

Interview with Yesaya Raditya, 2014 Henry Fong Award Winner

The 2014 Henry Fong Award winner, Yesaya Raditya, is a student at Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University. Vesna Hart, the INU Project Coordinator, interviewed Yesaya before he left James Madison University where he studied as an exchange student for a semester.



Yesaya Raditya, 2014 Henry Fong Award winner receives the award from Dr. Lee Sternberger, President of INU.

It has been wonderful to have you study here at JMU. To begin, please tell me about yourself.

My name is Yesaya Raditya. I was born and raised and born in Indonesia, but I have been living in Japan for the past four years and studying at Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University in the southern part of Japan. During free time I like to skim through books and watch movies. I like to hang out with friends and go out playing soccer and drink tea... Yes, I'm definitely a tea person.

What do you study at APU, and why did you choose to study there?

I am an International Relations major with a Peace Studies minor. I chose this area of study because from what I've seen, I think that the major problem happening in the world is because the conditions—the circumstances that people are living in—are so different in different parts of the world. For example, you have a stable government at one side of the world and then at another part of the world people live in an undeveloped country where the government is unstable and war is everywhere; people there cannot do even simple things we do every day. It is ironic because the West is trying to create this new world order since WWII has ended, but it doesn't work as they envisioned it would. I am trying to find some solutions for this issue using existing ideas.

What motivated you to attend the Student Seminar?

I participated in other international experiences with different topics, but the Student Seminar was different, I think. The topic of the Student Seminar, *Refugees in Global Society*, was interesting and very much related to major studies as well as my minor studies. I applied, and following the application process I was selected to attend the Seminar.

What was the highlight of the Student Seminar?

I was able to explore the topic of refugees more deeply than I have before, and I think that's the highlight. I appreciate that some of the professors who gave lectures focused on the case studies of specific countries. What they presented was very intriguing and really useful.

Why did you choose JMU?

First, I had never been to the United States, and I really wanted to go at least once in a lifetime to America. Second, during the seminar I met with Dr. Scherpereel and he talked about JMU. He explained that JMU has really good programs in Middle East studies and conflict resolution. These are the areas of studies that I really want to learn about and don't have the opportunity to study back in my home university. I checked the websites of several universities within the INU and in the end I decided to go to JMU. And, I'm here!



What are highlights of your time at JMU?

The thing that I realized the first week of school is that American students know how to have fun. I've had fun a couple of times, but I know the limits. In terms of classes, I love one of my professors, Dr. Kaussler. When I talk with him, it feels like I am not talking to a professor, but I'm interacting with some older student. He is very approachable and really easy going. During class time he encourages students to speak their mind freely. He embraced the ability to dialogue and have discussion with others. This is very different than in Japan, where hierarchy matters a lot more.

Where do you feel you have grown the most?

I think I'm becoming more open. I also don't take things at face value, but engage more in critical thinking. Interestingly, I got this from the experience of living in this community: from the environment, the campus, the classes...

What are your plans for the future?

First, I am going back home, to visit my family, and then I will do a two-month internship in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Indonesia. I'm looking forward to this experience since it's my first time doing a professional practical job. After my last semester at APU, I will graduate in September 2016. Following graduation... I think it's kind of similar to everybody's experiences as a senior. It's probably just figuring out what my future will be: either job searching or graduate school.

Thank you, Yesaya. We wish you all the best in completing your education.

