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### Journal Entry #1

Yesterday was an incredibly fulfilling and packed day. Everyone started off the day in Tokyo, Japan feeling refreshed after a good night's sleep. Breakfast was very pleasant and friendly towards picky eaters as the hotel restaurant had both Western, and Japanese diet choices. However some students still had trouble wrapping their taste buds around (natto)/fermented soybeans. After breakfast, we headed off to a private office in order to gain a deeper understanding of Japanese history and development. It turns out that some of Japan's origins actually came from both Chinese and Korean influences such as fireworks, and tea ceremonies which were refined over time! How cool is that? Proceeding that, we went to the Edo-Tokyo Museum to learn about the feudal era of Tokyo. Did you know that Edo is what Tokyo was called during the feudal era? It all started during the times of war for land between feudal lords or (daimyo). The strongest feudal lord Minamoto Yoritomo was fed up of all the fighting and decided to unite all the feudal lords as a shogun. Although there was an emperor at that time, much like Queen Elizabeth II, their power was only symbolic in nature and unity was only achieved by Yoritomo. After that enlightening experience, we headed off to Asakusa temple to learn about the Japanese religion of (Shinto). Right from the start, we were greeted by statues of the god of thunder and wind. Inside, we had the chance to purify ourselves with water and incense smoke. We could even get our fortunes told! Many special charms were available to be purchased that granted wishes such as fortune, health, and education. We ended the day off with dinner at the vegetarian, halal Origami restaurant. It was a fresh take "literally because of the vegetables" on Japanese food with vegetable tempura, mushroom rice, grilled vegetables, and misoshiro. It was a really good example of how effectively various religions have combined and thrived together in harmony which is something that should be truly valued in Japan. Currently, we are on a bullet train to Ai-Chi and all looking forward to our school exchange with Toho High School. See you soon Ai-Chi!

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