

The Significance of Writing One's Personal History
(In place of "May Way of Writing Papers")
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Experience and "Knowledge of Experience"

From a certain age, try to write your own history. I think this is very valuable.

Writing is an incredible thing. For all kinds of experiences gone through in the life process, even if you recall them over and over again, your image is only vague. However, if you write those experiences decisively into an article, associations will emerge from behind the article and reappear, thus forming a story that you can't even think about before beginning such a task.

I have served as a judge for several compositions and thesis competitions undertaken by universities and newspapers.

When I was requested to make an award ceremony speech, I made it a rule to convey the following message to the students.

"Although you are much younger than I, you have accumulated corresponding experiences. You have accumulated experience in family, school life, overseas study, regional social activities and other occasions. However, if these experiences are not written into articles, without your noticing it, they will gradually fade away and most of them will be forgotten."

Experience, through writing, could become eventually "experience-knowledge", which forms a block of such experiences. Then you write another experience to form another block of experienced knowledge. When several blocks of knowledge of experience are accumulated, they as a lump of knowledge of experience will not collapse easily. The size of this lump, I believe, represents how much you have grown as a human being.

In order to make all kinds of experiences truly irreplaceable to one's own life, it is necessary to turn your experience into knowledge of experience by writing them down. I, therefore, strongly recommend you to carry out this writing exercise until it becomes a habit of yours. This is the indispensable way that you can grow as a person.

"Life Quantity" and "Emotion Quantity"

People live in joys, sorrows and various feelings. Sometimes, you will feel ecstatic, but on the contrary, you will feel desperate, so that your heart is blocked and you can't move. Life can't have anything to do with these emotions.

In the words of ordinary people, today is just like yesterday, tomorrow is just like today, in short, they live a smooth day. However, sometimes they are played with by intense emotions. I have experienced this, too.

Even in the distant past, if it is a very painful experience, it will become some kind of "trauma", which will make people suffer for a long time. The word "traumatic stress disorder" (PTSD) is heard by many recently. Severe past experiences can lead to "flashbacks" (post-traumatic stress disorder), resulting in the inability to concentrate, sleep, and/or maintain emotional control.

I heard that many people who have experienced the Great Hanshin Awaji Earthquake, the Sarin gas attack on Tokyo subway and the Great East Japan Earthquake still suffer from this symptom.

Even if there is no such dramatic experience, people tend to be distressed by even small things as "why did you do that" and "why did you say that". Moreover, people often feel that they hate such statements themselves and cannot accept them. This happened to me, too. When it comes to "negative self" which is a very troublesome expression, this is what I mean. Just "don't think hard about it" or "forget it" is a mood that can't be forgiven anyway.

I heard that there is also psychotherapy for this symptom. I am not familiar with this therapy. I would, therefore, suggest to you to write a paper about the past difficulties and painful experiences straightforwardly. If you keep the feeling of "stuffiness" in your heart, it is difficult to overcome the symptom, likely.

Writing is to "objectify" oneself. If the feeling of "stuffiness" is written into an article, the person who writes this article can become another self who looks at this "stuffiness" from the outside. You can look at it with a calm heart and free yourself from your inner pain. I think that you can change yourselves from the "negative self" to the "positive self". Isn't it too much to call it a "relief of the soul"? In the process of writing about the painful past, you might feel even more painful. However, if you write down the painful experience truthfully, you should find that your heart has become much easier by the time you finish your writing.

Recently, Hiroyuki Itsuki wrote an article: "Sing painful songs when you are in pain, sing sad songs when you are sad". In the time of pain and sadness, you can't encourage yourselves even if you sing cheerful and happy songs. This paradox seems to me to be true. Japanese Enka songs are almost always painful and sad songs. As a matter of fact, it seems to me that Enka is "the rooters' song of life". People who are more or less in my age group know that the representative song of Showa era is "Kanashii Sake (Sad Sake)." The lyrics are:

Drinking alone in a bar
Taste the tears of parting
I want to forget my love's look
But it floats on the glass as I drink more

Oh Sake, if you have a heart
Please help me to take away anxieties towards my love
Drinking Sake makes you sad
Drinking and crying is also for love

I like being alone
Cry in the heart of what I said
In a world people fall in love, yet can't live together
Night falls with tears and regrets

Lyrics: *Ishimoto Miyuki*
Composer: *Masao Koga*

Although there is no word for "life quantity", I think it is possible to achieve it. How much quantity of life has a person lived richly throughout his/her lifetime? This quantity of life is equivalent to say how many feelings this person has had in his/her life. In my opinion, the larger the quantity is, the richer the life becomes.

If life quantity is measured by emotion quantity, I think it is measured by the means of volume of emotions which are expressed in written words. To my way of thinking, many excellent novels can even be said to be the perfect composition of emotional, expressed vocabulary.

What I want to say above is, first, that "experience" becomes "experience knowledge" through writing, which formulates a "block" of experienced knowledge for one's growth. Second, experience does not mean the factual experience only. It should include the feelings and emotions which are experienced in the process. Unless you write down those feelings and emotions, you may not expect that your life quantity will become ever larger.

Self and Others

When one writes one's own article about oneself, one is not oneself anymore. It is something like that you can't see your face without a mirror. You will never see your face unless you take it to the other mirror inside you. Look at yourself in the mirror, not the reflection but your true self. However, if you don't have that, you don't know what you look like.

We identify ourselves by looking in the mirror, don't we? In social life, the mirror reflecting oneself is for others. It's hard to imagine a completely lonely self that has nothing to do with others. In a state of complete loneliness, even the self-awareness of how one exists will not come into being.

We know how others recognize ourselves, how to evaluate ourselves and how to treat ourselves. According to other people's understanding, evaluation and treatment, we realize that we are such an existence and live a social life in this

way. I think we are constantly forming our own existence in such a social life. Self is not only confirmed directly by self. Self is formed while indirectly confirming the self in the eyes of others.

We were born from our mother's womb into this world. The first person we met was our mother. Although it is another person, the mother-child relationship is a very dense "symbiotic" relationship. Slightly away from this symbiotic relationship between mother and child, it is the father who exists. Another symbiotic relationship juxtaposed with mother is the father. Moreover, there may be brothers and sisters, and even grandparents around, which is also a symbiotic relationship. Needless to say, this is family. In this kind of family relationship, the relationship between oneself and others is one that one cannot choose. In this sense, it is the relationship of fate.

We start our life while confirming the symbiotic self in the eyes of others. The first other person in our life is our family. Compared with the human relationship waiting for us, which requires a lot of tension, this self in the eyes of others is in a deeper love. It can be said to be "acceptable".

We must confirm that our self-family is acceptable in the eyes of others, so that we can form a "positive self". In other words, if the mother-child, father-child and other family relationships are not smooth and tension arises, a "negative self" will be formed. In the later life process, we will be troubled by various psychological entanglements.

While experiencing early childhood, girlhood and boyhood, adolescence and youth, we must establish interpersonal relationships with those who are different from our families while continuing to live. When we attend primary school, middle school, high school and the university, we must live in relationships with people of different blood, birthplace and other attributes.

After graduating from high school or university, if we start working in various companies and/or organizations, interpersonal relationships will become more complicated. Even in such interpersonal relationships, we must row the boat of life forward while confirming our image in the eyes of others. While confirming the self-projected in the eyes of extremely diverse others, we must change our correspondence with those others and make ourselves form a certain self.

When it comes to "carrying out oneself", there is always a sound of courage and braveness. However, this is often just a kind of self-satisfaction, or creating useless friction with others, which may eventually plunge a person's life into an unfortunate and miserable situation. In my opinion, it is the behavior of a truly independent person to always look at himself/herself rationally through the eyes of others, change himself/herself flexibly and freely, and try to make life pliable.

Now, I am going to talk about my personal history. The history of childhood, girl- and boy-hood, adolescence and youth, and maturity and old age, is a form that everyone would think of immediately. According to this order, if you write down all kinds of experiences, impressive things, your position and feelings in them, you will certainly be able to write a story. When you see it, you can re-examine yourself and take it as the starting block of your next life.

Conscious of One's Own Blood-line

Terms such as "Ketsu-Myaku (blood-line)" does not seem to be used very much today, but if you write your own personal history, you can imagine that many people will be awakened to this idea. I think this awakening is very important.

I have always wanted to write something about my "birth", and then I obtained some related valuable material. I, therefore, wrote an article about my blood-line. I would like to introduce a part of it here. This is the beginning of an essay on "Reiwa New Era" commissioned by Hanada, a monthly magazine (June 2019).

I was born and raised in Kofu City, Yamanashi Prefecture. Kofu is a mountainous city surrounded by steep mountains on

all sides. I was born in a house which had been built about 50 years earlier, which has become completely dilapidated today. Now no one lives there. My elder brother and I felt that we can't just ignore our abandoned house. After some discussion, we decided to demolish it.

Before demolition, while sorting out the old furniture, etc., a photo was found deep inside a drawer on the second floor. It is beautifully bound and engraved with the name of the photo studio. Although the periphery of the lining paper is very shabby, the photo itself is still clearly visible. (See the photo below)

My heart was shocked when I heard from my eldest brother that the youngest of the nine blood relatives in the photo was our mother. The endorsement reads: Meiji 37, January, taken in Nakakoma-gun, Yamanashi Prefecture. The man in the military uniform in the middle is my grandfather (my mother's side). The photo was taken by my grandfather when he gathered the whole family together on the morning he left for the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905).

Our grandfather has several medals hanging from his chest. After confirmation on the epitaph, I learned that my grandfather also served in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895 (Meiji 27), ten years before the Russo-Japanese War, and his medals were given for that military service. Interestingly, our grandfather is wearing straw sandals in the photo. In the war, he must have worn this straw sandal to fight in the wilderness of Manchuria.



Standing on the left with a baby in her arms is my grandmother. That baby is my mother. The two girls on either side of my grandfather are my mother's sisters. The two old people on the right are our grandfather's parents, that is, my great-grandparents. The two ladies in the back row are our grandfather's sisters. When the Russo-Japanese War broke out, my mother was born. Much later she married and gave birth to five children, I was one. Every time I see this photo, I deeply realize that my existence does not belong to me personally, rather I am living in the

stream of blood flowing from generation to the next.

My Personal History

Life is the accumulation of experience. As I wrote earlier, the writing these experiences are an indispensable work to reconfirm and form oneself.

I had a chance to write my personal history. From 1988 to 2000, I worked as a professor in Tokyo Institute of Technology. When I retired, as a custom for many years, I was requested to deliver the "last lecture". Although it is a lecture, not only my students but also other students, teachers, staff or foreign guests can attend. It is indeed a kind of farewell party for the last class.

This reminds me of what I was going to speak about in the last class. The audience may not be attracted to an economist lecture on any topic of economics. Therefore, I chose a slightly different lecture style entitled "Sentimental Journey: Asia in My Heart". I don't usually talk much about my own history. However, I thought that it wouldn't hurt to talk about it in front of everyone as this is the last chance.

An editor of PHP Magazine Voice attended my last class lecture. And after the lecture, he said, "Prof. Watanabe, today's speech is very interesting. I recorded it. I will dictate it from the tape as an original manuscript. Please edit it for our

magazine." I red-penciled the original manuscript and it was published in the magazine sometime later. I recall that the editor-in-chief of Voice later said to me "The manuscript of the last lecture was published in our magazine for the first time."

The title of the article in Voice is "Asia in My Heart". The article was later read by Takashi Hirabayashi, editor-in-chief of the Central Public Opinion (Chuoukoron). One day, he invited me to the cafe of the Palace Hotel. He said to me: "Prof. Watanabe, do you want to add more to this article and publish a book as part of your personal history?" At that time, Tokyo Institute of Technology's retirement age was 60; my retirement age was just around the corner. After retirement, I was appointed as dean of the Faculty of International Development, Takushoku University. I was extremely busy at that transitional period on my life.

I replied, "I'm glad you invited me, but now I'm very busy under the circumstances. Besides, I think it is too early to write my own personal history." Hirabayashi said: "You have had student "war" experience. Nowadays, young people don't know anything about the Anpo Protests (Campaign against the Japan-US Security Treaty). Sixty years old is not young enough and I know you are very busy, so let us wait another two or three years." Then I replied, "Well, I'll find a way."

Although it is not my full personal history, I linked up the fragments of my life in one form or another which was published as a book entitled, "Watashi-no-nakano-Ajia (*Asia in My Heart*)."

The book was published in January 2004. It is regrettable that Hirabayashi passed away before publication of the book he took special care to see it published. This episode reminds me of such complicated feeling about my life and how it is intertwined with others.

Experience and knowledge of experience, according to different writers, are literally "very different". As I have been working in the ivory tower and research organizations environment, research history occupies the center of my personal and professional history. Besides this being a rather a special field, I will not write my research history as itself. What I write is what kind of era and society I have lived in.

When writing about one's personal history, something like a chronology from birth to the present is natural. I have already mentioned the procedures for writing in this order. We might roughly distinguish the three or four periods of girl- and boy-hood, youth, maturity and the present, and try to write down the important experiences for ourselves and the significance of the experiences for later life. If we write a story, as I have already said above, we will think of some things that we can't imagine before writing, and the content gradually becomes thicker in the process of writing.

Start with Something Symbolizing Youth

For me, the most symbolic event in my youth is the "Anpo Protests". This took place in my sophomore year of the university (1959-1960).

I came to Tokyo from the countryside of Yamanashi Prefecture, where I entered Keio University, and spent the first two years in Hiyoshi, Yokohama. It was when the "Anpo Protests" was enraging. As it was called "1960 Anpo Protests", it was more than 60 years ago. I was a country youth who knew next to nothing. Young people from all over the country fluently used political terms that were difficult for me to understand, much less discussed Japan's political situation and Japan-US relations, all of which made me feel a little drunk. In the warm atmosphere of this movement, although it completely cooled down later, I was addicted to it at that time.

I didn't attend university classes, but demonstrated around the Diet Building almost every day. However, if I just write such facts, my personal history becomes superficial. I need to review what considerations I took action for at that time. Otherwise, it is difficult to record about what considerations I grew up with for that is an indispensable component of my personal history.

Simply, "just like getting drunk, I was attracted by the enthusiasm of young people all around me." But I remembered that only my body was drunk and my head was strangely cold. Some people may think, if I had calmed down, then I should not have taken part in the movement. But I think this is the argument of a generation that has never experienced the "impulse" of a mass movement.

Why my body was drunk, yet head was strangely cooled down? That's the way it is. I began to feel that the logical center of the Anpo Protests is opaque. A feeling began to vaguely emerge in my mind, that is, whether the logic mentioned by my classmates and predecessors around me is wrong or not.

At the end of the Anpo Protests, I considered that the Anpo (the security treaty between Japan and the United States) was indispensable. Since then, I have believed that the Japan-US alliance has been the key to Japan's defense. If the alliance is not consolidated, Japan's security cannot be guaranteed. What did I think about in the Anpo Protests? I think that I experienced a valuable thinking process in my personal history.

In my personal history, I have not only reproduced my own thoughts at that time, but also added the knowledge and opinions acquired later, so I think it doesn't matter to add these knowledge and opinions to my personal history, rather, as my own history, this is justified. This is what I wrote in *Asia in My Heart*.

The Anpo Protests is an incredible political movement. The old security treaty, which came into effect in 1952, had no choice for the defeated country Japan. And it was also a unilateral treaty that humiliates and restricts Japan's sovereignty. Its characteristics are that stationing of U.S. troops is permanent, those troops can be dispatched even for domestic civil strife such as riots in Japan, bases cannot be lent to any country other than the U.S. and the U.S. is obligated to defend Japan, and treaty duration of U.S. troops is not clearly stipulated.

The so-called new security treaty aimed to change the unilateral treaty to the bilateral. As a matter of fact, (due to the establishment of) in the new treaty, two clauses, namely, the clause that the U.S. military can be dispatched during civil strife and that bases can only be lent to the U.S. military, were deleted, and the U.S. military obligations to defend Japan and the duration of the treaty were clearly stipulated to be within ten years.

At that time, due to the existence of Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution and the political situation that constitutional amendment could not be realized, it was completely impossible to explicitly stipulate Japan's U.S. defense obligations corresponding to those of the U.S. military. Therefore, although the new security treaty is far from the completely bilateral nature of Japan and the United States, sharing equal status and responsibilities, it is at least certain that it is the first step towards this goal.

Then, what was the Anpo Protests within the new security treaty? Was it just refusing to stand on Japan's own feet? No, it could not be. What is the Anpo Protests to protect? If we want to protect post-war democracy, then the theoretical arming approach is too weak. The parliamentary system based on universal suffrage is a system in which the majority competes with each other. You can't protest the majority decision at the parliament. Although the introduction of police in Congress is somewhat harsh, it is also violent for parliamentarians to prevent the Speaker from taking office through sit-ins. There is no justification for one violence used to condemn another kind of violence.

Imagine What is behind Reality

On this basis, when asked what the Anpo Protests was, I wrote:

Nationalism is hidden in the security struggle. Although Japan suffered repeated defeats in the Pacific and Asia, and countless people were killed by atomic bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan did not lose all its national strength. Although it was an unconditional surrender, it did not erase the preparation for the common enemy and confrontation

against the U.S. military. After the war, the economic recovery advanced at a faster speed than expected. In the mid-1950s (the mid-30s of Showa), Japan experienced an unprecedented period of high economic growth. At this time, political humiliation and economic self-confidence mixed together ushered in mass nationalism, which disappeared after the war, to begin to emerge once again. In this case, why does nationalism disdain security revision and tilt towards anti-security revision instead?

Nationalism is a kind of national psychology that confirms the “self” by projecting on to “others” and advocates “self” by opposing “others.” Nationalism would not have been established if there were no “others” who projected and opposed “self.”

In this context, Japan was “self,” while the U.S. was “others.” If “others” is powerful and overwhelming and has suppressed the existence of “self,” the “others” is impeccable as the object of appealing to the existence of “self” which is powerful and tends to suppress its existence, and impeccable as the object of accusing their own existence, as is implied by developmental psychology, which grasps people's growth process from the deep psychological level. After the war, Japanese nationalism vented its country towards the U.S. and advocated its existence, that is, anti-American nationalism.

Life in Organization

When writing my personal history of youth, there is one more thing that I want to touch upon. After graduating from university, I worked in a private enterprise called Nippon Kayaku Co., Ltd. After working there for three years, I left and attended my alma mater's graduate school and obtained a doctor's degree. Then, I entered my teaching life as a full-time lecturer at another university.

Although this work experience in a private enterprise was only a short three years, it was an experience that had a great impact on my life. The reason for resigning is not to hate the company's work at all. It was because I thought, "I want to become a researcher and stand on my own feet no matter what. The pre-30s judged by me was the limit window for me to enter this road." As a matter of fact, working in the company had been a very fulfilling time for me. Most importantly, when looking back on the later life experience, it can be said for me that nothing was more useful than this work experience.

I entered the company in 1963, and the next year was the Tokyo Olympic Games, which was the "era of enterprises".

I was placed to work at a pharmaceutical manufacturing factory located along the river of Arakawa, Akabane, Tokyo. I was assigned to the Material Warehouse Section, responsible for office work to manage the entry and exit of materials and equipment in all parts of the factory, and at the same time, I drove forklifts to transport chemical oil drums to the main departments. I, therefore, got a forklift driver's license and a dangerous goods handling supervisor's license.

What surprised me most was the interpersonal relationship in the enterprise organization. In the personal history of “Asia in My Heart,” I wrote as follow.

Factories form communities, and people are closely combined with each other to form a small universe. This fact surprised me. At that time, I had lost my left-wing view, but I still thought that workers and managers were opposite. In 1959, a year before the Anpo Protests, there was a picturesque labor dispute of Mitsui Miike, which was printed in our minds as the prototype of the workers' movement.

However, the interpersonal relationship observed in Akabane factory was based on the tacit understanding of familism and is truly coordinated. The factory director always wore vegetable-colored work clothes and never wore a tie. He was one of the managing directors of the company. As a director of the company, he was also one of the managers. He greeted

about 300 employees and soon remembered my name. The factory director's surname was Takeda, mostly called "Takechan" by the employees. When there was a reception (drinking party), as soon as he arrived, he flushed and leaned his knees on the tatami mat to pour sake to the employees.

No one doubted lifelong employment and everyone expected a little increase in wages throughout employment. Labor unions did exist; they were company labor unions. The union rally was held about once a month, and I attended it every time. The union chairman explained the negotiation with the management, and then delivered a slightly anti-system speech in the popular left-wing language at that time. To this, labor union members applauded one after another, but there was no sense of urgency. I never felt the atmosphere of labor unions arguing with "management". I wonder if the labor union had ever recognized that there existed the management of the company at all.

Before I could sigh with emotion that I could find a job in the university to support my wife and children, a fierce university dispute broke out in that university, which turned out to be the base camp of the Kanto United Red Army.

When I first entered the university, my job was to take lecture notes for my eternal teacher Kakuten Hara, and to take discussion notes for the monthly professor meeting. Can I get a full salary in this way? Judging from the extreme poverty until I got a job at the university, it was like happiness in heaven, but such a thing could not last long.

As a student, I took part in the Anpo Protests at my own will, and no matter what the outcome was, it was my own responsibility. However, in this school dispute, although I was young, I stood on the side of the faculty who confronted the students. How to associate with youth groups did become an important page in my personal history.

I would like to close this essay by quoting my words at the beginning of this essay again.

Although you are much younger than I, you have accumulated corresponding experiences. You have accumulated experience in family, school life, overseas study, regional social activities and other occasions. However, if these experiences are not written into articles, without your noticing it, they will gradually fade away and most of them will be forgotten.

Experience, through writing, could become eventually "experience-knowledge", which forms a block of such experiences. Then you write another experience to form another block of experienced knowledge. When several blocks of knowledge of experience are accumulated, they as a lump of knowledge of experience will not collapse easily. The size of this lump, I believe, represents how much you have grown as a human being.

In order to make all kinds of experiences truly irreplaceable to one's own life, it is necessary to turn your experience into knowledge of experience by writing them down. I, therefore, strongly recommend you to carry out this writing exercise until it becomes a habit of yours. This is the indispensable way that you can grow as a person.