

Photo Journal: CAMPUS Asia Social Innovation Forum in Beijing

From July 4th to 6th, 2025, I had the privilege of joining the CAMPUS Asia Social Innovation Forum held at Peking University. It was a truly enriching experience where I connected with passionate peers and professors from four leading Asian universities — Peking University, Nanyang Technological University, Waseda University, and Korea University.



Day 1 — Exploring PKU & First Inspirations

After a warm welcome session and self-introductions with our group members, we began the day with a campus tour of Peking University. The campus was vast and full of hidden beauty, but what stood out most was Weiming Lake. As the sun shimmered on the surface, the moment felt almost timeless — a peaceful start to what would become a deeply reflective few days.

We later attended two thought-provoking lectures. I was especially intrigued by Professor Jonathan Tan's session on behavioral economics for social innovation. His explanation of "nudges" — subtle ways to influence behavior — made me realize how small interventions can have powerful social impacts. One example that stuck with me was how Japan uses its "kawaii" (cute) culture to influence public behavior through a gentle and aesthetic approach.





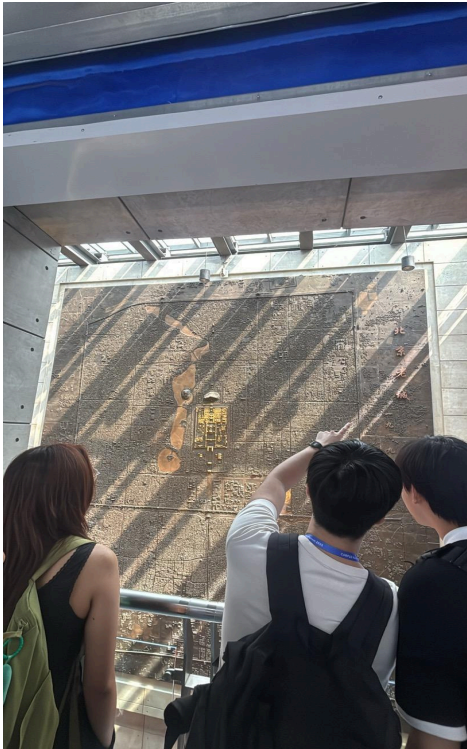
Day 2 — Learning from the City & Each Other

We visited a museum where we saw an aerial model of Beijing and learned how city designers have tried to balance efficiency and livability — a reminder that innovation isn't just digital, but can be architectural, social, and cultural too. Our visit to the Olympic Tower offered a moment to reflect on how cities commemorate collective achievements and histories.

The afternoon lectures left a strong impression on me. Professor Koyama's talk on innovation for inclusive societies introduced the idea of the *welfare wall* — barriers that unintentionally trap people in poverty. It made me think about how inclusion is not just about offering help, but about listening and creating equal opportunity. Sometimes, good intentions can unintentionally reinforce inequality if we fail to understand individual autonomy — a reflection that stayed with me long after the lecture ended.

Professor Kim Nam Kyu's lecture, "Why States Fight?", also resonated with me deeply. Having studied the Russo-Japanese War recently, I found his discussion on bargaining theory both timely and thought-provoking. It reminded me that behind every conflict are missed chances for understanding — and that innovation in diplomacy is vital.

In the evening, we worked in groups to identify major social challenges in Asia and develop collaborative solutions. Listening to my peers made me realize how different our perspectives were — yet how much we shared in terms of passion for change.



Day 3 — Closing Moments & Lasting Reflections

On the final day, we visited the Altar of Land and Grain and the Imperial Ancestral Temple. The scale and design felt grand and majestic — quite different from traditional Korean temples — and made me think about the legacy and symbolism of national heritage.



Back at PKU, we presented our group proposals. It was rewarding to see how much we had grown over just a few days — not just in knowledge, but in mutual respect and cross-cultural understanding.

Looking back, this forum wasn't just a conference. It was a space to learn, to question, and to be inspired by others. I'm truly grateful to the professors and staff at Waseda University for giving me this opportunity. I return with new ideas, deeper perspectives, and most of all, a sense of shared purpose that transcends borders.

I sincerely hope to join another social innovation forum in the near future — and continue learning alongside peers who care about making meaningful change.

