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The forum provided an opportunity to interact with our perspectives toward social issues among the young generation in East and South Asia. Especially in the background of the growth tension of international relations, the interaction worked to build up at least a fundamental collective consciousness towards civilizational inclusion. During the short period of the forum, 3 days this July, I hosted students from Peking University, Korean University, and Nanyang Technological University, as a native student from Japan. In this journal, I would like to firstly describe my schedule of those days and lastly comment on the meaningful outcomes I had.

To be noted firstly, this forum brought more difficulties than smooth achievements to my group. The place of field work was defined as Shin-Okubo, which is known for being an internationalized part in Tokyo. The decent amount of population is immigrants, just as central districts are divided by their needs of life. The city development seems to have done with cultural compartmentalization. Among the group members, many of them were the first time to come to Japan. It was just natural for them to expect something "Japanese" while wandering around the city, but rather we constantly encountered Korean and Chinese products which were a bit boring for some of them. It questioned us what the independence of culture in global cities is, and fundamentally, what kind of differences lay down among us.

The first day was featured with the mix of students. There was merely temporal group allocation, more focusing on ice breaking among us. In fact, I had a class on that day and had no choice but to participate in the forum after their first day trip to Tokyo. While listening to other students' impressions about Tokyo, I felt slightly awkward talking about my home city as they did. Talking about the characteristics of a certain place includes an implicit comparison with the outside world to some extent. I, a native of Tokyo, could not stand on the same ground as they stood. Nevertheless, after starting the fieldwork in Shin-Okubo on the second day, many international students seemed to have come to feel in the same way as I felt.

My group members and I spent most of the day in Shin-Okubo on the second day. We first went to a Shintoism shrine located next to the station. Group members seemed to take it as typical representation of Japanese culture. After the visit to shrine, we stroke down one district known as Muslim Street, entering some grocery shops. With succeeding exploration in districts of Korean and Taiwanese cultures, we started to lose a sense to walk a city in Japan. In a lunch time, we were walking down the main street. We were all hungry, but it was tough to choose a restaurant. Two Koreans in the group did not want most of the restaurants along the streets which are Korean. Although some are Indian or Pakistan, they shook their heads. I found a restaurant which is nether Korean or Indian, but it sold Malatang. Two Chinese strongly opposed my choice. It took a time to find Japanese Izakaya to enter. Although we knew beforehand that the city is one of the most multi-cultural parts of Tokyo, we still somewhat expected the city to remain to be Japanese. In fact,

what we enjoyed most in the city was taking photos in an arcade (*Purikura*), which is internationally famous for Japanese youth culture.

On the last day, we were responsible for a group presentation about project proposals to solve a social issue among our nations. We worked hard to find a way to promote multi-culture, but the more we had discussions, the clearer how our mother societies are different. The issue of immigrants was able to be found in south Korea and Japan but hardly found in China. The political backgrounds were considered in every nation, but the republic structure is dramatically unique to China. The population was characterized by gender issue in South Korea. One mentioned that it is rooted in the conflict with North Korea, in that conscription generates a deep crevice between gender. The specific ways in which social changes manifests itself differ, and this social structural boundaries made it difficult to discuss the social issues on the same ground. In the end, the promotion of multi-culture should be a part of cultural formations which is seen in a particular place of society. There was no common solution among our nations to promote cultural inclusion.

With disappointment and exhaustion, our group's presentation was nothing satisfying to me at all. While listening to other groups' presentations, I regretted not tackling the problem by focusing on a specific location, as some groups did. Suddenly, one of the members gestured and whispered to me, handing one small piece of paper. "This is for you". It was written in Korean but looked like a letter to me. I asked to him, "what did you write?". He chuckled and answered, "No. I won't tell you. This is homework that you should done by yourself". After saying this, he went back to writing letters to hand all other group members, which all in Korean. By seeing this, I decided to write letters in Japanese as he did, and all other group members did the same. After exchanging letters written in our mother tongues, I finally felt the personal success of this forum at least in the sense to confirm that we have a joy to interact with each other through something not understandable.

A completely cosmopolitan global city is utopian, and the social constraints of a particularity of the place should be regarded. Even places like Shin-Okubo were grounded in the broader social context of Japan and influenced by the pre-assumptions of collective sociality. I was wrong to have homogeneous and vague ideas of cultural diversity or multi-cultural environments. Cultural conflicts should not be considered in a discursive or conceptualized manner. After we shared our fatigue with the challenge of symbiosis, we somewhat refreshed. It may be because we faced our fundamental differences though our mother tongues, but still succeeded in deeding our friendship. In the end, the desire to get to know more people who I like was more realistic. Dialogue between civilizations could be facilitated in the same way. Overcoming social differences was hardly achievable, but the people's agency toward mutual understanding was exercised easier through collaboration of works.

Images

Group picture 1, taken on the last day of the forum.

Group picture 2, after the group presentation. We posed "B" because our group name was B.