



The 19th Japanese Speech Contest for University Students



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幸せの再定義:フィンランドからの視点

世界一幸せな国といえば、何を思い浮かべるだろうか。その国での生活はどのようなものだろうか。必要なものがすべて揃い、笑顔があふれ、あまり心配することなく晴れた日を楽しんでいるような場所を思い浮かべるかもしれない。

私の母国フィンランドは、2023年現在、世界の幸福度ランキングで6回連続で最も幸せな国と評価されている。しかし、初めてフィンランドを訪れた外国人は、一年の半分以上が寒冷な気候で暗く、ほとんど笑顔を見せない人々に直面し、ショックを受けることが多い。では、どうしてフィンランド人は世界一幸せなのだろうか。このランキングには多くの優れた理由があるが、最大の理由の一つは人々の自己認識と人生に対するユニークなアプローチだと考えている。

本講演では、フィンランドの視点から幸福の本質に焦点を当て、私の研究結果や経験を共有することで、幸福とは何かを再定義し、他国、特に日本との比較を通して幸福についての新たな視点を提供したいと思っている。フィンランドの幸福の秘密を解き明かし、幸福とは何か、そしてどうすれば誰もが幸福になれるのか、一緒に考えていきたいと思う。

Happiness Redefined: A Finnish Perspective

When you think of the happiest country in the world, what comes to mind? What does life in that country look like? You might think of a place where people have everything they need, are full of smiling faces, and enjoy sunny days without worrying too much.

As of 2023, my home country of Finland has been rated the happiest country in the world for six consecutive years in the world happiness rankings. However, foreigners who visit Finland for the first time are often shocked to be confronted with a cold, dark climate half of the year and people who rarely smile. So why are Finns the happiest people in the world? There are many great reasons for this ranking, but I believe one of the biggest reasons is people's self-awareness and unique approach to life.

In this speech, I will focus on the nature of happiness from a Finnish perspective and attempt to redefine what happiness means by sharing the results of my research and experiences and offer new perspectives on happiness through comparisons with other countries, especially Japan. Together we will uncover the secrets of Finnish happiness and consider what happiness is and how anyone can achieve it.

Apolline Debroux

University of East Anglia

若者の沈黙: 日本における対話と政治参加の促進

日本の政治状況における最大の問題の一つは、投票率の世代間格差である。高齢化社会と、遅れた政治的メンタリティが相まって、日本の若者の政治への関心は低い。若者の政治参加を奨励するため、政府は選挙権年齢の引き下げなどを試みましたが、変わらず 30 歳未満の投票率が 40% を下回る一方で、50 歳以上の投票率は 70% 前後である。しかし、すべての人に利益をもたらす社会と未来を創造するためには、投票することが重要だ。この問題には様々な原因がある。第一に、以前の世代に比べて若者がメディアを通じて政治に触れる機会が少ないこと。第二に、若者は投票することを自分の責任だと思っていないこと、そして最後に、自分の一票が影響力を持っていないと感じている。これは多くの国で見られる問題だが、ベルギーのように義務投票制などによって高い投票率を維持している国もある。ベルギー人の多くには、投票することは当たり前のことであり、文化の一部として見られている。日本では義務投票制を導入するのは難しいだろうが、初回義務投票制が解決策になるかもしれない。つまり、18 歳になって最初の選挙で投票を義務化するということだ。同時に、学校のカリキュラムに政治や投票について学ぶ機会を増やさなければならない。これにより、若者は投票するだけでなく、日本の政治環境に適切に参加するために必要なスキルを身につけることができる。

The Silence of the Youth: Fostering Dialogue and Political Engagement in Japan

One of the biggest problems in the Japanese political landscape is the gap between generations in voter turnout rate: the youth stay silent. The combination of a fast-aging society and the outdated political mentality has led to a high disinterest in politics among the Japanese youth. However, it is important to vote to create a society and future that fits everyone. Even though the government has made some attempts to involve them, by notably lowering the legal voting age, the voter turnout rate for citizens under 30 is below 40% while for citizens above 50 it is around 70%. There are multiple aspects to this problem. Firstly, the lack of political exposure from the youth through the media, compared to previous generations. Secondly, the youth doesn't see voting as their responsibility, and lastly, they are disillusioned by their impact when voting. Although this is a problem across many countries, some countries have managed to keep a high voter turnout rate through, for example, compulsory voting, such as Belgium. For a vast majority of Belgians voting is a given and is part of the culture. Although introducing complete compulsory voting in Japan would be a challenge, an idea could be to introduce first-time compulsory voting at 18. However, this must go hand in hand with education campaigns that add more opportunities to learn about politics and voting in the school curriculum. Through this the youth does not only learn to vote but can also develop the necessary skills to properly partake in the Japanese political environment.

Callum Cafferty

SOAS University of London

日本におけるエネルギー自給率問題

日本のエネルギー自給率は先進国の中で2番目に低い。その要因は何か。また、今後どのように対処していったらいいのだろうか。

2011年の福島第一原発事故直後、日本政府はすべての原子炉を閉鎖し、もともと少ない天然資源の石油及び石炭へ移行せざるを得なかった。そのため、自給率は2010年の20.2%から2012年の6.7%に低下した。しかし、再生可能エネルギー使用の増加及び原子炉再稼働のおかげで、2021年にはエネルギー自給率は13.3%まで回復した。

とはいえ、改善の余地は多大にあるだろう。

再生可能エネルギー使用の増加は増加が継続すると、間違いなくエネルギー自給率も上昇する。しかし、将来的に日本は再生可能エネルギーの地理的な条件が整っていないため、持続可能とは言い難い。

しかし、発展する可能性の高い再生可能エネルギー源は地熱発電である。日本は地熱ホットスポットの多い国にもかかわらず、日本の再生可能エネルギーの1.54%にすぎない。しかし、現在の利用率は2.5%であるため、地熱発電を発展すると自給率が上昇する。

福島第一原発事故の後で、全国の原子力発電所管理に対する規則及び法律が強化されたため原子力は怖いものではないということが明らかになってきている。強化された安全管理のもとで原子力を再開し、地熱発電やバイオマスなど、新しい形のサステナブルな再生可能エネルギーを取り入れることを提言する。これにより、CO2排出の減少もエネルギー自給率問題の解決も実現することができ、一石二鳥といえよう。

Japan's Energy Self-sufficiency Problem

Japan's energy self-sufficiency rate is one of the lowest among developed countries, but how did it get to be that way and what does this mean for Japan going forward?

In the wake of the 2011 Fukushima nuclear accident, all nuclear reactors nationwide were shut down. This caused the self-sufficiency rate to plummet from 20.2% in 2010 to a new low of 6.7% 2012 as Japan transitioned towards coal and oil, resources of which the country naturally has few. However, thanks to a new push for renewables and nuclear reactivation, we have seen a rebound to 13.3% in 2021.

However, this is still severely low, so where does this leave Japan as it looks towards the future?

If the current move to renewables continues as it has for the last 10 years, we will likely continue to see improvements in self-sufficiency. Yet eventually, there will likely come a plateau in the future, as Japan's geography is unsuited to current renewable technologies.

However, one source of renewable energy in Japan remains a goldmine of untapped potential, that being geothermal energy. Despite Japan being a hotbed of geothermal activity, it makes up only 1.54% of the country's renewable energy production. It is estimated that this is a mere 2.5% of Japan's possible geothermal output.

With enhanced security protocols and regulations in the wake of the Fukushima accident, it is becoming clear that nuclear power should not be a scary subject. I propose that nuclear power's restarting continue under strengthened safety measures, as well as including new forms of sustainable energy, such as geothermal and biomass. This could thus allow the government to both decrease carbon emissions and increase the nation's self-sufficiency rate, killing two birds with one stone.

Minju Kim

The University of Edinburgh

日本と韓国：友好関係を築く「対話」力

日本と韓国の間では既に活発な交流が行われているが、果たして本当にそれが両国間の関係発展に繋がったと言えるだろうか。確かに、両国間の不和は表面的には改善しているように見えるが、今の状態では深い友好関係が築けているとは言い難い。

一つの解決策は、お互いに共有している複雑な歴史についての「対話」を積極的に交わすことだと考える。私が言う「対話」は善悪を決める手段ではなく、心を開いてセンシティブで難しい話題について素直に話したり、聞いたりする相互理解のコミュニケーションである。つまり、一方的な発言や思い込みとは違い、「対話」には相手の立場を理解し、極めて根深い誤解さえも減らす効果があるのだ。

残念ながら、この「対話」は、政府間はもとより、個人レベルでもあまり行われていない。例えば、私は留学中広島と長崎を訪れた後、日本人の友達や知り合いに戦争や歴史について意見を聞きたかったが、何だか話しくかった。歴史や政治的な重い話はタブーに感じたからだ。日本人と深い「対話」ができなかったため、日本で「韓国が好きだ」と聞く度に喜びだけではなく違和感があった。

帰国して半年も経った現在でも、どうすればこの「対話」ができるようになるのか考え続けている。そこで、私はこの場を借り、韓国人学生として日本と今まではあまりできなかった「対話」を始めたい。聴衆の皆さんをはじめ、世界中の人々に、一見単純なようだが、実は平和の架け橋を作るのに不可欠な「対話」を始めることを提案する。

歴史は変えられないものだが、「対話」によって未来はまだ変えられる。

Japan and South Korea: Building a Stronger Relationship through the Power of *Dialogue*

As neighbours in East Asia, Japan, and South Korea are actively engaged with each other. This, however, has not led to real improvement in the relations between the two countries. In fact, behind the façade lurk past troubles and the lack of deep, genuine friendship.

I propose that one solution to this is to encourage more *dialogue* about the complex history shared by the two nations. The purpose of this dialogue should not be to determine who is right or wrong. Rather, it should be about striving for mutual understanding by talking honestly about and actively listening to sensitive and difficult issues. Unlike one-sided statements and assumptions, such dialogue enables the parties involved to understand the position of one another better and overcome even the most deep-rooted misunderstandings.

Unfortunately, there is a shortage of dialogue between the governments of Japan and South Korea, as well as at an individual level. For example, after visiting Hiroshima and Nagasaki last year, I was curious about my Japanese friends' opinions on war and history. Such topics, however, were difficult to bring up. Precisely because of this difficulty, whenever I was told 'I like South Korea' in Japan, the initial feeling of joy quickly morphed into awkwardness and inner dilemma.

More than half a year has passed since I returned to the UK, but I have continued to think about how to initiate this dialogue. As a South Korean student, I decided to use this opportunity offered by this speech contest to begin an open *dialogue* with Japan. I realised that something seemingly as simple as communication is, in fact, essential to building a truly peaceful future for both Japan and South Korea.

The past cannot be changed, but dialogue can help change the future. That is the power of dialogue.

Jamie Shepherd

University of Cambridge

不寛容の時代における「公案」の価値

我々は不寛容の時代を生きている。地球温暖化や極貧、コロナ禍後の社会課題等に対して、世界のいたるところで政治的意見の分極という傾向が続いており、どのように一つの社会で異なる見解を持っている他者と共に暮せばよいかに関する議論が加速している。

然し、不確定な未来に直面しているのは、現代が最初ではない。戦闘が継続的であり、飢饉や地震、疫病等といった災害が少なからずあった中世の時代には、禅僧が、現在に至るまで受け継がれてきた伝統を創り上げた。それが、「公案」である。

公案というのは、禅師の生涯にまつわるエピソード及びそれに対する注釈書をさし、日本の臨済宗の中では、特に座禅に深く関係しているものである。そのエピソードは難問や矛盾している言明の形式となることが多く、禅宗では物事の本質を明らかにして悟りを開くための不可欠な手段とされている。

中世の公案は現代にどのような関係があるのだろうか。また、どこまで仏教の教えである公案を現代の社会的・政治的問題に適用できるのだろうか。本スピーチでは、「公案」が、儀式や教義であるのみならず、現代でも様々な分野に適用可能な考え方であると主張したい。具体的に言えば、公案からわかる教訓として、表面的な矛盾の解決方法や冷静な判断の重要性、イデオロギーの空性という三つの教訓を挙げて論じていくことを目的とする。

Kōan in an age of intolerance

We live in an age of intolerance. On issues ranging from climate change to poverty and the social impacts of the coronavirus pandemic, societies around the world are witnessing a profound polarisation of public opinion and discourse, and as a result the debate on how, as fellow citizens, we can and should live alongside those with different worldviews to our own continues apace.

However, it would be wrong to say that ours is the first age to face such incessant instabilities. Buddhist monks of the fractious Medieval Period of Japanese history confronted similar existential threats, and in response to that era's internecine warfare, famine and natural disasters developed a ritual tradition that continues to survive to this day; the *kōan*.

Kōan is a term of art of Zen Buddhism, designating the practice of commentary on episodes excerpted from the biographies of Zen patriarchs, and in the Japanese Rinzai sect is particularly closely associated with the practice of *zazen* (seated meditation). These episodes typically take the form of a challenging puzzle or superficially contradictory statement, the contemplation of which is considered within the Zen tradition an indispensable instrument towards the discovery of the true nature of existence and the reaching of enlightenment.

What connection could *kōan* have to contemporary society, and how might this medieval tradition be adapted to the social and political problems of our age? In this speech I shall contend that the *kōan* should be considered not merely a ritual tradition or religious dogma, but a way of thinking - a philosophy of social conduct applicable even centuries after its first formulation. In particular, I shall propose and explain three moral lessons relevant to the problems of contemporary social discourse that I believe might be drawn from the *kōan*; the superficiality of contradiction, the importance of dispassionate judgement, and the fundamental emptiness of political ideology.

Abstracts

Individual Presentation Category

1) Samuel Lynn

Keele University

英語一語源・歴史・豆知識

English - Etymology, history, and a few fun facts

2) Sam O'Connell

The University of Edinburgh

もう一つの世界、もう一人の私: オンラインゲームにおけるアイデンティティーの探求

Alternative Worlds & Alternative Selves: Identity Exploration in Online Games

3) Grace Chak Kwan Ching

University of Bath

漢字のジグソーパズル

Chinese ligatures

4) Peter Ashton

SOAS University of London

才能と努力

Talent and Effort

5) Thomas Merryfield

The University of Edinburgh

なぜ人類は前代未聞のことをやり遂げたいと思うのか

Why Humankind Seeks to Achieve the Unachieved

Samuel Lynn

Keele University

英語一語源・歴史・豆知識

English - Etymology, history, and a few fun facts

Presentation Abstract:

At just a glance, one may expect English to be a simpler language than Japanese. You need only learn 26 characters and you can 'read' any sentence wrote in English, after all. The truth is, however, that beneath those 26 characters is a vortex of cultures and peoples all thrown together into one melting pot of a language which reflects all of its influences over the past one thousand years. Join me in looking into this language and how it has developed throughout time, with comparisons to Japanese where relevant.

Sam O'Connell

The University of Edinburgh

もう一つの世界、もう一人の私: オンラインゲームにおけるアイデンティティーの探求

Alternative Worlds & Alternative Selves: Identity Exploration in Online Games

Presentation Abstract:

Have you ever dreamed of what it might be like to live a completely different life? With massively multiplayer online role-playing games (MMORPG), this can become a reality!

This talk explores how MMORPG can be a platform to create a new version of yourself, break down boundaries to global friendships, and enhance your teamwork and leadership skills.

Join me as we explore the world of MMORPG and discover the positive impact they can have!

Grace Chak Kwan Ching
University of Bath

漢字のジグソーパズル
Chinese ligatures

Presentation Abstract:

Chinese characters are primarily monosyllabic, but a type of Chinese ligature 合書 produces polysyllabic characters. It combines two or more characters in an idiom to form a single character, while retaining the original meaning and pronunciation of the idiom. Although these polysyllabic characters are not recognised as formal words, they are commonly seen in daily lives and have a long history. This type of ligature dates back to the 17th century BC, and over time people have been using it for different purposes. Creating this ligature not only requires spatial thinking, but also a deep understanding of the characters.

Peter Ashton
SOAS University of London

才能と努力
Talent and Effort

Presentation Abstract:

The word 'talent' is commonly defined as 'natural aptitude' or 'innate ability', but is it always accurately applied? What can we gain by discarding it? This presentation will discuss how use of the label 'talent' can be seen to show ignorance or dismissal of an individual's effort, and how it is often too readily applied. Of course, the concept of 'talent' cannot be entirely dismissed, but this presentation will argue that by disregarding its influence over our lives, we can take our fates into our own hands and strive only to exert ourselves in pursuit of our goals and dreams.

Thomas Merryfield
The University of Edinburgh

なぜ人類は前代未聞のことをやり遂げたいと思うのか
Why Humankind Seeks to Achieve the Unachieved

Presentation Abstract:

Have you ever wondered why we push ourselves to achieve the unachieved? Why do we strive to break records and be the best in what we do? Is it simply an innate human behaviour or is there a more profound psychology at work? This presentation is going to deal with these questions in a three-step process. First, I will look at my rock climbing journey in setting personal records, followed by a deep dive into the psychology of achievement. To finish, I will examine world records and why we all should push ourselves to the limit, concluding that passion is the key to success.

Abstracts

Group Presentation Category

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- 1) ゴールデン・マイル Golden Mile** The University of Leicester
(Lucas Bailey, Hebe Yau, Harry Hodson, Naomi Musto)
レスターのフェスティバル
Festivals of Leicester
- 2) 卵ちゃんコンビ Egg-Chan Duo** Imperial College London
(Han Ying Chew, Xin Ding)
中国の結婚式の習慣
Chinese Wedding Customs
- 3) マンキューニアン Mancunians** The University of Manchester
(Awais Anser, George Hargreaves)
母語のデフィニション
The definition of a mother tongue
- 4) ジェームズとエマ: ヨークシャー人 James & Emma: Yorkshire People** Newcastle University
(Emma Gwenhwyfar Walsh, James David Edward Thompson)
ヨークシャー!
Yorkshire !
- 5) ロンドンかつ (Lon)donkatsu** King's College London
(YuThong Low, Pratap Guha, Chenhao Liu)
国の固定観念
national stereotypes
-

ゴールデン・マイル Golden Mile

The University of Leicester

レスターのフェスティバル
Festivals of Leicester

Presentation Abstract:

Leicester is a multi-cultural city known for its diversity, but do you also know that it's home to many famous festivals? In our presentation, we'll showcase to you Leicester's Diwali, the biggest celebration outside of India. Then we'll introduce Leicester's Caribbean Carnival, a blend of music, dance and food of Caribbean heritage. Finally, we'll discuss Leicester's comedy festival, Europe's biggest and longest running. We hope to show you how fantastic Leicester's festivals really are!

卵ちゃんコンビ Egg-Chan Duo

Imperial College London

中国の結婚式の習慣
Chinese Wedding Customs

Presentation Abstract:

Chinese weddings are vibrant celebrations rich in tradition! Red attire, opulent banquets and unique ceremonies all converge in well-wishes for the future happiness of the newlyweds. Beneath the grandeur and

jubilant chaos, a powerful message of family bonds and respect underscores the interconnectedness of generations.

We'll delve into iconic symbols like the auspicious food, such as oranges and grapes, unraveling the deeper meaning embedded in their Chinese characters. We'll also explore the iconic tea ceremony and the delectable spread at the traditional wedding banquet, unveiling the vivid symbolism behind the customs – from family bonds to wishes for prosperity.

Let's delve into the beauty of Chinese wedding traditions, not just as a celebration of the love between two individuals, but also a profound appreciation for the cultural heritage that shapes the union.

マンキューニアン Mancunians
The University of Manchester

母語のデフィニション

The definition of a mother tongue

Presentation Abstract:

In this modern world, different cultures and languages come together to create a diverse society. However, this also means that certain definitions we have previously established become blurred and confusing.

This presentation aims to rectify this by looking at a mother tongue in all its forms and definitions and encouraging the audience to look at complex concepts such as this in a new light, considering the different experiences people have had with languages throughout their lives. And ultimately, this presentation will help us answer the question of, what is the definition of a mother tongue?

ジェームズとエマ: ヨークシャー人 James & Emma: Yorkshire People
Newcastle University

ヨークシャー!

Yorkshire !

Presentation Abstract:

Yorkshire, one of the most important regions in the UK, boasts rich history, unique local culture, and natural beauty. In this presentation, we will briefly introduce the region with its culture, history and physical sites of interest, like the varied landscape, geographical features, cities, and various landmarks. From the expansive dales and the various places dotted around the region to the bustling streets of the city of York, we 'll uncover Yorkshire's charm and significance of its contributions to the wider UK. We hope you enjoy learning about this fascinating region of the UK today in our presentation.

ロンドンかつ (Lon)donkatsu
King's College London

国の固定観念

national stereotypes

Presentation Abstract:

What is the general impression of your country? How true is it? In this presentation, we will explore a few stereotypes from our countries of India, China, and Malaysia and how they differ from reality. While some aspects are based on their respective realities, we'll learn how others have been comically exaggerated past the truth. With these instances of the exaggeration of national perceptions explored, we will then look at why these may occur generally, as one of the many cognitive biases we develop over the course of evolution.