

International Japanese Study Consortium (December 15th ~17th, 2006)

Exploration & Dialogue in Japanese Studies

From the year 2005 for two years on our own initiative within our programme we carried out a joint seminar with six overseas universities (School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London; National Taiwan University; Sookmyung Women's University; Charles University in Prague; Dongduk Women's University; Beijing Center for Japanese Studies, Beijing Foreign Studies University). This joint seminar was not carried out thought so far long term exchange programmes or research programmes but via direct exchange with post-graduates of overseas universities who are also young researchers of the same generation as our students. This kind of seminar helps the exchange of opinions, the deepening of mutual understanding and the exchange of information regarding researches and is a way to deepen the relationship which mutually supports the future development of students' researches. As a final compilation, the international Japanese studies consortium focused on the professors of these universities and the researchers was organized.

These universities are the universities that have deepened a scientific research on the Japanese studies through various seminars such as international Japanese Studies symposiums and are institutions with continuous exchange agreements which have pursued prosperously the exchange with foreign students. I believe it is very important that this symposium was carried out with the universities with this kind of exchange achievements.

The international exchange programme in which the students are asked to participate has not been carried out so far and it necessity is still not recognized. However, in the regional studies such as Japanese studies or in the area of cultural studies the making of acquaintances with students of overseas universities during post-graduate studies and the establishment of the relationship which mutually stimulates their researches is immensely necessary in 21st century's international exchange of education and research for both Japan and overseas Japanese Research organizations. In a case of a long term exchange programmes, however, the number of students which develop the exchange is limited and with regards to academic fellows on educational level it shows almost no exchange. These kinds of exchange programmes usually develop the exchange only on daily basis.

The feeling that more interaction with the overseas is needed especially in the field of Japanese Studies I find in common with colleagues who have also experience in overseas training. The fact that it is necessary to develop a collaboration degree and supervision through agreements with overseas universities is in fact, the result of my personal 10 year old considerations and discussions with overseas partners. As a first step forward to transmit this idea I organized this joint seminar. The joint seminar which gathered post-graduate students and academics from six world universities at our school could not be realized without the cooperation and enthusiasm of each university and the efforts of so far piled up exchanges.

Especially the results gained from the meeting of all the researchers who are developing colorful researches in different parts of the world were beyond my expectations. There were numerous students who participated and received the supervision during the joint seminars between two universities but yet, I personally felt that this kind of seminar showed a steady improvement and raised results in collaborated supervision crossing over different regions. Moreover, the spreading of research themes over different regions is a merit of the participation of many universities. The one more reason why this kind of exchange on educational level has shown a great result is also because the share research topics were found in the set of Japanese studies.

Of course, if there had been no mutual trust resulted from the so far exchanges it would have been

difficult to organize this kind of seminar. The university that approved the organization of this kind of joint seminar and our university which did not go against this cooperation as well as the support of many friends from overseas agreement institutions are the reasons why this consortium reached unexpected results.

To our regret, the number of students from our university who participated in this time's international Japanese studies consortium was not as expected but yet, the consortium itself did confirmed the friendships built during so far joint seminars and according to the comments in reports and alumni meetings it did stimulated the development of international exchanges among students themselves.

The hero of this project is a student. Hereafter I would like to have this consortium considered as an opportunity for many young people who show interest in interdisciplinary and international research of Japanese studies and for that I would like to expand this circle of international exchanges

(KOKAZE, Hidemasa)