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UNESCO Spirit and the Establishment of a Sustainable Society

Isao Kiso, Counselor, Minato UNESCO Association

The UNESCO mission is first and foremost the preservation of world peace, along with the promotion of education, culture and science on which world peace rests. In this connection, let me express my opinion on how to establish a sustainable society.

I was elected to the position of secretary-general of the Japanese National Commission for UNESCO seven years ago. At that time, heated discussions were underway concerning how to work out effective measures to vitalize UNESCO activities in Japan. The bottom line was how to cope with the reality of greying of membership throughout regional UNESCO organizations and the decline in the participation of young members.



If you talk with elementary or junior high school students in Japan, you will notice with disappointment that they take peace for granted. It seems that, to their mindset, the preciousness of peace is only an abstract and remote concept. In reality there still exist conflicts in different places internationally. Japanese students seem to be detached from reality and to perceive peace or conflicts as issues occurring in faraway spheres which they only watch on TV or other media. On the other hand, I can tell that they are keenly interested in the deterioration of the global environment, as highlighted by the climate warming.

From the said finding, I felt that the Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), a flagship of UNESCO's endeavors, might be a solution if successfully introduced and promoted throughout the classes of Japanese schools. I thought that this approach might help to penetrate and activate the UNESCO spirit and its activities among Japanese schools. Thus I proposed that we designate qualified schools to be counted into the 500 UNESCO School Project and let those schools undertake the role of the regional centers for the ESD. Today the number of UNESCO schools in Japan top 800 and is still growing.

I think that world peace can be preserved only after we have successfully turned the whole globe into a sustainable society. What these two objectives address, from my viewpoint, are in the same direction. Therefore I earnestly hope that the ESD will grow into a major pillar of new UNESCO activities.

(Mr. Kiso is a special advisor to the cabinet and formerly ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the permanent delegation of Japan to UNESCO)

(Translated by S. Tanahashi, the PR, Bulletin & Internet Committee)

"The Future of the World and Japan"

Date: September 16, 2014

Place: Azabu Civic Center Hall

We had the pleasure of having Professor Eisuke Sakakibara of Aoyama-Gakuin University for this workshop.

First of all, let us introduce the profile of Professor Sakakibara as follows:

Professor Sakakibara joined the Ministry of Finance in 1965. He received his Ph.D. in Economics at the University of Michigan. In 1997, he was appointed the Vice Minister of Finance for International Affairs in the Ministry of Finance. During this time, he was often quoted as "Mr. Yen" in the financial press. Subsequently, he taught at Keio and Waseda Universities. He started his current position in April 2010. His recent publications include "The Seclusion syndrome" (Shueisha), "Japanese economy under the Abe administration"(ASCOM), and "The Meiji Restoration as a Paradox: A Modern History Revised" (Nihonbungeisha Co., Ltd.).



The following is a summary of his illuminating lecture:

Current state of the world

The world is rounding a major corner. The Islamic State is engaging in violent acts in the regions such as Syria and Iraq. All over the world, local conflicts and combats have been increasing as seen in Ukraine, Thailand, and the South China Sea. However, the United States has recently been consistent in not dispatching its forces to such foreign countries. This is an indication that the United States is becoming increasingly inward-looking and is no longer as active in policing the world as it once was as a Super Power. The United States has shown clear intention to have its allies such as Japan take over some of the burden.

It was in this bigger context that the Abe Cabinet confirmed the right to pursue collective self-defense. Although there are several opinions regarding this issue, I personally believe that this is a violation of the Japanese Constitution. As this represents a huge change in Japan's defense policy, my opinion is that it should have been determined only after a wide public debate if we were to permit the "Self-Defense Forces" the right to fight overseas. In terms of economy, not only Japan but virtually all developed countries are coming to a turning point. Economic growth in developed countries has declined all over the world. The growth rate of Japan last year was more or less 1.5%, the United Kingdom less than 2%, and below 1% for Countries of the European continent. Based on these data, I would say that the era of growth in developed countries is over.

The Japanese people often talk about "deflation" and, particularly, "growing out of deflation". However, other developed countries are also experiencing deflation, or "disinflation"—i.e., a decline in inflation rate. Although 5% or 6% inflation rate was quite common once in developed countries, the inflation rates of last year were: Japan, 0.4%; the United States and the United Kingdom, around 2%; and Germany and France, around 1%. These data further support the notion that the era of growth has ended and the era of matured economy has begun. During the rapid economic growth of Japan from 1955 to 1973-74, the growth rate was 9%. The following 15-16 years can be called the period of stable growth, with the growth rate at around 4.2%. From the 1990s it was down to 1%.

There are those who refer to the period from the 1990s to early 2000's as "the lost decade" or "the lost 2 decades." I, for one, do not think so. The Japanese economy during that time did not fatigue badly, but rather, entered into a mature stage of growth. Per capita Japanese GDP is nearly \$ 40,000, which is the second largest in the world. In addition, the Japanese population is declining lately. If you look ahead in the mid- to long-term, I think that 1% GDP growth is a sufficient rate.

Looking to the future, therefore, we should focus on policies based on economic maturation rather than growth. In other words, being fully cognizant that the Japanese economy has entered a maturation stage, we should devote our energy to improving the "quality of life". Of course, individual companies would naturally still desire to grow, and this is possible through expansion overseas. However, if Japan as a nation still continues to focus on high growth rate and outgrowing deflation, it could lead to the creation of a bubble economy.

According to the economist Mr. Kazuo Mizuno, "A frontier to be developed no longer exists in the whole world. Capitalist economy and modern capitalism which began in the mid-16th century have now come to an end. New phase has begun in the 21st century. In other words, developed economies of the world have entered the 'post-modern' stage." On the other hand, China, India, Asian countries such as Indonesia, Arab countries, and African countries which are the emerging market countries still have enough potential to achieve high growth in the future.

Let's take a look at India and China, which have been attracting attention in the sense of future growth:

China

From 1970 to around 2010 it has seen a big economic growth at an average of 10% per year. However, the Chinese government has reduced their aim to 7% for 2012-2013, indicating a shift to a period of stable growth. Moreover, China will soon be facing a decrease in population. A high economic growth rate tends to hide all the shortcomings of a society, but these problems, such as social disparities, become obvious as the growth rate stabilizes. The current challenge for China, therefore, is to make a smooth transition into a period of stable growth.

India

Currently, India's population numbers above 1.2 billion, about 100 million people less than that of China; in about a decade, India is likely to surpass China in terms of population size. India has the highest population growth rate in the world, and about 50% of the population is less than 25 years old. By 2050, India's population is estimated to be around 1.7 billion; in contrast, the population in China will have fallen to below 1.3 billion. For India, since the current GDP is still about one third the values of China and Japan, there is definitely a room for growth. Currently, the middle class is about 70 million to 80 million people, representing 5 to 6 percent of the total population. In 10 years it will have grown to about 300 million to 400 million people. Recently when visiting India, I felt that the economy there was thriving and in very good shape. This is because there was a regime change last year, with the subsequent replacement of the head of the central bank; there is an emphasis on economic growth now which has been progressing smoothly. Japanese companies have also expressed a great interest in this country.

Japan

As an advanced nation, Japan must recognize that it is now a mature society with a mature economy, and its policies should be formulated accordingly. The 3 key words of importance are environment, safety, and health. I believe that Japan is already a leader in these 3 fields. Let me elaborate on these three subjects:

Environment

The islands of Japan are located within a temperate climate zone. A surprising 68% of its land is forested, which places Japan second in the world after Finland. European countries have cut down forests to open up land for cultivating wheat and raising cattle. In contrast, the people of Japan have long regarded forests as sacred homes of deities and have assiduously protected and maintained forested areas. With abundant rainfall and numerous rivers in the forest lands, the Japanese have rightly considered their country a land of forest, water, and rivers, and have made efforts to have positive impact on their environment.

The coastal waters of Japan are the most fertile in the world where 28,000 species of fish are caught. The Japanese diet has long depended on fish as its main protein source, which resulted in a very healthy population. That abundant species of fish can be caught and eaten throughout the seasons even today indicates the diligent efforts by the citizens to protect the coastal waters and forests, thereby ensuring a clean environment.

Safety

Japan is known as the safest country in the world. The crime rate according to OECD statistics (i.e., the percentage of the total population that is drawn into crimes, either as perpetrators or victims) is less than 10%, a number that is comparable to Spain. Consider that crime rates hover around 20% in the United States and the United Kingdom.

That Japan is generally a safe country has historical roots. Before Meiji Era, Japan was involved in wars against foreign countries only three times: the Hakuson Jiang battle in year 663, the attempted invasion by Mongolians, and the attempt to invade the Korean peninsula by Hideyoshi Toyotomi. It is quite noteworthy too that Japan has never been successfully invaded by any foreign powers. In contrast, European countries have repeatedly fought among themselves and also have gone to war overseas many times. The United Kingdom is an island country located in the vicinity of the continent and has been invaded many times throughout its history. As a result, different ethnic people now live in four regions within the country. The U.K. and Japan are similar in that they are both island nations located close to a continent, but there is a marked difference in their history, most likely due to the fact that Dover Strait is relatively calm but a turbulent Genkai Sea separates Japan from its continental neighbor. The roughness of the Sea of Genkai may be one of the significant factors which has maintained Japan free of invasions by foreign powers.

In addition, there were only a few civil wars and the duration of each of them was relatively short. The 360 years of Heian Period and 260 years of Edo were long periods of stability devoid of civil unrest. That means Japan as a country has managed to maintain 600-700 years of peace until the modern times, a phenomenon not seen in other countries. This is one of the distinguishing characteristics of Japanese history which has contributed to relative safety in Japan today.

At the beginning of Meiji Era, a British woman by the name of Isabella Bird traveled the Tohoku region on horseback by herself for three months. In her diary, she mentions that Japan was a very safe country and that same thing could not be said of the U.K. of those times; also, people she met were very friendly. The safety she experienced was a result of the long tradition of peace, inherited from the preceding Edo period.

Recently, the Edo era has been re-evaluated in many ways. It was not so long ago that descriptions such as "In Edo period, rural areas were very poor" were frequently seen in history books. But recent analyses are concluding that rural areas were actually rich and thriving during the Edo period. In addition, instead of a central authority controlling any number of villages, heads of a village called Murakata Sanyaku presided over its residents in a decentralized way. Also, it is worth considering that the mainstream culture of Edo period was that of the commoners: Kabuki, Sumo, Ukiyo-e and so on. From these facts, I would say that ordinary people called Shomin (town people) and farmers were indeed rich and thriving.

According to historians, the society of the Edo period was a decentralized one. Samurai was the ruling class but not necessarily rich. Although they were elites, the samurais did not possess much land. This is in contrast to China, India, and the West, where the ruler or the landlord always possessed land and could lay claim to whatever was produced on that land. It was the farmers that owned land in Japan; the rich were either wealthy farmers or prosperous merchants. Samurai did not have land nor own means of production; in recent terminology, they were salaried workers. In fact, given that such people stood at the top of hierarchy, it can be said that it was a decentralized and egalitarian society. In addition, during the Edo period, the Shogunate held at most 4 million Koku or stipend, and it did not control everything that went on in the country; rather, it was the rural feudal lords who performed local administrative duties. In this sense, too, Japan had quite a decentralized system.

A foreign Japanese history scholar has analyzed the Edo era thus: "The Edo era represents a complete, perfected form of Japanese culture. Ordinary people were rich; there were no big differences between the lives of the ruling class and ordinary peoples'. Wealth distribution was not biased and virtually no one was extremely poor. "

The period up to 1945, from the Meiji Restoration to the defeat in World War II

This period is an unusual time in Japanese history. During this time Japan experienced four major wars:

Sino-Japanese War, Russo-Japanese War, World War I and World War II. Not only the frequency of wars, but the power of Emperor during those times, was also extraordinary and peculiar. Until the Meiji period, the Emperor was a merely a symbol of authority, and other people exercised actual power. One could say that an Emperor had "never been defeated" since he had never held any actual power.

Upon Meiji Restoration, under the Meiji Constitution, the Emperor was touted, treated and worshiped as a tremendous ruler almost like a god, and assumed supreme command of the military as well. This became one of the trigger which caused the military to run amok. At the beginning of the Meiji Era, Asian countries were being colonized one after another. As a defensive measure, Japan forged ahead to enhance the wealth of the country and strengthen the military. Thailand and Japan were the only two countries in Asia to not be colonized. In addition to geographical factors, the fact that Japan strengthened her military had a lot to do with this, at least in my opinion.

One more meaningful point is that Japan won the Russo-Japanese War. All countries of the world were astonished that a small country in the Far East had won against a big country like Russia. (It should be said that the mediation by the United States helped to achieve this result by helping to terminate the war in 1 year.) Militarization of Japan was thus a doom wrought at the very start of the Meiji Restoration. Meiji to pre-war Showa was continuous: the Constitution of Japan was not changed, nor the politics had shifted much during this period. I think that the Japanese defeat in 1945 in World War II was an inevitable conclusion to the trends initiated at the onset of the Meiji Era.

After this unusual period, the post-war Japan was gradually Americanized under occupation. However, time has finally come to return to the "original Japan" as was realized during the Edo era, to the nation of long-lasting peace. It is important to recognize that the Japanese has a DNA of peace and that it is our duty to firmly maintain this heritage.

Health

The average life span of the Japanese is the longest in the world and is 83 years when averaged between male and female. Also, according to obesity rate statistics of the world, the Japanese obesity rate is 3%, which is the lowest rate in all of the developed countries. In other words, Japan is the healthiest nation in the world. One of the reasons is the diet. Fish and soy are the main food source, which are good for health. Now, sushi has become popular worldwide, with the associated notion that it is healthy. It is just one indication that Japanese food is starting to be widely recognized for its health benefits.

As I mentioned above, it is important for the Japanese people to recognize that our society is in a fully matured stage, particularly from the viewpoints of environment, safety, and health. Factors such as low growth, low inflation and also low interest rates should be considered a common phenomenon among developed countries and not some problems unique to Japan. At this stage of a fully matured economy, with zero growth and the per capita GDP around \$40,000, nowadays I think Japan's new challenge is to figure out how to make this richness sustainable and to improve and enjoy our "quality of life".

Professor Sakakibara generously allowed for more than 30 minutes for the Q&A session, saying that questions that didn't relate to his lecture were also fine. This prompted many questions from the audience.

The Q&A session:

Question Please tell us about the exchange rate and the state of Japan's current account.

Answer In terms of the exchange rate, the current situation is based upon a stronger dollar rather than a weaker yen. Weaker yen is not the result of a weaker Japanese economy, but of an improving US economy that is driving the dollar higher.

Currently, benefits of weaker yen are almost non-existent for Japan. It used to be that a weaker yen had the merit of increasing exports. But recently, large and medium-sized Japanese companies have shifted a higher proportion of their production overseas. This means weaker yen does not drive exports higher. Because the Japanese economic infrastructure has changed, these days a strong yen rather than weaker yen is more beneficial, unless the yen becomes extremely strong. Japan relies strongly on imports for food and energy, and so a weaker yen will significantly impact us. It is time for the Japanese to recognize that a strong yen is to our nation's advantage. Fundamentally, the strength of a country is reflected in the

strength of its currency.

During the time when I was the Vice Minister of Finance for International Affairs (Kokusai KinyuKyoku) in 1995, Japan suffered greatly from extreme yen-dollar rates. 80 yen against a dollar at the time is almost equivalent to 60 yen per dollar level position today. All large Japanese companies which were heavily export-dependent were crying for help. After negotiations with the U.S., the rate was pushed back up to 100 yen. I felt that it was quite necessary to do so at the time. Now, however, a stronger yen is desirable for Japan when one considers the overall picture. I think that we should finally liberate ourselves from the idea that weaker yen is advantageous.

Question Japanese debt burden is enormous. How can Japan resolve this?

Answer Japan's debt is approximately 1000 trillion yen; it is significantly large. On the other hand, the financial asset of Japanese individuals is worth 1400 trillion yen. Japanese people own 92% of Japanese government bonds; I estimate that foreign governments have 5-6% of the bonds as foreign exchange reserves. Therefore, at this moment, I do not regard the national debt as a serious problem. However, in the long term, we must take measures to restructure our economy. In order to avoid increasing the amount of bonds or national debt, a tax hike is inevitable. That is why the sales tax was raised to 8%; it will likely reach 10% next year.

However, raising the tax by 1 percent is estimated to increase the government revenue by only 3 trillion yen at most. In order to fill the budget deficit, the sales tax rate will eventually have to be raised to between 20% and 25%. In Europe the tax rate is at 20%, and I believe that it is inevitable that Japan will raise the tax to that much in the next 10 years.

We cannot afford to keep a budget deficit of 40 trillion yen every year. Because governmental expenditures have already been streamlined, there is not much more that can be cut. Because a higher percentage of our population will be seniors in the near future, expenditures like social security and medical care for seniors which already make up 50% of the total expenditures will inevitably increase. Therefore, there is no choice but to raise our taxes. However, corporate tax should be decreased to reflect the international norm. That is why I believe that we must reduce the budget deficit by increasing the sales tax up to 20% over the next decade.

Question I agree with your opinion about going back to the way Japan was in the Edo period. The problem is whether Japan is actually heading in that direction.

Answer Recently there has been a surge in the number of public projects related to disaster prevention and the Tokyo Olympics. I think it is a problem that the government began to depend on projects like these to increase economic growth rate. I simply think that this is not necessary. We can produce the coming Olympic Games with a slightly different taste like, for example, "Garden city Tokyo." Switching our gear and focusing on strategies for a matured economy, we should concentrate on maintaining our lead in the fields of safety, health, and environment.

Question I heard India will become more and more influential. In addition to having a huge population, they also speak English. Japan also needs to foster global human resources who are fluent in English.

Answer About 20-25% of the population in India speak English. Certainly, the intellectuals and the upper class people speak English and they are the ones that lead the country. The Japanese people have many strengths yet one of the weaknesses is insufficient command of English. This is probably due to a poor-quality English language education in Japan. That needs to be changed so that the Japanese populace can obtain robust foreign language skills.

Historically, Japan has been excellent at receiving and absorbing civilization from China, and then after Meiji Era, from Western countries; however, Japan was and still is quite poor at communicating its own culture to the world. It is high time that the Japanese people heighten their international language skills and to propagate good things about Japan to the rest of the world.

Question Will the caste system of India be an obstacle to business activities?

Answer Currently it is not a problem at all in urban areas of India; those who live in metropolitan areas aren't even conscious of the existence of the caste system.

Question Please tell us about your ideas regarding ways to use and maintain the rich forests of Japan.

Answer In regards to Japanese forestry, there is a discrete forestry budget which does not receive any additional money from the general budget. Due to this lack of funds, the rich, diverse forests we inherited are not being taken care of; national and prefectural forests don't even get thinned properly and are left neglected. I feel that we need to take a good amount of money from the general budget to maintain and protect our forests.

Question What are your thoughts on TPP?

Answer The Abe administration is adopting a policy to accept TPP, but I am quite critical. TPP aims to eliminate tariffs, but the tariff of Japan is already sufficiently low at the present. With the exception of rice, it is not very meaningful to bring tariffs on other items even closer to zero. As for rice itself, it is impossible to not make it an exception to the rule, simply because rice is such an important agricultural product for Japan. All the farmers will go out of business if the tariff on rice fell to zero. For the sake of our farmers and our agricultural villages, we should not do this.

What the United States is requesting is for other countries to Americanize their system. Although there are benefits to Americanization, there are also some aspects of the Japanese system which are good and should not be abandoned. For example, Japan Post Bank or Kampo Insurance have important roles in sparsely populated areas such as on small and remote islands. It is not desirable to force them to be the same as any other private financial institutions. Another important example is how the current system allows local construction companies to preferentially take on local public work projects. Hundreds of thousands of such companies exist and they are essential in supporting the local economy. Without this preferential system, construction companies of rural areas will lose to big general contractor companies from Japan and the U.S., going out of business en masse. If the government is serious in revitalizing the rural regions of Japan, it is important to take good care of local construction businesses.

In many other ways, the U.S. insists Japan to follow the American way of doing things. The real intent of the TPP is for the U.S. and Australia to penetrate Asian markets which they see as growing and lucrative. Japan is already an established key player in Asia; therefore, there is no need to get on board the TPP. It is sufficient to leave things as they are now, since China is the largest trading partner of Japan and there is also a deep relationship between Southeast countries and Japan. China and South Korea also will not seek to join the TPP; we should not pursue it aggressively, either.

Our Impressions:

An earnest lecture spanning many fields truly engaged the audience. In spite of the difficult and technical nature of the topic, the professor nevertheless spoke clearly and succinctly, allowing even those who are not familiar with economic concepts to understand. I think Prof. Sakakibara inspired all of us to have hope and confidence in the future direction of Japan. I sincerely would like to thank him for this lecture.

(Written by Hiromasa Yoshihara, Vice Chairperson, the Youth Activities Committee, and by Mitusko Takai, MUA President; translated & photographed by Yasuko Sakashita, the International Culture & Science Committee)

The 18th MUA Salon
“The World Seen Through Birds’ Eyes and Insects’ Eyes”

Date: September 30, 2014

Venue: MUA Secretariat Office

MUA Salon is held to promote friendship among MUA members. This time we had the pleasure of having Mr. Shuhei Sato, Chairperson of the Youth Activities Committee, as the speaker. Mr. Sato talked about what he had been thinking, wondering and conducting himself since his high-school days. We had a very active Q&A session in the latter part of the Salon. Two hours passed by like a flash.

Mr. Sato started his speech by stating that he was honored to talk to many elder people. His speech went on as shown below.

[International High School Days in Chiba Prefecture, Japan]

I was borne in Kure City in Hiroshima Prefecture. I graduated from an elementary school there, and moved to Chiba Prefecture where I studied at a junior high school. Then, I entered Matsudo International High School where I studied together with friends from China, Korea, European countries and the United States. When I started to feel like I acquired a bit of an international sensibility after half a year passed, I found that I still was not able to take part in the discussions under way between a friend from The Uighur Autonomous Region of China and the other a Hang Chinese. I was not aware that the matters associated with ethnic minorities had become a major subject of discussion not only in China but in other part of the World. That was when I started to feel strongly that I needed to acquire much wider view on the international issues. While it is possible for people to obtain information about the world through school classes, books, TV programs, internet, etc., he or she really cannot understand the reality of the world without putting themselves into the real lives of ordinary people in the world. Thus, I acquired a hint for adopting birds’ eyes and insects’ eyes.



[High School Days in France]

I wanted to study abroad in order to acquire knowledge that really works. I was lucky enough to study for two years at a high school in France. Because I entered the school there without having any knowledge about French, I was not able to make a friend with anyone, and I was even discriminated being Asian origin. Through the passage of time, though, I became able to express myself in French gradually, and obtained some friends eventually. Two subjects I studied did affect my thought seriously.

[Classes on Political Science and Historical Science]

Students of the same generation discuss about their country as well as the politics based on their own opinions. I heard that the concept of “right” and “left” was created in France during the French Revolution. They debate by first declaring that he is “right” or “left”. They respect each other no matter how different their ways of thought are.

I leaned about the World War II in the classes of historical science. What I learned in Japan was the history centering on Japan. However, the classes in France as a matter of course teach on the wars in Europe and do not touch on the history of Far East nor on atomic bombs dropped in Japan. Thus, I was quite surprised about the big differences from what were taught in Japan. I learned that I needed to look at a matter from various aspects.

[Bird’s Eyes and Insect’s Eyes]

I used to looke at things only through the insect’s eyes, not bird’s eyes, by living in Japan as a Japanese and talked with my friends in Japanese. I noticed that I only learned about Japanese cultures as well as history from the Japanese view. I did not understand a bit about the basics of the international affairs.

[College Days in Japan]

I was vividly conscious of Japan as well as being a Japanese during two years of study in French. I also had an acute feeling that I was not knowledgeable enough about the fundamentals of Japan. Upon my return from France to Japan, I entered the law faculty of Chuo University, as I took an interest in the study of laws during my stay in France. I realized to observe matters from bird’s eyes as well as insect’s eyes through my study in France. Then,

I learned in a university of Japan that only Europe and the United States do not represent the world. In other words, views from Europe and the United States alone are not true bird's eyes. Countries in Asia, Middle East, Africa and Central-South America are also integral parts of the world. Thus, I decided to visit Philippines and Turkey for the purpose of taking part in volunteer activities.

[Days in Philippines and Turkey]

I had a little bit of knowledge on Philippines through TV programs which I would say the bird's eyes. However, I was quite surprised that there existed many things I was not at all aware of when I actually visited there and saw with my eyes, the insect's eyes. Just a few examples. Kids at the age of elementary school sell something on the street when they are supposed to sit in the class. There are many people strolling around who do not have houses to live in. But a Ferrari runs through among those people. I faced with the wide gap between the rich and the poor. I keenly felt it is necessary to see the reality with my own eyes instead of only having book knowledge.

In the meantime, I was interested in Turkey as the country is located at the crossroad of Christianity and Islam as well as Asia and Europe. Some people enjoy European culture and plenty of goods while others have to struggle desperately only to live. I did understand during my stay in these two countries that there existed a gap in the people's life in the world.

[Korea, the neighboring country, and Uganda, a far country]

When I visited Korea, I was quite shocked to find quite a difference in the historical recognition between Japanese and Koreans as I exchanged views on the history with the parents of my Korean friend.

On the other occasion, I visited Uganda in Africa to find that AIDS flourished in the country. The World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Red Cross distributed condoms to people for prevention and also provided medical care to those infected. Anyone have fears if he or she is told to have been infected by AIDS. Such fears cannot be relieved only by the Western medicine. Some other emotional cares which are expected to relieve fears must be adopted.

[Volunteer Activities]

Mindset wanting to help people is precious. What is most important is to find out what people need most and assist them to get hold of those.

I visited Leyte Island of Philippines most damaged by the huge typhoon a year ago. I visited there this year as well. Goods are distributed to people there periodically. However, I had to wonder if those were distributed to people who really needed help.

[Conclusion]

Globalization is the word most spoken by the people in the world recently. What I wonder, however, is that the current globalization has been created, introduced and spread by and based on the Western society criteria and, thus, other areas and cultures are not well taken into consideration. Many among my friends talk about international standards. While we must observe the rules prevailing in the international society once we get out of Japan, it is not right to blindly follow the Western standards without comprehending what is good about Japanese standards.

In addition to the knowledge obtained by observing through the bird's eyes, the one obtained through insect's eyes by visiting other part of the world and exchanging with people there is definitely needed. UNESCO states that the mutual understanding nips the war in the bud. What cannot be seen by overlooking through bird's eyes could be seen through insect's eyes placed at the same level as eyes of people living there. Both bird's eyes and insect's eyes are required for the globalization that could be welcomed by all the people in the world. This is my conclusion obtained based on my limited experience during 21 years I have lived to date.

Questions and Answers:

Q: How did you finance the living costs while you were studying in France?

A: I scouted out for a host family myself. They helped me quite a lot.

Q: I was quite impressed by your acting power. Under what voluntary body did you visit Uganda?

A: Upon arrival at Uganda I asked a voluntary body if I could take part in the activities with them.

Q: What do you think is the most important to be knowledgeable about Japan before participating in voluntary activities outside of Japan?

A: Japanese politics and history. Concerning Japanese history, the most important thing is to have your own view on it.

Q: I once heard that children in France are taught the modern history first and then long history dating back to ancient times. Is it that way they do even now?

A: History class started with EU. The result was first thrown out to us, and then, we discussed the cause of that. For example, French Revolution took place. Why did it happen?



Q: I learned that high school students in Scotland seriously thought about whether their country should be independent at the time of voting the other day, even if they were not old enough to have the right to vote. Do you have any say on the educational system in Japan?

A: I personally believe that education on modern history as well as English need to be restructured.

Q: Many of the American and French like debate, and they express themselves very clearly. Did you have a class specifically dedicated for discussions in France?

A: We had a lot of discussions and debates in most of the classes. Most of the French like debating and they debate for hours with a cup of coffee in their hands.

Q: Observing the world through bird's eyes and insect's eyes is equivalent to think and act not only globally but locally as well. Is there anything you do specifically for better knowing about Japan?

A: I do "sword fighting". I first started Japanese archery. Both of these are performed in Hakama, Japanese kilt. I adore the traditional Japanese movements seen in such authentic martial arts as sword fight and archery. I do find the gracefulness in Japanese Kimono and movements of people in Japanese Kimono. I would like to continue sending out the message on the Japanese culture through Kimono.

Q: Does it cost a lot to study abroad? It is often said that the number of Chinese and Korean students studying in the United States is getting quite large. They seem to be much aggressive in studying abroad. What do you think would be needed for Japanese younger people to match their energy?

A: As the scholarship program is made available for them, they should make the most use of it. However, I hear that less Japanese students want to go abroad to study, and the number of students who apply for the scholarship is very small. I admire the energy Chinese and Korean students have. The world is now moving centering around Asia. Chinese and Korean people are the members of Asia as we Japanese are. It is quite important to discuss how to cooperate each other and not to come into collision. I was quite glad, however, when an acquaintance of mine in Korea told me, "we may misunderstand Japanese because of the difficulty stemming from differing views of history; it is necessary that we exchange much closely by and among individuals, and deepen mutual understanding; there should not be any difficulty which cannot be overcome."

Discussions between Mr. Sato and the attendees went quite lively and vigorous. Everyone seemed to expect continued discussions, but the time ran out.

(Written by T. Kobayashi, Chairperson of the Membership Committee, and translated by Y. Suda, the Public Relations, Bulletin & Internet Committee)

UNESCO • Youth • Forum in Minato 2014

~CONNECTING OUR NEW WORLD~

Date: Saturday, October 4th 2014 13:00~17:30

Venue: Minato City Gender Equality Center, (Libra) Hall, Tokyo

13:00

Opening

Chairpersons: Mr. Shuhey Sato Minato UNESCO Association (Chuo University)
Mr. Hiromasa Yoshihara Minato UNESCO Association (Hosei University)

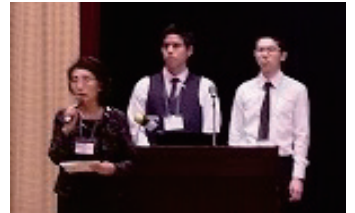
The chairpersons explained about the UNESCO Youth Forum, today's time schedule and activities of the Forum committee. The Forum lasted for as long as four and half hours, but with everyone's support it went smoothly in a pleasant atmosphere with many young participants.

Programs and Time Schedule:

Opening	13:00~	Sponsor and supporter greetings
Part 1	13:10~	The foreign students' introductions of their native countries (4 countries)
Part 2	14:10~	Panel talk including the 8 foreign students "Japan and myself, and my future"
Part 3	15:30~	Conversation between the audience and panelists
Part 4	16:10~	Let's sing together
Part 5	16:30~	Let's enjoy interacting
Ending	17:20~	Closing words

Sponsor Greetings: Ms. Mitsuko Takai, President of the Minato UNESCO Association

I am very happy that we are able to hold this forum with everyone's support. A lot of foreign students have come to Japan. I planned this Youth Forum because I wanted to provide opportunities for conversation between the foreign students who can be said as the contact point to the world and Japanese people, especially among young people. But I have learned that it is not so easy, because we Japanese do not often interact with foreign students. So I asked for cooperation and to come to Tokyo to Inter-Cultural Communication Life Association's Ms. Yoshiko Nagato, who had been assisting the foreign students for many years in Utsunomiya City of Tochigi prefecture. In other words we started the Youth Forum in 2010 to realize the communication between Tokyo and local cities.



From the Tokyo side, I asked for the cooperation of the college students who have been doing activities in UNESCO associations and college UNESCO clubs in the Tokyo metropolitan areas from the planning process. Now I would like to take this opportunity to thank Minato UNESCO Youth committee, Tamagawa university UNESCO club, Keio university UNESCO club, and the college students in the Shinjuku UNESCO association for your support.

I would also like to thank the foreign students who came from far away. I hope today's forum will be the opportunity for an enjoyable cultural exchange and a wonderful mutual understanding, across international borders, across regions, across organizations, and across ages.

Supporter Greetings: Ms. Yoshiko Nagato, Director of the Minato UNESCO association, President of the Inter-Cultural Community Life Association and the Utsunomiya UNESCO Association



Today, I would like to thank you for inviting the foreign students who live in Utsunomiya City. I have been the mother of the students for 32 years. In 2010, I received an eager request from the president Ms. Takai for connecting the spirit of peace through the UNESCO activities in Tokyo. This is the fourth event since then. Foreign students who study in local areas do not often have the chance to come to Tokyo. Therefore, they were excited that they could introduce their native countries and join in the panel discussions. So I have arranged the best members and have come here today. I would like to express my appreciation to many of the college students in Tokyo who helped prepare this year's forum as the executive committee. I hope today's forum will build UNESCO's

spirit which is "The fortress of peace" in everyone's heart and become a "New and nice place to meet new people".

13:15 Part 1. Foreign students' introduction of their native countries (4 countries)

“Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka”

Mr. Chamara Sasanka Salgado (Utsunomiya University)

Ms. Thanuja Jayanatumi, wife of Mr. Sasanka and studying Japanese

Sri Lanka is an island country located in the Indian Ocean with an area of 65,600 square meters (about 80 percent of the size of Hokkaido). It was the colony of Portugal, Holland, and England from the 16th century, but it became independent from England in 1948. It was called Ceylon until 1972. There are no four seasons, and the average annual temperature is 28 degrees Celsius. There are many rains due to the impact of Monsoons. The forests are rich, and many wild animals including elephants live there. Whales swim around the island, and you can enjoy surfing and sun bathing at the white sand beach. 70 percent of the population is Buddhist. The impact of Buddhism is huge, and there are many large statues of Buddha and huge pagodas. Many tourists from Japan come to Sri Lanka. Black tea, rubber, agricultural products such as coconuts, jewelry including rubies, and tourism are the main income. Sri Lanka has the world's fourth biggest black tea output. The black tea export destinations are for example, the Arab states, Russia, Japan and Turkey. The historical clothing for men is easy-to-wear sarong divided above and below. The historical clothing for women is sari on the other hand. You wrap around a 6 meter cloth around your body to wear it so it takes 30 to 40 minutes for women who are not used to wearing it. Teachers in school are always supposed to wear sarong. Rice-based diet are the main meals, and we eat rice with several kinds of curry. New Year holidays are determined by the movement of the Sun, and it's generally around April. On the New Year holidays, we eat historical meals with our family at a decided time and we visit temples.

“Socialist Republic of Viet Nam”

Ms. My Bin (Utsunomiya University)

Vietnam is located on the east side of East Asia and Southern East Asia's Indo-Chinese peninsula. The length from North to South is long, and the area is 330,000 square kilometers (about the size of Japan without the Kyushu region). The population is about 90 million people. 54 ethnic groups live and 87 percent of them are Kinh which is Vietnamese. The official language is Vietnamese (it is also called Kinh, or Annam). Vietnam was controlled by China in the ancient ages, so like Japanese, Korean and Zhuang, it received the impact of the Chinese letter culture. More than 70 percent of the words in the dictionary were originated from the Chinese letters, and the pronunciations are similar. The current notation method for Vietnamese is Latin (Quoc Ngu). A French missionary invented and spread it during France's colonization of Vietnam, and it was officially adopted in 1945. The literacy rate is high among adults. The Chinese letters were abolished in 1954, so ancient documents are unreadable because they are written in Chinese letters. Vietnamese recipes strongly have the effect of Chinese recipes which have been developed with the impact of the Chinese culture over a long time. Also, much impact of French recipe culture remains, because Vietnam was long under the colonial ruling of France. Vietnam has a rice-diet culture, and noodles are basically rice-noodles. Fermentation seasonings are used such as fish sauce (nuoc mam). The memories of the Viet Nam War seems to strongly remain among Japanese people, but I want you to know that the Vietnamese people right now love peace and are against war. We are also heartwarming and kind.

“United Mexican States”

Ms. Escobar Garcis Maria Del Rosario (Utsunomiya University)

Mexico is located in the southern part of North America, and it takes 16 to 20 hours by plane from Japan. The area is 1.96 million square meters (about five times of Japan). The capital is Mexico City. The population is 122.33 million people. The main language is Spanish, and the religion of about 90 percent of the people is Catholic. A lot of World Heritage exist. As it is called the treasury of World Heritage, many tourists from many countries visit Mexico. The most ancient civilization is the Ormecca civilization (the megalith human head statue is famous) which is said to have appeared before 2,000 B.C. Thereafter, there appeared and prospered such advanced aborigenes' civilization as the latter part of the Maya civilization, the Teotihuacan civilization (the huge Sun Pyramid is famous), the Tortecca civilization, and the Azteca civilization. The Azteca (Mexica) civilization flourished in the current Mexico City, but it has substantially vanished due to Spain's invasion in the 16th century. Mexican recipes, based from the Maya group's cuisines and the aborigenes' (such as the Maya group) cuisines, also received impact from Spanish cuisines. It is known for its hot taste cuisines in which corn, green beans, and diverse red pepper (chili) are used. The main dish is tortilla (it is made by grinding corn). The historical cuisine was registered as UNESCO's intangible cultural heritage in 2010.

“Mongolia”

Ms. Undral (Hitostubashi University, graduated Utsunomiya University)

Mongolia is located in East Asia, near Russia and China, and it occupies an important position in a geological sense. It takes about 5 hours by a direct flight from Japan to reach the capital Ulan Bator. The area is about 4 times of Japan. The population is 2.95 million people, one forty-fifth of Japan. The hottest month of the year is July, which is 25 degrees Celsius to no hotter than 30 degrees Celsius. The coldest month of the year is January, which is minus 30 degrees Celsius. The average life expectancy is the age of 67. There are a lot of young people from the age of 25 to 29. The population is originally nomads, but people who move to cities have increased, and 65 percent of the whole population live in cities, 35 percent live in the local areas, and 4 percent live in foreign countries. The country with the highest rate of Mongolian people living is South Korea, then the United States and China. Japan is fifth among countries Mongolian people select as study abroad destinations. Mongolia's representative traditional musical instrument “morin khuur” has a meaning of “horse musical instrument”, and according to documents, it has a more than 2000 year history, it was registered to UNESCO as world's intangible cultural heritage. Mongolian people who cannot play have increased because more people have moved to cities, but the morin khuur is decorated in many houses, as it symbolizes a good omen of “good things coming”.

Morin khuur “The running of a horse” played by **Ms. Aoi Fujioka** (Japanese player, friend of Ms. Undral)

The morin khuur has a sculpture of a horse's head on the front of the head, and there is a decoration of a dragon on the bottom, and it is said that the dragon protects the horse. It has two strings and is called the “The prairie's cello” because you hold it between your feet and play it like a cello. The song that I will play “The running of a horse” has the theme of a horse, which is treated like a member of the family. I will first image a horse walking slowly through a prairie, and then I will change to a fast tempo, indicating a horse running, then I will end by expressing the neigh of a horse.

14:30 Part 2 Panel Talk Main theme: “Japan and Myself and My Future”

**Sub-topic: “The reason why I selected Japan as a study abroad destination and its results”
“My future dreams, interaction between Japan and my native country”**

Panel host: Mr. Jun Imai, Keio UNESCO club representative Keio University

Ms. Mai Iwata, Minato UNESCO Association, Chuo University

Panelists: Mr. Sasanka, Ms. My Bin, Ms. Rosario, Ms. Undral and

Mr. Hewanaga Lahiru Wanamal, Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka (Utsunomiya University)

Mr. Kim Kwangil, Republic of Korea (Utsunomiya University)

Ms. Shu Rei Rei, People's Republic of China (Sakushin Gakuin University)

Ms. Sou Bu Dao, People's Republic of China (Utsunomiya University)

The reason I selected Japan as a study abroad destination

Mr. Lahiru (Sri Lanka)

Since I was young, I admired the passport my brother had. I also wanted to see a broader world. I wanted to be independent and live by myself.

Ms. Sou (China, Inner Mongolia)

My brother had an experience studying abroad and is now a Japanese teacher. So I became interested in Japan. Also when I was in elementary school, Japanese animation such as “Doraemon” used to be my favorite. I am right now a teacher in China, so after I return home, I would like to find a better way to teach by using Japanese text books as reference.

Ms. Chu (China)

I heard from my relatives living in Japan that “Japan is a peaceful and wonderful country”, so I wanted to actually live in Japan. Since I was young, I have been watching Japanese animation with interest, especially “Chibimaruko-chan”.

Ms. Undral (Mongolia)

My teacher in high school encouraged me “to study in Japan and become a doctor”, so I began to study Japanese. But I became very interested in business management rather than a doctor, so I changed my course and am studying management.

Ms. Rosario (Mexico)

When I saw Japanese animation, I thought Japan is a cultural country. I majored art in college, and now am teaching it in junior high schools. I had the chance to study in Japan using the studying abroad system

offered by Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology's, so I have applied for it. I was fascinated by the Ukiyoe (color print of everyday life in the Edo period) in books or the internet, so I am very happy that I could see wonderful real Ukiyoes in Japanese art museums.

Ms. My Bin (Vietnam)

I studied Japanese in Japan from 2005 to 2007. This is my second time studying abroad. This time, I want to enhance my Japanese skills to become a Japanese teacher.

Mr. Kim (South Korea)

I studied Japanese education at college in South Korea and now I am aiming to become a Japanese language teacher. In order to become a Japanese teacher, I thought I should experience Japan's society and culture, so I stayed in Japan as an exchange student for one year from 2007. As I thought one year was not enough, I have been studying in a graduate school since October of 2011.

Mr. Sasanka (Sri Lanka)

Until high school, I was a swot with good grades and did not have any idea what to become in the future. My father, who was an engineer, advised me "You should study abroad while you are young, and should study advanced technology", so I decided to study in Japan which should have a promising future outlook.

Before you came to Japan, what image did you have about Japan, what did you think about Japan after you have come here?

Mr. Lahiru

I knew Japan was very advanced in technology. Japan's animation, especially "Anpanman" is widely known. The first time I became aware of Japan was from the word "Tsunami". The reason English and Sri Lankan also use the word "Tsunami" is because Japan has suffered huge damage from Tsunami since old days. I knew Japanese did their best and have revived from huge damage every time.

Ms. Sou

I used to have a deep impression about Mount Fuji. After I came to Japan, I tried to climb Mount Fuji but I was not able to reach the top.

Ms. Chu

I heard from my relatives living in Japan, that "Japanese people are nice people who can be sensitive to others". I thought it is a wonderful country with a lot of world heritage even though it is a small country.

Ms. Undral

I used to have an image that Japan was a very small country in area. But after I came here, I found that there are a lot of buildings and a lot of people in the cities. So, now I feel that Japan is a very big country.

Ms. Rosario

I think Japan is a country with culture. Various people helps me, so I think it is a heartwarming country.

Ms. My Bin

When I was in college, the internet and personal computers had not spread that much, so I only had Japan's image through my Japanese teacher. As I heard that the economy is advanced and there are a lot of used electrical appliance, I thought that we do not need to buy new television and refrigerators when we come to Japan.

Mr. Kim

I had an image that the towns are clean, many earthquakes and many polite people. After I came here, I have noticed that there are no garbage and little car horns, but there are many earthquakes. I think the people are polite because I often hear the words, "Thank you", "I am sorry", and "Excuse me".

Mr. Sasanka

6 years ago I did not have information such as the internet, but I have often seen "Oshin" which was popular. After I arrived at Japan and got off the airplane, I thought that I had come to an European country. What I had imaged about Japan from "Oshin" was villages and people walking slowly but it was very different. In Sri Lanka it is well known that "Japan has lost the World War 2 and suffered a lot, but everyone worked hard and recovered". Even now, after six years I have studied here, my impression of Japanese people loving their country, working very hard, and making efforts have not changed.

The results of studying in Japan

Mr. Lahiru

Before I came to Japan, I could not speak Japanese at all, but after I studied Japanese for a year, I enrolled to a technical college in the Okinawa prefecture, and studied with the Japanese students. I had good grades, so I wanted to continue researching and transferred to Utsunomiya University in my third year. I am continuing to research my favorite field.

Ms. Sou

There are towns and flowers. When I saw the people cleaning the scattered cherry-blossom petals, I thought Japanese people like clean atmosphere, so I began to like Japanese people. I always think how I can raise the children in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region like the Japanese people.

Ms. Chu

I am doing my best to speak Japanese well. I have been living in Utsunomiya for a long time, but I am very happy that I have known a lot of people and being helped by them. I rely on my parents in my native country, but now I am doing what I can do by myself.

Ms. Undral

Other than schoolwork, I learn a lot as a man. By interacting and communicating with Japanese people, I have learned to see things from other people's point of view. I think my humanity and personality have grown up.

Ms. Rosario

In Japan, I am learning Japanese culture which is completely different from my native country. Personal relationship, and how to learn in college, etc. are completely different, So it is very interesting that I am experiencing a new world every day.

Ms. My Bin

Right now, I am thinking that it was a right decision to come to Japan. I have learned from Japan's society that "Relationships between people and helping each other are important". I have felt the warm heart of Japanese people, so I want to keep in my mind that I also want to have a warm heart.

Mr. Kim

I think everything that I am experiencing in Japan will certainly link to my future. Studying, eating delicious food, participating in events such as today. I believe that the people whom I will encounter from those occasions will someday be helpful in someplace. I feel I have refined my sensibilities through various experiences.

Mr. Sasanka

The results are that ①I became capable of speaking Japanese in addition to English and my mother tongue,②meeting my friends in Sri Lanka, and Japanese and foreign friends, I became able to spread my world, ③Through learning abroad, "I understood that studying is the fight with money", that means by studying and getting good grades, your studying fee will be free or you can receive scholarships, ④I became used to thinking and planning by myself, how to use my money, and how to enjoy cooking and tidying up,⑤ In Sri Lanka you are not allowed to marry while you are a student, but right now, we are married and we live together. This is a big result.

Your future dream and interactions between Japan and your native country.

Mr. Lahiru

I want to make more Japanese friends and interact with them. I will do my best to let them know more about Sri Lanka.

Ms. Sou

Not many Japanese people know that, the Inner Mongolia is inside China, and that we study in Chinese and also study in Mongolian. Since I have come to Japan, I recognized that education in Inner Mongolia has still not been developed and is insufficient. After I return to Mongolia, I would like to think of improving the teaching method that would inspire children's curiosities, and support making text books.

Ms. Chu

I feel there are many Japanese people right now who do not have a good image about Chinese people. I have been happy that the Japanese people have been polite to me since I have been living in Japan. "Politics is politics. Humans are humans." There are many Chinese people who have a polite heart like Japanese people. Nevertheless, it is sad that both sides only say negative things about each other. I want everyone to

visit China, and to know the nature in China, and the good heart and politeness of Chinese people. In the future, I would like to work at a tourist enterprise, and to make Japanese people know the good parts about Chinese people and Chinese people know the good parts about Japanese people.

Ms. Undral

I want to learn more about Japanese management. The message that I want to convey to Japanese people is “Certainly, try studying abroad”. You will have the chance to understand the good parts of your culture, your country, and your family. I think it will be a good life experience to earn money and learn by yourself.

Ms. Rosario

Since I have been living in Japan, I feel the spread of the world in my heart. Along with my specialty, I have learned how to teach children. I would like to change my teaching method to a way in which the children can be happy and have fun while learning.

Ms. My Bin

I would like to thank the Japanese people for your kindness. I want to visit various places, especially Hokkaido and Okinawa.

Mr. Kim

I am doing my best studying and learning the Japanese culture in order to become a Japanese language teacher. In the future, I want to convey to the South Korean people who study Japanese not only Japanese language but also about Japan objectively and precisely.

Mr. Sasanka

I want to know about the world and the situation of the current society. But even though I can speak Japanese, I have not reached the level of reading Japanese newspapers. I hope Japanese people teach me about Japan at present and its current politics. In addition, I want to know how Japanese people think about foreign students.

“Where, and how do you want to live” , in the future?

Mr. Lahiru

I want to research at graduate school, and after that I want to become a professor in a college or work at company’s research department. Since I have come to Japan, I have learned not only my specialty, but also Japanese culture and manners, so I would like to teach to the college students in Sri Lanka about that.

Ms. Sou

I want to return to Inner Mongolia and become a teacher. There is not a doctoral course in Utsunomiya University, so I will try to find one.

Ms. Chu

I want to work in a tourist enterprise in the Tochigi prefecture. I still do not have confidence in my Japanese, so I will do my best in order to speak better Japanese.

Ms. Undral

I want to become a manager in the future. As I am going to work at a Japanese company from next year, I will live as a working person in Japan. After I’ll have worked for 5 to 8 years and gained experience, I want to start a business by myself.

Ms. Rosario

After I return to Mexico, I want to talk to other teachers the things that I’ve learned in Japan. I also want to convey to them what I have studied in Japan.

Ms. My Bin

I want to become a Japanese teacher.

Mr. Kim

I want to become a Japanese teacher in South Korea.

Mr. Sasanka

I have been blessed with my life so far. The internet technology has still not developed in Sri Lanka, but there is the issue of infrastructure. I would like to spread the internet in Sri Lanka by using an easy radio communication which I am researching right now. From that aspect, I want to do things that would help Sri Lanka. I will continue to have a dream for a long time, and live positively.

15:30 Part 3 Everyone in the audience, let's participate!

Do you have any impressions or questions from the introductions of the native countries or the panel talk?

You speak Japanese very well. Teach me the studying methods to improve speaking skills of foreign languages.

Mr. Kim

I like the Japanese culture, and the smooth intonation of Japanese itself. I have mimicked the speaking style of announcers by watching television, especially news programs, and I always have a dictionary in my hand so that I can look it up quickly when words that I do not know appear.

Ms. Undral

I pursue and speak the words that the television or someone is speaking, like shadowing. I listen to music and news programs, and I repeat the words that I do not know. By exchanging letters with my Japanese friends, I find new things and learn a lot.

I was very impressed with everyone's comments. You each have a precise goal on your life. I realized that each of you have been building a philosophy on your goals for studying abroad. I have one request, that is, to make as many friends as you can. Bring back to your native country the biggest and best present, and I sincerely hope that you will remember Japan and become the bridge between Japan and your native countries. I wish you all for your good health and successful activities.

Japan is called an aging society, and there are many old people. What do old people do in your native countries ?

Ms. Chu

In China, male people retire at the age of 55. After that, they have a free time every day, and only have a lazy life. I am impressed that male people in Japan still work after the age of 60. From now on, I think it will be very hard for China, because old people will increase like Japan.

Mr. Sasanka

Old men and women in Japan at the age of 60 ride on bicycles and go to supermarkets and shops, or go out and ride on trains. I was surprised at how energetic they were. In Sri Lanka, the parents do the housework, so the grandparents relax and do nothing. I am worrying very much that my country also may become an aging society sometime in future.

Please tell me if you have something that you do not understand about Japan.

Ms. Undral

① During my class at college, there were such occasions that most students were looking down quietly and do not raise hands even when a professor asked a question. In Mongolia, students raise their hands if they understand. I think Japanese students should ask questions and say their opinions more actively.

② I was shocked when a friend I met for the second time spoke to me and greeted as if we met for the first time. After that I could not speak to anyone. I think Japanese people should speak more easily and comfortably to various people.

Mr. Sasanka

I think there are some Japanese people who do not look at another person's face when they meet and speak to foreigners. But when you drink, they speak a lot and become friends. I do not understand and it is very strange.

Mr. Sou

I could not understand why people start to speak by saying "I am sorry". I first was surprised.

Besides your school life, how do you spend your time? If it is all right, tell us if you have a part time job or a hobby.

Mr. Lahiru

After I return home from college, I have a part time job. I watch news programs, listen to music, or participate in circle activities.

Ms. Chu

I work part time at a Chinese restaurant three to four days a week. I also examine books at the library for my research publication, or play games with my friends.

Ms. Undral

I have been working part time at UNIQLO for about three years. I also go out to the park. I do not have enough time.

Mr. Rosario

I spend about 70 percent of my time at college. I also examine after school. If I have time, I meet my friends and see movies.

Ms. Sou

I examine at the library for about all day. I do not have time to work part time.

Mr. Kim

I do a part time job of teaching Korean. Conversely, I learn a lot about language by teaching. I spend a lot of time at college, so if I have time, I do exercise at the playground.

Mr. Sasanka

I spent 60 to 70 percent of my time researching at graduate school. I have a part time job two to three days a week. If I have more time, I do housework and help my wife.

Tell us if you have a favorite Japanese word

Ms. Chu

“Good fortune and happiness will come to the home of those who smile” which means good things will happen if you smile.

Ms. Undral

The word “welcome” which I use at the part time workplace and may be the number one word I use in one week.

Ms. Rosario

I think Japanese onomatopoeic words are interesting.

Mr. Lahiru, I heard that you have something that you want everyone to know in regards to your native country

Mr. Lahiru

After World War II in 1951, the allied powers, which were the victors of the war demanded strict compensations and sanctions against Japan, and the Soviet Union proposed that the Japanese territories should be divided at the San Francisco Peace conference. At that time Ceylon’s (now known as Sri Lanka) representative, president Jayawardene made a speech opposing the proposal. It is said that this famous speech touched the hearts of each country representative and the proposal was dismissed despite the opposition of the Soviet Union, and had resulted to Japan’s return to the international community. This story is well known in Sri Lanka, but college students in Japan do not know this much. I want them to know more about the relationship between Japan and Sri Lanka.

Sumo wrestlers from Mongolia are strong. They have been supporting Japan’s Sumo wrestling. I think the national anthem of Mongolia should be played when a Mongolian Sumo wrestler becomes the champion.

Ms. Undral

I have not thought about that. I think Sumo wrestling is a Japanese culture so the Japanese anthem should be played.

Panel talk moderator Mr. Jun Imai’s conclusion:

We could hear various opinions from various aspects which were very interesting. I think the stories of the foreign students who are experiencing different cultures are very important and there were a lot of things to learn from them. It can be said that it matched today’s youth forum’s goal of “cross cultural communication and mutual understanding”. What I thought that the foreign students had come to Japan with a clear vision for the future and a will. Listening to their stories, we should think not only how wonderful their speeches were but also how we can make use of it. Through mutual understanding, we should also grow. I am strongly willing to make further efforts of understanding the foreign students. I appreciate very much your wonderful talks. Thank you.

16:10 Part 4 Let's sing together!

Playing the accordion with the hosts Minato UNESCO Association Board of Director **Mr. Gunji Shimizu**

With Mr. Shimizu's lively singing voice and the tone of accordion, the participants sang songs together. The participants were relaxed and enjoyed singing while remembering their home towns in their hearts with bodily movements combined.

Songs "Furusato", "Shiawasenara tewotatako"

16:30 Part 5: Let's enjoy free interaction

Moderator: Mr. Mamoru Tonegawa UNESCO club representative, Tamagawa University
Ms. Chie Murohisa UNESCO club, Tamagawa University

The two moderators explained the exchange procedure with a great sense of humor in a good tempo, in tune with each other, as they were in the same club. Chairs were moved and a wide space was made. Everyone stood and divided into groups, so everyone could participate and freely interact with foreign students about free topics. The participants of the groups were changed three times.

- 1) Groups divided by the month of birth (① January to March, ② April to June, ③ July to September, ④ October to December)

Theme: your country's characteristics and peculiarity

- 2) Groups divided by a psychological test (What will you do if you go to a Karaoke with three of your friends?) (① Sing first, ② Discuss with your friend and sing a duet together, ③ Ask a friend to request to you what to sing, ④ Think carefully what to sing)

Theme: What is popular in your country among young people?

- 3) Groups divided by blood types. (①A type, ②B type, ③AB type, ④O type)

Theme: Love and marriage: encounter, age for marriage, marriage ceremony, relative power between husband and wife

The members of each group first introduced themselves. Each group had a foreign student and a person of a different age. As the themes were interesting and everyone could participate, so the discussions lasted long. Everyone enjoyed it very much, and laughter was heard everywhere.

This was the first time such interactive communication was held. The participants welcomed such communication with other people and had a lot of fun.

17:20 Ending

Words of thanks from the foreign students:

Mr. Sasanka of Sri Lanka, The representative of the foreign students

I would like to thank the president of the Minato Unesco Association, the college students in Tokyo who prepared for this youth forum as the executive committee, and Mrs. Nagato the mother of us foreign students, thank you for giving us this wonderful opportunity today.

I will simply explain how I feel right now. As a foreign student, I have come here today, and I was able to talk about my country as an "Introduction of my native country", and then we were able to talk about what we are experiencing every day in Japan in front of the Japanese people. I cannot explain in words, what I have in my mind, the feeling that is overflowing my heart, and the deep emotions right now. To all Japanese people, try to reach out to the world, and study abroad while you are young. Experience my feelings of "I cannot explain in words." Thank you.

Closing words: **Ms. Mai Iwata, Minato UNESCO Association, Youth Committee member**

With all the support from everyone, I am happy that we were able to conduct the youth forum as scheduled. I want to thank the foreign students who came here from far away. Leaving your motherland with full of anxieties, I was able to understand from your words that each of you are striving towards a goal and I was deeply impressed. I was also impressed to hear your life in college, your part time job, and your ordinary life. Today has become the day for us to newly sense our country "Japan". Also I became more interested in foreign countries and strongly wish to study abroad to experience real foreign culture and life.

I would like to thank Minato City Board of Education, Minato UNESCO Association, and Ms. Nagano of the Inter-Cultural Community Life Association, for helping us conduct today's forum. In preparing, I felt the importance of having activities with students from different universities and different groups who are doing UNESCO activities. I wish that this UNESCO Youth Forum will continue as a real interactive place to know different countries and cultures.

Finally I hope the foreign students will continue to gain fruitful experience in Japan, and at the same time will play an active role as a bridge between your mother countries and Japan.

Ms. Haruka Nakamura and Ms. Miyu Yoshizawa of the Keio University UNESCO club described and requested a cooperation for the fund raising activities of the National Federation of UNESCO Associations in Japan, which is engaged in an educational support activity.

17:30 The Forum ended on schedule.

Fliers design (Japanese and English): **Mr. Sasanka** (Utsunomiya University)

Stage Light: **Mr. Eishin Obara** (Tamagawa University UNESCO club)

Microphone: **Mr. Masato Tsuruoka** (Shinjuku UNESCO Association) Mejiro University

Camera: **Ms. Risako Iitomi** (Tamagawa University UNESCO club)

Camera: **Mr. Takayuki Kobayashi** (Minato UNESCO Association)

Stage setting, reception: Tamagawa University UNESCO club, Keio University UNESCO club, Shinjuku UNESCO



Listed below are the comments sent from the students describing their impressions on the UNESCO Youth Forum 2014 in Minato.

Mr. Sasanka (Sri Lanka)

I came to Tokyo by the Shinkansen. I reunited with last year's participants, and made a lot of new friends. I had a very enjoyable day. I was happy speaking in front of the Japanese people about my country because I felt that "I came to Japan as a representative of Sri Lanka". I cannot explain in words how enjoyable and valuable it was to speak about my experience in front of everyone. I think it will help the people who are thinking about studying abroad in the future. By speaking my goals for the future in front of everyone, I felt that I want to work harder than ever before. I was able to have various good experiences.

Ms. Thanuja (Sri Lanka)

It was a great fun. I had a good experience. This was the first time I have taken the Shinkansen. It was the first time I announced in front of everyone with my husband. I was nervous because it was my first time. I spoke about Sri Lanka's ethnic costumes Sari in front of the Japanese people. I was able to learn various things by joining this kind of a program for the first time. I have made new friends. My Japanese has become better by speaking to everyone.

Mr. Lahiru (Sri Lanka)

I had a great experience. Special thanks to the Minato Unesco Committee and to the Japanese Student Executive Committee. I am really grateful to have had this opportunity to listen to the experiences and opinions of other foreign students at the panel talk. I had a lot of fun interacting with the Japanese students. I hope this relationship will last long. This was my first time participating, and if I have a chance I would definitely want to participate again. I wish for the further success of the Minato Unesco Committee.

Mr. Kim (South Korea)

It was a very valuable experience. Through this forum, I was able to have beneficial interaction with not only Japanese people but also with people from other countries. I was very happy that I was able to participate in this wonderful event. If I am given this opportunity again, I would definitely want to participate. I would like to thank the people who had supported this event. Thank you very much.

Ms. Chu (China)

I have participated in this forum for the second straight year. It was a very enjoyable day as I interacted with a lot of friends. I was very surprised that there was a person among the participated foreign students who was very good in Japanese. I thought that I can be that good if I had studied hard, so I decided to study from the basics. It made my heart warm when I received a lot of encouraging words of "Do your best" from many Japanese people. Thank you for giving me this kind of a chance.

Ms. Sou (China)

I am happy that I was able to have this enjoyable and valuable experience. Immediately after I came to Japan, when I was learning at the Japanese school in Kawasaki, I used to experience volunteer activities and homestays in Kawasaki city. This was the first time I participated in this kind of an international cultural interaction meeting. I listened to the cultures and human life of 4 countries, and I was able to interact with foreign students of other countries, the Japanese students, the Unesco personnel and other

participants. It has become a wonderful memory. I want to thank the people who prepared for this event.

Ms. My Bin (Vietnam)

Thank you very much for letting me participate in this event. I was happy that I was able to introduce my native country. It was a very valuable experience that I was able to encounter with a lot of people such as the elderly, the Japanese students, and foreign students. I hope I can have this kind of an encounter again. The interest and support that is given to the foreign students has given us power. I definitely want everyone to look at how hard we study. I hope for your continuous cooperation.

Ms. Rosario (Mexico)

Thank you for inviting me. I feel my heart was given a new power. The audience listened to Mexico's culture and my experiences in Japan, and I was able to listen to other foreign students' daily lifestyle and opinions. I think I was able to understand the beautiful country of Japan and its culture and my understanding of Japan had widened. I think it will result in spreading of my human relationship. Above all, I have learned the importance of admitting that there are various lifestyles in this rich world.

Ms. Undral (Mongolia)

I want to thank the executive committee and the people who came to this event. This was my third time participating. I think each year has a different characteristic and the event has been growing. A lot of Japanese and foreign students participated and I was able to interact with them. I want to thank my best friend Ms. Fujioka for playing the morin khuur. It has become an important memory. I hope this fine Youth Forum will be planned next year.

Mr. Sato Executive Committee Chairman (Minato UNESCO Association Youth Committee, chairperson)

Doing something by our own power. Whether it is a big enterprise or a small event, by all means it is hard, but becomes the food for growth. I was able to actually feel this again in this forum. From the position as an assistant last year to the position of the chairperson of the committee this year, the day of October 4th existed very thickly and I spent the preparation period feeling the day of the forum coming closer. I think we were able to conduct a forum that was satisfying and that can continue to next year with everyone's support. I want to take this opportunity to thank all of the people who supported us.

Mr. Yoshihara Sub-Executive Committee Chairman (Minato UNESCO Association Youth Committee Sub-chairperson)

I am happy that I was able to participate in the youth forum from preparation, management and as the host. This forum has become a very big experience for me. Listening to the foreign students' stories, there were cultures and values which I did not know and I felt that the world was wide. Also at the forum, I was able to ask valuable stories directly. I would like to participate in this forum next year again.

Ms. Iitomi (Tamagawa UNESCO club)

This was the second time I participated in the UNESCO Youth Forum, and this was my first year I participated as the member of the executive committee. At first I felt anxiety but with everyone's support, I am happy we were able to hold this forum without any trouble. Thank you.

Mr. Imai (Keio University UNESCO club, representative)

It was a fresh and valuable experience to interact with people from various countries in this Youth Forum. Above all, what impressed me was that each foreign student not only respected Japan, but also that their goals for studying and visions ahead on their future were very stable. I strongly felt that I should not just be impressed by it, but also we Japanese students should learn from it. I think the real pleasure of interacting with new people is not just deepening your opinions but also understanding your weaknesses, and using it for your future, I was able to realize that in this fine forum.

Ms. Iwata (Minato UNESCO Association, youth committee member)

In this year's forum, I was able to communicate directly with the foreign students, as the host of the panel talk and it was a very valuable experience. The looks of the foreign students answering to our questions were very serious, and from that I was keenly able to feel the foreign student's passion towards their native countries and Japan. Also among the things that the foreign students talked about Japan, there were new discoveries I have not noticed before, and it became an opportunity to reconsider the country of Japan. I strongly felt the importance and the sense of accomplishment of students cooperating and making up one event. I will be happy if I have the chance to take part in this event again.

Mr. Obara (Tamagawa University UNESCO Club)

I was involved in the Minato Unesco Association Youth Forum just as a listener last year and as the planner this year. By participating from the planning, I was able to connect with students from other

colleges, and on the day of the forum, I arranged the stage set and stage lighting. By the supporting forum as a backstage personnel, I was able to gain a far more sense of accomplishment than last year. If I have the chance to take part in next year, I would definitely want to participate from planning.

Mr. Tsuruoka (Shinjuku UNESCO Association)

In this youth forum, I was able to encounter with various people and experience various things. It was just what I have been looking for that the students of the Unesco getting together, having discussions until we get satisfied, and conducting the management of the forum. I felt that it was conducted in a comfortable atmosphere for the foreign students to interact. But I think this Youth Forum was not a success as a whole, but a project that has the potential to become a better one in the future.

Mr. Tonegawa (Tamagawa University UNESCO Club)

There were mainly two points I felt in this Unesco Forum. First, the fun part of planning. It was hard to plan a big event with students of other Unesco committees. But as I look back, while looking at the audience having fun, I felt happy that I was able to take part in this project, and I am overflowed with a sense of accomplishment. Next is about the foreign students. The foreign students had properly thought about their future and about Japan. I received motivation and felt that I should work harder. Through this event, I felt that I want to know more about the world, and I would like to broaden my outlook towards the world even more.

Ms. Murohisa (Tamagawa University UNESCO Club)

This was the first time I participated in the “UNESCO Youth Forum in Minato”. I gradually joined from the planning stage. I was in charge of hosting the free interaction, which was very enjoyable. It was very interesting to listen to the real voices of the foreign students, whom I do not often have the opportunity to get contact with. Also, I felt that I should work harder by seeing with my own eyes the foreign students having firm opinions and definite goals. I would like to participate next year.

Snapshots from the Forum

				
Sato & Yoshihara	Sasanka couple	Bin	Rosario	Undral
				
Fujioka	Imai & Iwata	Shimizu	Tonegawa & Murohisa	Nakamura & Yoshizawa
				
Panelists on the stage			The steering members	

(Written by M. Takai, MUA president, and translated by Y. Kiribuchi, the PR, Bulletin & Internet Committee)

The 33rd Minato Citizens' Festival

Date: October 11 (Sat) & 12 (Sun), 2014

Place: Shiba Koen Park, Minato City

In October each year when the Minato Citizens' Festival takes place, the whole Shiba Koen Park area becomes the site and is divided into five areas to conveniently accommodate exhibition tents & booths and a great number of visiting citizens. We, the members of MUA's Minato Citizens Festival Committee, have been a regular exhibitor participant in this annual event. With cooperation from the other committees of MUA, we always participate in the "Minna no Hiroba" section at the site.

Thanks to the lovely weather on both dates, there was a large turnout to the site. We had the pleasure of having Mayor Takei's visit to our booth during the event. We exhibited panels, demonstrating major activities undertaken by each of MUA's committees, and called out to passersby to drop in to our booth. We wanted them to know MUA's activities and understand the UNESCO mission.

On the mini-charity bazar table, we exhibited for sale a variety of ornamental accessories and other items donated by MUA members. Fortunately they were all sold out partly because there are citizens who are aware of the nice quality of our items and regularly purchase items of their taste from our bazar. The proceeds were donated to the UNESCO scholarship fund in an effort to assist children in the areas affected by the East Japan Great Earthquake. Those who purchased from our bazar were generous enough to contribute to our donation box for the said objective.



We hope that our regular participation in the local festival will help expand the awareness of Minato citizens of our presence and activities. Last but not least we'd like to extend our hearty thanks to MUA members who offered cooperation in this event.

(Written by T. Watabe, Standing Director, the Minato Citizens Festival Committee, and photos taken by O. Kitaoka, Chairperson of the same committee; translated by S. Tanahashi, the PR, Bulletin & Internet Committee)

Physical education for healthier, happier, longer and more productive living



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The time children and adults all over the world spend engaging in physical activity is decreasing with dire consequences on their health, life expectancy, and ability to perform in the classroom, in society and at work.

In a new publication, Quality Physical Education, Guidelines for Policy Makers, UNESCO urges governments and educational planners to reverse this trend, described by the World Health Organization (WHO) as a pandemic that contributes to the death of 3.2 million people every year, more than twice as many as die of AIDS. The Guidelines will be released on the occasion of a meeting of UNESCO's Intergovernmental Committee for Physical Education and Sport (CIGEPS) in Lausanne, Switzerland, (28-30 January).*

UNESCO calls on governments to reverse the decline in physical education (PE) investment that has been observed in recent years in many parts of the world, including some of the wealthiest countries. According to European sources, for example, funding and time allocation for PE in schools has been declining progressively over more than half of the continent, and conditions are not better in North America.

The new publication on PE, produced in partnership with several international and intergovernmental organizations**, advocates quality physical education and training for PE teachers. It highlights the benefits of investing in PE versus the cost of not investing (cf self-explanatory infographics).

"The stakes are high," says UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova. "Public investment in physical education is far outweighed by high dividends in health savings and educational objectives. Participation in quality physical education has been shown to instil a positive attitude towards physical activity, to decrease the chances of young people engaging in risky behaviour and to impact positively on academic performance, while providing a platform for wider social inclusion."

The Guidelines seek to address seven areas of particular concern identified last year in UNESCO's global review of the state of physical education, namely: 1. Persistent gaps between PE policy and implementation; 2. Continuing deficiencies in curriculum time allocation; 3. Relevance and quality of the PE curriculum; 4. Quality of initial teacher training programmes; 5. Inadequacies in the quality and maintenance of facilities; 6. Continued barriers to equal provision and access for all; 7. Inadequate school-community coordination. (Excerpted)

Minato UNESCO Association is a citizens' voluntary membership organization that promotes Japanese traditional culture, holds cross-cultural workshops and presents multicultural events and international symposia for world peace. For any questions or comments about our articles, please contact our secretariat office at:

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