

総評

繋がりに生まれる気づき

—気づきから生まれる新たな自分と、自身の見つめ直し—

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1. 学問的学び（環境問題というトピックについての学び）

日本だけではなく、世界規模で進行している地球温暖化や大気汚染などの環境問題。限りある私たちの環境に影響を与え、また影響を与えられる私たち人間は、その変化に気づき、考え、対応していかなければならない。環境の変化は、先に挙げた温暖化等の問題に限らず、我々人間の社会問題をも含み、あらゆる側面から「環境問題」という言葉が理解され、その捉え方は多様である。本フォーラムにおける「環境問題」という言葉も広義であり、参加者一人一人が、興味・関心を持ち、気づき、調べ、考え、周りに伝えていくという一連の流れがあり、その流れは一方向ではなく、周りからの賛同や意見等から、新しく気づき、さらに調べ熟考し、周りとは議論し合うという、深い学び合いが生まれていた。

「環境問題」という共有するテーマで、一人一人が考え、学び、調べ、自身の声を伝えていった。一人一人が自分自身と見つめ合い、自分には何ができるか、相手にどのようにすれば伝わるか、意見が割れてしまった場合どう対処していくか、相手の意見に耳を傾けどうすれば分かり合えるか。日本語と英語という言葉の壁だけではなく、バックグラウンドの違い、文化的な違い、様々な異なりを、参加者たちは「異なり」と見るのではなく、「多様性」あるいは「個性」、もっと言えば「〇〇さん」と捉え、自分と相手と比較するだけではなく、より良い関係を築くため、お互い歩みより、理解し合おうと一人一人が意識することができたと思う。その第一歩として、本フォーラムが位置づけられたのではないかと思う。多くの気づきや学びが生まれた本フォーラムでは、相手との繋がりに生まれる、新たな自分自身の発見と、自身を見つめ直す貴重な時間が得られたのではないだろうか。

2. 国際交流・外国語教育・シティズンシップ教育的側面

本フォーラム参加により、普段は接することのない当校の学部生や、ヴァッサー大学の学生、先生方と共に過ごし、共通のテーマで語り合えたこと、またフォーラムの時間以外にも、様々な形で「アメリカ」という国にいる人々、言葉、文化、考え方に接することができ、また普段生活している「日本」という国にいる人々、言葉、文化、考え方、そして参加者自身をも見つめ直す、貴重な時間が得られた。

人がいれば言葉があり、またそれぞれの文化や価値観があり、それらの相互接触が生まれる。どちらがいい、悪いという評価や基準はなく、自身はこう思っているが、そうでない人もいて、自分自身を、自己をどこに結びつけ、また相手とどのように関わっていくのか、繋がっていくのか。お茶大側の参加者の多くは、私も含め「日本」に生まれ育ち、日本で生活をしている。このような「わたし（たち）」の居場所は、現在も「日本」にある。「日本語」を話し、そこにいる人々と接し、「わたし（たち）」が形作られる。しかし、本フォーラムに参加したことにより、参加者は新たな「わたし（たち）」を発見できたのではないだろうか。ヴァッサー大学の参加者との交流を通じて、日本語も英語も使いながら対話をし、お互いの考えやその価値観を理解しよう、相互に歩みよろうという姿が見られた。普段、日本で生活をすれば英語を話す必要もほとんどないが、それが通用しない場面も多く、英語という言語に苦戦する姿、言いたいことがうまく伝えられないため日本語で話し、通訳を介して自身の言葉を伝えようとする姿、同時に相手を理解しようとする様子、相手の声に耳を傾け、100%その言葉が理解できなくても、もっと理解したい、わかり合いたい、お互いに歩みよろうとする姿勢が、フォーラム内外において見られた。何時も、また誰とでも、お互いに理解し合おう、歩みよっていかうと考える参加者が増えたのではないだろうか。そして、自分自身を見つめ直す機会が得られたのと同時に、新たな「わたし（たち）」に気づけたのではないだろうか。

3. イベントとしてのフォーラムについて

まず、本フォーラム開催のためにご尽力くださったヴァッサー大学の丘先生、土屋先

生をはじめ、日本語を学ぶヴァッサー大学の学生、そしてお茶の水女子大学の森山先生と学部生の皆さん、私を TA として迎え入れていただき、またこのような貴重な経験をさせていただけたことに、心より感謝をしている。

どのような立場でも、本フォーラムへの参加が可能であることは、普段他学部、他学科で学ぶ人々とも知り合え繋がりが作れるまたとない機会であり、日本語だけではなく私たちが学んでいる外国語を通して、様々な人と繋がることのできる大変貴重な機会であった。

また事前に、両校の関係構築のため Zoom を使用した授業も行い、クラス全体での関係作り、続けて SNS を使用しながらバディとの個々の関係作りへと、ステップを踏んで関係を密にしていくというのも効果的である。次回に繋げるとするならば、お茶大生同士の関係もより深く強くした方が良いのではないかと感じた。授業前のアイスブレイクや、SNS を利用した活動も何か考えられるのではないかと思う。

Vassar-Ochanomizu

Student Forum on Environmentalism/The 9th International Student Forum:

Afterthoughts

Hiromi Dollase and Peipei Qiu

We are in an era where we face serious climate change. We can no longer ignore this extreme threat. What can we do for the environment? How can we adapt to this change? The 9th International student forum, which took place on Vassar campus from February 17th to the 21st, was a great opportunity for us to take a step to address these questions. Through the forum we educated ourselves on various environmental issues and learned about the efforts that have been made to protect our environment. Coincidentally, Vassar College declared a Climate Emergency on February 19th, in order to formalize "the College's dedication to ambitious sustainability initiatives while simultaneously instituting a renewed sense of urgency surrounding the climate crisis."¹ This timely forum dealt with an urgent global topic which we deeply care about.

The forum commenced with Professor Shin Moriyama's keynote speech, "Establishing a Global Environment for All World Citizens to Live Comfortably." His talk explained how he started the international student forum back in 2012. He discussed the educational value of holding a space for college students to exchange opinions and emphasized the significance of multicultural co-existence for future global citizens. He encouraged students to actively express opinions and to cultivate skills in communication by overcoming the differences of cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Professor Moriyama's speech delivered the core educational mission and the very goal of the forum.

Besides Professor Moriyama's talk, there were two lectures, one by a Vassar professor and one by an Ochanomizu professor. Professor Jodi Schwarz's talk, "Corals in a Rapidly Warming World," reported her study of the coral reef in Sekisei Lagoon, explaining how coral is a significant base of the marine food chain and how easily it is impacted by environmental changes. Professor Schwarz emphasized that humans should become symbiotic partners with nature and that researchers should have dialogue beyond disciplines and geographical borders. Professor Misako Kato's talk, "Biofuel Production from Microalgae," discussed this promising future of biofuel source. She showed the process of how oil is extracted from algae. Explaining how it is already used for various products, she stressed its great benefits. These lectures approached the topic of environmentalism through the diverse perspectives of biology, chemistry, language education, cultural learning, etc., helping us realize the richness and universality of this topic and the value of dialogue in a cross-disciplinary space. The participation of faculty members from the two institutions made this forum special, academic, and educational.

During the opening days Vassar's President Elizabeth Bradley and Dean William Hoynes gave welcoming remarks. In addition, Professor Yu Zhou of Geography gave a brief introduction to the Summer Projects in China sponsored by the Luce Initiative on Asian Studies and Environment. Last year, she took seven students to Chongming Island and supervised their environmental research projects. The forum included these students' presentations.

Overall, student presentations at the forum covered a wide range of fields and subjects on both environmental issues and environmental protection. Presentations that dealt with environmental issues include the topics of e-waste, nuclear energy and waste, overfishing, water shortage, endangered animal species and birds, microplastic, etc. Topics which touched upon efforts toward environmental protection include environmental vegetarianism, ecological art festival, agricultural community, eco-fashion, eco-business, and eco-branding. Students shared their ideas and proposals for the future as well; their presentations discussed examples of future green energy, innovative inventions, and the possibility of bioplastic. The discussion of environmentalism was not limited to the natural environment but extended to social environment; there were talks on issues of foreign workers, aging society, minority groups, and community's response to natural disasters. Students examined how to stop discrimination and how to create an inclusive community. We were impressed by the students' in-depth research and linguistic abilities, as well as their active participation in discussion. We were amazed how enthusiastically both Ochanomizu and Vassar students engaged in conversations and exchanged opinions and views.

Although the majority of the participants in the forum are not specialists of environmental study, we believe that it is very important to think about global environmental issues as our own. We can imagine that, after the forum, many of the students will be paying more careful attention to e-waste and looking for places where e-waste is collected. The students will also be thinking about where food comes from and eating more mindfully than before, and be considering how our daily actions would influence the environment. This awareness is an important outcome of the forum.

Throughout the forum, we, the teachers, also contemplated our roles as educators. Before the forum, we thought hard about how we could make it successful. Through the forum, we learned that teacher's role is to provide direction and a learning space, and to facilitate the students to make the forum work. The forum's success is evident from the students' reports after the forum: many expressed that the forum was an amazing experience and that they had unforgettable time meeting with the Japanese students in person; they hope that there are similar programs in the future. The forum's success was also clearly reflected in the laughter and smiles we saw and the warm friendships that the students cultivated.

We would like to express our appreciation for the hard work of Professor Moriyama and would like to thank him for bringing such an active and bright group of students to Vassar. Our appreciation also extends to the support of his teaching assistant, Ms. Ayumi Arnold. We are also deeply grateful to Professor Misako Kato for taking time out of her busy schedules to come to Vassar to give a lecture and support us. Last but not least, we thank the administration of Ochanomizu University for its long-time support to the meaningful exchanges between the two institutions.

This forum at Vassar was realized by the sponsorship of the Chinese and Japanese Department, with the generous support of The Global Campus and Studies Working Group of the Engaged Pluralism Initiative (EPI), the Luce Initiative on Asian Studies and the Environment (LIASE), and the Office of the Dean of Faculty.

Lastly, we would like to express our respect and admiration for Professor Moriyama for continuing the international student forum for nine years. It is our great honor that we were able to hold the 9th forum at Vassar campus. We sincerely hope that the two schools' relationship will continue to grow, deepen, and prosper.

¹ Annabelle Wang, "Vassar declares climate emergency, creates climate change minor," *The Miscellany News*, February 27, 2020.