**Japan from the outside**

**National Institute of Technology, Akita College**

A: Hello, everyone. We are from Akita National College of Technology. I’m Kentaro Kaneko.

B: I’m Yuki Kawabe.

C: I’m Riki Miura. First of all, look at this picture. What do you think it is? Please answer, Kentaro.

A: I think it is an old man smiling.

C: Now let’s turn it over. Then, what do you think?

A: Then it looks like a man being angry.

C: This shows that our impression on things may be changed if we change our perspective of view. Today, we will show you some similar situations in our school days and then show you the importance of having different perspective of views under the title of “Japan from the outside.”

A: By the way, what was your biggest impression in school days, Yuki?

B: I think… it was my trip to Singapore.

A&C: Really? So do I.

A: So Yuki, please talk about what you felt in Singapore.

B: OK. I’ll talk my impression of Singapore first.

Singapore is one of the most famous tourist spots. Its land area is about one five hundred and fortieth of Japan. I thought that countries in south-eastern Asia, including Singapore, were not developed. However, this idea was totally wrong, and there are many skyscrapers, which surprised me. Furthermore, we heard that various Japanese technologies such as water supply, developed subways, and electric power, etc. were utilized in Singapore. From now on we need to expand and utilize Japanese technology to the world. Now, let us focus on people in Singapore. What I felt through communication with local people is that　many Singaporeans respected Japan and had a longing. Japan is a developed country, and it is the world top level both in industries and economics. It seems that the Japanese are satisfied with their current life. In fact, some Japanese people do not understand the meaning of learning. In contrast, Singapore is still a developing country. However, Singaporeans had dreams, they want to become rich, protect families, and catch up with Japan. They go to school and study hard to make their dreams come true. I thought that their attitudes on learning things are different from ours. Singaporeans are studying actively. However, it seems that the Japanese are studying passively. It is important to study for goals and dreams. However, I think that many Japanese are studying not to achieve their goals, but to find their goals. 　In other words, Singaporeans have hungry sprit. To sum up, I have seen that we Japanese don’t have hungry Spirit. That’s what I felt. Next, what did you feel in Singapore, Kentaro?

A: My view of English has changed in Singapore.

I went to Singapore for language training. Singaporeans can use not only their mother tongue but also several other languages. I was surprised, and I realized lacks of knowledge. Singapore is a multinational and multi-faith country. So, Singaporeans use English for communication with everyone. You can live in Japan by only speaking one language. That is Japanese. Most Japanese students study English only to take credits and to pass exams, not to communicate with other people. I think that the difference in attitudes toward studying English makes the huge difference in English skills. In fact, the average TOEFL score in Japan is 27th among 30 Asian countries. In contrast, Singapore is number one. Language is a communication tool by nature. It is not just a subject taught in school. I think that it is impossible to catch up with other countries with the current educational system in Japan.

B: So, you felt the necessity of using English as a communication tool. Next, what did you feel in Singapore, Riki?

C: OK. I found people can grow by suffering. I had studied English since we were junior high school students. The official language in Singapore is English. But, I suffered in Singapore because I could not convey what I wanted to tell. Then, I understood English as a communication tool for the first time, and I began to use English as a communication tool. As a result, I came to be able to communicate with foreigners. This process is not only about language learning. Such kind of process leads to general problem-solving skills. First, I clarify our problems and set goals. Second, I think about what I need to achieve the goals. And then, I carry out the solution. So, the bottom line so far is as follows: I suffered by not being able to speak English for the first time. By suffering, our problems and goals became clear. This is true not only of English but also of everything. I think people can grow by suffering.

B: OK. You felt the experience of suffering is important.

Let’s sum up our talk so far. I mentioned the importance of hungry sprit. Kentaro pointed out the necessity of using English as a communication tool. Rikii felt the importance of suffering. As KOSEN students, we want to show you a way to solve those problems at the same time.

A&B&C: That is the obligation of overseas internship.

A: There are many merits of doing overseas internship. Firstly, it will give us opportunities to know what is happening in the world. By going to overseas internship, we can feel it from our own experience, and we can see the actual situations in other countries and how Japanese technologies are utilized, which will improve our motivation to study. In addition, listening to the idea of not only Japanese but also foreigners will give us new knowledge, information and idea. We can feel common sense in japan is not always common sense in other countries. We will suffer from not being able to communicate with local people, and will realize how good it was to live in Japan. To make it happen, we have to solve some problems. For example, securing of recipients, expenses, and basic English abilities. But many Japanese companies are expanding business overseas, so if we can make relationships with such companies, we think that we can make it.

B: We think that we should mandate overseas internship of the KOSEN student because we can see Japan from new perspectives.

C: Now, please remember the first picture. In the beginning, we saw an old man smiling. However, when we turned it over, it looked like a man being angry. In the same way, we went to Singapore and our impression of Japan had changed. For example, Japanese technology was utilized a lot in Singapore, but we think that Japan was not number one in Asia, and other countries were developing more drastically. Furthermore, we think that being good at English does not mean getting high score on test but means using English as a communication tool. And we are satisfied with our current life, but we need hungry sprit. In addition, we faced various problems. It is difficult to notice the problems when looking at things from one perspective. People can grow for the first time when they face a problem. Without going to Singapore, we wouldn’t have noticed these things.

B: I think that as a KOSEN student, we need opportunities to go outside and see Japan from different perspectives in order to respond to future globalization and external demand.

A&B&C: Let’s see Japan from different perspectives!

C: That’s all. Thank you for listening.