

*A contribution to The Japan Times* (It was not printed regrettably)

## **“Boys be ambitious!”**

Where can we find the spirit, “Boys be ambitious!”?

To where has gone the spirit, “Boys be ambitious!”?

It has been said, “In these years, the number of Japanese students who goes to study abroad is evidently decreasing”. For example, to the United States of America, the number decreased from 46,000 to 25,000, the most in history. Meanwhile, the number of students going abroad from China per year is 128,000 and from Korea, 72,000.

Why Japanese students don't go abroad? It is analyzed that the language ability of Japanese students has leveled off or it's because that it is difficult to gain employment under the present recession. Some students say, “We would rather stay in a safe and comfortable society in Japan than to live in a dangerous and uncomfortable overseas country”. Some media and people point out that it may actually be a lacking of the spirit of youth for challenges.

Furthermore, a data has become known that almost half of the freshman who began to work in the companies are thinking, “I don't wish to work abroad”. Why on earth don't the youth want to go outside anymore? Why have they lost their spirit and vigor?

When I was young, about half a century ago, the environment for studying abroad was not even as well prepared as today. In the rural area, particularly where I lived, to study abroad itself was almost considered as an impossible dream.

To achieve this impossible dream that I had cherished at my young age, I dared to go to study abroad in Spain for one year after my retirement. Although the sensibility might have decreased, I was able to enjoy the life with my young classmates at the Malaga University in southern Spain. This has made my life richer spiritually and has offered me more possibilities to pave my future life.

It is said, “A dream and a spirit will form a human being. A big dream and a great spirit will form a great life”. I believe that what makes a human being rich or poor depends on this dream or spirit.

There are more exciting things in this world than those that are only economically focused. Indeed, studying or working abroad helps one learn the different cultures and the different ways of living. It enlightens and expands one's world.

Here, I would like to again cite the famous message that Dr. Clerk presented to Japanese youth many years ago: “Boys be ambitious!”