

2025 Social Innovation Forum at Peking University

I participated in the CAMPUS Asia+ 2025 Social Innovation Forum at Peking University from July 4th to 6th, 2025. Before joining this forum, I had a few concerns. Firstly, since I hadn't used English much recently, I felt anxious about engaging in discussions with students from other universities. In addition, I had not participated in any CAMPUS Asia programs for the past few years, so I was worried because I didn't know any of the professors or students from Waseda University. However, now I truly feel glad that I joined this forum. In this journal, I will reflect on what happened during the Social Innovation Forum

Friday July 4th, 2025

The first activity of the forum was the welcome session. At that time, I met my group members for the first time. I was surprised to know that I was the only student from Waseda University among the five group members. At first, I felt worried about whether I could share my thoughts and represent Japan with confidence. But I also believed that being in this position would help me learn and grow even more. After the welcome session, we joined a campus tour of Peking University. The campus was very large and impressive, with beautiful gardens, a lake, and traditional buildings. One of the highlights for me was the Boya Pagoda. This tower stands out so much that I fully believe it was one of the symbols of Peking University. For lunch, we enjoyed a delicious Chinese buffet. In the afternoon, we attended two lectures. Professor He Jiani gave a lecture on "The Idea of Tianxia and China's Perception of the World." I had never learned about Tianxia in detail before, so it was interesting to understand how the idea started, what it means today, and how we, as people from other countries, should think and act with this perspective in mind. Next, Professor Jonathan Tan gave a lecture that connected behavioral economics with social issues and international



relations. I found it very interesting that human psychology and behavior can be analyzed from an economic perspective, especially how it explains people's irrational actions. Finally, Dr. Xia Mengchen spoke about urban planning in Beijing. I learned a lot about the historical buildings and the overall design of the city. However, since it was hard to fully imagine just from pictures, I was excited to see more during the field trip the next day. In the evening, we had free time, so I went to a local shopping mall with students from Korea University and Waseda University, and we tried the famous Chinese hot pot together. Even though none of us spoke Chinese and we had some worries, it was a great chance to see local life and food culture up close.

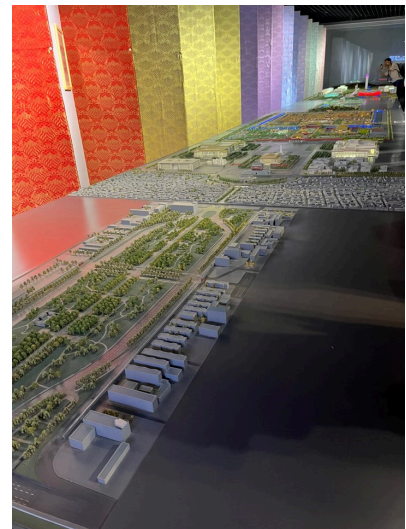
Saturday July 5th, 2025

Our schedule for the second day included a field trip in the morning and lectures and group work preparation in the afternoon. The day before the field trip, the weather forecast predicted rain, so we changed our plan and visited an indoor museum instead. We went to the Beijing Planning Exhibition Hall, which had many displays related to the city's history and urban development. What impressed me most was the large model of the Beijing Central Axis. Through this detailed model, I could see important cultural sites along the axis, such as the imperial palace, sacrificial sites, and administrative buildings. This helped me better understand how urban planning and imperial power are deeply



connected in Chinese history. After that, we visited the Beijing Olympic Tower. To be honest, I didn't even know about this tower before coming to Beijing, so I was amazed when I saw it up close. From the observation deck, we had a panoramic view of Beijing. Luckily, although it was supposed to rain that day, the weather turned out to be sunny, so we could enjoy the beautiful city under the clear sky. After returning to the hotel and having lunch, we attended lectures by professors from Waseda University and Korea University. Professor Shukuko's lecture focused on the importance of building a society that embraces everyone. During the lecture, We had plenty of time for discussion,

which allowed me to hear different perspectives and current situations regarding disabilities in other countries. Through these discussions, I realized that by learning from each other's experiences and examples, we can find better ways to solve shared challenges. The second lecture was given by Professor Nam Kyu Kim from Korea University. He explained why wars and fights happen and how they might be prevented using game theory. I found it eye-opening to learn that while wars come with enormous costs, they can often be triggered by small issues like mutual distrust. Finally, we worked in our groups to prepare for our final presentations. While discussing various social challenges in Asia, our group decided to focus on the issue of immigration as a common challenge in each country. Then, we shared ideas and explored peaceful solutions together.



Sunday July 6th, 2025



On the final day, we went on another field trip in the morning and spent the afternoon preparing for our group presentations. Firstly, we visited the Bell Tower and Drum Tower. These two towers were originally built to tell time and contain large bells and drums. In the square

between them, we saw local people enjoying Chinese folk songs, dancing, and playing traditional games, which gave us a glimpse into daily life in Beijing. One of the most memorable moments for me was the drum performance at the Drum Tower. The sound was powerful and dynamic, and the atmosphere felt quite different from similar performances in Japan or South Korea, which made it unique and refreshing.

In the afternoon, we focused on our group work. As we discussed our topic, we realized that each country's situation is different, so it was challenging to identify common issues and propose realistic solutions. Another difficulty was the limited time, which made it hard to explore everyone's ideas in



depth. Despite these challenges, we managed to summarize the key points from each country and highlight the importance of creating an environment where countries can support each other. Furthermore, we became aware of how essential it is to regard immigrants as individuals with equal human rights, rather than simply as foreigners, and to convey this through education. I felt proud that we were able to deliver our final presentation with everyone's contributions. Through listening to other groups'

presentations, I was able to learn about many issues that I had not noticed before. I also gained new perspectives and solutions from different angles, so even in a short time, I was able to learn a lot.

Throughout these three days, I gained two major insights. The first is that having an open and tolerant mindset helps develop a growth mentality. In the forum, we have had many experiences where listening to opinions from other countries helped me overcome biases and anxieties. For example, before joining this forum, I was very anxious, but during the forum, I realized that much of this anxiety was based on my prejudice. Once I participated, I didn't feel anxious at all. I also challenged myself to try new things I would normally avoid. For instance, even when some local foods had unfamiliar smells, I tried to eat them and learned why local people enjoy those flavors. By having these experiences that challenged my previous ways of thinking, I feel that I have grown a lot more than before coming to Beijing. Reflecting on how much I gained by embracing challenges, I am determined to keep facing new opportunities bravely from now on. The second is that I made excellent friends who I believe will be active leaders not only in Japan, China, Korea, and Singapore but also worldwide. Over the three days, I interacted with lots of participants who have deep knowledge in various fields and diverse experiences from different countries. Even brief conversations with these students gave me a lot of new information, and I was also able to share my own perspectives. I am grateful to have spent time in an environment that always encourages broadening one's horizons. I will never forget this experience, and I want to give back to society all the learning, friendships, and inspiration I gained from this forum.

