

A Report on the 26th INTERNATIONAL PHILOSOPHY OLYMPIAD Montenegro Meeting

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Abstract

From May 23rd to 27th, 2018, the 26th International Philosophy Olympiad (IPO) was held in the town of Bar in Montenegro. I participated in it as one of the Japanese delegation teachers organized by The Japan Organizing Committee of IPO. In this paper, I would like to report on the outline of the International philosophy Olympiad, the contents of the philosophy essay writing contest, the process and the evaluation criteria of the essay examination, and what the Japanese delegation brought to the IPO this time, etc. while describing some of essay writing training episodes between the representative students and the teachers. In addition, as a part of this report, I would like to attach the Topics of this tournament and photos of the scenes of Montenegro Meeting.

和文摘要

2018年5月23日から5月27日までモンテネグロのバルにて開催された第26回国際哲学オリンピック (International Philosophy Olympiad : IPO) に、筆者は日本代表団の教員の一人として参加した。本稿では、国際哲学オリンピックの沿革をはじめ、競技種目である哲学エッセイコンテストの内容、エッセイの審査プロセスや評価基準、日本代表団による今大会の成果などについて、今回参加した日本代表高校生たちと教員たちとの事前のエッセイトレーニングのエピソードなどを交えながら報告する。また報告の一部に、今大会のエッセイトピックス (コンテストに出題された課題文) や大会風景などの写真を添える。

Keywords : International Philosophy Olympiad, philosophy essay writing contest, young people, intellectual exchanges, promoting the culture of peace

キーワード : 国際哲学オリンピック、哲学エッセイコンテスト、若い世代の人びと、知的交流、平和的文化の促進

1. Introduction

From May 23rd to 27th, 2018, the 26th International Philosophy Olympiad (IPO) was held in the town of Bar in Montenegro. I participated in it as one of the Japanese delegation teachers organized by The Japan Organizing Committee of IPO. 50 countries participated in this IPO, which is the largest number among the IPOs ever held. Participants from the following six countries - UK, France, Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand - took part for the first time. It was a memorable in the sense that England and France, the major countries in the field of philosophy, first participated in this tournament. The International Philosophy Olympiad (IPO), which is a competition for high-school pupils, first took place in 1993, led by the Department of Philosophy of Sofia University in Bulgaria to invite a group of philosophers from various countries. Since 2001 the International Philosophy Olympiads have been organized under the auspices of FISP (*Fédération Internationale des Sociétés de Philosophie*) and

with the recognition and support of UNESCO. The two main purposes of the IPO are to promote philosophical education at the secondary school level and increase the interest of high school students in philosophy, and to promote the culture of peace by encouraging intellectual exchanges and securing opportunities for personal contacts between young people from different countries.

Professor Shinji Kajitani (University of Tokyo) was the leader of the Japanese delegation. The delegation's representative students were Mr. Yoshiyuki Ishikawa (Hiroshima Gakuin High School / United World College Adriatic) and Mr. Kosuke Takaira (Azabu High School). As part of preparation for the Olympiad, last autumn, the Essay Contest "Ethics Philosophy Grand Prix" was held as a domestic preliminary contest, and the final qualifying meet was held in February this year. These two selected students through these contests represent Japan this year. Mr. Ishikawa participates for the second time following last year. Mr. Takaira makes his first appearance.

Prior to dispatching Japanese national team players to the IPO every year, related events such as domestic preliminary rounds, the Japan Ethics Philosophy Grand Prix, and a summer camp in philosophy for high school students are held every year. I have had opportunities to get involved in some of these preliminary events as a tutor, instructor or a judge; however, it was my first time to participate in the IPO itself this year. In the following sections, I would like to state my impressions while describing the outline of this IPO.

2. From Japan to Montenegro

On May 22nd, I departed from Haneda Airport with Professor Kajitani, a leader of the Japan delegation and one of the representative students, Mr. Kosuke Takaira to arrive at the airport of Podgorica, the capital of Montenegro, making connections at Frankfurt and Vienna. Another representative student entered from Italy to Podgorica. We met at a hotel near the airport. This was our first reunion since the winter domestic preliminary round. We exchanged greetings with each other to catch up with our recent related activities. After our reunion, we took a short walk around the city-centre of Podgorica and had a shared meal at dinner. In the next morning, we moved to the town of Bar located in the southwestern area of Montenegro.

Prior to the departure to Bar, we held a meeting in the hotel lounge to discuss the philosophy essay writing that would be held on the 2nd day of IPO. This was a lively discussion between the two high school students and teachers. Based on the results of the training for the essay which we had done beforehand in advance, Mr. Ishikawa and Mr. Takaira organized their own preparation tasks and materials according to their own personal preferences. As an instructor, I was concerned very much about them if they could maintain a good physical and mental condition.

“Well, thinking about what school usually is, no teacher thinks together with students.”

“Since I began to engage in the Philosophy Olympiad, I am not good at memorizing subjects (laugh).”

These two quotes above came from the two participants of high school students. Also ideas tossed off on the way to Montenegro and in the middle of a meeting. Their words imply their implicit criticism but also have a fair amount of humor. Hearing the feelings of the students, our teachers cheered (with some comfortable laughter). Of course I would like to emphasize that these words are suggestive of how to create positive working relationships when considering educational situations and philosophical activities. But more than that, I was interested in two high school students casually talking using such phrases while trying out various philosophical thoughts during essay training.

3. IPO Day 1

We arrived at Bar in the afternoon. (Fig.1) In the evening, an opening ceremony was held followed by various greetings from staff of the host country Montenegro, as well as from supporters. We then moved to another venue in the city on foot and enjoyed dinner and a party. People from fifty countries joined in the party to be ended in success with representative students and teachers from each country. The students also seemed to be able to break up into different groups immediately, and they were expressively talking and listening to each other. Professor Kajitani introduced me to a number of IPO members. In the meantime, students introduced friends to each other one after another. Everyone quickly began to call each other by their first name very naturally (as if they had been friends from olden days).

Many of the teachers participating seemed to be high school teachers. In many countries, including Japan, philosophy is not necessarily a compulsory subject of high school, but it seems to be a subject they are strongly interested in. However, beyond the differences depending on each institution, environment, history, philosophical education, the

large number of participants in IPO, the award history, and the presence or absence of public support in IPO participation, from the contents of conversations and facial expressions of many teachers as they talked, I was able to feel intuitively a sense of mission and passion that they have to provide top young people the opportunity of a philosophical education.



Fig.1 Bar, Montenegro

4. IPO Day 2

At the beginning of the second day, a separate program was conducted for teachers and students. Students participated in philosophy essay writing contests in the morning and afternoon. I made a wish that Mr. Ishikawa and Mr. Takaira could fully demonstrate their abilities.

The contest is open to English, German, French, Spanish, and non-native languages, with students writing essays over a four hour period on computers. Participants are permitted to use only a language dictionary (book dictionary). Quotations from philosophical books and ideas are presented as topics (task texts) in the four languages mentioned above. Then students choose one of the quotations and freely set down their interests and concerns related to the content in writing. This is the basic process of the philosophy essay contest. As for the topics presented in this IPO 2018, see Figure 2.

It seemed that this year's assignment text was balanced as a whole and each quotation had a sort of implications. For high school students, it must

have been quite difficult to figure out how to face this challenge.

On this day, the teachers held a small-scale operation meeting early in the morning. In the afternoon, we visited ruins of the old city of Bar, where workshops and walks were held. In the evening, we returned to the venue again where a session for the whole conference was held, and we exchanged opinions on topics such as the choice of host country for the next IPO and the future initiatives within IPO, etc. After this Montenegro convention, the membership made plans to continue in Rome, Lisbon, Kazakhstan and so on. When talking to a Kazakhstan teacher later, we learned they have already started a related event and an education/awareness program as preparation stage for hosting IPO. This teacher also told me that he intended to create "good impact" in domestic education through IPO.

5. IPO Day 3

Students enjoyed program events such as workshops and visits to suburban lakes all day, while teachers spent the day judging the essays. In the morning teachers held a workshop to discuss criteria of evaluation and review process. (Fig.3) This workshop is important because it plays a significant part in guaranteeing the quality of screening. It is particularly important for teachers who are judging for the first time and they can confirm basic policies and resolve questions. A teacher from last year's host country, the Netherlands, was in charge of lecturers, and appeared to have developed a well-designed workshop. I'll try out his point: it is not an essence of essay evaluation whether or not you have knowledge of the author of the topic and the thoughts of the author. As we have teachers participating for the first time every year, we have to repeatedly explain and talk about the operation of evaluation criteria, but we would like to pay respect to the management attitude of IPO, which handles this procedure every year.

Evaluation work began in the afternoon. Essay evaluation is usually carried out by all teachers from each country. All essays are numbered

consecutively in order that evaluators may not be able to know the writer's nationality or name at all and teachers should be careful not to review the essays of players from their own country. Five essays are assigned to a group of four people who read and score the essays first and then they set up a place to comment on each essay. This process is provided only to refer to each other's opinion, to confirm that their evaluation is not biased, and eventually to score according to their own judgment. There is no need to give the same score. However, for those entries that have too great a range of difference among evaluations, an additional reviewer is put in to read such essays later.

Evaluation is conducted according to the five criteria of "relevance to the topic", "philosophical understanding of the topic", "persuasive power of argumentation", "coherence", "originality", and is rated on a 10 point scale in increments of 0.5. Mistakes in grammar and usage, fidelity of expression are not subject to deductions in particular, judgment is only made on the basis of substantial achievement of the above noted standards. Also, it is decided that the essence of essay evaluation would not be on whether they show a knowledge of the author of the topic or the thoughts of the author, as announced earlier in a preliminary meeting. Those whose average value of scores given in this evaluation reaches a certain level are regarded as passing the primary examination and proceed to the second stage of judging. In the second examination, the essays which passed the primary examination are evaluated with a small number of steering committee members (about five members), who is to decide gold, silver, bronze medals and honorable mentions. The Steering Committee may grant more than one medal in each category.

I participated in the primary examination this time to learn that most of essays were evaluated by the judges who generally agreed on their rating, while some essays were also very differently rated. We discussed the way we read with each other and focused on the corresponding relationship with our evaluation criteria.



Fig.3 Workshop/ Discussion

On this day, it was already past 20 o'clock when all examination work was completed, including the review process and the results. While exchanging what they experienced and learning from each other's work, all the teachers walked slowly back to the hotel overlooking the coastline stained with the evening sun.

6. IPO Day 4

At breakfast, one of the high school students in Montenegro came to tell us that we could eat at the same table. It seemed that he wanted to chat a bit more with teachers from other countries. I talked while having bread and bacon, drinking apple juice, however, he kept talking quietly and earnestly enough to forget to have breakfast. I was impressed by a word he uttered unexpectedly, "I think, people are afraid of thinking." Namely, the ideas are widely spread that it seems to be a boring thing just to repeat doing things by trial and error, or to be in a context in which suggesting a clear idea is also a risky thing in a sense. Hearing such ideas, I felt brand new and totally refreshed by his sensibility. It seemed desirable to further enhance the program of discussion between students and teachers, together with this unique atmosphere and mutual insights.

Two lectures and one workshop were held in the morning. Since the program in the afternoon was canceled, we happened to have a time to go to the Skadar Lake in the suburbs with a teacher from

Bangladesh and Professor Kajitani until when the evening awards ceremony started. Thanks to this short excursion, we had a quite relaxing afternoon.

In the evening, we returned to the venue and attended the awards ceremony (Fig.4). Mr. Ishikawa won the bronze medal, Mr. Takaira obtained the result closest to the honorable mentions. We say to Mr. Ishikawa and Mr. Takaira, congratulations on their good fight. While celebrating the good fight of these two, I also thanked many of those concerned. After the award ceremony finished, I took a walk with Professor Kajitani on the beach near the venue.



Fig.4 Award Ceremony

7. Finishing IPO

In my view, one of the best points of the IPO's philosophy essay writing contest is that we are pursuing the creation of a contest that asks for the ability to find the "problem" itself. Or, it seems to be purely competing for the infinite possibility of how to respond to the problem, to "Set a problem!" Evaluators' concerns over the judging process and evaluation criteria will also support such pursuit. However, the direction of such pursuit must be said to be different from the direction of so-called academic examinations and selection tests that give problems, tasks and themes, and then give answers. "From the beginning of involvement with Philosophy Olympiad, I am not good at memorizing subjects (laugh)" also can be understood by reading this line naturally.

What is it that brings these philosophy essay writing contest experiences to young people, including students who entered the national preliminary rounds from each of the participating countries? Students who experienced philosophy

essay writing contests will never have a high rate of advance to the path of philosophy experts. Rather it is likely they will operate in areas other than the field of philosophy. However, it is certain that there will be many situations that present philosophical tasks or require the ability to find the problem itself. I hope that the time spent on IPO and philosophy essay writing contests will continue to offer young people experiences and memories of good influence on their future life.

Before ending my report, I would like to add a couple of episodes. During the event, it became clear that people of IPO were deeply longing for Professor Kitagaki who used to lead Japan's IPO previously. At the same time, Professor Kajitani, who led us this time, was very much loved by IPO friends. They would often use a nickname for him with affection. It is very apparent that the members of the Japanese delegation have created deep and lasting positive relationships through participation in IPO.

8. Conclusion

In conclusion, I would like to summarize as follows. Firstly, the delegation's representative students met and overcame a very good challenge through this IPO; Mr. Ishikawa won the bronze medal, and Mr. Takaira obtained the result closest to the honorable mentions. Additionally, participating teachers came away convinced that the members of the Japanese delegation had created a deep and lasting positive relationship through participation in the IPO. Furthermore, what the Japanese delegation brought to the IPO this time was not the pleasant achievement of winning medals for the strong efforts of Japan, but also building further friendship and relationships of trust through philosophical activities.

Finally, I would like to thank Ms. Jasminka, the organizer in Montenegro, the host country, and all the staff there. I would also like to thank Professor Kitagaki who led us to participate in IPO in Japan and the people involved in us to the end. I would also like to thank the Uehiro Foundation for Ethics and Education, a Public Interest Incorporated Foundation that has provided full support for this project for such a long time.

1. "Images belong to the rational soul in the manner of perceptions, and whenever it affirms or denies that something is good or bad, it pursues or avoids. Consequently, the soul never thinks without an image."

Aristotle, *De Anima* [III, 7, 431a 14-17], Translated with an Introduction and Commentary by Christopher Shields. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2016, p. 63.

- « Quant à l'âme dianoétique, les images remplacent pour elle les sensations, et quand elle affirme ou nie le bon et le mauvais, elle fuit ou poursuit. C'est pourquoi jamais l'âme ne pense sans image ».

Aristote, *De l'âme* [III, 7, 431a 14-17], Traduction nouvelle et notes par J. Tricot. Nouvelle édition. Paris : Vrin, 2003, p. 191.

- „Der zum Denken fähigen Seele kommen die Vorstellungsgehalte wie Wahrnehmungsgehalte zu; und wenn sie ein Gut oder Übel bejaht oder verneint, dann meidet oder verfolgt sie. Deswegen denkt die Seele niemals ohne Vorstellungsgehalt.“

Aristoteles, *Über die Seele. De anima: Griechisch-Deutsch* [III, 7, 431a 14-17], Übersetzt, mit einer Einleitung und Anmerkungen herausgegeben von Klaus Corcilius. Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 2017, p. 191.

- “En vez de sensaciones, el alma discursiva utiliza imágenes. Y cuando afirma o niega (de lo imaginado) que es bueno o malo, huye de ello o lo persigue. He ahí cómo el alma jamás entiende sin el concurso de una imagen.”

Aristóteles, *Acerca del alma* [III, 7, 431a 14-17], Introducción, traducción y notas de Tomás Calvo Martínez. Madrid: Editorial Gredos, 2003, p. 104.

2. "No man is devoid of a heart sensitive to the sufferings to the others. Such a sensitive heart was possessed by Former Kings and this manifested itself in compassionate government. With such sensitive heart behind compassionate government, it was as easy to rule the Empire as rolling it on your palm."

Mencius [2a: 6], A Bilingual Revised edition, Translated by D. C. Lau. Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2003, p. 73.

- “Todos los hombres tienen un corazón incapaz de soportar los sufrimientos de los otros. Los reyes antiguos tenían el corazón compasivo, por ello practicaban una política igualmente compasiva. Cuando con un corazón compasivo se practica una política igualmente compasiva, el gobierno del mundo es tan fácil como hacer girar algo en la palma de la mano.”

“Mencio” [2A: 6], in Confucio, *Mencio, Los cuatro libros*, prólogo, traducción y notas de Joaquín Pérez Arroyo. Madrid: Alfabeta, 1981, p. 179-180.

- « Tout homme possède un cœur qui ne peut tolérer la souffrance d'autrui. Comme les anciens rois possédaient un cœur qui ne pouvait tolérer la souffrance d'autrui, ils établirent un gouvernement qui ne pouvait tolérer la souffrance d'autrui ; et comme ils mirent en pratique des mesures qui rendaient intolérable la souffrance d'autrui, ils instaurèrent l'ordre dans le monde aussi facilement qu'on fait tourner une boule dans le creux de la main ».

“Mengzi” [2a.6], in *Philosophes confucianistes*, textes traduits, présentés et annotés par Charles Le Blanc et Rémi Mathieu. Paris : Gallimard, 2009, p. 327-328.

- „Alle Menschen haben den Kardialsinn, der dazu befähigt, nicht hartherzig zu sein gegenüber anderen Menschen. Da die Ahnkönige (ergo) den Kardialsinn hatten, der dazu befähigte, nicht hartherzig gegenüber anderen Menschen zu sein, haben sie halt folglich Regulierungen, die nicht hartherzig waren gegenüber den Menschen, entstehen lassen. Wenn ein Herrscher mit dem Kardialsinn, welcher dazu befähigt, nicht hartherzig zu sein gegenüber anderen Menschen, Regulierungen praktiziert, die nicht hartherzig sind gegenüber den Menschen, dann erlaubt dies ihm, beim Dienstbewusstmachen des Reichs dieses auf der Handfläche kreisen zu lassen.“

Menzius [2a.06], in Robert H. Gassmann, *Menzius: Eine kritische Rekonstruktion mit kommentierter Neuübersetzung*. Band I: *Spurensicherung und Übersetzung*. Berlin/Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2016, p. 276.

Fig.2 The 26th International Philosophy Olympiad, Bar, Montenegro, 2018 TOPICS

3. “Because a (narrower or wider) universal community widely prevails among the Earth’s peoples, a transgression of rights in *one* place in the world is felt *everywhere* [...]”

Immanuel Kant, *To Perpetual Peace. A Philosophical Sketch* [AK VIII, 360], Translated, with Introduction, by Ted Humphrey. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 2003 [1795], p. 18.

- „Da es nun mit der unter den Völkern der Erde einmal durchgängig überhandgenommenen (engeren oder weiteren) Gemeinschaft so weit gekommen ist, dass die Rechtsverletzung an einem Platz der Erde an allen gefühlt wird [...]“

Immanuel Kant, *Zum ewigen Frieden. Ein philosophischer Entwurf* [AK VIII, 360]. Berlin: ELV Verlag, 2014 [1795], p. 36.

- « Puisque désormais la communauté (plus ou moins restreinte ou large) des peuples de la terre s’est développée au point que la violation du droit en *un* endroit de la terre est ressentie en *tous* [...] ».

Emmanuel Kant, *Vers la paix perpétuelle. Un projet philosophique* [AK VIII, 360], Introduits, traduits et annotés par Max Marcuzzi. Paris : Vrin, 2007 [1795], p. 35.

- “Como se ha avanzado tanto en el establecimiento de una comunidad (más o menos estrecha) entre los pueblos de la tierra que la violación del derecho en un punto de la tierra repercute en todos los demás [...]”

Immanuel Kant, *Hacia la paz perpetua. Un esbozo filosófico* [AK VIII, 360], Introducción, traducción y notas de Jacobo Muñoz. Madrid: Biblioteca nueva, 1999 [1795], p. 98.

4. “A work of art takes place in and as a performance in which listeners or observers abstract the artwork out of the context of the empirical or real world to render it purely aesthetic, an abstractive and active deed that requires them to achieve a state of self- or world-forgetfulness as they enter into the new world of the work of art.”

Lydia Goehr, “The Curse and Promise of the Absolutely Musical: *Tristan und Isolde* and *Don Giovanni*”, in: Lydia Goehr and Daniel Herwitz (eds), *The Don Giovanni Moment: Essays on the Legacy of an Opera*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2006, p. 149.

- “Una obra de arte se produce por medio y en forma de una actuación en la que los oyentes u espectadores abstraen la obra del contexto del mundo empírico o real y la convierten en algo puramente estético, un hecho activo de abstracción por el que deben alcanzar un estado de olvido de sí mismos y del mundo al entrar en el nuevo mundo de la obra de arte.”

Lydia Goehr, “The Curse and Promise of the Absolutely Musical: *Tristan und Isolde* and *Don Giovanni*”, in: Lydia Goehr and Daniel Herwitz (eds), *The Don Giovanni Moment: Essays on the Legacy of an Opera*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2006, p. 149, traducido al español por Luca M. Scarantino.

- „Ein Kunstwerk entsteht in und als eine Performance, in der die Zuhörer oder Beobachter das Kunstwerk aus dem Kontext der empirischen oder realen Welt abstrahieren, um es rein ästhetisch zu machen, eine abstrakte und aktive Tat, die von ihnen erfordert, einen Zustand des Selbst- oder Weltvergessenheit zu erreichen, wenn sie in die neue Welt des Kunstwerks eintreten.“

Lydia Goehr, “The Curse and Promise of the Absolutely Musical: *Tristan und Isolde* and *Don Giovanni*”, in: Lydia Goehr and Daniel Herwitz (eds), *The Don Giovanni Moment: Essays on the Legacy of an Opera*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2006, p. 149, übersetzt von Regina S. Mentz.

- « Une œuvre d’art se réalise dans et sous la forme d’une performance dans laquelle qui écoute ou observe extrait l’ouvrage du contexte du monde empirique ou réel pour la rendre purement esthétique, par une démarche d’abstraction active qui exige que l’on atteigne un état d’oubli de soi et du monde au moment où de pénétrer dans le nouveau monde de l’œuvre d’art ».

Lydia Goehr, “The Curse and Promise of the Absolutely Musical: *Tristan und Isolde* and *Don Giovanni*”, in: Lydia Goehr and Daniel Herwitz (eds), *The Don Giovanni Moment: Essays on the Legacy of an Opera*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2006, p. 149, traduit en français par Luca M. Scarantino et Nicole G. Albert.

Fig.2 The 26th International Philosophy Olympiad, Bar, Montenegro, 2018 TOPICS