how to survive in a disaster during seventy-two hours when rescue is difficult. The tour started with flows of events starting with the Tokyo Metropolitan area and ending with evacuation. We had a great experience especially answering survival question on the simulation sites and later get feedback of survival chances. After answering the quiz my survival chances was 70 percent which was interpreted as ‘I may survive but with injuries’. We had a visit to Senso-ji which is Tokyo’s oldest temple. It draws over 30 million visitors every year to visit the temple and its dwelling. Japanese center of worship.
Last but not the least, this trip is a dream because observing Japanese civilization is awesome. No words to describe, huge sky scraper, tunnels of roads and railways, crisscross of roads, new technology innovation and above all the respect they obtain. It is an exciting trip because we had slept on four high class hotel of 16 to 43 storey, dinning at expensive restaurants. Experiencing different forms of transport including comfortable air-condition buses, train, and ride on speed boat on the tsunami sea adjacent to the North Pacific Ocean. The delicious food and Asian chop stick is also a new experience. I had discovered that Japanese had abundant respect and significantly, timing is of great importance to them. Japanese slang, “no time to loose because time is money”.

Figure 14. Tokyo Metropolitan evacuation center. Disaster simulator

Figure 15. Senso-ji Tokyo oldest Temple. 30 million people visit every year.