

<最優秀賞>

三田 竜大さん 福井工業高等専門学校 3年

エッセイ内容:アメリカと日本、異なる2つの国で私は教育を受けることができた。同じ教育でも教育方針や教育方法はまるで違った。その違いは何かと考えた結果、根本に「自信」に対する意識の違いがあると気付いた。

Standing at the Forked Roads of Education

My life is filled with foreign cultures. My first visit to America was when I was just only four years old. My life's biggest turning point was then. I don't remember the details, but 14 years have passed since then, I still can't forget the hot dry air of Washington D.C. I lived in America from 4 to 14, but every summer vacation I came back to Japan. I was fortunate enough to learn both English and Japanese. Therefore, I was able to compare the two countries and cultures.

During my 10 years stay both in America and Japan, the biggest difference in the two cultures I felt was the one at school. The education systems between the two countries radically differed. In America teachers and parents often praised their children first no matter how bad the result was. In this way they tried to get their children to gain self-confidence. If you have self-confidence, it may lead to the better results in the next. However having too much self-confidence can cause unexpected effects. Children may miscalculate their ability, and feel disappointed in the end. On the other hand, educators in Japan tended not to praise their students. In fact they tried to find the imperfect parts of the result to make their students do better performance. Both ways had the same goal: to have their children or students get the better results. But the path they took was exactly the opposite. Here, the key was self-confidence.

I began to play soccer at six and I was fairly good at it. We played soccer in physical education. Most of my classmates boasted that they were very skillful with soccer, but it turned out that they could hardly even dribble the ball. I was shocked by this reality, although a few people were actually good.

I had another experience in Japan. In junior high school, I chose soccer as my club activity. One day, I asked my teammates how proficient they were with soccer. They said that they weren't very good at it. However, once the practice started, it turned out that most of them were obviously better than what I had just heard. I wondered why they hesitated to have an apt self-confidence unlike the Americans. I noticed that Americans trend toward being overconfidence, and on the contrary Japanese lacking self-confidence.

Another notable example was their attitude toward classes. In America, when teachers asked a question, most students raised their hands not considering the time answering the question incorrectly. Things often don't go like this. In Japan if a teacher asks a question and even names somebody to solve it, Japanese students will probably not answer it. They will be likely to ask someone near them to appeal that it is not their own answer. Japanese people tend to think that answering the question incorrectly is a bad thing. This is just one of many examples which I can give you. As a result, I came to a conclusion that this was the difference of education.

I can't clearly decide which method is better than the other. There are merits and demerits in each way. In my opinion, the best way is to find the third way. In other words, I believe that combining the two opposite education methods and finding the perfect balance of the two are the best way to lead the students or children to a better future prospect. To put it into practice, it is essential to learn more about both foreign and your own cultures and have the courage to change yourself although you may differ from the others. From my precious experience both in America and Japan, this was the closest foreign culture to me.

<優秀賞>

外館 優 さん 岩手県立久慈高等学校 2 年

エッセイ内容:私と同じ年頃の祖父が置かれていた環境や、日々の生活の中で考えていたことは私の想像とは全く異なるものだった。自分から行動して得たものが一番その人の生き方を左右するのだと感じた。

My Grandfather's Culture

I live with my grandfather. He is seventy three years old. He is older than me by fifty seven years. He was born and raised in Kuji, and graduated from Kuji Junior High School. So was I. But there are some differences between my life and his. "You have to study more!!" my parents often said. But my grandfather said, "You should go out more and see things you don't know instead of staying at home." I wonder why he said such a thing.

He could not go to high school. He began to work as a carpenter soon after he graduated from junior high school. My family runs a house-building company. We take high school education for granted now. But, about fifty years ago, a large number of children had to work soon after graduating from junior high school. And it was common for them to join the workforce and help their families. So he said, "I didn't have as much knowledge as modern students like you. But I wanted to learn new things. So, I would often go to bookstores after working. I bought not only novels but also practical books such as dictionaries." I was very surprised to hear that. I was envious of him because he didn't have to study so much. However, he tried to get as much knowledge as possible for his own sake. Now, we can learn in high school easily. We have a lot of places to study, such as the library. In other words, there is the environment for studying in Japan now. Education was not a matter of course in the past; it used to be a privilege for only a few.

My grandfather often told me about his experiences. When he was an elementary school student he went to the river, mountains and sea with his friends every day. "Every day!?" I was surprised. He knows how to swim in the river and how to catch insects. Such skills could be gained only through practice. We are prohibited from swimming in the river because it is dangerous.

Thanks to the Internet and hand-held digital devices, we can easily and instantly search for information we need. But he said, "The information you get with your smart phone is not something you gained through experiences. You won't be able to learn anything from that text that everybody can access without any effort."

He also talks about prices. When he was young, his monthly salary was only nine thousand yen. That is about the same amount as the daily salary of a carpenter today. So, he used his money carefully and only for the things he really needed. The music records he bought are still his treasures, he says.

My grandfather worries about today's young people. The world advances before we notice it. It appears that our efforts are not necessary as a driving force. He says that this is very unfortunate. When he was young, people knew that they were creating the future, that their efforts helped society to advance. This rapid growth of technology and society, he complains, is making today's youth negative.

"You should go out to see what you don't know." Now I know what these words really mean. Human value cannot be formed or measured only by the amount of knowledge. I am sometimes afraid of failure and have cold feet. In contrast, he tries to do anything positively. The environment in which he grew up let him do so. Talking with people of different ages help us realize our difference and see what we lack and what we excel in.

<優良賞> ※「日米協会会長賞」も受賞

小林 ひな乃 さん 鎌倉女学院高等学校 2年

エッセイ内容: 真のお弁当の価値とは? お弁当は私たちが思うよりもずっと繊細で、味、形、サイズ、彩りと様々な工夫が凝らされている。そこに、詰められた思いを私たちは見過ごしていないだろうか。

The Meaning of Bento

“Why don’t you bring a bento?” I was surprised and shocked when one of my friends asked me this question. I was sure, from seeing my mother waking up so early just to make a bento, that it was such hard work for someone. My friend seemed not to understand how hard it is to make a bento. When I came back from Hong Kong I was pretty much unaware of the importance of the ‘bento’, so I thought I should try making a bento for myself so as to understand better. Just as imagined, there were plenty of things I had to be aware of: time, nutritional balance, quantity of food, ingredients, and taste. However, this experience of making a bento every day for a week changed the way I thought of bentos.

Firstly, I started to eat everything up because bento is more valuable from the perspective of someone who makes it. Also I realized a bento is filled with love! I noticed my mom always cut meat and vegetables in bite-sized pieces so that they are easy to eat. From my experience of making a bento for a week, it is certainly difficult and takes more time to cut dishes into bite-sized pieces. Recently I heard about Kaori, a 44-year-old housewife, who started a blog in 2012 about the bentos she was making for her daughter. “Iyagarase-bento” meaning “spiteful bento” relates to this topic. Kaori’s daughter was at a rebellious age, so she ignored Kaori and didn’t talk to her very often. Kaori didn’t like it but she loved her daughter. As a result, she started making kyara-ben (character bento), with love. She continued making kyara-ben for about three years until her daughter graduated high school. By making kyara-ben, Kaori was able to find a way to communicate with her daughter and make her daughter smile. Hence I learned that the greatest secrets are always hidden in the most unlikely places, hidden in ordinary things you eat every day, like a bento. So, I will never forget that a bento is valuable item which is filled with love.

Secondly, it made me notice the difficulty of making a bento. I heard my friend saying “Ugh, my mother told me to wash my lunchbox by myself. She is so annoying.” This was not the only time I heard this, so I thought that it might be good to share my experience of making a bento, that hidden in the bite-sized dishes of your bento is kindness and love from the one who made it. To be honest, I have also complained to my mom about why I have to wash my lunchbox because I thought it is natural for mom to wash the dishes rather than for me to do it. Now I get the meaning of washing the lunchbox by myself. I think she wanted me to realize the effort involved in making a bento which is certainly greater than the effort of washing a lunchbox! Washing up afterwards is a way of thanking her for her efforts.

In conclusion, making a bento every day for a week was worth it to better understand the one who makes it. For example, it gave me another perspective to see bentos and made me realize that in a bento is a secret message of love from the one who made it. Besides all that, I have to say that I was very lucky to have such a valuable experience which gave me a chance to thank my mom. The experience of making a bento for someone may can bring mothers and their children closer, and reminds us that things we often take for granted are sometimes very precious.

<特別賞>

伊藤 悠太郎 さん 科学技術学園高等学校刈谷 3 年

エッセイ内容:家族とは?大切なものとは?当たり前だと思っていた日本の日常生活で実は幸せを見過ごしていた事に気付く。ホームステイ先で家族の在り方に感銘を受け、帰国後自分の家族とも時間を大切に過ごすようになる。

Gift from my host family

“Hi, all. How was today?” I heard my host father’s voice from the entrance. “Eh? The sun is still shining brightly. What time is it now?” I checked my watch. It was just five o’clock in the evening. I couldn’t believe it. In Japan, my father is usually not at home at this time of the day. During my two weeks’ homestay program in Australia, I experienced several cultural differences between Japan and Australia like the one mentioned above. For example, I experienced and learned the importance of saving water by taking a shorter shower. Another thing was that Australian food was quite different from Japanese food. So, I sometimes did not really enjoy it. Among these cultural differences, the biggest difference for me was the idea concerning about the time spent with one’s family. In Japan, it seems to me Japanese people don’t or cannot spend much time with their family. For example, in my family, after coming back home, each member eats dinner at a different time and spends the rest of the evening in his / her room, which is not unusual. My father sometimes gets home very late after working overtime and does not have a chance to talk with anybody in my family. So, sad to say, Japanese people spend much less time with their family. What about in other countries?

On the first day of my homestay in Australia, I had dinner with all the members of my host family. As I had had dinner alone for a long time, I was a little nervous. I could not find anything to talk about, so I kept silent during the dinner. I did not fully enjoy it. Furthermore, I could not talk with my host family due to my poor English. I felt really sorry for them. I could not get really involved with the family for two more days. However, something happened that changed everything. Just about a week before I was to leave, it was my host mother’s birthday party. I heard that twenty people would be coming to the party. As I could not communicate well with my host family, I did not want to attend the party. I stayed in my room and was checking my cell phone, when my host father knocked on my door and said, “Come and enjoy the party with us, Yutaro! Everybody wants to meet you. Come and talk with them!” I found what little courage I had and went to the living room. Everybody there was very nice and friendly. Thanks to their kindness, I made friends with them soon. One of my Japanese classmates also came to the party, and we enjoyed karaoke and played card games, too. This party really helped me to become a member of the family, and I built a trusted relationship with them. I really enjoyed the rest of my homestay, and every day I could hardly wait for dinner time to talk with my family. To my great surprise, I was even able to start a new conversation. I really want to thank my host family for being patient and sharing their time with me. I did find that Australian people put priority on the time spent with their family. During dinner, they enjoy talking about their day, and after dinner, they gather in the living room and relax. Parents come back home without working overtime and share their time with their family. I was really impressed with their way of living.

When I came back to Japan, I felt like I wanted to have more communication and time with my family, too. I shared my experiences in Australia with them. Gradually my family changed and we now spend more time together. I even suggested that we have a holiday meal together. Now, we have more chances to go out together and have more conversations. As our family’s attitude has changed, we have come to share our daily lives, problems, and so on. I enjoy sharing my valuable time with my family very much. I will never forget my precious experiences in Australia!

<特別賞>

島田 直弥 さん 科学技術学園高等学校刈谷 3年

エッセイ内容:贈り物に気持ちを込めるのは世界共通だが、その方法に違いを感じた。手紙を添えたり、風呂敷で包装したり、エコに貢献しながら気持ちを伝えることが出来たら一人ひとりの個性が光るスマートな表現方法になるだろう。

Smart Choice

Have you ever asked for gift-wrapping when you buy a souvenir abroad? When I visited Australia for an overseas seminar at our school, I was surprised to find that you have to pay for wrapping. In Japan, it is quite natural for stores to offer free wrapping. However, an incredibly high price is charged for wrapping in Australia. At the store where I asked for wrapping, the sales person charged me 8 Australian dollars. I couldn't believe the price. Finally, I paid the money because I thought there was no way out. Furthermore, the store had the right to decide the price, and on top of that, the gift wrapping I received was nothing luxurious.

Why is there such a great difference between Japan and Australia? In Japan, wrapping means "beauty" and it delights the eye. It also expresses the sender's feelings, or our appreciation, pleasure or sometimes compassion. Even if we try to express our feelings by the wrapping, most of us regrettably tear the wrapping without really appreciating or enjoying its beauty. The present I received from my Australian homestay was not wrapped but a letter was attached to it. The letter said, "Thank you for becoming a member of our family. Next time you come to Australia, please come and visit us!" It was difficult for me to translate from English to Japanese. However, it was the first time for me to receive such a heartfelt present. So, I was very glad and impressed with it. I still treasure both the present and the letter, and from this experience, I have come to think maybe a letter is even better than wrapping, because we cannot easily throw away a letter. And, a letter seems to have a wonderful and magical power equal to wrapping or sometimes even more. One day, I gave a birthday present to one of my friends with a message card. He seemed so glad to receive them. Since then, I have tried to send a present with a message card. I think a letter will help us express our feelings which are really difficult to say face to face. On the other hand, it is true wrapping also has advantages. Then, why don't we focus on advantages of both a letter and wrapping? I think it is a nice idea to choose the best way, depending on who receives the present. For example, we can send a present with a letter to our family members or close friends and we can send one with appropriate wrapping to older people or people to whom we have to show honor or respect.

Nowadays, the Japanese word, "Mottainai" is used all over the world. What if we just tear and throw away the wrapping after receiving a gift? Don't you think it is really "Mottainai"? If so, I have a great idea. In Japan, we have a custom of using "Furoshiki", a square scarf-like cloth, for wrapping. It is usually dyed in various colors, decorated with artistic pictures of flowers, trees, scenery or the family crest of the owner. It catches people's eyes and above all, it is environmental friendly because we can use it again and again. We don't have to throw it away after unwrapping it. Now is the time to make a smart choice and start thinking about our limited natural resources. I hope from the bottom of my heart we can respect and enhance each other's good culture. From now on, I would like to choose a better way depending on the situation and contribute to the protection of our environment. Let's enjoy sending our feelings and at the same time contribute to protecting our precious planet!

<特別賞>

藤田 光咲 さん 日本女子大学附属高等学校 1年

エッセイ内容:社会的弱者に対する手の差し伸べ方、それは単に設備を充実させれば足りるのでしょうか。本当の優しさとは、人と人との心のふれあい、その根底に存在する『公平の精神』から生まれるものであると、アメリカ生活の中で学びました。

Experiences Creates My Future

A station I use every day has yellow textured paving blocks for visually impaired people, extending toward a street outside of the station like a straight road to lead them everywhere. When I was living in the U.S. couple of years ago, at a crossing I found paving blocks roughly laid with only three pieces. It was like a sign saying bluntly, "Danger beyond this zone." First the blocks seemed much shabbier compared to the Japanese ones and I thought support to visually impaired people in the U.S. was behind Japan. However, after that, I sometimes saw people help sightless persons in a very kind and natural way and thus realized they do not need the road-like paving blocks like in Japan.

In my elementary school, I had a classmate whose name is Michael. He needed someone's help for everything because he had a mental and physical disease. Every Monday morning, our homeroom teacher asked us with a smile, "Who wants to take care of him this week?" and almost all my classmates raised their hands. My classmates helped me as well because I couldn't speak English well at first. I was afraid I was going to be bullied because of my poor English skill, but they asked me for lunch, invited me to birthday parties, and explained to me in gestures when I was struggling to understand what the teacher said. I was deeply moved by their kindness. Having treated so, I decided to take care of Michael because I thought it was my turn to help someone. Amazingly I never saw bullying in my class.

Through these experiences, I thought about cultural difference between Japan and America. In Japan children who have a severe mental and physical trouble are not allowed to go to a regular school. They go to a special school to take lessons suitable to their handicap and development, but instead they miss a chance to study with healthy children. On the other hand, I think that American people seem to value equal opportunity to everyone including handicapped children. In my view, their behavior I saw to visually impaired people was motivated by their strong belief that everybody should be treated fairly.

As for bullying at school, it seems that teachers in the U.S. have much more strict stance than in Japan to prohibit and eliminate it. Again, I believe "spirit of fairness" works well here. Michael and I were never bullied at my class in spite of our handicaps. Even if a bully had happened unfortunately, the student who bullied and his or her parents would have gotten told off and even been transferred to a different school.

I have no intention to conclude which culture is better. Personally I prefer the "spirit of fairness" rather than a culture to treat socially weak people in a special way. At a glance the yellow paving blocks for visually impaired people in Japan are exquisite tool that Japanese people develop, but at the same time it seems to me that the blocks implicitly say: "Why are you going out though you can't walk well." "You should walk on this block."

For whatever the reason maybe, and regardless of cultural difference, people should be more kind and supportive to physically and mentally handicapped persons. This I believe is a common value all over the world. Every time when someone asks me for my help, I want to say, "My pleasure!" This is my favorite phrase I learned in the U.S.

Based on the common value, both Japanese and Americans should understand cultural difference each other, rather than discussing which is better. Fortunately I had a chance to learn one of the symbolic aspects of American culture through my episodes of paving blocks and my classmate Michael. My dream is to have a job for which I can leverage my advantage of knowing both cultures in future. If I join a company for which a lot of Americans are working, I want to work in a creative way beyond tradition by mixing the best of both cultures as a "bridge" for best performance of myself

and contribution to the company.

<特別賞> ※「日米協会会長賞」も受賞
大石 光洋 さん 慶應義塾志木高等学校 3年

エッセイ内容:ものに対する価値観は千差万別。歴史的な遺産ですら例外ではない。それに加えて、自分に馴染みのない文化への憧れは誰もが持っていることを、私はイギリスで出会った友人との交流から学んだのだった。

Seeing the greener grass in England

People tend to desire something they do not own. There is a proverb that describes this situation: “The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence.” I experienced this situation when I participated in a summer school program in England when I was in junior high school student.

One day, we had an excursion to visit Salisbury Cathedral. I had never visited such a grand church, so I really admired its artistic stained glasses and relief on the wall. There were also many beautiful sculptures. I felt its long history from those artworks and the Magna Carta. Not only me, but other students from Japan looked impressed, too. However, Nick Carter, who became my best English friend through the summer school, and other English students in the summer school looked so bored of the excursion. They were chatting here and there. That confused me because I could not imagine how they could ignore the greatness of the Cathedral. Then, I asked Nick, “Why do you look so bored and sleepy?” He replied, “Just because I’m always sleepy, and do not like here.” I knew he was always sleepy since he was my roommate as well, but I could not understand why he did not like the place. I echoed, “Don’t you like here?” and asked why. He kindly told me that the Cathedral is no special for the English students because they have visited such kind of historical places many times. Then, I could understand why the English students looked bored. They were too familiar with European historical architecture.

As a result, I realized the rarity of the Cathedral triggered the strong impression in my mind. Apparently, there is no Gothic architecture like this heritage in Japan. Japanese people can see such majestic architecture only when they travel to Europe. Meanwhile, European people can easily access to such kind of historical sites. Recognizing this difference in backgrounds, I asked to myself, “Would I be so impressed even if Tokyo had this cathedral?” I could not find the answer since the Cathedral was moving me very much. Nevertheless, I actually kept wondering if the honest answer was “I would not,” until realizing it was useless to continue considering about it since assumptions were just imagination. On the other hand, it is also true that the same questions could come up with anything. Through this experience, I became aware of difficulty to observe essential values of things. One thing is observed differently from each perspective. A piece of trash could be a treasure for another one.

In fact, another day, Nick told me that he wanted to visit Kyoto. He was interested in Japanese temples, traditional Japanese handicrafts, and Japanese Buddhism. He even said he would have rather become Buddhist instead of being Christian. Thus, I can tell his attitude toward Japanese culture was positive. The eagerness to visit Kyoto might have been much greater than that of Japanese people. Then, here is a paradox: English people prefer Japanese historical heritage, and Japanese people prefer English historical heritage to each native cultural heritage. Every culture would have this paradox because man is an animal of curiosity. They always try to obtain something they do not own. Meanwhile, this curiosity makes people communicate with foreigners. If I had had no longing for English culture, I would not have become friend with Nick then. Therefore, I believe the situation of the grass greener on the other side is not a bad thing but a great help to encourage cultural interaction.

The experience at Salisbury Cathedral taught me the difference of perspectives. People put various values in one thing. However, this difference of perspectives promotes people to be interested in others. Thus, I realized I should find more “greener grass” and start communicating with others.

<特別賞>

梅内 ヴィクトル 健吾 さん 群馬県立伊勢崎高等学校 3年

エッセイ内容:様々な異文化交流を通じ、異なったバックグラウンドを持つ自分を見つめてみて、国際社会の中で日本が抱える課題を見だし、自分もグローバル市民になることを目指すこと、全ての人種が互いに理解できるような世界になることを願っている。

Two Worlds

I have two worlds. But what does two mean? Can you guess? I am half Japanese and half Russian. Two means my two countries. These days, many mixed-race people are living in Japan. I think they have had many good and bad experiences like me, and I want you to know more about us.

Mixed-race people in Japan were few when I was born, so at school I stood out remarkably. Many mixed-race people stand out, and I am no exception. But I could meet many people and do many things because I'm mixed-race.

Most of us can speak two or three languages. For example, I have lived here for a long time, so I can speak Japanese, and due to my mother's teachings and my visits to Russia I can speak Russian. Also at school, I have studied English for a long time. That's why I can communicate with people from around the world in different languages, and through this learn many things and have many new experiences. All this because I am mixed-race. If I were only Japanese, I'm not sure I would be interested in these things.

But I wasn't always happy. Because of my unusual face, I was made fun of by some people in my school when I was little. I think other mixed-race children have experienced similar things too. I wasn't able to forget these things and I had a complex with my face and long name. Looking back, I think I was just interesting and strange for others. Now, I'm 17 years old and I go to a high school which has a global communication class. Nobody sees me as strange and I enjoy studying English and foreign cultures with my classmates.

These days, international marriages are increasing in Japan, and the number of mixed-race children is increasing too. It is not strange to have a foreign wife or husband now. I hope that globalization in Japan spreads more and more in the future. However, international marriages can cause problems for their children. For example, soon I will have to choose between my Japanese and Russian nationalities, and because I was born and raised in Japan and my roots run deeply here, I will choose Japanese. But this choice isn't always easy to make.

I told you that mixed-race people are not ordinary here yet. But how about in other countries? For example, take my second country Russia. In Russia, there are many races and cultures. In fact, about 100 different cultures come together, so being mixed-race in Russia is not special. When I visit there, no one asks me "Where are you from?" like they do in Japan. As I told you, I fit in there, and I love it because many cultures and foods are brought there by many kinds of people.

Through my experiences, I see that the Japanese government should invite more tourist and immigrants for Japan to be more global. I heard that some elementary schools are teaching English and global culture these days. This is good because students can perceive other worlds, and they won't see foreigners as strange. Also they won't have stereotypes of foreigners. Learning another language gives these students different perspectives like I've experienced in my Two Worlds. If English speaking spreads in Japan, Japan will become more international, and for tourists it will become more convenient.

Now, I have some mixed-race friends in school and on social media. They have told me what they experienced, at their experiences are similar to mine. I could understand that most of them live strongly, and they make an effort to make use of their special ability. I think they have a broader knowledge and different experiences than others. I will use this to my advantage, and I will study hard and enter a global university. I want to study language and culture more to become a global citizen in the world. I hope no racial discrimination will happen in the future and all races will understand each other someday!!

<特別賞>

鎌田 涼 さん 湘南白百合学園高等学校 1 年

エッセイ内容:多様なこの世界では意見の衝突がつきものだ。その衝突は、一般に公正とされている手段を使っただけでは乗り越えることはできない。私は部活動の仲間から、互いに歩み寄る大切さと難しさを教わった。

“The importance of group compromise”

We have to live with various people, at home and work, and we sometimes have to face troubles and problems together. Unfortunately we often become preoccupied with our own way of thinking, even though other's opinions are valuable. In my school club, there was recently a clash of opinion over the club's management. However, once we considered each other's feelings we could accept difference and move forward. For solving problems, we should not underestimate communication, consideration and compromise.

I'm a freshman. I belong to the orchestra club at my school, which is a six-year secondary school. The leaders of this club are the oldest in the second half of freshman year. When I was a third-year junior high school student, the time was approaching that the members of my year would have to manage the club. However, our opinion about the direction of the club was divided, and we split over an issue which we thought was important.

One opinion was that we put practicing our instruments to improve playing before enjoying a conversation during the available time. Some members who had this opinion thought that we should choose leaders who could demonstrate the qualities of leadership to improve our performance. So, to improve the quality, there was no choice but to create seniority relationships. The other opinion was to put enjoying a talk with the members before practicing. These members had the opposite opinion, thinking that we wouldn't be comfortable if we had seniority relationships. However, we didn't touch on this issue because we thought it would lead to trouble.

It is our club's rule to choose the next leaders when the members are still junior high school students. Who we choose as leaders affects the direction of our club. Two leaders are decided by a majority decision, or a discussion. We used a majority decision for deciding. We carried out a majority decision. As a result, two members were chosen for two violin leaders, because they had the ability to play the violin very well and the firm opinion we should practice. They're sound so I felt at ease. As a result, clearly the members who thought we should maintain a high quality outnumbered other members who wanted comfort. Therefore, the solution to our issue was that we should regard improving the quality as more important.

The issue was settled by fair judgement. Nevertheless, there were members who didn't accept the result. That was the problem with taking a majority decision. So, the relationship between members with different opinions became strained. To be honest, many members who thought that we shouldn't make seniority relationships were beginning to become dissatisfied with our leaders. They stopped caring what the leaders said, and the leaders became angry with their attitude. As a result, our relationships were confused.

However, we were beginning to become aware of this problem because all members hoped for a good relationship. So, after considering each other's feelings, every member including the leaders realized the pressure that the leaders were under to put in an excellent performance. In addition, the leaders realized that they were being impatient. Then, we could accept each other. We tried to find a solution. The basis of our action was to attach importance to the distinction between relationships during the activity or not. When we do the club activity, we practice in accordance with leader's instruction. Also, at break time, every member enjoyed talking about their favorite things. Then, all members were satisfied with the management of our club. Communication is very important but, luckily, in this case, we didn't need to discuss this action we acted by ourselves.

I think accepting diversity is indispensable for carrying out goals with many people. Like that case, thinking about one other's responsibility or feelings is essential for accepting each other. When we make a majority decision, some people who have objections will always exist. Then, we should consider such people's feelings. If we can do it, we will feel diversity is interesting, because knowing diversity of culture, religion and language leads to spread sense of value.

<日米協会会長賞>

西田 ミュリ さん 愛知県立豊田東高等学校 3年

エッセイ内容:ブラジル人として日本に生まれ日本で育った過程で出会った様々な出来事。国籍という壁を越え、まずその人の中身を知り、人間関係を育てることこそが異文化理解への道だと知った。

Differences enrich my life

Cross culture has been all around me since I was born and raised in Japan as a Brazilian. I entered Japanese elementary school and learned how to read and write Japanese.

At home I only spoke Portuguese because my parents couldn't speak Japanese and they also wanted me to learn my mother language. English has been my passion since I took my first English class in an elementary school.

And now I'm here, studying in a Japanese high school trying to figure out which University I should go. That was a summery about my past but many things happened.

Let's start with my little boy classmate in elementary school. He shouted at me " Go back to Brazil you Brazilian!" I didn't get it.

I had lived in Japan all my life. I never thought that I was different from my Japanese classmates. Then questions like "Why did he say that?" "Am I different?" crossed my mind. I was confused and talked to my mother. She charred me up kindly saying, don't listen to him! Our nationality is different but we're all human beings! I understood what she said. But I guess that somehow I fixed upon that Japanese would prioritize Japanese in the end. "Nationality" became a wall between me and Japanese.

A lot of things changed when I entered a junior high school. I decided to join the basketball club. Unfortunately in Japan we have this system that younger students or even workers have to obey the older.

Indeed, that's a way of showing respect. But my seniors just didn't know how to be "Sempais". They always had "the favorite" one who would lick their boots. As I didn't like doing that I just did my part opening the windows and carrying out the balls and cones.

The favorite? She didn't have to worry about the time or preparing things as me. I found it unfair but what would I do? Soon the intrigue started. We had to make groups of five to practice. My sempais avoided picking me up. When I was around one of them said that something smelled like a poop.

They tried to make me feel small and incapable of playing basketball. And it was actually working. I wanted to quit and never go there again. I cried a lot but not in front of them.

Did they do that because I wasn't Japanese or what? I could only talk to my mother and my

classroom teacher. My mother always supported me but as I suffered a lot she recommended me to quit. My teacher didn't. He believed in me. He was actually the first Japanese to encourage me. I was surprised. He knew I was capable of playing and showing them that I wasn't weak. Then, even if it was hard I decided to keep joining this club till the end! Otherwise all my efforts would be in vain.

Somehow I was confident about myself. First I tried to be the leader of my group in my class, next the leader of my class and finally I candidate myself to be the vice president of my school. As I loved English I applied to do a speech contest, and also for a delegation between Japan and England. The result? I could win the speech. At the same time I was the first foreigner to participate in this delegation. Yes there were more "Japanese" that believed in me. Actually deep inside I doubted that they would choose me. That wall broke and I could trust my Japanese teachers and friends as "humans".

Never judge a person for its nationality. Judge them from what they are because in the end we're all the same humans.

"Cross culture" is one thing that I learned from various perspectives. In my opinion how much you want to learn about the others, how much you care, how much you help are the real meanings of cross culture. Our differences are unique, interesting, beautiful and valuable. I want to make the most of each opportunity I get to know more about it. I'm excited to know what's next!

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一般財団法人 国際ビジネスコミュニケーション協会(IBC)

「人と企業の国際化の推進」を基本理念とし、1986年に財団法人国際ビジネスコミュニケーション協会として設立。

以来、「グローバルビジネスにおける円滑なコミュニケーションの促進」をミッションとし、国内外の関係機関と連携しながらTOEIC事業およびグローバル人材開発事業を展開している。2012年4月1日付で一般財団法人に移行。