2016 EPOK Student Forum

Essay Collections

Okayama University

February 2017

　2016 年度、ＥＰＯＫを修了するみなさん、修了おめでとうございます。

　修了生 11 名は、日本語や日本文化を学習し、異文化間の交流を体験的に学び、またその経験を共有しながらグローバルな友情を岡山の地で結びました。

　岡山大学で過ごした半年あるいは 1 年間の留学生活の中で得た経験や出会いのすべてが、これからの皆さんの人生の宝になることでしょう。

　岡山大学のＥＰＯＫプログラムも皆さん一人一人の参加によって、より創造的な交流プログラムとして成長しています。 EPOK 留学を通じて、岡山大学がみなさんにとっての学び舎のひとつになったことを光栄に思います。

　皆さんの未来に祝福あれ。

　Congratulations on your completion of EPOK at Okayama University.

　The eleven EPOK students who are completing the exchange program are all unique ones with independent spirit.

　You have made international friends while sharing indispensable experience, studying and living abroad. All of your experiences and encounters in Okayama, Japan will be a treasure in your life.

　It is our great pleasure to share the part of your treasure. It is also our pride you have made a part of the EPOK history which will continue to grow.

　Best wishes for your bright future.

February 10, 2017

山本洋子　(Yoko YAMAMOTO)
Director
Center for Global Partnerships and Education
Okayama University

In completing EPOK Research Project:

2016 年度 EPOK 交換留学生のうち冬学期で修了する 11 名の EPOK Research Project の成果を
エッセイ集として纏めました。EPOK 生はそれぞれ日本語学習に取り組み、日本社会や文化
について教室内外で大いに学びました。EPOK プロジェクトは、そうした日本を知るための
様々な学習経験の中から個々のテーマを選び、リサーチした成果です。

留学は、慣れ親しんだ日常、家族や友と離れて、"異"なる文化の中で学び暮らす経験を通じ
て、新しい世界の見方と新しい友、新しい自分に出会うことです。良いことも困難なことも
全て合わせて、自らのリミットに挑戦する経験も得たはずです。EPOK を通じて達成した
様々な成果を今後の糧にしていってくれることを願います。

In February 2017 the eleven of 2016 students are completing EPOK program at Okayama University.
In this EPOK Essay collection, the students share their individual research interest, findings and
analysis which they pursued as their EPOK project in studying "Japan." The compilation of the writing
whose topic was chosen by each student shows a good variety of the students' interest in Japanese way.

In the course of EPOK these students have well achieved their own goals by strengthening *Nihon-go*
and intercultural communication skill as they immersed themselves in study, life and cultures of Japan.
The experience of living in a foreign land and culture, which could be both joyful and hard, has helped
these EPOK students expand their horizon and grow stronger, I believe.

Now this place foreign has become your second home. For your courage and achievement, I am proud
of YOU.

February 10, 2017

大林純子 (Junko OBAYASHI)
EPOK Advisor
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Alexander Bates

People of Okayama and their Exposure to Foreign Cultures by Age

Alexander Bates

The University of Adelaide – Australia

Summary

　この研究の目的は岡山の住民が外国の文化についてどう考えるのかを調べることである。研究のため、岡山大学の学生や３０代以上の岡山県住民などの対象として、インタビューを行った。日本に住んでいる外国人として、岡山の人がどんな観点で外国を眺めるのか調べた結果としては、年代が高いほど、外国の文化について興味をもっていることが分かった。

　　　　"If Japan is to continue enjoying today's prosperity and contribute to world peace and prosperity, it is indispensable for Japanese society to maintain harmonious relationship with the international community."(*The international Community of Japan, 1993*). Japan, like most other counties in the world, is slowly, but surely becoming more multicultural. It is not uncommon these days to see large groups of foreign tourist around large Japanese cities such as Tokyo, Osaka and Kyoto. However, in more rural areas of Japan, this sight becomes less common. For the Japanese people who live in these rural areas, does such opportunity exist where they can interact with foreigners and/or experience a different culture? Or do these opportunities fall short of the more well-known Japanese cities?

　　　　The focus for this research paper will be dedicated to developing an understanding of how the people of Okayama view foreign cultures and how often they are presented with the opportunity to be immersed within another country's customs. Overall interest levels in foreign cultures will be a key aspect in understanding how Okayama views the outside world. As a foreigner who has spent an extended amount of time if various parts of Japan. I have experienced very mixed and varied responses to my presence. From people displaying a genuine interest in me and my culture, to being denied entry to a bar because I was a foreigner (In Tokyo no less!). I have also discovered that this spectrum of reactions were not just exclusive to me, with other foreigners (or Gaijin- 外人) sharing similar experiences. Overall, my experience in Okayama with its people has been very positive and most (if not all) have shown a keen interest in my background. The research project was chosen due to these interactions. I began to wonder if this interest in foreign cultures stems from a lack of exposure, or from people who had extensive knowledge of other backgrounds and were simply trying to broaden their knowledge. These thoughts were the foundation of this research paper.

Results

　　　　To develop an understanding of the prevalence of foreign culture within Okayama, a mix of both quantitative and qualitative research methods were used. Research such as journal articles were seldom used as it was quite difficult to find specific information on the topic. The quantitative research comprised of asking the people of Okayama simple/easy to understand questions about their interest in foreign cultures and also their experiences. These questions were asked in a rather informal manner, as I believe that people would be more honest if they are relaxed and in a comfortable environment, as opposed to a more formal interview or a survey. Originally, it was planned that research would focus solely on the younger people of Okayama (students at Okayama University). However, it was later decided that by asking these questions to the general population of Okayama, a more varied answer pool would be obtained. The two primary questions asked were; "Do you have an interest in foreign cultures" and "How often do you feel you are exposed to foreign cultures (whether it be people/events).

Although these questions seem like simple 'yes/no' or single answer questions, they were used so it would be easy to create quantitative research and produce several graphs. A total of 42 people were asked these questions with 28 being young people (young people defined as under 30). Of that group 15 were male and 13 were female. The remaining 14 were people of older age (over 30) with 10 being male and 4 being female. The questions were asked in a variety of locations where people would be most relaxed, from locations such as university, club circles and even at bars/izakaya's. After all the information was collected, the two groups were divided (younger generation and older generation) to see if there was a difference between generations, the results were as follows (see graphs below);

Do you have an Interest in Foreign Cultures?

People aged under 30

21%

79%

■ Yes ■ No

Figure 1
Figure 2

People aged 30+

7%

93%

■ Yes ■ No
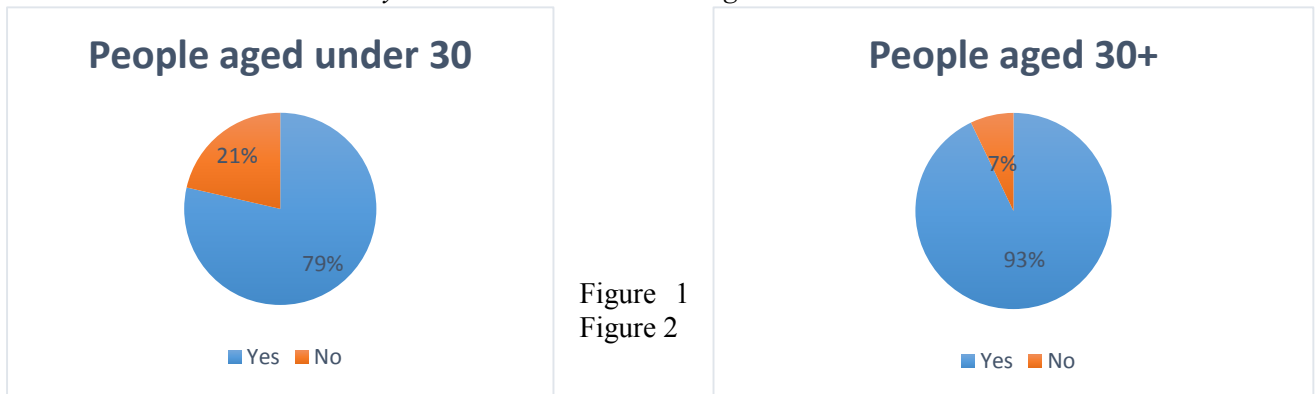
As both Figure 1 and 2 show, a large percentage of people from Okayama have an interest in foreign cultures, with 35 out of 42 people answering 'yes' to this question. In figure 1, 22 out of 28 people replied positively to the question, whereas in figure 2, 13 out of 14 people responded with a yes to the question.

How often do you feel you are exposed to foreign cultures?

People aged under 30

People Aged 30+

Figure 3

Figure 4

Figure 3 and 4 show how often the people of Okayama feel exposed to foreign cultures. In figure 3, 20 out of 28 felt that they were often exposed to foreign cultures, whether it be through meeting foreigners, events etc. In comparison, out of 14 people in figure 4, 13 out of 14 people over the age of 30 felt that they were either hardly, or never exposed to foreign cultures.

The qualitative research component of this paper consisted of in-depth interviews conducted with both Japanese and international students. A total of 3 people (Japanese/female/under 30, Japanese/male/over 30, and American/male/under 30) were interviewed and were asked questions similar used in the quantitative research, as well as questions related to foreign languages, travel, views on different cultures, interest, as well as any personal comments that were made. As with the quantitative research, the interviews were conducted in environments where the interviewee would be most

comfortable.

Out of the 3 people interviewed, all could speak English as well as Japanese (a little in the case of the American). As with travel, all 3 had also travelled abroad before, with the Japanese male over 30 having visited over 50 different countries! I believe it was this fact that led him to believe that he feels as if he is never exposed to foreign cultures within Okayama. All three agreed that experiencing different cultures broadens one's mind and generally makes them a more accepting person and although, 2 of them have had bad experience while travelling abroad, said they didn't believe that the experience reflected on the culture. While the Japanese male (Over 30) believed that he did not have many opportunities to experience foreign culture within Okayama, the Japanese female who was a student believed that she has previously had many opportunities to experience foreign culture (through study abroad opportunities, as well as establishments such as L-Café). Within the group of three people, it was made blatantly clear that all 3 had a deep interest in learning and experiencing other cultures.

With the personal comments section of the interview, a variety of answers were obtained. The Japanese interviewees agreed that Okayama receives a lot less exposure from foreign cultures compared to Japan's larger cities, with one saying that Tokyo and Osaka feel like completely different country's compared to Okayama! The American and Japanese student re asserted the fact that they believed that there are many opportunities the experience foreign cultures within Okayama. However, the Japanese male, who was over 30 (actually over 40), believed that during his time at University, he did not have the same opportunities to study abroad and meet foreigners as University students of today. He also added that he believes that it is much harder for older generations of Japanese people to travel or explore a different culture due to work and family commitments which become far more important later on in life (despite visiting over 50 country's himself). This statement supports the quantitative information provided in figure 4.

Discussion

By looking at both the quantitative and qualitative research present in this paper, we can generalise how the people of Okayama are exposed to foreign cultures. Also, we can see how different generations feel about foreign cultures. Although this research does have its limitations, such as being a small sample size (45 overall compared to the population of Okayama is quite small!) as well as the data being collected in an informal manner, I believe certain trends show themselves within the two age groups. The first trend shown in figure 1 and 2 suggest that the younger people of Okayama (73%) have less interest in foreign cultures as opposed to older generations (93%). However, as shown in figure 3 and 4, younger generations of people believe they are more exposed to foreign cultures compared to people over the age of 30. For this information, a few presumptions can be made. While more opportunities exist for younger people of Okayama to interact with foreign cultures, many students may not consider this a high priority in their lives. Most students interviewed were students at Okayama University, and many were in their final years of study. This could possibly mean that the students were more focussed on finding a job and good grades as opposed to showing keen interest in foreign cultures.

Whereas in the older generations of Okayama people, although they showed a higher % of interest in foreign cultures, believed that they had little to no exposure to different cultures. Throughout the qualitative research aspect of this paper, these statements seem to have been supported by what the interviewees had to say. While in University, it is natural for people to have many interest, including foreign cultures, club and circle activities, however, the primary reason for attending university, is, and always has been to acquire a job after graduation. This could be why younger people do not show as much interest in foreign cultures as older generations who already have a job. Younger people may also feel as if more 'international' opportunities exist for them now, compared to 20 years ago, which affects how exposed they feel to foreign cultures. Also, although it may be an assumption drawn from the information provided, but many of the people interviewed over the age of 30 stated that they now believed that life should be dedicated to work or a company, and expressed desire to experience a different culture, but were unable to due to these commitments.

Conclusion

According to the information gathered, the young people of Okayama have more opportunities and feel more exposed to foreign cultures than their older counterparts, however, when it comes to overall enthusiasm and interest, the older generation just comes out on top. As the world becomes more globalized, it's becoming important to develop an understanding as to how other cultures view different topics, and their customs. Overall, this research has shed a little light on how exposed to foreign culture's the people of Okayama feel. However, since only a small sample size was used (also inconsistent with the ratio of young and old people), more study is needed within the area to grasp a true understanding about the exposure to foreign culture that the people of Okayama are interested in.

EPOK Experience Reflection

At first, while applying for the EPOK program, I had no idea what to expect, or what I was getting myself into. Although I had previously stayed in Japan for an extended period of time, this was my first time studying full-time in a foreign country. Upon arrival at the share house (and my new home for the next 10 months) I was nervous about meeting my new housemates. However, they were all friendly and I was settled in no time. Over the first few days, I was able to quickly make friends. The Orientation sessions organised by The Global partner centre allowed me to explore Okayama University campus and find out where my classes were before they begun. During the semester, I undertook a variety of classes that would allow me to develop a more in-depth understanding of Japanese culture. Before arriving in Japan last year, I had no Japanese language skill at all, now however, I believe that I am able to speak and understand Japanese at an intermediate level. EPOK classes such as 'Study of Japan', 'Homestay' and 'Chado' were my personal favourite, as they allowed me to experience a side of Japanese culture in which not many foreigners are able to. During the summer holidays, myself and a few friends had to opportunity to explore and participate in activities unique to Japan, such as climbing Mount Fuji, and visiting large cities such as Tokyo and Osaka. Looking back on my time here at Okayama, I can honestly say that this has been one of the best experiences of my life, I have been able to experience aspects of Japanese culture that I had only read about, make lifelong friends, and develop skills that I can now use, throughout the rest of my life. I am very grateful for this opportunity to participate in the EPOK program and am sad to be leaving within the next few months. Thanks for Everything!

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- http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/other/bluebook/1991/1991-3-4.htm *The international Community of Japan, 1993.*

- Majority of research was acquired through Interviews and short meetings with various people within Okayama;

- Interviews for quantitative research – 42 People (Japanese), anonymous

- Extended interviews; Japanese, Male, over 30, anonymous (Okayama City)

  Japanese, Female, under 30, anonymous (Okayama City)

  American, Male, under 30, anonymous (Okayama City)

Kyle Nelson

Japanese Reactions to Western Culture

Kyle Nelson

Cal. State East Bay (America)

Summary:

　日本の文化が様々な点で世界中に影響を与えてきたことに疑いの余地はない。しかし、当の日本人はどうだろうか。彼らはどのように西洋文化に反応してきたのだろうか。本論文では、岡山大学の学生に実施した匿名のアンケートから得られた情報を用いて、この問いに答えることを目的とする。調査に参加していただいた学生からは、それぞれの問いに対し示唆に富む答えを得る事ができた。また、それらの答えは西洋文化が日本に及ぼしてきた影響について彼らがどう感じてきたかを明らかにしていた。当然ながら、様々な答えが得られたが、驚くべきことに、一部の問いに対しては、完全な合意が見られた。それらはウェブ上の記事などの情報源から裏付けを取ることもできた。本論文は西洋文化が日本に与えた影響の全てを網羅したとは言えないだろう。しかしながら、日本人が西洋文化に対してどのように反応してきたか、そして良くも悪くもどのように影響を及ぼしてきたかを明らかにする第一歩となるだろう。

In our modern world, it's hard to imagine a time when all our various cultures and ideologies were separate and isolated. Every nation on Earth has managed to influence one another, and for better or worse, we are all interconnected with a variety of cultures and beliefs. One such country is that of Japan, whose culture and traditions have fused with the modern era, perhaps more so than any other nation. This unique blend has spawned a multitude of identities and preconceptions towards it. Ask any foreigner about what comes to mind when they think of Japan, and they might give you answers such as; a highly developed modern society, a nation of electronic manufacturers, lovers of fish and sushi, Samurai and Bushido, and a country of hard-working, honorable people. One way or another, Japanese culture is felt all over the globe. Yet, how do the Japanese themselves feel about the rest of the world? With this thought in mind, this report sets out to explain how the Japanese have reacted to western culture and influences in their daily lives, through the use of student interviews and electronic resources.

Before this report begins in full, it's important to explain the meaning behind the topic, and from where it originated from. That being said, this section is composed of my own beliefs and feelings, and may not be considered fact for other people. In my own personal experience growing up in America, my first encounter with Japanese culture was through the medium of Anime. Television shows such as *Dragonball Z*, *Gundam Wing*, and even *Sailor Moon* were immensely popular among children of my generation. The advent of *Pokémon* (in both Anime and Video Game form), only helped to further my interest in this "new world" of Japan, where all these wonderful shows and games were coming from. As I got older, my interest in Japanese Anime and Video Games gave me the desire to start learning the Japanese language itself, however I wouldn't be able to do so until the start of my college life. In the meantime, I spent my teenage years learning more about the nation of Japan, of its culture, history, and people. Nowadays, while my interest in things such as Anime may have subsided as I got older, all of these important interactions led me to finally having the chance to study abroad in Japan, and fulfill my dream of being able to experience Japanese culture myself. So when it came time to choose a topic to study, I thought to myself "What about the reverse? How do the Japanese react to western influences and culture, and how has it affected them?", and thus a topic was born.

To find the answer, I conducted anonymous interviews with Japanese students at Okayama University and asked them a variety of questions relating to how they felt about Western culture affecting Japan. Although this demographic doesn't speak for every age group in Japan, I felt that the similarity to my own generation (only a couple years off) would allow for answers more closely related to my own personal experiences. The answers they gave me were surprising, as many of them felt the same way regarding certain topics, and only a few differed in their opinions. The first question that I asked them was about which aspects of Western culture (such as Fashion, Music, History, etc.) were of interest to them as they were growing up. Of the students I interviewed, four of them revealed that they loved the popular *Harry Potter* franchise. One student explained that by reading the Japanese translation of the books in Junior High School, it marked the beginning of their interest in Western culture and lifestyles. Another student remarked that the movie versions of the books made them interested in the United Kingdom, and was one of their first introductions to this new foreign culture. It's interesting that for a few students, *Harry Potter* was to them what Anime and Manga was to Westerners like myself.

Aside from that, other topics were brought up such as a fascination with Western-style weddings. The students remarked that the popularity of Western-style weddings has increased tremendously in Japan over the last few generations. Upon further research online, one article states that "even though only a tiny fraction of Japan is Christian, a majority of couples have Western-style 'White Weddings'" (PRI.org). So ruling the concept of religion out of the picture, most Japanese in some way or another seem attracted to the idea of Western-style weddings, whether due to the beautiful (and expensive) white wedding dress, or the elaborate ceremonies that accompany them. In addition, one of the students explained that Japanese-style weddings are considered to be more expensive than their western counterparts, so pricing might be a factor to why Western-style weddings are more attractive. Surprisingly, the students further explained that some couples even get married twice, celebrating with one Japanese-style and one Western-style wedding. It's clear to see that even something as sacred as marriage is not exempt from Western influence.

The second question that was asked to the participants was if they thought that the Westernization of Japan over the last 150 years has somehow harmed Japan's culture, and if there were any benefits. This one really surprised me, as all of the answers I received dealt with the introduction of western foods. The students felt that western style cuisine has negatively affected the eating habits of the Japanese. They explained that bread and meat are eaten in more abundance than in the pre-westernization era, where the common diet was fish, miso soup, and rice. This has led to higher obesity rates, and more chances of heart disease. According to an article written by the Japan Times, "Lifestyle factors have become Westernized... Especially, food has become Westernized – and mainly high-calorie and high fat" (Japan Times). The article states that at the moment, less than 5% of the population can be considered as obese, and that that number is only expected to increase in further years. Even though the general consensus among the interviewed students was that Western cuisine caused obesity, one student felt that it also enriched Japanese food culture and allowed for more variety in food choices than before. Overall, it was enlightening to learn that not all Western influences have been beneficial to Japan.

The third question that was asked to the students was why they wanted to learn English (or any other foreign language), and if they also enjoyed doing so during their previous school life. Once again, the students unanimously agreed that learning English is fun and enjoyable, albeit hard. Many of the students wanted to travel abroad and experience foreign cultures, so they needed to develop their English skills as a requirement. Some also felt that learning English would enrich their lives, allowing them more opportunities in the job industry as well as allowing them to appreciate western pop culture more. Regarding their previous lessons in school, the answers were a little more mixed. Some students didn't enjoy learning English during Jr. High and High School, as they felt the lessons were rigid and focused more towards filling a requirement for examinations, and not allowing room for discussion and proper practice of the language itself. Confirming this statement, an article by Japan Today explains that Japanese teachers of English focus on a mandated set of grammar and vocabulary words that are featured on national tests, and that "a broader understanding and the practical uses of English are largely ignored because they have to cover the specific material and don't have time for anything else" (Japan

Today). It's interesting that even though there are students who are passionate about learning English, the school system they are a part of doesn't adequately prepare them for interaction with western cultures. However, one or two students remarked that despite this, English was one of their favorite classes while growing up.

This also leads into another question that was asked to the students, which was that if there was one thing they could change about Japan in order to be more like the West, what would it be and why? As expected, the answers to this question were far more mixed than the others. However, the same student who loved learning English in the previous paragraph remarked that they'd like to see the Japanese educational system changed in regards to introducing active learning and having more discussions in class. They reasoned that this would allow for the Japanese people to be better able to express their opinions not only amongst themselves but with foreigners as well. Coupled with the paragraph above, it's clear that there is a desire for students to learn a new language, but the systems in place do not properly allow them to engage in thoughtful discussion. This is one area where Japan could definitely take some influence from Western cultures.

The final question that was asked was what were some positive or negative stereotypes regarding Western culture in general. Some students gave some interesting replies such as the idea that Western girls (mainly teenagers) look older than their Japanese counterparts because of the use of makeup. They explained that Japanese girls normally don't wear that much makeup (or any at all) during pre-college life, and that they don't start doing so more commonly until they reach university age. They also assumed that because Japanese girls (and guys) have long bangs in their hairstyles, as opposed to shorter bangs in Western hairstyles, that they may look cuter or younger than the "more mature Western women". In regards to how they felt about specific Western cultures, one student felt that Americans were friendly and had strong personalities, while those from the United Kingdom were seen as kind and gentle, with a penchant for communicating with the use of alcohol as an aid (to break the ice so to speak). Another student explained that although they felt that most Americans are funny and friendly, they can also be arrogant, and that many Japanese also have negative views of US military troops stationed in Japan (for being cruel and aggressive). To clarify this, a report written by the Congressional Research Service states that "opposition to U.S. Military bases derives from two main areas: (1) concerns that the American presence degrades the local quality-of-life with regard to personal safety, noise, crime, and the natural environment; and (2) pacifism and anti-militarism" (Congressional Research Service). Another student built upon this by stating that although they feel safer due to U.S. Military protection, they do agree with the idea that the troops have caused crime and other problems in local areas. Unfortunately, debating the presence of U.S. troops stationed in Japan is not the point of this research paper, however, there's no denying that their presence could be considered as a negative Western influence on the Japanese.

Overall, there's no doubt that the West has had a significant impact on Japanese culture. While this paper is not able to cover nearly a fraction of what's been affected, it's been enlightening to see how Japanese students from my generation have been influenced from abroad. Whether it's by pop culture, foreign cuisine, language, or other topics, they have all played a significant part in shaping and incorporating new ideas into modern Japanese lifestyles. It's important to note that even though these influences are changing society in various ways, it's important for the Japanese to maintain what makes them culturally unique. Western culture has clearly affected Japan, and there have been roadblocks along the way, but I can rest assured knowing that there is no other country on earth better equipped to combine traditional values with modern ones.

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Nine Anonymous Okayama University Students. Personal Interview. Jan 11, 2017.

EPOK Reflection

I've had an amazing time through the EPOK program since arriving in Japan last April. Admittedly, I was nervous before arriving because I felt like I wouldn't be able to have a good time. Luckily, during my time here I managed to make a large number of friends, not only among the Japanese but with other international students from abroad as well. This was my first time living on my own, and I'm lucky to have experienced dorm life with roommates from other nations. I travelled to numerous cities such as Hiroshima, Osaka, and Tokyo, and also experienced the quiet inaka life of small towns such as Yakage and Bizen through homestay and internship programs. By working in L-café as well as helping out as a Teaching Assistant in various English classes, I was able to help many Japanese students improve their English ability, making many friends along the way. I'm immensely proud of what I've accomplished during my time here in Japan, and I'll never forget the memories that have been made here. It has always been a dream of mine to someday live in Japan, and EPOK has allowed it to partially come true, if only for a short while. I hope to one day return to Japan, and reconnect with the many wonderful people whose path's I've crossed.

Robert Spargo

The influence of English proficiency and foreign exposure on Japanese-foreigner interactions

Robert Spargo

The University of Adelaide - Australia

　このリサーチは日本人と外国人の社会的交流についてです。日本人の大半は外国人と交流することは大変だと思います。それはなぜですか？私は、日本人は英語に自信がなくて外国の文化をあまり知らないからだと思います。そのせいで、日本人は外国人と交流することができないと想定していました。その想定のために岡山大学生と英語ペラペラな日本人に質問しました。このレポートの中で私の経験と研究を説明します。結果は海外に行ったことがある人は外国人と交流することできるようになりました。

　One of the main unique differences between Japan and many other Asian cultures/countries is how Japan has continued to reject immigration, limit foreign interaction and limit foreign influences upon Japanese culture. While Japan as a country is ranked academically high, generally considered at least the top 5 in most fields(Worldbank.org), the reality of their level concerning English is rather different. As a foreigner in Japan, one will quickly come to realise just how little interaction Japanese people generally have with foreigners and perhaps even see a barrier form between foreigners and the general Japanese populace. While Japanese people generally harbour no ill intent when they interact with foreigners sometimes it can come across as racist and make foreign people feel alienated in Japan. Comparing Japan to a similar Asian country such as Korea the level of acceptance of foreigners seems to be completely different, it also hardly feels as if there is a barrier between Korean people and foreigners. The question is, what causes this barrier between Japanese people and foreigners? While one could speculate that it is Japanese culture that causes this barrier, this report will explore the hypothesis that it is a language issue. While the hypothesis of this report is that the barrier is caused by language, this report also aims to explore any other causes by evaluation of research and observations.

　The basis of this hypothesis comes from the observation of different Okayama University students. The first observations were that of how general students will act towards foreigners, while they show the kindness that a normal Japanese person generally shows it feels as though that is all it is. Comparatively, Okayama University students that have experienced studying or living abroad in another country, particularly that of a western country, are much easier to have a meaningful conversation or develop friendships with. A rule of thumb among language learners and teachers is that if you wish to develop your proficiency in a language exponentially the best way is to experience living in a country where it is the primary language. For many of the students that have studied abroad they have a much higher proficiency of English and thus much more confidence and comfortability when speaking English and interacting with foreigners. However, while studying abroad does improve English skill which favours the language hypothesis, living in a foreign culture allows for a change in world perspective and allows for one to break the restraints of one's own culture. Exploration into the latter would support the hypothesis that Japanese culture is the main influence of interactions between foreigners and Japanese people.

　Firstly, to explore the aspect of culture influencing Japanese-foreigner interaction I conducted my own research and observations of Japanese daily life and how most Japanese students and the general populace go about their lives. One aspect that really stood out to me was how very different the way daily life in Japan is in comparison to Australia. Although it may be a generalisation, most Japanese people tend to stick to their social groups and rarely have much contact with people outside of that. For example, public transport, in Australia it isn't uncommon to have someone strike up a conversation with

you during a bus or train ride, however, Japan on the other hand it is very uncommon and most people try to avoid disturbing/interacting with other people. For me this is a very difficult concept of Japanese culture to grasp as I highly value the friendly mateship culture of Australia. Nevertheless, after observing this aspect of Japanese culture I concluded that perhaps it could be the introverted nature of Japanese society that causes this barrier between Japanese people and foreigners. However, after joining a university volleyball circle, there remained a barrier within some of the members. Japan being notorious for having a unique club/circle culture especially around sports I thought that this would be a great opportunity to really test the validity of the culture influence hypothesis. After joining there were some members whom were friendly and quite welcoming of myself and some other foreign members, yet, shortly after I noticed that many of the members still preferred to keep their distance from us and once again felt as if there was a barrier. This led to the conclusion that there must be another aspect that influences this kind of behaviour.

The second aspect that I explored was the approach of language being the primary influence on creating the barrier. Whilst studying at Okayama University I've lived in an international share house. The share house contains a vast array of people from different countries and cultures but in each room, there is at least one Japanese student. The share house is where most of my good Japanese friends came from, the point being that the Japanese people in the share house were much easier to talk to and build solid friendships with. Another place where I was able to have rich conversations with Japanese people was at an English café that I found in Osaka and went to for research. The two things that the people at met at the share house and the English café had in common were that they generally had English levels that were good enough to have a complete conversation and that they had travelled to foreign countries. This led me to two hypotheses' one being that by increasing proficiency and confidence in English, there is less of a barrier between Japanese and foreigners. The second being that by studying/travelling abroad a person's personality and attitude towards foreign people changes. To further explore these aspects, I designed a small questionnaire, the target being two kinds of people. One, the generic student of Okayama university that has not travelled to foreign counties therefore there is theoretically a bigger barrier between them and foreigners. The second, being a Japanese person who has had large amounts of foreign influence or interaction, either by studying or travelling abroad. The questions were as follows.

Directed towards the generic student who had little exposure to foreigners and a general understanding of English:
1. Are you comfortable speaking to/and or interacting with foreigners?
2. Do you consider yourself to be proficient in English?
3. Have you ever studied in/travelled to an English-speaking country?
4. Have you had much experience/interactions with foreigners/and or foreign cultures?

Directed toward Japanese people whom had more influence or interactions with foreigners/foreign cultures were:
1. Are you comfortable speaking to/and or interacting with foreigners?
2. Do you consider yourself to be proficient in English?
3. Do you believe that you act differently towards foreign people and/or have a different view of foreign cultures after studying/travelling abroad?
4. Do you believe that your English level greatly increased while studying/travelling abroad?
5. Did studying abroad allow you to gain confidence in interacting with foreigners and speaking English?

The first questions were mainly asked and gathered from Okayama University students while the second questions were primarily from Japanese people that lived in my share house or were at the English café. Each group of people totalled 20, that is 20 normal students and 20 people that had been abroad.

Little exposure + basic English

SH/Cafe
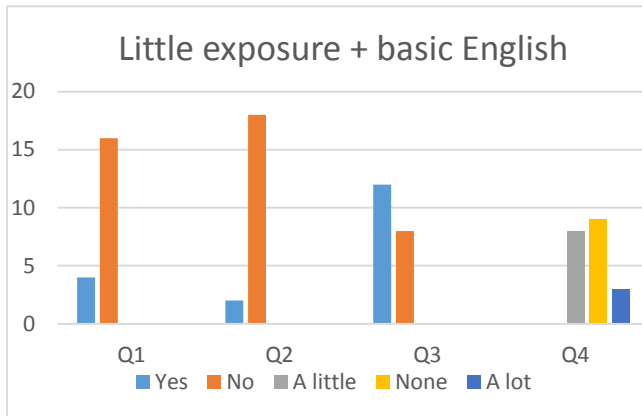
The results of the first two questions are as I expected from my hypothesis, general students that normally foreigners would feel a barrier from have little confidence in their English and are not comfortable interacting with foreigners. The third question however, was more surprising. Many people answered that they had travelled to or studied in an English-speaking country. Although, during the questioning many people continued to elaborate that they were only there for a short period of time and primarily interacted with fellow Japanese students when it was for study. The forth question also coincides with my hypothesis and thus was not surprising, nevertheless it is helpful in gauging the cause.
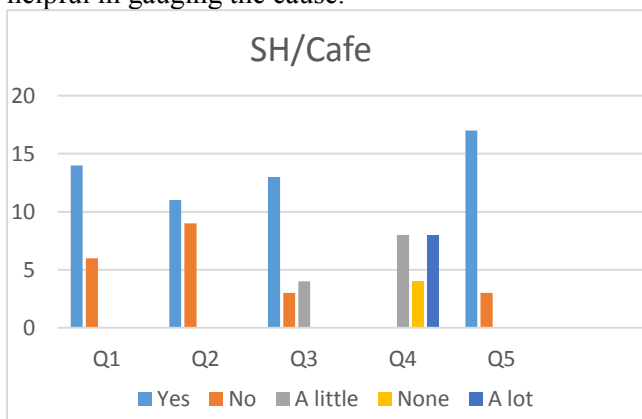
Questions one and two for the people that were more proficient in English and more experience with foreigners also supported my hypothesis about language. However, the answers to question three suggest that perhaps more experience in foreign culture and more interaction with foreign people changes one's perspective and allows for a smoother interaction with foreigners. The answers to this question I find a bit null, due to the humility of Japanese people many of the interviewees answered a little but I believe it would possibly have been a lot. The fifth question supports both hypotheses rather than just one of them, it could have been the increase in English proficiency or the increase in experience/interactions with foreigners and foreign culture that led to this answer.

After analysing my research results, I believe that there are two main explanations to why there feels like there is a barrier between Japanese people and foreigners. One main reason is due to English proficiency, Japanese people lack the confidence in their ability to have a proper conversation with a foreigner. The other being a lack in experience and understanding of how foreigners behave and their culture thus, a lack in understanding how to interact with them. From the questions asked, the first two questions were the same for each group. However, the answers were quite different. The first group the majority answered that they were not comfortable interacting with foreigners and that they do not consider themselves proficient in English. On the other hand, the other group of interviewees generally answered that they were more comfortable with interacting with foreigners and showed more confidence in their English ability. These two questions were very important in deducing the two main explanations. The third questions in each group were different, the first groups third question aimed to relay what kind of experience the interviewee had with foreign cultures, thus allowing inference to the hypothesis about foreign interaction. However, in the fourth question, many of the students explained that while they had been to foreign countries before they still had limited interaction with foreigners. For example, many students had been to foreign countries on short English learning programs but, due to the nature and construct of the classes, the primarily had Japanese friends while they were there. Meanwhile, the third question for the second group was more catered to exploring the hypothesis that more interaction with foreigners and foreign cultures leads to a better understanding of them. While as previously states the answers to the fourth question in the second group were slightly null due to the interviewees being Japanese, the consensus being that studying abroad improved their English proficiency. This answer supports the hypothesis that English proficiency effects Japanese-foreigner interactions, this may be due to personal confidence, or it is also possible that with improvement in language ability, one also learns more about foreign culture and how to interact with foreigners. The

final question for the second group wasn't directed at a single hypothesis but rather both due to the fact that confidence could be from language proficiency or experience in interaction. Regardless, it served to support both hypothesis as the majority answered that they were now more confident after travelling or studying in foreign countries.

Finally, to conclude this essay I would like to summarise my research. The aim of this paper was to explore what influences the interactions between Japanese people and foreigners and attempt to explain why sometimes there can feel as if there is a barrier between the two. The research was conducted primarily through observations of Japanese behaviour, personal experiences and interviews. Based on the research, it can be inferred that the two hypotheses' that were made can explain what the influences are. Those two hypotheses were, that one's level of proficiency and confidence in English directly lead to how comfortable they are with foreign interaction. The second, one's level of exposure to and understanding of foreigners their cultures, influences how they interact with foreigners and their cultures. The research conducted supports both hypotheses, however, the sample size was limited to 20 in each respective group of interviewees. To further this research, I would like to collect a larger sample size and have a variety of different prefectural interviewees. However, despite the limitations on this research, I would like to conclude that the proficiency of one's English level and their confidence as well as understanding and exposure to foreigners and their culture, influence how Japanese people interact with foreigners. Those that have had more experience such as travelling to or studying in a foreign country show more proficiency and confidence in English well as a higher ability and comfortability in interacting with foreigners and their culture.

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EPOK Reflection

When I had heard about the EPOK program at my university I immediately thought that it was an opportunity that I would regret if I didn't take it. The EPOK program allowed me to fully experience the daily life of living in Japan as well as the life of being a Japanese University student. It allowed for me to learn many new things, tested my ability to adapt to foreign culture and allowed for me to gain valuable life skills. The main purpose of the classes that I underwent while here were to improve my Japanese language skill and experience and learn about Japanese culture and those goals were met joyfully. The core Japanese classes were interesting and fun but also intensive and relevant allowing for vast improvement in my Japanese language skill. Other classes also allowed for me to learn about Japanese culture and history extensively such as Study of Japan which taught me much about Okayama history and Chado where I learned about the history of Zen and the art of tea. The staff associated with this program were all very helpful and friendly, never did I ever feel lost or in distress. I also took the opportunity of being a student in Japan to try and experience the club/circle culture that is unique to Japanese education and joined a volleyball circle, I had a great time playing volleyball and improving my Japanese language skill through conversation with the circle members. Through this program, I was also able to make many valuable friends that I'm sure will stick with me for a long time, both Japanese and not. I am grateful to the EPOK program for this opportunity to improve me Japanese, learn about Japan and make many friends, I will wholeheartedly recommend this program to any of my peers and will be sure to share much of my newfound knowledge of Japan and Japanese culture.

Huang, Yun-Ting

日本酒

Huang, Yun-Ting

Fu Jen Catholic University (Taiwan)

Summary:

　　　　Sake is a Japanese rice wine made by fermenting rice that has been polished to remove the bran. Unlike wine, in which alcohol is produced by fermenting sugar that is naturally present in grapes, sake is produced by a brewing process more like that of beer, where the starch is converted into sugars before being converted to alcohol. This research program is about the history, production, varieties, taste and special use of Japanese sake. Since I am studying in Okayama, and I have visited a famous Okayama local Japanese sake factory by chance, I will focus on the Okayama local Japanese sake brand: 御前酒蔵元辻本店. First, the history of 御前酒. Second, the production including rice, water, brewing, maturation and toji. Third, the varieties including 純米 吟醸酒, 吟醸酒, 純米吟醸酒, 吟醸酒, 特別純米酒, 特別本醸造酒, 純米酒 and 本醸造酒. Fourth, the taste and how it is served. Finally, the special uses of Japanese sake and what they mean in Japanese culture
.

　日本酒は、通常は米とこうじと水を主な原料とする清酒を指す。多くはアルコール分が 22 度未満のものをいう。日本で特有な醸造酒である。

日本酒の起源を考えるのに興味深い史料の一つである「八塩折之酒」という説である。『日本書紀』に記載されるのは、須佐之男命が八岐大蛇を退治するために八塩折之酒という八度にわたって醸す酒というものを造らせる記述である。実際の酒がどのようなものであったのか、重複して醸すという点でのちの貴醸酒に通じるものがあるのかなどの疑問が今まだ解明されていない。

　日本酒の独特の製法が最初奈良時代になって「播磨国風土記」に登場する。奈良朝時代（約７００年代）にへんさんされたと言われる「播磨国風土記」に＜神に供えた糧が枯れて、かびが生じた＞ので、＜すなわち酒を醸さしむ＞とあるのが米を原料として酒についてのもっとも明らかな記述と言われている。

一説による、日本には古くから「民族の酒」といわれる民間伝承の酒があり、一方、日本朝廷の確立とともに中国の文化や技術を取り入れた「朝廷の酒」もできたそうである。すでに平安時代には、現代の酒とほぼ同じような製法でさまざまなタイプの酒が造られていたことが「延喜式」（約９００年代）に記されている。やがて、江戸時代における「商人の酒」として商品化されるに至るが、これは各地伝承の「民族の酒」と「朝廷の酒」の技法と交流して、生まれたもので、現代にも通じる「酒屋万流」の時代が到来する。またこの時期日本酒は朱印船貿易により東南アジア各地に作られた日本人町やその国の王族などへ輸出された。そして、明治時代の 1890 年代から 1920 年代にかけては、酒造りにおいて急速な近代化の時代を形成する。

吟醸酒は 1952 年（昭和 27 年）に至って、ようやく小川知可良が東北地方の酒造場から小川酵母を分離し、また 1953 年（昭和 28 年）に野白金一が熊本酵母を分離すると、これを用いて盛んに吟醸酒が試みられるようになった。

日本酒の主な原料は、米と水と麹（米麹）である。広義には、日本酒の醸造を支える酵母・乳酸菌などのすべてを「日本酒の原料」と呼ぶこともある。

用途によって、麹米用と掛け米用の 2 種類がある。麹米は通常な酒米が使われる。掛け米は全部または一部に一般米が使われるが、特定名称酒の場合には酒米のみが使われることが多い。普通酒は麹米と掛け米とともにすべて一般米で造られる場合が多いである。

水は日本酒の 80% を占める成分で、品質を影響する大きな要因である。水源はほとんど伏流水や地下水などの井戸水である。条件が良い所では、水源とする水道水が使われることもあるが、醸造所に専用の水源を確保することが多い。都市の醸造所などでは、水質の悪化のために遠隔地から水を輸送したり、良質な水源を求めて移転することもある。水の硬度や水質などの条件も日本酒の味わいと品質に関わっている。

日本酒に用いるこうじは、蒸した米にこうじ菌を振りかけて育てたものであり、米こうじともいう。これが米のデンプンをブドウ糖に変える糖化の働きをする。日本酒だけでなく、他の酒類や味噌・味醂・醤油など多くの食品に麹が使われている。注意しなければならないところは納豆菌がこうじ米に繁殖すると、スベリ麹と呼ばれる納豆のような粘性があるこうじになるので蔵元では納豆は食されない。

日本酒の製造を行う場所は蔵元や造り酒屋、製造を主導する人は「杜氏」と呼ばれついる。「杜氏」は蔵人の監督者であり、酒蔵の最高製造責任者をいう。製造工程はだいたい五つの階段に分けている。下に示した図を参照してください。
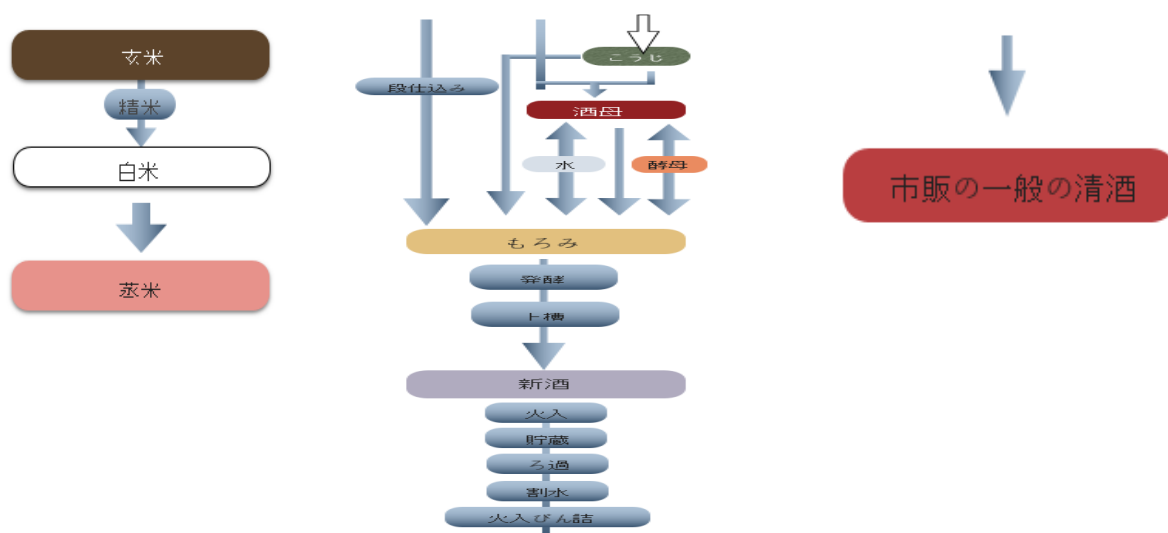


日本酒の分類は「特定名称分類」と「他の分類」二つがある。「特定名称分類」の中また二つの種類がある、「普通酒」と「特定名称酒」である。普通酒は特定名称酒以外の清酒である。一般に流通している大部分の日本酒は普通酒に分類される。特定名称酒は清酒の要件を満たしたものうち、原料や製法が基準を満たすものは政府を決められた特定の名称を容器また包装に表示することができる。特定名称を表示した清酒を特定名称酒という。特定名称酒は、米穀検査により 3 等以上の玄米またはこれに相当するの玄米を精米した白米を使い、白米の重量に対するこうじ米の重量の割合が 15% 以上のものに限られる。特定名称酒は原料と精米歩合によって本醸造酒、純米酒、吟醸酒に分類される。全部で 8 種類に分類されます。

特定名称	使用原料	精米歩合	こうじ米使用割合
本醸造酒	米、米こうじ、水、醸造アルコール	70％以下	
特別本醸造酒	米、米こうじ、水、醸造アルコール	60％以下または特別な製造方法（要説明表示）	
純米酒	米、米こうじ、水	規定なし	
特別純米酒	米、米こうじ、水	60％以下または特別な製造方法（要説明表示）	15％以上
吟醸酒	米、米こうじ、水、醸造アルコール	60％以下	
純米吟醸酒	米、米こうじ、水	60％以下	
大吟醸酒	米、米こうじ、水、醸造アルコール	50％以下	
純米大吟醸酒	米、米こうじ、水	50％以下	

また、精米歩合について、下の図を通じて、違いをわかっている。本醸造酒は 30％以上を精米した、吟醸酒は 40％以上を精米した、大吟醸酒は半分以上精米した。この精米歩合によって、日本酒の香り、味わい、値段も違いがある。大吟醸酒は最高級な酒米を極限まで磨き、蔵人の力により、醸した最高級な日本酒である。
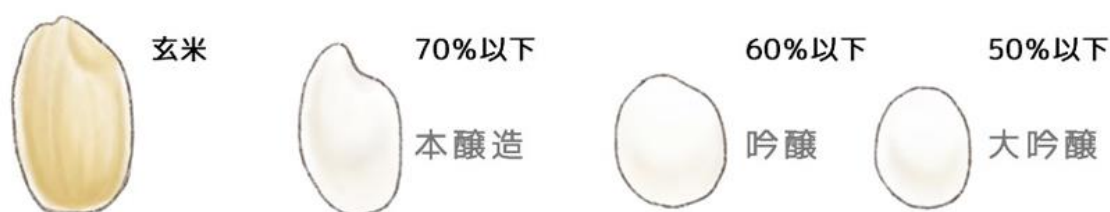
日本酒は、元々常温で飲用するものである。しかし、富裕な者らの始めた趣向から、徳利を湯煎で温めて飲用する「熱燗」が広まった。20 世紀後半以降には冷蔵設備の普及により、冷やしたり氷を浮かべて供することも広まった。そのため日本酒は、約 5℃から約 60℃まで、幅広い飲用温度帯を有するようになった。

料理への利用は、魚介類の臭み消しや香り付けなどの調味料として、調理に使用されている。日本酒の製造過程で産生した酒粕も、砂糖や塩を加えた白湯に溶かして「甘酒」という飲み物になる。粕漬けや粕汁などもよく料理に使われている。

日本酒は日本の文化や料理や日本人にとってすごく重要で、欠かないものである。ですから、日本酒に関する施設や文化行事日本中でもいくつがある。宗教施設はほとんど神道教の神社や祠である。日本の酒に関する神社は全国で 40 社ぐらいで、全部で 55 以上の神がまつられている。中にはこうじや仕込み水に祀る対象の神社もある。でも日本に特定な酒の神様はいないと言われている。おもしろいことは、日本酒に関する神社は、千葉県から福岡県の間だけに位置するという。中で京都と奈良に集中している。奈良市にある菩提山正暦寺は昔僧坊酒を造っていた中心的な寺院である。初めて清酒がここで醸造されたという伝説があり、「日本清酒発祥之地」の碑が建っている。また、日本人の家庭行事や祭りも日本酒に関係が持つ。例えば四季と節句に連なる花見酒、夏越酒、菊酒、月見酒、雪見酒など、日本の各地にも「どぶろく祭り」という日本酒に関する祭りがある。

今学期にとった授業のおかげて、岡山県勝山にある「辻本店」という岡山ご当地の日本酒の蔵元に見学を参加した。辻本店は文化元年（１８０４年）、現在地に酒造業を創業した。当時は美作勝山藩御用達の献上酒として「御膳酒」の銘を受け、これは現在の銘柄「御前酒」の由来である。一般には「萬悦」の銘柄で親しまれていた。蔵元は古来「うまさけの国」と言われた「美作」の地域で、寒冷な気候、良質の酒米と水という、酒造りにとって条件がす

ごくいいという恵まれた環境にある。御前酒蔵元では、地元の米にこだわり、岡山県産の雄町、山田錦といった酒造りに適した米を選び、磨き、酒を醸しています。仕込み水は、蔵の横を流れる「旭川」という河川の伏流水を地下から汲み上げ、使用しています。備中杜氏の辻麻衣子さんは前杜氏の味「コクがあって、なおかつキレのよい酒」を引き継ぎながらも、さらに「なめらかさ」を求めて若い蔵人と共に日々研究に努めております。辻本店の店舗と主屋も 2013 年 11 月に「登録有形文化財」に登録されました。

酒が好きだから日本酒を飲み始めたところ、日本酒の種類や味わうがよくわからなかったので、なかなか飲む機会が少なかった。日本で交換留学と日本語授業のおかげで日本酒にだんだん興味が高くなって、今回の研究レポートを通して、日本酒についてたくさん勉強した。日本酒はただの酒だけじゃなくで、日本の文化と緊密に繋がっている重要な一部分である。

<u>References</u>

日本酒造組合中央会
御前酒蔵元 辻本店

<u>EPOK Reflections</u>

　　　　It is the first time I left my home for such a long time and study abroad, it's quite hard for me to get used to everything. Thanks to the tutors that really helped me a lot. There were also some activities for exchange students, which helped me get close to people from different countries. About the dorm life, it is a interesting experience cause this is also the first time for me to live in a dorm. I am living in "share house", it's a kind of dorm that have your own room and public living space in the same time. Roommates are all from different countries, so it is also a good chance to get close to people from different countries, not only the language studying but also the culture knowing. Although I am major in Japanese at my home school back in Taiwan, I don't actually have a lot of chances to talk or use Japanese in my daily life. My Japanese speaking was really bad and I was afraid to speak Japanese to Japanese people. Things changed at the moment when I started my exchange program in Japan. I have no choice but to speak only in Japanese since I am in Japan. The Japanese words, phrases and grammar I used in the first day of my exchange program are probably more than the amount I used in Taiwan in about three months. It's really a big improvement for me. And now I am surely know my Japanese speaking skill is way more better than past, I am confident to use Japanese in my daily life or talk to Japanese people. A year is not that long but long enough to learn a lot of things that I had no chance to know before, I am truly appreciate I have this valuable chance to study in Japan for a year.

Lo, Wan-Yu

Shuin-cho Booming: Temple and *Jinjya* in Japan
御朱印集めブーム：お寺と神社

Lo, Wan-Yu 羅婉瑜

Fu Jen University – Taiwan

"*Shuin-cho* booming", which is commonly mentioned among the young people in recent years. Actually, I have heard the word before I came to Japan as an exchange student. However, even though I have been to Japan for at least 4 times so far, I did not know and heard about what the *shuin* is at all. As a result, I think it is a great chance for me to study what the *shuin* is and the reason why the *shuin*-booming will get popular with people in recent years through this research. And it is probably that there are many people, no matter foreigners or Japanese people, who like me that are not familiar with the culture of "*shuin*". For that, it is meaningful for me to study about the shuin as the subject of this research.

For the content, first I will introduce what "*shuin*" is, its origin, changes and differences between *shuin* of *jinjya* and temple. And based on the things that mentioned before, finding the reason why *shuin-cho* booming will be popular is the content of the second paragraph.

(八木透「御朱印ブック」、2010、38 ページ)

まず、御朱印にはいくつの意味が込めていると考えている。歴史的な面から見ると、御朱印は古くからお寺に参拝できるときに、お経を書き写して、お寺に納めると、御朱印をいただくことのできるものである。また、御朱印をもらうということには参拝した証でもあり、記念のすべきものでもあり、旅行の思い出でもある。さらに、御朱印は単なる記念スタンプではなく、お札や御守りと同様に、神仏に敬意を払っていただいた非常に貴重なものであり、自分の思いが込められたありがたく大切なものでもある。このように、御朱印にいろんな気持ちを込められたものでもあり、大切にしなければならない物であると考えられている。

また、御朱印にも変遷がある。前に言った通り、もともと、お経を書き写し、お寺に納め、御朱印をいただくのが原点である。だが、江戸時代に入り、庶民もある程度で自由的に旅行できるようになり、観光目的でお寺に参拝する人が増えていた。それによって、参拝しただけで御朱印をいただけることになった。また、御朱印をいただくという習慣が神社にも広がり、現在お寺でも神社でも御朱印をいただくことができるようになってきた。このように、御朱印は時につれ、今私達が知っている御朱印になっている。

七福神巡りなど、さまざまな御朱印集めルートが誕生

もともとは霊場巡礼で御朱印をいただき、集めていた

七福オールスターズ

こんなにあつまりましたよ。

あともうひとふんばりです。

個人の参拝スタイルに応じて集めかたは柔軟に

僕は今回神社で

私は今回お寺に行くわ。

御朱印集めのルーツと変遷

(八木透「御朱印ブック」、39頁)

御朱印集めは近年起きた新しいブームではなく、昔から続けられた習慣である。御朱印集めの原点は霊場巡礼[1]であると言われている。霊場巡礼を始めようになったのは 13 世紀前半からであると言われるが、流行し始めたのは室町時代からである。この頃から、納経した寺社で「納経請取状」をもらうことになっていた。また、江戸時代に入ると、多数の神社仏閣を巡礼するようになり、新たなルーツも誕生した。それによって、御朱印集めにはお寺と神社巡りの楽しむ意味を加わり、集めブームになっていく。時間につれ、巡礼ルートや御朱印集めはより自由になり、今では参拝スタイルに合わせ、様々な集め方ができるようになった。

また、すべての御朱印は同じようになっているわけではない。次に、お寺と神社の御朱印の違いを紹介する。

お寺の御朱印はいくつの特徴がある。一番の特徴は中央に墨書きされる文字であり、一般的にはそのお寺に祭られているご本尊の名前が入っている場合が多く、なかにはご本尊を古代インドで使われていた梵字であらわすところもある。それ以外にも、お寺の名前やご本尊以外の仏さまの名前が入る御朱印もある。また、中央には「三宝印」[2]や「御宝印」[3]という押し印があり、右上と左下の計三か所に印が押されている場合も多い。また、霊場巡りでいただく御朱印も少々違いがあり、右上に押された押し印に何番目に札所かを表す印がある。

(八木透「御朱印ブック」、43頁)

①奉拝(右上)
②お参りした年月日：空いたスペースにお参りした時間が記入される
③山号[4]・札所番号などの押し印(右上)
④ご本尊名やお堂名など（中央）
⑤三宝印や御宝印など（中央）
⑥寺号（左下）
⑦お寺名の押し印（左下）

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[1] 霊場とは仏さまのいるような神聖な場所のこと。巡礼とは、昔「順礼」と書かれ、霊場を決まられた順番にすべてめぐると、願い事が叶うことができるらしい。

[2] 「仏法僧宝」の四文字が刻まれた押し印。

[3] 梵字でご本尊を表す押し印。

[4] 山号とはお寺の名前の上につける称号のこと。

神社の御朱印はお寺と比べ、よりシンプルな感じがする。中央にある墨書きは神社名が書かれている。また、押し印はお寺よりも少なく、一般的に 2 ヵ所があり、神社名の大きい印とまつられている神さまを表す社紋が押されている。しかし、場所によって、社紋は入らず、神社名の押し印のみの所もある。

①お参りした年月日：空いたスペースにお参りした時間が記入される。一般的に浸りの余白部分に書かれたことが多い。

②社紋：神社の押し印の真上、あるいは右上のあたりに社紋が入る。社紋は神社に祭っている神様に由来する。

(平成 28 年 12 月 2 日、京都八坂神社

でいただいたもの 筆者自身の)
③神社名（中央）
④奉拝（右上）　　　　　⑤神社の押し印（中央）

　近年ブームになっている御朱印集めという女性を中心に、パワースポットの一つのお寺や神社をめぐり、御朱印をいただくことという意味である。そういう女性は「御朱印ガール」と呼ばれ、ネット上で御朱印や朱印帳の情報を交換することが多い。では、なぜ御朱印集めはブームにあるか？次は御朱印集めブームの魅力の面から紹介し、また影響と問題点を説明する。

　まず、御朱印の魅力はいくつがある。一つ、御朱印はお坊さんや神職さんの手書きであり、いただいた御朱印には同じものはなく、自分だけのために心を込めて書いたものである。また、お寺や神社によって、御朱印も違うため、朱印を集めて振り返る時、訪れた時の風景や気持ちも思い出せるであろう。また、最も古い巡礼ルートであると言われる「西国三十三所巡礼」をはじめ、「七福神巡り」や「縁結びスポット」などの新しいルートが現れ、自分の都合や願い事によって自分に合うコースを選べることができ、毎回違う雰囲気を味わうことができるであろう。最後、御朱印は仏さまや神様とご縁を結んだことを示し、仏さまと神様とのつながりを感じられることも魅力の一つである。

　また、御朱印集めがブームになったため、お寺と神社にも影響を与えている。御朱印を集めるのは女性が多いため、より派手な柄や独自のキャラクターを加えたもの、きれいな刺繍が入った朱印帳を作成した神社やお寺が増えてきた。また、普段あまり若い女性が寄ってこない神社やお寺にも御朱印をいただくため訪れるようになったこともある。一方、参拝の本来の目的を忘れ、ただ御朱印を求めるためお寺と神社に行く人も多くなってきた。さらに、少し行きにくいところや特徴がある御朱印をネット上で転売することもこのブームが与える影響の一つである。そのため、御朱印を一部中止になったことも行っていた。

このように、ブームになった御朱印集めは長い歴史がある魅力的なことであり、今でも神社仏閣に影響を与えるひとつの社会現象である。また、御朱印に込められた意味をちゃんと理解し、いただくべきであると考えている。

　経験としてはあまり長くはないが、今回のリサーチを通し、感じたのは御朱印の意味や歴史に対する理解の重要性である。なぜなら、以前「参拝の意味を忘れ、ただ御朱印をいただくために神社やお寺に行く」というようなことをしたことがあるからである。これはまさに

「御朱印の本の意味が知らないのに、御朱印を集めている」という人の出来事であり、神社仏閣への不敬でもあると深く反省している。また、御朱印に込められた意味を一歩先に知り、神さまや仏さまとのつながりを感じながら参拝し、御朱印をいただいたら、また違う気持ちと思いでができると違いないと考える。これによって、神社やお寺巡りする時はもう一つの楽しめ方が増え、より一層日本の古い歴史や文化を味わうことができると考えている。

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     In the first and second semester, I choose "Study of Japan" and "Japanese cuisine" as EPOK courses to start the program. Through these two courses, we went to *Okayama-jo*, *korakuen*, and making the *bizen-yaki* which is the traditional crafts of Okayama. Also, we studied the traditional cuisine, like *udon*, *kaiseki-ryori* and also the way to make *dashi* and *onigiri*. Although, it is great to experience new things that didn't experience before, according to the presentation of these classes, it is more challenging than I do in Taiwan for presenting by English. Besides, I also joined the *bu-katsu* that named "Glee Club". Despite it is a little bit busy and difficult for me to make balance between the study and curricular activities, I still feel interesting to join the *bu-katsu*. Furthermore, it is thankful that there is the same interest between I and my tutor, such as *karaoke,* so it is great to spend time with her. For all, it is a very great experience for me to study abroad and learn the new thing that didn't know before.

Murtaza Dostdar

What is the significance of Samurai Bushido in contemporary Japanese Martial Arts?

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Abstract in Japanese:

日本の文化では侍が重要な役割を果たす。侍の役割は平安時代にまでさかのぼります。武士の文化は 9 世紀以上にわたって存在していた。現在、日本には武士文化はほとんど存在しない。日本の武士文化は皇室によって廃止されました。 ほとんどの武家は武士であるというタイトルを失った。 これは、日本の歴史の明治維新時代に起こったことです。日本のカタナは世界中で武道に使えています。カタカナの起源はまだ伝統的に日本のものです。**この草稿は、主に日本の武道における日本武道文化に焦点を当てています。**

Samurais were once proud and fearless warriors living by the code of conduct known as '*Bushido*' or "the way of the warrior". Their unique philosophy valued honor, self-discipline and selflessness. They were literate warriors of war and leaders among the numerous Japanese Clans. Zen meditation which gives insight into one's true nature and opens the way to a liberated way of living is one of the Buddhism practices that were most common in Japan. Samurais were also known to dwell into Zen meditation which kept them calm and to build mental strength for their battles.

The word "Samurai" roughly translates to "those who serve", as the role of the Samurai were to follow their Daimyo or clan Lord. Another, more general word for a warrior is "bushi," from which bushido is derived. Samurai warriors date back to 600 BC and were known as 'Mononofu' according to an article by the Maltese Kendo Federation. During the mid-Heian Period (794-1185), the samurai were the armed supporters of wealthy landowners–many of whom left the imperial court to seek their own fortunes after being shut out of power by the powerful Fujiwara clan.

In the beginning of the 12th Century, however, the warrior class achieved political power and became the Military Service of Japan. Besides combat and martial arts, they made up a set of regulations which were to be obeyed at all times, known as 'The Code of Bushido'. This code included seven virtues that were valued by Samurais at all times. The sources of the seven virtues found by Inazo Nitobe are rectitude, courage, benevolence, politeness, honor, loyalty and self-control.

Inazo Nitobe has also wrote a very popular book called *'Bushido: The Soul of Japan'* in English in (1899). In his book Nitobe discovered close resemblance between Bushido and the spirit of Chivalry which is the code of conduct associated with medieval institutions of knighthood between 1171-1220 in the European countries. There have been many publications about Samurai, popular books including *Yagyu Munenori's "Ken to Zen"* (Sword and Zen) and the *"Gorin-no-sho"* (The Book of Five Rings) by *Miyamoto Musashi.* These publications tried to convey to the samurai on how to live beyond death.

From the beginning and to the end of samurai era, their long history and tradition still remains in Japan. Including the Japanese culture which is deeply enriched by samurai history. In modern times there are remaining samurai heritage in almost all parts of Japan. From the Great Castles built by the Emperors and Daimyos during their rule to the different cultural events held throughout the year in commemoration of samurai warriors.

There are Great Castles built by various warlords or clans found in all parts of Japan which now serve as national treasures and are owned by the Japanese government. Most remaining castles were built during the samurai era by the various shoguns with the help of their clans. All Japanese castles are unique with their particular design and color which represent the various clans that built them and now serve as major landmarks of Japanese history. It has the history of samurais, their clans and the rulers. Almost all castles are now open for the public, serving as tourist attractions. Some of

biggest and most popular castles include Matsumoto Castle, Himeji Castle and Edo Castle which is part of Tokyo Imperial Palace.

Bushido in modern Martial arts.

There is also the mixture of samurai ideals and teachings which have transcended throughout history and this can be observed from modern day Japanese lifestyle and Japanese martial arts. Kenjutsu is the general name covering all martial arts that include the Japanese katana technique. There are many unique Kenjutsu practiced everyday which hold the secret to samurai bushido including Kendo and Iaijustu (Iaido). The main focus of this essay will be kendo due to personal experience.

Many of the martial arts schools of using blades today arose from the old schools in Muromachi period (1336-1573). Iaijutsu (now known as Iaido) was first established by Iizasa Ienao from Chiba Prefecture in 1447. Onin War (also known as the civil war) occurred in the latter half of the Muromachi Era (1392-1573), Japan experienced anarchy for a hundred years. During this time, many schools of Kenjutsu were established. Kenjutsu was practiced for centuries until the modern type of Kendo was created.

Kendo translating to "sword way" was developed by Naganuma Shirōzaemon Kunisato during the Shotoku Era (1711–1715). Naganuma developed the use of bōgu and established a training method using the shinai. Since Emperor Meiji after Edo period made the order to disband all samurais and prohibited the use of katana, as a result the practice of Kenjutsu declined. Former samurais were afraid of losing their way of the sword and so kendo practice became more common.

Kendo keiko or practice of kendo involves a shinai (bamboo sword), kendogu (which is the hakama and dogi) and bogu (armour) therefore has physical contact with the sword. The modern practice of kendo includes all of the historical practice with more advanced techniques and safer methods.

Ever since All Japan Kendo Federation was created in 1952, kendo became an important part of school education and so became popular among people of all ages. Its fame went worldwide when the International Kendo Federation (FIK) was established in 1970 and the first triennial World Kendo Championship (WKC) was held in the *Nippon Budokan,* Tokyo in the same year. In May 2015 the 16th WKC was also held in Tokyo and participants from 56 different countries and regions came together.

So how does Samurai Bushido relate to Kendo?

Samurai bushido relates to kendo in many ways when it is practiced. Kendo in modern society is a culture of passing down of Bushido's ideas. The ideas are needed as an important way of learning bushido and kendo (Naoya. 2016). Personally being able to observe and participate in kendo, every single time that practice starts and ends there are elements of bushido within it. Kendo itself was invented by samurais and it was practiced for the reason of maintaining their sword skills that have been learned over the years. This was precisely because some did not intend to abandon samurai bushido. Even to this day kendo has been carrying the same practice that were created during the Edo period with the addition of safer methods which allows people of all ages to participate.

First of all, each and every kendo student is taught the same etiquette and rules to appropriately learn the way of the kendogu (kendo uniform) and shinai (practice sword). This includes the proper method of wearing kendogu, the appropriate stance and handling of shinai. Moreover, bowing being a simple everyday manner in Japan, is also incorporated in kendo as a way of politeness which is an element of bushido discovered by Inazo Nitobe. Politeness is necessary and is used as a gesture of thanks when asking someone for practice and when sparing against your fellow members, same rules apply when entering or exiting the dojo. It's always pointed out if someone is not carrying the proper etiquette during training.

Before the practice starts, everyone lines up in order of seniority and either a senior or a sensei starts by having everyone go through the initiation of the training. During this time, there is a moment where everyone goes into Zen meditation for about 30 seconds. This meditation which is carried out before and after kendo. Zen meditation in kendo has the same purpose as bushido, which is to calm the mind reflect upon the everyday practice and improvements. This rectitude as an element of bushido being part of kendo was also supported by Naoya Miyata a senior at Okayama University Kendo club.

Moreover, kendo was practiced in Star Wars to enhance their skill of Light Saber battles and there are two statements that really drive home the importance of Kendo in the world of Star Wars. "It's honour, it's balance, it's justice; kendo is everything that Jedi are". "There's also a saying in kendo: 'One thousand days training for one moment of reckoning". This is a reflection of the kendo competitions, and how each participant trains almost every day and all their effort is measured by an instant spar in a competition. The significance of kendo is shown in both Japan and around the world in contrast to different ways it has been incorporated. Nonetheless the elements of bushido are clearly visible in the practice of kendo everywhere.

Conclusion:

Samurai bushido is well known throughout Japan and even the world, however, realizing that it has been adapted into sports was the opportunity observed and written in this essay. Samurai heritage along with bushido has survived for centuries and its significance remains in Japanese culture and sports. Kendo as an origin by a samurai has evolved over the decades to become a sport in which anyone can participate. It is practiced by thousands spreading over many nations in the world and international competitions being held every 3 years in different countries. Moreover, the elements of bushido are visible in everyday practice of kendo all over the world from politeness to the proper etiquette of each kendo participant. Therefore, samurai bushido is a significant part of Japanese history and modern day lifestyle. In kendo it has even greater importance being part of the teachings that are passed down from one kendo practitioner to another pupil.

Okayama University Kendo Club
2016/2017

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Naoya Miyata - Kendo Senpai (Senior) has been participating in Kendo for approximately 18 years and was my personal kendo trainer.

EPOK Reflection

My exchange journey to Oka-dai has been an amazing experience, as this was the first time for me to take a semester long exchange overseas. EPOK is a great program for all foreigners (that's right I said the word 'foreigner' as if it was nothing) hehe this may seem weird to locals reading it.

I have been always wanting to visit Japan at least once in my life. My interest for Japanese culture, whether its Bushido or Anime grew over the years and so I am here now but only to realize that my stay is coming to an end now. All my classes were fun and the staff are really friendly, toping it off with the fact that I had so many wonderful trips to different places all around Japan within these two quarters. Including class trips to Kagawa, Tokyo and Yakage for participating in Daimyo Gyoretsu.

My Okadai experience was even more interesting when I found the Kendo club and immediately joined in for the everyday practice, so officially a member now or was. Furthermore, going through EPOK course to follow my interest in Samurai Bushido and connecting it to Kendo was a very unique task for me and I enjoyed every moment of it. Some things that I am going to miss a lot about Japan are the people that I have met so far, the Kendo club and generally how kind the local people are in all parts of this country.

SungHee Cho

Japanese Club Activity 部活とサークル

CHO SungHee　チョソンヒ

The University of Adelaide（Australia）

要旨：オーストラリアと違う日本の学校文化の一つである部活とサークル。ある日本人の学生を見ると、勉強より部活のことをもっと大切に思い、一生懸命取り組む。外国人は知らない日本の部活、サークル文化について、特徴や違う点、日本人学生が思う部活とサークルのイメージ、なぜやっているかなどについて話している。

　日本人の友達と話して、一つ気づいたことがある。部活のことを学校生活の一位として考えるほど頑張ってやっていることだった。ある学生は週五回以上練習があって、それに参加するため、必死でスケジュール管理をしているのも見た。最初、部活は「興味があるからやって見るもの。でも、日常生活や勉強のことが先。趣味は趣味だ」と軽く思っていたので、なぜあんなにストレスを感じながら頑張っているのか理解できなかった。部活が結構好きなんだと初めは思っていた。

　エッセイのことを部活とサークルについてしようと選んだ時から、L-café に来る学生たちに質問して彼らの考えを聞いてみた。部活動をしている学生に「なぜ部活をするようになったか」、「なぜ部活 ・サークルを選んだか」、「部活とサークルのイメージと違う点は何か」。そして、していない学生には「なぜしていないのか。」、「もし、やるとしたらどこに入りたいか」、「部活とサークルのイメージと違う点は何か」を質問した。

　まず、部活とサークルの違いについてはみんなが同じ答えだった。部活は「厳しい」、「頑張らないとダメ」、「音楽系だったら演奏会、体育会系だったら大会に大学の名前で参加し、結果報告が必要だ」、「部室がある 」、「担当教師がいる」がサークルは「厳しくない、いつでも簡単に辞めれる。」、「ストレスがない」、「飲み会が多い」、「部室がない」、「担当教師がいない」と言った。

　次にイメージについて部活は「頑張っている感じ」、「真面目」などの肯定的なイメージが強かったけど、サークルについては「遊んでる」、「頑張ってしない」、「飲み会」、「根性がない」、「軽い」などの否定的なイメージが強かった。

　まとめると、部活とサークルの違いは学校からのサーポトの有無（例：担当教師、部室、等）自己啓発ができるかできないか、登録や報告が必要であることなどがある。

　そこで、厳しくて難しいことをしているのになぜ部活を選んだかについて聞いて見たら、「専門家や先輩からしっかり教えてもらえる」、「自己啓発のため」、「友達がいるから」、「就職活動をするとき役に立つから」などの面白い答えがあった。
　現在、岡山大学には 文化系、体育系、医学部、歯学部、法学部・経済学部の５つの 部活があって、中には約 130 の部が登録されている。サークルを入れると数はもっと増える。そして、部活のサーポトのため学校は課外活動施設（テニスコート、バレーコート、学生会館等）を支援している。このようにサーポトを受けている部は大会や文化祭に参加、部員たちの出

席率や参加率を上げて部の発展のために尽力している。

　岡山大学のギターマンドリンアンサンブル部を例として見ると日本の部活文化がどんなに厳しいか、よくできているかが見える。まず、音楽系の部活なのに音楽専攻の生徒だけではなく、工学部、農学部など音楽と関係がなさそうな専門を勉強している学生もたくさん入っている。（コンダクターは工学部の男学生だった。）週三回以上練習があって、年末にある演奏会のため約 10 の歌を練習する。ギターやマンドリンの先生がいて、トレーニングを受けることができるし、先生からのトレーニングが受けれないとしても先輩から教えてもらえる。なので上下関係がちょっと厳しいため、３年生や４年生の学生は新しい部活活動に参加するのをためらうようだ。

　友達に招待されて行った演奏会で見た能力は音楽専門家と比べても劣らないぐらい素晴らしかった。このように、一生懸命部活をしている学生たちのうえで日本のアマチュア文化は他の国と比べて特に優秀だ。初心者も１から習得することができるシステムがうまく作られていて学生たちが生産的な趣味を持つよう支援し、自分の才能をうまく使えるようにしている。したがって、エリート文化が少ないため、アマチュアから専門家の道に行くことが簡単である。

　オーストラリアはスポーツ系の部活は発達できているが、芸能系や文化系などの部活はないほうが多い。そして、自分の個人時間のことを大事に思うので理由があったら練習や試合などに参加しなくても周りの視線が日本みたいに厳しくない。韓国は日本とオーストラリアと反対にエリート文化のため、する人はみんな本格的にして一般人とのギャップが大きい。

　大学部活の欠点があるとすると、先輩後輩の上下関係が厳しいため、３年生や４年生は部活活動に消極的になってしまうことと、授業と部活を両立させるのが難しい場合が多い点がある。

　部活についてインターネットで調べるため「部活」という単語を検索してみると、「部活ガンバ」、「部活動」、「部活ブラック」、「部活行きたくない」、「部活で学んだこと」などが出た。上のことは大学の部活やサークルのことを中心としていろいろ調べてみた結果、ネットの関連検索語は中学校と高校の部活のことが多かった。肯定的なイメージが強かった大学の部活のイメージと反対になぜ否定的な単語が多いんだろうと疑問に思った。

この答えは部活についてのニュースに詳しく説明されていた。厳しいルール、長い練習時間、内申点のために興味がなくてもやる、自分の時間を持つのが「よくない」と思う周りの視線などで無理矢理に続けていくなどがあった。興味があって始めたとしても、興味がなくなってしまうという現象は勿体無いと思う。練習時間を長くして練習の質が落ちるのはよくないと思う。練習をすればするほど悪く変わっていく練習はなんの意味があってやるのだろう。学生たちが興味を持つ、自分が好きなことに集中して自己啓発をするように手伝ってくれる。これが正しい部活ではないだろうか。

　厳しく過酷であると言われているが、わたしの周りのたくさんの人が部活に入ることを勧めていた。周りの人達から部活について話を聞けば聞くほどわたしも部活に入ってみたかったという気持ちが大きくなった。そして、なんで部活に入らなかったんだろうという気持ちになった。１年は長くもあり短くもある貴重な時間。次に、、、

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Interviewed 10 Japanese students and asked about 1) are you doing any club/circle activity? If so, why? If not, do you want to join 1-club or 2-circle please explain reason as well 2) what is the difference between club and circle activity? 3) what kind of image do you have on club and circle activity?

Article online [Internet]. at: http://www.okayama-u.ac.jp/user/st/nyushika/pdf/daigakuannai2014/8-10.sarkurukatudou.pdf [Last accessed: 20 DEC, 2016]

Article online [Internet]. at: https://www.okayama-u.ac.jp/up_load_files/event/homecomingday20161022.pdf[Last accessed: 03 JAN, 2017]*Article online* [Internet]. at: http://www.okayama-u.ac.jp/tp/news/news_id5141.html [Last accessed: 03 JAN, 2017]

　2016 年は私に「忘られない年」になった・卒業を目の前にしている時、大学生としてできるものは全部したいと思った・時間が過ぎて未来に後悔しないために始まった交換留学の準備は考えたより簡単でスームズには運ばなかったけど、グローバルパートナーズの手伝いで完璧に準備し、来るようになった・24 時間ずっと楽しくて面白いことがあったとは言えないけど、これって、人が住むところだったらそうものだから大丈夫・でも、一つのことは断言できる・ここに来たのは後悔しないと・楽しかったこともたくさんあったし、勉強になったものも言えないほど色々あったからだ・ここだったからこそできたことがあって、ここだったからこそ会える親切な友達やスタッフがいたからだ・特に、グローバルパートナーズやL-café でもらえる、体験プログラムやイベントそして、日本の普通の学校に行って（私は田舎の小学校、岡山付属中学校、町の高校などに行った-ここの三つは全部違うプログラムだった＊毎週新しい情報があるから時間がある時よく行く方がいい）交流するプログラムはとてもよかった・イベントや交流会などを通じて、日本の文化や人にもっと近づく行くのが可能だったし、深く理解するようになった・日本に来て、岡山大学に来て良かったと思った時も、グローバルパートナーズのあるプログラムに参加した後からだった・一つ惜しいのは部活に参加できなかったこと・もったいない気持ちを入れて部活についてエッセイを書いたんだけどやはり、もったいない気持ちは消えないなー・ いつも遅刻する悪い学生でした・一年お世話になりました・みんなありがとうございました・

Jonny Ting

The culture of clubs and societies, and what the Japanese really think of it

Jonny Ting（ジョニー）

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Summary:

　日本の学校の部活は、日本の学校生活を楽しくするための最大のものの 1 つです。日本の学校のクラブは、交換留学生のためにも、日本の高校生活を楽しくするものです。スポーツやカルチャークラブなど、多くのクラブから選ぶことができます。ただし、学生は通常、1 つのクラブに参加することのみが許可されています。 クラブの外にはサークルとして知られる小さな集まりがあります。 サークルはより小さなカジュアルクラブであり、より社会的です。 生徒が学校に通うことを助けるためにクラブが設立されました。 日本のクラブクラブシステムの真剣さはとても興味深いものです。
私が日本の学校のクラブを研究している間、私は強迫観念のあるクラブ文化に関係する要因が何かを判断することを目指しています。 日本の学生は本当にクラブで過ごす時間を楽しんでいますか？ これらの答えを見つけるために、私は岡山大学の様々な大学生にインタビューをしました。 これらの大学生からこの情報を集めて、私は高校と中学のクラブについてもっと理解しています。

Japanese students first join a club in junior high school, and usually stick with them throughout their student life and even through university. There are two categories of clubs: sports clubs and culture clubs. Common sports clubs include baseball, soccer, basketball and martial arts (e.g. Kendo, Judo), while culture clubs range from music, dance, art, manga, language, and others. Changing clubs is rare, but sometimes does happen. In junior high school, students are usually only allowed to belong to one club. In high school, students may be allowed to choose more than one club, but often choose to stay in just one. Only when the important final exams are coming up do students often choose to cease their club activities to focus all their efforts into studying.

In all clubs, a hierarchy of maturity is well distinguished between students. The students are separated into 'senpai's and 'kohai's. The term 'senpai' is the broad term used to refer to the senior or more experienced members of the club – generally one whom you consider of higher status than yourself. 'Kohai' refers to the newer and younger members who learn from and submit to their senpai. There is an obvious difference in power and ability between the two groups which can give rise to a special relationship between senpai and kohai, but can also cause difficulties because of the level of disparity.

The junior high school and high school club system varies slightly from university clubs. In junior and high school, there is usually a teacher assigned to each club. This teacher has the responsibility of moderating and managing the club schedules and meetings. Any queries or requests can be consulted to this teacher where he/she is able to provide contribution from a more matured perspective. However, in university, there is usually no supervisor to manage each club. This forces students, particularly senpais, to take on the responsibility of managing the club, organising the club's daily activities and acting as good role models to other club members. Kohais have the duty to listen and follow the senpais' instructions, and are often made to do the smaller jobs, such as cleaning up, as their way of contributing to the club. In this way, students are expected to and act more individually independent.

Being a member of a sports club usually involves participation in very intensive training schedules. Clubs usually meet 5 days a week for practice sessions which can last for two to five hours, and some are separated into morning and evening sessions before and after classes. This demanding schedule leaves students exhausted by the time they return home during late hours. Even throughout holidays and weekends, club activities do not cease to operate, and instead are further intensified given the extra free time. Culture clubs are different not only in that it covers other trades and interests, but they also usually don't have tight schedules like sports clubs. Besides music clubs, most culture clubs usually meet much less frequently – some only once in a week or two – because less 'training' is required. Because of this, some students are able to afford the time to join more than one club, whereas it isn't feasible in sports clubs. This system is much similar to the system in Western countries, where club members are usually able to come and go as they see fit. Clubs are usually seen more as a place where you can satisfy your recreational needs, rather than something you are required to attend.

When I interviewed Japanese students, whom were all ranging from ages 18-27 who are/had been in a sports club, the first response was always a complaint about the heavy training schedule. For example, one girl who used to belong in the volleyball club associates "training sessions" to mean at least 5 hours. With so much of the day dedicated to attending classes and club commitments, there is practically no time left for anything else. This mindset led many students to allege that when belonging to a club, their everyday life essentially reduces to only consisting of studying and club activities. Every day they wake up, go to school, do club activities, study, sleep and repeat. It hinders their time and energy for study, as well as eliminating any downtime for relaxing or doing other hobbies. Many students choose to quit bukatsu for this reason; the stress it caused was too overwhelming for them.

These results showed me that all the stereotypes and problems of Japanese clubs which I have heard and read about were true. I was curious; if this is so, do Japanese students like the system? The response: every single one that was interviewed said they do NOT like the system. They all believe the standards are too demanding which has a negative impact on students' wellbeing. Many students sustain injuries from their club activities, but are still expected to attend training instead of recovering otherwise they fall behind. From an alternate perspective, not only is it tough for students; it is also hard for the supervising teachers of clubs. These teachers are forced to oversee the clubs they're assigned to, and can be very exhausting as activities can continue till late in the night.

The senpai-kohai relationship can also prove to be a detriment to the system. Out of those I interviewed, half of the students have had negative experiences or relationships with their senpais, some to the point of leaving the club. Because of the hierarchy, senpais may feel superior and behave egotistically, making bullying a common occurrence within clubs. One girl whom I interviewed had explicitly left her club because of the mistreatment she received from her senpais, and now has a very negative impression of clubs. Another interviewee recalled her junior high school years being unpleasant and stressful because her badminton club senpais were very strict and frequently scolded her. She had only wanted to play the sport recreationally, but this, along with the tightly-packed schedule of the club, took away her interest in the sport. However, in her high school badminton club, she had supportive club members and senpais who helped her through not only club trainings but throughout her high school life altogether. This example is a good demonstration of how influential senpais can be in making or breaking a kohai's school experience.

Another difficulty found by students is the process of quitting a club. Although the actual quitting process requires just the signing of a form, many choose not to leave even when they dislike it because of the negative repercussions that are associated with quitting. Leaving may be seen as an act of betrayal, which can sever your ties with friends and other members of the club, and ruin your overall self-image in general. A common and easy, though circumstantial excuse for leaving a club is injury. Two students I interviewed admitted they had been lucky enough to leave their high school clubs that they disliked because of an injury. However, this is a special case. In most instances, students decide to remain in their clubs for the purpose of keeping up appearances. But after leaving clubs, friends usually reminisce about how difficult it was, and are relieved from their escape. Why is it then that so many

students join clubs?

The most common and main reason gathered from students is: it is simply the best way to make friends. In a club, you're able to find many others around your age who share the same interests as you, which by itself already forms an instant connection. All the challenges and experiences you face together as fellow club members, especially when you win a competition together, creates strong and unique bonds that you share with them and no one else, making it easy to develop lifelong relations. This idea motivates many to participate in a club. Many students choose to endure through all the hardships they face in a club because they don't want to miss out on this opportunity to make connections. Along with the interaction done in school classes and part time jobs, joining in a club society is the biggest and easiest way to make close, meaningful friends while young.

Another reason students join clubs is to improve their skills or simply to indulge in their interests. Club training sessions are the best time to hone your skills and learn from others in the same trade. There are not many other places where you can work with so many others so regularly on what you like, so it can be very rewarding. Especially for those who are serious in improving, or winning competitions, this is the best time and place to make the most of it. It is very easy to gain motivation when results show or when trophies are won. What better way is there to enjoy student life while learning?

Others may simply choose a club because they have nothing to do, or they don't want to feel left out. Doing club activities is seen in Japan by many just like a custom of daily life, similar to attending school. Those who are not part of a club are sometimes looked down upon, so there is social pressure to join one. It is important to learn how to keep a good balance between academic and physical commitments.

In university, outside of clubs, there are also circles which are smaller, more casual societies that students can join based on their interest. These circles have a similar system to culture clubs, where it is much more relaxed and less time-consuming. The schedules for meetings and activities are less frequent, and attendance is less strictly enforced. In clubs, the activities and rules are taken much more seriously because most of the club teams have high aspirations to win state-wide competitions. Some clubs may go above and beyond the usual training quota if they are truly committed to training when a major competitive event is upcoming. Circles don't focus on creating competitive teams, but instead has the outlook of gathering students together in groups who wants to hang out and have fun. For the more casual, uncommitted players, a circle is better suited for them.

Most students I interviewed prefer the circle system over the club system. All of them claimed to only have participated in club activities not because of choice, but mostly because they felt obligated to join. The negative implications that are associated with skipping practice would stain their image too much that it's not worth it. In circles however, the environment is much more easy-going and relaxed, which what most students are looking for. However, this is also the root of the downside to the circle system: it is too casual and the members meet too infrequently that it can be difficult to form meaningful relationships. Not only do you see other members less frequently, you also don't go through many big milestones with them that you would in clubs, such as winning a championship. This makes circles more of a place where you make acquaintances rather than lifelong friends.

In summary, based on the opinions of those interviewed, Japanese students are not in favour of the current Japanese school club system. They believe the system puts too much emphasis on training that is too straining and time-consuming. The more casual and laidback student society found in university circles is what most students are seeking for, even though it has its negative aspects. Unfortunately, many Japanese people are stuck doing something they don't like, but are unable to change the system and are forced to yield to it.

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EPOK Reflections:

   The semester that I have spent in Okayama University has been an incredibly memorable and fulfilling experience. One thing I wanted to achieve in my time abroad was to become more independent, because this was the first time in my life I've lived alone away from home. Before coming, I was very worried how I would settle and adapt to a foreign country which I barely spoke a word of. However, when arriving in Okayama, I received so much help from my tutor, friends, neighbours, and teachers that I had no problems at all settling in. I've met countless amazing people, both Japanese and other international students, who have taught me so much about Japan and the rest of the world and broadened my perspectives. My roommates and neighbours have especially made my time here in Okayama, and I couldn't ask for a better accommodation than the Share House. Everyone has been so kind to me, and not a single moment in the time here did I feel lonely or left out.

I am grateful to the EPOK classes and the L café for providing us many opportunities to interact with local Japanese students, which has brought about many of my friends here in Okayama. My Japanese culture and language knowledge has greatly improved in my semester here, which I am motivated to continue to pursue after I return home to Perth. While travelling around Okayama and Japan, I have come to realise how much there is out there is out there in the world outside of Australia. To those wondering how to make the most of their experience, I wholeheartedly recommend doing a homestay. Joining EPOK has honestly been one of the best decisions I've made in my life. This experience has far exceeded my expectations, and it really been one of the best times in my life. Thank you Okadai!

Clayton Formosa

Higher Education in Japan and diversity issues in light of Japan's aging society

Clayton Formosa

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　このエッセイは、日本の高等教育の現在にある問題について説明する。過去の２０年間で学生の成績が減ったり、学生の人口も減ったり、特に 18 歳の高齢者の方、高齢者も増えるようである、日本の大学で研究記事も基本、英語で書いてあるなぜと言うと、基本の研究論文は日本以外で作られている。今までも問題の状態について同祭力を調べているつつがあるようだ。その問題の原因は過去 20 年間からあったよう（Smith 1997、p.82）。これにより、日本のすべての高等教育に国際化を実施しようとしたようにした。実現なら正のように見えるものの、日本のナショナリズムと自己保全の間には相関があって、衝突しているように見える。現在から将来までも、「日本の高等教育の制度が世界の他の国と比較したて、どのような問題を抱えているのだろうか？」という疑問を調べてしかる後、前の多様性の試みを見て、日本の高等教育の制度に対してを「どのように改善するのができるのだろうか？」説明する。上の疑問に光明を投ずして、さらに圧力を学生と高等教育達の関係者にプレッシャーをかけないようにするのだろうか?このエッセイでは、Global'30'と言う高等教育的なプログラムが 2020 年のまでに 30 万人の学生を集めようと言う目標を作られた。世界各地から 3000 人と 8000 人の間に留学生を集めることに目指している。MEXT はその 30 の選ばれたの大学を国際化のためのセンターにとして、使用しているそうだ。

Abstract:

　　　This essay will look in to that of higher education in Japan, as of an increasing need of insight for the last approximately two decades has become apparent as declining scholastic levels, dropping student population especially that of 18 year olds, aging population, global competition, which is vectored by research capacity that is mainly dominated with English written works and an abundance of other factors. These factors have been apparent in Japanese educational system for the past seemingly two decades (Smith 1997, p. 82). This has pushed Japan into attempting to implement internationalization in to all HE institutions. While this implementation all in all seems positive it is also seemingly having a correlation and a clash with Japan's nationalism and self-preservation "complex". With this the essay will be exploring the question "what problems dose Japanese institutions have in comparison to the rest of the world" in a contemporary prospective, thereafter, look over an attempt to implement diversity and ask the question "How can it be improved?". This essay will hopefully shed light on these questions and offer some suggestions to alleviate any pressure on the system to keep up with the world standard of diversity among students and staff and that of globalization. The essay will explore this by, exploring and reviewing MEXT's attempt to gather 300,000 students by 2020 through a program called Global '30'. Using 30 selected universities, as "Centres for Internationalisation" each aiming to gather between 3000 and 8000 international students from across the globe. Along with a factors and the use of supporting secondary evidence.
Keywords: Intergration, Higher education, Japan, Diversity

　　　Due to many issues facing contemporary Japan, Japan must look upon to appropriately implementing diversity in universities and higher education, in light of its aging population and dropping student populace. Japan had in the last few years put quite some effort in to making a system of diversity through internationalization, be it in and out of HE (Higher Education). For the sake of this essay's goals will focus more on HE aspects.

This is important to note as for one, diversification is said to be 'one of the most significant terms of the 21st century in respect not only to corporations and business entities but also to societies in general' (Rivers, 2010). As these forces of globalization in the world increase and new developments in communication technology are created each day. Thus a "psychosocial" challenge of interacting with and accepting people of other walks of life who have different languages, cultures and behaviors is a factor in which almost every community on the planet has to handle appropriately. The concept of diversity coming about can be considered one of the main aspects of internationalization. (Rivers, 2010)

Diversity a term which relates to all higher education institutions all over the world who are increasingly 'embracing the importance of the international dimension of higher education and developing policies and priorities in response to the new demands and opportunities stimulated by globalization' (Knight, cited in Ninomiya, Knight, & Watanabe, 2009, p. 117).

As with many of the more advanced nations, HE institutions of Japan are currently facing off with an extraordinary amount of threats to their continuation. In addition to increased international competition, two of the most context specific problems include shoshika (the declining birth rate) and koreika (the aging population), problems which most likely increase over the next 40 odd years (Rivers, 2010).

Thus with this, MEXT (the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology) has taken a reactive over rather a proactive stance towards this issue (Kuwamura, 2009). Under MEXT's guidance the period between 2004–2007 the number of HE institutions in Japan was observed going from 709 to 756. Notwithstanding the fact that during the same period the number of 18-year olds in Japan dropped from seemingly 1.41 million to 1.29 million. Moreover this is reflected in MEXT's (2008) report. Preceding this, Mulvey (2001) had stated 'Japan's traditional university feeder programs have reached the point where they can longer graduate the number of students sufficient to maintain the economic vitality of the majority of Japan's universities' (p. 13).

Following this Poole (2005) thereafter, perceived that a passive approach to educational policy management was on the rise. He proclaimed that 2009 would see 'places available at HE institutions. . . . almost likely equal the number of applicants' (p. 245). Rivers, (2010) words it as 'any candidate rejected would impact directly upon the financial position of the university'. Thus in turn, it is suggested that Japanese 'institutions will end up admitting lower-ability students with little or no motivation to study simply because they need their fees, which makes up about 80 per cent of the university's income' (Sheppard, 2008, p. 15).

The key underlining issues such as shoshika, koreika, global competition and funding issues have only rushed Japan into further internationalizing and diversifying its HE institutions. That Japan's haste for internationalization is now a lifeline of the universities in Japan as a way of increasing low enrolments and improving its research output and competeness (Ninomiya et al., 2009, p. 123).

Ideologies of internationalism and nationalism within Japan In a seminal paper on national identification written by Kosterman and Feshbach (1989) define internationalism as a concept which 'focuses on international sharing and welfare, and reflects empathy for the peoples of other countries' and nationalism as 'a perception of national superiority and an orientation toward national dominance' (p. 271). Although often believed to be on the polar opposite of the spectrum, within Japan internationalism is seemingly closely affiliated with nationalism (Sullivan & Schatz, 2009). (Rivers, 2010) presented in a paper a brief overview of the Global 30 Project. How it represented this "ambitious plan", motivated, more so seemingly pushed, by deteriorating internal conditions in combination with the declining and aging population. The paper clearly showed that the Global 30 Project and the '300,000 international students plan' bared all the primary hallmarks of a nationalistic agenda being pursued under the banner of internationalisation. There were three key reasons used to support his assertion that we will look in too and expand on.

First and foremost, 'The Global 30 Project appears to be a reactionary measure borne out of poor policy management by MEXT' (Rivers, 2010), a problem further effected by the demographic issues facing Japan. It has been seen by the varying secondary resources (Poole, 2005; Sheppard, 2008, p. 15; Ninomiya et al., 2009, p. 123;Rivers, 2010). Rivers, also points out that if one was to refer to MEXT (2009a) themselves clearly illuminate that '300,000 international students plan' is required to 'maintain and develop our society' (p. 15). Therefore, it can be seen that the main motivation for attempting to attract international students is that of financial one and to protect Japan's own economic and internal interests.

Secondly, the pure English-only courses validates a lack of innovation on the part of MEXT. Notwithstanding the fact that many of the students that come to Japan are commonly non-native English speakers, therefore insisting on English-only language course can allow for a negative mindset of 'us–them distinction' – i.e. foreigners should speak English and Japanese should speak Japanese, a process which assists in building Japanese national identity (Rivers, 2010). It has also been stated, international students will have the opportunity to learn about the Japanese language and culture however, be simultaneously denied the opportunity to actively contribute in it. This is as there are not any Japanese students within the Global 30 Project classes through a seemingly deliberate minimalisation of Japanese contact (Hall, 1998). As for the occurrences of intercultural contact that do exist on campus he states it represents, 'a kind of simulated contact' (Rivers, 2010). over that of a meaningful contact which tries to promote or even encourage the renegotiation of beliefs, values, stereotypes, prejudices and the development of cultural boundaries (Rivers, 2010; Hall, 1998).

Finally, apart from the increase of the recruitment of foreign academic staff members it's seemingly continues to be tainted with limited term contracts renewable based on factors such as government funding (Rivers, 2010), practices akin to that of the Meiji period. This may suggest that Japanese HE institutions are not serious about the internationalisation of academic staff either. Rivers, (2010) mentions that, it can be further claimed that the diversification of HE institutions in Japan requires more than the recruitment and retention of international students and academic staff.

This essay has explored the underlying issues of one of Japan's attempts at solving its HE issues through internationalisation. It can be seen that its attempts at internationalisation is, rather less of an attempt at bridging the gap, and more of a form of nationalistic and economical form of preservation. With this it has brought about many questionable situations and issues. Japan at this rate will be unable to move to a successful full implementation of internationalisation or diversity in, yet alone out of the HE fields. This is a it is no longer nor, possible in this day and age to have diversification while at the same time putting little to no effort towards changing attitudes and breaking down the clear prejudice barriers which exist within the wider social context in Japan's society.

So now we have to ask, what can be improved? , more so how can it be improved?. To do that we have to ask what actually makes a successful integration on internationalisation in a society and university? In a paper written by Taylor (2004) called Toward a Strategy for Internationalisation: Lessons and Practice from Four Universities, he looks at the strategies for internationalisation in four prominent universities: the University of British Columbia (UBC), Canada; the University of Chicago, United States; the University of Uppsala, Sweden; and the University of Western Australia (UWA), Australia.

What was found to make implementation successful were of the following:

• An emphasis on interdisciplinary teaching and research including the development of new disciplines and forms of study such as area studies, international political economy, and international security, which often sit outside traditional departmental structures.
 • Development of new methods of delivery with consequences for teaching methods, assessment, quality assurance, and staff training.
• Recognition of the importance of customer care to support international students, visitors, and their families thereby contributing to a total experience of higher education.
• The importance of centralised management and effective management and effective leadership as well

as incentives and reward mechanisms.

• An emphasis on effective costing, cost-benefit analysis, risk management, and investment appraisal in the context of more varied and less predictable income flows; increased recognition of the concept of opportunity cost in shaping the direction of institutional effort and the work of individual members of staff.

• The increased importance attached to functions such as marketing and counseling and new skills within the spectrum of support services.

• The importance of interdepartmental working and the involvement of staff and students at all levels from all parts of the institution.

• The application of modern technology to support teaching and research and for administrative support.

• The importance of external fund-raising and, in particular, alumni relations.

• The development of partnerships with other institutions, both at home (through shared overheads) and overseas, leading to the creation of interinstitutional networks.

• Enhanced awareness of competitive forces in higher education, especially in student recruitment and the generation of research funding.

• The importance of staff development and training (Taylor, 2004)

Moreover, 'Respect for other peoples, other cultures and other value systems must always be a fundamental element in all education' (University of Uppsala, 2002, p. 3) also should be consider that "an increased intercultural understanding will also contribute to increased understanding and appreciation of a person's own culture". (University of Uppsala, 2002, p. 3) The rationale for internationalisation lies in a university's fundamental responsibility to prepare its graduates to be active and critical participants in society. (UWA, 1999, p. 2)

As this is the common mindset outside of Japan. Japan will therefore have to abide be or imitate these steps in its policies if it were to see any positive change in its HE's internationalisation. If Japan does not throw away its "self-preservation complex" and have a segregation of it groups over a proper push to merge the cultural groups together, In turn challenging the "us–them distinction", foreigners should speak English and Japanese should speak Japanese social construct that Japan has clanged on to for so long and break it down. If this is not done there may never be a true "internatonalisation" in HE.

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Cristina Randazzo Papa

Maps as Evidence of Right to Sovereignty: the case of Senkaku Islands

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　1970年代から続く尖閣諸島/釣魚台に関する抗争は、日本と中国、加えて日本の同盟国である米国にも関係するような国際問題になった。去年は特に国交事件などの衝突が激しくなっており、両国の関係性がより厳しさを増している。国交事件が沢山あったので、一帯の無事を脅した。歴史上では、何世紀にもおよび中国政府が日本政府が求める列島に関する情報の提示を行わなかったが、第二次世界大戦後に列島付近で天然資源が見つかった事が発端となり、今日の政治抗争が始まった。慣習国際法では、領土の主権を持つのに必要な条件は、"animus possidendi" (その領土を所有する意志) がある事である。上記の意志だけでなく、他国や国際機関の間接的な意見もまた、地図作成では、国内的や国際的に認められている地図における論争中の列島の名前で表されている。それぞれの国が書いた地図を読み取ることにより、各国の意見が見えてくる。したがって、世論やマスメディアの情報をしっかりと見極めるとともに、抗争を防ぐため地図を比較、分析していくことが重要だと考える。

Introduction

　　The Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands (尖閣/釣魚) are a small archipelago of 5 uninhabited islands and 3 barren rocks situated in the Eastern China Sea, 170 km north-east from Taiwan. They are administered by Ishigaki, Okinawa Prefecture, Japan, which considers them as having always made part of its "Nansei-shōto", "South-Western Islands" (as per stated in "*Basic Viewpoints about the Senkaku Islands*", a document accessible on the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs website). Even though they have been uninhabited ever since World War II, these islands had previously been populated for about 60 years by Japanese workers and their employer, Koga Tatsuhiro, to whom the islands had been leased by the Japanese Government. With the occupation of Japanese territory by the US due to the war, these islands had passed under American administration along with the rest of Japan, yet Okinawa and the other southern islands (including the Senkaku) were given back to Japan only 20 years after its end. So far, no complaints had ever been advanced by any country about mentioned islands; yet, once the word spread that in the late 1960s the United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE) had found out that there may have been reserves of offshore oil in the area surrounding the archipelago, both China and Taiwan started contesting Japan's control over it by saying that it had been acquired through a violation of the International Law and of the Potsdam Declaration. This violation would consist of the Diaoyu Islands not having being returned after Potsdam Declaration in 1945, with which Japan was to return to China both Taiwan and the islands that belonged to it, obtained through the Treaty of Shimonoseki, the epilog of the Sino-Japanese War in 1895. It is indeed true that the treaty they signed stated that China would cede to Japan sovereignty over "*The island of Formosa [Taiwan], together with all islands appertaining or belonging to the said Island of Formosa*", but it is not specified which were the islands included in its territory, thus there is no evidence to affirm either version is correct based on this treaty. Moreover, this treaty was signed in April, while the order emitted by the Japanese Government to place markers on those uninhabited islands dates three months before that, thus suggesting that it is impossible for Japan to have acquired them through that treaty, and thus, Japan was not supposed to give them back to China. Not only that, but China never complained about the numerous Japanese expeditions that took place from 1895 onwards. Some scholars assert that the first expedition is but fiction and never actually took place, yet it is not possible to deny most of the others, and especially the second one, which took place just two days after the first – maybe fake – expedition, and from which the ship brought back some samples of both rocks and of a local type of albatross. It would be unfair not to

acknowledge the first historical record of these islands as belonging to a Chinese travel diary dating as back as 1372, but its author only mentioned passing by its main islet, without landing nor reclaiming its ownership.

On the other hand, the Japanese Government retains its rightful claim of a *terra nullius*, and that none of the countries that are now advancing their claims had ever contested it until they found out about the presence of oil. Also, Japan maintains its right of sovereignty over the archipelago because it built some infrastructures and facilities from 1897 until halfway through World War II.

In the past, many theories have been formulated as per how to deal with the issue, but the main ones are just three: 1. Even though acknowledging Japan's legal right over the archipelago, it should give sovereignty up so that peace may be maintained; 2. For both countries to acknowledge the other's claims and to create a special commission which would be in charge of regulating the exploitation of resources on both countries' behalf; 3. For both countries to withdraw any claims, and just not to exploit neither the land nor the sea portion surrounding the archipelago.

It is easy to imagine how economic interests are too strong for the third option to be chosen, and it seems like this frozen situation has been damaging Japan greatly: in a research conducted in 2009, it is affirmed that "China benefits from the endurance of the dispute because it can use territorial dispute threats to compel Japan to change its behavior or policy on other disputed issues. The results show that China gained concessions on other issues by using the territorial dispute as bargaining leverage in most of the 26 threats made between 1978 and 2008.". Regarding the second one, there have been some negotiations in the past, but the situation is getting more and more tense, to the point where its feasibility became very unlikely. The first one, instead, would not only damage Japan's interests, but some scholars are actually pressing for it not to even consider such actions to prevent China from advancing more claims in the future, supported by such a precedent. Speculation set aside, ever since some Chinese scholars raised for Okinawa to be claimed as well, it is beyond reasoning for Japan to give up any territory, especially because the International Law seems to back it up even in the Senkaku Islands' case. It seems like the only feasible way of solving the issue is that of surveying people who once inhabited China, Japan, Taiwan and other countries. In order to grasp their perception of the world that used to surround them, I will be analyzing their primary resource of contact with the outer world: maps. By dealing with geographical maps and modern media, my aim is to determine both past and present tendencies in the either explicit or perceived attribution of the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands' ownership.

Findings

Through comparison of the first (1961) and second (1982) editions of the Chinese "Liang Zhong Haidao Zhenjing" [Two Sea Route Directional Canons], it is evident how a change in terminology took place due to the political development of the issue: in the first edition, the annotator Xiang Da describes the islands – though individually referred to with their Chinese names – by saying that "Diaoyu Islet is an island in the Senkaku Archipelago along the sea route from Keelung, Taiwan to Ryukyu", and then again "[…] Diaoyu Island, part of the Ryukyuan Senkaku Archipelago.", while in the second edition – published once disputes over its possession had started – these annotations were changed into "[…] Diaoyu Island in the sea to the northeast of Keelung, Taiwan."; the exact same change of expressions happened in the explanation of "Chikan Islet" ("Chiwei" in Chinese); the most relevant case, instead, is the explanation of "Huangwei Islet", saying that it "is located in the Senkaku Archipelago between Taiwan and Ryukyu. It is also known as Jiuchang Island [which is referred to as Kuba-jima in Japanese-Chinese-English translator's note]" in the first edition, and "it is located in the sea to the northeast of Chinese Taiwan. It is an island under the jurisdiction of Taiwan.", which strongly asserts the Chinese political position, stressing its will to possess something that just 20 years prior they would have referred to by using Japanese words instead. Political issue set aside, it seems that Xiang Da was using Japanese maps, as he not only mentioned the islands as part of the "Senkaku Archipelago", but also because he very often referred to "Diaoyu Island" as "Yudiao Island", which is closer to the Japanese transcription of "Uotsuri-jima".

Furthermore, amongst the many maps analysed in the Japanese "*Commissioned Research Report on the Senkaku* Islands" in 2016, the researching commission emphasized how in "*A Complete Map of the Ryukyus*", edited by Akamine Kousei in 1958, "[t]he Senkaku Islands were included in the Yaeyama Island Group. The map includes Tokara Islands and Amami Islands of Kagoshima Prefecture, Ryukyu Islands, and northern Taiwan, and the geographical boundary of the Ryukyu Islands including the Senkaku Islands was circled with a red line." (Figure 1).

A Chinese version of the map, visible on GlobalSecurity.org – an affirmed website in the international relations' field –, shows the islands with their Chinese name, yet inside the line explicitly marking the boundaries of Japan (Figure 2), thus proving quite controversial for Chinese claims.

Amongst nowadays' maps, it is important to mention the one purchasable through National

Figure 1: Detail from "A Complete Map of the Ryukyus"

Geographic's website, in which they juxtapose the Japanese name and the Chinese one – with smaller font and inside a parenthesis –, accompanied by an explanatory sentence to the reason, stating "Administered by Japan, claimed by China and Taiwan" (Figure 3).

Figure 2: Chinese map on GlobalSecurity.org

With claims turning from words and negotiations into the serious risk of clashes, a new concern arose about new claims on China's part in 2013 regarding an extension of its air defense zone, which extends largely over the Japanese one. Even though these new claims are not supported by the international community, China proclaimed the need for planes entering the zone to submit flight plans beforehand and for them to identify themselves, otherwise serious military measures will take place. The claimed air defense zone is depicted in the map (Figure 4) provided by both countries' ministries of Defense, even though the Japanese Government and its ally, the USA, strongly oppose such a unilateral, non-supported claim,

Figure 3: Map by National Geographic

Figure 4: China's self-proclaimed extension of air defense zone

which might mark the start of a new chapter in the history of International Law.

With ways of conducting a speech being the mirror of a person's – or of whole countries' – will and thoughts, it is worth mentioning how there has been a significant change in Japanese media's expressions, which in the past would have always referred to "Senkaku Islands, Okinawa Prefecture" first, followed by "known in China as the Diaoyu Islands", while in recent times there was an evident switch towards erasing this last part, showing the national will to stress its sovereignty over the area, without any concession whatsoever.

Conclusions

The ongoing dispute over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands keeps on causing anguish to the international society as a whole, especially because it seems like the existing doctrine in International Law is not sufficient to avoid nor solve such disputes. In these turbulent times, a major accident such as the beginning of a conflict between two superpowers such as China and Japan – and, most probably, the US – is to be avoided without fail; yet, it looks as if all negotiation attempts between the two countries will keep on turning into nothing. For this reason, the involvement of a specific international

commission – independent from either country – in order to finally assess the best measures to be taken seems to be urgently needed. Last but not the least, the restricted access for both Japan and international organizations to the documents PRC uses to stress its thesis is still a great hindrance to verifying it and thus, it is adding tension to an already bad situation. If any of these measures were to be taken, keeping the peace in the area would be a much more probable outcome than the ones that are predictable as of today.

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EPOK Reflections

The five months I have spent in Okayama University have been filled with new challenges, hope, laughter, panic and so many more elements that are really hard to convey through writing. I suppose I could summarize it as "energy": energy I have received from my fellow exchange students, from my teachers, from the staff working at Global Partners, from all the Japanese friends I got the chance to make in here, from my flatmates, from my boss in L-Café, from my tutors; energies I have spent studying, travelling, trying to meet deadlines, adapting to life in here and then adapting to the idea of leaving a place that had become so dear to me.

I will forever be grateful for all of the warmth I have received in a place I never thought I might consider my own in the least bit.

The contents of the lectures were very interesting and challenging, to the point where I started adding more classes than I had originally planned just for fun. However, what I often found most thrilling was how very few could be considered your "normal way" of giving a lecture: from practicing tea ceremony to going on a walk among pieces of pottery in Inbe, through zazen sitting, producing pieces of Bizen ware with my own hands, and field trips to Kyoto and other amazing places, until the point where I did not know the distinction between class and leisure anymore.

Every single day I have spent in here involved new and unique experiences together with all of the friends I have made in here. Feeling lonely in this place is definitely not an option, which is extremely reassuring for people who leave everything and everybody behind, seeking personal growth.

Now that my departure time is getting closer and closer, I can confidently say that I have two places to come back to inside Japan: Yakage – where my amazing host family lives – and Okayama. I wish to my fellow exchange students and to all the ones to come next to achieve an experience at least as amazing as my own.

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Yokai

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In a lot of countries, there are stories and legends that have been passed down for ages and they are often known but they often kind of fade overtime. However, *yokai* are unique in that they have adapted over time to whatever age they are in. In my previous paper about *yokai,* I talked about how they influenced a lot of Japanese culture in the past up till today. In the past two years however it seems more research has come out and new ideas have been formed. In this paper I want to relook at *yokai* to see how they have changed from the past and how their image still lives on and may never die.

What are *yokai?* Are they ghosts? What is the difference between a *yurei* and a *yokai?* Why is this so confusing you might ask? Well the biggest reason is that there really isn't an English word to accurately describe them. Let's start with what *yurei* are. *Yurei* are spirits or ghost in Japanese folklore. They are often depicted in white clothing, which is either *Kimono* called *katabira* or a *kyokatabira,* their elbows are tucked near their sides with their wrists dangling lifelessly, have black long hair, and usually have *hitodama* or blue/purple flaming balls around them. In Japanese traditional beliefs, humans have what is called *reikan* in Japanese or spirit in English. When a person dies the *reikan* leaves the body and enters something similar to purgatory. There it waits for the funeral ceremony to be performed so it may join its ancestors. However if this ritual is not done properly or the person died from something violent like murder or suicide, it can become an evil spirit that acts on vengeful emotions and anger.

In my past paper I said that *yokai* were, "a word used to explain unexplainable phenomenon that would happen that seem unnatural in daily life". They are also described as ghosts or phantoms which make it really confusing to tell what they exactly are. So to solve this I dug deeper and at many different angles. The history of *yokai* stretches vastly throughout history. The first recordings of them occurred in the 8th Century and more recently in the Edo period. A visual catalogue by Toriyama Sekien, which in English it is known as "The Illustrated Night Parade of a Hundred Demons", cataloged 200 types of *yokai.* In order to better understand what exactly *yokai* were I researched as far back as I could find. That is when I found *mononoke.* Mononoke are vengeful spirits that do mischievous things to humans. A lot of times they cause disease, cause death or just straight up possess people in order to make them suffer. Mononoke were often written about it the Heian period and can be found in many of the Japanese famous writings like the *Genji Monogatari.* Mononoke are not the same as *yokai* but are more like a category of *yokai* and have many of the same features. Yokai are very similar in that they are spirits however there is one thing that makes *yurei* and *yokai* different. It is true that they are both spirits or phantoms but the difference is *yurei* are often angry spirits of human, whereas *yokai* are spirits who can be just angry in general or there is a cause or reason why they are angry. However that does not mean *yokai* are evil for they have also been known to be kind creatures.

In Japan it is well known by the world that there are thousands of deities in Japan. There are many reasons for this however one of the more important reasons is that Japan has a long history in the belief of animism, which is the belief that trees, mountains, grass, and nature all have a spirit. This also means that man-made objects can have spirits too. Often *yokai* were created because of unexplained events that were happening. These things very from things like the *kappa,* which was possibly made to explain drowning in lakes or rivers in ancient Japan by grabbing his victims and dragging them to the bottom to suck out their soul or the *azuki-arai* which means bean washer and was used to explain the sound of rushing water. Also in ancient Japan, when people would throw out something they often would take them to a shrine to make peace with the spirit and give thanks to the item. It was believed that if you just abandoned these items they would become angry about the mistreatment and turn into

yokai. So probably the higher government officials at the time did not care about these sorts of practices often and were more often than not a victim of an angry *yokai*.

Now that we have a better understanding of *yokai,* let us move on. I truly think *yokai* are amazing and here is why. It is not because of their unique traditions or history. Let me put it this way, in a lot of countries, there are stories and legends that have been passed down for ages and while they are often known, they often kind of fade off into, "kind of knowing what they are." However, *yokai* are unique in that they have adapted over time to whatever age they are in. Here is what I mean. I explained the *mononoke* for a reason because they were written about in the Heian era which is thought to be one of the first known documentations of these types of stories. *Yokai* were of course probably known about back then but they were not all that popular outside of the Shinto Shrine. At least not until the Edo period when *Toriyama Seikien* helped boost the popularity of them. However *mononoke* were written about quite frequently in many famous documents. They seem to be more in the sense of a scary encounter in these cases. In the Edo period *Toriyama Seikien* logged 200 different types of *yokai* in pictures for the first time. *Yokai* cannot be seen nor heard so this gave them their first form through images. It was a big deal at the time because it took what could not be seen and made into something completely new. This book inspired many artists and a new *yokai* culture started. People started to make things like playing cards, game boards, toys, art, and more that were all being made based off of them. People would even have *yokai* sown on and hidden on the inner lining of their Kimono and would show them off by showing their friends in secret. Events were often held with *yokai* art in the background or they would get together to tell scary stories that included *yokai* in them as well.

In the Modern day Japan the idea of *yokai* has exploded. I am not just talking about Yokai-Watch though, which is one of the more obvious examples. *Yokai* have found their way into everything. It expands wider than you might think, from literature, to films and even have inspired directors internationally. Nintendo has even added *yokai* to their Pokémon franchise that is included in their new game Sun and Moon. Although *yokai* are still around today, they have changed drastically over time. *Toriyama Seikien* took the stories of *yokai* and gave them a new look without really changing anything about them. However nowadays, a good example being Yokai-Watch, we see an interesting change. As mentioned earlier *yokai* cannot be seen nor heard but in Yokai-Watch they are able to be seen and talked to. I guess this just goes to show how adaptable they really are. However this is not without its problems. I was reading an article about the new game coming out about Yokai-Watch. This franchise is super explosive in Japan but to other countries, like America, it is not as popular. Well to a degree that is. Looking at this game it will probably be liked by many but not easily understood. One because the word *yokai* means nothing to most people who do not live in Japan because they do not have any idea what the word means. Also there is no word for them in English which makes it really hard to describe what exactly they are because they are ghosts but spirits, but also phenomenon. So to most unless they know what *azuki-arai or bakaneko* is it can be really confusing. The game really is more of a "Japanese experience" because it comes down to the people's knowledge of Japanese culture and Japanese folklore. That is not to say that this will stop *yokai* from going international because the world is slowing globalizing and there is a ton of information about *yokai* nowadays on the internet. This may be a reason for their problems. In Japan 1.4 million units were sold, however in America there were drastically less sold than the creators originally thought. They were only about 400,000 units sold in America. This is not to say that *yokai* wont sweep the world by storm, however it may take some time before the world can fully understand what the word *yokai* means.

Yokai still being around in Japanese culture is not the only interesting thing. It is the degree of which they are present in today's modern day. It is a cultural phenomenon that may never die out because *yokai* have been able to adapt and change, while still keeping their general historic origin. In conclusion *yokai* are phenomenon that literally cannot be explained and I believe this is one part of Japanese culture that may never die.

EPOK Experience:

This was my second time coming to Okayama through EPOK. Overall I had a great experience and enjoyed it a lot. It was my second time so a lot classes I have already taken but there was a lot of new opportunities as well. The TESL class was a great opportunity and I enjoyed exploring it and learning how to teach. I was able to go to a cram school in rural areas a few times and help teach English which was really fun for me because I love working with children and teaching. I was also able to do a homestay again and found that I got a different experience. I had so much fun with both and I learned so much from them. I am really grateful for these opportunities offered at the University. I spent a lot more time at L Cafe this year and was able to experience a lot great things and meet many new people.

Photo

MEMORIES