

The Final Report of the 8th U.S.-Japan Youth Forum
- Summary and comments from the participants-

Moderator

Ayako Hatano



Graduate student at the University of Tokyo Graduate School of Arts and Science

Post-forum Comment

It was an honour to be the moderator for this year's U.S-Japan Youth Forum. The topic of this year is especially controversial but more significant than ever in the context of world peace in this globalized world. We have recognized that patriotism or 'love of country' works as an integrating and stabilizing device for the nation. However, thinking about the territorial issues in the world such as the conflict between Israel and Gaza, China and Japan and the growing sense of 'xenophobia' against immigrants in Europe and the U.S., it could work as a serious cause or fuel for conflicts. Good or bad, people get emotional over issues like patriotism (or nationalism) and what it means to be Japanese, American, or whatever nationality one happens to be. Actually, the debate on nationalism and education is part of a larger, more complicated debate about national and individual identity.

Therefore, we believe now is the time for the youth to discuss this issue and that it is essential for our mission to explore the future of all people in the world to live in peace. Since the start of the Forum, promising youths from seven different countries with various cultural backgrounds have had numerous discussions. Through them, we have put the question; what is open and healthy nationalism? How do we develop that in the context of education? And though, as expected we did not have enough time to discuss this big issue in the limited time of the forum as we had innumerable questions and comments from the audience, which demonstrated the high level of interest and the importance of this issue. Despite the short time, it was a successful Forum as the panelists did not come to a rapid conclusion but exchanged opinions in a non-emotional and professional manner in dealing with this difficult issue. Also, interactive discussion with the audience made the forum more participatory and lively. I believe that the positive feedback from the audience shows that we were able to encourage them to think about this issue that the world is currently confronting, through discussion

between the panelists and the Q&A session. I believe this Forum itself is an essential platform connecting people of different generations with different ideas. And these communications will be a catalyst for people to consider or develop their own identity. If more people would embrace open nationalism, the world could be a better place for everyone. I truly hope that what we discussed in this forum will continue to encourage the participants and the audience to help the society for all peoples to live together in peace.

I would like to show my greatest gratitude to all those that made this year's youth forum possible, especially to H.I.H Princess Takamado for joining us and enlightening us with a very inspiring speech after the discussion. I sincerely hope that, with your support, the Youth Forum will continue to serve as a platform for the youth to convey their opinions to the world.

Panelist

1.Nobuhiro Morita(Japan)

Sophomore Student at Keio University in Japan, majoring in Law

Japanese Executive Committee Member for the 65th Japan-America Student Conference



Profile

Nobuhiro Morita is a sophomore at Keio University, Faculty of Law. Having spent a total of 8 years abroad in his life, he has been able to see his country from the outside. He developed his interest in education and patriotism while studying in the United States for four years through in and middle school.

In the summer of 2012, he participated in the 64th Japan America Student Conference where he discussed the influences of education on personal and national identity within his round table. He is currently an Executive Committee member of the 65th JASC.

Presentation Summary

Title: **Patriotism and Education In Modern Japan**

Patriotism and Education, these two factors are something that nation

all over world have difficulty dealing with, especially in today's globalized society. Japan has been facing this issue ever since the end of the World War II. The controversies can be seen in history education concerning the establishment of the nation, the government's and army's actions during the war, and the post-war economic boost. There have also been endless discussions held surrounding teachers' refusal to stand for the national flag and sing the national anthem. One of the core reasons for these issues comes from the fact that Japan has only one term to describe both "nationalism" and "patriotism", which is "愛国心 (aikokushin)". It is becoming more and more important to discuss patriotism and education because in order for Japan to survive and succeed in the globalized society it is indispensable to overcome the dark histories of war and to unite as a country that can be stable and consistent.

Post-forum Comment

To take part in the 8th Youth Forum as a panelist was a great honor for me and a wonderful opportunity to broaden my horizon. Having had the chance to receive education in two different countries, Japan and America, I have always been interested in the ways school systems work differently. Participating in this forum enabled me to share my ideas and to add more to my knowledge by learning how systems differ even more in countries like France, Germany, China and Singapore. Although tackling the issues surrounding patriotism was not the easiest thing, I believe all the panelists were successful in pulling out the uniqueness of each nation's education on patriotism. Exchanging ideas with the floor, whose ages ranged from middle school students to those who have experienced the war period, was also very intriguing. Hopefully discussion on this stimulating issue will not stay in the forum but will continue out in society. The best part of participating in this forum was the new bonds I have created with intelligent students from five different countries. Through exchanging ideas with them, I have learned so many new perspectives, and I am confident that this experience will help me throughout my life. I hope this great platform for young students will be passed on so that more and more students will be able to gain as much, or even more than I have.

Finally I would like to thank all who have organized this wonderful event. I will not list all your names for it would take too long. Thank you.

2.Ulli Jamitzky (Germany)

Ph. D candidate from the University of Münster in Germany

Currently a research student at International Christian University in Japan



Profile

Ulli Jamitzky is a PhD candidate from the University of Münster (Germany) and currently a research student at International Christian University (Tokyo, Japan) on a Monbu kagaku sho Scholarship.

As part of his research on Japanese trade policy, he is conducting interviews with Japanese politicians, bureaucrats and trade experts. Before coming back to Japan in April

2011, he gained his first working experience at a leading international consulting firm. He has also lived in Chile for six months in 2008 while doing two internships in Santiago de Chile. From 2006 to 2007, he was an exchange student at International Christian University. He has also studied Japanese for six months at Tokyo University of Foreign Studies in 2011.

Presentation Summary

Title: The Problem of Patriotism and Education - A German Perspective –

Talking about “Patriotism and Education” is not an easy topic for Germans. Due to our history, it is almost a taboo for us to use these two ideas together. Among many Germans even the simplest expression of patriotism elicits some form of uneasiness. Germany is usually known as a role model when it comes to how countries should deal with their past. The German term “Vergangenheitsbewältigung” – meaning “the struggle to come to terms with our past” – already shows the complexity of this attempt. However, Germany is not as successful as many might believe. A recent study at Berlin University shows that historical knowledge is alarmingly low among German high school students. For example, only 50% of them identified the Nazi regime as a dictatorship. Knowledge about East Germany is even lower, and it seems that Germany is forgetting its own lessons. At the same time, many young Germans argue that we should put the past behind us, as they do not want to be made responsible for the crimes

of their grandfather's generation. They want to be patriotic and proud of their country without being labeled as 'nationalists'. So is this just an expression of healthy patriotism, as is possible in many other nations? I doubt this and would argue that you should only be proud of something you achieved by yourself – and being born in a certain country does not qualify as such in my opinion. However, I believe there is another way: Dealing with the past, taking responsibility and finding your own understanding of history – that is what every new generation can achieve and then, maybe, even be proud of.

Post-forum Comment

The U.S.-Japan Youth Forum is a great opportunity for young students from all around the world to discuss urging issues and problems of global importance. I felt honored to be able to participate as this year's panelist from Germany. We discussed the controversial issue of "Patriotism and Education" from various perspectives, and I believe everyone in the audience as well as on the podium left the evening with a broader understanding of the discussed subject matter.

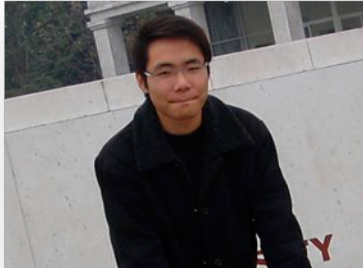
Already throughout our preparatory meetings, we learnt how difficult and sensitive this year's topic was when we tried to find common definitions for patriotism and nationalism.

The panelists' individual presentations laid the groundwork for a stimulating and engaging discussion with the audience. I was positively surprised by the genuine interest of particularly some very young members of the audience. It felt as this year's overarching theme succeeded in engaging the Japanese youth in the area of educational issues. Therefore, I hope that students who attended this year's event will continue to think about this important issue and spark discussions at their universities and seminars with their fellow Japanese and foreign students. I further hope that the U.S.-Japan Forum continues to provide an excellent opportunity to bring students, business leaders and diplomatic staff together in the years to come.

Through the Youth Forum I was able to broaden my network as I met many intriguing internationally-minded people at the dinner party. And I am sure that this unique experience has created a somewhat special bond between the panelists and the organizing team.

3. Huang Jie (China)

Double Degree Master Candidate at Fudan University in China, majoring in Chinese Politics and Diplomacy, Currently studying at Keio University in Japan, majoring in Media and Governance



Profile

Huang Jie is currently a double degree master candidate, studying media and governance at Keio University in Japan, and Chinese politics and diplomacy at Fudan University in China. He is also the founder of a famous NGO in Nanjing, Xinanlou, which is a popular science club to improve Chinese people's understandings of a healthy life. His research interest includes modern Chinese state-building, Chinese political participation and Sino-Japan relations. He also pays much attention to the problem of Chinese patriotic education and rising nationalism, which has great impact on China today and its relations with other countries.

Presentation Summary

Title: Patriotic Education with Chinese Characteristic

He analyzes the meaning of patriotism and nationalism in the Chinese context and the Patriotic Education Campaign in China. Patriotism is devotion to one's country and nationalism is extreme loyalty to one's nation

Nationalism is predicated upon a doctrine of exclusivity but patriotism is more inward rather than outward looking.

Beginning from the Mao era, there have been various forms of patriotic education; history textbooks, political courses, moral models, patriotic movies, patriotic education bases. The features of Chinese patriotic education and the CCP's history are still very important part. Another vital part is China's glorious civilization and history. More and more attention is now paid to the achievements after reform. In conclusion, the patriotic education has implication for Chinese state building. Chinese patriotic education aimed at building nation and state identity through patriotic education is more inward oriented than outward. Although there is not enough evidence to show that patriotism education is the cause of rising nationalism in China, I believe that a mild-mannered kind of patriotism is now needed in China.

Post-forum Comment

N/A

4. Walid Laouar(France)

Graduate School Student at École Normale Supérieure de Lyon in France, majoring in Political Science

Currently a research student at the University of Tokyo in Japan



Profile

Walid Laouar is a Graduate School student in Political Science, studying contemporary East Asian Studies at École Normale Supérieure de Lyon in France. He is currently studying as a research student at The University of Tokyo for one year. He is interested in Asian political relations in the East Asian region, particularly security and strategic affairs. He is preparing a Master's thesis on the United States of America's involvement in Japanese territorial issues. He has also participated in an exchange program for a year at the University of Gakushuin before coming back to Japan last April

for his current studies.

Presentation Summary

Title: The new age of Patriotism & Education: The French example in perspective

If France is one of the oldest democracies and republics in the world, the creation of the notion of a country with a population seeing itself as French came late, after the July 1789 revolution. Indeed, the creation of a people of one nation was made after the establishment of the Third French Republic in 1871. The new government used patriotism education in schools as the new axiom of policymakers, leading to significant reforms as carried out by Jules Ferry, these are still today pride of the French education: a secular school, free and compulsory. They created a new school system and a new way of teaching by implementing patriotism among the youth. The main purpose was to create among the students the feeling of one nation with one people; and an adhesion to new republican values and morality.

This modus operandi with historical lessons and civic instruction has become real question because of the recent events in Hong Kong. Indeed, demonstrations took place against an academic reform that aimed to introduce moral and national education courses that would erase the darkest and controversial events involving the Chinese Communist Party from the historical program. According to the politicians from China; the goal of teaching patriotism should be to establish a strong sense of national affiliation among the citizens. In this respect, the Third Republic of France is a prime example. We will try to see if what China is trying to do has a similar goal as France has: erasing ethnic particularism in the same uniting the people behind the belief in a great China.

Post-Forum Comment

From the beginning, I saw the U.S.-Japan Youth Forum as a great opportunity for the expression of different opinions based on the diversity of educational and ethnic backgrounds of the panellists. The subject this year was a really good choice because it presents two different versions of the question: a European/Western vision of the debate which was important because the problem of patriotism in school had arisen in the society for a long time and had been mostly solved. The Oriental perspective showed that the Asian countries have things to learn from the West to solve their current educational issues that still put a brake on the peaceful coexistence of the nations. Indeed, we all succeeded in developing our personal view on the patriotism and education in our mother countries. After all panelists had spoken, H.I.H Princess Takamado made a remarkable speech in which she summarized the western and oriental points of view before adding her own personal argument.

The discussion was followed by a discussion between the panellists and the audiences. I was surprised at the interest of everybody from university professors to simple high school students. Those enthusiasms showed the polemic of the discussion in the sense that anyone could have a different approach to the problem in light. I don't see any way to improve the forum for the next sessions. But as suggested by one of the guests, it could be a good idea to change the name of the forum. Indeed, it's difficult to call the meeting a Japanese and American forum when it provides the views of people from Europe and South-East Asia. The International Youth Forum could be a good name.

5. Maimunah Nokman (Singapore)

Senior Student at the National University of Singapore, majoring in Japanese Studies

Currently studying at Yamagata University in Japan



Profile

Maimunah Binte Nokman is a senior undergraduate student in Japanese Studies from the National University of Singapore. She is currently studying in Yamagata University for a year under the Monbukagakusho Scholarship for Japanese Studies Students. Prior to Yamagata University, she attended the “Asia in Today’s World” Summer Program at Kyushu University with a Mitsui Cultural Scholarship. She is interested in the society of Japan in terms of regional dialects and how their usage has evolved over the years, as well as merchant history during the Tokugawa Period.

Presentation Summary

Title: **Discrepancies in Patriotism**

Using Singapore as a case study, I hope that attendees of the forum were able to get an insight into how Singaporeans cope with patriotism from the grassroots level and do not merely accept whatever is pushed by the government. As there is no right definition of what patriotism is and no right way to inculcate patriotism, it is a task that every nation will have to struggle with to find the right formula. One must also not underestimate the role of the Internet, as most of the youth in Singapore get information on current affairs from the World Wide Web. With the ability to get all the information at your fingertips, there is a need for the government to be transparent since something could result in a lack of credibility and trust from the citizens. In addition, the internet is also a space for citizens to express their love for their country in a less political way, which might also contribute to patriotism.

Through my involvement with panelists from other countries, I once again realize how connected we all are despite our differences. There is so much we can learn from each other and improve as a country and as citizens of the world. I do hope that ongoing conflicts between nations can be solved amicably with both parties achieving what they want.

Post-Forum Comment

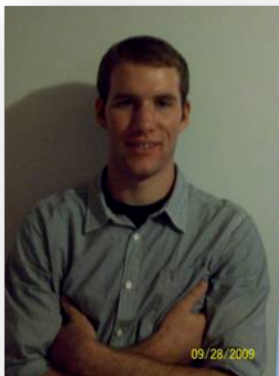
I am glad I was given the opportunity to participate in the Youth Forum with the theme of “Patriotism and Education.” If it was not for this forum, I would not have thought so much about what patriotism is to me or to Singaporeans and how education played a vital role in developing that. I felt that the flow starting with the individual presentations, panelist discussion and Q & A with the audience was a good one. There was enough time for the audience to follow what was being discussed and then finally get to interact with the panelists. It was a pity that we only had 5 minutes to share what we had as most of us had a lot more to say. I really liked the panelist discussion as it was impromptu and I learnt a lot of new information and insights from my fellow panelists. It was good thinking on Ayako’s part to make the Q & A session with the audience longer as there was much more that the audience could contribute to the learning experience.

If there was anything that I might suggest to improve the next forum, it might be to get a more varied group of youths to be part of the audience as they would make the session livelier. It would be interesting to hear the opinions of students who are not from Japan but are studying in Japan. It would also be helpful to have writing materials for panelists on the table on the stage for them to take notes during the forum. Nevertheless, I learnt a great deal from Ayako, my fellow panelists, the distinguished guests and the audience. Kudos to the event!

6. Patrick Meuer(The United States of America)

5th Year Student at Edgewood College in America, majoring in History

Currently studying at Toyo University in Japan



Profile

Patrick Meuer is a 5th year History major at Edgewood College in Madison, Wisconsin (United States of America). Currently, he is studying Japanese at Toyo University in Tokyo, Japan. Upon returning to the U.S. he plans to enroll in a Japan Studies Ph.D program.

In the spring of 2012 he finished his senior history thesis. The goal of this project was to research intellectual trends in the field of

education during Japan's early Meiji period. In the summer of 2012 he participated in the 64th Japan-America Student Conference. At this conference he was a member of the Personal and National Identity roundtable. Among other things, this roundtable discussed the differences and similarities between the Japanese and American education systems and the ways in which this may affect identity formation in each country.

Presentation Summary

Title: **9/11, Patriotism and U.S. Education**

After the attacks of September 11th, 2001 the issue of "Patriotism and Education" took on renewed importance in American society. The battles that have ensued over the course of the last eleven years have been heated indeed. Yet, the post 9/11 debate over patriotic education is not the first of its kind in American history. Throughout the 20th century there were various similar occurrences. These instances all followed some type of traumatic experience such as war or economic depression. Making note of this observation will help in understanding why patriotic education has become such a hot topic following the attacks on 9/11.

In summary, this presentation will seek to explain how 9/11 changed the debate over patriotism and education in America. In addition, it will highlight the intellectual battles between conservatives and progressives concerning this issue. Finally, it will briefly explain how these arguments have affected the American education system and political atmosphere.

Post-Forum Comments

To be honest, before the forum I was quite nervous that I had not prepared enough. Between going to school, working on the executive committee for the 65th Japan America Student Conference and not having a lot of English language resources available to me in Japan, the task of creating a good presentation was not easy. However, when we really began to discuss among delegates and share our ideas, I found that what was more important than doing a large amount of background research was deeply considering one another's words. I recall having sharp debates over the definition of nationalism and whether or not it was a positive or negative thing. In addition, I think the most precious aspect of this forum is the ability to see the issue being discussed from the vantage point of someone who may see the world quite differently from you. As an American I am naturally biased to see things based on the social environment in which I was raised. Thus I am grateful to have been able to hear about the ideas of other students representing a diverse group of countries.

To point out some aspects which could be improved, I think having a larger time slot would be helpful. The panel discussion felt slightly rushed, and I would have liked more time for questions from the audience. In addition, even though I think the sharing of ideas is what is most important, I think there should be more of a focus on academic research about the topic to be discussed. While the sharing of ideas is important, more focus on the academic side will help the panelists form their ideas more solidly. I personally felt that I could have benefitted from a deeper study of the topic. Furthermore, to suggest an idea for next year's topic, I would be very much interested in seeing a discussion about the environment or the legitimacy of war. I think both are quite valid topics to discuss in today's world, and I hope I could share more about them at the reunion.
