

To stand here today as a TLP graduate is truly a great honour and firstly I would like to thank my teachers for empowering me with their support, guidance, and encouragement, because all of this wouldn't have been possible without them.

...And what do I mean by “all of this”?

To begin with, I am half-Chinese on my father's side. But that never meant that I was naturally good at Chinese. As a child, I was brought up in Japanese and English, and unfortunately my father was not like my fantastic TLP teachers. Whenever my mother asked him “Oh, please, could you teach Chinese to the kids?” he would always reply “太麻烦了!”, that was his way of saying “I can't be bothered”. Back in the day, however, people often assumed that I was a trilingual just because I had the Chinese blood in me. Nope! One's lineage does not guarantee one's linguistic ability! But deep down, I wanted to do something about it.

And TLP changed me in the course of four years. Our freshman year started off with the seemingly ever-lasting pronunciation training. Prof. Wang was so careful about keeping the doors and the windows shut so that our hullabaloo wouldn't get on other people's nerves. ...I'm sure it still did though. Moving on to our second year, we participated in the Nanjing University Summer School in which we immersed ourselves in the fully Chinese environment. And so, by the end of the year, most of us acquired Level 5 of HSK (the second highest grade in the Chinese Proficiency Test). And that's where my TLP junior program ended.

In TLP senior program, it was time for me to take classes in Chinese or in English. TLP was not only about learning the languages; it was also about absorbing the world and widening interdisciplinary ways of thinking. In the third year, Prof. Karima took us to the Beijing Excursion in which we visited government institutions, companies and schools. Gaining a bit of confidence after achieving Level 6 in HSK, the highest grade, I took Chinese classes on China-Japan Relations, Taiwanese films, and essays on Japan written by Chinese intellectuals. And as for English classes, I selected leisure studies, global fashion and holocaust history.

Oh, by the way, my actual major is English literature. I am not a China expert at all! And so were many of my peers and I believe that this is what makes TLP special. We all come from different areas of studies. Learning a language intensively should be open to anyone, regardless of specialties. And such diverse perspectives have activated our

learnings. So, my appreciation goes to my wonderful classmates too, and I know that our community would last for a lifetime.

Although my “major” seems to be somewhat distant from Chinese, TLP certainly did have a “major” impact. It inspired me to study the representations of China and Asia in English novels especially around the 19<sup>th</sup> century, during which the cross-cultural encounters between the East and the West became increasingly reflected in literature as well.

Next autumn, I will be embarking on a new journey for my master’s degree in England, and it’s hard for me to say goodbye to my beloved University of Tokyo. But I hope to be back again one day and I wish to see the continued success of TLP in the future too. 谢谢您们的倾听。Thank you for listening.