

Economy

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Josai on academic cooperation with V-4 universities

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The Josai University group has tried to build strong relations with the V-4 countries and has rapidly expanded educational cooperation with V-4 universities during the past five years. This paper introduces how we have advanced our cooperation and what we are thinking about for the next step.

1. Josai University Group [JUG]

Josai University was founded in 1965 by Mikio Mizuta, who dedicated his life to the postwar reconstruction of Japan and served in the position of Finance Minister five times. “Character building through learning” was the basic guideline of this new university as well as the educational principle of what was to become three institutions of higher education: Josai University, Josai Junior College (established in 1985) and Josai International University (established in 1992).

Josai University and Josai International University are international liberal arts universities consisting of undergraduate and graduate schools, offering a broad, comprehensive education. It may be said that Josai University has five faculties in relatively conventional areas, such as economics, management, contemporary policy, mathematics, and chemistry and pharmaceutical sciences. Josai International University also focuses on relatively new areas in eight faculties, such as information science, media, humanities, tourism, environmental studies, social work, nursing, and pharmaceutical sciences.

We have four campuses, the Sakado campus in the Saitama Prefecture, the Togane and Awa campuses in Chiba Prefecture, and the Kioi-cho campus in the center of Tokyo, all of which are located within

100 km of one another in larger Tokyo. Both Josai University and Josai International University share the Kioi-cho campus in addition to their main campuses, and the Kioi-cho campus also houses the main office of the educational corporation, managing student exchanges and international activities. In the main campuses in Sakado, Togane and Awa, which are suburbs of Tokyo, we put emphasis on education and research connected to local communities in addition to global education.

2. Relations with the V-4 countries

The foundation of our relations with the V-4 countries started in 2008. Our chancellor Dr. Noriko Mizuta had a long-developed interest in the culture, history and people of Central Europe. She asked us to start a Hungarian language class as part of our unique globalization efforts. One of her motivations for doing so was that only a few Japanese universities have relations with universities in Central Europe and no private university in Japan offers such classes. Thus we started the Hungarian language class at the Sakado campus.

Contrary to our expectations, more than 200 students took the class during the first year and the popularity of Hungarian language boomed among the students.

In order to oversee the class, prominent Hungarians have been visiting our university. The Ambassador of Hungary, the members of parliament, and finally then-president of Hungary, Dr. Sólyom László visited our campus [Hungarian President] and the President gave a lecture to our students. This visit further stimulated our strong interest in Central Europe.

Since 2009 marked the 90th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Poland, interest in Polish history/culture/scholarship and art has been recently growing in Japan. And inasmuch as Poland is the largest nation in Central Europe and also the epicenter for Japanese studies, the expansion of our international network to Poland has been discussed in our university.

Dr. Jadwiga Rodowicz-Czechowska, then-Ambassador of Poland, visited the Kioi-cho campus [Polish Ambassador]) and gave a lecture entitled “Diplomatic Relations between Japan and Poland” to Josai University students in 2012. This was the first official exposure our students had with Poland. Ambassador Rodowicz’s husband, Mr. Waldemar Czechowski,

also participated in the lecture by giving a speech on the evolution of media in Poland. Students were able to feel more familiar with Poland through their interesting lectures, which were based on a deep understanding of the Japanese culture.

Two months later Anna Komorowska, First Lady of the Republic of Poland, visited our campus [First Lady] with the strong support of the Embassy of Poland in Tokyo and gave a speech to our students. In her speech she introduced the philosophy and activities of Dr. Janusz Korczak, an activist for children's rights, and also discussed the activities of the "Solidarity Bridge" project that she promotes, in which organizations from both Japan and Poland support those affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake. Many students from both universities, including students of the Faculty of Social Work Studies participated and listened to the speeches with great enthusiasm. They must have realized that the project was based on a long history of goodwill between Poland and Japan, as pointed out in the paper written by Professor Jolanta Młodawska-Bronowska of the University of Lodz [Młodawska-Bronowska 2013].

On April 14, 2014, Poland's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Artur Nowak-Far, visited the Kioi-cho campus [Poland's Minister] where he gave an excellent lecture titled "Japanese Journey into EU Law." It was a great honor for us to have the opportunity to hear this lecture from such an influential person from Poland.

Through the visits of highly influential people from the V-4 countries to Josai, we have developed close relations with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, and Josai co-hosted the seminar "Visegrad Group and Japan – Together for Eastern Partnership Seminar" in 2013 [Seminar of Visegrad Group]) and "Visegrad Plus Japan Security Seminar" in 2014 [Security Seminar]) with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in collaboration with the V-4 Embassies in Tokyo at our campus. In the conference, students were able to witness discussions at the national level. We believe this kind of seminar constitutes a valuable opportunity for our students in their growth into the next generation of leaders.

Based on our strong relations with Poland and Hungary, as mentioned so far, we founded the first Institute for Central European Studies [Josai Institute] in Japan last year to promote joint research, academic exchange, and undergraduate and graduate education in the region. We have received very gracious and valuable support from each embassy of the Visegrad Group for the founding of the institute. With the support of ambassadors, affiliated schools and affiliated institutions from each country, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, we hope to expand the active programs offered by our institute.

The Deputy Director of the Institute, Nobuhiro Shiba, formerly a professor of Tokyo University, expects that this Institute will act as a free salon for researchers and graduates, and also act as the center of the network for the researchers in East Asia and Asia.

3. Student exchange activities

In addition to these connections with influential people, since 2008 we have also built a strong record of educational and cultural relationships with universities in the V-4 countries by actively promoting student exchanges. We now have close relations with nine institutions in Hungary, four in Poland, three in the Czech Republic and two in Slovakia. A Josai delegation visited the University of Łódź to conclude our agreement for an academic exchange program, making it official in 2012.

The total number of exchange students so far has reached more than 100 incoming to Japan, and 200 outgoing to the universities in the V-4 countries. In particular the University of Łódź has already dispatched students on the Mizuta Scholarship to Japan for two years, and students from Josai stayed at the Summer School in Łódź for two weeks last year.

At the end of this September, The Noriko Mizuta Scholarship award ceremony for the V-4 students who had just arrived in Japan and the Student Friendship Ambassador Swearing-in Ceremony were held at the Kioi-cho campus [Mizuta Scholarship]. The Scholarship was established for Hungarian students to commemorate the visit of the Hungarian president in 2009, but now it also provides awards to students from Poland, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia who will be studying at Josai. This scholarship award was given to four students from the University of Łódź this year.

The role of the Student Friendship Ambassador is to attend the events in the university or local communities as a representative of students from each country. The Josai International University Polish ambassador is Małgorzata Angelika Lańska from the Polish-Japanese Institute of Information Technology, and the Josai University ambassador is Tomasz Rydz from Warsaw University. As ceremonies are performed according to Japanese custom, with continuous bowing required in accordance with the standards of Japanese culture, the student ambassadors were a little nervous at first. But, they were excited to become ambassadors without having to pass the qualifying examinations to become diplomats.

In 2014, Polish exchange students from the University of Warsaw and the Polish-Japanese Institute of Information Technology who were studying at Josai were invited to give a presentation to promote the Japan-Poland exchange at the “Poland, Ireland Evening Reception” hosted by the household of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. [Poland Ireland]). The invitation was extended by the wife of Prime Minister Abe, who had the occasion to tour the University of Warsaw and the Polish-Japanese Institute of Information Technology during the Prime Minister’s visit to Warsaw in June, 2013. She requested that the exchange students give a presentation at the “Poland, Ireland Evening Reception” that would introduce the charm of Poland and provided suggestions from an exchange student perspective as to how Japan and Poland can build even stronger relations.

The V-4 and Japan Student Conference [Visegrad Conference] was held by the Josai Institute for Central European Studies in February this year. The conference was planned in conjunction with the previous day’s V-4 + Japan Security Seminar and was recognized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as an official function commemorating the year of V-4 + Japan exchange. The conference offered graduate students and young researchers opportunities to immerse themselves in the interrelated subject matter that is critical for a balanced understanding of the V-4 countries and their relationships with Japan: history, culture, and political economy. Panelists from Josai’s partner universities in each of the Visegrad Group of Nations made presentations on themes related to further development of relationships between the V-4 countries and Japan. Student participants in the conference, in addition to recognizing regional and cultural differences and common problems between Japan and the V-4 countries, were able to deepen mutual understanding through productive discussion.

Through these discussions we have become convinced that they will undoubtedly someday become bridges of goodwill between Japan and the V-4 countries. The next conference is also going to be held in February, 2015 through the support of the Fund.

4. Unique program in Josai and the future

Josai believes that it is very important for a student to correctly understand his or her own country’s place in the world in order to be a leader of global society. Based on this concept, Josai and Josai International University three years ago started a new program “Japan in the World”

[Shirahata 2013]), open to students regardless of their major. More than 100 Japanese students from both universities are taking the class now.

The researchers in the field of fine arts lecture on themes such as “Uki-yoe”, “Japonism” and “Acceptance of Foreign Fine Arts.”

The program was created to link with global internship training based in Hungary. Thirty students participating in the “Japan in the World” course visited art museums in Budapest that possess examples of Japanese fine artworks.

We intend to extend this type of program to fields such as economics, environmental studies and other fields in which Japan’s global contribution is significant, linked with internship training based in the V-4 countries, especially Poland.

As of this year, Josai offers courses in English at the undergraduate and graduate levels for both international and Japanese students who are proficient in English in our Global College program. All-English classes focusing on Japan in the world will start from the next semester as part of the program.

For a university having a suburban-type campus, relations with the local community are especially important. As it is expected that Japan will have an exceedingly high proportion of benefit-receiving elderly to productive-age workers, local communities are now struggling to revitalize their communities against rapid decreases in the population of the younger generation in this aging society. Therefore, Josai and Josai International University have developed programs of community-oriented education and research in close cooperation with local governments.

One of these is a program of “Machi-zukuri” [Machi-zukuri], literally meaning “Town Planning”. We have strongly supported the traditional festivals around the campus area, especially the Sakado Yosakoi festival in the Machi-zukuri class. During the festival, traditional dancing teams parade through the street and a total of 100,000 people are gathered at this small city of Sakado, and several student teams from Josai join the parades. Josai also closely cooperated in the preparation of the festival with a view toward the revival of the community, and over 100 students of the faculty of management are involved in the planning and administration of this festival.

We have another unique project-based learning program utilizing nearby farmland [Campus life] Near Josai University there are many unused farm fields, where cultivation has been abandoned due to farmers’ aging. In the program a student group cultivated vegetables or rice in the field and the processed foods made from the cultivated crops were sold as the specialties of the area by the students in the program. Students learned about agricultural issues in the area, cultivation processes, ne-

gotiating methods with professionals, cash planning, inventory control, trademark registration, and advertisement, along with other things. One of such examples is a project making Chinese medicinal food curry sold in a pouch. Students cultivated the vegetables and herbs and they were processed into curry for distribution in pouches by a local food company, according to the students' recipe.

We are planning to expand similar projects of community-oriented education and research to solve local problems in the Sakado, Togane and Awa areas.

Our education programs are rapidly changing in view of globalization and community-oriented education and research. Community-oriented education will have a particularly important role in our university's globalization efforts. Through the discussion of attendees at the V-4 + Japan student conference held in 2013 at our campus, we recognized that not only can we develop cutting edge science in collaboration, we can also share ways of solving local problems in the V-4 countries and Japan. Students can discuss these kinds of problems with a sense of reality and enthusiasm.

We believe that our strong relations with Polish universities will contribute not only to the students' own future success, but also to that of our communities as well as our countries, and ultimately aid in the promotion of world peace.

Streszczenie

Uniwersytet Josai z Tokio podejmuje wzmożone wysiłki w zakresie rozwoju wzajemnych relacji z krajami Grupy Wyszehradzkiej. W rezultacie tych działań, w ciągu ostatnich pięciu lat gwałtownie rozszerzył współpracę w dziedzinie szkolnictwa wyższego, szczególnie w zakresie wymiany studentów. Całkowita liczba studentów przyjeżdżających na Josai osiągnęła liczbę ponad 100, podczas gdy liczba studentów z Uniwersytetu Josai oraz Josai International University, zmierzających na naukę do uczelni w krajach V-4 wyniosła około 200 osób. Opierając się na wcześniejszych doświadczeniach wymiany międzynarodowej, w roku 2013 Uniwersytet Josai uruchomił, jako pierwszy w Japonii, Instytut Studiów Europy Środkowej, aby promować w Japonii działalność badawczo-rozwojową w odniesieniu do krajów Grupy Wyszehradzkiej. W lutym 2014 r. na kampusie tokijskim Josai Instytut ten zorganizował konferencję studencką pod nazwą "V-4 + Japan". Przesłaniem konferen-

cji było promowanie wzajemnego zrozumienia wśród przedstawicieli młodszej generacji naszych krajów. Studenci-uczestnicy konferencji, oprócz uświadomienia sobie regionalnych i kulturowych różnic między Japonią i krajami V-4 , mogli skorzystać z okazji i pogłębić wzajemne zrozumienie w toku praktycznych dyskusji. A. Shirahata konkluduje, że wynik tych dyskusji pozostawił wśród władz uczelni silne przekonanie, że pewnego dnia uczestnicy tego wydarzenia utworzą „most dobrej woli” między Japonią i krajami V-4 . Powyższy artykuł omawia dotychczasowe osiągnięcia i przybliża plany dotyczące dalszego rozwoju i zróżnicowania współpracy naukowo-dydaktycznej między naszymi uczelniami.

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This monograph covers the output of the conference titled “2014 – New Opportunities for Japan and V-4 Cooperation” and contains Japanese and Polish contributions. It offers reflections on the *statu nascendi* of economic and cultural relations between the two nations. Viewpoints and research results mirror the various interests and arguments of the scholars (mainly economists, sociologists, and japanologists), businessmen, and representatives of administrative bodies (central and local governments) who participated in the conference, all of whom are searching for common solutions.

The presented papers are very much diversified with respect to their content and writing styles. The book itself reflects an eclectic approach. The multifaceted approach to the discussed issues facilitates the comparison of expectations against real life activities. The most important goal of the book is to identify the potential for collaboration and crucial fields in which there exist challenges and a need for changes, all in the interest of leading to a new stage of reciprocally profitable relations between Poland and Japan in today’s globalised world.



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