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LSE-Waseda University PhD Exchange Programme 2016

Blog editor

I am a third year Ph.D. student in the Department of International Relations, interested in International Political Economy, particularly on Korea and Japan's Free Trade Agreements (FTAs). I am currently on an exchange programme at Waseda University, Graduate School of Asia Pacific Studies (GSAPS), in Japan. As the first exchange student from our department, I have benefited tremendously from this program, and I feel obliged to share this exciting opportunity with other research students. For anyone who is considering on going to Japan for his or her fieldwork, I can strongly recommend the LSE-Waseda University PhD Exchange Programme. The GSAPS and Waseda University provide opportunities to learn Japanese, make friends from diverse backgrounds, gain resources with limited access, meet with distinguished scholars and practitioners, and truly enjoy the life in Tokyo.



The GSAPS encompasses multidisciplinary studies that focus on East Asia, which include politics, economics, development, sociology, and more. The department is composed of students with diverse backgrounds, where both English and Japanese are commonly used. Since my Japanese was only at the beginner's level, the GSAPS provided a perfect communication environment, where I could use English academically, while socialising in Japanese in daily life. Within the department, there are also opportunities to join student-organised bodies like the GSAPS Student Association and Young Asia Observers for socialising and exchanging ideas.



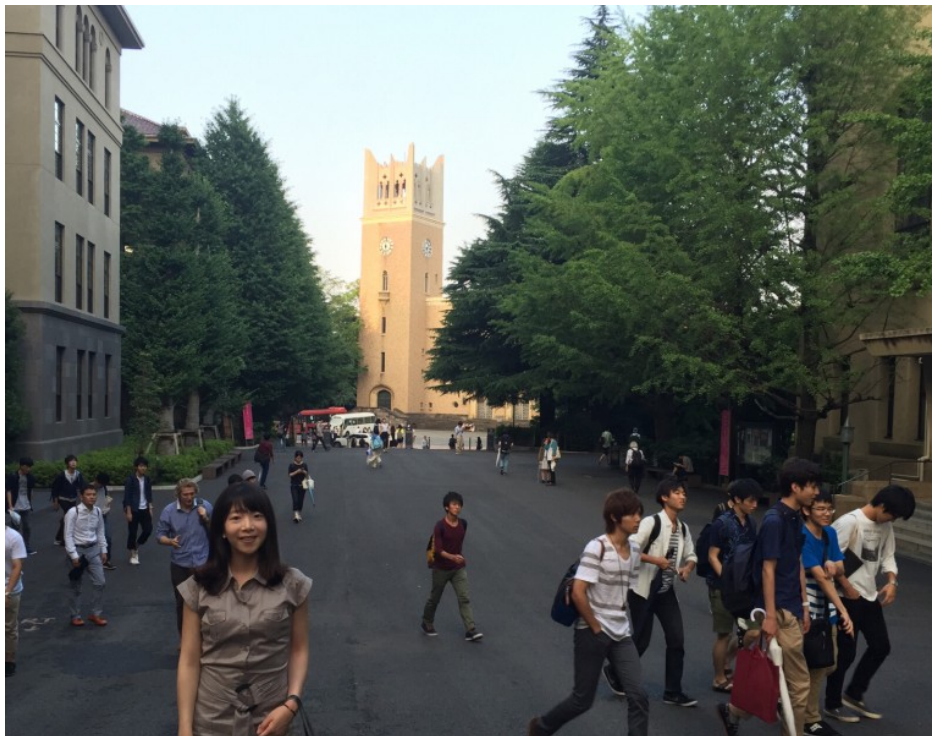
L to R: Sohyun Lee (current LSE exchange student), Mina Chiba (Waseda University exchange student this year), Yao Yang (next year's Waseda University exchange student).

At Waseda University, I am able to retrieve Japanese newspapers, journals, and books that are not accessible otherwise, which has been critical on the development of my research. Moreover, I have been receiving much support from Professor Shujiro Urata, a renowned economist and an FTA expert, who has kindly agreed to supervise my research during my stay in Japan. Under his guidance, I have been able to attend many conferences on the FTAs, meet Japanese trade experts, and get involved in many exciting scholarly discussions.

Last but not least, studying at the Waseda University provides an opportunity to enjoy the insider's life in Tokyo. As a sushi, ramen, coffee, and tea lover, I like to find the hot spots of Tokyo hiding in the back alleys. When I leave here, I will also miss the short weekend getaways to *onsens* (Japanese hot springs)!

[More information on the LSE-Waseda University PhD Exchange Programme:](#)

Sohyun Lee



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