

Doing is more difficult than knowing

Living abroad and facing other perspectives inspired my way of thinking as well as my emotion.

I had thought I gained a precious experience, but it mattered when I really did something.

When I was seven, I moved to Shanghai. Living in apartments organized for Japanese overseas workers and going to Shanghai Japanese School, at first, I had few occasions where I realized I was living abroad. However, I had to have that sense when a dispute between China and Japan happened. In 2012, the Japanese government declared the nationalization of the Senkaku/Diaoyutai Islands, which had been a controversial issue between both countries for years.

On account of this, many demonstrations against Japan took place anywhere in China including Shanghai. This suddenly changed my young life. My school sports festival was canceled, and I was not allowed to go out alone. I was strongly surprised at this immediate change, while I also felt anger against both countries causing this conflict, which deprived me of my normal life in Shanghai.

At the same time, however, I found that some Chinese people still have positive feelings towards my country. At an event for introducing Japanese culture which I was invited to go to, many

Chinese visitors actively asked Japanese staff about sights and cultures in Japan. I could happily experience the reality like this on many occasions and began to think that showing genuine interests and trying to mutually understand them is necessary to solve conflicts like the Senkaku/Diaoyutai Islands issue.

However, this proved not enough when I participated in the Sino-Japan Youth Conference as a Japanese representative last summer. It was a conference held online over four days, and participants came from China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Japan. They were divided into nine groups, talking about the Sino-Japan relationship. I was very excited to join the conference and curious about what students in other regions think about this relationship.

On the final day, I joined a history session, where each group creates a new high school textbook in a neutral way. Our group's topic was the Nanking Massacre in the Sino-Japanese War. The session started with reading current textbooks. I was given a textbook in the Japanese language and three regions' textbooks translated into English. Reading them through, I found there is a difference in the number of victims; the number in the Chinese textbook was twenty times as large as that in Japan's. After reading them, participants were supposed to share their views about their own country's textbooks. The discussion starts, a participant from China being the first and a

member from Hong Kong being the second. My turn came. Everyone realized the difference in the number and asked me about the tone of Japanese textbooks and the intentions of the Japanese government. I could not choose what to say at once because I had two options in my mind; “The Japanese government is neutrally telling the truth” in one mind, and “Japanese government actively hides the fact in a biased way” in the other. In my view, my answer is slightly the latter, but with everyone in the group looking at me, I was too afraid and ashamed to tell my opinion. I thought that meant Japan and I are to blame. Instead, I said, “The Japanese government does not actively hide the truth, but does not truly show the fact.” Then, a Chinese participant said the Japanese government hides the truth. I could not say anything. Although he is now a friend of mine, I regret that I should have told my true opinion because being honest was the only thing that I could do, facing the reality.

This experience gave me an important lesson; doing something is sometimes impossible even if I know what to do. In the real world, too, many problems are left unsolved although each stakeholder knows what is the key to solving them. Telling a lie to yourself or blurring the answer does not lead to the actual solution. What is necessary is to be honest and try what you must do. In this way, I hope even one more problem will be solved in the future. [696 words]