

## *Japan and Russia Student Forum 2015*

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Thank you for coming all the way to see us today. Unfortunately last year Japan and Russian Student Forum 2014 wasn't held. When I applied for this forum, I was concerned that this year forum might not happen. So, now I am happy to spend the time with you and work altogether on this forum for the next four days.

The relationship between Japan and Russia has been complicated for a long time, still now we haven't concluded a treaty of peace and faced a host of diplomatic problems. So, for Japanese people, Russia may be "a close yet far country," because Russia, especially Far East, is close to Japan geographically, but we have a few opportunities to learn about Russia. We know a bit of knowledge about Russia: Literature, Ballet, Matryoshka, Borsch, Ice skating and Cold winters. At first, I was also a person, who felt unfamiliar with Russia. But one opportunity had changed my mind.

I was born in Tokyo and had never been left Tokyo until I entered Hokkaido University, which is based in north of Japan and near Russia. When I received a letter of acceptance from my university, I needed to decide my second foreign language because our university students must learn it for one year. My brother, who loved Russia, encouraged me to choose the Russian language strongly. At first, I was reluctant to decide it, but my brother didn't give up on urging me to try it. He said "I would learn the Russian after entering university, so please, my sister, you will learn the Russia and teach it to me" I gave in to him and decided to learn the Russian as my second language. So, I began to study Russian language only for my brother not for me, but I gradually got to enjoy learning it. When I was a freshman, I studied it very hard and got a good result in an exam. I found studying incredibly enjoyable. This is my first contact to Russia in my life.

One day, I found one poster on a board in my university. This poster said that we would recruit Japanese student, who hoped to study abroad in Russia. This was a "RJE3 program" poster. The RJE3 Program is intended to develop professional groups between Hokkaido University and 5 Russian universities that play leading roles in the fields of sustainable environment, sustainable culture and sustainable development in the Far East and the Arctic Circle. Even though I was still an undergraduate student, I insisted the person who was in charge of RJE3 to allow me to participate in that program. Fortunately I got permission and took part in RJE3 as one of me Japanese students. And then, through this experience of RJE3, I made a firm decision. I determined that I would go study abroad in Russia for agricultural research when I am a graduate student and become a person who would develop the Russian Far East land in the future.

In this forum, we are divided into three themes: Cooperation through innovation, Regional renaissance and Contribution to the culture of the world's sports.

First of all, "Cooperation through innovation" is my discussion group. I'd like to discuss the agricultural cooperation between Japan and Russia in the future. I read some reports from the Japanese ministry of Agriculture before this forum, which said that Russia agriculture skill had room for improvements and some Japanese agricultural technologies can help Russian agriculture. For example, in the field of agricultural chemicals and machines, Japan goes ahead of Russia. On the other hand, in the soil of Russian Far East, there are many kinds of microbes and chemical compositions, which are peculiar to Russia and never have existed in Japan.

Secondly, "Regional renaissance" is a serious problem in Japan as well as in Russia. Russia government established Ministry for Development of the Russian Far East in 2012. I heard that the ministry is responsible for the economic and social development of the Russian Far East. Nowadays, in Japan, depopulation in a rural region is a severe problem. The population who are engaged in agriculture declines and the large fields, which had been cultivated one time, have been abandoned.

Thirdly, "Contribution to the culture of the world's sports" is a near issue for each other. Russia is a host country of the FIFA World Cup 2018 and Japan is also preparing for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games. We need to foster players, managers and trainers, who have fair sportsmanship and flourish internationally for these events.

At present we don't have enough knowledge to talk about our own country. However, we have prospects for improving the relationship between Japan and Russia in the future. Through this Japan and Russia Student Forum 2015, we can come in touch with different ideas and discuss the problems between us. *"Japan and Russia from now on: learning from the past, living the present and planning the future"* This is not only this forum's theme but also for our future theme. I'd like to be the person who is engaged in the development of Russian Far East as a Japanese person in the future. I hope that this forum will be significant for all of you and get a step close to your own dream.