

Dear All,

H [redacted], you bring up the issue of litter and filth in public places in Britain. You mention the contrast between the beauty of scenery and architecture and the ugliness of the litter on the streets. From a Japanese point of view middle and Southern Europe are dirty places and to find a standard of cleanliness similar to the one expected at home a Japanese person has to go to somewhere like Switzerland.

You also bring up the point that some young students in the dining room here queue-charge and push in ahead of people already in the line. You write: "they should learn the rules and manners of this country before learning the language."

Your point about culture is a general one. Can I learn a language without learning and taking part in the culture? My own feeling is that I always want to integrate into the foreign culture but would this always be the case? I am not sure.

Just how far, M [redacted], do you want to want to have a "French self" when you speak French? What is the relation, S [redacted] between your Japanese self, your violin self and your English self. In a sense, your violin self feels to me to be intensely European. I don't have a clue how you feel about this.

G [redacted], most of your letter is technical in content: I suggest you have a look at the Co-build book on phrasal verbs. They should have it in the bookshop on campus. Forgive my dismal ignorance but, not having seen CATS, I do not know the plot.

You use an excellent phrase in your letter:

"I can't have my cake and eat it". C [redacted] F [redacted], is there a phrase like this Chinese and what about in German, St [redacted] and A [redacted]?

G [redacted], you say that after 40 days in UK, time is flying but you also "feel a bit irritated now". To me that sounds like a polite expression of a pretty strong feeling. If you will, please say more in your next letter.

I have a sort of sense that both you and T [redacted] are in some way, probably quite different ways, pissed off.

S■■■■, your description of the debating classes in Tsukuba is fascinating. It is really a step forward when people in Japan realise that their discourse structure is deeply different to that of most other languages and take steps to work on this.

If you were planning a course to teach the Europeans in our group how to think and plan discourse for communication in Japanese, what sort of course would you offer us? I am going ask you to say two words about this in class.

C■■■■ F■■■■, please feel free to record the natives I bring into class. They are there to provide us with rich text to work on.

You ask about the relative academic reputations of Chichester and Christchurch. Neither is in the top flight of colleges but I reckon that the local one has the better reputation.

A■■■■, you mention that you give religious instruction at school. Are you a believer? Do you come from a Catholic family? Did you know that T■■■■ went through a Catholic education when he travelled up North to Kyushu in the main part of the Japanese archipelago.

You mention a young Englishman you met on Friday who told you he hates the Germans. The guy is atypical but there is some discomfort here at German success. I suppose it is normal in a lazy, declining country, that people should be jealous of hard-working success.

I feel that in Europe the Second World War has been better put to rest than in East Asia, where tensions are still rife. Two weeks ago there was a sharp complaint from Beijing when the Japanese prime minister went to pay his respects at a monument to Japanese Second World War dead. These, of course, include people hated by the Beijing.


Mario.