

Student Interview

No. 29

Jiezel Nara (Year 1, MPP/IP)



At Mount Takao Jiezel is third from left in the front row

— Have you enjoyed your time at GraSPP?

Of course! GraSPP is a great place to study at because you can choose what you want to study and take classes you're interested in. On top of that, some of my classmates are studying while working as lawyers, they have a lot of different experiences, so I get a lot of motivation even from my friends. I'm going to China to study in February 2019. I've always wanted to study about East Asia, so Campus Asia was perfect for me. I could do what I wanted to do and go where I wanted to go, I was really lucky!

— You were the head of the student council, I believe?

I always wanted to be president, ever since I was young. So I put myself up to become the head of the student council as the first step on the way there (laughs). I got to know a lot more people after I became a candidate. I want to create more interaction between the international students and the Japanese students, but everyone is so busy, I had big goals but it was hard to actually achieve them. We had a mini event called a quiz night, plus we had a tour to Akasaka Palace, and went to see the autumn leaves on Mount Takao.

I think a good point about GraSPP is that there aren't so many other students in the same grade, so you stay connected to people above and below your grade the whole way. Also the people here are very open and friendly, it's no problem to casually invite them out for a drink. There are a lot of classes with group work, plus meetings as well, so you end up wondering how many times you've met with so-and-so during the week (laughs). It just shows you how there are so many chances to spend time with your friends.

— What are your future goals?

I'm very concerned about territorial issues, so in the future I'd like to be involved in that field in the United Nations. I got interested in that after joining in an exchange meeting with a Korean school in Japan when I was a high school student. When I was younger I lived in the Philippines, I came to Japan in my second year of junior high school and went on to high school from there. As part of international relations we had joint classes with the Korean school and were

invited to cultural festivals, we learned about each other. One time I talked with them about the territorial issues, and came up against a clash in our values and cultural differences. I was surprised at the gap between my own thinking and that of other people, so that sparked my interest in the territorial issues. In my third undergraduate year I spent a year studying in the USA, which was a chance to learn about how they saw East Asia. I wondered at that time why the three countries of East Asia are so similar and yet have such poor relations with each other. So after returning to Japan, I entered GraSPP so that I could learn about security issues in East Asia.

— You're going to study in China soon, aren't you?

Yes. It's sad to be spending time away from my friends, but I'm also looking forward to it. I like the experience of living in another country with a different culture and customs. Territorial issues have been studied by many researchers yet remain very difficult to solve. So I'm trying to learn widely about politics and economics now so that I can look at the territorial issues from lots of different perspectives, in the hope that I can make some small contribution to them in the future. If I'm going to do it I want to be at the top - you should set your targets high, so I'm aiming to be the secretary general of the UN! (Laughs)
(Interview and text: editorial staff)



With her classmates at Hongo Campus. Jiezel on the left

APEC Voices of the Future 2018

Kayuki Nakahara, Year 2, MPP/IP



Nakahara is on the left

In November 2018 I went to APEC Voices of the Future (VoF) in Papua New Guinea. It was an unforgettable experience for me to join the VoF as the youth delegate for Japan, something I had been deeply looking forward to since learning about it last year. At the end of the week-long program, I feel a certain level of achievement, and also a great sense of responsibility, energy, and hope as someone who will be a leader for an inclusive society.

I have long been interested in the relationships of trust between states that support international relations and are the bedrock of diplomacy.

By joining the VoF, I was able to learn how world leaders work together to build trust. I stayed in a room with three Thai female delegates during the conference. It was a little awkward at first, but once we'd finished introducing ourselves one of the Thai women said that we should all stick only to English in the room. I learned later that she'd done this for me because of her own past experience in living with other roommates with different languages. This reaffirmed to me how important it is to use your imagination in order to understand someone else's position, not just at the level of individual communication but also in thinking about social problems. I also learned something valuable from the Chinese delegates. The Chinese delegates invited us to dinner on the first day. Sitting around a table to enjoy delicious food was an excellent way to open up and get to know each other. Having learned the value of this idea, we Japanese delegates actively invited delegates from other countries out to dinner from the next day.

The VoF taught me the power of persistence and boldness.

"Don't expect people above you to approach you. Young people have to take the courage to go to the top." Inspired by this key phrase from the CEO summit and by seeing delegates from other countries boldly taking chances, or resiliently dealing with difficulties, I began to challenge myself in small ways without fearing the risks during the program.

I was lucky enough to meet Prime Minister Abe and his wife Akie as well as members of the ABAC committee, to directly talk to them about our vision as the Japanese youth delegates. That made a big impression on me. I realized just how much the world leaders expect of the power of youth, which made me want to do my best as a member of society to support it in the future. The issue of mental health among Japanese youth which we emphasized in particular evoked a lot of empathy from the youth delegates of both the host country Papua New Guinea and other countries, so I have decided to devote myself to this problem.

Lastly, I would like to thank the people who helped me to participate in this program and ensured me a safe and highly productive stay in Papua New Guinea.

Visiting a country right in the middle of rapid development to directly see the problems of poverty, refugees, and protection of the native peoples left a powerful impression on me. My meeting and interaction with the local people has made Papua New Guinea a place that is special to me.

We youth delegates hope to make the most of the friendship and knowledge gained at the VoF, and to contribute to the growth of peace in Papua New Guinea and throughout the world.



Editor's Postscript

Since taking over the role of editing the newsletter, I have gained an even greater interest in the events going on in GraSPP and the people who study and work here. GraSPP is home to fascinating people who are smart, active and have sometimes truly amazing ideas and the ability to act on them, people who are shaping the future.

Let's look forward to learning and discovering even more in 2019, to make this a place where hope and joy come alive! **(Editorial staff)**

vol. 53 NEWS LETTER

(Editor & Publisher) Graduate School of Public Policy, The University of Tokyo
(Date of Publication) March 6, 2019

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