

# MPMA FIELD TRIP – WINTER IN HOKKAIDO 2026

The excitement was evident as we prepared for our winter field trip to Hokkaido, the northern gem of Japan. What awaited us was not simply a class excursion, but an immersive academic experience that combined regional development, environmental awareness, institutional history, and cultural exploration. This journey became a meaningful extension of our classroom discussions in the MPMA program.

## *Arrival in Hokkaido - From New Chitose Airport to Lake Shikotsu*

Our journey began at New Chitose Airport, one of Japan's key regional gateways. Observing its efficient infrastructure and seamless transportation connections immediately reflected the importance of accessibility in regional development. From the airport, we traveled to Lake Shikotsu, where the snow covered landscape welcomed us with quiet beauty. The lake, surrounded by mountains and winter scenery, highlighted Hokkaido's strong connection between nature and tourism. The preservation of such pristine environments demonstrates how ecological sustainability and economic strategy must operate together. Standing by the lake, we witnessed how natural assets form the backbone of regional identity and tourism driven growth.



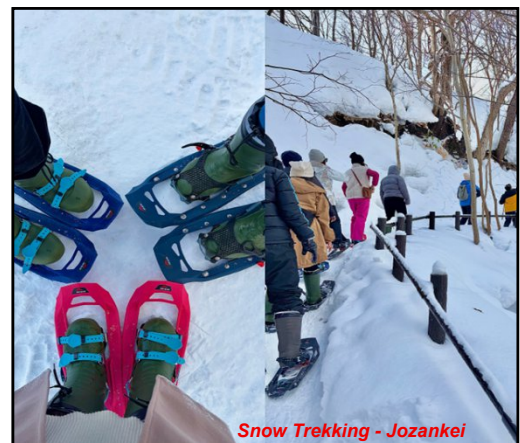
## *Onsen Experience - Culture and Well-being*



After Lake Shikotsu, we moved to our hotel and experienced a traditional onsen. The hot spring culture of Japan reflects not only relaxation and hospitality but also the integration of natural geothermal resources into community life and tourism industries. The onsen experience offered insight into how local traditions contribute to regional branding and economic vitality. It was both culturally enriching and academically meaningful.

## *Snow Trekking at Jozankei Onsen Higashi - Learning Through Experience*

The following day, we traveled to Jozankei Onsen Higashi for snow trekking. Our professional tour guides welcomed us warmly and carefully introduced safety procedures, environmental considerations, and the fundamentals of snow trekking. Equipped with snowshoes, we walked through deep snow and forest trails. The experience required teamwork, endurance, and cooperation. It demonstrated how structured tourism activities are carefully managed to ensure visitor safety while preserving fragile ecosystems. Snow trekking was not merely recreational, it became a practical example of sustainable tourism management and environmental governance in action.



## ***Exploring Sapporo: History, Urban Planning, and Governance***

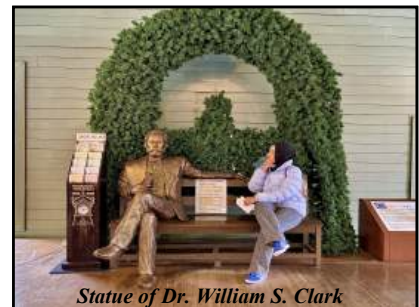
After trekking, we were given free time to explore Sapporo city. This allowed us to observe urban planning and public space management firsthand.



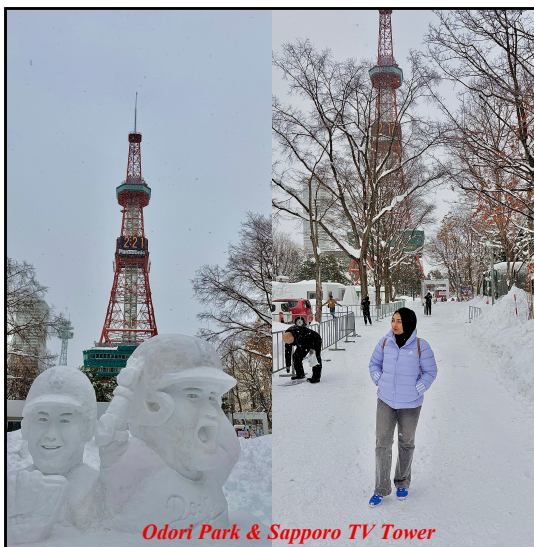
### ***Sapporo Clock Tower***

The Sapporo Clock Tower, built in 1878, stands as one of the city's most symbolic historical landmarks. Originally part of Sapporo Agricultural College, it represents the early modernization and educational foundations of Hokkaido.

Inside the Clock Tower Museum, we saw the statue of Dr. William S. Clark, an American educator who contributed significantly to agricultural education in Hokkaido. His famous phrase, "Boys, be ambitious," remains



influential in shaping educational philosophy in the region. The visit reminded me that regional development begins with investment in human capital. Education, leadership, and institutional vision played a central role in shaping Hokkaido's growth trajectory.



### ***Odori Park and Sapporo TV Tower***

Walking through Odori Park, even under layers of snow, revealed how public spaces function as centers of social life and civic activity. The Sapporo TV Tower rising above the park symbolizes the city's blend of history and modern development. The city's ability to maintain accessibility and organization despite heavy snowfall reflects strong municipal governance and infrastructure resilience.

### ***Former Hokkaido Government Office – The Red Brick Building***

Our final stop was the Former Hokkaido Government Office, widely known as the Red Brick Building. Constructed in the late nineteenth century, it reflects Western architectural influence and the institutional formation of regional governance in Hokkaido. The building stands as a symbol of administrative continuity and policy evolution. Seeing it covered in snow emphasized how history and governance remain deeply embedded in the identity of Sapporo. This visit reinforced a key lesson from our MPMA studies: sustainable regional growth depends not only on resources, but on strong institutions, administrative capacity, and long-term policy vision.



## *Academic Community and Shared Growth*



*Rikkyo MPMA Fellows*

Beyond institutional visits and landscape exploration, the field trip strengthened our academic community. Conversations during meals, collaborative trekking challenges, and shared reflections fostered intellectual exchange and cross cultural understanding. The MPMA flag against the snowy backdrop represented more than our program, it symbolized collective learning through engagement.

## *Bringing Experience Together*

As our field trip came to an end, we reflected on the depth of the experience. From natural landscapes at Lake Shikotsu to structured tourism in Jozankei and historical institutions in Sapporo, every location served as a real world case study. The trip expanded our understanding of how environment, infrastructure, education, tourism, and governance intersect to shape regional development. It strengthened our academic perspective while also fostering collaboration, cultural appreciation, and personal growth. Hokkaido was not simply a winter destination. It became a living classroom that brought public management theory into practical reality.



*Rikkyo MPMA Field Trip Team - Winter 2026*



And finally, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Kataoka Sensei, Orihara-san, Uehara-san, and the entire MPMA staff for organizing such meaningful and enriching field trips. I feel both grateful and honored to be part of the MPMA community. These experiences will remain truly memorable and deeply valued.