

MIRAGE in a DESERT

1999 ~ 2001

Li Cho



Parade of camels in the festival

Salmiya, Kuwait / February 2000



There was a festival from 2/2 to 2/24 in 2000 in Kuwait. Many events were held such as parades, concerts, sports games, camel races and big bargain sales etc.

At 2/2, there was a parade along Arabian Gulf Street. 80,000 of people came to see the parade. Many countries which supply workers, such as India, Pakistan, Philippine and Bangladesh joined the parade. I was impressed by the national flag of Bangladesh. It looked like Japanese national flag but the color was red circle and green. I was also impressed by a parade of camels. It made me feel that I was in an Arab Region.

Drinking alcohols were prohibited in Kuwait, so there were no drunker which could be seen in Japanese festivals.

Camels and people in a desert area

Kuwait / March 2001



I was invited to a camp in a desert in March by my Kuwaiti colleague. You can't do camping in Summer in Kuwait because it is incredibly hot. Instead, Kuwaiti people do camping in winter. It was like a small village in a desert area. They went camp at weekends and stay with their whole family. I went to a desert tour with them on a car. We met camels and sheep and took pictures. We could not stop laughing when we saw one sheep running away and a man was trying to catch it crying something and a whip with his hand.

There was nothing in a desert area. I could not go back without their guide.

Camel farm

Kuwait / August 2000



Maximum temperature in August in Kuwait was around 50 degree Celsius. I went to camel farm at north of Kuwait. Camels were raised for food. Arabian camel has only one hump. Workers were taking rests at shacks. Nobody could work during such hot hours. I supposed they would work after sunsets.

Sand dust

Kuwait / February 2001



When I got out from my home in the morning, it was foggy. But I felt thirsty even in white fog. So I asked to a driver and he replied, "It is not a fog but a sand dust."

White fine sand were floating like a fog. The driver said that strong wind blew up fine sand yesterday, and they came down today.

After work, I murmured, "why are people working in this hard environment?" And the driver answered laughing, "It's for money!"

Seaside

Salmiya, Kuwait / May 2000



I walked along seaside at around 6PM. Temperature was still 40 degree Celsius. Many people came to walk or run along sea side. Some of men were wearing white dishdasha, and some of women were wearing black abaya. It seemed very hot for me.

Most of Kuwaiti people used perfumes, both men and women. Even in walking seaside, they used perfumes, and sometimes it was very strong that you could feel it 5 meters far.

It is very hot in Kuwait but most of the buildings and vehicles are air-conditioned, so you will not feel how hot it is if you do not go for walking outside.



Opening ceremony of Japanese garden was held in Kuwait in October 2000. Many VIP's from Kuwait and Japan attended the ceremony. During the Iraqi invasion, Iraqi destroyed oil wells, and oil flooded over land. Land was spoiled by oil. Kuwait and Japan made a research how to clean the land. And they made a Japanese garden using cleaned soil.

After the ceremony, attendees walked around the garden. It might be strange to see people wearing white dishdasha walking around in a garden in Japan, but in this garden surrounded by desert, suit wearing Japanese looked strange.

Sunflower in late Novemer

Salmiya, Kuwait / November 1999



I could see sunflower in winter in Kuwait. Temperature went down below 10 degree Celsius in the morning and night, but temperature went up to around 24 degree Celsius in day time. It was like an early summer in Japan.



Monument of Iraqi Invasion

I heard a story of Iraqi invasion to Kuwait in August 1990 from a car driver. He is a Sri Lankan. He was a car driver of Austrian ambassador at that time.

“Iraqi army started invasion from 3am. At first communication tower near Ahamadi was bombed. Royal family evacuated to Saudi Arabia. 90% of Kuwaiti evacuated to Saudi Arabia by cars. Iraqi soldiers shot Kuwaiti when they found them, but they did not shot foreign workers such as Indian and Sri Lankan. All cars in my company were taken to Iraqi. Because I was a driver of Austrian ambassador, they did not do harm to me. Iraqi declared that Kuwait was a part of Iraq.



Monument of Iraqi Invasion

I heard a story of Iraqi invasion to Kuwait in August 1990 from a car driver. He is a Sri Lankan. He was a car driver of Austrian ambassador at that time.

Iraqi army started invasion early in the morning of August 2nd, 1990. He went to the ambassador's house on that day as usual. The ambassador has already gone to the embassy. He was told from a wife of ambassador, "Iraqi invaded Kuwait! Don't you know it?" And he knew the fact. Then he went to stores to buy food and others for ambassador and his family.



On a car ferry

I went to the Failaka island. It took one and half hour by car ferry. Failaka island was small and plain. During Iraqi invasion, it was occupied by Iraqi as advanced base.