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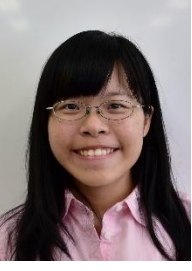



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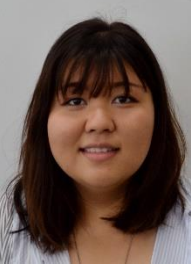



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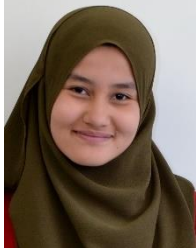


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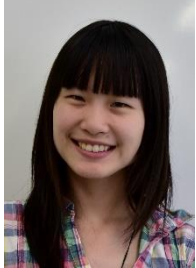
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2016年夏、EPOKを修了するみなさん、修了おめでとうございます。

修了生 39名は、それぞれが自主性にあふれたユニークな学習をし、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、より生き生きとした力強い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 thirty-nine EPOK students are all unique ones with independent spirits. You have also made international friends while sharing indispensable experiences, 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 a part of your treasure.

It is also with our pride; you have made a part of the EPOK history which will continue to grow.

Best wishes for your bright future.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Yoko Yamamoto".

July 15, 2016

山本洋子 (Yoko YAMAMOTO)

Director

Center for Global Partnerships and Education

Okayama University

Hey there folks,

It's been grand. Putting this booklet together has been...an experience. Thank you to everyone who helped out. Thank you to the EPOK students for actually getting your essays in on time. This semester, this year, has been fantastic. We sincerely hope you enjoy this memento of your time in Okayama. The editing committee- at least some of the editing committee- has spent long nights working on this to make it the best it possibly can be. Hopefully our effort was worth it?!

Enjoy your books. Thank you to everyone who submitted pictures. Also, thank you to everyone who posted pictures on Facebook, because we raided your Facebook profiles for photos. ;) This entire thing has been a trial, but we've managed to make it happen, thanks to everyone who helped. This book is yours: your essays, your photos, your suggestions, and for some of you who waiting until Tuesday night to submit essays, your tears. Cherish it.

A special thanks to: Sarah Valence, Danielle Hagen, Eileen Prangan, Katetip Pichetmetakul, Mr. Thomas Fast, Maya Nolan, Rei McGahey, Geoffrey Ashford, Shih-Yao Lin, Krystal Morgan, Lauren Caldwell, and Amira Keddeh for help getting the booklet finished and put together!

Thanks for the memories.

じゃあ、また。

クリスタル

## TANG LEAW

Chado: The History of Cha-No-Yu 茶道：茶の湯歴史

Leaw Tang Siong リャウ

**概要:** 今回、私は日本にいつ、どのようにして“お茶”が持ち込まれたのか、そして、どのようにして、大衆的なものになったのかを紹介したいと思う。

お茶が日本に初めて持ち込まれたのは8世紀で、中国に訪れた日本の外交官によって持ち込まれました。また、このころは、中国で仏教を学んでいた僧侶たちによって茶の種が持ち込まれたため、茶は主に僧侶や貴族にのみ飲まれていた。

12世紀の終わりごろ、栄西禅師が日本に禅仏教を持ち込み、将軍の二日酔いの薬として茶を備えさせたことから、日本で茶の文化を大衆化させた。これに伴い、日本全国で茶の文化が広まり、日本の大衆文化の一つとなった。

**Summary:** In this essay, I will show how and when the Cha (tea) is introduced in Japan, and how the Cha (tea) is popularize in Japan. Tea first came to Japan in 8<sup>th</sup> Century, brought back by Japanese diplomats visiting China. Also, during this time period, Japanese monks who studying Buddhism in China brought back tea seeds when returned Japan, but during this period, tea was only for Buddhist monks and nobles. At the end of 12<sup>th</sup> century the Zen monk Eisai (1141-1215) brought home Zen Buddhism and he successfully popularize cha in Japan through the preparation of tea as medicine to the Shogun who was suffering from a hangover. After this, tea spread widely throughout Japan and the culture of drinking tea began.

Chado (茶道), The Way of Tea, is not only about drinking tea. It is so difficult that making and drinking the Cha will have to concern about the manner, rules, and the way of making and drinking Japanese tea. Preparing the materials and utensils is much easier than attending a tea ceremony, *ochakai* (お茶会). In Cha-No-Yu, there are certain rules or forms of etiquette.

A common image of Chado is training for brides-to-be in the art of good manners, in conjunction with flower arrangement. Actually, many women may have learned Chado at school. Chado is ranked high by the mass media in the category of pass times and lessons, reflecting the current boom of “style”. We can differentiate the Cha-No-Yu in Japan is different from other country that also has the culture of drinking tea such as China and Korea. Although the tea’s origin is from China, but tea culture in China is just about drinking tea for satisfaction. So, how was the cha introduced in Japan?

Tea seeds were not native to Japan, but introduced from China sometime in the early Heian period (794-1185). Tea first came to Japan in 8<sup>th</sup> Century, brought back by Japanese diplomats visiting China. Also, during this time period, Japanese monks who studying Buddhism in China brought back tea seeds when returned Japan, but during this period, tea was only for Buddhist monks and nobles. Toward the end of Tang dynasty in China, the drinking of tea was going through a transformation from medicine to beverage, but due to

deteriorating relations between the two countries, this transformation did not reach Japan until much later. The Japanese were forced to mould and cultivate their own traditions and culture around the tea. Tea was rare and valuable commodity from the Nara period to the Heian period so rules and formalities were based on this concept.

The history of Japanese tea began with the Emperor Saga paid a royal visit to Kanzaki on April 22<sup>nd</sup> in 815. Emperor Saga paid a visit to Shiga Kanzaki in Oomi province. He passed Sufukuji Temple. The Abbot *Eichu* welcomed the Emperor, led by the guardians and priests. The emperor stepped down from the palanquin and went up to the temple and then worshiped the Buddha. Then *Eichu* brewed tea himself and dedicated it to the Emperor. He was rewarded with a garment. This is the first official description of tea in Japan, which reports the dedication of tea to Emperor Saga by *Eichu* in Bonshakuji Temple. The habit of drinking tea by aristocrats and priests gradually spread and became a daily practice.

A renewed interest in tea appears with the reintroduction of seeds by the priest Eisai (榮西), from Okayama prefecture, who was dispatched to China to study philosophy and religion which became the founder of Zen Buddhism and built first temple of Rinzaï sect. Eisai came back from Song in 1191 and planted tea seeds to make a tea plantation in Unsenji Temple in Saga prefecture. Eisai was an active *Kenmitsu* priest, who belonged to the authorized Buddhist sects of the time. He explained the medical effect of tea in his *Kissa Yojoki*, which was the first work about tea in Japan that the value of tea as medicine is apparent in the title as well as the opening lines of this work: “Tea is an elixir for good health, a miraculous means of prolonging one’s life.” Eisai professes that tea is the wizard’s herb for sustaining life and the secret for long life.

Eisai introduced the Sung method of preparation where plucked leaves were made into powder which was whisked with hot water in a bowl. This is the style in which tea is prepared today. After the death of Eisai and until the end of the Kamakura period, tea was drunk mainly by Zen monks, who found it useful in staying awake during their meditations, as well as by the nobility and high ranking warriors.

During Kamakura period (1185-1333) and Muromachi period (1333-1573), the nature of tea drinking changed radically into a place of the downfallen aristocrats, emerging warriors and the military lords, took the power and were absorbed in tea contests called *Tocha* (鬪茶) or *Chayoriai* (茶寄合). *Tocha* can be translated as “fight-tea”, it is a game which the participants try to guess if the tea that is served is from the Uji-area (宇治) around Kyoto, so-called “*honcha*” (本茶) or “real” tea, or not and therefore making it “*hi-cha*” (非茶) or “not” tea. Tea contests were the events where the competitors tasted several drinks of tea and distinguished the places of their production like the tasting of wine. *Tocha* as the central form of recreation gradually lost its appeal and tea grew to be widely associated with wine drinking parties.

A new form of tea appreciation developed known as “*wabi-cha*” (侘茶) for which historically a tea master known as Muruta Shuko (1423-1503) is credited. This *wabi-cha* is generally described as simpler, more rustic kind of ceremony than what was practice at the court of the Ashikaga. It was not merely centred on meibutsu utensils, but other karamono and utensils from Japanese origin were also used. This form of tea practice also became known as chanoyu and spread from the wealthy merchants of trade cities like Sakai to the court of shogunate.

When Oda Nobunaga deposed the last Ashikaga shogun and became shogun himself, he adopted some of the cultural activities of the Ashikaga, such as the tea ceremony, as a means

of confirming his power. He does not seem to have had a great interest in *chanoyu* personally, but his treatment of it placed it at the centre of the cultural interests of ruling warrior class elite. Nobunaga's influence on the contents of *chanoyu* was however negligible.

Nobunaga's successor Toyotomi Hideyoshi continued his tea politics and under his patronage and that of his brother Hidenaga, Sen no Rikyu (千利休) became the leading tea-master in Japan. Rikyu was one of the most influential tea-master in the history of *chanoyu* and much of what we regard today as being characteristic of *chanoyu* is in some way related to him. Rikyu was succeeded by daimyo Oribe, who created a new style of *chanoyu*, but who, because of his untimely death, was unable to succeed in establishing a lasting school of tea.

The Edo period, Oribe was invited to Edo by the Second Shogun Hidetada to be his tea mentor. However, Oribe committed suicide like Rikyu as the result of conspiracy with Toyotomi's side during the Siege of Osaka (大阪の陣) in 1615. Kobori Enshu (1579-1647) became the magistrate of construction, and studied *chanoyu* under Oribe. He made his presence in *chanoyu* as a daimyo tea master after the death of Oribe, by organizing tea gatherings at the official visits to daimyos by the Shogun, or by supporting tea gatherings hosted by the Shogun. Reflecting the stability of the governance of the Tokugawa Shogunate, Enshu incorporated the *chanoyu* of royal culture with the traditions of the *shoin* tea of the late Muromachi period. His gorgeous aesthetic sense was distinctive from that of Rikyu or Oribe, which been called "kirei sabi" since the early Showa period.

Tea was spreading independently of the daimyo through the teachings of Rikyu's own descendants. The Sen House, served as sado in daimyo houses, and developed their schools' styles until today, while teaching *chanoyu* to the townsmen of Kyoto. The Sen Houses continued their *chanoyu* tradition for four hundred and fifty years.

After the Meiji Restoration, *chanoyu* and other cultural activities favoured by warriors were labeled old-fashioned. Chado faced difficulties, but it managed to survive by teaching a small number of provincial disciples. After the absolute devotion to modern civilization and enlightenment, the Japanese people began to recognize the value of domestic Japanese culture so the Japanese tea culture able to last until today. The thirteenth successor was Ennosai Tetchu (1872-1924), who introduced tea to girls' schools in the early years of Meiji period. As a result, the practice of chado was opened to the public at large.

However, the image of *chanoyu* for good manners was developed only after the Meiji Period, especially after the Second World War, this constituting only a short period in the long history of *chanoyu*. *Chanoyu* was at its lowest ebb during Meiji Period, when every value of the previous Edo period was rejected, as *chanoyu* had been the ritual of the samurai and basis for the manners and etiquette of Edo period merchants. It is significant that the Meiji government referred to tea masters as "amusement performers" when they had to label and document the existing occupations

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Cultural History of Japan through Tea (Papers from Chado Class)

### EPOK Reflections

As an East Asian studies major, join an exchange program in Japan was my biggest wish. Thanks to Okayama University, offered me the opportunity to participate in EPOK program, so I can make my wish comes true. Yeah, I did it! My experience in Japan especially in Okayama University, joining the EPOK exchange program was unforgettable. I met many different people from many different countries and lot of Japanese friends. Although my Japanese level is still in beginner, I tried to speak Japanese as much as I can. I learned a lot of Japanese culture by taking Japanese culture class, Japanese language class, Study of Japan and more.

The reason I chose *Chado* as the topic of EPOK research project is the tea culture in Japan is interesting. Even *Chado* class is available starting from junior high school, so they are familiar to *Chado*. *Chado* is not only attending or hosting a tea ceremony just to drink the tea for satisfaction but to learn the manner, etiquette and also the way during drinking the tea. This made me decided to find out more about the history of *Chado*.

I am glad that I am able to study in Okayama University even it is under the EPOK exchange program for 1 semester (2 quarters for Okayama University). I got a great exchange study experience through EPOK program in Okayama University. I love Okadai!!

## SITI ABD WAHID

### Zen practice among Japanese people and its comparison with Islamic practice

Siti Zuhaila Binti Abd Wahid

この論文で、私は日本で実践されてきた禅の思想や概念について簡単に説明します。次に、この論文は、禅の実践と禅が日本の人々の間に与える効果を定義したいと思います。最後に、以上の結果が、いくつかの選択された側面から禅とイスラムスーフイズムを比較するために使われます。

禅は情熱的なものではありませんが、私たちのいつもの日課に専念するものです。したがって、禅は、私たちの日常生活に影響を与えるので、議論すべき興味深い話題です。日本での禅の重要な影響の一つは、宗教的な慣行に寛容であるということです。この精神的にきたえることと、私が人生において、信じているイスラム教とを比較することによって、私は皆さんと一緒に、2つの行いの類似点と相違点を共有したいと思います。

しかしながら、日本の人々の日常生活の中で禅の実践を実現することは容易ではありません。禅は、彼らの文化や日常生活の中に非常によく、とけこんでいました。さらに、真の禅の哲学は、僧侶たちを除いて皆が知っていなければならないものではありません。しかし、彼らの文化や日常生活に、禅の要素が、とけこんでいることを理解しているのでしょうか。そして、イスラム教と比較すると、間違いなく、より禅の原則や理念を理解することができます。

In this essay, I will discuss briefly about the philosophy and concept of Zen that have been practiced in Japan. Secondly, this essay will define Zen practice and its effects among Japanese people. And lastly, the results from above will be used to make the comparison between Zen and Islamic Sufism from a few aspects.

Zen is not some kind of excitement, but the concentration on our usual everyday routine. Thus, it is an interesting topic to be discussed as it affects our daily life. One of the significant influences of Zen in Japan is the tolerance to religious practices. By comparing this spiritual exercise with Islam, the one that I believe in my lifetime, I like to share with everyone the similarities and differences between the two practices.

However, to realize the Zen practice in Japanese people's everyday life is not easy. Zen had been blended very well within their cultures and lifestyle. Furthermore, the true Zen philosophy is not something that everyone must know except for the monks. However, are Japanese realizing the Zen element that blend in their culture and lifestyle? And definitely, by comparing with Islam, one can understand more the principle or philosophy of Zen.



Japan is one of the country that is well known with its hectic and hustle bustle lifestyle. Yet, to enjoy peace and serenity of life is everybody's dreams. Everyone use anything in extent to achieve that goal. While Zen, a kind of philosophy also offering the same effects. Zen is a sec of Buddhism that was originated mainly from China and Korea, and spreading throughout the world with different kind of name like "Ch'an" in China, "Thien" in Vietnam, "Soen" in Korea and so on. Zen is the term used in Japan. *Ch'an* is the Chinese rendering from Sanskrit word *dhyana*, which refers to a mind absorbed in meditation. However, the term "Zen" that is used in Japan are widely popularized in Western countries. Literally Zen means "meditation" which usually is called Zen Buddhism in Japan.

Zen Buddhism is actually too abstract and difficult to be explained in a few sentences. Zen is not a moral teaching, and as it is without dogma, it does not require one to believe in anything. It is not a belief, a dogma, or a religion; but rather, it is a practical experience. We cannot intellectually grasp Zen, because human intelligence and wisdom is too limited. However, simply said that Zen Buddhism purposes the practitioners to attain Buddha-nature in order to get enlightenment (*satori*), that would be achieved through the routine of meditation session. The ultimate target, *satori* is something that indescribable as it is felt through the experience of practicing meditation for a long time. Yet, it might take a whole lifetime to get the feel and realization of *satori*. Zen Buddhism is not a theory, an idea, or a piece of knowledge. But, one cannot deny that there is an intellectual element on Zen that lead to the enlightenment, though it is not a logical understanding.

Zen Buddhism that had been introduced in Japan since 1191 by Myousan Eisai, a Japanese monk that study Buddhism in China. In the same time, he brought back tea from China, and initially practicing tea-drinking as one way of aids in monk meditation. This moment also was the sparks of history of tea ceremony (*chadō* or *sadō*) in Japan. From this moment, Zen really influenced widely in Japanese cultures and lifestyle like *chadō*, arranging flower (*ikebana*), Japanese calligraphy (*shodō*), samurai, martial art Judo and others. However, many Japanese people until nowadays do not learn or practice Zen thoroughly and ideally like monk, but they got to know Zen from these cultures and lifestyles.

Zen Buddhism is separated to two major schools, Rinzai Zen and Soto Zen. These two schools are diverse in method to achieve the enlightenment. Rinzai Zen is based on the use of the *koan*, a kind of absurd phrase or statement which is given by a teacher to a disciple in order to trigger enlightenment. It might take a few months or years just to find the answer of the *koan*

puzzle. Whereas Soto Zen is much more focused on Zazen, which means sitting cross-legged in quietude and in deep contemplation. From the Soto Zen perspective, the *koan* riddle is too formal and one might be too focused on solving the riddle compared to find enlightenment in daily life. In reality, from questionnaire distributed on this research, most Japanese people do not take Zazen as their meditation or spiritual practice, and they also do not realize the influence of Zen in their culture and daily life.

However, what does it mean by the enlightenment that has been mentioned a few times before? In order to get this answer concretely, an interview had been conducted to one of Zazen practitioner. From her perspective, Zen is not something that provide you the concrete or objective answer. It is like the life time process of study that you come to understand about something after a long time you practice it. As for her, she practiced Zazen frequently in her age of late 20's as she really need to find the serenity and peace of mind on that time. After a few months, her weekly practices gradually decreased. On the other hand, as a tea person, she focused more on the tea practice as she realized that there is Zen elements in practicing tea, in her everyday routine.

Furthermore, from her routine of practicing tea mostly every week, she become more sensitive and aware of everything around her. She also become more attentive and calm person. By meeting many people while practicing tea, she got to know various types of people and learn the reality of the world by observing the guests. The similar opinion or view also was being mentioned by most of the respondents from the questionnaire conducted. Although most of the respondents do not practice Zen in their daily life, 50% of them realized the importance and advantage of Zen in life. Then, more than half of the respondents agree that Zen practice is good for meditation by highlighting in this globalized era, where physical aspects be the center, in extent the spiritual aspect is being neglected.

From experience and active learning of practicing tea, *chadō* made a person focuses on everything in front of him rather than thinking about other things outside the tearoom. For example, meals for tonight dinner, problems with friends or other that have no relation with practicing tea. It might be the details and precise procedures that cause the thought and focus on the tea ceremony. For an hour of practicing tea, the realization come that one can relax although his entire life is messy. Thus, one should realize that in midst of chaotic or problematic life, there must be a time, to rethink and make a solution. Thus, this will make anybody keep his composure whenever he faces problems. That is another indirect effect of Zen element in way of tea (*chanoyu*) or *chadō*. The element of harmony, respect, purity and tranquility in *chanoyu* also can be felt after a few time practicing tea, which can be reflected by everyone in their daily life.

The last part is by comparing Zen with Islamic practices, Islamic Sufism. From “The Revival of the Religious Learnings” (*Ihyā' ulūm al-dīn*), there is a chapter that gave the details of meditation from Islamic perspective. One of the similarities that can be found is the goal to be achieved from meditation. As for Zen, the enlightenment or *satori*, it is the goal. There goes in Sufism, the state of mind and *ma'rifat* are the goals. However, *satori* and *ma'rifat* refer to different states of mind. First, the state of mind in Sufism means turning of hearts towards the great Watcher and to keep it engaged in His thoughts and attributes. *Ma'rifat* is the fruit of this state of mind, which means the knowledge that God watches the state of mind, know its secrets, sees the actions of man and well know what each man does. People sees outwards action but God can see inwards thoughts and outwards action.

Next, the different kind of realization of mind occur between Zen meditation and meditation of Sufism. In Zen, one come to realize about his surrounding, his thought about

everything with indefinite answers whereas in Sufism, the realization will bring one to understand and remind himself about the reality of God, the reality of this world and the reality of human life and their wrong doings. In Zen, it leads to serenity and calmness by thinking of nothingness while the meditation in Sufism has the objective to rethink and reflect on what we have done, our wrong and bad doings.

Lastly, Zen promotes the freedom of mind, without including any feeling as Suzuki (1964) claims that it is an unnatural encumbrance. Whereas from Islamic perspective, love, grief and regret and other feelings are included as one consults everything to his God, and being reminded that our life is in His knowledge, and one should try his best in his life and God will do the rest, that made a person gain the ultimate tranquility.

In conclusion, Zen practice is not one of the highlighted culture or philosophy among Japanese people. One might practice some elements of Zen, by knowing nothing about the *satori* or the ideal philosophy of Zen. It usually happens in life which we do our daily routine without setting any ultimate goal for this temporary life. In other hand, by realizing and appreciating what we have right now in front of us, we always can change it to the better.

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### **EPOK Reflection**

By completing this essay, I glad to know more about Japanese culture and the Zen elements involved. I am happy to share what I learnt from my home university, University of Malaya about the Islamic Sufism, to list down the pro and contras between these two practices. My four-and-half-months' life in Okayama will become a memorable experience for me. Learning Japanese Language that I admired for ages, and get to know a lot of friends from America, England, Australia, Egypt, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Canada, China and other different countries was beyond my expectation. We share our thought and opinion in various things in the class too. Playing Bingo and flash cards in Reading and Writing 2 class will be the things that I will miss so much after this. A very thankful to Okayama University for accepting me here, giving me a chance to meet everybody here. Praise to God for this wonderful meeting, for this 一期一会 (one chance one meet).

# KHAIRUNNISA OTHMAN

## Japanese cuisine and its interaction with foreign cultures

BY: KHAIRUNNISA BINTI OTHMAN

### Summary:

このエッセイは日本料理（和食）や外国の食文化との関係を主に話します。実は、日本料理は経済と社交上から来ます。外国で日本料理は人気がありますのでなれるやすいです。同時に、日本が修正しています。外務省のアンケートによると外国で和食レストランの数は2015年に89000ぐらいあってそして後2年60%に増やします。

今日、たくさん洋食があります。それは1868年に、明治時代に明治維新があつていろいろな外国の文化と組み合わせて多い洋食レストランがありました。最終的洋食が日本料理になれました。同時に、外国が日本料理をインポートしました。伝統的な作り方を使ってでも時々日本人の嗜好によくなりました。

### Discussions:

#### 1. History of Japanese food culture

More than 2000 years ago, Japan was mainly rice-basis culture. The tradition of rice served with seasonal vegetables and fish still remains essence of native Japanese food. However, Japan has developed a rich and varied food culture that includes not only native Japanese food but also many foreign dishes since Japan reopened to the west 150 years ago.

Gradually, imperial commands had decreased the eating habit of almost all types of meat following the introduction of Buddhism to Japan in the 6th century. Then later, the vegetarian style of cooking known as *Shojin ryori* was brought into Japan via China and Korea together with the introduction of the Zen culture and monks. Now in Japan, this practice is served generally at many temples, especially in Kyoto.

Many of the foods and food ingredients eaten by Japanese today, such as soy sauce, miso, tofu and other products made from soy beans, had already presented by the 15th century. Around the same time, a formal and elaborate style of banquet cooking, which was derived



Shoujin ryori. Most of the dishes are vegetables



Honzen ryori. Dishes are carefully arranged and served on legged trays, full-course dinner



Kaiseki Japanese cuisine is known for its meticulous preparation and beautiful presentation

from the food of aristocrat, was introduced. This cooking style known as *Honzen ryori* is one of the three basic styles of Japanese cooking along with *Chakaiseki ryori*, which for the tea ceremony, and *Kaiseki ryori*.

*Kaiseki ryori* was formed to its present form in the early 19th century and now is still served at first-class Japanese restaurant and traditional Japanese style hotel. While retaining the fresh seasonal ingredients and artistic presentation of earlier styles, *Kaiseki ryouri* meals have few rules of manner and relaxed atmosphere. Even Japanese have few opportunities to experience proper *Kaiseki* dinner. However, the types and order of foods served in *Kaiseki ryori* are the basis of contemporary Japanese food nowadays.

## 2. The development of cultural exchange of Japanese food with foreign culture

During the Meiji Restoration in the late 1860s, Japan's national seclusion was eliminated and the Emperor declared Western ideas could contribute to Japan's future progress. As part of the reformations, the Emperor lifted the ban on red meat and promoted Western cuisine, which was viewed as the cause of the Westerner's greater physical size.

Japan's first substantial and direct exposure to the West came with the arrival of European missionaries in the second half of the 16th century. At that time, the combination of Spanish and Portuguese game frying techniques with a Chinese method for cooking vegetables in oil led to the development of *tempura*, the popular Japanese dish in which seafood and many different types of vegetables are coated with batter and deep fried.

With the reopening of Japan to the West in the mid-19th century, many new cooking and eating customs were introduced, the most important being the eating of meat. Although now considered a Japanese dish, *sukiyaki*—beef, vegetables, tofu, and other ingredients cooked at the table in a broth of soy sauce, *mirin* (sweet sake), and sugar—was at first served in “Western-style” restaurants. In the early 20th century, Indian curry powder imported by way of England also started to be used widely.

In addition to such, Japanese terms as sushi and tempura that are used without translation, numerous Japanese words are entering the world's dictionaries. For example, the *Shogakukan Random House English-Japanese Dictionary* has a 950-word list of borrowed Japanese words. When this list is examined by genre, words related to cuisine and food predominate. There are some 70 of these terms, including those denoting seafood and fish such as *awabi* (abalone) and *ayu* (sweetfish); and types of vegetables, including *daikon* (Japanese radish) and *nappa* (green leaf vegetable).

## 3. Foreign culture in Japanese cuisine

Japanese culture has always freely incorporated ideas and aspects of other cultures, often adapting it to an extent that it somehow becomes uniquely Japanese. Food is no exception. Japan until now has incorporated imported food from all over the world and gradually modified them to make them as their own.

Many European style dishes have been incorporated, and adapted to Japanese tastes. These adapted European style of cooking are called *yoshoku*. It is not the same as imported cuisines that have been kept true to their origins. There are as many authentic Italian, French, and other restaurants in Tokyo as there are in any other major international city. It is western style cuisine that was introduced a long time ago, and the well-known dishes in this genre would be totally foreign in any other country. Some items that were originally introduced as *yoshoku* are so well entrenched in Japanese food culture that they are in the line between *washoku* (Japanese) and *yoshoku* (Western).

Long before, many Japanese people travelled abroad and it increased the demand for "original" foreign cuisine increased, *yoshoku* became rather unfashionable. However, in the last decade or so, *yoshoku* has made a comeback starting from the Showa period.

During Meiji period, Chinese people from China built Chinatown in Yokohama, Kobe and Nagasaki. They served cheap and common Chinese dish openly, and eventually become popular. After the end of World War II, the people who came back from China introduced the Chinese dish which they had eaten in China. Mostly of Chinese food mainly Cantonese-origin dishes called *chuuka* has been incorporated into everyday household cooking nowadays.

Among the most infamous foreign food or Japanized-food in Japan:

i) *Omuraisu* (rice omelette)

Rice omelets first started to be made in Japan around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, but they are part of a much larger trend of the introduction and adaptation of western dishes to Japanese tastes.

ii) *Kare-raisu* (Japanese curry)

Originally curry is an Indian dish. Englishmen brought this from colonial India into Japan in the late 19th century, Japanese people believed that curry was a Western dish. Japanese Navy invented the practice to put curry on rice. The dish became popular and available for purchase in supermarkets and restaurants starting in the late 1960s.

iii) *Hambaagu* (Japanese style hamburger)

In Japan, hamburgers can be served in a bun, called *hanbaagaa*, or just the patties without a bun, known as *hambaagu*. They don't have much in common with the American style of hamburger, except that they both start off with ground meat, with meatloaf shape and similar texture. *Hambaagu* is similar to what are known in America as Salisbury steaks.

iv) *Gyoza*

Originally from northern China, and is called *jiaozi* in Chinese. It is a food that a lump of minced pork and vegetables is wrapped with a thin dough. In Japan, gyoza is commonly a side dish of ramen or rice and eaten after dipping it in the sauce mixed shoyu, vinegar and hot sesame oil. In China, gyoza is one of main dishes, and it is eaten in Chinese soup.

v) *Ramen*

A noodle dish using Chinese noodle. In the late 19th century, Chinese cooks in the Chinatowns in Yokohama and Kobe served Chinese noodle dishes first. Then, many Japanese cooks learned how to make the recipe. Japanese ramen cooks made a lot of effort to suit Japanese taste, so it has been one of the major Japanese dishes today.

#### 4. Japanese culture in foreign cuisine

Japanese food culture from an international perspective is emerging. According to a survey by MAFF<sup>1</sup>, the number of overseas washoku restaurants came to some 89,000 as of July 2015, up 60 percent from 2½ years earlier. And Japan's most famous contribution to global food culture is sushi, in fact it is famous within Japan itself. In 1970's sushi travelled from Japan to Canada and the United States, it was modified to suit the American palate, and re-entered the Japanese market as "American Sushi"<sup>2</sup>. The example of this phenomenon is California roll, which created in Canada in 1970s, and gain its popularity across the United States by 1980s, thus sparked the Japanese food — more precisely sushi's global popularity.

<sup>1</sup> Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Ministry of Japan

<sup>2</sup> Iris-Aya Laemmerhirt (2014). Embracing Differences: Transnational Cultural Flows between Japan and the United States, Volume 36 of Edition Kulturwissenschaft. p. 102-103.



The number of restaurants specializing in lower-cost noodle dishes such as *ramen* and *soba* are also growing. Besides that, a lot of Japanese foodstuff and seasoning brands such as Ajinomoto, Kikkoman, Nissin and Kewpie mayonnaise, are establishing production base in other Asian countries.

One more thing being concerned is the halal issue. In Muslim majority country, it is a must that Japanese foods served are *halal* according to Islamic dietary law, which means no pork and alcohol allowed. Thanks to high demands, many kinds of *halal* Japanese cuisines are MORE available day by day.

Responding to concerns about the quality and authenticity of dishes being marketed abroad as “Japanese”, together with the popularity of Japanese food is growing worldwide, helped in part by the addition of *washoku* to UNESCO’s Intangible Cultural Heritage list in 2013, in late 2006 the MAFF began planning a certification system for non-Japanese cooks working at *washoku* traditional Japanese cuisine restaurants abroad. Moreover, experts fear that many non-Japanese chefs may fail to learn proper cooking methods and serve dishes that depart significantly from genuine *washoku*.

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### **Review:**

Alhamdulillah. Honestly speaking, this EPOK program is really a precious opportunity for me to learn so many new things in Japan. From Japanese language, kanji writing, culture, fieldtrips, soft skills, not included got to make friends from all over the world, every single thing is memorable. Definitely, for me it is once in million kind of chance. I would admit that my Japanese language becomes better. I could develop enough confidence to talk with Japanese people. As I am a self-learner before, to come here and learn directly from Japanese people is sometimes hard to believe.

I and other Malaysians were also given opportunities to promote Malaysia and Malaya University. Being interviewed by Okayama television channel, to hold small Malaysia Open Day before, event with Nakagawa Elementary school in Yakage town, joined University promotion program to Japanese people, I hope I may contribute back to my university which had given me the precious chance to be in Okayama University.

I deeply feel grateful to God, all lecturers, the staffs especially from the Global Partnership Center, the RA’s and all EPOK fellows. Although sometimes had difficulties, with all these wonderful people, I survive everyday life with smile instead. Everyone too, let’s treasure these moments and grab lot of benefits for our future ahead.

## CHRISTOPHER CRAIGO

### 遙かなる草原：ファイアーエムブレム：烈火の剣の英訳におけるローカライゼーションの問題

#### The Distant Plains: Localization Issues in the English Translation of “Fire Emblem: The Blazing Sword”

Chris Craigo

Summary：日本で2003年4月23日に発売された「ファイアーエムブレム：烈火の剣」というゲームソフトは英語に翻訳され、同年11月3日にアメリカでも発売された。ファイアーエムブレム：烈火の剣は「リン」という、サカの草原に一人暮らしをしている少女剣士の、一度も会ったことのない祖父であるキアラン公爵と会うための旅を描写する。物語の舞台は、中世ヨーロッパから着想を得たファンタジーの世界、「エレブ大陸」である。しかし、烈火の剣の英訳はただの直訳ではなく、アメリカ人プレイヤーの期待に応えるための翻訳である。その翻訳、すなわち「ローカライゼーション」においては、登場人物の話し方や言葉遣いなどにいくつかの変更点が見られる。本稿では、リンの物語を例として翻訳学的観点からこのような問題を取り上げ、その変更の影響及び文化的背景を検討する。

First released in Japan on April 23, 2003, “Fire Emblem: The Blazing Sword” was translated into English and released in America on November 11 the same year as “Fire Emblem.” The game depicts the journey of Lyn, a young sword-wielder living alone in the Sacae plains as she travels afar to meet her long-lost grandfather, the marquess of Caelin. The game itself is set on the continent of Elibe, a fantasy world inspired by medieval Europe. The game’s English translation, however, is far from a direct translation, and is instead a translation specifically made to accommodate American gamers’ cultural expectations towards the genre. In the game’s translation, that is, its “localization,” there are a number of differences in areas such as word choice and characters’ speech styles. As such, in this essay, I’ll be examining such issues of translation with regards to Lyn’s story in the game, all the while tracing the significance and cultural background of such changes.

Arguably one of the most unique elements of Fire Emblem: The Blazing Sword is the influence Japanese interpretations of medieval Europe play on the variety of cultures present in Elibe. While the latter half of the game expands to cover nearly all of the continent, Lyn’s story focuses primarily on the Sacae plains where Lyn was raised and Caelin, where Lyn’s grandfather reigns as marquess. Even within the context of the same game, however, these two territories boast vastly different cultures and lifestyles, as evidenced by the significant differences in speech styles that the characters from these locations utilize. What’s more, while the Japanese script is notable in that the character’s various speech patterns are clearly distinct from everyday speech in modern Japanese, the English localization utilizes a number of strategies to magnify and reinforce the “medieval” aspects of the game’s world. One of the earliest examples of this comes with the introduction of Sain, a knight serving Caelin who encounters Lyn shortly after she begins her journey. Despite his claims of chivalry, upon

meeting Lyn, Sain wastes no time making his intentions clear, resulting in the following conversation:

セイン：待って下さい！ 美しい方！よろしければ、お名前を！そして、お茶でもいかがですか？

リン：・・・あなた どの騎士？

セイン：よくぞ聞いて下さいました！俺は、リキアの者。もっとも情熱的な男が住むといわれるキアラン地方出身です！！

リン：「もっともバカな男が」の間違いじゃないの？

While the original Japanese is clearly exaggerated (although certainly amusing), the English translation of the game takes this conversation in a slightly different direction:

Sain: “Wait, O beauteous one! Would you not favor me with your name? Or better yet, your company?”

Lyn: “Where are you from, sir knight, that you speak so freely to a stranger?”

Sain: “Ha! I thought you’d never ask. I am from Lycia. I hail from the Caelin canton, home to men of passion and fire!”

Lyn: “Shouldn’t that be “home to callow oafs with loose tongues”?”

As seen above, while there are a number of key differences between the two, perhaps the most notable is the unmistakably “medieval” word choice used in the English translation. Namely, whereas Lyn originally uses *バカな男* to put Sain in his place, this ends up becoming “callow oafs” in the English version, a particularly fascinating choice for a number of reasons. Decidedly archaic, even for an insult, this particular phrase represents an “extension” of the original text to accommodate Western audiences’ expectations. Given the fact that Elibe is presented as a distinctly medieval, European-influenced continent, some level of “medieval-ness” is to be expected, but the key point to note is that this “medieval-ness” is “signaled” to audiences in different ways in the Japanese and English versions of the game.

While Sain’s use of *敬語* and word choice (etc. *美しい方*) in the original Japanese is certainly knight-like, the fact remains that his original conception is rooted in Japanese idealizations and romanticizations of medieval Europe. As such, his speech patterns in the Japanese version serves as an attempt to present such idealizations via a Japanese filter of sorts, a way to “reign” in the foreign-ness of his character. On the other hand, while Lyn’s speech style lacks these explicitly “knight-like” elements, her character still maintains a doubly-foreign quality in that not only does she come from a non-Japanese-influenced background, but that even within the context of the game world, her Sacaeon heritage explicitly identifies her as an “other” in most situations. And yet, as the protagonist of the game’s first half, Lyn serves as the player’s gateway into the world of the game, necessitating a balance in her speech between her foreign identity and relatively “domestic” traits, bridging the gap between player and world in her own right.

By means of contrast, then, whereas the Japanese version of the game required certain textual strategies to negotiate the foreign-ness of the game’s world, the English version of the

game instead took specific measures to re-align itself to the cultural heritage it was originally derived from— that is, Medieval-European fantasy. Knights and dragons and princesses and such are generally more familiar to Western audiences, and as such, depictions of those such tropes for Western audiences hold a greater pressure to conform to the previously-established expectations therein. In his essay, “Translation, Community, Utopia,” translation scholar Lawrence Venuti introduces the idea of the “domestic remainder,” or additions to a text produced by the translation process that “results in the production of textual effects that signify only in the history of the domestic language and culture” (Venuti 473). As such, as a means to signify “medieval-ness” to Western audiences, both Lyn and Sain’s use of archaisms not present in the original constitute a part of the translation’s own “domestic remainder,” as well as a bridge for the cultural gap between Japanese and Western audiences.

As seen in the conversation above, then, Lyn’s own speech style in the English version reflects an intentional effort to conform to expected cultural forms for the genre, despite the absence of such elements in the Japanese original. What’s more, this sort of “domestic remainder” in the game’s translation manifests itself not only in matters of word choice, but also in the form of outright additions to the game’s script. Notably, in the exchange above, while the original saw Lyn merely ask 「あなた、どこの騎士？」, the English version has her asking “Where are you from, sir knight, that you speak so freely to a stranger?” The English translation, then, effectively presumes her reason for asking in the first place, and thereby has Lyn voice this particular interpretation. Presumably an attempt to clarify Lyn’s thought processes, this particular example is notable in that it not only constitutes an addition completely unfounded in the original text, but in the fact that it’s entire presence in the game is clearly predated by the translator’s interpretation of Lyn’s own thoughts and character. Simply put, then, the English translation is no mere act of mediation between languages, but rather a “reading” of the original Japanese, geared towards Western expectations, but presented as entirely representative of the original work.

This particular notion of translation as an expectation-oriented “reading” of the source text appears again later on in Lyn’s story when she encounters Rath, a fellow nomad from Sacae who came to her aid specifically because of her Sacae heritage.

ラス：俺は、クトラ族のラス。・・・他部族とはいえ、同じ草原の民の女を見捨てておけん・・・

リン：ありがとう、ラス！あなたに、母なる大地の恵みがありますように！

ラス：そして、敵に父なる空の怒りを・・・！

Rath: “I am Rath of the Kutolah. Our tribes may be different, but I will not abandon a woman of the Sacae.”

Lyn: “Thank you, Rath! A thousand blessings upon you!”

Rath: “And a thousand curses upon our enemy!”

As mentioned earlier, while Lyn occupies the unique space of an “other” in the game world, her encounter with Rath is unique given their shared Sacae heritage— a fact that both of them recognize and specifically address linguistically. Namely, with their shared heritage confirmed, Lyn immediately begins what is presumably a shared saying among the tribes of Sacae, calling the “blessings of mother earth” upon Rath, leading Rath to finish the

saying and summon the “wrath of father sky” on their enemies. While these two lines are clearly meant to be taken as a pair in both the Japanese original and the English translation, the English translation takes a different turn and instead removes the cultural references to the earth and sky present in the original. As such, while the shared cultural knowledge between Lyn and Rath is still signaled via the paired nature of their lines, the terms by which said cultural knowledge is expressed are notably different. Simply put, while the original Japanese reflected Sacae culture’s focus on nature, this was modified in the English version for a more culturally-neutral, albeit “medieval” phrase. That is, the English translation’s “domestic remainder” in this instance manifested itself not as an outright addition, but rather, a mediation on the part of the game’s translators to better align the game to audience expectations. With this specific change, while the shared cultural background of the two is indeed recognized, the terms in which they express this connection are changed to better match the game’s previously established medieval-esque tone, essentially subverting the cultural nuance of the original to further appeal to audience expectations.

While there are countless other examples and issues to be found and examined in not only the remainder of Lyn’s story, but also the entirety of the game itself, the fact remains that such issues of translation play a key part in shaping the game’s narrative on a variety of levels. From these examples alone, it becomes clear that localization is far from simply swapping out words from one language to another and instead involves an incredibly deep level of consideration with regards to cultural, societal and linguistic issues. While “Fire Emblem: The Blazing Sword” begins in the quiet, pastoral span of the Sacae plains, it only takes a quick comparison between the original and translation to see that the issues of localization therein are anything but “plain.”

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Experiences: Through EPOK, I’ve not only made memories for a lifetime, but I’ve also found the confidence to continue on in my study of Japanese. Perhaps most importantly, however, I finally learned something else entirely: 失敗は成功のもと.

## SAMUEL CASTILLO

### The personal and emotional factors of studying abroad on second language acquisition in Japan

Samuel John Barrera Castillo

#### Summary:

この論文での私の狙いは、以下のことです。私たちが「留学する前にどのように日本での生活を想像していたか」だけでなく、「日本という海外で実際にどのようなことに出会ったこと」についての考察です。私自身の経験と他の留学生の10ヶ月間の生活を参考にしています。このレポートの性質から参考文献は存在しないことを了承していただきたいです。まず、海外から日本にやってきて日本語を勉強する外国人は「留学生」という面白い言葉で呼ばれることについて話します。次に実際に学ぶことだけでなく学習方法にも大変面白い面があること、最後は長期間の留学がどのような影響をもたらすか、これらについて述べていこうと思います。

The presence of high quality Japanese media and products across the world have greatly promoted the image of the culture in Japan. An aspect of Japan that appeals to many people is its language. Children who grew up on Japanese media such as anime, manga, and dramas often found when they got older that there would be parts of their favorite shows and mangas only found in the Japanese versions. Because of this, the desire to find and understand the parts only in the Japanese versions sparked a great interest in learning and becoming fluent in the language.

Once a person has a vested interest in Japanese they seek out different ways to learn it. For example, a student might find Japanese classes to take at their own university. At the beginning of the class the teacher would give lessons on the basics of the nature of the language. The instructor would teach basic greetings, vocabulary words, and how to write in the three different systems of Japanese. Various activities would be assigned to the student such as grammatical exercises, writing exercises, and pronunciation and speaking practice. Once the student gets a good grasp of the basics of language their enthusiasm for the language grows. The student will be proud and amazed at their own ability to be able to read hiragana and katakana and some basic kanji. The excitement at their new found ability then

influences the decision to study abroad in Japan. This particular student decides they want to become fluent in Japanese and decides to further their studies in the country.

With the arrival of the student in Japan comes the change of the learning environment. Since the classroom is no longer in their own country's university, the language gains context because it is in its native environment. Which means that studying at a Japanese university provides many advantages and benefits. For example, the grammar, kanji, and vocabulary words that he learns in class are going to be things he would be able to see and hear as soon as he leaves the classroom. The student is now put in a situation where the language he has been studying is turned into a tool for everyday life. In other words, he is strongly pushed to use it. Because of this, the language turns from being a subject of just academic study to a practical skill he must practice and perfect in conjunction with studying. This makes the goal of proficiency and fluency more straightforward. That is not to say that this process is simple; things such as loss of self-confidence and/or insecurities can cause the student to fall back on the native language safety net which in turn can greatly influence efforts to attain fluency.

One other great influential factor, intimidation can also greatly affect the attainment of fluency in a positive way and/or a negative way. One example of intimidation can be the meeting of other students with a higher level of proficiency in Japanese. Say for example, the newly arrived student has become quite good friends with a Japanese student who is fluent in English. Their conversations usually consist of the Japanese the newly arrived student does know with gaps filled in by the Japanese student. The newly arrived student is aware of their inability to not be able to express themselves yet in Japanese. If the newly arrived student, the Japanese friend, and another foreign exchange student with a high level of Japanese all go out to dinner, it is likely the conversation that will occur over dinner will alienate the newly arrived student. This is because the student with a high level of Japanese seems to be able to draw out more of the Japanese student's personality and character because the high level student is speaking the Japanese with the Japanese student with a high level of proficiency. Which in turn allows the Japanese student to relax more and not have to think much. This, in turn leads to a rise in insecurity that causes the lower level student to believe that their friendship with said Japanese student was not as close as first assumed. The social anxiety that ensues causes a lack of motivation to study and learn. This is because the student looks at

themselves in relation to the student of higher level Japanese and think that the skill gap is too large to close. As such, the lower level student may either fall into one of two states of mind: (1) depression and loss of self confidence in their ability because they end up comparing themselves to the students of higher levels and get discouraged by the skill gap. (2) A sudden burst of resolve not to despair but to see higher level students as goals to achieve and surpass.

However, if the student is able to adopt at least some of the qualities of the positive approach listed in the example above, they will likely accept their own level and come to terms with or overcome. This then makes the likelihood of attaining proficiency in the language all the higher. For example, the student may be more inclined to use newly learned grammar points directly after learning them in the classroom. This fosters experimentation with ways to say different things and express different shades of meaning. From this comes feedback from native speakers with regards to how the student's speech style comes across in Japanese. So if a complicated grammar point from class is troubling the student, they can try and use it towards natives in an everyday context to properly learn its correct usage. As the student increases their knowledge of the language and begins to apply it in their day to day life, their self-confidence in using Japanese also increases. Depending on how much the student applies most of the qualities of the aforementioned positive approach will reach a moment of clarity where they will be able to hold their own in a Japanese conversation faster than those who succumb to that of the more negative approach of anxiety.



**Reflection:**

As stated in the summary, most of this paper is based off the culmination of experiences of myself and other foreign students, beginning from the events leading up to the start of the EPOK program and during the actual program itself. With that in mind, the following is a collection of my personal experiences in EPOK as well as my thoughts on the impact it had on me as a person. The first day I arrived in Japan, I was not overwhelmed with amazement and culture shock that other exchange students felt. Instead for me, it was straight cut to the trials of adaptation between myself and the Japanese culture. This is because prior to coming, I had already familiarized myself with Japanese culture and got used to hearing the language (This was before starting formal studies of the language) for about all my life up until that point. When I finally arrived mostly everything I had expected about Japan was almost exactly how I'd expected it to be. However, my experiences were not entirely free of culture shock.

After 5 months, I had gained a decent level of fluency in Japanese. The culture shock I had experienced took the form of my usage of Japanese. When I tried to express my own feelings, the Japanese I used would come out strange. How I thought a particular action or feeling would be expressed in Japanese ended up being completely different from what I expected. One would think that these events would be few and far between but the frequency in which they occurred is what culture shocked me. Overall I set out on this program to learn how to speak Japanese and I am proud to say that I have accomplished this goal. I hope to be back soon to improve and sharpen my skill even further.

## MARISSA ARMSTRONG

### Dinnertime: Bento or Homemade?

Marissa Armstrong

#### SUMMARY:

みんなにとって、食べ物が大切です。体の健康のためや、心の健康など、食べ物は一長一短のことです。しかし、日本人やアメリカ人にとって、何の食べ物生活がありますか？とくに大学生からこの質問を調べたかったです。インタビューした後、結果をまとめました。ほとんどアメリカ人の大学生達は便利な食べ物を買って帰りました。日本人の学生もするのですが、半分ぐらいは自分の料理を作りました。びっくりしましたことは、ストレスがたまった時に、日本人は食べ過ぎないように勉強していると言いました。アメリカ人はすごい食べることをすると言いました。三番目のポイントが一番面白かったポイントでした。みんな家族と一緒に食べることが大切だと言いました。私もそう思います。現代に、たくさんの人はスマホを見ながら、晩御飯を食べます。家族の会話が少なくなっていますから、スマホを閉めて、家族の目を見て、楽しくて、良くて話をした方がいいだと思います。全部このポイントを調べましたから、良かったです。日本人の学生やアメリカ人の学生もインタビューしてもらったも良かったです。楽しかった経験でした。

**ESSAY:** In the course of a college student's lifetime, they will go many different places, study a lot of subjects, and learn many new things. One thing they will also do a lot of is eat. Whether or not they make their own food or buy fast food (or bento's in Japan's case), and why they choose what they eat is what I'm most interested in finding out in my research. My first guess is that most students go for convenience over cost or how healthy it is, so I would like to see if this is true. I surveyed six students, three Japanese and three American. There are a lot of different factors in what cause a student to eat what they do, so I narrowed it down to students living by themselves, in dormitories and apartments, as opposed to living with their parents. I wanted to see what students do when their parents are not around to feed them. In addition, I also interviewed males and females to see if there was any difference. In my research, here is what I found.

Question one was the background for my research. The question was: When you are hungry, do you make your own food or buy food such as a bento (fast food in American's case)? My answers from the American students were quite interesting. Alex, 22, from California said that he usually buys premade items from the grocery store and cooks them with the microwave or oven. He says this is because it's hard to find the time to make food every day and there's times when studying for a test is more important than making a

homemade dinner. Savannah, 24, said that she makes most of her dinners hand made with a lot of food from the farmers' markets. She is a runner, and says that eating unhealthy, convenient food really affects her running. Though, she does say that cooking for herself takes a lot of time from her evening.

Takeru, 19, who just became a student at Okayama University, says that he eats a bento almost every night for dinner. This is because it is cheap in Japan, and is healthy when it has fish, egg and rice in it, he says. He also mentioned that ingredients can cost the same as a bento, so it is easier to just buy one at a market. Maho, 20, who has been living on her own for a couple of years now, says that she makes her own food almost every day because it is healthier because you can add many vegetables or fish, and a large bag of rice is very cheap.

Many of the answers I received were different from each other, which was really great to hear. I would have liked to interview more students to get a wider array of answers and data, but it was quite difficult to find the time and people who did not mind being interviewed. I will not completely base all of my results on these few students but I would like to make a more central observation based on their answers. What I learned while talking with them through the first question was that convenience was part of the issue. I was told that finals week for both the American and Japanese students was an especially busy time where food was the last thing on their mind. This is true for me as well.

"If I am studying for midterms or finals, I can't find the time to hand make dinner. A sandwich from the school café will be fine." This is a phrase that many students will say to themselves when the time crunch of finals comes. I was particularly interested in Maho's answer. When I asked her if cooking for herself took a lot of time, she said it did but is better than eating unhealthy. In her case, her little brother eats unhealthy, so she tries to be a role model for him. I was really impressed by her answer because Japan has an image that everyone eats completely healthy all the time. This is just one example that disproves that.

When searching online for some research about food culture worldwide, I came upon an article titled Attitudes to Food and the Role of Food in Life in the U.S.A., Japan, Flemish Belgium and France: Possible Implications for the Diet-Health Debate, which researched how food affected adults and college students from France, the U.S.A. and Japan. It mentioned food is one of the biggest factors in stress levels in adults and college students. Though I do not want to be a psychologist, I am always particularly interested in the way food affects minds of people around the world. We are humans, so it is only natural to feed ourselves with food that grows from the ground, but I wonder what happens to our minds and bodies when we constantly eat processed or foods with pesticides.

Reading part of that article led me to my second interview question: Do you eat when you are stressed out? When asking the American students, all three of them said yes. I was surprised because sometimes people lose appetite when they are stressed, but it seems this was not the case for my small study. I hear many stories on news channels during schools'

finals season, many discussing how the stress levels cause other health problems in students, namely insomnia and lack of appetite. This is why I was very surprised to hear all of my American interviewees say they ate a lot when they were stressed. When asked what type of food they ate, they all answered fast food, chips, or sweets. It's no surprise that 'Comfort Foods' have that name; I can see why they would be comforting in times like those.

When asking my Japanese interviewees, I got the opposite response. One of my female interviewees said no, she does not eat when she is stressed, because she is worried about gaining weight. She also stated that it was not good for her health. When asked what she did instead of eating while stressed, she said she drinks green tea because it is supposed to be calming. The other two interviewees also said no, stating that they worry about eating too many snacks and that they don't feel too hungry if they are very stressed. When looking up information on stress levels in some articles, it was no surprise to me that higher stress levels cause all kinds of health problems, including insomnia, weight gain, weight loss and headaches.

My third and final question encompassed food as a whole for these students. My question was "Is it important to eat dinner together as a family?" And what I meant by that question was whether or not their family emphasized eating dinner together as an important role in family life. All six of my interviewees said yes, it is. From my Japanese interviewees, all of the answers comprised of the reason that family is important. Especially from a young age, eating with your family (or even mother or father) is important because it helps develop the family bond. The answers from all of my American students were pretty much the same: talking to family during dinner strengthens your family as a whole.

I was quite surprised to hear the three answer in the same way. I had an impression of Americans that nowadays, families just eat on their own time from the time their child goes into middle school. Sports, clubs, music lessons, etc. can get in the way of having the time to eat with your parents and siblings. I definitely assumed my interviewees would answer the same. It was quite refreshing to hear them say the opposite. For the Japanese students as well, I agree with them. It feels so easy to let activities and fatigue get in the way of sitting down and eating with your family. With a hard day, tempers can flare and make it difficult to want to eat with each other. But at the end of the day, family is family and eating together is something that no one else can accomplish for you.

Though my interviews were short, I enjoyed hearing everyone's different opinion on food. I am glad that I asked American and Japanese college students who were living on their own because living on their own has given them a chance to look back and see what eating with family means to them now that they do not do it anymore. It was great to hear from everyone on their opinion on food in their lives, and on the route they are taking to become workers in society.

**REFLECTION:**

Start to finish, my experience here in Japan has been like a dreamland. When I first got here in October, I never thought my stay here would end. I thought to myself, “I have so much time to travel and practice Japanese, I’ll just take my time with everything.” The first semester was filled with so much fun and exploration. I made a lot of new Japanese friends at L-Café, travelled to a lot of new places in Okayama and Hiroshima, and finally got used to riding a bicycle. Second semester, which in this case was actually two quarters, felt much different from the first. With the introduction of the new school system, the quarters made the weeks feel much faster, and I realized that I didn’t have much time left before I had to go back home. I was able to fit some more travelling trips into my schedule, all while still enjoying my time here in and around Okayama. Although I could have done without the almost daily summer rain! Writing this, with only two weeks left before I go back home makes me remember how I felt when I first arrived in Japan. For someone like me who has never travelled anywhere before coming here, I remember clearly the feelings of arriving in a country I have always dreamed of coming to. I am extremely happy that I chose Okayama to come to. It has been a wonderful mix of small city life, and large countryside life with peaceful and kind people. Though, Japanese people are kind in any prefecture you go to!

I must say, I am deeply saddened to have to go home. I spent ten months here and told myself I had so much time to do so many things, but I wish I had done more. And I wish I had practiced speaking Japanese more. Though, I can say that my understanding of the language and my listening skills have gone up tenfold. This is something I would have never accomplished had I not come to Japan. I also got to see the way colleges worked in Japan, and I was really surprised. For international students at least, we do not receive much homework and that was really nice because it gave me more time to study what we learned, and also gave me time to work. Though I am going home soon, I will absolutely look forward to coming back to Japan. I don’t know what I want to become yet, but if I work in Japan, I will thoroughly welcome that. Japan truly feels like a second home to me.

## KEVIN CHEN

### Path of Politeness

Kevin Chen (ケン・チェン)

**Abstract:** 世界には多くの言語があります。それに加えて、言語ごとに多くのニュアンスがあります。日本語では敬語がそれにあたります。敬語は昔から現在までつかわれています。敬語には尊敬語と丁寧語と謙譲語の3つのニュアンスがあります。謙譲語では話し手は自分のことを控えるように表現します。丁寧語では目上の人に敬語を表すために「です」と「ます」などを文末につけたりします。尊敬語は目上の人動作を表現します。敬語を通すことでコミュニケーションをより円滑に運ぶことができると考えられています。敬語は年齢や性別などによって大きく変わることがあります。しかし、敬語は現在では、大切かどうか分かりません。このエッセイは敬語と敬語の効果について書きます。

What is culture? This thought provoking question can have a multitude of answers and all of them can be right. However, most people would tend to agree, that culture is rooted in the past. This, too, can be muddled with many answers. The criteria to define "the past" is as wide the sky is endless. The common ground between all cultures and societies starts with communication. Communication between two beings the creates transmission of ideas and imposition, and within that conversation, something inherently inconspicuous is triggered; that is the linguistic etiquette in every language.

A single, simple phrase is something that many people starting a new language, find hard to master. A new language comes with new grammar, sentence structure, and even completely new words. This approach can produce varying answers to a single question, but who can say that one is wrong when taking all things into consideration. For English speaking countries, a new language, especially one from the Eastern part of the world, is a difficult, yet rewarding undertaking.

In Western countries, it is very common to initiate conversation with a positive and friendly personality. However, some situations require formality, but those times are few and in between. There is no official "system" to rely on, but more of a courtesy to others. On the other hand, Japan does, in fact, have an official formality system.

The Japanese language makes use of a plethora of honorifics that convey a sense of respect and humbleness. For Japanese citizens, the *hierarchical relationship* 「上下関係(じょうげかんけい) 上下関係」 is extremely important in social and professional life. Honorific speech is generally longer than the formal counterpart and at times, it also has different words to convey the same meaning. In English, a simple phrase like "Good morning" can be directed to almost anyone, and it would sound completely normal, but Japan has various phrases that convey the same meaning, just in a more or different styles.

*Keigo* 「敬語(けいご)敬語」 is one such example of a possible method to address oneself and another person. At times, it is even required to speak in 「敬語(けいご)敬語」. Because of the high importance of business vernacular, almost all Japanese are taught the way to properly use 「敬語(けいご)敬語」. 「敬語(けいご)敬語」 has long been

considered the epitome of Japanese politeness and has continued this thinking even from the *Kamakura Shogunate* 「鎌倉幕府(かまくらばくふ)鎌倉幕府」. However, 「敬語(けいご)敬語」, to the regular laymen, is centered upon the self and the imposition of the self onto others.

「敬語(けいご)敬語」 is an overarching term that has three categories that each have their own special forms. They are *kenjou-go* 「謙讓語(けんじょうご)謙讓語」, *sonkei-go* 「尊敬語(そんけいご)尊敬語」, and *teinei-go* 「丁寧語(ていねいご)丁寧語」. The first is 「謙讓語(けんじょうご)謙讓語」. This is essentially the humble form of 「敬語(けいご)敬語」. In 「謙讓語(けんじょうご)謙讓語」, the speaker willfully lowers oneself when talking to another person. In that same vein, the speaker will refer to the listener in a higher social regard. This is 「丁寧語(ていねいご)丁寧語」, while 「尊敬語(そんけいご)尊敬語」 is an even more respectful version of 「丁寧語(ていねいご)丁寧語」. When speaking to someone else about oneself, one can say ~moushimasu 「～申します」. On the other side of the spectrum, *osshaimasu* 「おっしゃいます」 is used when speaking to someone else about that person.

Going back to the example of saying "Good morning", the English sentence is simple and straight to the point. The Japanese have the formal method which is *ohayou gozaimasu* 「おはようございます」, the informal method *ohayou* 「おはよう」, and the very casual tone *ohha~* 「おっは～」. Depending on who one is speaking to, age, and even relationship to the speaker, one might have to change their way of speaking to fit the situation. With so many ways to speak a single meaning, it is difficult to pinpoint what is more polite than the other. In the table below, it shows the simple phrase "I know" and all the ways to say it. It is also in an order where participants of the questionnaire rate each phrase according to high levels of formality.

存じております	知ってますけど
存じ上げております	知ってますよ
存じてます	知っている
存じています	知ってる
知っております	知ってるよ
分かります	知っているわ
存じ上げてます	知っているよ
知ってます	知ってるわよ
知っています	知ってる知ってる
知っておりますよ	知ってるわ
知っていますよ	知っているわよ

Source: Ogino 1986

In Japanese society, mistakes made by non-native speakers are not as critical as if a native Japanese speaker mistake. For non-native Japanese speakers, one of the harder aspects of the language is located in 「敬語(けいご)敬語」 and so, mistakes are easily forgivable. On the other hand, native speakers that make mistakes are more likely to leave a bad impression.

For the sake of not making 「敬語(けいご)敬語」 mistakes, many of the larger Japanese companies will invest in seminars that teach the new and young workforce the

"appropriate" way to speak. However, each young generation that comes, comes with a sense of conflicting ideals of 「敬語(けいご)敬語」. For young people, 「敬語(けいご)敬語」 is not a daily occurrence and so when they are suddenly expected to use it in the professional realm, they are not prepared. A common problem is knowing whether to use 「謙讓語(けんじょうご)謙讓語」 or 「丁寧語(ていねいご)丁寧語」 in a given situation. As a proactive result, *business cards* 「名刺(めいし)名刺」 became a norm in Japan.

Speakers of 「敬語(けいご)敬語」 use the honorific language to exemplify the 「上下関係(じょうげかんけい)上下関係」, to enunciate grace and sophistication, and to keep civility between each other. But is 「敬語(けいご)敬語」 truly relevant in today's Japan?

Looking back at the *Edo period* 「江戸時代(えどじだい)江戸時代」, when Japan was at its most isolated state, the rest of the world was steadily advancing towards the new frontier of technology and art. Compared to present Japan, isolation is not an option. Becoming a global partner in partaking in technological and artistic growth would be in the best interests of Japan, and to do that, Japan must be versatile. In spite of that, 「敬語(けいご)敬語」 is contrary to the versatility idea. It is continually rooted in the idea that the *hierarchical relationship* 「上下関係(じょうげかんけい)上下関係」 takes priority.

In Japan, gendered speech patterns have even formed: women's words 「女(おんな)女(おんな)の言葉(ことば)言葉」 and men's words 「男(おとこ)男(おとこ)の言葉(ことば)言葉」. 「敬語(けいご)敬語」 is said to be the special language referred to by women, because of their conservative nature. While it is seen that women are an avid user of 「敬語(けいご)敬語」, there is no real numerical data supporting that claim. In the same vein, gender and age also are not a good indicator for the fluidity and practicality of 「敬語(けいご)敬語」. It can be said, though, that, in some situations, gender does take precedence over age and renown.

Intercultural communication, a result that many people can relate to, make up the culture that many adhere to even now. This exchange of ideas leads to the creation of new ones that incorporate the old or vice versa. The younger generation will always be in the state of innovation will continually have this mindset. 「敬語(けいご)敬語」 is constantly changing, yet it still contains the essence of what Japanese call culture. The beauty of 「敬語(けいご)敬語」 culminates in words that embody traditional relationships and makes clear the foundation of honorifics and humbleness. Whether it lay in gender, age, or status, 「敬語(けいご)敬語」 is something that must strive to contain the core of Japan, even though it is something that is contrary to the idea of change.

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### Contemplations of Ardor

Never did I ever dream of coming to Japan. And yet here I am, studying abroad in Japan. However, my immediate reaction to my rejection by Yokohama University left me in a state of stupor. In fact, I was not the only one to have been rejected. My companion George, also felt the deep pang of rejection. We shared our stories and our opinions on the matter and decided that Japan was still in our sights. Our stories, however would diverge at this point. George would eventually make his way to Kansai University and I, Okayama University.

George left one month earlier than me because the semester for Kansai University was slated for early August. He had shared his events to me like it was a dream for him. Even now, at the end of the semester, he occasionally messages me through social media and elaborates all the occurrences in his time in Japan.

I, on the other hand, rarely speak of special events that happened to me, opting to hold in my stories for the opportune moment. This may be one of those moments.

It has been a mere 10 months here in Okayama, Japan, but each day has brought me a newfound appreciation for the multitude of cultures around this planet. Armed with but a sliver understanding of Japanese culture from the ever popular genre of anime, I set out to enhance my small understanding.

Far from what was indicated in Japanese pop culture, there was much more to be had. From food, to clothing, to night life, to traditional events; these things cemented themselves into my being and made it a part of me.

Cooking for myself was never my strong point, so as a result, I went out to eat multiple times. Food was comparatively cheap and I took to that plus with fervor. I had delicacies like the Tokyo Banana, Kyoto Style Okonomiyaki, and the simple yet, inspiring Japanese sushi.

From an outside perspective, any culture would seem exotic, and that's how I saw Japan. Eventually, though, I began to see Japan as just a part of life. Events like Hanami and the cluster of national holidays called Golden Week, make me realize that life is full of these kinds of events and not just limited to a singular sense.

Even though my time in Japan has been shorter than what I had intended, the memories and experiences will not be forgotten and will continue to form my mind and soul. And so the page turns...

## CLAIRE BATE-ROULLIN

### Okayama's Local Specialties and their Relationship with Momotaro

Claire Bate-Roullin クレア・ベイトルーリン

この論文ではお土産として売っている岡山の名物を中心に、日本のお土産についてを検討したいと思う。まず、お土産の歴史また起源について説明して、現代日本に文化的な意義を検討する。そして、岡山の名物を紹介する。その後、岡山の名物やお土産とももたろという昔話の関係について検討する。最後にその関係で、どう経済的や社会的なツールとして地域アイデンティティの持つの感じを作ること、売り込むことについて検討する。

Omiyage is translated into English as souvenir and yet in my opinion this is not an accurate representation of the word. A definition of souvenir given by the Oxford English Dictionary states that a souvenir is: “A thing that is kept as a reminder of a person, place, or event” (OED). This implies that a souvenir is meant for the person doing the travelling. This differs from omiyage which are usually bought as gifts for other people as is shown by data collected from a survey done by JTB, a travel company. In this survey nearly 80% of omiyage were bought for other people, mainly friends and family (nearly 50%) and only around 20% of omiyage were bought for themselves. (JTB, 2013). From this it might be more accurate to consider omiyage as a souvenir given as a gift rather than just a souvenir.

Omiyage giving in Japan is not a recent phenomenon but rather a practice that has its roots in the early Edo period. At the time, travel was strongly restricted with it even being stated in a treatise on civil administration that “no one of any class should travel without reason” (Kanzaki, 1992, cited in Krag, 2014, 22).

Thus, travel by the ordinary class was undertaken for usually religious purposes only. With the improvement of roads in Japan, especially with the creation of the Tokaido, linking Edo to Kyoto in the early 1600s, these pilgrimages became more and more popular. However, these were usually too costly for ordinary people to afford on their own and so a village's religious organization, called ko would fundraise, collecting money from the whole village. This money, called senbutsu would then be used to fund a chosen member's pilgrimage where he was charged to represent his community and pray for their wellbeing on their behalf (Ikkai, 1988). He would also bring back protection charms. Whilst the culture of senbutsu and ko's has practically disappeared, these charms have evolved into what would be today's omiyage.

This history can be seen in the apparent old meaning of the word omiyage. Whilst there is no definite source for the word, the general consensus is that the Chinese characters or kanji that used to make up omiyage either used to mean a “a vessel” (Park, 2000), used for food offerings to the gods, “coming down from a shrine” (Chi et al, 2011) in reference to objects bought or procured at a shrine or “sacred charm” (Ikkai, 1988).

The current kanji making up the word omiyage (お土産) can be translated as “product from the land” reflecting how omiyage has evolved to mean products representing the local area they come from. This change might be explained by the introduction of the railway in the late Edo period. As travelling became faster and more convenient, people were able to travel further and bring back more things than when they used to travel by foot. A consequence of this was that people started to bring back local foods and specialties,

otherwise known as *meibutsu* from the regions they visited, though not all of these were convenient to bring back. Foods that would not spoil during the journey and that would be convenient to transport, started to be developed in response to this demand. An example of this is Shizuoka's Abekawa mochi that started to use *gyuuhi*, a sugary gel instead as it kept longer and thus established itself as a local specialty (Dihn, 2013). Another example of how travelers demand has shaped local specialties and *omiyage* is Kyoto's *yatsushashi*. Whilst being presented as a traditional snack from Kyoto, the current most popular form of this, *nama-yatsushashi* actually only appeared on the market in the 1960s (Chi et al, 2011).

The importance of defining what a local specialty is, especially in regards to gifting *omiyage* in Japan's day to day culture is apparent when looking at the abundance of TV programs promoting such things. Nearly 35-45 % of Japan's TV shows focus on food programs, usually in the context of travel (Chi et al, 2011). Furthermore, just flicking through travel magazines, one can find multiples pages dedicated to the areas local specialties and no Japanese train station is complete without a shop selling *omiyage*. It is clear from the survey results as well how much *omiyage* is a part of Japanese culture when more than 90% of respondents stated that they bought some when traveling and with more than half stating that it was absolutely necessary (JTB 2013). This data reflects my own findings, though I interviewed mostly non-Japanese living in Japan, all had bought *omiyage* at some point during their stay here.

Finding what constitutes an area's local specialty can be difficult since many small towns might claim that a specific product is special in order to draw attention. According to Yutaka Mukai, a member of the Ise City Chamber of Commerce and Industry, "In order to be *meibutsu*, something has to be a special product; it has to require specific skill or knowledge for creating it that is possessed by people in a certain region. This skill or knowledge is often passed down in families from generation to generation, thus preventing those from outside the region from gaining the ability to produce the *meibutsu*." (Chi et al, 2011)

To choose what is clearly defined as Okayama's *meibutsu* I decided to follow the official tourism website where I identified four main types of *meibutsu*. Firstly, due to Okayama's location close to the Seto Inland sea, seafood such as Hinase's oysters and spanish mackerel (or *sawara*) are considered a local specialty. These however are not appropriate as *omiyage* as they do not keep well. Next are *hiruzen* soba and *horumon* udon from Tsuyama. These have only recently risen in popularity thanks to the B-Gourmet Grand Prix held in Hyogo Prefecture in 2011 where *Hiruzen's* yakisoba won first prize which has helped contribute to the local economy due to the advertisement generated by the media coverage (Brasor, 2011). Instant forms of these are available at *omiyage* stores in Okayama, however they do not appear to be highly popular as a form of *omiyage* as none of the respondents to my survey had bought them.

One of the ways Okayama's tourism board seems to promote itself is by labelling itself as "the fruit kingdom". White peaches, muscat and piona grapes are often cited as the best local specialties of Okayama, thanks to the warm climate and relative high amount of sunshine the "hare no kuni" (sunny country) receives. Fruit picking tours, as well as an abundance of peach and grape derived sweets, jellies and fruit parfaits are a few of the ways the prefecture sells these local products. The association of the region with Momotaro also helps strengthen its image as a "peach" producing region with all the respondents to my survey citing peaches as one of the main local specialties in Okayama.

Finally, another one of Okayama's *meibutsu* and possibly its most popular *omiyage* is *kibi-dango*. Indeed, according to my survey results the majority of the respondents had bought *kibi dango*, either for themselves as a snack or as *omiyage* to gift to others.

Whilst the origin of *kibi-dango* is unclear, many theories seem to link the snack with the Kibitsu Shrine in Okayama Prefecture. One of the theories surrounding the sweets origin

according to local historian Taniguchi Sunio is that kibi-dango was a snack usually offered to the deity of the Kibitsu Shrine before being consumed (Taniguchi, 1970, 64).

The name of the sweet itself is a pun, referring to the Kingdom of Kibi (today's Okayama) and the Japanese word for millet, which is 'kibi'. It would appear that whilst originally kibi-dango used millet as one of its main ingredients, as the confection became more popular and was marketed towards travelers, the ingredients changed to mochi, as this could keep longer. The earliest known seller of kibi-dango in Okayama is Koeido, which still exists to this day. Whilst the shop started selling these sweets during the early Meiji era, it is thanks to the Sino and Russian wars that its popularity increased. As many soldiers passed by train through Okayama to reach the imperial military base in Hiroshima, Koeido would sell kibi-dango in the station, very much like how it still does today, increasing its popularity as an omiyage. It was in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century however when Momotaro became linked to kibi-dango (Koeido, 2013).

Momotaro, whose name can be translated as Peach boy, is the hero of one of the most well-known Japanese folktales. In it, the young boy who was found in a giant peach by an old couple, goes on a quest to kill ogres terrorizing the local population. To help him with this his mother gives him kibi-dango for the journey, which he uses to gain the friendship of a dog, monkey and pheasant who in turn help him in his fight against the ogres.

The Koeido shop owners would dress as Momotaro and as the demons he fought to promote the local snack (Koeido, 2013). Before this time, Momotaro was not actually directly associated with Okayama Prefecture, which is surprising considering how interlinked these two seem to be today. It was in fact only after the Second World War that Okayama Prefecture started to actively use Momotaro's story to promote itself and thus create a sense of local identity linked with the character. According to Antoni's journal article, Momotaro can be seen as a symbol for Japanese nationalism (1991) used in schools as a form of propaganda during the war and afterwards. After the defeat in the Second World War, a symbol of Japanese strength was necessary to unite and rebuild the country largely destroyed by the elite military class's recklessness and the Allies' bombs. Okayama, which was nearly entirely burnt to ashes during an air raid heavily, began to promote Momotaro and kibi-dango as part of its heritage, perhaps in response to the heavy losses it sustained during the war. Actually, prior to the 1930s, Momotaro was usually associated with two other places in Japan, Inuyama in Aichi Prefecture and Kinashi in Kagawa Prefecture. It was only after a local historian wrote a book claiming that the deity enshrined at the Kibitsu shrine, Kibitsu-hiko was the person on which Momotaro was based on that Okayama became the main area associated with the story (Henry, 2009). This is apparent by just visiting the city where upon exiting the train station, where one of the lines has just been renamed the Momotaro Line, one will come across a statue of Momotaro and his companions as well as face Momotaro-doori, one of the main streets in Okayama City. The pothole covers are also decorated with the story, whilst many products in omiyage stores bear a connection to it and it is nearly impossible to miss a peach related product or image walking around the city.

As Chi states in his research on meibutsu, the success in promoting a local specialty, especially as omiyage has potential to affect various facets of Japanese society, not only strengthening regional cultural identity but also providing local employment, thus helping in the depopulation of more rural areas in Japan. As he says, meibutsu and omiyage is more than just a souvenir or food, it is also a social and economic tool. (Chi, 2011)

In conclusion, researching the history and significance of Okayama's main meibutsu sold as omiyage it is clear that the folktale of Momotaro, whether truly originating from Okayama or not, has been appropriated by businesses and the prefecture for promotional purposes. In fact, the marketisation of the story has helped create a sense of local identity for

the region as well as strengthening the association of Okayama with its local specialties such as peaches and kibi-dango.

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#### EPOK Reflections

I had little expectations before coming to Okayama, having heard many years abroad stories, both good and bad, I had decided to come with an open mind and only one goal: to improve my Japanese. Considering how much I struggled with daily life when I first arrived such as buying a train ticket or finding the right bus, it is nice to be able to look back and see how far I have come.

It would be impossible to condense a year of experiences into a couple of paragraphs, but as clichéd as it may be, through all the challenges I have faced and opportunities I have been given, I feel that I have truly become richer as a person.

I am extremely thankful to Okayama University, the Global Office team and the EPOK program coordinators as well as everyone I have met during this year for making my time here so enjoyable and worthwhile. From conversations at my part-time job with local Japanese people, visiting schools, volunteering at festivals, giving presentations at the International Centre and a couple of homestays I have been able to meet people and do new things that have helped me grow as a person and see the world a little differently.

Finally, my time here has enabled me to not only further my understanding of Japan and its culture but also to help me understand my own culture and sense of identity. I have come to appreciate things from my own country that I might have once taken for granted. I have also learnt that whatever challenges and situations one is faced with, it is the mind set with which you face them that is the most important. For all new incoming students, I highly advise to make the most of the opportunities given to you here, be it through the university such as the Global Office or L-Café or even outside of campus through your day-to-day life. More importantly, always keep an open mind!

## HSUAN LIN

讃岐うどん：うどん界の王者

### Sanuki Udon: The Most Famous Udon Brand in Japan

EPOK 2015-2016 林宣 (LIN, Hsuan)

#### Summary

Japanese foods are not only rice dishes. Noodles are also important. That's why I write this essay about udon.

Within so many kinds of local gourmet in Japan, Sanuki Udon won the first place in "Local Brand Strategy Survey" held by Nikkei Research for three times, on 2008, 2010, and 2013. What make Sanuki Udon the most famous udon brand in Japan can be explained in the following two reasons. First, "Setonaikai- climate" is good for growing wheat and salt-making. And the good combination of other materials (such as "dashi", soy sauce, and other condiment) make udon taste special and delicious. Second, new type of food-tourism which is known as "Sanuki Udon Boom" makes Sanuki Udon famous throughout the whole Japan.

#### 1. はじめに

日本では、都道府県・旧国名などの地名入り名産品がたくさんある。商品名に地名を入れれば、知名度が高くなり、売り上げも上がりやすいといううわさがあるらしい。こういう地域ブランド化によって、農産・水産・果物・畜産・菓子・ご当地料理は日本国内だけではなく、海外まで知られるぐらい人気になった。その中で、讃岐うどんは日本三大うどんの一員と認められている。さらに、株式会社日経リサーチによる「地域ブランド戦略サーベイ」の調査結果では、ご当地料理というジャンルに分類され、2008年・2010年・2013年の3回連続で名産品ブランドランキングの総合1位を獲得したという。うどん界の王者とも言われる讃岐うどんの魅力点は一体どこにあるのか。このエッセイでは、「讃岐うどん」が有名になる秘訣について述べる。

#### 2. 和食はお米料理だけではなく、麺料理もある

そもそも、なぜ日本料理の話なのに、お米ではなくて麺類のうどんが1位になるのか。まず、「日本料理＝お米料理」という考えはステレオタイプである。東西の食生活の差異については、お米を食べるかどうかをもっとも大きい違いといわれている。小麦とトウモロコシが主とする西洋の国々と比べ、東南アジアを含める東アジア諸国では、米を主食として食べていると思われる。特に、ご飯を中心した和食は、ご飯一杯・お魚・漬物・味噌汁といった定番メニューの組み合わせが自然に浮ぶ。また、旅行ガイドブックを開くと、よく載せられたお寿司や丼物などのお米料理は、日本を代表するグルメと言っても過言ではない。しかし、日本全国でお米が育てられるわけではなく、気候や土地の条件によって小麦の栽培に適した地域もいくつかある。お米を栽培するより小麦のほうが向いてる香川県は、その中の一員である。

#### 3. 香川県の地理条件

香川県は、年間降水量が少なく、晴れた日が多く、冬でも暖かいという特徴を持

つ瀬戸内海式気候に分類される。北の中国山地と南の四国山地に挟まれ、季節風の影響を受けにくい。なぜなら、太平洋から吹いてくる夏の季節風は中国山地に止められ、日本海から吹いてくる冬の季節風は四国山地に止められ、水分が届かなくなるからである。しかし、同じ瀬戸内海式気候でも、瀬戸内海の北にある岡山県と瀬戸内海の南にある香川県は、水問題に関して状況が異なっている。岡山県は雨が少ないが、大きい川が三つあり、冬に中国山地に積もった雪が夏になると水になるため、水に困ることはない。一方、香川県はそういう利点がなく、昔からため池を使って水を確保し、さらに1974年は徳島県の吉野川の水をトンネルで香川県に導かれ、香川用水の完成によってようやく水不足の問題が大幅に改善された。水稻を栽培するのに大量の水が必要であるため、香川県は以前から水が少なくても収穫できる小麦を、讃岐平野で栽培している。以上の地理条件で、香川県は生産の難しかった米作に代わって、小麦が収穫できる農地を作り上げる理由が分かった。

#### 4. 讃岐うどんの特徴

日本のうどんの歴史は奈良時代までさかのぼれるが、讃岐うどんの場合は、平安時代に弘法大師により小麦と麺づくりの技術を中国から持ち帰ったのが始まりと伝えられている。日本各地にさまざまなうどんがある中で、香川県の讃岐うどんは全国から1位と選ばれる理由は極めて強いコシの食感と、ぶっかけ・生醤油・釜玉など多様な食べ方があることである。美味しいうどんを作るには、3つのキーポイントがある。

まずは「コシ」と「のど越し」である。コシがいいというのは、ただ硬いだけではなく、もちもちとした弾力がありながら、しっかりした歯ごたえを感じることである。コシのいいうどんができるのは、「土三寒六常五杯」という独特の製法のおかげである。気温や湿度によって、小麦粉に加える水と塩の分量と生地のコねる時間が変化しなければならない。そして、なめらかなのど越しができるには、こねた生地を十分に足踏みし、数時間ほど寝かせるのが大事なコツである。このように、もちもち、つるつるした食感のうどんができるのである。

次は、「だし」である。瀬戸内海で多く獲れる最高級のいりこから作っただしは、色が薄い黄色で、濃厚な旨みがある。

最後に、「材料」の良さである。讃岐うどんは、小麦粉・水・塩というシンプルな材料で作られる。讃岐うどんを美味しく食べるには、良いだし・醤油・薬味が欠かせない。前の3. で述べたように、香川の温暖で雨が少ない気候は小麦の生産に適する。さらに、地産の小麦粉でうどんを作りたいという願望で、讃岐うどん専用の小麦粉の品種の「さぬきの夢2000」と「さぬきの夢2009」が開発された。雨が少ない気候は塩作りにも適している。香川県小豆島で作られた老舗の醤油と香川県内で栽培された青ねぎを加え、美味しい讃岐うどんが出来上がりである。こういう風に集まれた良い質の材料は、美味しさのみならずとも言えよう。

#### 5. 讃岐うどんブーム

讃岐うどんブームは20年ほど前に始まり、今なお続いている。そのブームの仕掛け人といわれる田尾和俊(2015)はこう言った。

讃岐うどん巡りはレンジャー。香川は讃岐うどんのテーマパークなんです。日本一小さな香川県というテーマパークに、うどん店というアトラクションが何百とある。しかも、“あやしいうどん店”という人気アトラクションがある。郷土料理として

うどんを取り上げても若者はなかなか動かないけど、レジャーとしてなら面白がって動く。

田尾氏は、雑誌・ラジオ・テレビなどのマスコミの力を借り、県内の若者を中心に宝物探しのようなうどん探検ブームを起こした。おもしろい・楽しい・怪しいという視点から、。こういう讃岐うどんブームの効果が反映されたのは、フード・ツーリズム<sup>3</sup>、つまりうどん屋巡りのために県外から香川を訪れてくる光景である。「香川県観光動向調査」(2004)の結果によれば、42.9%の客は「讃岐うどんを食べるため」という観光の動機として香川を選んだ。また、原直行(2007)のうどん巡りの客層分析によれば、客層は主に20・30代で、香川県より県外からの来客が多い。特に2回目以上のリピーター客が多い。讃岐うどんの魅力に関し、価格と味はもちろん、うどん屋の数・バリエーション・うどん屋の雰囲気などのことも判明された。

## 6. 結論

以上、このエッセイでは、讃岐うどんの美味さの秘密と讃岐うどんブームになった秘訣について述べた。自然環境の恵みによって、讃岐うどんは掛け替えのない美味しさが作られる。うどん屋巡りというレジャーを推進する斬新なアイデアで、讃岐うどんブームが起きた。さらに、「讃岐うどん」は日本全国で名産品ブランドの1位と認められた。香川県の浜田恵造知事(2013)は「香川県は知名度が低い、讃岐はとても高い。讃岐で引きつけ、うどんを介して香川県に結びつけるのが良いと考えた」と話した。美味しいうどんが生産できるが、必ず売れるとは限らない。そのため、売る手段が大事である。讃岐うどんは地域ブランド大賞をもらえるほど知名度が高まった理由は、讃岐うどんブームをはじめ、県知事によるさまざまなPRプロジェクトのおかげであると言っても過言ではない。この大成功な例を参考になり、日本の各地域もこれから宣伝手段を工夫し、特色のある名産品を世間に見せるのだろう。

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<sup>3</sup> フード・ツーリズム：フードを味わうことやフードの生産地域の特質を体験することが、旅行の主要な動機となること



## Reflection

At first, I was really nervous about living alone in a foreign country. But after just a few weeks, I get used to the easy life style here and made some new friends in Kuwanoki dorm and L-café. I have to say that L-café is a good place to meet new people, both Japanese students and non-EPOK international students. It's a friendly space to hanging out for a short chat or lunch break. Also, attending events and volunteer trip are good ways to earn more special experience.

As for classes here, I took Japanese courses, EPOK classes, and a few classes with general Japanese students. Some of them are pretty fun and exciting, and things I like the most are classes with field trips. For example, we get to visit local high schools and cool factories in Okayama, and I got a chance to homestay with a local family for one day. These are special experience I might never get if I'm just a visitor stopping by for just a few days.

EPOK classes are mostly taught in English, while others are in Japanese. I think the most challenging thing for me is "language". Though I do speak Japanese and English, either of them is my mother tongue. So I often feel frustrated when I tried to switch between 3 languages--Japanese, English and Chinese. (Just like right now, please imagine I struggling with my poor English and Japanese grammar and writing skill at midnight.)

Last, I want to talk about the most important thing I've learned. That is, to "take things easy". Before coming to Japan, I'm a kind of person who rather chooses reading and writing than talking, because I never felt ready to do free talk with foreign people. After talking with many people here, I realized communicating is not that hard than I thought. True communication takes place even when the conversations are lack of advanced vocabulary or grammar. And that people contact with open mind and kind heart, more than how well your language ability is. So it is totally okay for not being a perfect English or Japanese speaker. "You are better than you think you are."

Dear EPOK fellows, thank you for all the happy time together. Be confident with yourself and hope to meet somewhere again sometime.

**KIM LY****Japan: An Individualist or Collectivist Society?**

Kim Ly 李輝夢

*Summary:* 西洋的な視点で見ると、日本は独特な文化を持ち合わせているようだが、私の経験から察するに、日本人は集団行動を好み、他人と違うことを恐れる。一般的にはこのような社会は集散主義社会として知られている。このレポートにおいて、多くの日本人はどのように個性を獲得するのか、なぜ最新の流行を追いかけなければというプレッシャーを感じるのかについての問題提起を行った。その結果、これらの問題に対して、日本の社会構造を代表する縦社会、単一の文化、歴史、言語、および民族を背景とする集団への帰属意識、集団行動をとることによる長所および短所、並びに日本独自のサブカルチャーを生んだ日本人の気質から日本についての深い考察を得た。

“Japan is the only country where...” or “the Japanese are the only people who...” are phrases that I had personally heard countless of times during my stay in Japan. From a Western perspective Japan is deemed to be somewhat unique and possess characteristics or stereotypes that Japan is known to only have. During my extensive stay in Japan, I noticed one thing about Japan and Japanese people; is that the society and its people tend to stick together to sometimes restrictive levels and generally avoid changing the status quo. People that I’ve met and seen often jump on the bandwagon and avoid or are too afraid to be “different” from the rest. How exactly do the majority of people in Japan find their individualistic features? Why do many Japanese people tend to feel pressured to follow the latest trends? Of course, “many” does not mean “all” Japanese people, however, from a general consensus; Japan is known to be somewhat a collectivist society. Why this may be so could be analyzed from the roots of Japanese culture and behavior. I will describe the Japanese peoples’ collectivist nature and explain pros and cons of conformity and its effect on Japan’s society.

Conformity is the act of matching attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors to group norms (Hogg and Vaughn’s *Social Psychology* 2005). From a Western perspective, Japan is known to be somewhat conservative and indeed has a certain degree of conformity embedded within its culture. This could be presumed by the fact that Japan is comprised of a country which is inhabited by primarily Japanese, in contrast to melting pot countries such as Europe or the United States. Being a small island with tens of millions of people who share the same culture, history, language and ethnicity, there is no doubt that Japan appears to be a homogeneous nation. Only about two percent of the nation’s population comprise of foreigners (excluding other Japanese descent ethnicities and Nikkei Japanese). As a result, there is little to no variation among the Japanese in regard to the cultural traditions of Japan making hardly any difference between political and religious ideologies of one group versus the entire group. This could be the reason why one would feel pressured to stay in the in-group to avoid losing face or even feel shameful.

Geert Hofstede, a Dutch social psychologist who had developed a matrix of cultural dimensions based on his comprehensive studies created a database which assessed and differentiated national and organizational cultures with six measures: power distance, individualism, masculinity, uncertainty avoidance, long term orientation and indulgence.

According to Japan's dimension of power distance, "Japan is a borderline hierarchical society and that the Japanese are always conscious of their hierarchical position in any social setting and act accordingly" (Hofstede). I can agree with this claim based on my own personal experiences and other foreigners' experiences whom have experienced sometimes painstakingly slow decision making, having to wait for the decisions to reach every layer of the hierarchical layer of the organization or group. In corporate Japan, a proposal or claim must reach every department to the top guy who can finally take the decision, which perfectly displays Japan's power distance within its society. Managers ask for all the detailed facts and figures before taking any decision making changes very difficult to realize in Japan (Hofstede).

Noted by blogger and English teacher Tristan Vick, he describes this as the "talking in circles syndrome" which "affects everything from school functions, such as PTA meetings, to corporation and employee relations, to national politics." As a side effect, these make agreement hard to come by when one person does not completely agree or even make it near impossible to state the problem straight forward and then tackle the issue (Vick). Vick, as a teacher, every year joins *kenshuukais* (education research seminar) in which teachers get together to learn teaching methodologies and focus on new techniques to improve learning and education. However, Vick strongly shows how dissatisfied in how real problems often only get hinted at in a roundabout way and are never succinctly put out. There was once a time during one of Vick's *kenshuukais* (研修会) where a teacher had objected to the way English was taught in Japan and believed it was not adequate enough. To her response however, the other people in the seminar raised objections by saying it was impossible to challenge the curriculum that had already been mandated by the Japanese government (Vick). "Instead of objecting to her radicalism, they simply dismissed her methods, and nobody, not a single person, [were willing to be a rebel, stick up for her, and go against the system that could have given students a real chance at learning English more properly]" (Vick). They did so simply because of the impression that it was impossible to change the ways that had all always been done. This clearly demonstrates groupthink, how people in groups "[think] the same, and because everyone else holds to the same beliefs, it is believed as true simply because there is a ubiquity of like belief" (Vick). Groupthink, if used effectively, can attribute to more precise results if one is well informed and correct about a certain issue. However, if their consensus is wrong from the very start, it can only mean that the whole group is wrong and that there is usually no way of overcoming the issue. Anything that is alien to the status quo often out rightly gets dismissed solely since it does not conform to the group mentality. Vick had experienced countless of times where his idea or opinion was straight out rejected by the simple phrases like "But this is Japan. That's not how we do it in Japan" or simply "This is the Japanese way." The public education system in Japan is indeed conformist and rather rigid. This becomes more of an issue since "group-think dominates the way Japanese respond to real world issues and spills over into their politics and everyday life too" (Vick).

Where I grew up, the United States taught us Americans to pride ourselves for our uniqueness, individualism and freedom due to our highly autonomous society. In contrast, Japanese people have a more group oriented way of thinking in order to maintain the "Wa" (和) or the "peacefulness of society" or "harmony" in society. Anything which creates a division, like religion or politics, is viewed as something to keep on the low down to avoid confrontation wherever possible. According to Hofstede's database mentioned earlier, "Japan is one of the most uncertainty avoiding countries on earth." It had additionally stated that this could be attributed to the fact the Japan is constantly threatened by natural disasters in which the Japanese people needed to prepare themselves for uncertain situations. Likewise, this preparation for emergencies and precautions can apply for every other aspects of society. One could say that in Japan, "anything you do is prescribed for maximum predictability" (Hofstede). One thing you might notice is that Japan has many ceremonies within its culture such as

weddings, funerals, and other social events. From cradle to grave, people are prescribed in great detail by education how to behave and act. However, in a way, this sort of conformity helps promote unity—or at least a sense of unity. There must be a certain level of comfort that comes from that feeling of like-mindedness, almost like trust; otherwise I doubt they would do it so much. Japanese are generally taught to “not cause trouble for others,” and are taught this precept from primary school. People are respectful and taught from an early age to show respect. Respect not only being to your boss or your parents or superiors, but respect for the environment and everyone you come across translating to a more harmonious society. This results in a population that is socially hypersensitive yet not restrained in any other way as long as an individual’s action does not cause trouble for others (Fleury).

Based on my own experiences in Japan, I noticed that interact with Japanese people for the first time was quite rigid. I often had to give careful thought to every word I say before I say it. Although this allows me to interact with others on a higher plane of respect and manners, it also creates barriers. I cannot simply relax and show my true self in just the first or second meetings because I would usually be too busy trying to conform to the social etiquette. Although this applies to all people that I would meet for the first time, I feel more overwhelmed with Japanese people.

Moving on to social norms and trends, I believe the Japanese have flourished with an abundance of subcultures. The wealth of these subcultures provides some evidence that Japan is not as collectivist as one may think. Although Japanese people are initially brought up to believe in the same ideals, everyone has an equal opportunity to choose which path they follow in life. Not all people choose to work for large corporations and become a salaryman. The



variety of subcultures in Japan do include a salaryman where everyone looks like this,

Who are often obligated to work vigorously and stressfully making them look like this, on their daily commute to work and have to drink with



coworkers and superiors as a part of their method to get to know one another and socially bond (enjoyment is optional). However



there are also *hikikomoris/NEETS* (not recommended) who are freelancers or don’t have a job who often are *otakus* or “geeks,” another subculture of people who indulge themselves with endless amounts of anime. To add on the list, there are also:



Kogal, shibuya-kei, harajuku-kei, akiba-kei, metal heads, hip hop enthusiasts and many many more.

Although modern Japan has come a long way through thick and thin in becoming more individualistic since post-war times Japan inevitably remains a conformist society. This may be the cause of Japanese tradition of highly valuing refinement. “For something to be refined, it must conform. One cannot achieve greatness within a category or group without being a member. Hence education is very much about conformity” (Miyanaga). These are just some of the assets of Japanese tradition. As depicted in a Japanese proverb, “the nail that sticks up gets hammered down,” those who are different or stand out tend to be avoided and often excluded

in Japanese society, which ultimately leads to the pressure to conform, therefore suppressing individualism (Kobayashi).

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### **EPOK Reflections:**

My dream since high school was to become an English teacher and someday live in Japan. After coming to Okayama University, not only had coming to study abroad accomplished one of my dreams, but I experienced many things I had never and probably never could have experienced before. Not only did I enjoy myself to the fullest during my stay, I believe that I had grown as a person. Not only did I just improve in my Japanese skills, I felt like I had become a whole new person (for the better). I was able to reunite with many of my Japanese friends but additionally was fortunate enough to meet people from all around the world with some who I am very thankful to be friends with and had taught and guided me through many hardships I had during the past year. Had being afraid of not being able to make friends because I was somewhat conservative definitely made me worry when I first moved to Okayama. Okayama was completely foreign to me with no one that I knew and no place I was familiar with. But not very long had I met the friends that encouraged and provided me the opportunity to become a more social person and built the confidence in myself mentally. I had challenged myself and experienced job hunting for the first time, which I did not even plan on doing so during my study abroad but eventually decided to do so in order to discover what I want to do in the future. Sure I had my share of ups and downs here and there but all of those experiences helped me find the person that I am now, and it is a whole new me that I am definitely content with. I never had any expectations before coming to Okayama but I ended up with more than I could every hoped for.

## JOSEPH COLL

### Teaching and Learning English in Japan

Joseph Coll ジョセフ・コル

僕のテーマは「日本の英語勉強と英語教育」。この論文に日本の教育制度を研究してなぜ義務教育の時英語の学生が文法とか読書だけを勉強しました。日本人学生の意見は大切ですから「何のために英語を勉強したいですか」を聴きます。日本の中学と高校で英語は義務教育なのでその理由はだいたい「義務的」と思うです。それと、今の岡山大学の英語学生が意見を聞いて自分の作るアンケートを答えます。最後に何の方法が日本政府を使ってどんなように日本の学生のために英語教育を改善します。

The opportunity to learn English in Japan is something presented to students at a very young age, with organisations such as MEXT taking steps in 1998 to introduce mandatory English classes in a select amount of primary schools and Eikaiwa (英会話) schools being available for children even before they have started elementary school. The reason I've chosen to research this topic is because during my time in Japan, I've been fortunate to not only have teaching experiences in some of the smaller Eikaiwa's around Okayama, but also as an assistant within some of Okayama University's English language classes, one being for presentation skills, and the other being for more traditional speaking skills. I was also fortunate enough to be able to sit in a presentation by Kensaku Yoshida, about the methods of English teaching in Japan, and ways in which the methods of it need to be evaluated and changed for the better.

English is studied within Japanese schools for at least six years, from junior to senior high school, with most students starting to study English in junior high school as a compulsory subject, up until 2002. In general, in high school, students are able to choose another second language aside from English, but for the most part, high schools tend to teach only English, as the majority of universities treat English as a compulsory subject in their entrance exams. However, due to the methods of English teaching in Japan, students are often left unable to communicate with native speakers should they have the chance, as they lack the vocabulary and communication skills needed to hold and keep up with a conversation, despite those years of mandatory education. Students are often taught phrases or grammar points that a teacher will explain to them to gauge their understanding, and then must use this information to communicate information that they may very well have little interest in, creating an almost artificial conversation, which doesn't properly prepare them for the real thing. For comparisons sake, during my time learning Japanese at Okayama University, when a new grammar point or piece of vocabulary in introduced to us, we're given the information necessary to use it, but are free to apply it in a way that interests us, rather than being given a set topic. Conversations then become less about a repeat after me mentality, and become

about the individual using what they have learned to express themselves. Students gain their own goals as opposed to a vague “I wish to learn English because it’s been with me for so long”.

To get a better understanding of such things as why Japanese students want to learn English, how long they’ve spent studying English etc., I created a small questionnaire to ask students from one of my classes I assist in at Okayama University.

The questions were as followed:

- Why do you want to study English?
- What have you spent the most time studying about English?
- What is your strongest point in English?
- What is your weakest point in English?
- Do you enjoy learning English?
- What would you like to learn in English?

The pool for these questions was 28 Japanese students. Firstly “Why do you want to study English?” The majority of students chose to travel and for work/study reasons, 8 and 12 people respectively. Other options included to meet new people (4 students), because of pop culture (2 students) and I have to/It’s mandatory (2 students). Secondly, we have “What have you spent the most time studying in English?” Writing and speaking were the two options to fall quite short on numbers, with only 1 and 3 students choosing these options respectively. Grammar came in slightly lower than what I had expected at 6 students, and reading with 5. By far the most chosen option was listening at 13 students. However, when examining the next question; “What is your strongest point in English?” there’s an anomaly in results compared to the results gained from the previous questions. Most students find reading to be their strongest point, with a staggering 17 students. The previous highest choice, listening, is down to only 2 students finding it to be their strongest suit, despite having possibly spent the most amount of time studying it. Grammar again is lower than I had expected, with only 5 students finding it to be their strongest point, and writing and speaking being at 1 and 3 respectively. Moving on to what students find to be their weakest point in English, as expected, speaking and listening are their weakest abilities, at 10 and 9 students choosing these options respectively. Reading and writing are the lowest chosen options, at 1 student choosing reading, and 2 choosing writing, and finally grammar comes in at 6 students finding it their weakest point in English, despite the majority of time from mandatory English classes focussing on grammar. Question 5 saw 25 students saying that they did enjoy learning English, with only 3 saying that they did not. Given the chance, I’d like to have interviewed these 3 students to get more insight into why they don’t enjoy the language. Finally, I left the students with an optional question that they could fill out themselves, as opposed to giving them pre-set options to select from. From the students that chose to write something down, there was a very clear, common theme between all their answers, on “what they would like to learn in English?” Conversation skills for daily life was the overwhelming top choice here,

and isn't too surprising to me. From classes I've assisted in, or helped teach around the Okayama area, lesson plans and curriculum are still focused on teaching grammar points and reading and writing abilities, rather than giving students practical ways to apply these things in conversation

It seems that for students, there's a feeling of responsibility to take English classes, thanks to their requirement in certain exams and fields of education and work, as there's a lack of passion involved for them to take any real interest. Similar problems can be found with non-native English teachers, teaching the language to students. Whether it be a lack of functional grammar, vocabulary, or a similar mind-set of the fear of making mistakes. Many non-native English teachers almost carry a sense of embarrassment towards their position, and won't often admit to being an English teacher, should the topic come up, but instead choose to lie about what they teach.

Recently, efforts have been made to make to shift the emphasis of English language education to more verbal based communication skills. The idea being to introduce the TOEFL examination (a speaking and listening comprehension based test) as part of universities entrance examinations, thus requiring the focus of high school level English classes to shift to a more communication based curriculum. "There's no other way left to change (the current English teaching system in state schools). We need to set an attainment goal for students to achieve high TOEFL scores" (Toshiaki Endo; 2013). While being an admirable idea, I believe it doesn't quite solve the problem altogether, as I feel it is skipping over important steps. A shift to a more communication based curriculum is good, but also requires teachers that have an expansive knowledge of the language already, if not native speakers to teach, who are an unfortunate limited resource. Secondly it would be unfair to put students into a testing environment that they may not understand. This is a method that needs to be introduced over the span of a few years, to ease students into a new testing environment, and make sure they've been supported with the proper knowledge of what exactly they will be tested on.

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### EPOK Reflection

The EPOK experience has been a very unique one for me, this being the longest amount of time I've spent completely out of my comfort zone. Initially I struggled to settle in, but I feel as if that was to be expected of a lot of students, which eventually helped me to become more relaxed, as all the current EPOK students were in a similar situation, so there was a sense of comradery between us all. It's both thanks to those people and the staff and students at Okayama University, that I've grown to become a bit more confident in myself as a person, as they've really helped me come out of my shell, if only a little, so I'm very grateful to all those people I've met.

Of course, Okayama University have also been incredibly accommodating and helpful with any issues I may have had, and have helped present me with so many unique opportunities I never thought I could experience, from being able to create my own Tatami-Beri mat in Study of Japan class, creating a possible yuru-chara for Okayama, and helping to teach young children English in Bizen-Manabijuku. Teachers for all my classes have also been very receptive to any issues I may have had, especially in the second semester in Japanese 3. Given the opportunity, I'd like to come back and really put myself out there a bit more, but nevertheless I've enjoyed my experience here at Okayama University, and wouldn't hesitate to recommend it to anyone else.

# GEOFFREY ASHFORD

## Ai Wanto tu Supiiku Ingurishu

Geoffrey Ashford

このレポートでテーマは日本で英語を教える問題です。問題はたくさん英語の先生は英語があまりできません。英語の試験の中心は書き読みけど一番大事なスキルは話です。試験は使わない英語もあるからその勉強は難しすぎし日本人は試験後、単語をすぐ忘れます。ビジネスでよく英語で話が要るけど日本人は読み書き方が勉強したから英語であまり話せません。そして、未来の試験と英語の授業の中心は英語の話になった方がいいと思います。

How Japanese speak English has been the butt of many jokes, but these jokes hold a bit of truth. Most Japanese students speak with what is called “*katakana*” English, but not because they want to, it is due to how they have been taught. The Japanese ministry of education is trying to rectify this issue, but seem to be making more mistakes than headway. Japan does not necessarily need more foreign teachers to teach English, but rather needs to update its teaching system to one that actually teaches students.

The Ministry of Education and many other officials have noticed the poor English skills of the average Japanese person. To help with speaking, the hiring of native English speakers to teach in Japan has been greatly encouraged. Unfortunately, many of the native speakers that are hired have little to no experience teaching English, and as such, tend to help very little in the education for Japanese students.<sup>3</sup>

Japan’s education system is heavily based on tests. There are tests for passing each class, entering schools, measuring English level, and more. However, the abundance of tests has taken away the meaning of tests, and instead changed how students are taught. Education has become less about teaching students, and more about cramming knowledge, and

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preparing for the next test. Encouraging cramming actually takes away from the educational value of schools. By cramming, students are able to retain a large amount of knowledge for the next test, but after the test, the students end up forgetting almost everything.<sup>4</sup>

English is taught in the same way, cramming vocabulary, and memorizing sentence structures for the next test. This is not language acquisition; this is only a test passing strategy that does not allow for the long term use of a language. However, this is not entirely the teacher's fault, as the test itself takes some blame. When tests like the *Eiken* have ridiculous questions like, "Although the advertisement for the cruise had promised \_\_\_ dinners, the guests were disappointed by the quality of the food aboard the ship." with the multiple choice answers of "1) elliptical 2) abject 3) sumptuous 4) imperative."<sup>4</sup> All the words in the question are fairly common, except the four options as answers. When I first saw this question, it took me a bit to figure out the answer because no one uses sumptuous. If a student were to try and pick up vocabulary from reading, like native speakers do, they would have to read 500,000 to one million words to even find one use of the word. Spoken, on television or in movies, it is more around one use of sumptuous per one billion words.<sup>4</sup> What is worse is this isn't a one of a kind question, but rather a common style of question. This forces students to learn words that they will NEVER use, wasting their education, and fostering a disdain for the English language.

For future improvement, many primary schools are starting to introduce English at earlier ages. Currently 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade classes have some English curriculum, but the ministry of education is looking at introducing English around 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.<sup>2</sup> This may help some, but the issue is not start time, but the frequency. Usually in primary school education, English is taught in a more fun way by native speaker using easy English and games. These methods get the students to learn, not just cram. Unfortunately, the students will only learn English one to two hours a week. With very little frequency, it is difficult to learn a language.

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The frequency of English classes increases in junior high, and senior high school, but those three to five hours a week are spent in the cramming style, which helps very little with Language acquisition.<sup>1</sup>

Although studying abroad is seen as the best way of language acquisition, there are really only two things it provides. First, instead of studying English for three hours a week, it suddenly becomes 50-80 hours a week. The second, and more important is the constant practice of speaking and listening in English. The previously mention cramming style focuses on written English. Students cram vocabulary and grammar, but may or may not know the pronunciation.<sup>4</sup> Students also don't get to practice their spoken English. This combined with the usual shyness, and fear of mistakes cause students to not want to speak English. Just by spending two hours a week doing speaking practice, the Japanese student's English abilities could grow much faster than with current methods. However, the main issue there is the English teachers themselves have poor speaking skills and then transfer that weakness down to their students.<sup>2</sup>

The main purpose of learning English is to use it for business, but if business workers cannot speak the language after going through six to twelve years of studying English, it seems as if time was almost wasted. With Japan being such a test based society, one way to change the teaching method would be to change the test. Instead of focusing on the written section of the test, there should be just as much or more focus on the speaking portion, as spoken English is much more important in business communication than written. Another way to help would be to limit or do away with multiple choice tests, and make the questions fill in the blank. In any given situation in English, many words can be used, and there is not just one correct answer. By encouraging students to use what vocabulary they have to communicate, the system of lingua franca can be established. Lingua franca is where people can communicate with a language that is not their native tongue. These methods would

require more work from the test providers, both in administering and grading the tests. By changing the test, the way instructors teach would be forced to change to better prepare students for the tests. After implementation, test scores are bound to be shockingly low, but after about five to ten years, Japanese students' English performance would improve drastically.

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## AMIRA KEDDEH

### Youth and childhood independence and identity development;

*A brief look into the development of identity and independence of Japanese and western youth from early childhood into adolescence.*

**Amira Keddeh**

この作文は子どものせいちょうかていにおけるほごしやのかんよについて、日本とオーストラリア、アメリカおよびイギリスとのひかくによってけんとうを行うものである。また、子どもの社会的責任についての教育を、「出る釘は打たれる」と「子どもの夢」のかんてんから、こうさつするものである。「出る釘は打たれる」の考え方は、オーストラリア、アメリカおよびイギリスでは見られないものであり、この日本独自の考え方を教育の点でこうさつすることは、オーストラリア出身者としては非常に有意義なものである。特に、それぞれの子供の夢の独自性と子供に同質性を求める教育とが並存するという一見矛盾するげんしょうについてこうさつする。

From the western perspective, the sight of an early primary school aged child walking alone to school in the morning, instantly invokes a sense of concern and urgency to find that child's parent or guardian. However, in Japan, this scene is the norm rather than the exception. The sense of self-reliance and confidence that these young children exude is simultaneously fascinating, impressive and concerning. The first impression of this would be the assumption of an absence of paternal instinct on the behalf of the parent or guardian, but on the contrary, these children are often the center of the familial relationship in that parents rarely do things purely for themselves and instead the focus of the home is set on the development of the child. Comparatively, children in western countries are rarely ever seen without the hovering presence of a guardian; be that a parent, teacher or older sibling or relative. When comparing Japanese society and western society there is a large disparity in the average age of when children commute to school alone.



The degree of self-reliance and responsibility among young children differ greatly between western and Japanese society. Fundamental differences in how children view their responsibilities seem to affect their behaviour and ability to act on their own accord. In western society, young children are often treated as incapable of basic responsibilities such as walking to school alone or going to a local supermarket; this is a distinctive difference compared to Japanese children who naturally walk to school alone or with other local children their age. In my interviews with local Japanese students regarding their early childhood and upbringing, I found that all of them walked to school from their first year; some would walk with older children from the same school who lived in the same neighbourhood, however the majority



stated that they would often walk alone or with peer aged children. In comparison, starting from primary school and often continuing until the final year of primary school it is often rare to see Australian students, for example, walking to school alone. Often Australian parents would also drive their children to high school, though this is not always the case with the availability of a public bus.

On first seeing children walk to school alone in Japan, many westerners, myself included, feel a sense of surprise and sometimes concern, about seeing a young child on the streets without a supervising adult. In this sense, independence for the average Japanese child begins at age 6 when they first enroll and start attending school. Furthermore, around this age, Japanese children begin learning, through observation of others, about social responsibility from their peers and school. Elementary school children in Japan also learn to do things for others by helping in serving lunch in the cases of some schools and keeping their surroundings clean through cleaning up their school after the day is over. In the Japanese school system there also exists lessons on “morals” to teach children what is deemed acceptable by society as a homogenous whole. Interestingly though, western children rarely begin noticing social “responsibilities” or observing social “behaviour” until it is highlighted by their teachers. Additionally, it seems that western society teaches the adult to not interfere in how a child interacts with society, often preferring to leave this entirely up to the parent. Interfering in how a child interacts with its surroundings or society is seen as overstepping the bounds of what is acceptable behaviour. The biggest difference in this case appears to stem largely from the multicultural aspect of western society, in that, different cultures often combine in one country. This results in a vastly different set of cultural behaviours, beliefs and values within one country.



Multiculturalism allows for different values to be accepted within the same community, however this may present problems that stem from clashing values and perspectives. This is rarely an issue in Japanese society due to the predominantly homogenous aspect present in the majority of the Japanese community. Conversely, Japanese society places great importance in the harmony of a society and the homogeneity of the people living within the scope of that society, children are also encouraged to become independent and follow their dreams- within the societal norm, of course. “Adolescents have become increasingly individualistic in their interests while retaining some of the more traditional collectivistic cultural values.” [Sugimura & Mizokami, 2012].

The homogeneity of Japanese culture, through the western perspective, is often described using the Japanese idiom 「出る釘は打たれる」 [deru kugi wo utareru] which roughly translates to, the nail that sticks out will be hammered down. From the western perspective this is seen in a negative sense in that differences are discouraged, however this can also have other meanings for the Japanese. This idiom can also be translated to mean that those who excel or stand out are also subject to criticism. Therefore, if one stands out from the crowd, there will always be those who will criticize or try to bring you down; therefore, it takes courage to be different but one must also accept the hardships that come with great success. Yet despite the inclination to conform, children are also encouraged to follow their dreams. With the changes that arise from an increasingly multicultural world, the current and younger

generations are moving more towards choosing jobs and studies that take them in very different directions than that of their parents.



In regards to differences within the societal norm, the results of my interviews indicate that being different was viewed as negative on the whole. Or rather being contrary or speaking one's mind was discouraged. This is partly due to the concept of 「本音と建前」 “honne and tatemae”. This being one's “real” self and the “outside” self that one displays when interacting with others. One student mentioned that she was more contrary to other students when she was young, in that she often spoke her mind. This caused issues and discord with other students and eventually her mother and grandmother suggested that she change so that she would fit in more. Once again the individual's perspective is discouraged in order to obtain a social harmony with others. In fact, it is preferable to stay silent in the event of a disagreement; “Japanese culture by comparison tends to approve of or even endorse silence as part of conversation. Silence for one thing is to maintain sociability in avoidance of offending the listener though open verbal utterance- a common social phenomenon among Japanese. Conversely, silence could convey anger and hostility, while verbal utterances of these emotions could be disastrous.” [Lebra, 2007]. This aspect is fascinating and unique to Japan; whilst there is a general opinion that the individual has a responsibility to adjust his/her behaviour to fit in with others in western society, they are not outright asked to change their behaviour if it doesn't conform.

Within western schools, children often fight or argue and this is seen as normal and even beneficial in that it teaches them how to deal with conflict and how to problem solve. Whilst dealing with problems in the classroom, children learn how to deal with different ideas, religions and cultures. On the contrary, within Japanese schools and indeed within Japanese society in general, conflict of any sort is highly discouraged and usually glossed over in order to preserve the “harmony” of the group as a whole. Furthermore, it is here the problem with a phenomenon known as “ijime” or bullying arises. The distinct individual is often ostracized and cast out from the social circles within the school, and this is seen as normal behaviour in order to coax that individual to return to the normal parameters of acceptable behaviour.

Overall, the main difference between the upbringing of children in the two cultures starts at an early age mostly in the amount of independence given. Japanese children are expected to become more socially adept at a younger age but are not given much responsibility to earn money or an allowance until they reach university age. On the other hand, western children are given little to no independence until high school age where many will often find part-time jobs like babysitting or begin doing chores to earn money from their parents. Conversely, Japanese students have little to no control over their money until much later in life, some even indicated that some of their money is still handled by their parents even at university level. The bigger difference in behaviour between adolescents in Japan and those in western countries stems from the influence that societal norms have in their lives. Where Japanese youth place emphasis on the individual within a collectivist society, in western society the emphasis is purely on the individuals' achievements. As a whole, Japanese society is more harmonious but often at the cost of the individuals' sense of uniqueness. However, although the societal whole in western countries is not as harmonious, the ability to problem solve and deal with conflict is much higher.



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Interviews with Okadai students from different hometowns and with exchange students from western countries were conducted plus two interviews with Okayama teachers.

### **Reflection:**

Looking back on my exchange experience I realize that I have changed from the day I first set foot in Okayama. The decision to come here for an entire year of study was possibly one of the hardest I've ever made and it has had its positives and negatives like any other experience. Even though I've been traveling from an early age, being this far away from home without family was a first for me. Okayama is so conveniently located close to many interesting places in Japan and I've taken that opportunity to travel around to nearby cities. I have regrets of course, that I did not travel more, but I think having spent almost every given holiday or long weekend in another city is something I should be quite thankful for.

My expectations for this exchange program were exceeded beyond what I'd hoped for, and the staff at global partners did their best to make this program easier on all the exchange students. I also had the opportunity to meet, and get to know very well, students from other countries all over the globe. These friends I am very sad to leave behind but I am hopeful we will all one-day meet again. Not to sound too cheesy, but the dormitory life has been so helpful in that I feel like I've got another small family here in Japan, it's been like a little support circle of people in the same unfamiliar situation. I'm also grateful for the help that the RA's in Kuwanoki have given. My travels would have been much harder to organize had I not received help from all the people here who put their time and effort into making our lives a little bit easier.

I think the things I will miss the most are how convenient Japan is and how absolutely lovely strangers can be here! It's been so easy to get around the country and living here has been very easy to adapt to. The strangers (usually older obachans and ojichans) that I've met on trains have been incredibly sweet and kind. The amount of help you can find if only you have the bravery to ask (even in very poor Japanese) has been astounding. I sometimes refer to this experience as my "bubble of non-reality" because it really has been like stepping away from reality into a happy little dream. Maybe one day I'll be able to come back again but until then, good bye and thank you!

## TEGAN SMITHAM

### The rebellion and expression of Japanese youth through eccentric fashion

*Tegan Smitham*

色々な日本の若い人たちはソーシャル抵抗のために、面白いファッションを着ています。最近の日本で、たくさん若い人たちは伝統的な社会の考えに反抗しています。反抗力は強くなくても、ファッションの意味は強いです。東京市の中に色々なファッションのタイプが見えます。例えば、ガングロとロリータというファッションのイメージは特に強くて、伝統的な日本人の考えに相いれないです。日本社会は難しくなれるので、逃げるために、人たちは好きなファッションのサブカルチャーが探しています。今、たくさん外国人も日本のファッションを着ています。世界中、現実逃避の方法になってました。

‘The nail that sticks out gets hammered down’. This Japanese proverb plays an active part in reinforcing the idea that fitting in and working with a group mindset, rather than an individual one, is crucial on assuring a productive and industrious society.

In many Western Societies, individualism is a desired trait that roots from early childhood into adulthood. Though the importance of teamwork is highlighted during school years, students are always encouraged to ‘follow their dreams’ and pursue goals that may be perceived as selfish in a number of Eastern Societies.

However, due to the influx of globalization, which has been immensely amplified through the use and innovation of the internet, seeds of Western idealism have begun to sprout throughout Eastern cultures. Modern youth in Japan are turning to individualistic expression through fashion as a means to rebel against a rigid social and working culture. Far from anarchism, this form of social rebellion is quiet and personalised, which commonly only affects the individual, rather than several other parties.

Such examples of rebellion are more often seen within bustling cities rather than towns and villages in the countryside, as traditional aspects of life are more prominent. It’s a rarer sight to bear witness to an eccentric fashion enthusiast in the midst of rice patties than in the heart of Shinjuku, Tokyo.

There are a number of negative consequences associated to those who express themselves through these sub-cultures. Due to the homogenous and nationalistic nature of Japan and its society, an individual can be accused of bringing shame of their family and country should they choose to stand out. The refusal to conform can be met with anger and distaste alike, therefore an inclusion within a community who share the same views and ideals is an important factor to consider.



Each fashion sub-culture represents a different form of rebellion. For example, *Lolita* and *Ganguro* are polar opposites in their forms. *Lolita* fashion, which is inspired by the Victorian Era and Rococo sentiment is characterized by its call for modesty and an end to ‘unladylike’ mannerisms. Terasa Younker, a graduate student of New York University who worked in a number of Lolita garment shops as part of her research, explains that *Lolita* is a complex form of rebellion and an escapism from both modern ideals, traditional roles

such as marriage, adult work life and the widespread sexualisation of young women. [Younker, T. 2011]

On the other hand, *Ganguro*, a ‘Hip-hop’ inspired fashion sub-culture which hit the peak of its popularity during the mid-nineties, is characterised by heavy makeup, dark tan and short skirts – both of which conflict heavily with *Lolita* ideals. It is also a direct contradiction to Japanese beauty ideals; which relies heavily on pale skin, natural makeup and dark hair. *Ganguro*’s form of rebellion focuses upon freedom of self-expression and sexuality, and is widely believed to be a type of ‘revenge’ upon submissive roles demanded by traditional thinking. [Macias, P; Evers, I. 2007]

A student named Xuexin Lie from Spelman College in Atlanta travelled to Tokyo University and conducted interviews in an attempt to understand the Japanese perception upon the *Ganguro* lifestyle. Out of the 66 participants involved, 52% believed this fashion style to be a revenge against traditional Japanese values, which 38% believed it simply to be a matter of generational difference. An overwhelming majority also believed that an important motivation for Japanese girls to practice *Ganguro* is to identify as individuals, leaving behind acceptable Japanese social behaviours. The majority of the participants agreed that *Ganguro* is a confrontation to Japanese society and expectations, and those who wear the fashion do so out of rebellion and desire for individualism. [Xuexin, L. 2005]

There are several other sub-cultures within the eccentric fashion society within Japan, each with their own means of expression and individualism. Such include *Decora*, *Gyaru*, *Kogal*, *Visual Kei* and *Mori Girl*.

Within the fashion community as a whole, the creation of smaller sub-cultures and their respective groups allow for the individual to feel a sense of belonging, whereas alone, social rejection may be more frequent in occurrence.



The objective of eccentricity is to express individualism, yet within sub-cultures, the attempt to differentiate oneself from other members is often lost due to inevitability of similarities in style. There is a constant push for new and innovative means of expression, all while

remaining loyal to the underlining themes and message of each fashion type. Because of this, there is a frequent creation of subgenres within each culture that allows the wearer to pick a certain style that resonates more with them individually than others might. *Lolita* is the most outstanding in this regard, as subgenres are constantly being produced. Originally, *Lolita* held three main choices of wear – sweet, gothic or classic. However, in recent years a number of other choices have been steadily gaining popularity, some of which include 姫 (princess), pirate, steampunk, aristocrat and boy style.

Eccentric Japanese fashion and the ideals behind the clothing have not only been limited to Japan's shores. In recent years, a number of Japanese designers have gained traction overseas and a few featured in major fashion shows in New York and Milan.

Despite the global potential to expand the market even further, many Japanese designers are struggling to find the resources to reach out to foreign clients. Realising this issue, the Foreign Ministry within the Japanese government devised a strategy, introducing 'Kawaii Ambassadors', three well-known style icons within Japan whose goal it is to spread the industry internationally.

The famous *Lolita* model, Misako Aoki is one of these ambassadors. She has been charged to host fashion shows and expeditions in a number of countries including Russia, Brazil and France.

Another strategy put in place by the Ministry is the Japan Fashion Week, sponsored by the internationally famous New York Fashion Week, which is intended for international journalists to discover new trends.

While semi-successful, the fashion industry has yet to find a means of firmly marketing overseas. Many famous brands still reside in small boutiques within Harajuku and Shibuya, which makes it difficult for foreign Japanese fashion fans to access their favourite clothing. Online ordering has become the most popular means of doing so, yet without the market exposure, only a small amount of foreigners are aware of such fashion. Though the sub-cultural communities overseas are limited, those within feel a sense of community like their Japanese counterparts. They too use fashion as a means of self-expression, individualism and rebellion against social expectations.



To conclude, eccentric fashion and their respective sub-cultural communities within Japan act as a means to rebel against rigid tradition and social beliefs without the harm of anarchy. The ever-growing culture represents the changing mindset of Japanese youth who are introducing themselves to the relatively Western belief that individualism should not be met with shame and can simultaneously exist within a society while still emphasising the importance of teamwork.

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### EPOK Reflection:

Looking back upon my time as an EPOK student at Okayama University, I acknowledge all the experiences that I've had and the wonderful people I've met and interacted with; both Japanese and international alike. Spending a year in Japan has allowed me to experience wonders that come with the seasons, whether stunning leaves in autumn, snowfall in winter (which as an Australian, I was very enthusiastic about), cherry blossoms in spring and festivals and wavering heat in summer.

I have been told many times that leaving one's home country in itself is an incredible thing. There are many people out there in the world who have never stepped a foot outside of their own country – their own state perhaps. There are many instances where some people simply don't have the chance - whether it is about money or any other possible factor. Yet here we are, an ocean away from familiarity; from comfort. Thinking upon that perspective, I know that I am very fortunate to have been given this opportunity to come to Japan and study the language in its home environment. I think the immersion has been unbelievably helpful to both my language and social skills alike and would have missed out on many things had I simply continued studying Japanese back home.

It was certainly worth it. As with any experience, there will be great times and there will also be hard times. Yet looking back at all the wonderful people I've met, the close friends I've made and the fulfilling experiences I've had, I can safely say that it was a good decision. Classes here have been consistently interesting and the teachers are all wonderful. The Study of Japan and Chado class that I've taken have been particularly excellent in allowing opportunity to experience things that I may not have been able to otherwise. Such examples include going to the Tatami-beri factory and making a mat, trying my hand at Bizen pottery and learning some of the processes involved in the Japanese Tea Ceremony.

I go home leaving behind a beautiful place, filled with wonderful and kind people. I am eternally grateful for that and will never forget my time as an EPOK student at Okayama University.

## MEGAN MATSUDA

### Nikkei, Nihon-Jin, and Self Identity

Akemi Matsuda  
EPOK 2015-2016

私にとって、アイデンティティーはとても大切なことです。アイデンティティーがあれば、今の自分が理解できます。たとえば、日系アメリカ人の歴史にはとても暗い時がありました。第二次世界大戦の時、日系アメリカ人は、アメリカ政府に、収容所に入れられました。その時にたいのみの日系の人々が「しかたがない」と言って、その生活が良くなるように努力しました。その姿勢が日系の人々をたすけました。そして、その強い展望を持っている人々は、今もそのように生活しています。それは私にとって大事なことです。

アイデンティティーの重要性が少し分かるように「日系アメリカ人と日本人の違い」について説明したいと思います。

Many people do not understand the differences between a Japanese native and a Japanese person born and raised somewhere else. *Nikkei* is a term used for people of Japanese ethnicity, but who are born in a country other than Japan. I am a fourth generation, *Yonsei*, Japanese-American (*Nikkei Amerika-Jin*) who was born and raised in California, United States of America. From my experience of living in Japan for nearly a year, I have come to understand more differences and similarities between the two that I did not know before. There are even differences amongst Japanese-Americans depending on where you are from, just as there are amongst people from different prefectures. It is difficult even for me to know the differences between *Nikkei* from all over America, but I have some knowledge of the differences between *Nikkei* from California, specifically Los Angeles, and *Nikkei* from Hawai'i. In my opinion, the biggest difference between *Nikkei* and *Nihon-jin* is self-identity.

From my own experience, I came to realize some differences between *Nikkei* born in Los Angeles, and those in Hawai'i. My father's parents were born and raised in Los Angeles, and my mother's born and raised in Hawai'i. On my father's side of the family, Tsunetada Matsuda, my great-grandfather, came to California from Tottori in 1911 and worked on farms to earn money. He later returned to Japan to marry his wife Tsuyako, and brought her back with him to California in 1923. Around the same time, Kazuma Matsumoto, my other paternal great-grandfather, immigrated to East Los Angeles, California, from Hiroshima, in 1913 for higher education after leaving his life at a Buddhist monastery. His wife, Yukie Matsumoto, left her family's silk farm in Fukushima in 1920 to attend tailoring school in California. On my mother's side, both pairs of great-grandparents immigrated to Hawai'i from Hiroshima around the early 1900s to cultivate farms. Soichi and Ito Kaneoka, who resided in Honolulu, owned a farm. While Tamakichi and Tamae Kamigaki, who were in Kona, had a coffee bean farm, which later turned into a Macadamia nut farm. Growing up seeing these differences even amongst my paternal and maternal family, I eventually came to understand more prefectural differences while living here in Japan. This gave me an insight to some differences that I may have not noticed before because they started to blend together during my grandparents' time. One language difference I have known from before was that my Hawai'i born family refers to a rice ladle as *shakushi*, a word my Los Angeles born family strongly opposes, using the name *shamoji*. I can now understand that this was most

likely due to a prefectural dialect difference that had not disappeared over the years. It is believed that most dialect differences eventually disappeared amongst *Nikkei* as years passed. People originally from different prefectures married, their children then using mixed dialects of Japanese and ways of life as their standard.

As World War II came around, *Nikkei* were soon seen as traitors due to Japanese involvement with the opposite side. “The hysteria of World War II temporarily pushed the Japanese to hide their connections to Japan, but their dual identity reemerged in the aftermath of the war as Hawaii and its people became a symbol of the of the American and Japanese alliance against communism” (Miyasaki 148). I do not agree that it was mainly Japanese Hawaiians that became a symbol of alliance, but as Japanese American, I believe that Japanese Americans as a whole were seen as a symbol of alliance and strength. The struggle to get back on their feet after being forced into living in internment camps for several years inspires me to work hard and to be thankful for the life I have been given. As Graue says, “These are stories of immigration, relocation far from ethnic communities, assimilation, resistance, and reawakening of cultural interest” (60). Their struggles have created a new cultural outlook for Japanese Americans, the term “*Shikataganai*”, now seen as a positive and empowering term. This term is seen completely different to Japanese natives, as they had a different experience during that time. To my understanding, “*Shikataganai*” to Japanese means that something can’t be helped. But to *Nikkei*, it means that the situation is inevitable, so why not make the best of your situation and thrive, showing your oppressors that they cannot break you. I believe that this strong mindset the *Nikkei* had throughout their time in the internment camp came mainly from the *Issei*, first generation, who had come from Japan. Their strong mindset is very much like the pride and honor that the Japanese had throughout history. Especially with the honor and thinking of *Bushido*, the way of the warrior. According to Koshiro, “the younger generations in both countries should continue to narrow the perception gap and to build a common ground in understanding the event” (799). I agree with this but seeing as how much of a sensitive topic it still is, it is difficult for the younger generations to begin speaking about it as we are not directly involved.

Japanese people tend to be hospitable and respectful. From an outsider’s point of view, that is a stereotypical view of Japanese natives. Living here, I came to see that this is mostly very true. And culturally, Japanese natives follow old traditions fairly closely and implement these traditions and ways of living in daily life. Some do not even realize that it is implemented in daily life. Where as many, not all, older *Nikkei* tend to continue to implement these traditions and ways of living, although their children and grandchildren may not. As sad as it is, the farther the generation away from the first immigrants in their family, the more traditions and customs tend to fade. I noticed this in my mother’s side of the family more than my father’s. My mother’s parents grew up speaking Japanese to their parents and continued with Japanese traditions and ways of living, but as they grew older and had their own children, the language was not used at all, and only some of the traditions were carried on. In Hawai’i because of the bombing of Pearl Harbor, *Nikkei* were not placed in camps, rather they were placed under oppressive restrictions and rules. It seemed as that decision was made in pity for they were also attacked by their homeland.

Whereas in my father’s family, tradition and customs were well imbedded into my grandparents and their siblings. By mid-April and May of 1942, both of my paternal grandparents and their families were placed in internment camps. Kazuma and Yukie Matsumoto were placed in Poston Relocation Camp with their three daughters, one of them

being my grandmother, Chizuko, who was nine years old at the time. They were originally supposed to go to Manzanar Relocation Camp due to their residence in East Los Angeles, but were placed in Poston, Arizona because Kazuma was chosen to become a translator for the government. He would translate documents for the government so that they could decipher some Japanese messages and such. Although it was tough for them to become accustomed to living in their camp, they were able to overcome the difficulties by living each day as if it was any other. Tsunetada and Tsuyako Matsuda were sent to the temporary camp at Santa Anita Race Track for about five months with their three children, one of them my grandfather, Kenji, who was thirteen at the time. I was told that the families brought there were forced to stay in uncleaned stables, having no where to place everyone. They were later moved to Gila River Relocation Camp and eventually to Tule Lake Segregation Camp. Tsunetada and Tsuyako Matsuda took their children back to Japan when World War II ended, returning to their hometown Yonago, Tottori for several years before my grandfather returned to California alone at the age of eighteen. I feel that having a stronger tie to the Japanese traditions and customs is thanks to my grandfather who had lived in Japan for several years at such a young age. My grandmother's family wasn't the most traditional, but they still carried on important traditions and ways of living; teaching my cousins, brother, and myself from a young age.

"Where are you from?" This question carries many different meanings to every individual. It can be where you were born, where you grew up, where you consider your home to be, or even where your roots are from originally. I cannot always answer that question immediately as it is very difficult to do so. But one of the main answers I have, is the history of my family and the struggles they went through to give me the life I am living. This is self-identity in a looser outlook. To everyone, there is a different meaning to self-identity whether it be your race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc. In terms of self-identity, I am a fourth generation, Japanese-American, who is proud of my own family background and the struggles they have gone through. I like that I am Japanese and that because of my background I have an understanding of the Japanese culture that others may not have. In conclusion, *Nikkei* and *Nihon-jin* have many differences but many similarities all depending on your own self-identity, background, and how you as a person perceive yourself.

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## Reflection

Leaving home, I was definitely nervous and unsure of my decision to leave my comfort zone and live in a different country for a year. I have had a strong desire to study abroad in Japan since middle school, leading me to eventually become a Japanese major in college. Learning about my background and traditional culture has always been an interest of mine. I have always felt like something was pulling me to learn more about the culture that I have only grown up with partially. Finally, being here in Japan, and living here for 10 months really brought my dreams to reality and has opened many new doors I did not know were there. Choosing to come to Okayama University is a decision that I would make again if I had gone back in time. I would not change any of my experiences here, good or bad.

I have accomplished many things and changed so much while being here. These 10 months have flown by and it is a pity to see it coming to an end. I have made amazing memories and extraordinary friends here that I do not want to separate from. There is also a lot more to learn and see that it is difficult for me to go home, but I do miss home. I can't wait to see what the future holds for all of us and for the next time we can meet again.

## CHELSEA LINDSAY-WEBSTER

### ‘The Tale of Genji’ and its contribution to Japanese culture

Chelsea Lindsay-Webster

私は、日本の文化で、むらさきしきぶの「げんじ物語」ほど有名な本はないと思います。世界中の人がこの本を知っています。いろいろな国の人が、げんじの恋物語を読んで、楽しんでいます。私も平安朝の世界に興味があり、この時代の女性作者の本を読むことが好きです。このため、私の論文の内容は「げんじ物語」の主要な特徴と、この本に見られる日本の文化についてです。おもしろくて、ゆういぎな内容だと思います。「げんじ物語」の主要な特徴は今様歌や女の人の見方や平安時代の心情や感情に多く共感できるところです。今でも、現代の読者は「げんじ物語」の登場人物を労ります。それは、むらさきしきぶの才能のおかげです。「げんじ物語」は日本の文化にとっても大切な影響を与えています。1000年後の今もこの本は出版されていて、とても価値のあるものだと思います。

*The Tale of Genji*, often considered the world’s first true novel, written by the court lady Murasaki Shikibu has long fascinated and enthralled readers, its popularity continuing to the present day. *The Tale of Genji* was written during the mid-Heian period (794-1185), a time of peace which produced a great flourishing of aristocratic culture among the court of the Emperor in the capital Heian-Kyo. Not much is known of the author, not even her real name, as Arntzen (2005, p 26) informs “the name by which we know the author is a combination of that of one of the main female characters in *The Tale of Genji*, Murasaki, and an office title, Shikibu (Bureau of Rites), because her father held a post at one time in that bureau.” However, the discovery of her personal diary, written during the years 1008 to 1010, help give us some insight into the author whose work has left such a lasting legacy in Japanese culture. Its enduring impact is proven in that *The Tale of Genji’s* literary influence continues to be seen not only in Japan but around the world and in many different medias, not just that of the original text. Shirane (2008, p 1) summarises this enormous impact on Japanese culture by stating that “The history of the reception of *The Tale of Genji* is no less than a cultural history of Japan, for the simple reason that the *Genji* has had a profound impact at various levels of culture in every historical period since its composition ... remarkably, *The Tale of Genji* has become many things to many different audiences through many different media over a thousand years ... It is also one of the few Japanese texts that, in the modern period, has had a global reach, coming to be recognised as part of world literature.” It is important to consider what it is about *The Tale of Genji* that has appealed, and continues to appeal, to a broad variety of readers. How is it that people around the world, so unconnected to the culture of ancient Japan, find empathy and meaning in *The Tale of Genji*? What features have made it so intriguing and how have they in turn influenced Japanese culture? In aiming to answer these questions I will be looking at the main salient features of *The Tale of Genji* which include: poetry, the glimpses of a women’s perspective, and the expression of the feelings and emotions of the period that evokes empathy with readers of any time or place. In order to look at the lasting influence of Murasaki’s poetry from *The Tale of Genji*, it is firstly important to look at the background and prestige of poetry in the Heian court in order to understand why it is such a crucial element both in the story and beyond.

It can be said that in no other court did poetry and literature play such a crucial role, and hold such a prestigious status, as in the Heian court. Gerlini (2014, p19) states that this literature then cannot be understood without having knowledge of how the court functioned, as the two are inescapably intertwined with each other: “Heian literature as a whole is often defined as court literature: its role, function and its very existence cannot be properly

explained outside the social-historical frame of the court”. One of the most important features to understand is that of the use of Chinese and the development of a vernacular Japanese written language. Like many things originally imported from China, the Chinese language was originally used mainly by male court aristocrats with the aim of obtaining a sense of equality with China, as well as showing off superior knowledge and also serving an administrative function in allowing records to be written down. However, Chinese did not replace the native spoken language of Japan and with the difficulties of translating native poetry into Chinese characters, a vernacular kana script was developed that allowed the evolution of written Japanese syllables as well as allowing court ladies, who were generally discouraged from learning Chinese characters, to write their own poems and stories. This development of a more universal vernacular script allowed the flourishing of poetry, which soon became an integral part of court life, especially in regards to love and courtship. Women and men lived generally separated lives and poetry was a socially accepted means of allowing them to interact with each other. Garber (2007, p14) helps explain both this separation and poetry’s importance in this regard by stating that “Poetry’s solitary responsibility for inter-sex communication owes its prevalence to the historical reality of an extreme physical, social, and visual separation of women from men. Men generally existed in a social ‘public realm’ while women, by contrast, socially existed in a ‘private realm’ ... a courtier’s attractiveness was determined by how well he could express himself poetically, and poetic exchanges were essential for a man to prove himself desirable in the eyes of a woman at court”. Poetry was the most essential factor in proving ones’ romantic suitability to a potential love, becoming almost an obsession in the Heian court. As such I believe that one cannot diminish the importance of the poetry included in *The Tale of Genji*, it is not placed there just for effect but because each poem provides an insight into the character who composed it and their relationship with the receiver. An example can be seen in the poem offered by Yūgao to Genji initiating their courtship, Arntzen (2005, p27): “*kokoro ate ni sore ka to zo miru shiratsuyu no hikari sohetaru yuhugaho no hana*. At a guess I see that you may indeed be he: the light silver dew brings to clothe in loveliness a twilight beauty flower.” Garber (2007, p39) explains how this poem reflects Yūgao’s attractiveness and suitability as a romantic partner by stating: “By equating this unknown visitor to the dew and herself to the flower, Yūgao is demonstrating her poetic skill. The choice of the fan to go along with the moonflower (yuhugaho) recently picked by Genji, and the scent she imbues it with, further illustrate her skill at poetic exchanges ... Through the details of her poetic package, Yūgao (the low- ranking daughter of a provincial governor) is able to represent herself as a desirable female entity worthy of pursuit even by the likes of Genji (the Emperor’s second son). From Genji’s reaction and subsequent actions, the effectiveness of Yūgao’s poetic representation of her attractiveness is apparent.” Yūgao’s poem offers an example of an ideal attractive poem and also illustrates how the initial stages of courtship begin. However, one must remember that this exchange is set in a story and it is unlikely that such spontaneity and overlapping of social boundaries could have occurred or been initiated by a woman at the time. The poetry from the *Tale of Genji* has contributed widely to Japanese culture in that they became some of the most famous examples of Heian waka poetry and have been, and continue to be, studied long after the Heian period, as well as being enjoyed by both Japanese and non-Japanese alike, capturing the hearts and imaginations of readers of all ages and nationalities. They personify the very essence of Heian aristocratic culture and can still make valued contributions in fully understanding the complexity of the characters’ emotions and thoughts, especially that of the female characters who can be given a voice through this medium.

The Heian period is most notable now for its profusion of female authors writing personal diaries and fiction which were circulated around the ladies of the court. These writings did not hold a vast amount of prestige among the contemporary male aristocracy,

*The Tale of Genji* perhaps being an exception for its sheer novelty and scale, and generally were not regarded as anything important or long lasting. However, for it is my opinion that in modern times they provide an essential source of evidence into what the Heian court was like, especially the life of a court lady, providing a rare female viewpoint which is often lost in history. Despite *The Tale of Genji* having a male protagonist, there are many female characters whose personality and personal feeling are expressed through their poetry and interactions with Genji. Arntzen (2005, p29) compares “the complex picture of male-female relationships from a women’s perspective” in *Genji* to that of the works of Jane Austen, allowing western readers to gain some kind of perspective even though the two narratives could never be linked. Arntzen (2005, p29) then continues, using the Yūgao chapter previously discussed, to exemplify this feature of female expression by stating: “The fact that poetry is exchanged between the lovers means that we hear a woman’s voice, and that moreover her desire is expressed equally with that of the man. Note also that Yūgao initiated the relationship, and the narrator in no respect condemns her for this. If nothing else, a simplistic notion of a complete and long-standing subjugation of women in Japanese society is challenged by the portrayal of women in *The Tale of Genji*, even as the novel also amply provides evidence of the undeniable restrictions under which they lived.” As well as hearing the voices of women through the poetry they compose it can also be said that, as Murasaki Shikibu was a woman herself, her voice is expressed through the female characters she created. Though perhaps not as personal a voice as those expressed through the various ‘pillow books’ written by other court ladies, I believe *The Tale of Genji* could be said to offer a more honest and truthful expression of human emotion as a wide variety of characters are present, with very human flaws and imperfections, which resonate with readers of all backgrounds even to this day.

It is almost unbelievable that a novel written more than one thousand years ago continues to be in print and has been translated from archaic Japanese into modern vernacular, and then further translated into many different languages around the world. It has been read and enjoyed by people of varying ages and backgrounds and for many has inspired an enduring interest in Japan, including myself! What feature has so captivated and enthralled readers throughout the ages? It can be said that Murasaki’s exceptional skill at portraying the vast scope of human emotions and sentiment is what has continuously drawn readers to the story of *Genji*. Though undeniably not recent, Maki (1940, p121) explains how this feature has kept readers returning to *The Tale of Genji* by stating that “the novel owes much of its vitality to the unchanging nature of emotions that are to be seen in Lady Murasaki’s characters. The love, hate, fear, joy, hope, anxiety, sorrow, and other emotions that flow through Prince Genji, Murasaki, Yūgiri, Tamakatsura, Kaoru, Niou, Agemaki and all the wealth of characters that appears in the book are the same as those that many people today have experienced”. It is this ability to recognise ourselves in Murasaki’s characters, to empathise and sympathise with them in their struggles and triumphs, which marks *The Tale of Genji* as a truly a great piece of writing. It is the desire to express these emotions of love, jealousy, desire, shame and sadness that has seen *The Tale of Genji* adapted to numerous modern mediums such as television, film, comics and manga, making it even more accessible to a modern audience. For example, the highly sexualised manga of Maki Miyako (Shirane (2008, p344) “which focus on the spitefulness of women. Her opening scene, for example, is one of hatred and intrigue”. Maki’s version contrasts with other interpretations of the world of *Genji* as highly romanticised, instead depicting it as dark and gritty. Shirane (2008, p344) states that her characters “suffer from ‘women’s nightmares’, characterised by malice, hatred, and unsatisfied love”. Readers can identify with both the positive and negative feelings portrayed by the characters in *The Tale of Genji* and as such draw parallels between

themselves and those characters and their emotions. It can be said that perhaps some of the emotions felt by certain characters have been magnified by the audience, perhaps even imagined, but this does not alter the persisting impact they have had, and continue to have, on audiences even to this day, promoting new versions and adaptations of *The Tale of Genji* for even more audiences to fall in love with.

In conclusion it can be said that while there are numerous features from *The Tale of Genji* that have helped the epic contribute to Japanese culture as a whole, perhaps the most important and recognisable feature is Murasakis ability to portray human emotion and personality with such skill that readers of any historical age can identify with the characters they are presented with. It is this portrayal of both the positive and negative attributes of human nature that has allowed *Genji* to transcend the ages and to continue to impact readers today. The importance of poetry can also not be underestimated for it is this that allows the essence of the Heian court to be shown to modern audiences and also allows women a voice, which is rarely seen in historical novels or documents at all. It is these features that will continuing the enduring legacy of *The Tale of Genji*, and it is hoped that many more adaptations will exist on new medias in the future.

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### **Reflection**

Before coming to Japan, I was extremely anxious and nervous, not only about being away for so long in a foreign country but also if I would be able to learn and improve in a new environment. When I first arrived, as expected, it did take a while to settle in but the teachers, staff and students at Okayama University were extremely helpful and soon I made new friends and felt at home. The EPOK classes were varied and interesting and although mainly taught in English, each class provided ample time to converse with Japanese students during group work etc. These classes also provided us with the opportunities to go on field trips and excursions where we not only were able to talk with Japanese people outside of the classroom environment, but also learned and experienced many interesting things about Japanese culture. The highlight for me personally was the visit to Konpira-Kyu Shrine for the EPOK class 'Family and Gender'. Previously I thought my main problem would be not being able to converse with or make Japanese friends. However, Okayama University provided a lot of areas to socialise and work together with Japanese students and I have made lasting friends here. I believe I have had such a wonderful opportunity and I know I will treasure my memories of studying here.

## DAVID BATH

### How Traditional Japanese Culture Impacts Modern Japan

David Bath

この論文について伝統的な日本の文化は近代的な日本と日本の近代化を影響しました。この論文はまるっきり西洋の文化になりませんしには今めかしました。日本は植民地にならなかったそして、西洋に日本は文化的が特異です。

Japanese culture is a very rich and unique culture in the world, that has shaped the identity of a nation. Japan is the most striking of the Western world, unlike other major countries has maintained a very unique culture that stands out. There are many examples of this throughout Japan, and it makes the country enormously interesting for foreigners and very important for Japanese people as well. Firstly, through my research I have found that in Japan's history, instead of really 'Westernizing' they were able to modernize and remained very independent from any Western powers. This is a very stark contrast to the other Asian countries at the time.

Even though Japan had adopted some Western cloths, foods, industries, etc, they generally maintained their own culture and unique worldview. However, modernity of course has an immense impact on a nation's tradition and culture. The reverse is also true; a nation's traditions can also impact an effect a modern country or the modernization of a country. This is in fact one of the primary reasons Japan was able to jump the gap and become one of the great nations of our time. In the past Japan's education, unification under the lords of the land and constant peace (after the warring period) led to not only a growing economy but a path to modernity.

During the Edo period we can see Japan really begin to thrive in culture, education and infrastructure. Due to their closed economy and blocking themselves off from most other countries they maintained a peaceful nation for hundreds of years, while simultaneously building up their many roads, waterworks, farms, etc. I believe this idealism of the Japanese spirit is a major part of the Japanese mind. Even though a generally closed nation they still traded with the Dutch and were very open minded about the things brought in from other countries. We can still see this openness to a variety of ideas in Japan today, through their many Buddhist temples alongside their many Shinto shrines.

Due to many of these factors they were able to modernize very rapidly in the 19th century. They had the resources, manpower and capital to be able to compete in the modern market at the time. This is after the opening of the ports and the movement of power directly to the emperor. Because of this general loyalty and only small conflict from this change the nation was able to be united and not divided and warring. I think that because of the cultural influences of the Edo period they were able to unite and work to modernize during the Meiji revolution.

Of course at first their industry had been very expensively bought and machinery was brought in from Europe. However unlike other Asian nations Japan was able to cut down and reduce costs substantially during this period so that they could save money and turn a profit. A good example of this was Nakayamasya, a factory that was built during this period that was made in a way that all measures were taken to save money. I think that the educated population was a very important aspect to this, and this culture built around that was very crucial in the development of Japan into the modern world.

During the Edo period there were many different important cultural traditions and customs that came into Japan. Because of a strict social structure and the artistic and cultural development through the growing of individual's wealth and ability to gain more knowledge Japan's culture was able to prosper. Items like the Ukiyoe wood block prints, art schools and kabuki theatres were a great example of these sorts of cultural pieces that many Japanese could enjoy directly or indirectly.

Interestingly enough we still see many of these cultural pieces around today, whether it be the tea ceremony or the traditional home, Japan has managed to keep its identity. However, the Japanese during the Meiji period had opened themselves completely to the Western powers and took it in their best interest to copy and match the kinds of systems, technologies and even cultures of the West. They had matched the systems of the British, French and Americans in many of the main components of their countries, such as in industry, the military, railroads and transportation, etc.

Even through the attempted Westernization and modernization of Japan, Japan had largely remained Modernized but not quite Westernized as we had seen in other countries. For example, in construction, Japan had copied many materials and building designs yet changed many aspects of these Western buildings with traditional Japanese building techniques and used many local materials for the sake of saving money due to the economy. You can still see the combining of Japanese construction methods and Western materials today. In railroads, even though the Japanese copied Western systems they still tied the railroads to their traditional stations and communities.

I believe that this is not anything new either, as we had seen in the ancient times when the Japanese had borrowed the Chinese alphabet, the Chinese tea, Buddhism, etc. They had always managed to integrate the systems yet change them into a Japanese style. The tea

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culture in China was very relaxed and meant for parties, yet when introduced into Japan it eventually branched off and became a very structured and meaningful tea ceremony.

The Japanese language had adopted the Chinese characters yet still remained a very unique language from Chinese. It changed according to how they structure it in a Japanese style. The Japanese had Buddhism brought over yet they still practiced Shintoism along with it. I believe when it came to the Westernization and Modernization of Japan these same principals apply. They managed to be one of the few countries to successfully industrialize while keeping a significant uniqueness despite the pushes to move towards pure Western styles.

This can be seen all over in modern Japan, the bicycles, cars, streets, architecture, etc. Is to the most part unique in its style and how it's constructed. It still has the core idea of the Western model and the core features of how it works, yet the Japanese construct it with their own methods or how they think it's best to be built through their perspective. This is also very apparent in the social aspect of Japan as well.

In the social aspects of Japan there is still a very clear hierarchy seen, especially in work and school settings. You have this culture of senpai and kohai, which is generally only seen in Japan. Whereas in Western countries like the United States, grade in schools isn't all too important on a social level, especially to the extent in which it is in Japan. In the workplace you see this boss and coworker social structure which is also apparently much more strict than in a western country like the United States.

Another good example of this sort of social culture in Japan is the politeness culture they have. The Japanese have different language forms meant only for humbleness and honor. This clear drive to be sure to be as polite as possible and to honor bosses, teachers, senpai, guests, etc. and to be as humble as possible when regarding yourself or your family is a very clear example of how the Japanese traditions show even now in modern Japan.

This I think clearly shows how Japan's traditions and cultures have strictly kept Japan Japanese while being able to add many other pieces from other cultures, despite the rapid pushes to become like a Western power. I'm hoping through the many problems facing Japan and many countries in the current world, Japan can maintain its cultural heritage. Although I believe Japan will always have the Japanese mind and spirit.



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## Reflection

I'm really glad I decided to come to and study in Japan. I have not only learned so much about the Japanese culture and language but also made lifelong friendships. Being able to completely submerge myself in another culture for almost year has really helped to widen my perspective on the world. This has really been a life changing adventure and if I could I would do it all again.

## JOSEPH BAUERMEISTER

### Chado- evidence of its influence in modern Japan

Joseph Bauermeister

#### Summary:

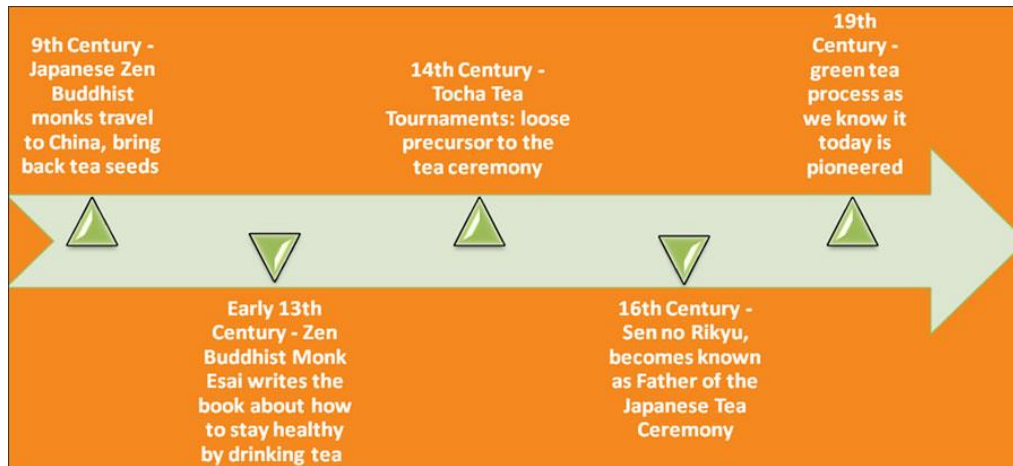
この作文で茶道について話したいと思います。特に、現代的な日本は茶道にどう影響しましたか。イギリスの元々茶文化に対して、日本のはもっともアクセシブルでした。昔の日本で、誰でもは茶道を楽しむことができ、今の日本の社会に茶道の影響を見ることと思います。

#### Introduction:

Chado, the Japanese tea ceremony, is not a word that you may hear often in modern Japan. What was once a core part of daily life and a common practice for the Japanese people has become a part time endeavour for passionate hobbyists and a novelty for festivities and events. Although society is no longer as entwined with Chado as it once was, I believe that the influence that Chado has had on Japanese culture and society continues till this day. This essay aims to assess to what extent it could be said that the influence of Chado in modern Japanese is evident, and how it can be seen in today's society. Along with the open ended thesis question I have proposed, I will be trying to include content regarding the history of Chado as well as its relevance to olden Japan. I will be comparing the role that it plays in society with the role that tea plays in British society, how it differs, and how it might be similar in some ways. Through this essay I will be trying to provide the reader with some information about Chado as well as trying to kindle thought regarding the way that the past continues to influence Japanese modern life even when it does so in unseen ways.

#### History of the tea ceremony:

Chado, the Japanese tea ceremony, involves a few key elements, the process, the tools and the spirit of Chado itself. The process entails how one enters the tea room where Chado is held, how one greets the host as well as the other guests and order in which things are conducted. Essentially the motions of the event. The tools include the actual objects and items that are used in the ceremony, the ground matcha tea, the bowls from which you drink and the whisks are examples of such objects. Lastly the spirit of Chado, the importance placed on sincerity, respect and appreciation. These three parts that I have divided Chado into have separate origins, all three are essential for what is known now as Chado.



### *Brief history of tea and Chado*

The majority of the process of Chado was created by the innovative tea master, Sen Rikyu who introduced key themes such as sincerity and simplicity to Chado. During his lifetime during the 16<sup>th</sup> century he became close to a powerful Daimyo at the time, Hideyoshi. His friendship and influence on such a powerful man in 16<sup>th</sup> century Japan could have been one of the reasons that the Japanese tea ceremony spread as widely and as freely as it did. Chado became a core part of the daily life of not only the upper class in society, but also the soldiers, businessmen and ordinary people of 16<sup>th</sup> century Japan. Something as widespread as Chado could surely be thought to have influence upon the future state and customs of Japan. Much of the spirit and teachings of Chado originate from Zen Buddhism which started to be practiced in Japan in the year 552AD. In fact, Chado could be considered similar to Zen meditation with its focus on purity and a free mind. Its link with Buddhism could be one of the reasons it spread so easily in Japan.



Comparison with British tea ceremony:

Akin to Chado, taking tea in Britain used to involve a strict rule of etiquette and also featured sweet snacks to compliment the tea. However, unlike Chado, this was only available to the upper-class who were the only ones during the 18<sup>th</sup> century who could afford to buy the imported tea, fine china and pastries. In addition to this there was no spirituality or sense of

sincerity or simplicity that came with the British tea ceremony. In fact, it could be said that a tea party took on the spirit of opulence, one up-manship and showing off how refined and wealthy you were to fellow aristocrats. Because of the exclusivity of tea until it became affordable for the ordinary members of society, tea had a muted effect on British society. It is interesting to think that while *Chado* was once widely practiced by everybody, it is now enjoyed by a particular few. Conversely, while tea in the UK was once a luxury, it is now consumed by the majority of households almost daily.

Evidence of *Chado* in Modern Japanese society:

When observing modern Japanese society, it is hard to differentiate what influenced or originated certain customs and practices. For example, both Buddhism itself and *Chado* have many of the same focuses as each other, particularly purity, sincerity and a clear mind. However, something I think *Chado* may have influenced the most are scenarios in Japanese society that involve a relationship dynamic between host and guest.



Sen Rikyu's rustic and simplistic style of *Chado* could have helped popularise *Wabi Sabi* which grew to be such an influential concept in Japan. *Wabi Sabi* is the appreciation of the simple and the minimalistic, both of which are now heavily associated with Japan especially in terms of its design and electronics industries. Although *Chado* originally used common items with a natural and rustic appeal to them, the kind of items that Sen Rikyu would have used have become in themselves ironically expensive and more exclusive than they were back then. In conclusion, I believe that *Chado* resulted in the widespread influence of Japanese minimalism as well as helping to shape the relationship dynamic between host and guest in modern Japan.

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Reflection:

During my time here at Okayama I have managed to gain many valuable experiences that I certainly wouldn't have gotten elsewhere. The original reason I chose Okayama was due to my love of the more natural, historical and traditional side of Japan. In addition to that, due to me being from the countryside myself, I wanted a smaller city. Thanks to the university I was able to engage with the local community in many different ways such as by visiting local villages and highschoools. Through the friends I have made here I was able to find a new motivation for studying Japanese, one separate from worrying about doing well in exams which has brought me so much stress in the past. I would like to thank my teachers for providing such committed support in helping me improve my Japanese. As well as all of the friends who have helped make my time here as enjoyable as it was. My time here certainly wouldn't have been the same without each and every one of you.

# BRIGHDE MCGAHEY-ALLEN

## The History and Modernization of Geisha

Brighde McGahey (Rei)

このレポートは「芸者の歴史と現代化」昔に京都にたくさん芸者がいました。芸者の仕事は男の興行です。この興行の中で芸者はお茶をあげて、踊りをして、男と話しました。でも、第二次大戦のとき、芸者は京都にでて、工場に行つて、新しい仕事を見つけりました。それから、最近京都に芸者は有名な人。外国人は芸者の見るが好きだから、今芸者は慣行三京です。時々京都に祇園に芸者を見られます。外国人はたくさん写真を撮ります。何で京都の芸者は変わりますか？このレポートはその質問を答えます。

Walking through modern day Kyoto may feel like nothing has changed in the past two hundred years. The buildings still retain their authentic appeal and the vendors still sell Japanese delicacies such as sweets and matcha inspired items. If you should happen to find yourself within the Gion district, Kyoto's most famous sight-seeing area, then you may even be lucky enough to catch a glimpse of wandering Maiko and Geiko (The local dialect name for Geisha) as they move to and from entertainment establishments. If you were to ask a foreigner, who had not been to Japan, about Geisha they would possibly think to the famous film 'Memoirs of a Geisha' and refer to the entertainment as prostitution. However, this film has stirred up a lot of controversy as to the authenticity of the information it gives and this following essay will explore the reasons behind this whilst detailing the history and modernization of Geiko.

To discuss this effectively, this essay will begin by examining the Gion district before 794. To find the roots of Geiko we must start in the late 600's with the Saburuko girls. Saburuko girls were the first recorded 'Geiko-like' performers in Kyoto. Often misplaced from their families due to social and political upheavals, those with an education would often find themselves waiting tables and offering conversation with customers. The higher class Saburuko girls would dance and entertain at elite social events, which is the direct root of the later Geiko profession. (Szczepanski, K). Whilst these girls did offer sexual trade to customers, this profession was soon overhauled as the capital moved to Kyoto, or Heian, in 794.

In 794 Heian began to thrive around a beauty obsessed culture. Throughout the following centuries dancers were in high demand, and thus the tradition continued to be considered Heian's defining quality. Between the Twelfth and Fourteenth Century came the rise and demand of the Shirabyoshi entertainment girls. Prized for their knowledge of the arts, poetry and dance, these girls were often the daughters of wealthy aristocrats who would force them to perform at events in order to continue to earn money and make ends meet. Due to their wealthy families, these girls were highly educated and were considered adept at playing instruments such as the drum and flute. (Newworldencyclopedia.org, 2016)

The Eighteenth Century brought forward the most recognizable form of Geiko, and began the exciting new district of Gion. Dubbed the 'pleasure quarter' in the past, this sexual trade became rarer and rarer as customers began to want the entertainments more than the pleasures. Originally as a male profession visiting brothels, female Geiko began to rise and limitations were placed on them in terms of where they could perform and what they could wear. Despite the heavy limitations, the industry became only more popular with time. Whereas the garb of the Geiko was limited to plain colours, they were now recognizable from the bright established silk garbed courtesans. Starting from 1680 and continuing on into the 1700's were the odoriko, translated to dancing girls, who would perform for high class samurai. Exploiting the arts, these girls would grow up to be known as the first authentic 'Geiko' and by 1750 they had begun to stray completely from the sex trade, and began to focus entirely on the arts and education. By 1779, the Geiko profession had been officially regulated. By this point, the female 'Geiko' had all but driven men out of the business, and they were in very high demand.

By the following Nineteenth Century Geiko continued to be a highlight of Kyoto, and it is rumoured that the Meiji Restoration itself was plotted amongst the many tea-rooms of Gion as the very samurai who initiated it were those who would flock to the company of Geiko in the evenings. Both the Imperial Faction and the Shinsengumi frequented the districts. (Dougill, J. 2005). By 1813, the first Geiko were officially recognized and the industry continued even despite the Meiji Restoration. Although the samurai class fell, the Geiko continued to work in the entertainment district and upheld their already thousand-year-old traditions.

It was World War II that brought the downfall of traditional Geiko. The Japanese Government closed down the majority of entertainment districts and even the most famous of Geiko were forced to leave and work manual labour in factories. Those who were wealthy enough to remain began to lose their reputation as once again low class prostitutes stepped up and began to call themselves 'Geiko' and thus began to sully the original tradition. Not only this, but the men they so often served had been called to war, and thus the Gion businesses struggled to remain open. In 1944 all Gion establishments were closed and the women were forced to work and it was a whole year later before they were allowed to return and work. These Geiko that returned decided to completely reject western influences and focused strongly on keeping culture and tradition alive. A quote from Mineko Iwasaki, a Geiko of that time, reads: "I existed in a world apart, a special realm whose mission and identity depended on preserving the time-honored traditions of the past." (Iwasaki, M.)

Although the profession struggled, it remains to be a dominant part of Kyoto's history and can even be witnessed today. Modern Kyoto consists of five main Geiko districts known as hanamachi. Whereas olden Kyoto had thousands upon thousands of Geiko, these modern districts do not hold that many. A section of 'Kyoto: A Cultural and Literary History' can give us the exact figures from 2004.

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"Gion Kobu (82 Geiko, 24 Maiko) Pontocho (43 Geiko, 5 Maiko), Miyagawa-cho (39 Geiko, 23 Maiko), Kamishichiken (15 Geiko, 8 Maiko) and Gion Higashi (11 Geiko, 5 Maiko)."

(Dougill, J. 2005)

Every year these five flower districts put on a dance performance in order for customers to experience the difference between their styles. This performance is called 'Miyako Odori' and is designed to represent the seasons.

For foreigners, the tourism industry of Kyoto is one of its most defining features. For a price of roughly 10,000 yen to 20,000 yen you can purchase a very famous package to understand exactly what it feels like to be a Maiko or Geiko. Maiko Taiken is a package that many beauty shops offer across Kyoto that allows you to experience being a Maiko. From the intricate details in the makeup, to the heavy kimono, it gives a very authentic feel for westerners. Although the Geiko tradition has begun to die out over the years, a surprising amount of Japanese teenagers and adults visit Kyoto in order to experience this. Personally, I have visited these establishments twice and on each occasion there were an equal amount of foreigners and Japanese in the make-up rooms and wandering the streets. Once all dressed up, you are able to wander around Gion district and take photographs with various shrines, and other points of interest. In doing this, it really made me respect the amount of effort Maiko and Geiko go through in order to get ready for each day. And I cannot imagine how it must feel wearing so many layers in the deep heat of summer.

Another tourism point is Gion Corner. Situated in central Gion district, each night authentic Maiko will frequent the building and perform for paying customers. The price is nowhere near as expensive as it may have been in the 1800's, but it allows tourists to experience a true taste of Japan.

This essay has explored the origins, growth and modernization of the Geiko profession. Whilst I feel that the Geiko profession may yet continue to decline, I undoubtedly agree that it is one of Japan's most defining features. Gion District has such a diverse and intense history, with even more culture that I haven't touched on. Although Geiko are often considered shrouded in mystery, the district itself has fought through many hardships and continues to be a thriving community even today.



### Reflection of EPOK Program

If someone had told me four or so years ago that I'd be spending a year in Japan- on the other side of the world! - I would have probably laughed at them. I'm not the most confident person, and the idea of travelling such a distance to a country that is so wonderfully different to my own would have terrified me. And yet despite this, EPOK has been the best year of my life. It also allowed me to experience a lot of new things, such as travelling on a plane for the first time. I was lucky enough to arrive with two other students whom I knew very well from studying with them for the previous year.

When I first arrived, the most surprising thing for me was probably the humidity. Despite it being October, the weather was still fairly hot and humidity was something that England really didn't have. Even if the clouds were grey, I found myself struggling against the suffocating heat. Luckily, this soon subsided and winter rolled around. I even managed to witness snow a few times, which I heard was pretty rare for Okayama. EPOK allowed me to experience many, many aspects of Japan. From travelling to Osaka, Kyoto, Kobe, Hiroshima and more places, to experiencing Maiko Taiken, Chado, Kimono and even creating a love in me for the traditional instrument, Koto, which I now take lessons for and have even purchased one to continue my learning!

I have met the most amazing people, both Japanese and EPOK, and I believe those are friendships that could easily last a life time, no matter how big the ocean between us. I now want to visit other countries, such as America, Korea and China. I want to experience more and more of the world, and without the EPOK program I'm not sure I would have that feeling. The JASSO scholarship has been amazing, and has allowed me to live comfortably in Japan whilst studying and travelling. I think my particularly favourite of all places had to be a brief trip to Okinawa with Krystal. We'd spent all morning travelling only to arrive at the airport and be told 'Sorry, your flight is cancelled.' We drudged our way all across Osaka to find somewhere to stay for the night, then drudged our way back to the airport the following day. Once we arrived in Okinawa, I swear my face was pushed so hard up against the car window as we were driving to the middle of the island. Everything looked like something out of an American movie. There were palm trees, golden beaches and emerald ocean! I felt like I was in a dream. Krystal, however, was focused on driving, and probably thought I looked like some excitable five-year-old or something. We spent the following two days chilling on beaches and exploring the over-sized aquarium park that Motobu had to offer.

Honestly, I wish I could do another year of EPOK. My Japanese language has improved immensely, my knowledge of Japanese culture and traditions too. The people here have been incredibly hospitable, and are always willing to help if you find yourself lost on a street. Everyone has such a positive attitude to foreigners, and I really feel like I could happily live here for the rest of my life.

Thank you EPOK, and thank you to everyone I met during my stay. Thanks for all the trips, the parties, the classes, the exploration and especially for making me feel welcome and included.

Finally, as we would (probably not) say in England:

*Cheers loves! Keep calm, and carry on!*

# MANEESHA KURUPPU APPUHAMILAGE

## **Communication with Japanese citizens**

Maneesha Kuruppu Appuhamilage

### まとめ

日本では外国人と会話する機会があまりありませんが、もし彼らに話せる機会があったら彼らの意見は少し変わってくると思います。だから私は日本人と話してみました、彼らは外国人のことをどう思っているか知りたかったので。いろんな意見を聞きまして、一つはっきりしました。それはことばのかべがあるので、声をかけられるのは怖いそうです。でもそれを克服したら、しぜんにお友達になれることが分かりました。

### Introduction

Even though Japan and Sri Lanka are Asian countries, more than common things they have a lot of different things like language, culture, traditions and so on. And by communicating with Japanese friends and families, I have come to learn a lot about Japan which leaves me either shocked or amazed.

My main reason as to why I came to Japan is do research and through this, I have made a lot of Japanese friends and I have a lovely host family as well. Even though laboratory work was my main priority when I first arrived here in Japan, overtime I experienced many things I haven't and gained new objectives. And therefore to understand Japanese culture and traditions, their way of thinking and expressing things and their opinions on foreigners have become one of them.

The research that I will be carrying out is mainly through communication with Japanese people and noting down their opinions and experiences with foreigners. I searched up about interactions between Japanese people and foreigners, and a word that always popped up was 'Gaijin card'. It seems like a wildcard that foreigners often use for forgiveness of any misbehavior or offence in Japan. The word 'Gaijin' is a universal accepted word for foreigners in Japan and it is referred to as 'outsiders'. There is a type of Japanese people who wants to befriend foreigners for self-serving purposes such as learning English. But obviously not everyone is like that. I have met many different Japanese people such as students who speak excellent English and students who have no knowledge of English at all. But they still wanted to be friends with me hoping for true friendship and not for their benefits.

### Method

I was interested on the opinions Japanese people had on foreigners so I conducted survey where the questions I asked was 'what do you think of foreigners?' and 'Has their opinions changed after they met me?'. I asked these questions to my fellow laboratory members, my host family and my Japanese friends. Many had different opinions on foreigners and some said that their view on foreigners changed after they met me while for some, it hasn't really

change much. I carried out this survey on people from different age groups (eg; 10s, 20s, 40s year old)

## **Results**

The following are the results for the interviews I carried out.

### **10-year-old Japanese girl:**

#### ①外国人の事をどう思う？

日本語がうまく話せなくても、がんばって日本語で話しかけてくれる。うれしい。日本人と かみの毛の色や目の色、体も違うと思う。でも同じところもあると思う。

#### ②私と会う前と会った後の外国人への考え方

はじめは、知らない人だからあまり話せなかった。それは、外国人だからとか、日本人だから関係なく知らない人とは話せない。

少しづつ話始めてなか良くなれたと思う。なか良くなれたら、日本人とちがう見た目は気にならなくなった。

### **18-year-old Japanese female:**

#### ①外国人の事をどう思う？

I got cold feet when foreigners came close to me because I wasn't used to foreigners and there is a language barrier as well.

#### ②私に出会って外国人に対する見方(みかた)が変わったか？

After I met Maneesha, the language barrier wasn't there anymore and we became friends naturally. It was fun.

### **24-year-old Japanese female:**

#### ①外国人の事をどう思う？

I think my image on foreigners has changed.

For example, I had prejudice and wrong images about Chinese, but I changed that way of thinking about Chinese after making great friends.

Therefore, I am sure that a race is not problem. The most important thing is the personality and now I hope to make global friends in future.

### **24-year-old Japanese female:**

#### ①外国人の事をどう思う？

外国人のことを怖いと思ったことはないと思います。私は幼い頃から英語を勉強していたので、駅などで外国人が英語を話しているのを見たら「話しかけてみたいな

あ」と思っていました。英語でない言葉を話している人たちを見ても、何を話しているのだろう、と興味を持って見ていました。昔から、外国から来た人と話してみたい、友達になりたいという思いが強かったと思います。

②私に出会って外国人に対する見方(みかた)が変わったか？

留学や他の国際交流を通してたくさんの外国人と出会って、「外国人」ということをあまり意識しなくなるようになりました。つまり、ただ「新しい友達ができた！私と違った文化知っていて面白い！」という感じです。なので、Maneeshaに会う前と会った後では、外国人に対する意見はあまり変わっていないと思います。「外国人だから」ではなくて、ただ「Maneeshaだから」友達になれてよかったと感じます。

#### 24-year-old Japanese male:

①外国人の事をどう思う？

テレビで見ると外国人の人は怖いイメージがあるけど、日本に留学で来てる外国人は真面目で意識が高いなって思う！日本人より頑張ってるなって思います。

②私に出会って外国人に対する見方(みかた)が変わったか？

マニーシャと会って、マニーシャは真面目で頑張っているなって思うけど、外国人のイメージはあまり変わっていません。

#### 40-Year-Old Japanese lady:

①外国人の事をどう思う？

文化や言葉のちがいがあるので、物事の考え方やとらえ方が日本人とはちがう すごい。

たとえば「おじぎをする」について。

相手に頭を下げることは日本では日常的(にちじょうてき)です。頭を下げる意味も「あいさつ」「おれい」「あやまる」と場面によって色んな意味がふくまれます。

しかし、外国人が考える「頭を下げる」は良い意味(いみ)ではないため、頭を下げる事は少ないと感じています。

日本に近い文化や考え方の国の人は、スムーズに日本の生活が送れ、ほど遠い国の人は生活しづらいのではないかと感じています。

②私に出会って外国人に対する見方(みかた)が変わったか？

マニーシャさんの場合、頭を下げて「あいさつ」をする行為(こうい)はとても自然(しぜん)で、日本人に好印象(こういんしょう)を持(も)たれていると感じました。

一生懸命(いっしょうけんめい)日本の事を勉強して留学して来たのだと、話す言葉一つをとってもよく分かります。

マニーシャさんを通して実感(じっかん)した「外国人の見方」は、国によって異(こと)なる文化や考え方の違い(ちがい)を理解(りかい)しようとがんばる人と「自分の国ではちがうから…」と理解(りかい)しない人の2種類(しゅるい)の人がいると思うようになりました。

「国」よりも「人」によるものだと痛感(つうかん)しています。

見た目で「言葉が通じないかも」と目を合わさない様に逃げてしまいがちですが、「言葉が通(つう)じる」だけで、とても自然(しぜん)に仲良く(なかよく)なれる事を子供に身を持って体験させてあげられてマニーシャさんに感謝(かんしゃ)しています。

## **Conclusion**

These answers really touched my heart. After communicating with them, I understood that it is mostly the language barrier that separates Japanese people and foreigners. To be honest this is my second time studying in a foreign country but first time in a non-English speaking country so I had a lot of worries as to how I was going to live here and will I ever make Japanese friends. But I have realized that after we overcome all these fears, we are all the same despite the fact that some of us were brought up in a totally different environment from the Japanese community. And thus I was able to make friends naturally and even though sometimes we struggle with words we end up having a great time. But I won't say that every 'Gaigin' is a good person but unless we talk to them, we can't just judge them. And even after few interactions there may be differences that we cannot get used to but if there is at least one thing we have in common, we can enjoy it together.

## SHIH-YAO LIN

### 日本社会における軽減税率の導入と問題

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#### SUMMARY:

The Japanese government plans to introduce the reduced tax rate to cushion the impact of the planned consumption tax increase from the current 8 percent to 10 percent in April 2017. Fresh foods such as rice and meats, processed foods such as bread, noodles, snack foods and non-alcoholic drinks will be kept at a consumption tax rate of 8 percent while the rate for other products will be raised to 10 percent. Alcoholic drinks, food served at restaurants, and newspapers will not receive a reduced rate, however, hotel room service meals, catering foods and lunches at companies and school cafeterias will be categorized as eating out and subject to the 10 percent consumption tax.

On the other hand, implementing a reduced taxation rate makes it difficult to maintain planned social security expenditures. Some believe that the increase in security expenditures can be alleviated by increasing tax revenue resulting from an increase in tax revenue by the government.

Consumption tax revenue is, in principle, used for social security expenditures; meaning that fiscal discipline will slacken if social security costs are not reduced. I expect that the Japanese government will show leadership and find an acceptable solution to this issue.

最近、「軽減税率」という言葉が「消費税率 10%への引き上げ」と共に広まり、頻繁に耳にする。2015年12月16日の朝日新聞によれば、自民・公明両党は同日の会議で2017年から消費税率を10%へ引き上げると同時に、消費税の軽減税率の導入を正式に決定したという。軽減税率の対象品目は主に、「外食」を除いた「生鮮食品」と「加工食品」である。軽減税率の導入によって、消費税率の引き上げによる家計への負担が和らぐと見られる一方、導入に伴う政府の財源の減収で社会保障の財源の不足と、「生鮮食品」と「加工食品」という対象品目の線引きの曖昧さなど、課題はたくさん残る上、軽減税率の導入は時期尚早だという見方もある。このレポートでは、日本における消費税をめぐる導入と改正の歩み、日本の食料品の消費税率制度と海外諸国の税率との比較、また軽減税率の導入に関する残された課題について検討する。

消費税の軽減税率の導入は日本で消費税の増税による家計への負担を軽減させる対策として考え出された。もともと消費税は1988年に竹下登内閣が税制改革の目玉として打ち出され、その後、国民所得の増加とともに、政府は1995年4月に消費税率を3%から4%に引き上げ、さらに地方消費税の1%を合わせ、消費税率全体は5%にした。1997年から2012年まで消費税率は5%

を維持したものの、2014年4月、安倍政権の「アベノミクス」政策の目玉の税制改正対策で、消費税率を5%から8%に引き上げ、さらに2015年10月に10%へ引き上げの予定があったが、1年半延期し、2017年4月に実行する。10%への増税は家庭への負担が高まるため、不満の声が上がり、「実行時期をさらに延期」または「導入しない」という声もある。増税の対策として、政府は食料品などを対象とする「軽減税率」を考え出した。軽減税率は2017年4月の消費税率の引き上げと共に導入する。このように、政府は消費税率の導入後も徐々に引き上げるだけでなく、地方再生のための「地方消費税」と「軽減税率」という国民の負担軽減の対策を打ち出した。

海外諸国、特に西欧諸国には消費税の軽減をすでに導入した国が多いのだが、それらは日本における税制と異なる。異なる点は主に、品目の線引きと消費・軽減税率である。消費・軽減税率は国によって異なる。例えば、イギリスでは付加価値税の標準税率は20%だが、食料品などの税率は0%となっており、フランスでの軽減税率は5.5%、ドイツでは標準税率が19%で、軽減税率が7%などであるのに対し、日本では消費税率は2017年4月から10%になるが、消費税率の引き上げと同時に導入する食料品などの軽減税率は8%である。一方、アジアでは、中国以外のほとんどの国で軽減税率を導入していない。また、すでに導入している海外諸国で、軽減税率の対象品目の線引きは国によって異なる。高田(2004)は、各国の軽減税率について、客観的合理性や根拠のある仕切りができていないわけではなく、それぞれの国の歴史的な背景やその他の事情が影響すると述べている。例えば、ドイツでは、同じハンバーガーでも、店内で食べる場合は19%の付加価値税が適用されるが、持ち帰り用の場合は7%の軽減税率が適用される。一方、イギリスでは、同じ持ち帰り用の食品でも、フィッシュアンドチップスやハンバーガーなど温かい食品の場合は20%の付加価値税が適用されるが、スーパーで売られている惣菜は税率はゼロとなる。このように、海外諸国の軽減税率と対象範囲は国の事情によってそれぞれ異なり、日本も外国の税率の歴史から教訓を学び、検討する必要がある。

日本における軽減税率の導入で、家庭への負担を軽減することができるが、その一方で課題も多く抱えており、不満の声もある。実際、2016年1月18日のNHKニュースによると、「軽減税率」を「酒類と外食を除いた飲食物品」に導入する方針への評価の調査で、「評価する」人はおよそ40%である一方、「評価しない」人は50%余りであった。課題としてはまず、減税による社会保障の財源不足である。2015年12月22日のNHKニュースによれば、財務省の試算で、軽減税率による減収は年間約1兆円を見込んでおり、もともと消費税率の引き上げによる増収分は年金、医療、介護、子育てなどの社会保障の財源に充てる予定であったが、減収による社会保障の財源不足で、どのようにして捻出するのが大きな課題となっている。また、対象から外れた「外食」は、その定義として「食品衛生法で規定される飲食店などが、その場で飲食させるため、テーブルやイスなどを設置した場所で食事を提供すること」であるのが「加工食品」との線引きがあいまいだという指摘も出ており、消費者が混乱し、食品販売者の事務負担も大きくなる。例えば、牛丼屋やハンバーガー店で商品を購入し、そのまま店内で食べた場合は「外食」となり、10%の消費税が課されるが、飛行機での機内食を取るシートや新幹線などのワゴンサー

ビスが「飲食の設備」にあたるかどうかは明確ではないため、「外食」となるかどうかははっきりしない。このように、軽減税率の導入について、利点があるものの、まだ大きな課題が残っており、混乱を招きかねない。

以上、日本での消費税率の歴史、日本と海外との消費税率の比較と、軽減税率の課題について検討した。課題がまだ山積みになっているが、家庭の財政負担を軽減するためには、軽減税率の導入が不可避かつ不可欠と考えられる。今後、政府が様々な軽減税率の課題に対する対策を打ち出すことと、企業も政府と協力する姿勢を示すことで、問題が次々解決され、税の支出の減少による家族の可処分所得も増加し、人々の満足度が向上することができると考えられる。

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#### Reflection 感想

私にとっての留学とは、まさに「出会い」そのものでした。21年間台湾のみで育った私の初めての海外留学と生活は人生に多くの新たなものを運んでくれました。日本の文化だけではなく、世界の文化、土地と人々、その中で自分がどうあるべきかを考えるきっかけにもなりました。政治に対する興味の違い、環境や平和についての考え方、知識としては知っていたが現実に大きく存在した歴史的・宗教的な価値観の違いなどを体験し、自分の人生の浅はかさを実感しました。振り返ってみて、この一年間は自分にとって生まれて初めてのことが数えられないくらいたくさんありました。まず最初は一人暮らしです。一年間の一人暮らしは生まれて初めてですが、料理と掃除が意外と面白かったです。特に初めて自分で作った料理を食べた時の感覚は、多分一生忘れられないだろう（その料理自身がまずかったけど（笑））。

課外活動としては、京都外国語大学主催の模擬国連（Japan University English Model United Nations）に参加しました。日本各地の大学



の学生が集まり泊りがけで行う大規模な会議で、各国の学生の国際的な問題について考え方や意見を聞くことができました。会議中で一悶着があったが、最後にみんなのおかげで想像以上に良い結果を得ることができて、本当に嬉しかったです。模擬国連を通して友達も増え、英語とコミュニケーション能力（と日本語能力（笑））が格段に上がったと思います。その他には、岡山地元でボランティアしたり、台湾人留学生のイベントに参加したり、一日一日を無駄にせず充実した毎日を過ごすことができました。

留学の間にもう一つの目的は日本全体を見ることでした。最初の頃は一人で旅行するのが怖かったですが、他の人に頼らないで旅行したかったです。日本に着いてから、すぐ旅の計画を立て始めました。なぜかという、「もっと多くの場所に行けばよかったな」という後悔しなくなかったからです。日本にいるうちに、できるだけ北端と南端までに旅行してみたいです。この一年間を思い出すと、私にはもう思い残すことがないといえるでしょう。関西、四国、東北、北陸、関東、北海道まで行って、新しい友達ができたり、日本文化に触れたり、本当に素晴らしかったと思います。

最後に、留学して一番強く感じたことは、人と人のつながりの大切さです。一年間だけでも、外国人の友達と早いうちに仲良くできたのは信じられなかったです。多様な価値観を持つ人々や様々な国籍・人種が共存しているから、理解できないことや混乱することも少なからずありましたが、一年という限られた時間の中で、たくさんの人と知り合い、関わりあっていくことで、人間のつながりの面白さや周りの方々に支えられて生きているということを実感できて本当によかったと思います。帰国しても、これらの大事な人たちを忘れたくないと思います。岡山大学に留学しにきて、よかったです。次は、2年後、アメリカの大学院を目指す！

## SYUAIROH ISMAIL

### 日本の小学校のカリキュラムについて

なまえ：イスマイル、シュアイロ (ISMAIL, Syuairoh)

要約：私の研究は日本の学校の手短な歴史と構造、そしてまた小学校カリキュラムに焦点を当てたものである。私は岡山県立イシイ小学校とヤカゲ小学校を訪れ、授業の観察と、またインタビューや質問を先生へ行った。研究の方法としては、文献調査、論文、新聞記事を参照している。

日本の小学校の生徒たちは道徳、体育、算数、理科、音楽、総合的学習、家庭科、そして美術を学んでいる。国語、社会・義務教育として、小学校教育は中学校に進むために不可欠な基礎的内容を学ぶ、初歩的段階にあると言える。

私の結論として、日本の小学校カリキュラムは利点が多いと言える。小学校では給食の時間や掃除の時間が毎日設けられている。その時間は少年期の小学生にとって、規則を養うことのできる非常に大切な時間である。そのうえ、小学校カリキュラムに満足しているとすべての回答を得ることができた。しかしながら、小学校の英語教育は5年生からではなく、1年生からの開始を望む声が多く挙がっている。

#### Summary: Curriculum in Elementary school, Japan

My research is focused on short history and structure of the school system, and the pros and cons curriculum system in elementary school, Japan. I went to Ishii elementary school and Yakage elementary school in Okayama prefecture to make an observation during classes and also interview & ask several question to teachers. Refer to books, article and journal article are also my methodology of this research.

Japanese elementary school's students are learning moral education, physical education, mathematic, arithmetic, science, music, special activities, home economic and arts and crafts.<sup>4</sup>Elementary schools also represent the first stage of compulsory education, providing children with the basic knowledge necessary to begin their middle school studies.

In my conclusion, I can say that curriculum system in Japan have more pros than cons. They have school lunch and cleaning time session every day which is it very important to make they more discipline at the young age. Moreover, my all respondents are also satisfied with curriculum system in their school. But most of them said English learning are also important and is better to start from 1<sup>st</sup> grade instead in 5<sup>th</sup> grade in elementary school.

#### CURRICULUM IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, JAPAN

<sup>4</sup>40. Nemoto, Y. (1999). Japanese education system. Parkland, FL: Universal /uPUBLISH.COM.

This research project looks into a short history and structure of the school system and the pros and cons curriculum system in elementary school, Japan. I went to Ishii elementary school and Yakage elementary school in Okayama to make an observation during classes and interview & ask several question to teachers. I also refer to books, article and journal article to make this research.

After World War II, the United States occupied Japan and made liberal proposals for reform of the Japanese school system. In 1947, the Fundamental Law of Education and the School Education Law were enacted and a 6-3-3-4 system was set up on the principle of equal educational opportunity which is 6 years of elementary school (from 7 years old - 12 years old), 3 years each for middle school and high school and 4 years for university. There are also kindergarten and nursery schools for pre-school children. Japanese law also requires all children between ages 6-15 to receive education. Public elementary and middle school tuition is funded by the government, so that all children receive an adequate education, regardless of family income. However, public high schools do charge for tuition and students in private elementary, middle and high schools pay much higher tuition fees. Central government also supplies textbooks free of charge to all children enrolled in public and private elementary schools and middle schools.

Curriculum is an education course that school offers. The Education Ministry sets the national curriculum for all public schools, from kindergarten to high school, to ensure standardized education. Under this system, each school creates its own curriculum conforming to the provisions of the School Education Law, the Enforcement Regulations of this law and the Course of Study while taking into account its own circumstances and the situation of the community. The Japanese school year runs from April to March. Children who have their 6th birthday on or before 1st April can enter the first grade of elementary school of that year. There are 3 terms: spring, fall and winter. The spring term starts in early April and usually ends on July 20; after 40 days of summer vacation, the fall term starts on September 1 and finishes in mid-December; winter term begins in early January and ends in mid-March. Class size in Japan averages 36-40 students to one teacher in urban areas.

Japanese elementary school begin around 8.30 am and ended at 3.20 pm. On Monday, at the beginning of each week around 7.40 am, a morning assembly is held before classes begin. Everyone attends the 15-minute assembly. At 8.30 classes begin. Each period between 40 and 45 minutes in elementary and students are given a 5- to 10-minute break between consecutive classes. During the morning hours there are four classes such as Math, Japanese, Social studies and Science and many elementary schools also include a 20-minute recess. Music, moral education, Home economics, Physical education, Arts and crafts, special activities also taught in Elementary school. In home economics, children learn nutrition cooking, sewing and other related household matters. Moral education classes use stories to encourage children to think about right and wrong. In special activities class, the homeroom teacher decides on activities such as reading and the class president or vice president attends the children's council.

The lunch time starts at 12.30 pm about 40 minutes. At public schools, where school meals are provided, the students are responsible for carrying the meals to their classroom and serving portions. They have no canteen in their school. They eat together with classmate and homeroom teacher and cleaning up afterwards. The dishes also have a balanced diet and the menu always changed. After lunch it's time for recess, which is about 20 minutes long. Some schools use this time for cleaning the classrooms: The students move the desks and chairs to one side of the room, then broom and wipe the floor, clean the blackboard, and throw away the trash. Afternoon classes begin after the cleaning. In lower elementary school classes are only in the mornings, and the children go home after lunch. But in upper elementary school and

higher there are five classes each day. Elementary school students also can choose from a wide variety of after-school clubs, which usually meet once a week. Through club activities the students have the opportunity to receive training in sports, or to deepen their understanding of subjects that interest them. Once the students enter middle school, though, extracurricular activities take on a bigger role: Some clubs meet several times a week, or even every day, and on some days the students won't leave school until around 5 o'clock.

My respondent for this research is 2 teachers from Ishii elementary school and 2 teachers from Yakage elementary school in Okayama prefecture. I ask the same question to these 4 teachers which is to *respondent 1 (Philippines female)* and *respondent 2 (Japanese male)* in Ishii elementary school and *respondent 3 (Japanese female)* and *respondent 4 (Japanese male)* in Yakage elementary school. My first question was “are you satisfied with curriculum system in your school? and what is the pros of curriculum in your school/elementary school in japan?”

*Respondent 1 said she is very satisfied. Moreover, in Ishii elementary school, they have English immersion class since 12 years ago. They also teach arts, physical education and music in English from 1<sup>st</sup> grade. She also said almost all elementary schools incorporated the subject of moral education into the curriculum and used supplementary books on morality because she thinks moral education can prevent problem behaviour among students such as bullying, truancy and school violence and encourage in children a respect for human life.*

*Respondent 2 said he is very satisfied because they have English immersion. He also believes disciplining children at an early age helps them develop good study habits and prevents the development of undesirable behaviors.*

*Respondent 3 said she is satisfied. She said in elementary school they mainly focus on developing the character of the individual, rather than their intelligence but teacher also provides them with interesting in and out of class activities, Indeed the elementary school methodology combines study with fun activities such as uses pictures and toys.*

*Respondent 4 said he is very satisfied. The school lunch and cleaning session with classmate is very important. It can enhance cooperation between of them. School meals are also promoting maintenance of balanced diets and prevent of obesity.*

My second question to them is do you agree English learning should start from 1<sup>st</sup> grade in Japan? what is the cons of curriculum in your school/elementary school in japan?

*Respondent 1 said she is very agreeing. Since English is the most widely spoken language in the world. It is enough reason to keep the language on the curriculum.*

*Respondent 2 said he agrees. The cons are maybe the school hours is too long which is almost 8 hours. Moreover, teachers always give homework every day to them. He worries that the students will come bored and unwilling to further study in high school because tired of school life. He also said 1992, the elementary schools class even have in Saturday and it also burden the teacher.*

*Respondent 3 said she is agreeing. The cons of curriculum system in Japan is late teaching English education.*

*Respondent 4 said he is agreeing. Another cons of curriculum system are bullying. Japanese students have a very strong relationship class. This interaction sometimes creates a group of slaves extreme and nasty bully other students who are not in their group. Although these cases are decreasing in recent years, the threat is real and has been a source of concern to school administrators.*

In my conclusion, I can have said that curriculum system in Japan have many benefits. I agree that discipline and moral education is very important to teach from young age. I also thought the school lunch and cleaning process are very help student to be more cooperative, responsibility and not dependents to others. Moreover, my respondents are also satisfied with curriculum system in their school. But most of them and I prefer English learning are also important and is better to start from 1<sup>st</sup> grade instead in 5<sup>th</sup> grade in elementary school.

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### My Review Experience in EPOK program

Actually I am very glad because my friends and I are the first batch from Malaysia that joined EPOK program. Before arrive Okayama, I am very worry if it difficult to get halal food but actually it's not hard as I thought. I am very happy to know there have halal menu in Okayama University (Okadai) cafe and also halal meat & ingredients that sold every Saturday in lobby Kuwanoki dormitory by Japanese male (Kurosawa-san). It is easier to eat because we can cook in our apartment. Moreover, Japanese here especially sensei here are very kind and helpful. For example, I took Japanese cuisine and it's in Ramadhan (Muslim fasting month), but sensei never discriminate us. Even though there have eating session in class, but sensei never forget to give us to bring the food to home. She also re-arranged lunch time in Ramadhan month to the next month. Moreover, here also have Okayama Islamic Centre near to Okayama University. Even though it is small but it is very convenient to Muslim like us to pray or break fast there during Ramadhan. I can say that Japan is very rich country and Muslim friendly. I also went to rural area (inaka) and I think that inaka people very easy going, kind, friendly and helpful. They really want to talk with us even though their English is limited. I also hope EPOK can make more classes with Japanese students so that we can communicate more with them. Lastly, Tutor tutees system also really helped me a lot. My tutor always helps me whenever I have problem in Japanese language or to go somewhere in Japan.

## NOR MOHD ZAMID

### Child Poverty in Japan

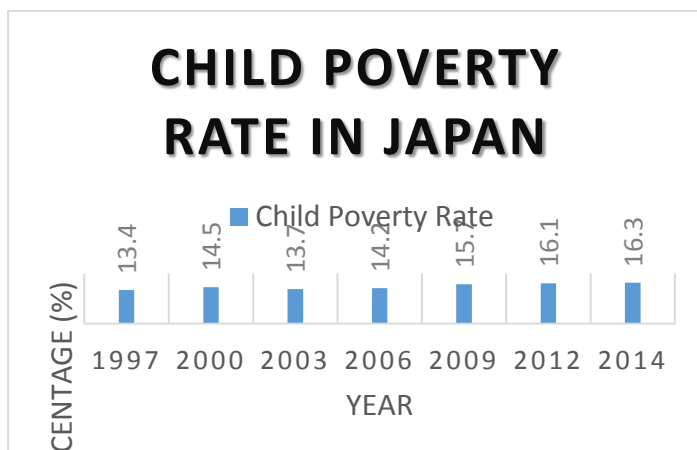
Nor Mohad Zamid

このエッセイでは、日本(にほん)における子供(こども)の貧困(ひんこん)に関する(かんする)認知(にんち)と関連(かんれん)について議論(ぎろん)する。子供(こども)の貧困(ひんこん)は深刻(しんこく)な問題(もんだい)であるが、不(ふ)運(うん)なことに子供(こども)の貧困(ひんこん)にはあまり目(め)が向けられて(むけられて)いない。その上(うえ)、中(なか)には、子供(こども)の貧困(ひんこん)についてこれまで聞いた(きいた)ことがないという人(ひと)や、私(わたし)が子供(こども)の貧困(ひんこん)について尋ねた(たずねた)ときに衝撃(しょうげき)を受ける(うける)人(ひと)もいる。このように大きく(おおきく)、発展(はってん)した国(くに)では子供(こども)の貧困(ひんこん)が存在(そんざい)すること、そして年々(ねんねん)増え続ける(ふえつづける)ことを知って(しって)いる人(ひと)がいます。日本(にほん)の貧困(ひんこん)に関する(かんする)ウェブサイト(うえぶさいと)では、日本(にほん)では6人(6にん)に1人(ひとり)の子供(こども)が貧困層(ひんこんそう)であると述べて(のべて)いる。子供(こども)の貧困(ひんこん)は大人(おとな)や家族(かぞく)の貧困(ひんこん)と分けて(わけて)考えられ(かんがえられ)、定義(ていぎ)されるべきであるが、子供(こども)の貧困(ひんこん)にはあまり目(め)が向けられて(むけられて)いないためにほとんど遂行(すいこう)されていない。先進国(しんこく)である日本(にほん)を調査(ちょうさ)の背景(はいけい)として例(れい)にとってみると、日本(にほん)ではこれまでに、この問題(もんだい)の存在(そんざい)と先進国(せんしんこく)との関連(かんれん)に関する(かんする)多く(おおく)の疑問(ぎもん)が提示(ていじ)されてきた。日本(にほん)は人口(じんこう)が多い(おおい)が、現在(げんざい)では出生率(しゅっしょうりつ)の低さ(ひくさ)により人口(じんこう)は減少(げんしょう)し、高齢化(こうれいか)が進んで(すすんで)きている。

In this essay, I will discuss about the relevance and awareness about child poverty at Japan. Child poverty was a serious issue but unfortunately child poverty is given less attention. Besides, some people admit that they never heard about child poverty and shocked when I am asking them about child poverty. Who knows that in this big and developed country, child poverty exists and rose year by year. The poverty of Japan website stated that one of six children at Japan was classified as a child poverty. Child poverty should be defined and measured separately from adults, family and household poverty, but this is rarely accomplished because child poverty is given less attention.<sup>5</sup> Took Japan as research background, which is developed country, have raised many questions regarding the relevance of this issue exists at this developed country. Japan with high population but now shrinking due to a lower birth rate and the increase of aging-society.

<sup>5</sup> Middleton, 1997

Figure 1: Percentage of Child Poverty Rate in Japan. Source: <http://www.hinkonstat.net/> (2015)



Children was so important to country. They play an important role for country development as they will lead the country someday. As in another word, child is a ‘stock’ for a country. Nowadays, Japan have a very serious issues which is child poverty, falling birthrate and aging society. These issues have a strong relation. This is because,

the elders getting older, while the number of children and elders not balance yet the children also were not well prepared for the future because of lacks of education due to poverty. To lead a country of course they need an education and knowledge in their head.

Regarding to the awareness about this issue among Japanese, 30 Japanese have done answer my bilingual questionnaires (English and Japanese). Respondents are lecturers and students of Okayama University. First question is “Do you know what child poverty is?” 「子(こ)どもの貧困(ひんこん)貧困とはどのようなものか知(し)知っていますか。」 and the response was 90% for Yes and 10% for No. Second question is “Do you think Japan having this child poverty issue?” 「日本(にほん)日本にも子(こ)どもの貧困(ひんこん)貧困はあると思(おも)いますか。」 and the response was 93.3% for Yes and 6.7% for No. The response was beyond my expectation because my last research on summer 2015 at Osaka the response was inverted from this time. I think this is because the research area, which Okayama is small town while Osaka is the third largest city in Japan as well.

So, from the response we know that child poverty issue was not yet widely spread in Japan. Child poverty issues was not received significant attention by public. The truth is there also some people that never heard the term of child poverty and they often misinterpreted child poverty as a family poverty. It is imperative to know that child poverty is measured by children who is 17 years old and above that lives with family with a household income is 50% of median income internationally and child poverty and family poverty was two different issues.

Next, I had interviewed two Japanese from different background. First interviewee is Yuko Takahashi who was grow up at rural place in Japan. She said that she has a friend who is classified as child poverty and often absent to class due to health. Her friend doesn’t have enough money to have complete routine meals like us. Her friend often ate just one time per day and the portion of dish is very little because they have to divide with whole family. Apart from that, they often get sick and absent. So, her friend having a trouble on education. Her friend cannot focus in class because sick and also they often think about how to get rid from the poverty. They tend to work rather than go to school. Yes, Japan has equal education system, but data shows that children who are in poverty are not very good at school grade. Educational background carries a lot of weight in Japanese society. So this thing would be an obstacle.

“After World War Two most were poor at that time people tend to care and cooperate each other. Nowadays, effects of individualism (from America) they do not care each other as before

*(I am not saying Japanese are not friendly. I just said about tendency of our social system “When we become friends we trust and cooperate each other”).” –Yuko Takahashi*

The neighbors’ behavior also being distraction to them. Some neighbors hate them and do not want them to live there. They lost connection with neighbors so they are so difficult to get help when they really need it. Some of them are struggling just to eat. The common problem is they usually cannot enter university or cram school due to the fees which is expensive. The common rate of school fees is more than 1,000,000 Yen (per year) to enter private school, more than 500,000Yen (per year) to enter public school while the enrollment fee was around 300,000 Yen, Cram school summer lecture (5 days) was 16,980 Yen. Many students rent scholarship with no interest or low interest. For the poor and excellent student there have scholarship from generous old people that are poor when they are kids. They give scholarship as a contribution from a company and to make better evaluation of the company.

Yuko also had shared some incident when she was at kindergarten which is, she wants to invite her poor friend to return home with her mother’s car, but Yuko’s mother does not allow her because of the status of life which her friend is a poverty child.

Usually, poverty child comes from broken family which most of them live with their mother. Single mother then to be stress due to divorce and they get angry easier even on small things. So, children tend to be passive because they scared if they will get scolded. This behavior being an obstacle to the child to grow up normally.

My second interviewee is Takaaki Nakayama who is from Kobe, the sixth largest city in Japan. When I ask about child poverty, he admit that actually he do not really know about child poverty.

“Actually, I didn’t really know that there was still child poverty in Japan. Because I live in Kobe. Also Japan is a rich country. I thought there was enough social security for child poverty. So I believe potential poor children would be saved by social security.” –Takaaki Nakayama

But surprisingly according to the Health, Labor and Welfare Ministry’s latest survey, a record 16.3 percent of children lived in households that earn less than half the national median income as of 2012 — 0.6 percentage point higher than in 2009 and up from 13.7 percent as of 2003. Unlike other countries, there are no “street children” in Japan. However, many kids actually do not have breakfast. The reason why they go to school is to have school lunch. The potential reason why child poverty is getting worse in Japan is because the increase of the number of part-time workers in Japanese society.

In fact, he didn’t know about child poverty. But he got shocked when he was told about the rate of child poverty in Japan. Japanese total population is falling because of the decreasing of birthrates and aging of the population. To keep economic growth, Japan need enough workers. Therefore, child poverty is a serious issue for the future, because Japan are losing future workers.

“To help break the chain of poverty, the government should substantially expand the availability of student aid, such as scholarships and grants, that doesn’t require repayment, rather than offer loans that create financial hardships. It should utilize all available resources to prevent a situation in which children with high motivation from poor families cannot receive a higher education because of the limitations of their parents’ income.” –The Japan Times

As a conclusion, living standard really affects the education. Poverty child have a dream to be success but social, family and people being an obstacle to their dream. Social mobility and individualism of some Japanese makes poverty child feel neglected and they think that will



be the end of their life which is forever being poverty child. Japan's government have to rethink about this issue because children play an important role for Japan's future. Without them, who will lead Japan someday? People getting older and die. Moreover, the aging society was increased every year.

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### **EPOK Reflections**

I've wanted to come to Japan since I began studying Japanese since my first year of Bachelor Degree at University of Malaya (UM). Since at UM only second year and above are eligible to join exchange program so, last summer I've joined ASEAN Program at Kwansei Gakuin University for 10 days. Honestly, exchange program and summer program totally different. Other than the duration, exchange program was more challenging and we got chance to know more about ourselves though. Since I am more comfortable living at small town, so, I think Okayama suits me well. Struggling as Muslim at non-Muslim country was an expected matter, but, all people are same. I got chance to continue practicing what Islam taught us without any major obstacles such as prayers and I also had fasting month here. There were also have Halal Food Market and at OkaDai Café there also served Halal Bento. Next, the arrangement of syllabus and program for EPOK students was convenient to us. Since the syllabus full with Japanese culture and traditions contents, it's helped me to know more about Japan rather than I read on books, internet and television. My eyes opened wider and my knowledge about Japan had gained a lot. About Japanese language, I had known more such as the dialect and true pronunciations. The EPOK Tutor-Tutee Program also helped me a lot. My tutor such a kind and very helpful person. She has showed and taught me more about Japanese. Sometimes. She being my best friend, sometimes she is my teacher and sometimes my driver. Furthermore, I found the teachers here were all helpful and close with student. I think the best part of my experience was meeting new people from around the world and making friends. At Okayama University, I've learned a lot. I know myself more and tend to be more independent than before. So despite any hardships I am glad that I came and joined EPOK Program.

## MAYA NOLAN

### Investigating the Relationships between Physical and Mental Health in Japan and Japanese Lifestyle and Culture

By Maya Nolan, University of Surrey, UK

#### SUMMARY

ほとんどの人は日本人がとても健康だと思います。実際、2015年のWHOの報告では日本は世界でいちばん長い平均寿命を記録しました。日本人はよく魚や大豆製品を食べ、あまり脂っこい食べ物をたべないので、日本人は健康なのではないかと考えました。私はそれを確かめるためにアンケートをしました。その結果、確かに予想に合う結果は得られましたが、一方で日本人は一般的に考えられているほど健康的ではないということも分かりました。しかしながら、アンケートの結果は日本が世界で最も健康な国のひとつであることを証明するのに十分なものでした。

#### INTRODUCTION

Japan's life expectancy has been steadily increasing over the decades and is now known to have one of the highest life expectancies in the world. In fact, in 2015 it ranked number 1, with the average person reaching 83.7 years of age. Japan also holds the record for highest life expectancy for women, 86.8 years, and has the 6<sup>th</sup> highest life expectancy for men with 80.5 years (WHO, 2016). There is a particular focus on the Japanese diet in the study into the life expectancy – a typical Japanese diet is thought to be low in saturated fats but high in fish Omega 3 and soy protein (Kurotani et al. 2016). In 2005 the Japanese government developed the 'Japanese Food Guide Spinning Top' which illustrates the average recommended Japanese diet and there are already studies linking this 'Spinning Top' diet to low risks of cardiovascular and cerebrovascular disease in Japanese individuals. An active lifestyle might also be a contributing factor considering the popularity of sports clubs ("bukatsu") among students during most of their academic life, and active hobbies among Japanese adults too. For example, in 2011 it was found that the percentage of Japanese individuals participating in sports was as high as 63% (Statistical Handbook Japan, 2015).

However, despite the high life expectancy Japan still has some health-related issues to face. For example, Japan has a high incidence of suicides. In 2013 there were 26,063 incidences of suicide and it was the leading cause of death for those between 15 and 39 years of age in 2013 (Statistical Handbook Japan, 2015). In relation to this there's also the issue of work-related stress in Japan. According to the Japan Times, in 2014 1,456 people claimed compensation for poor mental health at work which is an increase from previous years. There's also been an increase in businesses claiming that they've had employees taking over a month's leave or quitting due to poor mental health.

The aim of my project was to investigate whether there could be a possible relationship between the Japanese lifestyle and this high life expectancy. What makes Japan supposedly healthier than the rest of the world? Also what does the average Japanese person actually consider to be physically or mentally healthy and the difference in these views with those of Western countries like America and the UK.

#### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

For my project I carried out an anonymous questionnaire which questions participants on numerous lifestyle aspects. It asks about participants' diet, exercise, health and disease as well as childbirth. The questionnaire was available online (<https://maya122.typeform.com/to/fZDROG>) and was answered by 51 participants – 26 Japanese participants and 25 participants from the "West", which consisted of people from the UK, USA, Germany, Italy and Australia. Participants also varied in age from those in the 18-25 age group to

those over 50 years old. There was also around a 50:50 ratio of females and males who participated.

### Japanese Diet vs. Western Diet

As illustrated by the bar chart there are some differences in what each person eats daily in Japan versus the Western countries and the UK. For example, as expected, a higher percentage of Japanese participants eat rice and noodles daily, compared to participants from the UK. Eggs, soy products, fish and tofu are also part of the average daily diet of more Japanese people than people from the UK.

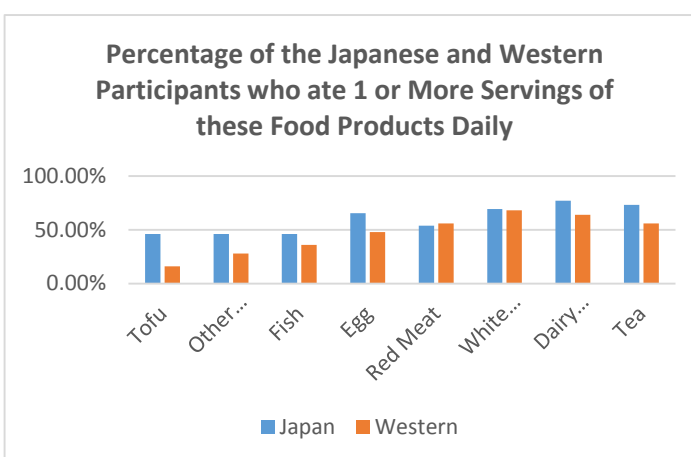
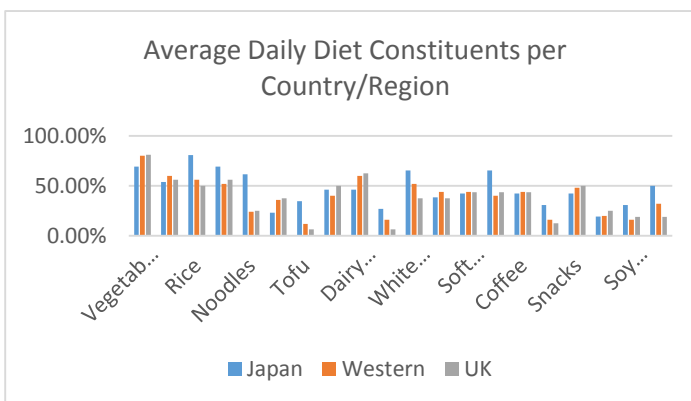
One of the questions asked in the survey was how many servings of each of the food or drinks each participant had in an average day. As shown in figure 2 a higher percentage of Japanese participants than Western participants ate more than one serving of tofu and other soy products a day. A higher percentage of Japanese participants than Western participants also eat at least one serving of fish and eggs per day. These results do seem to support Kurotani et al's reports that the average Japanese diet is higher in soy protein and also in Omega 3 which is provided by fish. However, from these results it can't be said that the Japanese diet significantly contains less saturated fats than the Western diet since the percentage of participants who ate one or more servings of red meat or white meat was very similar to that of the Western participants. Additionally, it was reported that a higher percentage of Japanese participants eat one or more servings of dairy products, such as cheese or yoghurts, which is also a source of saturated fats.

Another noticeable result from the graph is that tea seems to be a main component of the daily Japanese diet, even more so than participants from the UK, despite the British "tea-drinker" stereotype. In fact, 73.07% of Japanese participants' drink one or more servings of tea on an average day whereas 56% of Westerner's will drink tea on an average day. 34.61% of these Japanese participants' drink as many as 3 or more servings of tea a day whereas only 12% of Western participants will drink 3 or more servings of tea. However of course it is important to note that the types of tea that those in Japan and those in the West drink are different. In the West the most commonly drunk type of teas are black teas such as Ceylon or Assam tea, and often this may be drunk with milk and/or sugar. Whereas in Japan green tea, oolong and kōcha (紅茶) are more commonly drunk.

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### Exercise and Physical Activity

Each participant was asked about daily physical activities in terms of amount of weekly exercise they do and their main form of transport. Results found that the modal average amount of weekly exercise for Japanese participants was less than 1 hour (42.31% of participants) whereas it was 1-3hours for Western participants (40%). This low amount of weekly exercise reported by the Japanese participants was unexpected considering the "bukatsu" culture of Japan and the statistics for sport participation published in the Japan Statistical Handbook, as mentioned in the introduction.



It was also interesting to note the main forms of daily transport used by Japanese and Western participants. Participants had to choose which transport they considered their main form of transport (the transport they used the most) from a choice of cycling, walking, car, train, bus and taxi. Results showed that cycling was very obviously the main form of transport for Japanese participants, with 69.23% reporting they cycled every day, whereas in the west this was only the case for 28%. Walking and trains were pretty similar between both regions but it was interesting to note that 0% of the Japanese participants reported the car as a main form of transport whereas 28% of Western participants did. So despite the low amount of reported weekly exercise Japanese participants do seem to use a lot of active forms of transport like walking and cycling so may in fact they may get more exercise than stated in the weekly exercise results.

### **Physical and Mental Health**

Participants were questioned on whether they perceived themselves to be physically and mentally healthy. 15.48% of Japanese participants perceived themselves to be not physically healthy, compared to 36% of Western participants. Reasons for this perception was pretty consistent between both regions and tended to be about putting on weight and not exercising enough or not eating a “balanced diet”. It should be noted that no participants reported having serious illnesses such as cardiovascular disease or diabetes although 4% of Western participants and 3.85% of Japanese participants did report to have/have had liver disease. Despite fewer Japanese participants reporting to think they are not healthy it was interesting to find that only 61.54% thought that the Japanese population as a whole was healthy whereas 84% of Western participants perceived the Japanese population to be healthy.

In regards to mental health only 15.38% of Japanese participants reported that they didn’t think they were mentally healthy whereas 40% of Western participants said they didn’t think they were mentally healthy. Reasons reported by Japanese participants who thought they weren’t mentally healthy revolved around “stress” or were described as feelings such as being “sad” or “angry”. Whereas for Western participants who thought they weren’t mentally healthy, the majority gave reasons such as “depression”, “anxiety” and “eating disorders” as well as “stress”. I also noticed that for Japanese participants not everyone who said they didn’t think they were mentally healthy provided a reason, whereas every participant from the Western countries gave a reason for their answer. I believe this is most likely due to the stigma of mental health in Japan and the taboo of talking about it in Japanese society– Japanese people may be less willing to admit to having any mental health issues or when they do, don’t seem to fully understand what they are feeling due to lack of public awareness. On the other hand, in countries such as the UK, mental health is an issue which has been campaigned about and made publically aware for years now, so they are more open about discussing it and also have more of a clear idea of what they might be suffering from.

### **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

It certainly does seem that the Japanese high life expectancy may be linked to diet and lifestyle. In consistency with Kurotani et al’s findings my questionnaire also finds that the average Japanese diet contains essential Omega 3 and nutritional soy. The average Japanese person also intakes antioxidants in the form of green tea which may be another factor linked with their seemingly good health. In addition to diet, physical exercise is of course another important factor for good health. Although results show that weekly exercise is low, I believe that the fact the Japanese majority cycle and walk to their destinations on a daily basis provides the Japanese people with enough physical activity to keep them moderately fit and healthy.

In regards to mental health in Japan there does seem to be some issues with Japanese people being able to cope with the stresses of school and work. The excessive pressures placed on young Japanese to get good grades, enter a university, and find a job whilst also doing extra activities or a part-time job, seems to be having negative effects on the mental health of some young Japanese. It doesn’t seem to improve in adulthood, with a lot of Japanese workers having to deal with the tough Japanese economy and having to work overtime at work, it’s no wonder that Japanese adults are often having to claim compensation for poor mental health at work and

the term “karoshi”, literally translated as “death by overtime”, exists. It doesn’t help that there is still stigmatism of mental health in Japan which means that Japanese people are unlikely to seek out and receive help from professionals, family or friends.

Overall though, it is easy to see why there’s this global perception that Japan as a country is very physical healthy and fit – they have a high life expectancy, live active lifestyles and have a diet rich in fish, soy and green tea. However, it is starting to seem that this may not necessarily still be the case in the future. The Japanese diet is changing. The Japanese people are not eating so much fish as the world still seems to think and actually the diet appears to be just as high in saturated fats from red and white meat as the Western diet. Snacking also seems to be a frequent, daily occurrence, especially amongst younger generations, and it is becoming more frequent to see “overweight” Japanese people. Whether this is down to Western influence or something else, there are already signs that the “typical” Japanese diet is slowly drifting away from the healthier, “traditional” diet and so there’s the possibility that a few decades down the line Japan may no longer sit at the top of the list of high life expectancies. On top of this change of diet there’s also the effects of mental health to consider which of course will also have an impact on the happiness and physical health of individuals, and so poor mental health can also have a negative impact on life expectancy. However, attitudes to mental health in Japan does seem to be slightly improving with more mental care support being introduced into the workplace and suicide rates are declining.

With the described changes in diet and existing mental health issues it’s probably likely that Japan won’t remain at the top in terms of life expectancy and will be overtaken by other countries in the top like Monaco and Singapore. However, I believe that if Japan doesn’t drift too far from the traditional diet and keeps fish, soy and Investigating the Relationships between Physical and Mental Health in Japan and Japanese Lifestyle and Culture.

## REVIEW

I can honestly say that my year at Okayama University has been one of the best years of my life. I had never heard of Okayama before coming here but it is a beautiful and calm city which I have enjoyed living in very much. Okayama University is filled with so many wonderful people who have made me feel so welcomed and always seem to do their utmost best for everyone. There are indeed some extraordinary individuals here at Okayama, who I have had the absolute pleasure of meeting and befriending and these friendships have helped me to truly enjoy “Japanese” life to the fullest as I got to see and experience lots of Japanese cultures and beliefs. It’s not just Japanese cultures that I’ve been able to experience. I’ve been able to meet people from all over the globe, who have happily shared their experiences with me. I have truly learnt a lot.

Without a doubt, this year at Okayama has provided an opportunity to grow and develop as an individual. I am definitely more independent and resilient than I was at the start of this journey and living in another country has also in general just broadened my mind and, in some ways, made me more mature too. Not forgetting the fact that I have also learnt a new language and lots of practical laboratory skills in my research here. I have achieved all I had hoped to during this exchange and more! It’s definitely an experience I would recommend. Thanks for everything Okadai! さよなら!

## DANNY DA'VAL

### The contrast of the opinion in eye health care within Japan and international countries

Danny Da'Val-

#### Introduction

ヘルスケアは、日本でより重要になってきています。多くの変更は、政府が日本で起こっています。私は政府が人々を告げるものを知りたいと思いました。私は目に興味を持っているので、私は目の詳細を尋ねました。私は調査を行い、学生たちにそれを与えました。学生は自分の意見が異なっていたかどうかを確認するために、日本およびその他の国からのものでした。結果は、別の国からの学生が同じような考えを持っていると述べました。

The countrywide healthcare has become a growing concern amongst the Japanese population. The Japanese health care system is set to make many changes with their new vision plan set over the next 20 years to be complete at 2035[1]. These plans have many ideas to generate an unmatched health care service to bring prosperity to both Japan and the world.

Because of this news, I became interested in hearing the opinion of health care from residents of Japan, both born in Japan and from different countries that have travelled to live here. I decided to narrow my field to health care of the eye as that is my main interest. An article from 2007 divulged, that the current focus of eye care in Japan is more towards eyestrain and eye fatigue rather than prevent of serious eye conditions [2]. This concept was supported by a discussion I had with an Ophthalmologist here at Okayama University while attending his class. He talked about how he tested trehalose, a disaccharide sugar used in cosmetics, could be used in eye drops to help those with dry eye syndrome. The trehalose in the eye drops helped reduce drying out when tested but the Japanese pharmaceutical companies did not want to make another brand of eye drops with the many they already have, whereas these drops are currently being manufactured in Europe.

#### Collecting Data

To gather opinions on health care of eyes in Japan, I decided to construct and distribute a survey, as I felt it was the most appropriate way to collect opinion based research. I wanted to enquire about different aspects with the survey I constructed, then analyze the data. I combined this with similar research I found from the internet. Firstly, I wanted to address eye sight as a whole, asking which sense participants find most dear and their opinion on how and if they lost their sight. I'd also enquire if their opinion of lost sight would change if they were born or acquired with sight impairment.

Next I began enquiring more specific areas of health care of eyes. More specifically I addressed colour vision testing. This is a common technique used to identify the most common form of blindness, colour blindness. This technique I have previously noted has

been used in England and by talking to an Ophthalmologist here, the technique has also used frequently in Japan. I wanted to ask if they have seen this type of testing before and if so where. This would provide insight to how this technique is used in Japan as well as international countries and how they differ. I'd even ask them to partake in a couple of colour vision tests myself, like those indicated below, then ask them how they found the examples.

The last question was based on a topic of research right here in Okayama University, retinal prosthesis. Retinal Prosthesis entails using a photoelectric dye to replace dead or damaged cells in the eye to restore sight to those whom are visually impaired, like retinitis pigmentosa. In healthy eyes, there are a set of cells known as photoreceptor cells, which can be further divided into rod and cone cells. These cells absorb light to generate a potential difference in order to stimulate the optic nerve so we can see. In some diseases, the photoreceptor cells are damaged but the other cells and structures remain intact. With this knowledge, it is possible to replace these dead photoreceptors with a prosthetic replacement. The photoelectric dye currently being tested absorbs light within the visible light spectrum and generates a potential difference, just like rod and cone cells. For this question, I enquired how willing the participant would be to use this form of treatment if they needed it.

I distributed the questionnaire to a number of classes of students from both Japan and international origin, to see how their answers changed from country to country. I chose to distribute to students as they are still in education so they hold the most current opinion and information of eye health care. In total, I was able to collect surveys from 104 students. These students partake in different majors, one third of which taking science-based topics like medicine and dentistry. This allowed me to receive both a generalized opinion and a more endowed opinion from those who have studied this area in further detail. From this I can identify if there is a difference in opinion between individuals partaking in different majors. The results I gathered I shall discuss below.

## Results

As mentioned earlier, I distributed surveys to students partaking in a variety of courses, allowing reliable data. The list is stated on the right. Of my 104 participants, 87 claimed that sight was their most important sense. This is further supported with an article I found by Ron Bailey. He revealed 98% of the respondents of a 2005 internet market study in Japan also claimed sight as their most important sense. This is heavily supported by question 7, which reveals the individual's dependence on sight.

The question asked how difficult for the individual to have impaired vision, many students chose high numbers, showing their dependence on sight. This dependence is further enhanced with the next question asking their likeliness that they would undergo treatment to improve their vision. The results I gathered showed that many people were more likely to try and improve their vision. This opinion changed however for the majority of people when the conditions changed to being born with visual impairment rather than being acquiring visual impairment through your life. Most people claimed that this change would definitely alter their opinion because the change would mean they would not have as strong as reliance and then as strong of an opinion, on sight, which is a fair comment.

Analysis of the colour vision testing reported that 85 of 104 students answered the three tests correctly. Of those who made mistakes, the most common was of the number 74,

the one of the left. This is most likely because the number is coloured in by different wavelengths of green, the less noticeable wavelength causes the fluctuation in the results. This reveals the colour blindness may not necessarily to whole colour spectrums but for some specific wavelengths as noted in previous studies.

The next questions I asked were more specifically about these tests, asking the difficulty of these tests, where they last took the tests and when this was. The consensus agreed that the tests were not too difficult despite the mistakes. About 20% of the people who took the survey stated that they never have taken this test. This is collaborated with when they last took the test. This proves interesting as this is roughly the same number of people who made errors. However, not having taken the colour vision test before doesn't necessarily mean those individuals made those errors but not taking these tests can mean many individuals with colour blindness can go unnoticed.

The places they took the colour visions tests were mainly either at school, the opticians or doctors' clinic. In some cases, they have had some people claim they had these tests when taking a driving exam, revealing some countries consider the perception of colour an important factor when on the road. It was also noted in some situations these tests were only taken when another eye condition was noticed. In my case, I only took the tests one they became aware of my squint or lazy eye. This supports my theory that I believe these tests should be used more as part of a routine at an optician, say every few years, to ensure that any problems don't go unnoticed.

The final question revealed that people were inclined to use retinal prosthesis to improve their sight, which brings hope for this treatment. Overall, the results revealed similarities of opinion among the students all over the world. It differs between countries on how it is applied. Currently Japan focuses on smaller health care issues of the eye such as fatigue and strain. However, with all the changes happening in the health care system up to 2035, we shall see if that application of knowledge changes.

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### Reflection

When I took that long flight to Okayama, I had no idea what to expect. This is the first time I got to explore another country and Japan has been high up on my 'to go' list. I've



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always admired Japan from afar. Yes.... The manga and anime were a factor but also the language and culture too.

My only purpose I had to come to Japan was to gain research experience within the laboratories, so when I had the opportunity to undertake classes to improve my knowledge of the Japanese and culture, I was excited. I met many great friends from all over the world, not only Japan, that have made this year awesome.

I definitely believe that being part of EPOK has allowed me to learn about Japan, far more than any holiday would, mostly because many of the opportunities I have had here. The trips I was able to go on with Study of Japan and the ability to gain experience to teach English to Japanese people, both at schools and as a job, has been amazing as it allowed me to find out so much about Japan and its people.

This year has definitely been one of my best. I have many fond memories of Japan thanks to you lovely people and I will cherish these memories forever. I hope the rest of your lives are awesome and I pray that one day our paths cross again. Just so you know, if any of you happen to be in England and want a tour guide, I'd be willing. Same goes about wanting to talk, I have email, Facebook and line, you know where to find me.

Peace out guys

**LAUREN CALDWELL****Bunny Island's Dark History**

Lauren Caldwell

University of Kansas

この作文は億の島の暗い歴史についてです。この島はたいてい「ウサギ島」と言われています。第二次世界大戦の時に日本は億の島でたくさんの毒ガス製造しました。日本は中国にその毒ガスに対して使用しました。しかしそのガスは中国人だけ影響されなかったです。実は毒ガス工場の工員も影響されました。工員はラバーから作ったマスク服とスーツとブーツをもらったにも関わらず、ガスは貫通してしまいました。それからその工員の皮膚と目と喉に薬傷を得ました。しかし、島に大数の野兎が住んでいますので、最近億の島は観光客の中でとても有名になりました。今日億の島はとても幸せな所ですけど、その島に最低な起こった事件を忘れないことが必要だと思います。

Okunoshima is a small island located in the Seto Inland Sea, in the city of Takehara, Hiroshima Prefecture. Just a short ferry ride from Tadanoumi port, Okunoshima has earned itself a reputation with tourists because of the abundance of rabbits there. There are many videos on the internet showing people happily leading large hordes of rabbits around with food. It may be a happy place now, but it has not always been that way. In fact, during World War II Okunoshima became the site for a poison gas factory. There is not one developed country today that has not committed some form of atrocity against another country or its own people, but in this paper I will specifically be focusing on the production and use of poison gas on the island of Okunoshima.

In 1918 and 1919 the Japanese were closely studying the research and production of chemical weapons in countries like Germany, France and the United States. Japan did not want their technology to fall behind, so throughout the next decade or so the Japanese government poured the millions of yen into research of poison gas and in fact even had a laboratory devoted to it in Tokyo (Tanaka, 10,11). By 1928, scientists in Japan had completed experiments in small-scale production of mustard gas, phosgene, chlorine, hydrocyanic acid, lewisite, adamsite, and sneeze and nausea gas. Top military officials then started looking for an appropriate place where massive amounts of the gases could be produced, (Tanaka, 12). Okunoshima was chosen because it was small, isolated, and close to the military city of Hiroshima; but still far enough away from Tokyo in case of disaster. Japan was a signatory on the 1925 Geneva Protocol which banned the use of chemical warfare; and even though the protocol did not ban the development and storage of chemical weapons, Japan went to great lengths to assure the secrecy of construction of the chemical munitions plant. They even went as far as to remove Okunoshima from maps, in an effort to conceal what was going on there.

The factory on Okunoshima was established in 1929, and from then on until Japan's defeat in 1945, in total, 6,616 tons of gas was produced on the island (Okunoshima National Park). The poison gases were then transported to an arms factory in the city of Kokura where it was put into artillery shells, (Kristof). Though this facility was running during the time of World War II, none of the gases were used on a Western country, but only against China. In fact, Japan used these gases more than 2,000 times against Chinese soldiers and civilians in the war in China in the 1930's and 1940's. As well as being used on Chinese prisoners. After the war had ended, Japan left munitions dumps that China says contain roughly 2 million poison gas shells (Kristof).

Although the Chinese were the biggest victims of the poison gas produced on Okunoshima, they were certainly not the only victims. Those who worked in the factory

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themselves also suffered greatly as the hands of the poison gases. It took a while for the scientists to understand how to create the gases on a large-scale, but as soon as manufacturing began in August 1929, so too did the casualties among the workers. Although workers' bodies were supposedly completely protected with masks, clothes, gloves, and boots, all made from rubber, the rubber was not enough to keep out the mustard gas and tear gas, which penetrated the rubber and not only burned their skin, eyes, and throats; but also did lasting damage to their internal organs and even caused cancer in many situations (Tanaka, 15).

Immediately after World War II, the U.S. Occupation Forces collected substantial evidence of the use of chemical weapons by the Japanese Imperial Army. These were compiled into two separate reports that Colonel Thomas Morrow, a law officer of the United States forces turned in. These reports included actual detailed descriptions of cases where the poison gases were used, as well as statistical data on the issue. But before the trial was over, Morrow returned to the United States without warning and because of this, those behind Okunoshima were never convicted as war criminals (Tanaka, 18). With the end of the war, documents concerning the plant were burned and Allied Occupation Forces disposed of the gas either by dumping, burning, or burying it, and people were told to be silent about the project.

It was not until 1961, that the workers who suffered so much received a small ongoing monthly medical allowance, and only after lengthy negotiations. In 1965, the government agreed to award the family a lump sum upon the death of a sufferer. These benefits were only for those who worked full-time though. No form of compensation existed for former part-time or temporary workers, school children, or participants in the postwar cleanup until 1975, when these people became eligible for free medical services and a small monthly medical allowance granted through the Ministry of Health. Anyone who received some kind of benefits for this had to go through rigorous examination by a medical approval committee to

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be officially recognized as a poison gas sufferer. Though for many the classification as a poison gas victim came too late and they died from cancer (Tanaka, 19).

In 1988 the Okunoshima poison gas museum was opened on the island not only to commemorate those who suffered and also lost their lives, but much like the Hiroshima atomic bomb memorial museum, it is also there to warn of the dangers of chemical warfare, in case anyone was to try something like this again. But on the one hand, every Japanese person knows that the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, and 1.5 million people each year pass through the museum in Hiroshima. But few Japanese have ever even heard of Okunoshima and its poison gas factory, and only 52,000 visitors a year pass through the island's poison gas museum (Kristof).

When the island was developed as a park after World War II, some domestic rabbits were released onto the island, and without any natural predators there, they flourished and the island became what it is known as today, “Bunny Island”. Today, Bunny Island has a golf course, hotel and campground and people can frolic with the rabbits all day if they like. I think it is amazing how a place where something horrible once occurred has been made into such a happy place. But at the same time I believe it is important to also take time out of your day one Bunny Island to visit the poison gas museum. The people who suffered there deserve to be recognized and deserve to be remembered.

## JAMYSON HAUG

### The Relationship between Linguistics, Literature, and Students

Jamyson Haug

California State University Fullerton

このリサーチは文学と言語と岡山大学生の関係についてです。大学生は子供の時から本を読んでいますので、大学生の近代文学と現代文学についてどう思っているか研究しました。どうやって近代文学と現代文学が自分の考えを作ったかどうやって他の人の考え方が変わるか研究しました。インターネットの研究もしましたけれども、岡山大学生もインタビューをしました。大学生たちの中で大体みんなは文学に興味がありました。そして、大学生は「言語と教育は文学とつながっている」と言っていました。現代文学が好きな人も多かったです。現代文学は近代文学より読みやすいです。好きな人は多いでしたけれども、近代文学の本を読んだらもっと勉強になると言われました。普段の会話と書き方も近代文学と現代文学の本を読んでから正しい文法と難しい言葉を使えるようになるそうです。近代文学と現代文学は勿論教育と言語の関係がありますけれども、関係は深いかもしれません。

Cultures around the world have developed literature that engages and inspires the people of that country. Japan has also produced literature that has evolved through various stages and styles (Folktales, Haiku, etc.) comparable to Western literature. Modern and contemporary literature are an integral part of education today with university students representing a broad group of people who have become immersed in literature because of the nature of university life. The question at hand, however, is what effect does modern and contemporary literature in Japan have on university student lives? Most people can agree literature is a powerful medium in that it affects both critical and creative thinking, as well as, linguistic intelligence. Through researching this topic, there have been consistent results among personal interviews with a small group of students at Okayama University in Japan that demonstrates how important or unimportant literature is in their lives. Additionally, the effect students believe literature has on linguistic intelligence. However, to understand more about literature in Japan, one must look at how modern and contemporary literature came to be.

Historically, most cultures or countries recorded history after writing was developed. The Japanese people have a rich oral tradition so; Japanese literature naturally advanced from it. Written by Masahide Kanzaki in *Japan: A Pocket Guide*, “Japanese literature traces its beginnings to oral traditions that were first recorded in written form in the early eighth century after a writing system was introduced from China” (Kanzaki). Japan had first adopted this idea from China during the Nara period, and this was a time of high influence from abroad. Kanzaki also mentions that of the first two forms of writing included stories of folktales and other mythology while the other form was for historical record keeping (Kanzaki). This is where the beginning of literature can be traced back to its roots in Japan. Literature transforms throughout history in every culture, but now that people understand

what Japanese literature was like in the beginning, they can examine modern literature, and lastly contemporary literature.

Modern literature came from the Meiji era and continued through the late 1900s. Early modern literature pre-dated the Meiji era. For the sake of this research Meiji era and post-Meiji era will be discussed. According to the New World Encyclopedia, which features information researched by Donald Keene, Japanese authors, and universities, “The Meiji era marked the re-opening of Japan to the West, and a period of rapid industrialization. The introduction of European literature brought free verse into the poetic repertoire; it became widely used for longer works embodying new intellectual themes” (“New World Encyclopedia”). This was a period where people began to see a spark of the new literature which helped mold literature into what it is today. As new literature from other countries came to Japan, specifically those from the West, one can observe that in this era, Japanese literature started to become the staple that opened up different ways of thinking. Naturally, with the introduction of new forms of literature people were able to learn more and by reading and writing more often the improvement of linguistic intelligence increases. One of the more famous authors during this period of new literature, Natsume Soseki, proved to be a prime example of new writing styles in Japan. According to the New World Encyclopedia:

A new colloquial literature developed on centering on the “I” novel, (*Watakushi-shosetsu*), a form of fiction that describes the world from the author’s point of view and depicts his own mental states. This style incorporated some unusual protagonists such as the cat narrator of Natsume Soseki’s humorous and satirical *Wagahai wa neko de aru* (“I Am a Cat,” 1905) (“New World Encyclopedia”).

This humorous and satirical writing style was something new in Japanese literature and arose during this period as a result of foreign influence. Thanks to that affect the Japanese people began to think in new and creative ways that prompted the new types of art and modern of art like modern Japanese literature. As one moves forward into contemporary times, one can observe the variety new media that surround society.

Japan, America, England, and other countries all offer their unique forms of literature, but Japan specifically has some exciting areas that started to come to arise in current times. Manga (similar to comic books), new types of non-fiction, stories of fiction, all have become popular over time, which is how the art(s) came to current day. According to an article titled “10 Contemporary Japanese Writers You Should Know,” by Kathleen Massara, she discusses several notable authors that are not only popular, but have a huge influence on people today. A particular author that Massara mentions is Haruki Murakami who “...is probably the most familiar author on this list, mostly due to the breakout success of his 1987 novel, *Noregian Wood*, which was published in English in 2000” (Massara). Murakami is an important figure due to his books selling in bookstores all over Japan and around the world. Murakami writes novels that seem to be well-liked among college students and specifically college students in Japan. This background is necessary to understand the central thesis of this research.

During this study, a small group of Okayama University students were asked several questions that yielded similar results from everyone. The first question was whether Okayama University students had any interest in modern and contemporary literature and if so was there anything in particular. About 80 percent of the students interviewed responded with an interest in literature, but more specifically contemporary due to its ease of reading. Then students were asked if there was literature that inspired learning or if they learned anything from what they had read. This again provided consistent responses mentioning how if people are to read certain types of books (e.g. Modern Literature, Early Modern) they can learn more about the times, but there also proves to be a certain difficulty in the difference of

language. This is where the idea of improving linguistic intelligence comes into to place. As university students begin to read books from the modern era, they came across phrases or words they might not have been as familiar with which improved their thought process, speaking ability, and general understanding of the world. Finally, the last question asked whether Okayama University students thought that there was a link between education and linguistic intelligence or not. Students believed that those who read more learned a lot more than the average person. Thus, affecting the way students think and progress in life during college and post-college life. As students read they were able to observe the differences in lives now, and differences from modern times, as well as enjoy better vocabulary, proper grammar, and have a broader knowledge of general information. Students agreed that from what they have read, they have been able to become more versed in other subjects than they normally would not have had interest.

In conclusion, literature develops as time goes on, and so does the way people think. Literature and education go hand in hand, and so does linguistic intelligence and ability. As people develop new forms of literature, other things begin to sprout from it and people who are in their university years benefit greatly from this. Speaking, reading, and general conversation ability all improve from reading literature from the modern and contemporary era. Linguistic intelligence alone, however, is not the only thing to improve but knowledge of other subjects and information that might not have otherwise been common knowledge also increases. University students are often presented with new types of literature on the regularly, so it is natural that people who are attending university tend to have a higher ability in critical thinking, linguistic ability, and other educational benefits. It may be difficult for some people to find time for reading and it proves to be a challenge for Japanese university students with how fast-paced Japanese university life is, but those students who are given the opportunity to read, more often find themselves learning more about the world and themselves. The Relationship between Linguistics, Literature, and Students

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#### Response to EPOK

Before coming to EPOK I didn't know what to expect about the program or what I was getting into because I didn't know anyone who had done the program before. I had only heard about it and on a whim decided that in order to improve my Japanese and



understanding of Japanese culture that it was a good idea to come study in Japan. After completing my program, I am glad that I was able to come because I have learned a lot about not just Okayama, but information from all over Japan. I have improved my speaking of Japanese and highly improved my listening comprehension. While there are still many different vocabularies and grammars I must practice and learn, I have learned more than I could have from just reading textbooks and I am grateful to the EPOK program for that. I will be using what I have learned in the future and will not only benefit from this myself, but those around me will benefit because I will be there to provide them with information.

## SIMONE BASSO

### The Evolution of Japanese Mythology

Simone Basso

この研究のテーマは日本の神話学についてです。特に、日本の社会と共に変化してきた点に注目して述べたいと思います。その上で、日本の社会で神話学の使い方に影響を及ぼしたと言われる現象について調べます。

まず、日本の神話学の起源を調べます。神道と仏教が日本の神話学に影響を及ぼしているものについて触れ、この宗教の起源を述べます。そして、この論文のために様々な大学生をインタビューし、結果を論じます。日本の神話学について聞いた時、仏教と迷信が良く述べられていました。神話学をしらない人が多かったけど、宗教と迷信の両方は神話学と密接な関係にあります。

それから、現代での神話学の使い方を調べます。論文のこの部分は若い人と密接な関係があります。ノラガミと言うアニメなど、現代日本にも神話学は残っています。

最後に、神話学は古代と現代の両方と密接な関係があると結論づけられます。生き方が神話学にも左右されているので、この話題は大切なことだと考えます。

Japan is a highly developed country. It could be said that Japan is ultramodern, maintaining its rank as the world's third largest economy, and providing technological advances beyond what we would have thought possible (Ashkenazi 64). On the surface, it would seem that the influence of Japanese mythology has died away with time, and only plays a small role in the day-to-day lives of Japanese people, but in actual fact, Japanese mythology still has a significant impact on the Japanese way of life. While Japanese mythology may not play the same role that it once historically did, Japanese mythology is still present today. Its positive influence is evident from its beginnings, a continuing impact that should be acknowledged and well respected.

The beginning of Japanese mythology is difficult to pin point. However, as Japanese mythology is an integral part of Japan's two most practiced religions, Shintoism and Buddhism, it could therefore be said that the influence of Japanese mythology began during the rise of these religions (Kuroda 1). The roots of Shintoism go back to at least the 6<sup>th</sup> Century B.C.E, when the early Japanese developed rituals and stories based on the idea that the *Kami*, a divine being, was found in all natural phenomena. Japans' earliest form of mythology began here, but was altered with the arrival of Buddhism in Japan in the 6<sup>th</sup> Century CE. The two religions evolved to take on some elements of each other's beliefs, and a new form of Japanese mythology was born. Mythology in Japan has been and is still influenced by the collective elements of Buddhist and Shinto doctrine. As do most religions, Shintoism and Buddhism lay a template for how to live, particularly in regards to social norms and expected behaviour. Religious teachings are commonly taught through stories that aim to communicate lessons of right and wrong. Japanese mythology can be seen in the stories of these two particular religions that recount the myths of deities and heroes, along with moral precepts, ritual requirements and explanation of the world.

Japanese myths are primarily based on the Kojiki. The Kojiki is referred to in English as 'The Record of Ancient Matters', a collection of myths concerning the origin of the four home islands of Japan, and the Kami. The Kojiki was completed in 712 AD (Borgen & Ury

61). During this era, mythology played a role in Japanese politics, with the government indoctrinating the idea that the emperor was a descendant of the “Sun Goddess Amaterasu”. This concept validated the role of the emperor, a concept that continued on until the Emperor lost his divine status as part of the Allied reformation of Japan after World War II in 1946. Although the role of Japanese mythology in politics became less significant, mythology continued to influence the daily lives of Japanese people as Shintoism and Buddhism continued to be practiced.

For the purpose of this study, a group of students were interviewed. With students were a mixture of students attending university within Honshu and Kyushu. Firstly, they were asked if they were aware of the Kojiki. Most of the students were aware of the Kojiki, but when asked which myths within the Kojiki were most prominent, it was only the book title they recalled rather than its contents. It was further commented that the contents of the Kojiki was not commonly taught in school, just the fact that it was a historical book containing myths and legends. The relevance of Japanese mythology in religious practice was also discussed in the interviews. Out of the small group of students that were interviewed, 50% of those students’ families were adherents of Buddhism. According to the 2008 NHK survey of religion in Japan, 34% of people in Japan believe in Buddhism (西 66). Taught from a small age, these students were taught ancestor veneration. The medium of this practice is worship at the Butsudan, which is a Buddhist Alter, commonly found in Japanese Buddhist homes or temples. Some differences existed between the students. For examples, upon returning home, some of the students prayed at the Butsudan as a way of greeting their ancestors. On the other hand, some of the students only prayed at the Butsudan during a time of worry or sadness, particularly during a time when they are in need of strength and encouragement. Ancestral spirits are often included in Japanese mythology, and the fact that honoring these spirits is particularly highlighted as a vital part of practicing both Shintoism and Buddhism.

The extent of just how conscious Japanese people in the modern world are of the impact Japanese mythology has on their way of life is an interesting concept to explore. For instance, in terms of religious practice, the students seemed unaware of the connection Japanese mythology had to praying at the Butsudan. A weak affiliation with their religion could explain why the students were not too familiar with the myths associated with Buddhism. Furthermore, they stated that they don’t really care too much for their god, and that religion doesn't significantly affect their daily routine. On a statistical level, many studies have shown the decline of religious practice and affiliation in Japan. In the previous generation, religion may have played more of an important role, as suggested by the fact that the students were taken to the Butsudan to pray when they were children. In comparison with the previous generation, the younger generation is not as religiously affiliated, and therefore are not too concerned with the Japanese mythology directly linked to religion.

Superstitions, which have also arisen due to Japanese mythology, appeared to influence the students in some way. When asked what superstitions affected their daily routine, all of the students mentioned a particular superstition that had almost direct relevance to the myths taught within the Kojiki. Found in section XVIII of the Kojiki, the myth of Susanowo-no mikoto is a prominent story that negatively portrays serpents. Susanowo-no mikoto was the son of Izanagi, the god who gave birth to Japan’s archipelago. His story of heroism begins with his fall from Heaven into Izumo (Byung-hoon 289). The story follows that the eight-foot serpent of Koshi came once a year to devour a young girl. Susanowo-no mikoto then went on to defeat the serpent by creating a trap, and killed the serpent with his sword (Chamberlain 71). It was clear that the group interviewed felt that snakes were bad omen, and further supported their views with stories from their childhood. For example, one of the students was told as a child that if he refused to go to bed when it was bedtime, a snake would come and eat him whilst he was sleeping. He also told of a myth originating from his

town, following the story of a menacing snake that was defeated by a crab. The crab cut the snake into three pieces, which now form the three wells atop the local mountain. Stories such as these are commonly linked to Japanese mythology. Although the student was not aware of where this fear of snakes had originated from, it was still clear that the view of snakes as a bad omen had in some way affected them.

Influenced by Japanese mythology, anime has become a pop culture phenomenon around the globe. Some of the most popular Japanese animations are influenced by Japanese mythology. This includes both modern anime, such as *Noragami*, and older anime such as *Inuyasha* or *Dragonball*. *Noragami* has deep influence from Japanese mythology as it focuses mainly around shrines of both Buddhism and Shintoism. An example of the mythology that influences *Noragami* is the Japanese god Bishamon, one of the Shichi-fuku-jin (“Seven Gods of Luck”). He is the protector of the righteous and is the Buddhist patron of warriors (Safra & Aguilar-Cauz, 2006). This being just one example of many, Japanese mythology tends to dominate the anime world.

While it may not seem that Japanese mythology plays a role in the daily life of Japanese people, closer inspection reveals that mythology still has a significant impact on modern Japan. From the beginning of its history, the role of Japanese mythology has changed many times. The *Kojiki* played an important role throughout all these changes, but in recent times it seems as though the *Kojiki* is not as impactful as it once was. In saying this, religion is still relatively significant, with about a third of the population believing in Buddhism or Shintoism. Mythology, from a religious perspective, is important in the way of myths being a used as a medium to communicate teachings and explanation of the world. In terms of social norms and expected behaviour, mythological stories are used to discourage children from misbehaving, and it was also found during the study that superstitions believed by the students also stemmed from mythological stories. Even in popular culture such as anime, the influence of mythology can be seen in the likes of anime such as *Noragami*. This study has revealed much about the evolution of Japan from its earliest time till the present day, and it can be concluded that mythology has been and still is a positive influence in Japan.

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### Response to EPOK

Participating in the EPOK program has taught me much about both the Japanese language and Japanese culture. I was able to experience many different aspects of Japanese daily life, particularly the daily life of Japanese University Students. The course offered a range of classes that suited my goals whilst on exchange. I thoroughly enjoyed the core Japanese classes. They were clearly structured, and the teachers were consistently helpful, particularly in regards to giving me feedback. I learned much about the history and geography of Okayama in my Study of Japan class. The Global Partners Office were very supportive, and assisted in any way that they could in order to make our participation in EPOK a good experience. I am appreciative of all the hard work Global Partners put in to making this program more than just a Japanese Language program, and I look forward to applying what I have learned to my studies when I return to Australia.

## LUIS CABRAL III

### **Sports, Clubs, and Senpais difference in athletic culture**

Luis Cabral III  
Epok Research Project  
July 29, 2016

先輩と後輩の交流はがっこうで起こってしまいます。先輩は後輩に力を持っています。ときには後輩にいじめっ子になります。後輩はきょうせい聞いて、先輩の無理なんだを作ってこはいがします。せんぱいどこはいのこゆうは心理学としゃかいせいをおそわります。しんりがくはつねにをしたがいます。社会性は後輩に無表情になります。このシステムは子供を頓挫します。先輩は後輩に習慣を教えます。でも先輩が習慣を忘れて、後輩を命じます。さいきん後輩は先輩に反抗します。その序列は力を上げすぎます。力は後輩を奴隷にします。先輩と後輩の関係は学生に悪いです。

Sports and physical fitness has been the biggest trend with in human culture that allows for groups of people to come together to compete against each other in various activities and to also create friendships among those competitors. Within schools, sports play a major part in the development of children and young adults. Japanese junior high and high schools promote sports through clubs which is essentially a team that goes out competing in different events against other schools. These clubs can range from different activities from sports to dancing club or even a manga club. However, in this club system there is a hierarchal system that rules over each club where those who are older take priority and have authority over the younger members.

Being on a team, whether it be a sports group or fine arts, is one of the many experiences that school kids go through during middle school up until the end of their college life. In America the most well-known teams are sports teams which are the equivalent of clubs in Japan. Usually organized by school officials these teams are used to nurture kids into athletes and promote both physical fitness and a competitive nature. Each team consists of a coach, players, and/or a manager. The coach is the head figure that forms the base of a team's

success. Their word is almost absolute as they can be more knowledgeable in the sport or subject at hand as well as become a pillar of emotional stability in times of great strife during games or sessions. Members or players are those that join for various reasons, mostly to have fun or training to make it professionally. Within the members and players' sect there is an unchallenged rule of equality for everyone. No matter what your age was everyone is on the same level in terms of position on the team, excluding the captain, and amount of authority held within the team. This allows for a stronger connection between players or members allowing them freedom to be expressive without the worry of offending someone's higher stance in rank or age. Practice sessions become more intense as players don't see each other as senpai or kohai but rather as fellow competitors striving for improvement and success.

Japanese clubs, circles, businesses, and about any other area where members or teams are involved there is a culture of senpai/kohai relations. This system calls for a give and take between those older as well as those younger. The senpai, being the older member, has authority over a kohai and whatever they say or do it is through obligation a kohai must abide. A system such as the senpai kohai relationship has a very strict element and through recent study has shown to cause kohai to not be treated as underclassmen but rather close to "slaves" for the sempai. The amount of authority given to the senpais gives them the opportunity to take advantage of the status quo to feel empowered. That is not always the case but with growing concern for opposition arising evidence shows that there are instances of it happening. A senpai/kohai relationship restricts underclassmen from having a stance on anything concerning the senpais thus, restricting them to have any opinions for fear of disrespecting their seniors. It is meant to teach the kohai about respect for one's elder but without teaching when to take a stand against unfairness.

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Age does not reflect the amount of talent or ability a person has. The older one gets does not automatically make them greater to someone in any sense. Through hard work and dedication one can raise their level and help benefit the group. In American teams and groups, the talent of a member as well as the ability to be a team player, to get along with others is valued highly on equal footing. This encourages members to work together and to collaborate to achieve success but, to also continue in improving. Working together in such a way helps in the development of youth socially and psychologically. Socially: as they interact more and more with others intimately it creates a basis for them to use within their daily lives and psychologically: as they develop those relationships they garner many traits that enhance their character.

A senpai/kohai relationship has aspects of teamwork however with a cautious tread as to not offend anyone. A senpai is usually determined by age and rank status and anyone lower or younger is a kohai. Whether it be in a workplace or in a club there is a pecking order to things which sets back social and psychological development. In the social aspect underclassmen are taught to obey the word of a senpai, obligated to do whatever it is they want. They go through their daily lives with a system as such it creates this schism with intimacy between fellow members and would be friends. In psychological views they leave with in their minds a need to always follow that status quo everywhere they go to work or whatever clubs or teams they decide to join. They become stiff and rigid without fulling experiencing the joy in what they do. These setbacks take away self-expression and character from an individual. The fear of disrespecting one's elder and the obligatory duty to appease the older sect overshadows any notion of self-expression.

The senpai/kohai relation does teach loyalty and the important lessons of nurturing an underclassmen and difficulties of learning. A senpai would be strict with a kohai in order to



make them mentally stronger for when they enter a company. That strict nature also teaches the simple tough reality of teaching a kohai whatever it is they need to know to get by or to ascend to adulthood. Despite these potentially informative and character building notions, a senpai/kohai relationship is not as effective or efficient in building character or manners. There are other more optimistic ways to do so but this system has become tradition in Japanese culture. A relationship based on obligation pales to one based on common, mutual, and intimate ideals. Individualism and expressionism gives kids the opportunity discover what the world has to offer to them personally. Senpai/kohai relationships has both good and bad points along with anything else yet, when you put restrictions in place an opposite force will come to oppose it.

The Epok program has been a tremendous experience for me as I have learned various things about the country Japan and about myself as well. I have gained many friends over the past couple months, friends who will forever be close to me. From learning language and customs to adapting to the cold and Japanese lifestyle only describe a fraction of what I have done during my tenure here at Okayama. This experience will be the stepping stone for me to fulfill my dream of teaching. Okayama is and always will be the place where my journey to a new place starts and hopefully someday I will be able to return.

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## MARGARET FLYNN

### 外国人の日本人についてイメージ

フリン・マーガレット

EPOK 2016

私は日本人に、面白くて、社会について質問を聞きたいんです。それから、私は考えたり、外国人の日本人についてイメージを決めました。国でも別の国についてイメージあります。そのイメージは正しかないかかもしれないので、その考えについて聞くつもりでした。質問を書いた、色んな人の意見を取るために聞きました。その、質問をインタビューして、聞いた後、結果を見ました。インタビューをしたグループによって、結果は少し違います。日本人は、全部のイメージと反対か賛成しませんでした。別の質問は、別の答えをとりました。

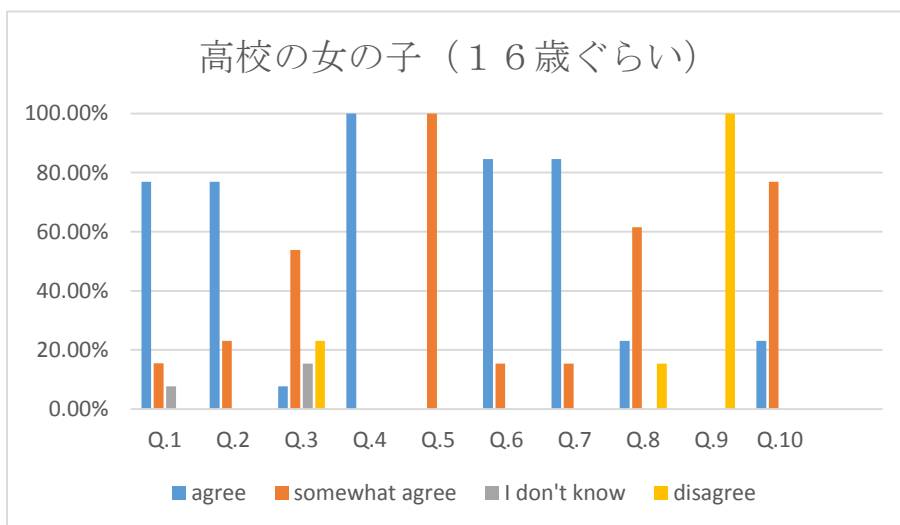
For our EPOK project I decided to focus on a topic that was centered on society and perception. My question was, “Do Japanese people agree with the stereotypes applied to them by foreigners, and if so, to what degree?”. This is a question that came about after considering that most of our images of Japanese people, as foreigners, are filtered through our media and are very likely to be just stereotypes or assumptions. I set out to interview Japanese people on their views concerning the subject. I wanted to see if the stereotypes applied to Japanese people are also considered true by Japanese people. Unfortunately, I was not able to interview as many people or as broad of a range of people as I had hoped. However, the 2 groups of people I did interview could be considered polar opposites in many ways, making for a few very interesting and varied results. All data was conducted and collected by myself.

Firstly, I asked my fellow international students to share some of the ‘image’ or stereotypes they had heard of or seen, concerning Japanese people. Just to clarify, these were

not necessarily *their* opinions, but things that they had heard/seen whilst in Japan or before coming here. The stereotypical statements of Japan I gathered were boiled down into these:

- 1.) Japanese people are shy. (日本人ははずかしがりやです。)
- 2.) Japanese women are shy and passive. (日本の女の人ははずかしくて、うけみです。)
- 3.) Japanese men are shy and passive. (日本の男の人は恥ずかしくて、うけみです。)
- 4.) Japanese women are aggressive when pursuing a relationship. \*this question had to be thrown out due to data collection mistake\*
- 5.) Japanese people are always polite. (いつもれいぎたたくします。)
- 6.) If they have a problem with something, they are unlikely to voice their opinion about it. (問題があっても、全然いいません。)
- 7.) Sometimes, when they are being polite, they will lie to you. (時々、ていねいにしていながらたてまえいいます。)
- 8.) Japanese people always go “by the book”, or are inflexible. (いつもマニュアルどおりにたいようします。)
- 9.) Being an outlier or doing things your way is considered bad in Japan. (たいてい、マイペースはだめです。)
- 10.) If Japanese people see an incident, they may ignore it or not help. (事故かけがをした時に、あまりたすけません。)
- 11.) Japanese people believe that perfection is best. (いつもかんぺきがいいとおもいます。)

After consolidating the questions into these 10, I was able to interview 2 separate groups of people. The first group was high school girls, around 14-16 years old. The results from the questions are below.

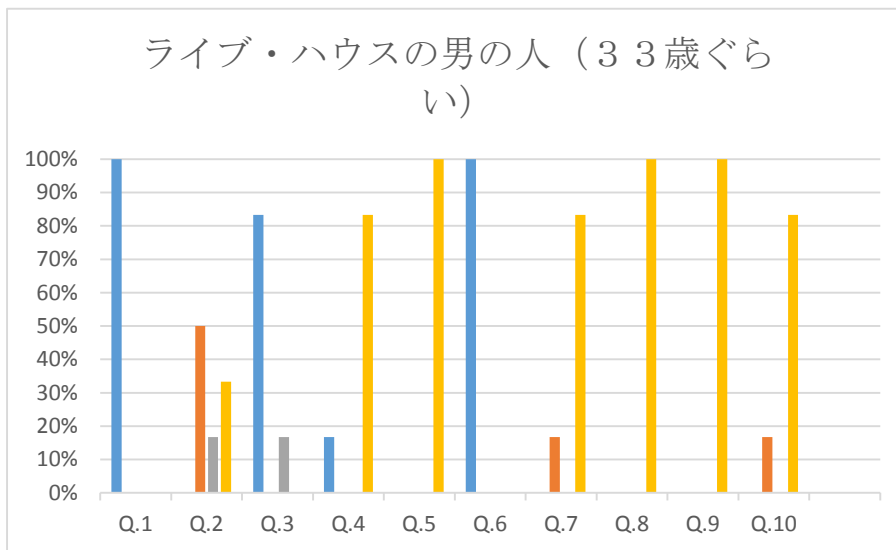


As you can see, some statements that I posed to them were agreed or disagreed with 100%, whilst other statements

drew varied responses. Overwhelmingly, the female students believed that the statement

“Japanese people are always polite” was true. They also all said that the statement “If Japanese people have a problem with something, they are unlikely to voice their opinion about it” to only be somewhat true. Lastly, they wholeheartedly disagreed with the statement “If Japanese people see an incident, they may ignore it or not help”.

My 2nd set of interviews was conducted at a Live House show, with men ranging from age 27-35 years old.



These interview results were slightly different in some areas and vastly different in other areas. Both groups completely disagreed

with the statement saying that Japanese people may ignore or not help during an accident.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> group agreed 100% with the statement “Japanese people are shy”, and 100% with the statement “Sometimes when being polite, they will tell a lie”. They also generally agreed that Japanese people tend to go by the book, via question 8. Unlike Group 1, Group 2 completely disagreed with the statement that “My Pace”, or doing things your own way, is generally considered bad. Question number 4 had to be omitted from group 2 because I made a mistake collecting data.

Overall, I was very lucky to conduct this survey and learn more insight into Japanese people’s views of the stereotypes that others apply to them. I was also able to take video of the second group so that if people are interested they can view it themselves. There was not a

100% consensus on all of the questions, as one can imagine, so I do not believe I can state one way or the other if Japanese people agree with their stereotypes overall. The group of girls I interviewed *generally* agreed with about 5/10 of the statements, while the men only *generally* agreed with about 3 of them. Some of the stereotypes were agreed with, some were disagreed with, some were slightly agreed with, and some people were unsure of their thoughts on the matter. I also believe, that even though I was unable to conduct these interviews with more people, the great diversity even between the 2 groups I did interview led to some very interesting and diverse results, helping give a broader perspective on Japanese people opinions across profession, age, interests, and gender.

I'd like to conclude with my EPOK experience. I have had an immensely rewarding experience through EPOK these past few months. Travelling, going to museums and various national treasures, and engaging in a curriculum that was challenging and useful have all been a part of my time here. All the classes I have taken have added something new to my knowledge base, and the flexibility allowed in choosing our classes was wonderful. Our cultural experiences, provided by more than one course, went hand in hand with our regular curriculum, allowing me to apply them both for a better understanding of Japanese culture and language. There have been a few challenges that I have faced in terms of assignments, but this only allowed me to strive for my best and dig deep to apply my knowledge. I will be coming home with a deeper understanding of Japanese culture, better Japanese language skills, and some wonderful friends that I have gained through this program. I am amazingly grateful for having been given this opportunity, and I will carry my knowledge and experiences with me throughout the rest of my studies, and my life.

## SELENE SANTOS

### Interracial Dating Among Japanese College Students

Selene Santos

#### Japanese summary:

今日、日本人が外国人と国際関係を持つというアイデアは、非常に一般的です。友人を持ち、世界中の他の国々から連絡が取れる可能性はこの10年間の技術の進歩によって高まっています。また、異人種間のデートがトレンドとなっており、日本もこの拡大しつつある現象の例外ではありません。日本人は外国人と触れ合い、異なる民族的背景がある誰かと恋愛関係をもつ多くの機会があります。この研究論文の目的は、日本の大学生の中で、同じ民族的背景を持つものと、異人種間の間の恋人関係とその認識を比較することでした。また、この研究論文で表現した主なアイデアは、異なる民族的背景を持つ外国人もしくは、同じ民族的背景を持つ日本人と付き合いあうことによる文化的な違いを含んでいます。私の研究の結果は、多くの文化の違いはあっても、日本人は非常に外国人とロマンチックな関係を持つことに非常にオープンであるという結論に至りました。

#### English summary:

The idea of Japanese having international relationships with foreigners is quite common nowadays. The possibility of having friends and keeping in touch from other countries around the world has increased in the last decade thanks to the advancement of technology. Also, interracial dating has become a trend and Japan is no exception to this growing phenomenon. There are many opportunities for the Japanese to interact with foreigners and get involved in a romantic relationship with someone from a different ethnic background. The purpose for this research paper was to compare dating relationships of couples and what are their perceptions between interracial relationships and those with the same ethnic backgrounds among Japanese college students. Also, the main ideas that were expressed in this research paper involved cultural differences between dating a foreigner with a different ethnic background or a Japanese with the same ethnic background. The results of my research conclude that there are a lot of cultural differences, but Japanese are quite open to the idea of having a romantic relationship with a foreigner as much as having a relationship with another Japanese.

College life has a lot of ups and downs between classes, going to parties, having a part time job, hanging out with friends, or basically just enjoying life. There are many similarities in every country with some minor differences that make them unique when it comes to the way students go through college. Even the way people interact with each other are quite different and could depend on their individual personality, interests, goals, or cultural backgrounds. There are also opportunities for students to go study abroad, which broadens their horizons and gives their mind a little something to think about like comparing their way of life from back home to their new environment in the present. New relationships are formed when studying abroad and sometimes they can even lead to finding their significant other in another country. Interracial dating is a common trend all over the world, but let's narrow this idea down and focus on interracial dating among Japanese college students. The focus is mainly going to be on what types of race/ethnicities that Japanese college students have an

interest in when considering interracial dating, their attitudes towards some specific types, and some cultural background differences from interviewed students.

Japanese students as well as other Asians are influenced by the international trends in interracial dating, but more specifically they are also affected by American trends as well. Fujino (1997) and Yancey (2002) found that interracial dating among Americans was more common when both identity group members had been exposed to each other's out-group at a young age, either through schooling or common neighborhoods. Research of American youth, indicate that interracial and interethnic daters were more likely to have lower levels of prejudice toward racial out-groups and were more willing to befriend and live with racial out-groups (Mok, 1999). College students who exhibited lower levels of in-group favoritism, intergroup anxiety, and in-group identification before coming to college, were more likely to date racial out-groups during college (Levin, Taylor, & Claude, 2007). Parental approval also played a role in inter-racial dating, in so far as Asian-Americans, Latinos, and white American colleges, students were more likely to date within their own ethnic group when they perceived that their parents, as well as the parents of their romantic partner, would approve of inter-group dating (Edmonds & Killen, 2009; Field, Kimuna, & Straus, 2013; Liu, Campbell, & Condie, 1995).

In Liu, Campbell, and Condie's study (1995), Asian-American and Latino students rated opposite-sex whites as more attractive than members of their own in-group. Furthermore, Latinos and African-Americans rated whites and Asian-Americans as having a higher status, which was mostly defined as education and income. The perceived attractiveness and high status of Asian- American and white students illustrated that these two groups were perceived to be highest on a social and racial hierarchy (Feliciano, Robnett, & Komaie, 2009).

The predominant view toward dating was that marrying within one's own ethnicity was the most practical and comfortable (as also reported in Levin, Taylor, & Claude, 2007). But when considering dating outside one's race/ethnicity, a majority interviewed, were interested in dating white people (similar to the findings in Feliciano, Robnett, & Komaie, 2009; Tsunokai, McGrath, & Kavanagh, 2013). One of the surveyors from an article said it was closely linked to perceived status based on skin color and a Western archetype of beauty: "The first impression thing, when we see a white person we see well-educated, rich, and tall." This immediate judgment approach of associating whiteness with positive traits was expressed by thirty percent of those who were interviewed. The desire to want to date a white person was often based on global racial and economic hierarchy (Brown, 2000; Kim, 2011; Grant & Lee, 2003; Marginson, 2008; Marginson & Sawir, 2005). All three students who dated white students, were comfortable with English, were well adjusted to life in America, had attended several years of high school in America, and planned to live in the US long-term.

A majority of students indicated that they would be comfortable dating Asian-American students of their own ethnic background (Levin, Taylor, & Claude, 2007), but felt that Asian- American students did not want to date them because of the cultural divide between international and domestic students. Additionally, when it came to inter-Asian international dating, historical conflicts and parental messages were potent factors in the decision making process (Edmonds & Killen, 2009; Field, Kimuna, & Straus, 2013; Liu, Campbell, & Condie, 1995). Stereotypes of a given Asian international ethnic group were often mixed up with an Asian-American ethnic group.

According to the article, Japanese students in the study tended to be more liberal toward dating domestic students than Chinese or Korean international students. Over half of the international students interviewed saw Asian-Americans as having a white middle-class American culture, with a mix of a national ethnic culture as well. This led to inaccurate transnational ethnic stereotypes, wherein Asian international students applied their learned stereotypes of Chinese, Japanese, and Koreans from their home country, to Asian-Americans. International students, who were new to the country (lived in America three months or less), and/or had little contact with Asian-Americans, were more likely to link an Asian national stereotype with that of an Asian-American ethnic group.

Some students that I interviewed personally from Okayama University shared their opinions and ideas with me based on their own experiences with interracial dating. Most of them talked about the cultural differences when dating a foreigner versus dating a Japanese. A lot of them had the same or somewhat similar answers with each other. There are some answers that are based on cultural differences that I would like to share. One is about Japanese being shy when it comes to expressing their feelings. Foreigners, especially Americans, tend to be more open with expressing how they really feel such as saying “I love you”. Another is about showing intimacy in public. Japanese tend to be more reserved and they do not like hugging or kissing when there are many people around, because they feel that they are being watched and that people will talk. Americans or Australians on the other hand do not mind and would gladly hug and kiss their partners in public.

There are a lot more cultural differences that I would like to share from the information I had gathered during my interviews. In American culture, it is usually the guy who pays for everything that the couple will do on their date. In Japan, they split the bill or they pay for themselves, especially if they are still a high school student, since high school students are not that rich compared to working adults or those with higher pay part time jobs. Also, another cultural difference is that Japanese girls want to know when you are interested in them. Meaning they want you to tell them up right that you are interested in them and that you are considering on dating them. In American culture, the gestures and the way you act around the person you like usually indicates that you like the person and it is rather implied already so there is no need for either of them to say that they like each other.

A couple of more culture differences include: messaging your significant other plus how many times you would meet them and knowing what is on their mind. The first one is about messaging plus how often do you meet with your significant other. In the Japanese culture, messaging your significant other too many times is considered annoying or a bother. They do not usually text each other quite that often and when they meet, they usually meet only once or twice a month/week depending on the couple. For Americans, it is quite the opposite where they would text each other every so often and also try to meet each other as much as they possible can. The last cultural difference I would like to share is about knowing what is on their minds. According to one of the interviewees, he said that when he was dating a Japanese girl, they expect you to know what is on their minds without having to say anything. He never experienced this kind of thinking when he is dating his current Australian girlfriend. I am not quite sure if this also refers to American girls, so I wanted to state specifically that this person is dating an Australian and this is how he feels for one of the different cultural ideas that he gave me.



**Review:**

My experience and the things that I had learned with the EPOK program is one I will never forget and I will take with me back to home Guam. I have enjoyed my classes and the teachers were all really nice and fun to learn from. Also, the staff from the global partners office were really kind and helpful. Whenever I had a question or needed something, they were willing to help me to the best of their abilities. I especially enjoyed my time in the L-Café and also getting the chance to work there and gaining some work experience was a bonus! I like to also especially thank the L-Café staff for being kind to me and helping me while I was working at L-Café. I also enjoyed the mini fieldtrips sponsored by the L-Café and how experienced many new things such as: going to an onsen, planting rice with children in the countryside, and also learning how to make authentic Japanese sushi! It was my first time to try an onsen and I would like to go to one again before I leave Japan. I also enjoyed planting rice for the first time, but I was so tired at the end of the day. Playing and having fun with the children after planting the rice made my trip to Yakage even more enjoyable. The last fieldtrip was leaning how to make sushi and it was delicious eating everything that we made. There was one event that I was able to go to that was sponsored by the EPOK tutors! They did a good job showing me around Kurashiki for my second visit! I have made some many new friends both Japanese and from other countries as well. We would all do many things together, like go shopping, go to a karaoke place and sing our hearts out, and having dinner/drinking parties with each other! The friendships and bonds I made during my stay here, I hope will last for a lifetime and that we will keep in touch even in the future! I also enjoyed my many adventures with the friends I made as well as some mini trips I had on my own. There are some trips that I would like to mention from when I went with my friends. One was the time when I went to USJ with Sarah, Danny, Jean-Christophe, and Audrey! We had lots of fun riding many rides, watching 4D movies, and eating interesting food that you can only find at USJ! I also enjoyed the time when I went to see the Naruto with Maya, Danny, and Sarah! We did a lot of walk and getting wet from the rain, but it was worth it to see the whirlpools as well as the Naruto Bridge that was inspired by the bridge in the manga called "Naruto"! One mini trip that I went on my own that I would like to mention is the time I went to Tokyo during a four-day weekend in the end of May! I had the chance to meet a lot of my friends who came to Guam and now it was my turn since I came to Japan. The first day, I got to go to a Sailor Moon exhibition and then to Akihabara. The second day, I got to go to Sensouji Temple and after I got to visit both Shibaura Institute of Technology (SIT) and Chiba Institute of Technology (CIT) campuses! The third day, I had the chance of going to Kichijoji and do some shopping before going back Okayama the next day. Yes, I would say I had a fulfilling and pleasurable time during my stay here in Japan! I would like to come back here again in the future! I plan to be an English teacher to foreign students, so entering the J.E.T program is one of my goals once I graduate from college! Thank you for the wonderful memories Okayama University, Global Partnerships Office, the EPOK program, L-Café, my teachers, and all the friends I had made during my stay here!

## SARAH VALENCE

### The Japanese variant of the escape phenomenon

Sarah Valence

現在の日本では、日常生活にある責任や義務から逃避するために、日常生活の中の一般的な活動より珍しい、色々の人々がしている様々な唯一である活動がされているということが課題になっている。例え、漫画・アニメ・コスプレー・カラオケ・ゲームなどに、日本だけではなく、世界中に人気が集まっているようである。

様々な学者によると、その活動のことが、前述したのように日常生活にある責任や義務を避けるために、逃避方法の一つとして説明されている。本文では、その活動に関する文脈や、する必要がある理由・来由や、どういうふうに日本の社会がその活動に頼ることなどについて説明する。

#### The Japanese variant of the escape phenomenon.

To start with, the title deserves an explanation. To put it simply, it is the observable and particular way the people of Japan cope with the omnipresence of their responsibilities in their daily life. According to research and observable data, there is a growing tendency towards evasive behaviors among various groups of the Japanese population. The purpose of this paper will be to question and explain the reasons for the apparent desire of a great number of Japanese people, with a focus on students, to escape their own reality. Starting from a very young age with parental guidance, then a very rigid learning environment, role association and social expectations, let us look at Japan from a different angle, one that cannot usually be observed from the outside.

#### So, what is so particular about Japan? What does “escaping” mean, here?

Maybe the term “escape” gives off the wrong idea. It isn’t like most Japanese people are trying to physically escape the country. They are said to love, among others, how comfortable it feels inside the borders. Foreign countries may seem strange, unsafe and difficult to understand, which is a feeling that is exacerbated in this particular culture. Travelling is also one of the themes that will be discussed later, but in any case, the term “escape” here should not be taken literally.

It’s all about the pressure. Starting from a very young age, kids learn how to behave in society and how to focus only on their studies. As Sugimoto presents in his book, *An Introduction to Japanese Society*, schools are ranked by prestige and reputation (p.129) and to even have a chance to occupy a good position in large corporation or public bureaucracy, students must work hard from a very young age. That includes classroom time, endless hours of studying, cram school, and a parental pressure that surpasses that of most countries. In 1990, Professor Shogo Ichigawa from the National Institute for the Educational Research named eight characteristics of the Japanese education system through comparison with the other Asian countries and the Western schools. The first one of these characteristics was “The way that schooling and school education dominate children’s and young people’s lives” (2). Through the informal, personal survey I did on the people of Okayama, all of them replied that only from University do young people start to have free time. When asked, kids answer that they don’t get free time at all in between lessons, studies, duties and extracurricular activities. They also do not feel like they have the choice to drop any of these, the parents make sure of that. But the children are not the only one trapped in this situation.

The education system is, as Sugimoto describes it on page 131 of his book, an "expensive business", which causes a heavy burden on families. Admission, entrance exams, uniforms, material, everything has a price. Even public universities are said to cost over 10% of the national income of average workers in Japan. Add to that the price of years of cram school and private tutoring, two fairly common techniques supposed to enhance the chances of getting into a better institution and eventually getting a better job, and that constitutes quite a heavy financial burden. Then, to add even more to it, to facilitate the students' performance, most parents are said to take care of their every needs until they reach university, and even some time after that. Mostly by paying for their transportation fees, eating allocations, lodging expenses and even social activities (generally through clubs), but also by taking full responsibility for them. Mothers are said to create for them a stress-free environment that will allow them to concentrate all their efforts on their studies. Still to this day, women are often expected to stay home and take care of the children rather than being considered as equally functional as men workers. Why? So that the kids, in turn, can become successful, get into good schools and have good jobs or become good mothers to their own progeny.

In other countries, such a treatment would be unthinkable. Children learn to be autonomous and independent at a much younger age. But for the sake of them getting a good job in the future (which relies almost entirely on the prestige of the schools they graduated from, as mentioned before), they live under an unimaginable and suffocating amount of pressure. Leisure time, as it would be expected at this point, holds a whole new meaning. To have leisure time is often perceived as not working hard enough. Students study in school, then in cram school, then at home. On weekends, they study some more and they have club activities. Being so busy, they are constantly connected to the world around them, constantly being watched and judged on their performances. It could be expected, at least from an exterior point of you, that the pressure they would feel would build up and they would need some kind of release at some point.

The few moments of free time that they have, what do they spend it on? What do these people do for fun? Not only students, but also the mother who spends her time taking care of her children's every needs, her part-time job and her household duties? And what about the father, the head of the family who has to work overtime almost every day, sometimes in another town to provide for everyone's financial needs? In a society like that, where each person has their own role and expectations to fulfill, how can one not feel the need to change their mind? At their busiest, people should at least feel the need to escape the pressure that they continuously must feel. That hypothesis, although it might be refuted by some, something that is worth investigating. Why do people agree to this demanding lifestyle?

### **Fitting in and Ijime**

One very important aspect of the Japanese society that I haven't got into yet is the social side. Japan is a society of appurtenance, where they don't stand as individuals, but as parts of this ensemble that allows them to feel like they belong. 家(uchi) versus 外(soto), literally house versus the outside. It comes from the feeling of distinction between the people inside your circle and the ones that are not. Similarly, the concepts of 籍(seki) often mentioned in research, the latter being a synonym of Uchi and the first a word to describe a formal "subscription" to a group or organization. Sugimoto states the 戸籍(koseki) as an example, which is the family register officially recognized by the government (156). To not correspond to a koseki or to sully it constitutes a great shame. I will discuss shame later, but for now let's focus on this notion of fitting in.

A great majority of the interviewed students prefer spending their free time with friends, or their 仲間(nakama) for the same reason why people want to have a good koseki. To have friends reinforces the idea that they fit into a group, like they do in every aspect of

their lives. The family's role attribution, the working force and their community are good examples of circles most people feel the need to join. They are encouraged to build bonds. Failure to do so leads to this very particular Japanese phenomenon called Ijime.

Ijime is the Japanese equivalent bullying. Especially present during school years, but also apparently during the first years of work as well, it can become quite overwhelming. Sugimoto states that since the 1980s, Ijime has been defined as a collective tentative to humiliate, torment or disgrace a single target, one that would stand out (146). That reinforces the feeling of security of being in a group and explains why friends are associated with happiness and fun. With this, social pressure holds a whole lot more influence on people. Individualistic societies don't such systematic bullying. Solitary activities are just as popular as social ones, which might explain why manga, anime and video games would be so popular there. That, and the fact that there is no "shame" associated to them, which is not the case in Japan.

### **Shame versus guilt**

The difference between shame and guilt is to be clearly identified in order to understand this mentality. To put it simply, guilt comes from inside. It comes from our morals and the conscience of our own actions. Shame, on the other hand, comes from the outside. It appears when one's actions are devalued by something exterior to them. For example, if one is seen in an arcade when they should be in a library studying, this person looks bad to the outside world and starts feeling shame. Guilt is to avoid going to the arcade because of the voice that says that it is not appropriate to act like this. Seeing as being "free" here is almost a synonym to being "lazy", the fear of being shamed is enough to prevent people from admitting their leisure. From the responses gathered through personal survey, mostly among the university students, the habit of keeping "busy" is kept and some of them won't say that they have free time at all.

And even if they wished to escape their duties, they couldn't. Not for long.

### **Traveling in Japan**

With the different countries' borders becoming so easy to cross, the world is boiling with activity. A new wave of travelers is being raised and swarms in foreign lands. Some call it internationalization, others would call it opportunities, but regardless of the name, this change is not welcome everywhere. An article by Professor Robert W. Aspinall from Shiga University was written about the reluctance of Japan to enter this new wave. He states that Japan is shown to be overly-protective concerning globalization and the exposition of their people to the rest of the world, which they control very carefully: "Firstly, foreign elements that enter Japan will be controlled and assimilated and therefore become "Japanese". Secondly: foreign elements will be controlled for a limited period and given very limited responsibilities and then required to leave. This rigid approach to borders also affects Japanese people: if they leave Japan for too long and spend too long in the risky outside world their "Japaneseness" may become suspect and so this is not encouraged except where absolutely necessary" (1). This means that, not only do they discourage people from going outside, but they also closely supervise the foreign elements coming in.

When asked, all of the interrogated Japanese people from Okayama unanimously answered liking foreigners, but preferred meeting them in their own country rather than to go abroad. They want to use them as resources to have a connection with the outside without leaving the comfort of their home. To them, travelling is an appealing, yet terrifying concept.

Earlier I mentioned that Japanese people did not want to physically escape the country, and that is one of the reasons. Culturally, the outside world is seen as unsafe, whereas Japanese generally prefer to be surrounded by known, comfortable things. To some

extent, it is true, but other cultures embrace novelty without losing focus on their own society and goals. In Japan, traveling is often considered a distraction, a step away from the ideal that they should have, unless it fits the purpose of their future career. Prolonged vacation is not well-perceived here and the system makes it very difficult to have them. Holidays are planned in a way that people have single random dates through the week to go somewhere, which does not allow them to go abroad but merely to travel in Japan for a bit. The exception to that is the Golden Week, but even so, there are still working days through that “break”, which is highly inconvenient to fully enjoy the time off to travel. Getting time off work is also unthinkable and the way holidays are in Japan forbids Japanese people to forget about their obligations even for a few days. When asked, the people of Okayama admit barely even leaving their town. A few exceptions are found, but according to personal surveys, even Japanese travelers still say they look for familiar things and activities when they go abroad.

### **Foreigners in Japan**

In my own experience in this beautiful country, I couldn't help but to admire how disciplined the Japanese people are, but also how strict they are in their ways. I am a traveler and I like to think that my spirit is free. Curiosity led me to many new places and temerity made me try things that most would fear. That often came across as frivolity and recklessness. I was always “the one who was always playing elsewhere” and that made me wonder what fun meant to others. I love to learn, and experience is the best kind of learning, so I thought... How does that make me less serious than anyone else? I learned more about my field of study out there, on the road, than I could ever do in a classroom.

Doing this survey and reading about the subject made me realize many things. Here, there is barely any place left for creativity and spontaneity. You are free to do whatever you please within the domain of what is socially accepted and then again, you will be highly pressured to follow certain paths rather than others. Which is why us foreign elements are so confusing to people. We get to play, we get to travel, we get to choose our path freely, have useless hobbies and yet, we don't get the consequences of our actions. They watch foreigners like you would watch animals in a zoo, with no actual intention to replicate any of their behaviours or try to understand their context. As Pr. Aspinall says, Internationalization, or 国際化(kokusaika) is a whole new concept and people are not ready to change their ways just yet (2). The image of productivity that they give is their pride, but the system in itself doesn't allow much freedom to people to make their own discoveries and attempt different approaches. Not everyone is the same, and not everyone is made to live according to the Japanese standards.

So why do people have all these means to escape? If you look at manga, it's a perfect example. It doesn't take much time to read, you can take it on the train on your way to work and it is so incredibly imaginative that it keeps your mind off other things. You can watch anime on your phone for the same reason, or play video games. This is the only moment where people seem to disconnect with their reality completely and for once, pretend that they could be anything. Dream of another world in the security of your own home.

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Personal interview-based survey on a total of 100 Okayama inhabitants on a period of two months.

## ROBERT SEITZ

### An Unfortunate Denial of Reality: Japan and Marijuana

Robert Seitz

マリファナについて、日本人に共通する意見と科学的な事実とは絶対に違う。このために、日本では癌などのような病気がある人は天然の安全で効果的なマリファナと言う薬を使うことができない。人々はマリファナと関係がある事実を何も知らないまま、オウムのように意味がない言葉を繰り返す。何千年もの間、指導者は人々を多くの危険な目にあわせてきました。マリファナについてだけではなく、全部のことは、他の人の意見に惑わされなくて、自分の研究をした方がいい。

Japan refuses to acknowledge the modern scientific and medical findings pertaining to marijuana's use as a treatment for symptoms of various illnesses, and by doing so prevents people with illnesses such as cancer from receiving optimal medical care. This is due by and large to the deeply ingrained and astonishingly erroneous misconceptions regarding marijuana present in the minds of an overwhelming majority of Japanese people. One does not have to look very far to realize what the people of Japan tend to think about marijuana. While carrying out a project for my Japanese language course last semester, I conducted interviews with anonymous University students from various prefectures in Japan regarding marijuana. While the number of people interviewed formally by me was rather limited, it would be no exaggeration to say that the myriad of Japanese people I have spoken to casually about this subject outside of these interviews often echo, sometimes verbatim, the answers collected during the formal interview process.

My interviewees consisted of two different groups; students that have never lived outside of Japan, and students that have studied abroad in California or Arizona. I began my interviews with the question "What is Marijuana?", and the answer to this question varied greatly depending on which group the interviewee belonged to. The students that have never lived outside of Japan generally all replied that marijuana is a drug. When questioned what a drug was, one student told me that "A drug is something that is bad for your body, for example heroin or cocaine". I then asked, "What is the difference between marijuana and those other drugs you mentioned?", to which the student responded that he had no idea. His responses were very typical. The common Japanese train of thought is that marijuana is a drug, and drugs are bad. There is no distinction made between one "drug" and another, and Japanese people see no reason to look beyond their pre-programmed idea that "drugs are bad".

The students that studied abroad were an entirely different creature. Their answers ranged from "It is a plant found in nature" to "It's a luxury grocery item like tobacco or alcohol", to the more revealing "It's just not a big deal". These students experienced living in areas where marijuana consumption is present on a large scale, both medicinally and recreationally. They were forced to face the realities of marijuana as a result. In other words, they formed their own

opinions based on direct perceptions of the world around them. This is contrary to the students that never lived outside of Japan; this group of students was told something, and they believed what they were told without ever questioning it.

When an unquestioned belief is held onto so firmly that it prevents people from receiving a particularly useful form of medical treatment, something is wrong. But that would never happen here, would it? This is Japan, a modern nation where people are afraid of things like religion because of the inherent dangers pre-packaged into the high levels of blind faith and fanaticism the world's major religions infamously spawn. Unfortunately, the sad truth of the matter is that because of a common Japanese belief, many sick people in Japan, especially chemotherapy patients, are missing out on something western doctors consider to be a miracle medicine. That miracle medicine is marijuana, and Japan shoots itself in the foot by refusing not only to acknowledge western studies connected to the medical uses of marijuana, but also by refusing to conduct experiments or studies of their own. Because, well... it's a drug. And "drugs are bad".

Nevertheless, doctors in the west would be quick to disagree, and for good reason. "A day doesn't go by where I don't see a cancer patient who has nausea, vomiting, loss of appetite, pain, depression and insomnia," says Dr. Donald Abrams, chief of hematology-oncology at San Francisco General Hospital and a professor of clinical medicine at the University of California, San Francisco. Marijuana, he says, "is the only anti-nausea medicine that increases appetite. It also helps patients sleep and elevates their mood—no easy feat when someone is facing a life-threatening illness. "I could write six different prescriptions, all of which may interact with each other or the chemotherapy that the patient has been prescribed. Or I could just recommend trying one medicine..." (Firger, "Keep Toke Alive").

During my investigation into Japan's relationship with Marijuana, I came across an intriguing documentary filmed in Japanese with English subtitles that chronicles the stories of some native Japanese people suffering from different illnesses that decide to use marijuana illegally in courageous efforts to improve their physical conditions. One of these people is an elderly woman diagnosed with cancer. Another is a young child with a rare condition that causes her to have seizures. Her parents tracked down some cannabis oil for her, and sure enough, the frequency of her seizures have diminished significantly. I will provide the link to this documentary in the sources section of this essay and recommend it to anyone even remotely interested in this subject, especially if you are Japanese.

When asked about medicinal marijuana by the host of the documentary, Dr. Shirasaka, a doctor that was arrested in Japan for giving marijuana to his patients for free, replied that "It was used that way (medically, in Japan) before the war. There's a pharmacopoeia, a compendium of medicines that have been used in Japan. A catalog of all recognized medicines. Indian cannabis plants and Indian cannabis extract appears within it. The extract used to be sold over the counter as a medicine for asthma... up until around 1948" (Shirasaka).

When the host discusses Japan's anti-marijuana law with Taiki Moriyama, a Japanese

lawyer, Taiki highlights a few thought provoking bits of information that make marijuana's illegal status in Japan even more puzzling. "I didn't mention this in my explanation earlier, but the intent of the act is not described anywhere within it. Normally, laws have their intent written within their first article. As in, why they were enacted. But the Cannabis (Marijuana) Control Act doesn't have that. There are various theories as to why we have this law. Hemp has always been considered a sacred plant in Shinto Buddhism. When the Pacific War was fought in the name of the Emperor, some say that the allied occupation made this law to sever the ties between Shintoism and militarism, in order to wound Japan's pride as a nation. Others say it was America's ploy to shut down our hemp fiber industry, to make way for man-made materials like polyester and nylon from the U.S. Nobody knows why this law was written. And as far as I can tell, the government never had a proper discussion regarding the necessity of illegalizing cannabis" (Moriyama). The Japanese government does not provide any reason as to why marijuana is illegal, and nobody seems to care.

The host also meets with an anonymous woman that goes by the pseudonym "Pop". When discussing her situation with the host, Pop says "I was diagnosed three years ago. They told me I only had a year and a half to live, which I've exceeded." During the filming of the documentary, Pop was battling with cancer of the ascending colon. She was taking the fourth kind of medication given to her by doctors after the first, second, and third types stopped working. The fourth kind of medication is the final medication available to her; once it stops working, there is no other medication left to turn to. When asked about how marijuana affects her, she replied "Without a doubt, it increases my appetite. Cancer patients lose a lot of weight, so having an appetite is important". She lost a staggering 25 kilograms since she became ill, morphing from rather chubby to remarkably frail. "Going through treatment, I've realized that having meat on your bones is essential to fighting off disease" (Pop). What came as the biggest shock to me was that she was also taking undiluted opium extract and actually had a legal prescription for it. When asked if hospitals can really prescribe opium, she replied "It is illegal, but hospitals can still issue prescriptions for it". At this point in the documentary, she shows the camera a medical bottle of raw opium, as well as her prescription form. So in Japan, you can legally be prescribed opium, but not marijuana. Anyone that has done even the most minimal research on opium knows that it is a markedly dangerous and addictive substance. Basically, it makes marijuana look like organic baby food. That she would be prescribed opium but denied marijuana is nothing short of absurd and inhumane.

Unfortunately, discussions with Japanese people surrounding marijuana tend to be trapped inside a magical circle without any exits. They often have no idea that marijuana is simply a plant produced by nature, let alone that it can help people with cancer or that it is far safer than alcohol or tobacco when used as a recreational substance. Perhaps the Japanese police force should arrest the wild birds, deer, and rodents that eat marijuana in nature the same way they arrest human beings that choose to consume it. Because, well... "drugs are bad".

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## EILEEN PRANGAN

### Japanized English

Eileen Grace F. Prangan

カタカナとは、日本語の表記体系の一種。主に外国語に借用された日本語として使われている表記である。外国語に借用されたのに、原因の意味とまるで違う。しかし、日本人は外国人にその外国語を使う傾向がある。外国人も日本人に英語で話す時、言いたいことを伝えるように英語を日本語のような発音で話す。どんな言語の勉強でも正しい発音が重要である。

The Japanese language has a form of writing called カタカナ (*katakana*). *Katakana* is a Japanese syllabary system that is generally used for foreign words. In *katakana*, words are imported from foreign languages. The pronunciations of these words are based on Japanese syllabary so that Japanese people can easily say the words. An example would be a foreign name, such as “Tom”. With *katakana*, it would be written and pronounced as トム (toh-mu). However, English or other foreign words adopted into the Japanese language usually have a different meaning from the original. In Japanese, borrowed foreign words are called 外来語 (*gairaigo*), while borrowed English words are called 和製英語 (*wasei-eigo*). Even though the borrowed words no longer hold the same definition from where they originated, Japanese people think that their version of the same word is the same in English. Non-Japanese people also tend to think that Japanese people will understand what they want to say if they Japanize words, or say words from their mother tongue in a Japanese manner.

Because of this way of thinking, using gairaigo/wasei-eigo in both English and Japanized English causes confusion and misunderstandings.

Japanese people start learning English from junior high school until the end of their high school years. Despite learning it for a long time, many struggle with the language. The constant struggle for Japanese students to learn English may be due to the lack of experience of their teachers and the lack of communication with actual native English speakers. When approached by a foreigner in the streets, they may try to avoid communication or rely on gairaigo to speak to them. Using gairaigo may sound helpful, but often times, the listener will think of a different idea from what the Japanese speaker is actually trying to convey.

Consider this scenario:

There are two friends. One is a native Japanese speaker and the other is a native English speaker. The Japanese friend tells their friend that they are going to move to a new マンション (”mansion”). The English-speaking friend is very surprised to hear this from them and asks them if they are secretly rich. From here, the Japanese speaker will think, “Why would they think I’m *that* rich for moving into a mansion?”

In English, a mansion is a very large, impressive house. In Japanese on the other hand, a mansion is a normal condominium. Although both meanings have a similar idea, they are still very different from each other.

Okayama University students studying English at LCafe and English speakers from Guam were asked separately to take part in a survey. Both parties were asked to give the definitions of commonly used borrowed words in Japan. The following below is a chart of their answers:

**Japanese Students**

**Native English Speakers**

マンション (mansion)	Apartment/condominium	マンション (mansion)	Large, expensive house
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スタイル (style)	Body Shape	スタイル (style)	Fashion
バイキング (Viking)	Buffet	バイキング (Viking)	Scandinavian sea pirate
コンセント (consent)	Power outlet	コンセント (consent)	Agreement
カンニング (cunning)	To cheat; Cheating	カンニング (cunning)	Smart, Clever
クレーム (claim)	Complaint	クレーム (claim)	Assertion; Declaration

The results of the survey from both parties were interesting. The words that were chosen for the survey are commonly used words both used in the Japanese and English languages. From the chart, it can be understood how a misunderstanding can occur in a conversation between a Japanese person using gairaigo to a native or fluent English speaker. The definitions from both ends are different from each other. The English speakers were surprised to learn the Japanese meanings behind these words. Likewise, the Japanese students were also shocked to learn the original meaning of the words.

The list of gairaigo words is quite long and continues to expand. Despite the fact that new foreign words are becoming Japanized, that does not mean that non-Japanese people should do the same and Japanize foreign words not included in the gairaigo list when talking to Japanese people in English. Another example would be a non-Japanese speaker trying to speak to a Japanese person who cannot properly understand English. The non-Japanese speaker would try to say their English in a Japanese manner. It may sound Japanese but the Japanese speaker would have a difficult time comprehending what they are trying to say. Correspondingly, Japanese people should also be mindful about pronouncing English or foreign words in a Japanese manner. Pronouncing words in the katakana way will make it harder for the native speakers pick up what they are trying to say.

In conclusion, some English and foreign words are widely used in the Japanese language. They may be widely used in everyday conversation, but they usually hold a completely different meaning from where they originated. With any language, people should be mindful about how they pronounce their words to native speakers, as saying words in a different manner may confuse the whole conversation.

*Katakana* plays a big part in the Japanese language. It is mainly used for foreign words. Foreign words may have been adopted into the Japanese language, but often times, they are given a different meaning from the original. Without knowing that, Japanese people tend to use *gairaigo* towards foreigners, thinking that they understand the same meaning as they do. Likewise, foreigners trying to speak to Japanese people in English try to say words in a Japanese manner thinking that it will be understood. However, that is not the case for both situations.

### **Being in the EPOK Program**

Being accepted into the EPOK was a dream come true to me. After years of aspiring, the program made it possible for me to finally come to Japan and study in a Japanese university, which exceeds my original dream. The EPOK program has allowed me to experience the school life in Japan and what it's like to live in a different country. From these experiences, I was able to test my Japanese abilities and my independence, and grow as a person. The time I had here was short and I came across my fair of hardships, but above all they were learning experiences that will surely benefit me.

## DANIELLE HAGEN

### Why not Guam?

Danielle Hagen

アジアの学生にとって留学の目的は英語を話せる国でよく英語の勉強することです。しかし留学は英語の勉強だけではなくて文化を学んで色々な人に会って別の国で別の生活を経験して世界に意見が変わることです。その上自分の目的は英語の勉強だったらどこでも英語を話せる国はいいですけど日本人にとってアメリカや英国もが一番英語の勉強ができる場所。グアムもいい英語の勉強ができる場所ですけど日本人の大学生に聞くとあまりグアムのことが分からなくてただの観光地だけで勉強ができる場所ではないと思われていました。

The purpose of a study abroad for an Asian student is to improve their English in a country/state where English is the mother language; however, a study abroad is not only about studying, it is also about learning different cultures, meeting different people, experiencing life in a different environment than what one is used to, and widening one's perception of the world. Therefore, if one's main goal is to improve their English, any country where English is the main language would be a good choice however because of Japanese people's preconceived images of the U.S and U.K, they are prone to think that either are the ideal places to go to for studying English. However, when Japanese college students were asked about studying in Guam, they based their answers on preconceived knowledge about the island. Their answers expressed their little to no knowledge about the island, making them think that it is not the ideal place to study English.

Since the beginning of the student exchange program between University of Guam and Okayama University, there have been many students from Guam who chose to go to Okayama but very few students from Okayama have come to Guam. There were 13 Guam students who exchanged to Okayama and only 3 Okayama students who chose to go to Guam until now. As a way to understand the Okayama student's reasons for not choosing Guam, Okayama students were interviewed; they were students who held interests in studying abroad in the future and one who had already been on a study abroad in the states. When asked where the students wanted to study abroad or where they had studied abroad before, they replied with answers such as somewhere in the states or the United Kingdom. Prior to interviewing the students, the answers they would give were already expected. In the eyes of a Japanese student, the states or the United Kingdom is the ideal place to study. When asked why these places were ideal, they replied that it is where you learn perfect English skills, it gives you opportunities to study in an all English environment, and there is a diversity of people. It also seemed that studying in these places gives a better image to companies when applying for jobs; however little did they know that they could also achieve these points in Guam as well.

Guam is a very small island and not many people around the world know about it but when living only about 4 hours away from it by plane, one would think that Japanese people would have a little more knowledge than others; however, it was not true. Most of the students interviewed knew at least that Guam existed but had close to nothing or very little knowledge about it. They also did not know that Guam was an optional place for them to study abroad at. A reason for that is because when the students imagine Guam, they said they would think of the beach or vacation, definitely not as a place you go to study. They usually see ads for a vacation to Guam on the television. They also think the people in Guam do not speak perfect English and since it is a small island, they would not be able to meet a lot of

people from different cultures like they would in the states. After listening to the explanation about Guam, they realized that what they thought was not all true. Guam is a very nice place for vacation however it is also a great place to experience a study abroad. The main language of Guam is the same English people in the states would speak and it is also a mini melting pot of cultures. It is also closer to Japan and cheaper to fly between Guam and Japan than it would be to go to the states. Although there are many Japanese people on the island, it does not mean one would not be put in an environment where they would be forced to do their best and speak English; it would only depend on where they go. It is also more convenient because in situations such as if a student were to get in an accident or run into a situation which is too complicated for them to understand in English, there are people on Guam who would be able to translate the important details from them. A Japanese student who studied in California was interviewed and she exclaimed that, “It was very troubling and inconvenient. There were other Japanese exchange students as well but their English was about the same as mine so it didn’t help.” There was no one to translate something important for her which became a troubling situation.

After the explanation, the students were asked what their current impression of Guam was and whether they would consider it as a place one could improve their English. All the students agreed that even though Guam had the image of a vacation spot, it was also a good place to study and that it would be an option they would consider for a study abroad. They also expressed that they were only thinking of studying as the main point of a study abroad rather than the experience of a completely different culture and environment.

A study abroad is not only meant to be an opportunity for studies but as a fun trip to experience new and fun adventures. It is okay for a student to have lots of fun while studying abroad; it is a part of the experience. Even though The U.S. and U.K. have the preconceived image of being the ideal places to study English, after hearing more knowledge about Guam,



the Japanese students also began to think that this “vacation” island was also an ideal place to study English.

### **The EPOK experience**

Being in Okayama has been a fun and life changing experience. Through the EPOK program I was able to take unusual classes which allowed me to experience different cultural aspects about Japan and also a class which allowed me to learn about even the country side(Inaka) of Japan which I thought was quite refreshing. I enjoyed a wonderful dorm life as well with international roommates and even a Japanese EPOK student tutor who helped me to know a little bit about Okayama. The teachers were kind and very caring. I loved the atmosphere of my classroom and the classmates I spent this semester with. I feel that my Japanese skill has grown significantly since coming to Japan. I was not able to travel around to different places as much as I wanted to however I feel that even without that, I enjoyed my time fully. Through the EPOK home-stay class, I was able to meet a wonderful and warm Japanese family. It was an experience I will never forget and connections I will treasure for a lifetime. EPOK allowed me the opportunity to come to Japan as an exchange student which has helped me to realize what steps I would like to take next in my life such as another study abroad in Korea. I have learned many things from this experience and I would like to experience more in yet another environment.

## NUR MOHD BOHARI

### Part-time Job (*Arubaito*) Culture among Okayama University's Students and what are the Pros and Cons of This Culture

Name: Nur Syazwani binti MOHD BOHARI

このエッセイでは、「岡山大学の学生の間でアルバイト文化」について検討した。「アルバイト」文化が日本の有名な文化だから、このトピックには興味がある。このエッセイから、「アルバイト文化」が生まれたのは、家族や他の人のサポートや、将来の節約、授業料の支払などからである。また、我々はこの文化から教訓を得ることができ、その教訓を生かし、文化を吸収することができる。

良い研究の結果を得るために、質と量の方法を両方使用していた。この文化の関連する背景と問題を理解するために、私は専門家によって書かれたいくつかの学術論文を読んでいた。それだけではなく、岡山大学における現在の状況をより理解するために、ターゲット・グループの間で分散アンケートのデータを収集、分析し、論文に出したデータと比較した。アルバイトがもたらした学生への影響を理解するために、パートタイムの仕事をしている。

*Arubaito* (アルバイト) comes from German word *arbeit*<sup>6</sup>, which means part-time job. The term usually refers to student part-time job. It is being traced back to the nineteenth century when German offered their students “arbeit” cleaning their homes<sup>7</sup>. During Japan postwar period, there were only two kinds of employment contracts in Japan until mid-1980s: non-limited term contracts to regular employees and limited-term contracts to non-regular employees of the organization, such as *paato* (female part-time), *keiyaku* (contract worker) *shokutaku* (reemployed elderly worker as contract workers) and *arubaito*<sup>8</sup>. *Aubaito* is employed directly through the local labor market.

*Arubaito* culture seems very famous in Japan compared to Malaysia. According to The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, the percentage of part-time employment rate for Japan in 2013 is 21.9%<sup>9</sup>, which is quite high compared to other countries like Russia, Hungary, Turkey and even its neighbor, Korea. Usually, the companies only give low wage for part-time worker compared to permanent worker. They also much easier to dismiss, though they perform the same task as fulltime worker. In addition, they also do not obtain the same allowance and annual bonus given to the full-time worker. But, above of all this inequality, why students still want to do part-time job?

According to Admission Office Okayama University, there are 10148 undergraduate students have been registered to this university up till 1<sup>st</sup> May 2016<sup>10</sup>. 30 questionnaires were

<sup>6</sup> Buckley, S. (2002). *Arubaito*. In *The Encyclopedia of Contemporary Japanese Culture*. (pp. 27-28). London, England: Routledge.

<sup>7</sup> Perez, L. G. (1998). *The History of Japan*. (pg 181). Connecticut, London: Greenwood Press.

<sup>8</sup> Imai, J. (2011). *The Transformation of Japanese Employment Relations: Reform without Labor*. (pp.27-30). Hampshire, England: Macmillan Publishers Limited

<sup>9</sup> “Employment.” OECD Data. (2016). <https://data.oecd.org/emp/part-time-employment-rate.htm>, (2016 May 4).

<sup>10</sup> Okayama University 2017.

distributed to Okayama University (OkaDai) undergraduate students to get the responses for this issue. As mentioned above, *arubaito* culture among students in Japan is very popular compared to Malaysia. From the responses, the average living expense among OkaDai students is ¥91309 per month. Meanwhile, the university students in Malaysia usually spend ¥31250 (RM1250) per month. We can see the average living expense among OkaDai student is much higher. Based on the response, most of the living expense is used to fulfill the basic needs. 20% from the average living expense is spend for hobby and others, like internet bill and entertainment. The responds show that there are three primary financial sources for the students, which is family, doing *arubaito* and scholarship. It shows that 13.3% of the student getting money from the family, 30.0% doing *arubaito*, 53.3% get allowance from family and doing *arubaito*, and 3.3% get scholarship and doing *arubaito* for their financial source. Most of the students doing *arubaito* although get the allowance from the family. Next, the result says 27.6% of the students get more than enough money from their financial source, 48.3% said it is enough and 24.1% said it is just enough to obtain the money from the financial source. No one answers not enough getting money for this question.

Based on the questionnaire, 4 students are not doing *arubaito*, which give 13% and 26 of them, which gives 87% doing *arubaito* in various fields. They work at restaurant, education-related like private tutor and tutor at cramp school, *konbini* and others field like sport apparel and car rental. 13 students work at restaurant, 4 students tutoring and work at *konbini* each, 3 of them tutoring and work at restaurant at a same time and the two remaining involve in car rental and sport apparel business. Among of 30 students, only two students doing more than one job at a same time. The highest average wage per hour is tutoring which gives 1119 yen, followed by working at restaurant which gives 885 yen, others which gives 825 yen and working at *konbini* gives 818 yen per hour. Although the highest wage is doing tutoring, but most of the student doing *arubaito* at restaurant. This is due to high wage, suitable time to work, which is after school time or at night as most of the students work at *izakaya*, and they also get food when working at restaurant. The average working hour made by OkaDai students is 13.4 hours per week.

As mention before, students still want to do part time job even though they are aware of this inequality. This may due to some reasons. Doing *arubaito* do gives some pros and cons to students. One of the reasons why students are doing *arubaito* is to get money for saving or to spend it to something that they love, like hobby and entertainment. Besides, based on the responds, 70% of students doing part-time job to gain experiences, followed by self-confidence and making friends, which give 10% each, to polish skills and obtain self-satisfaction both contribute to 3.3% each and 3.3% get nothing doing *arubaito*. From data above, we can see most of the students get something precious in their work. Only one student does not obtain beneficial value from this activity. Meanwhile, according to Manabu Sato, head of the Tokyo-based *Burakku Arubaito* Union, students used to take part-time jobs just to earn pocket money, but nowadays many have to work to cover their tuition and living expenses<sup>11</sup>

Doing part-time job also may affect students in the other way. From the questionnaires' answer, 26.9% of the student always can focus in class, 30.8% often focus in class and 34.5% sometimes focus in class, not very often focus in class and not focus in class at all both give same value, which is 3.8% each. We can see that most students can focus in class compare to only one student is not very often and not focuses in class. However, based on the responses, in different question, 19.2% of the students always sleepy in class, 26.9% often sleepy, 34.6%

<sup>11</sup> Maruko, M. (2014, December 29). Exploited Working Students Starting to Fight 'Burakku Arubaito' System. Retrieved May 17, 2016, from <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2014/12/29/national/exploited-working-students-starting-to-fight-burakku-arubaito-system/#.VzqLOTv97Dd>

of the students sometimes sleepy, 15.4% not often and 3.8% of students is not sleepy at all in class. For this question, most students feeling sleepy in class compared to ones who awake in class. This is so contradict compared to the percentage of focus in class. From this, we can say that although they are sleepy, they still can focus in study.

Doing *arubaito* also might disturb their quality time with family and friends. From the responds given, 7.9% of the students say *arubaito* always disturb their quality time with their family and friends, 3.8% is often disturbed, 38.4% of the percentage vote both sometimes and not very often and 11.5% says it is not disturbed their quality time with family and friends at all. The percentage of students' quality time with family and friends which is been disturbed and not been disturbed is same. Most students say *arubaito* sometimes and not very often disturbed their quality time. On the other hand, based on project group led by Hirokazu Ouchi, a professor at Chukyo University in 2013, said that a lot of students who do part-time job do not have time to write reports for courses at university, always tired or sleepy and cannot concentrate during lecture time, unwillingly skip other activities with friends and even attending job-hunting seminars<sup>12</sup>.

But, above of all feedback, most OkaDai students agree with this culture. Only one response says if possible, he/she does not want to do part-time job. Most popular reason among the students, with nine responses, says they agree with *arubaito* culture because it gives new experiences and experiences with social to the student. Second famous reason to agree with *arubaito* culture is students will be more independent, with five responses. The third most popular reason is to get knowledge that cannot be obtained in class, with three responses, followed by self-satisfaction for using money earned by own efforts, with two responses, same with to do preparation before working permanently in future which also get two responses, followed by to sharpens skills and communications, meeting new people and to understand the hardworking and the value of the money. From these responses, we can see that there are many reasons why students continue doing part-time job, besides money, although they don't get the equal right compare to permanent worker.

I have three times experience doing *arubaito* in Japan. First and second part-time job involve packaging *bento*. I managed to get 456 yen per hour and free food to eat. As I did it during weekend, I work six hours per day. Third experience involves education-related job. I got 3000 yen for 3 hours working. For me, working six hours per day is quiet tiring. I may do it well last time, but doing it as routine will make me exhausted. From my experience and the responds, we can see that education-related jobs give highest wage compared to other part-time job. Just like stated above, I agree that experiences, to polish skills and making friends are reasons that can be obtained through this activity. Through my experience, I really support this culture but with two condition: first, as long as it's not disturb students' study time and their time with family, and second is as long as it is not an illegal job.

To conclude the essay, *arubaito* is a part-time job for student. It may more popular here compare to Malaysia because the living expense in Japan is very high, almost triple compared to average living expense for student in Malaysia. Most of OkaDai students get allowance from family and doing *arubaito* as financial source, which represents 53.3% in total. Besides, majority students with 48.3% say they get enough money from the financial source. The most popular part-time job among OkaDai students is working at restaurant, due to some reasons like high wage, suitable time to work and get food when working at restaurant. The average

<sup>12</sup> Maruko, M. (2014, December 29). Exploited Working Students Starting to Fight 'Burakku Arubaito' System. Retrieved May 17, 2016, from <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2014/12/29/national/exploited-working-students-starting-to-fight-burakku-arubaito-system/#.VzqLOTv97Dd>

working hour made by OkaDai students is 13.4 hours per week. For me, it is suitable number of working hour. There are many reasons why student doing part time job. Apart from getting money, students are keen to do *arubaito* because of the valuable things obtained during doing the job like experiences, self-confidence, self-satisfaction, making friends and polishing skills. OkaDai students mostly said that doing part-time job do not disturb their quality time with family and friends. Last but not least, majority of OkaDai students are agree with this culture because it teaches the students how to prepare themselves to be a responsible and matured adult in future.

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#### EPOK Review:

I'm an Islamic Studies and Applied Science (Biohealth) student. It's a double major programme. For me, it's quite tough programme. I decided to not pursue my study after my graduation before. Therefore, I joined EPOK programme because this is my last chance to study abroad and being sponsored. Here, I study Japanese Language with postgraduate and PhD students. We have a happy energetic Japanese Language class four times a week. It's very inspiring surrounded by these people. Now, I have intention to continue my study in future.

# SHARIFAH SYED JAAFAR PUTRA

## RESEARCH ON WORKAHOLICS AND KAROSHI IN JAPAN

Sharifah Syed Jaafar Putra

### A) Summary in Japanese

このエッセイでは、にほんでざんぎょうがしょうれいされているじじつと、かろうしがどのようなものであるのか、についてせつめいします。にほんでしごとちゅうどくとかろうしは、いままでしんこくなもんだいでした。かこすうじゅうねんかん、しごとちゅうどくがじょうしょうけいこうにあることは、せかいのせんしんこくにおいてけねんされているもやだいです。にほんは、もっともしごとちゅうどくしゃがおおいくにのせかいだいにランクインしています。やく31.7%いじょうのひとがしゅう40じかんいじょうもはたらいているのです。しごとちゅうどくは、かろうし(ざんぎょうのしすぎでしぬこと)をひきおこすしんこくなもんだいとしかんごえられています。けいざいやこようじょうたいがへんかしているにほんは、ろうどうしゃにおけるしごとちゅうどくのこうどうにえいきょうしています。そしてわたしのにほんじんのゆうじんにたずねたところ、かれらはまたこのもんだいについてみとめています。

このけんきゅうからわたしたちは、しごとちゅうどくがのうりよくのちょうかだとかんごえられていることや、しよもうのタスクをたっせいするためにちゅうやすごしているろうどうしゃたちが、ひじょうにこうりつてきではあるがかなりきびしいというじじつをすることになるでしょう。しかし、じっさいこのじょうきょうはこじんにえいきょうをあたえます。このけんきゅうがまたかろうしとはどのようなものなのかていぎすることになるでしょう。かろうしは、ろうどうしゃのけんこうじょうたいのあつかをひきおこすちょうじかんろうどうのけっかの1つです。

In this essay, I will discuss about what the factor that encourages Japanese to work overtime and how the Karoshi be. Workaholics and Karoshi in Japan was a serious issue until now. For the past few decades, the rising trend of Workaholics behaviour has become an issue of concern for the developed countries of the world. Japan ranked the second country that has the most workaholics, with an estimated 31,7% people who works more than 40 hours in a week. Workaholics is considered as a serious social problem that can lead to Karoshi (die due to overwork). In Japan, where changes in the economic and employment situation in Japan is affecting the behavior Workaholics among workers in Japan. And based on my observation and when I ask to Japanese, they also admit about this issue in their country.

From this research we will know what the factors Workaholics actually are considered as those overly capable, highly efficient and extremely hard working individuals who spend their days and nights for the accomplishment of their desired tasks. But in fact actually this situation give impact to individual. This research also determines the impact of Karoshi to the Japanese. Karoshi is one of the consequences of long working hours, causing the deterioration of the health of workers.

## B) My Essay

The development of Japan economy that occurred since the 1980s often associated with Japanese management system unique and very effective. One of the attention is the work environment in Japan is the key to success and also often associated as the cause of the situation Karoshi and Workaholics. In this research, Workaholics in general are people working very hard for many hours. Workaholics term was used officially refer to service workers white collar and public "overworked", the term was coined in 1968 by members American psychology of Wayne Oates. Karoshi is one of the consequences of long working hours, thus causing the deterioration of the health of workers.

For the past few decades, the rising trend of Workaholics behaviour has become an issue of concern for the developed countries of the world. Workaholics seen to have an impact on the physical and mental labor. Japan ranked the second country that has the most workaholics, with an estimated 31,7% people who works more than 40 hours in a week. Workaholics is considered as a serious social problem that can lead to Karoshi (die due to overwork). According to labor ministry data, records Karoshi compensation claims increased to 1,456 in the year ended March 2015, the highest so far.

### 1) The factors that encourages Japanese to work overtime.

Reasons to work in a long time in Japan, not only due to economic factors, but also social and cultural factors. For the Japanese, the work is the ultimate goal of the work was itself: it is the obligation of the society and self as social beings. In Japanese culture, the time spent at a desk or work is symbolic statement on the managerial and loyalty to the organization, because of the hard work and trade is rated higher than the capacity of collective culture. As a result, workers in Japan often asked to work overtime voluntarily. Based on my observation the Japanese don't have free time to engage in sports such as tennis. In Japan however, even if a worker doesn't usually be 7.00 p.m. before he or she reaches home. On top of this, there are very few sports facilities to be found either near one's home or office. Those that do exist are usually membership-type club with exorbitant membership fees that put them beyond the reach of the average worker. Therefore, engaging in healthful sport on weekdays is difficult for some people.

What is more, the homes of urban workers are extremely small, and it is rare for a worker to have a room of his own. referred to by some as "rabbit hutches" these inadequate homes do not afford the worker much as a place to relax and refresh after a day of work. Even if one seeks to escape such a "rabbit hutch" for a more spacious home, the price is so high that the burden of the loan payments forces one to advance one's position in quest of a higher salary. And this propensity for overwork is not limited to adult. It actually begins is not limited to adults. It actually begins in the elementary school years. Japanese children attend school an average of about 240 days out of the year, or 40 to 60 days more than their counterparts in most western countries. On top of this, in order to prepare for junior high school entrance examinations, they engage in "overtime" in the form of after-school "juku" (preparatory classes for these exams). They even learn about working on holidays, in the form of increasingly prominent Sunday juku. In this way, children grow accustomed to overwork as early as their elementary school years.

In the light of the drawn conclusions, the assumption can be made that obsessive working behaviour might be the influential factor behind slow and delayed working of finance department. Workaholics with their extreme attitude concentrate on hard work instead of working smart. This leads to their inefficient productivity. Thus, managerial level staff should deal with workaholics in order to reduce inefficiencies. Another finding include that workaholics are highly influenced by their financial dependents. During research it is observed that a person with greater financial responsibilities yields aggressive workaholics.

To meet their purpose, workaholics generally tend to work harder and longer.

Workaholism develops by just taking work as a hobby but later it becomes a habit and addiction. The evaluation revealed that workaholics consider their work a priority over other things without realizing how adversely this approach is affecting them. Few of them accepted the fact and have shown willingness to change or compromise while some of them didn't accept the fact that their attitude is spoiling their personal and private life. It is thus, concluded that overall performance achieved by workaholism is either just satisfactory or below average. Because of their over working habits they sometimes do irrelevant work during the working hours which ultimately results in late submissions.

Another interesting finding reveals that most of the workaholics are from the background who wanted to make money out of their hobbies. Due to their interest in their work, they often prefer that over other things in life. This give them pleasure and contentment. This trend is mostly seen in international non- government organizations.

Generally, workaholics are considered those individuals who extend their working hours and tend to invest more time in their work. The research, though, proved the concept to be a mere misconception. During research it was observed that workers who work in their scheduled time slot also act as workaholics. Various factors are involved which influence one to act this way including future worries, jealousy, professional consciousness etc. The trend is common in private organizations where promotions and incentives are based on performance and devotion. To get the purpose, workaholics generally work extremely hard to show their devotion and excellence in front of their superiors. The results could not find anything eminent with regard to person's brought up. It all just happens because of an individual's own choices and preferences. It was also observed that married persons seem to show more workaholism as compared to singles. The difference however isn't very clear but still it reflects the real life conditions in our society. Having more financial dependents also forces a person to drive towards workaholism. All these impacts on one's professional life, also influences one's personal life in a negative way. A workaholics person generally faces a lot of health issues and fatigue.

## 2) How Karoshi be?

Stated in the simplest terms, Karoshi is death from overwork. Defined in more professional terms, it is a “conditional in which psychologically unsound work processes are allowed to continue in a way that disrupts the worker’s normal work and life rhythms, leading to a build-up of fatigue in the body and a chronic, condition of overwork accompanied by a worsening of preexistent high blood pressure and hardening of an arteries and finally resulting in a fatal breakdown”. (Definition by Dr. Tetsunojyo Uehata of the National Institute of Public Health et al.)

For example, cases because of Karoshi from Toshitsugu Yagi, who died in February 1987, at the young age of 43 from a myocardial infarction. Mr. Yagi worked for Sogei Co., a middle-sized advertising agency based in Tokyo. Mr. Yagi’s busy work schedule for several years leading up to his death didn’t allow him to return home before 11 or 12 p.m most night. On the day of his death, Mr. Yagi had returned home unusually early, at 10 p.m., and had even found time to help his eldest daughter a bit with her exam studies. As soon as he got into bed that night about midnight he started feeling pain, and before an ambulance could arrive he had died. After her husband death, Mrs. Mitsue Yagi found the words in one of his notebooks. “Don’t the salaries workers in ‘Prosperous Japan’ today actually live a lower life than the slaves of old?”. Unfortunately, Mr. Yagi would prove the truth of these words with his own untimely death.

According Dr. Uehata, the cause of fatigue build-up is: 1) heavy physical labor 2) long hours of overtime, working without days off, late night work and other factors that obstruct



biological rhythms 3) excessive stress resulting from factors like overly intense work responsibilities, solitary job transfers and undesired job assignments or transfers.

In addition, factors that tend to accompany excessive workloads like disruption of sleep rhythms, reduction of free time for rest and leisure, excessive drinking and smoking, alteration of eating habits, neglect of medical treatment and disruption of family life, all contribute to the build-up of fatigue. When these excessive stress factors act on the cerebrum, they cause the sympathetic nerves and suprarenal glands to affect changes in the production of such hormones causing a rise in blood pressure, hardening, of the arteries and increased coagulating characteristics in the blood, which in turn lead to cerebral hemorrhage, cerebral infarction, and heart failure.

In recent years, the death rate of cerebral and heart disease patients in Japan stands at more than 300,00 per year. Needless to say many of these deaths are unrelated to work, but it is believed that the cases in which work load is a contributing cause of death number in the tens of thousands.

The passage of time and the current economic situation is affecting the behavior of workaholics among Japanese workers are becoming a serious problem for Japan. The Japanese government has implemented various measures to overcome Karoshi among employees, but also workaholism still occur even in small amounts but also the population in Japan is at an alarming level.

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#### D) Review of my experiences in Epok Program

I'm feel glad because had be chosen to join EPOK Program in Okayama University. Many new experiences I get based on classes I take on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter. I can't forget all of this experiences, I learn many about culture in Japan. And the most experiences I love is field trip to many places Inaka. I just feel glad, because from this course I can have communicated with other Japanese. Also in EPOK Research, from this course I learn how to make research in the fact get information directly from Japanese people. Because not easy for me if you do something research about some place but u don't ask or face the real people from that place to get information. Thank you Okayama University for all of this.

## KATETIP PICHETMETAKUL

### 日本のレストランの喫煙席と禁煙席

Katetip Pichetmetakul (Noon) ゲッティップ ピチットメータークン (ヌン)

10ヶ月間日本に住んでいてびっくりすることがたくさんあります。私にとって一番面白いのはファミリーレストランで禁煙席と喫煙席が分かれていることです。大坂へ行くとき、サイゼリヤというレストランで食事をしました。そのとき店員に禁煙席、それとも喫煙席に座ると聞かれました。そのとき私は混乱しました。

タイで全部禁煙席ですから、日本のレストランは不思議だと思います。その時は初めてレストランで食事をしながら、タバコのおいがしました。そのあと、その店に行きたくないと思いました。

それで、私は他の人の意見を知りたいです。ほかの人がタバコのおいが好きかそれとも嫌いになりました。日本人はその分煙に慣れているかどうか調べたいんです。あとは、タバコの煙は健康に悪いので、レストランを決めるときに喫煙席があるレストランは問題があるかどうか。喫煙者はレストランの中でタバコを吸うとき、周りの人の気持ちを気にするかどうか。あとは、そのように席を分けることで日本に悪いイメージがつくかどうか、日本人はご飯を食べながら、タバコの煙がするのはどんな気持ちをするのか、それに、禁煙席と喫煙席を分けることは本当に煙をふせぐでしょうか。これについて、周りの人の考えを聞いてみたいので、このテーマを選びました。

この作文は日本のレストランに関する説明をします。禁煙席と喫煙席が分かれているレストラン。タイのレストランは全部禁煙席ですから、日本のレストランでタバコを吸えることは不思議だと思います。

タイは公の場でタバコを吸うことはできません。タイの法律は公の場でタバコを吸うなら、2000バーツ罰金を払わなければなりません。例えば、レストランや工場で吸えません。その上、通常タイの社会ではタバコは好まれません。もし、歩道で誰かタバコをすうのを見たら、周りの人は小声で話したり、厳しい目で見つめたりします。もし、その人がそれに気づいたら、タバコを吸うのを止めるでしょう。タイでタバコを吸える場所は家の中や駐車場や非常口などです。タイ人は傍目が気になるため、人前では社会上禁止された行為をあまりしません。日本人がタバコを止める理由は周りの人に迷惑をかけたくないからだと思いますが、逆にタイ人は周りの人に叱られることや悪口が怖いからです。

それにしても、非喫煙者はタバコを吸わないですが、副流煙によってタバコを吸わなくても間接的にタバコを吸うことがあります。受動喫煙は、タバコの煙と喫煙者のタバコを含んだ息をあわせて吸い込むことを意味します。受動喫煙には二つの種類があります。一つ目は喫煙者のタバコの煙を直接吸い込む場合で、二つ目はタバコを吸った人の息を吸い込む場合です。喫煙者がタバコを吸う場合はフィルターに守られているので、大きな害はありませんが、受動喫煙者の場合は煙草の煙を直接吸うので、喫煙者より危険です。

ファミリーレストランで禁煙席と喫煙席が分かれていることに注目します。ファミリーレストランは一般的な料理を手ごろな価格で提供します。それに、子供からお年寄りまで食べられるレストランと言われます。レストランでタバコの煙を守る

の方法は二つがあります。喫煙席のゾーンと禁煙席のゾーンの間に壁があることとファンが動くことですが、効かないような気がします。レストランによっては壁というよりただの仕切りのようになっています。禁煙席のゾーンと喫煙席のゾーンはきちんと分かれていないので煙は自由に行き来します。この場合はレストランで壁があるのに意味がありません。それにドアを開けると、煙も外に出てしまいます。

子供たちは免疫力があまりないので煙を吸うと、大人よりも呼吸器疾患になる危険性が高まります。例えば、ぜんそくや気管支炎、肺炎などです。妊娠している女性もとても危ないです。煙を吸いすぎたら、妊娠中毒症や早産など危険をはらみませす。副流煙を吸う機会が多い人とそうでない人を比べると前者は2倍肺がんの危険性があります。喫煙席があるレストランで働いている人はとても危ないと思います。

私は禁煙者と喫煙者をインタビューしました。外国人と日本人の意見が知りたいですから、サンプルは日本人に加えて外国人15人になります。回答者の年齢は20から25歳までです。喫煙者は3人です。非喫煙者は12人です。このインタビューをしてみて最近日本で喫煙者は段々減ってきていると思いました。

非喫煙者のタバコを吸わない理由は体に悪いし、お金がかかるからと言いました。これから、喫煙者は減りつつあると思います。

タバコを吸うことに関してみんなタバコは健康によくないと知っています。その上、匂いはくさく周りの人に迷惑がかかります。しかし、喫煙者はタバコを吸うことはカッコいいと言いました。

喫煙者はタバコがよくないのを知っていますが、ストレス解消のためにいいと思っています。禁煙席に座ってもタバコのおいがるのはにおいがうつってしまうため、禁煙席を作っても意味がないと言いました。タバコが嫌いな人もいるし、迷惑をかけると言いました。煙は味や香りに影響があります。食べるとき煙の匂いがすると食事が美味しくなくなります。もう少ししっかり分けてほしいと言いました。喫煙者は周りの人に迷惑をかけるから、悪いと言いました。タバコのおいを防ぐためにレストランの中に煙を吸い込む機械や喫煙席の間にかべがあるのがいいと言いました。レストランのなかでタバコのおいがきらいな人もいるからです。

煙を吸い込む機械はいいですが、空気を移動させるから、かべのほうがいいです。かべがあれば空気があまり移動しないからです。一番いいのは両方があることです。でも、そういう機械が少ないから、もっと増えたほうがいいです。レストランの中を全部禁煙にすることについて大体賛成ですが、反対の人もいます。賛成の人の理由はレストランには子供とお年寄りも来るからです。それに、タバコのおいが嫌いな人もたくさんいるから、そういう人に迷惑をかけるのはよくないと言いました。また、ご飯を食べるときはタバコがなかったら、おいしく食べられます。反対の人の意見はレストランでタバコを吸う人もいるから、全部禁煙になれば、喫煙者がかわいそうだといいました。しかし、喫煙者は全部禁煙にすることがいいと言いました。タバコを吸う人が我慢するべきだと言いました。

外国人と日本人は禁煙席のことについてどう思うを調べました。外国人たちはそういうレストランがある日本は悪いイメージと思っています。日本人の平均年齢は長いですが、レストランの中は健康に悪い場所です。インタビューから、大体若者の日本人は好きではない感じがしました。食べるとき煙の匂いがするなら、おいしくなくなります。食べるときはその料理の匂いが必要だからです。アレルギーの人はかわいそうです。タバコの匂いがすると、頭とのが痛くなります。

でも、気にしない人もあります。生まれた時からそういうレストランへ行き、慣れてしまったようです。禁煙席に座るとき全然タバコのおいがないと答えます。

全部禁煙になるのは一長一短と言うことができます。長所は非喫煙者が美味しく食事できます。その上、皆さんの健康にいいです。大体外国人は自分の国は禁煙レストランですから、全部禁煙席のほうがいいと言いました。短所は喫煙者がレストランにいるとき、タバコを吸えないなら、その人たちがかわいそうです。とにかく、私の意見はレストランにいるとき、皆が幸せに食事をするため、喫煙者はタバコを吸わないべきです。短い時間なら、喫煙を我慢できると思います。

ほかの解決策はタバコのおいをかえることです。インタビューに答える人はほとんど反対でした。理由はもしタバコがいいにおいがするなら、喫煙者数が段々増えるに決まっています。その上、においはほかの人に迷惑をかけないですが、タバコの煙害はまだあります。煙を吸うと、健康には悪いです。

日本社会でタバコを吸うことに対する今後の対策はタバコの値段と税金を高くすることです。喫煙者はタバコのポイ捨てなどに気をつけなければなりません。学校ではタバコが体に悪いとしっかり教え、公共の建物では全部禁煙席にします。タバコのパッケージに病気について書くことも大切です。

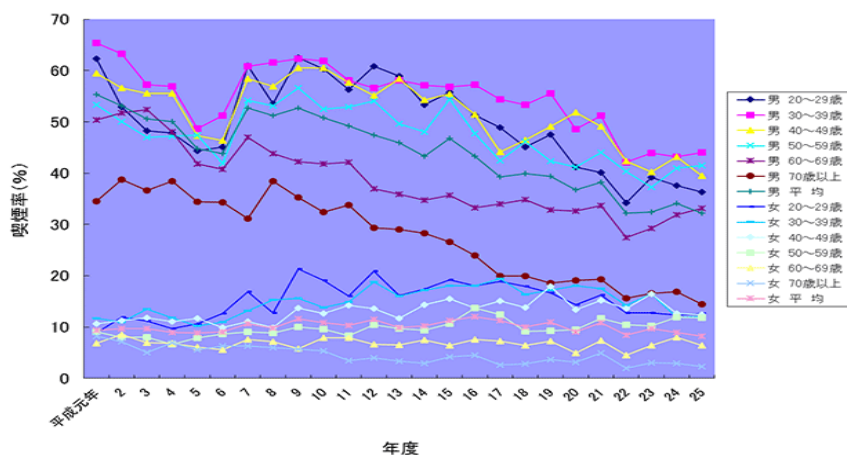
このインタビューの結果から、回答者は大体タバコの煙が嫌いなので、全席禁煙席になるのは賛成でした。禁煙席に座っても、タバコの煙が来るから、レストランの中を喫煙席と禁煙席を分けるだけでは十分ではありません。

私はレストランの中でみんなが幸せにご飯を食べられるように、全席禁煙席になることほどいい方法はないと思います。レストランでタバコのおいが嫌いな人もいるから、喫煙者は我慢しなければなりません。食べた後喫煙所で吸ったほうがいいと思います。日本社会でタバコを吸うことの対策で一番いい方法は吸わない人にタバコの悪い面を教えて、この人を守ることだと思います。タバコの値段と税金が上がっても喫煙者がタバコを吸うことをやめるわけではありません。喫煙者は値段が高くても、買います。教育によって喫煙者を増やさないことが大切です。

### 成人喫煙率（厚生労働省国民健康栄養調査）

現在習慣的に喫煙している者の割合は、19.3%である。性別にみると、男性32.2%、女性8.2%であり、男女ともに10年間で減少傾向にある。

喫煙習慣者の年次推移（性・年齢別）



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# KRYSTAL MORGAN

EPOK Final Paper

## Teaching English as a Foreign Language

Krystal Morgan

文化は重要です。文化は私たちが学ぶ方法を変更します。文化を理解することは、教師のために重要です。英語はむずかしですね。

### Introduction

Culture is a lens through which we see the world. It colors our thoughts, feelings, how we view the world, how we process information, and how we perceive new things. Learning is no exception to the shades of cultural impact. How we learn is effected by our culture just as much as it is by our schools and teachers.

Culture is all around us and it shades everything we do, from how we get up in the morning- do you brush your teeth before or after breakfast? - to how we eat our food- chopsticks, fingers, or forks? - to how we interact with others every day. Since culture is so instrumental to our understanding of the world, it's easy to see that it also impacts how students learn, especially in regards to language.

In countries with a large multicultural population, such as those within Europe and the United States of America (herein referred to as USA/America), cultural sensitivity is something that is needed within a classroom environment to offer the best education to students. Within Japan, the multicultural aspects, though less obvious, also impact individual students' educational needs. When teaching English, as a first or foreign language, it's important to take into consideration different students' backgrounds, especially their socio-economic status-which could impact their ability to do homework or activities outside of class- their religion-which may require missed days of class as well as other exceptions-and their familial background.

Some students will require certain accommodations to be made in order to participate in class within the same capacity as other students. It's vital that we understand these situations and are sufficiently accommodating to avoid offending them or others while still maintaining a high quality education and controlled classroom environment.

### Background

Some of the most prominent cultural barriers when teaching English, especially as a foreign language, include lack of certain sounds within students' native tongue, religious customs and the place of respect within a classroom -such as within Japanese cultures.

Many English classrooms in Japan will have either a foreign teacher who's native to English with a low Japanese level, or a Japanese teacher who learned English but lacks native

fluency. While both instances have their benefits, the best classrooms fall somewhere in between, or have both teachers within a single room.

Learning English from a native speaker allows students to learn more accurate pronunciation and, oftentimes, native teachers will announce words clearly without losing the natural flow, allowing students to learn the sounds and repetitions of words that may otherwise be spoken in katakana English. The benefits of having a native speaker include accuracy of pronunciation, spelling, and social cues that a 日本人 teacher may otherwise be lacking. Issues with native English speaking teachers arise, however, when those teachers lack an adequate level of comprehension in Japanese to sufficiently explain concepts to students, or otherwise fail to understand the cultural norms within a Japanese classroom and violate the unwritten code of conduct and expectations. These lacks can cause a disruption to the normal flow of learning that is expected of students, causing problems for students despite the fact that the shortcoming is beyond their control.

Learning English from a Japanese teacher who is not native to English allows students to have higher level explanations for the meaning of words and phrases. Unfortunately, many Japanese English teachers lack proper pronunciation and understanding of the English language, leading students to learn incorrect grammar, pronunciation, and social cues. Since many of these teachers are teaching English through a Japanese lens, they don't fully understand, nor can they convey, many of the subtleties contained within the English language that a native speaker could.

Unfortunately, neither approach is fool proof, especially without the proper training. This leads many students to choose immersion over classroom study. Immersion has benefits as well, however it can lead to a higher use of slang and idioms as opposed to proper English, meaning that the English learned through immersion is not always appropriate for an academic setting. Unfortunately, classroom learning has much the same issue, where students learn only academic English, leaving them relatively clueless in real-world interactions.

### Field Studies

Throughout my time in Japan, I've participated in several Teaching English as a Foreign Language (herein referred to as TEFL) courses as a teacher and as a student. Through the TEFL assignments, I've worked with children and adults ranging in age from 6 to 30. Throughout my work with these students, I've learned a great deal about student interactions and strengths from an anthropological perspective.

Younger students tend to be underestimated in their ability to grasp new words, concepts, and interaction, yet they easily absorb them. Younger students tend to pick up on lessons faster than older students. University students, unfortunately, filter everything through their in-brain translations, causing a delay in comprehension and reply, whereas younger students seem to learn the concepts in much the same way they learned their native tongue, with none of the unnecessary mental translation to delay their responses. I've found that younger students tend to have a better retention of new material, whereas older students require several instances of repetition. Focusing more on speaking with older students helps their reaction time, though they still find difficulties when going beyond rehearsing pre-prepared speeches.

In the USA, teaching English as a Second Language (herein referred to as TESL) is less scripted than the teaching of English in Japan. Often the learners of TESL are older, ranging in age from 13-60, though more often 20-40. Many of those who participate in TESL are immigrants newly arriving in America. I've worked with speakers of Spanish, Tagalog, and Japanese through TESL activities.

The Japanese learners have the same setbacks within the USA as they do when learning English in Japan. Many struggle to lose the tendency to pronounce everything using katakana English. Native Spanish speakers have less difficulty with pronunciation than those native to Japanese language. Unfortunately, many of those learning English from a Spanish perspective struggle with common concepts within English that are foreign to Spanish, such as the double L; within English a double L, such as with roll, is simple a long L sound, whereas in Spanish it's more of a rolled r sound. This causes some discrepancies in learning English, but they're not impossible to overcome. Tagalog speakers use enough English within their everyday interactions that they have less difficulty learning the language than native speakers of many other languages.

### Conclusion

Some of the most prominent cultural impacts upon learning English as a second or foreign language are the lack of certain sounds or syllabic patterns within the native language. Learning English is perhaps more difficult for learners coming from different alphabetic writing systems.

The best thing we can do to ensure accurate and applicable learning of English within non-native speakers, is to ensure sufficient comprehension of the native tongue to effectively explain concepts while still maintaining a native or near-native teaching regime which includes hands-on interaction and experience. Students need to speak and they need to listen.

Sources derived from hands-on application and actual teaching experience within: Bizen, Tsuyama, Teaching Assistant for Ian Nakamura, TESL in Contra Costa County, TESL in Duval County, Tutoring English to Foster youth in San Francisco Bay Area



## EPOK Review

Everyone has that one place that they just have to go before they die. For me, it was Japan. I had several opportunities to come previously, but due to life couldn't embrace them until EPOK. Coming to Okayama was, for me, fulfilling a dream in a way. Some of the best experiences of my life have taken place in Japan with people from all walks of life.

EPOK has opened up many opportunities for me and helped me to grow as a person. The food, the culture, the language- all of it has come together to create a wonderful experience that I hope to repeat, except with my family present. I've done and seen so many things that I had only dreamed of before. I've eaten things that have in the past, and some still do, disgusted me-squid? No thanks- and I wouldn't have gotten that opportunity without EPOK. Unfortunately, I've also discovered that many of the traditional foods in Japan make me stop breathing... the hard way... 10/10 would not do again.

Hopefully I'll be back in the future, with many epi-pens (because I like breathing), to further explore the wonders of 日本.

It's been fun. Until we meet again, let's Facebook stalk each other, kay?


Road trips needed: 1 Americas, 1 Europe (and the UK, you EU abandoning traitors), 1 Africa, 5 million Asia. Better get started, that's a lot of ground to cover.

Memories don't write themselves...  
Get Autographs, make memories

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**EPOK**





One of us will make it big one day,  
get an autograph, just in case.

---

**EPOK**





Oh the places you'll go...  
Take our Autographs with you!



**First, let's take a selfie...**  
**Then let me get your Autograph**

# Japan English Model United Nations: JUEMUN

Kyoto, June 2016



Photos Courtesy of Thomas Fast and JUEMUN Journalism

# L-Café!



# Japanese Language: Teachers and Classes





# EPOK: Teachers and Classes



# Global Partners

Keep calm and EPOK



EPOK

# Exploring Okayama!



# Sharing World Cultures



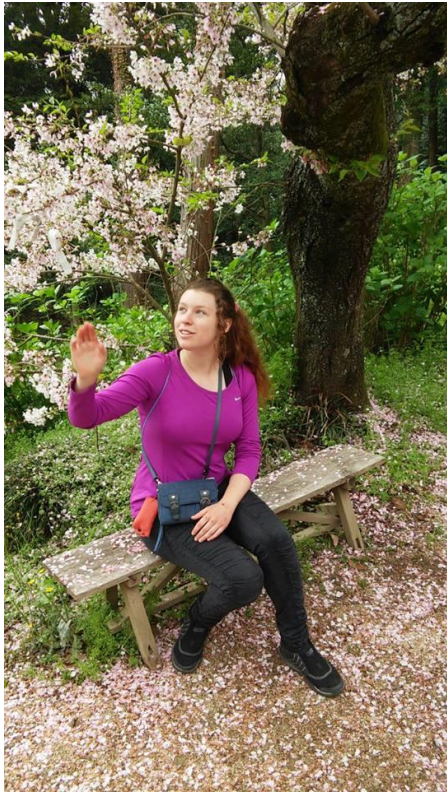
# Oh the Places we've been: Travel!



EPOK

No matter the **Season**, no matter the weather, fun is just around the **river bend**, lurking in the **colors of the wind**.

Colors of the Wind



EPOK



*A Special Thanks to:*

*EPOK Editing committee*

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*Japanese Language Teachers*

*All of Global Partners*

There have been some bumps along the way, but still the stay was great. Thank you Okadai, from the EPOK Class of Summer 2016.



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