

Kōkoku High School

wraps up Guam Study trip



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166 students from Kōkoku High School, one of the largest all-boys schools in Japan, wrapped up their four-day student study trip to Guam on Thursday and Friday. In Japan, educational trips are a common part of their high school experience and for Kōkoku High School, it's one that final year and second year students can select as an elective.

While these study trips often take students to different regions of Japan, studying abroad is a unique opportunity, one that the school's President and Principal Yoko Kusajima said has promoted cultural immersion and connection for 20 years.

"Almost 20 years has passed since we started. It's so beautiful and Guam always has a warm heart for the children. Our students are only boys so they want to do exciting activities in Guam. For most it's their first time," Kusajima told the Guam Daily Post.

She said the goal of the study trip is to introduce "culture and English conversation," to the students a majority of whom spoke broken English.

"Also, island culture. The people in Guam are so warm-hearted. This is a nice opportunity for the students to know that," she said, emphasizing that they were building connections between cultures and islands.

Most of the Kōkoku High School students were 17 years old, among them Yu Sawada, a second-year student who was excited to be on Guam for the first time, though he had only heard about the beauty of the island and noted that visiting has shown him "the people are very kind."

SHARED MOMENT: Kōkoku High School students and faculty members pose for a photo with members of the University of Guam Chuuk Student Organization during their visit to Guam at Hotel Nikko Guam's Magellan restaurant in Tumon on Thursday. Photos by Frank San Nicolas/The Guam Daily Post



TOURING TUMON: University of Guam Chuuk Student Organization members pose for a photo with Kōkoku High School students in Tumon during their visit to Guam on Thursday.

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KUSAJIMA: Yoko Kusajima, Kōkoku High School president and school principal, during her school's Guam visit at Hotel Nikko Guam's Magellan restaurant in Tumon on Thursday.



HANDS-ON LEARNING: A Kōkoku High School student shows a kendama trick to a member of the University of Guam's Chuuk Student Organization during their visit to Guam at Hotel Nikko Guam's Magellan restaurant in Tumon on Thursday.

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As part of the activities he delved into on Thursday, he and his group shared the Japanese culture with students from the University of Guam, who participated and also served as tour guides.

"It was about the tea ceremony, and flower arrangement," he said.

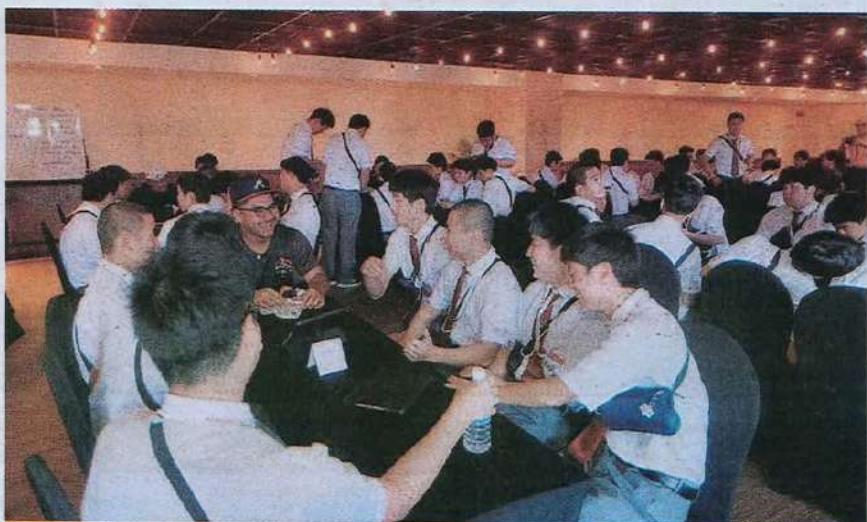
Each group presented a different aspect of the Japanese culture with their tour guides, among them, Reenomilyn-Merna Mori, a UOG student representing the Chuuk Student Organization.

"It's great because I haven't been to Japan and doing the presentation to me is like they're showing me where I've never been," she said noting that the language barrier although challenging did not prevent them from connecting.

Mahalani Mori, also a UOG student representing the Chuuk Student Organization shared that though she acted as a tour guide for the students, she too was learning about Guam having only arrived six months ago.

"I relate to them in a very, very big way," she said adding that she also has a Japanese heritage. "I'm part Japanese. It feels nice and it makes me want to learn more and interact with them to get a better glimpse of my ancestry."

This was the 21st Guam study trip for the Kōkoku High School students who flew in from Osaka, Japan.



COMMUNICATION: Japanese students from Kōkoku High School interact with students from the University of Guam Chuuk Student Organization during their visit to Guam at Hotel Nikko Guam's Magellan restaurant in Tumon on Thursday.



SIGHTSEEING WALK: A University of Guam Chuuk Student Organization member guides Kōkoku High School students through Dusit Place in Tumon during their visit to Guam on Thursday.



SIGHTSEEING STROLL: A University of Guam Chuuk Student Organization member guides Kōkoku High School students along Dusit Place in Tumon during their visit to Guam on Thursday.



GROUP PHOTO: Japanese students from Kōkoku High School pose for a photo with a student from the University of Guam Chuuk Student Organization during their visit to Guam at Hotel Nikko Guam's Magellan restaurant in Tumon on Thursday.

Photos by Frank San Nicolas/The Guam Daily Post