

Japan-Russia Student Forum 2018

2016PP292 Sayaka Jean Suzuki

On May 18th-19th, I participated in the Japan-Russia Student Forum that was held at Hokkaido University. Until this forum, I did not have any connection with people from Russia, and I barely had knowledge about the relationship between Russia and Japan. However, through the forum, I was able to become friends with people from Russia and people from various universities in Japan, and I was able to learn more about Russia than I ever knew before. This experience created an interest in Russia and made me think more about the relationship between Russia and Japan.

At the conference, we discussed how Russian students and Japanese students could interact with each other more and have more connection. I thought this was a very interesting topic because it relates to the Eight-Point Cooperation Plan between Russia and Japan. The aim of the Eight-Point Cooperation Plan is to create economic, cultural and person-to-person exchanges. Through our discussion at this forum, we the students actually accomplished part of this plan with our person-to-person exchanges.

As a result of the discussions, we concluded that both Japanese universities and Russian universities should have more connection such as increasing the number of exchange programs between both countries. Recently Nanzan University created a partner university from Russia, Pacific National University. I think this is a big step for Nanzan University to have more interaction with Russia and Russian students.

By attending the conference, I was able to learn more and widen my ideas about the relationship between Russia and Japan. Before this forum, I had never communicated with someone from Russia, and I did not know much about the country either. So, when I presented my perspectives towards Russia, they were actually quite narrow at first. However, I think by stating our minds, sharing our perspectives and honestly listening to other people's ideas and perspectives we gain the ability to understand more about different people and cultures. By doing that, I think it is possible to make a useful policy.

The forum taught me many things about Russia and the relationship between Russia and Japan. Also, it gave me the opportunity to think about the vision of the future of both countries. However, what impressed me the most was the passion of the students. I still remember, after the forum, a couple of Russian and Japanese students including myself gathered in one room in the hotel. We had snacks and chatted till midnight. We talked about the future of both countries, and the problems we need to solve. Each student had their own vision for the future, and I was so moved by them. I felt lucky that I was able to interact and discuss ideas with people that have such great ideas and high potential.

I am very thankful to Nanzan University for giving me this valuable opportunity. I hope our ideas will be used in the future, so as to promote a good relationship between Russia and Japan.