

...aveled to Tanzania to visit the Maasai tribe. I thought that finding a different culture and trying to accept it would be the best way to become a skillful communicator. That would be normal, right? So, I decided to discover all the different aspects of the Maasai culture, my visit to the Maasai village brought me endless surprises! When I first met the tall, bright red-clothed, barefooted chief with his long cane, I had to show him the top of my head, and he responded by stroking it. The tribe also hunted and even cooked a wild goat for me. I was fascinated, and in terms of my search for a different culture, I was completely satisfied. However, on my flight home, I noticed that I hadn't really connected with them in any way. As a matter of fact, I felt like a spectator because what I had experienced was a one-sided conversation, not a mutual exchange. Although I was certain that finding a different culture would lead me to some meaningful cross-cultural communication, I felt I failed. But after I got home, I noticed that although the customs within my Japanese culture and the Maasai culture are totally different, the feelings and the purposes behind the behavior are actually almost the same. For example, we both regard respect as important. Being patted by the Maasai chief is similar to our culture where we bow to the elderly. Moreover, when they cooked the goat for us, they used almost every part, which perhaps was a way for them to show respect for the living things they eat. But guess what, we put our hands together before eating for the same purpose. We actually have a lot in common. And this made me realize my fundamental mistake: the truth is, it's discovering cultural similarities that leads us to these meaningful relationships, not just identifying the differences. However, when I asked my classmates about this, everyone had the same fixed idea I had before: that in order to reach across cultures, finding and accepting differences is the only way. This is what we're taught at school, on the Internet, and even the Japanese kanji IBUNKA suggests this. But I don't think this is actually true. Doesn't merely spotting the differences enlarge the walls which divide cultures? Actually, cross-cultural communication has become a crucial skill in the 21st century, people have begun to focus too much on the gap between cultures. It's like you're asking someone to climb a wall after saying how difficult it's going to be. In order to improve our cross-cultural communication ability and make these relationships real, finding similar aspects of both cultures will be just as important as finding differences. Because then we'll be able to connect heart to heart. Of course, I do believe that understanding differences is important in order to accept diversity. But what my experience has taught me is that we should also embrace our similarities. If we're focusing too much on the differences, we may understand them, but they will not help us to build meaningful relationships. Just distinguishing differences is not the way to communicate across cultures, but also discovering the things we all share is. Since my experience with the Maasai tribe, I try to not only play "Spot the Differences", but now also play "Spot the Similarities". So, I would be happy if many people here today would also practice "Spot the Similarities", and enjoy this game! Some people can spend a lot of time concentrating on a game called "Spot the Differences". But I've come to think that in some situations this exercise can promote a one-sided view. Cross-cultural communication, or IBUNKAKORYU in Japanese, is defined as the ability to create relationships with individuals from differing cultural backgrounds, according to the Association for Childhood Education International. Having spent my entire life in Japan, I've always wanted to improve this ability. And three years ago, I decided to put it into practice.

# 第9回 城西大学 THE NINTH JOSAI UNIVERSITY

# 英語スピーチ

ENGLISH SPEECH

# コンテスト

CONTEST

開催日 | 2019年 11月16日(土) 12:30~

会場 | 坂戸キャンパス 水田三喜男記念館 講堂

### 応募資格

#### 高校の部

高校(高専の1~3年生を含む)に在籍する英語を母語としない者。

#### 大学の部

大学、短大(高専の4~5年生を含む)、大学院、専門学校に在籍する英語を母語としない者。

### 応募締切

2019年  
10月17日(木)  
必着

### 応募方法

次の2点を下記の大会事務局まで郵送またはE-mailで提出してください。

- ①所定の応募用紙(スピーチのテーマと600字程度の日本語要旨を含む)(コピー可)
- ②募集要項に掲載されている課題文を朗読した音声ファイル(携帯電話で撮影した動画ファイル可)

※詳細な募集要項、応募用紙は語学教育センターのホームページから入手できます。  
※提出された書類、CDなどのメモリ等は、返却できませんので、ご了承ください。  
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