



Nara JETNet 51st Event “A Walk Back in Time to the Nara Period”

On October 31st, 2015, Nara JETNet held its 51st event, “A Walk Back in Time to the Nara Period” near the Heijo Palace Site. Nara JETNet is an organization which plans events to promote cultural exchange and understanding between the members of the JET programme and the citizens of Nara Prefecture. The organizers of JETNet events are the 5 Coordinators for International Relations (CIRs) working at the Nara Prefectural Government. The members of JETNet are the rest of the JET programme participants located throughout Nara Prefecture. This event was put on by 33 JETs and saw about 30 people from the prefecture come out to participate in the morning walk and the afternoon activities held throughout the day.

The event began at 9:30am in Saidaiji Kinrin Park with the Opening Speech followed by stretching led by two of the CIRs, after which participants, divided into 8 groups, set off to the Heijo Palace Site. They reached the North side of the site, passing by Akishino Temple, Seimu Tenno Tomb, and other historical sites over a course of around 6km.

We arrived at a field near the Heijo Palace “Second Street and Mibu Gate” at 1pm, and had our one hour lunch break. When 2pm came, the 8 groups became 4 teams and turned over for the afternoon activities (see below).

Icebreaker: two truths and one lie

One person from each team tells the others three ‘facts’ about themselves, one of which is a lie. The rest of the team have to find out which is which!

Petanque:

A traditional French game similar to boules. The aim is to get your boule as close as you can to the jack, which is thrown first.

Hawk and Sparrow:

A Chinese children’s game where one ‘hawk’ is tasked with catching the rest of the team one by one, who are lined up in a row as ‘baby sparrows’. However, one member of the group acts as the ‘mother bird’, standing at the front of the row and defending her children from the hawk.

Dakssaum (aka ‘cock-fighting’, ‘Korean one-legged sumo’) :

This one is even played competitively in Korea! Two people stand on one leg, holding the other foot above their knee, and try to either push each other out of a circle on the ground or make them use both feet.

Wink Murder:

A popular game in English-speaking countries bound to get everyone laughing. Players stand in a circle and nominate someone to be the ‘detective’. The detective turns their back whilst the group decides a ‘murderer’ and stands in the middle of the circle: their objective is now to find the murderer. When the murderer winks at other players, they must ‘die’ in the most dramatic way possible. The detective has three guesses: if they guess right, the murderer becomes the detective!

At 4pm, the games ended and participants responded to a survey. After the closing speech, at 4:30pm, the event ended. The day was a great success and enjoyed by all the Japanese participants according to the survey we conducted: 95% of the 22 people who answered said they really enjoyed the event, while all participants responded that the communication with the JET participants was good. They also mentioned that it was a really fun event and that they would like to come to our future events. Japanese people enjoyed the exchange with the JETs, as they were very enthusiastic also due to the fact they do not usually interact with foreign cultures nor play foreign games.

We plan to continue to promote international exchange at the grass roots level. Thank you everyone for your input and participation! See you next time.

