
Your Japan, My Japan

An Englishman's Perspective

わかる日本と不思議な日本

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NAN'UN-DO

はしがき

本書は、クリス・ウイルソン氏がかつて *Asahi Weekly* に連載していた記事の中から、異文化理解の為にリーディング教材としてふさわしいものを厳選して15編を選び出し、教室で読みやすいように、解りやすく注釈を施したものです。本文の理解を深める為に、練習問題が設定されており、内容把握・語彙力・単語の定義と正確な意味理解にも役立つものと思います。

ここで、著者のウイルソン氏の概略をご紹介します。彼は、イギリス・マンチェスターのお生まれで、マンチェスター・グラマースクールで7年間学び、10代の時から、夏の休暇のほとんどは、外国を放浪しながら見聞を広めました。ランカスター大学とカルガリー大学で環境学を学び、私たちが暮らす地球の複雑さがより良く理解できたと同時に、学び始めた時よりもより多くの疑問を感じながら卒業したとのことでした。

大学卒業後、南米へ赴き、ペルーのアマゾン川のガイドとして働き、ジャングルの小屋に住み、旅行者達をカヌーで案内したり、密林を歩き回ったりもしました。熱帯雨林は、大学の教科書で学んだ無味乾燥な学問的事実に息吹を吹き込んでくれたのでした。

1999年3月に来日して、新潟・北海道に暮らし、現在は沖縄本島で生活しています。沖縄の暖かい気候や美しい海・優しい人々がとても気に入っています。週末は、スキューバダイビングをしたり写真を撮ったり、ギターを弾いて過ごしていますが、これからも素敵な人々に会い、外国を旅行し、魅力的な世界を出来る限り経験したいと思っています。

同氏のこのような幅広い経験が、日本人には決して気付かないような日英のちょっとした文化的な違いを私たちに思い起こさせてくれるのです。文化に関する基本的な違いは、日常の些細な違いに起因しており、日本人には極めて当然のことが、イギリス人を始め他の文化の人々には、全く受け入れられないことが多数存在するものです。こういう事を認識することこそが、異文化理解への第一歩なのです。

本文における内容は、ウイルソン氏の個人的な見解ですので、読者の方々は必ずしも賛同する必要はありませんし、大切なことは、確固たる自分なりの考えを持つことです。

施注にあたっては、細心の注意を払ったつもりではありますが、思わぬ思い込みや誤解等もあろうかと思われまますので、読者諸賢のご指摘を待ちたいと思います。

最後に、本テキストの刊行に当たり、南雲堂の青木泰祐取締役編集部長には、大変お世話になりました。ここに記して感謝の意を表します。

2005年8月
宇野 毅

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Lesson 1

Trainspotting

Most English and Japanese people like trains. Both countries have an extensive rail network, both have groups of avid trainspotters, and both countries love Thomas the Tank Engine.

Possibly the two most famous fictional trains in Britain are *The Little Engine That Could* and *The Hogwarts Express*. *The Little Engine That Could* said, 'I think I can, I think I can,' as he struggled to the top of the mountain and then, 'I knew I could, I knew I could,' all the way down the other side. *The Hogwarts Express* left platform nine and three-quarters and took Harry Potter to Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. If these fictional trains actually had to deal with the real British rail system, then the stories would be a little different. *The Little Engine That Could* would have decided that it couldn't be bothered and Harry Potter, due to a derailment or a rail strike, would have never made it to Hogwarts.

Slow, unreliable, and expensive: trains in Britain are about as effective as inflatable dartboards. Things in Japan, however, are very different.

My first train journey in Japan was from Narita International Airport to Tokyo and then on to Niigata. Once I had bought my ticket, a station worker showed me exactly where to stand on the platform. Dead on schedule, the train I wanted pulled into the station, its doors opening directly in front of me. It was obvious that time-keeping was something that was expected rather than hoped for by train users in Japan.

From Tokyo to Niigata I took the Shinkansen bullet train. If British trains are equivalent to old family cars then Shinkansen trains are like Rolls-Royces. Not only can they go faster, but they do it without making it look or sound difficult.

Britain now has some high-speed cross-country trains; it does not, however, have high-speed train tracks. This means that for the moment these new trains

are restricted to a more mundane pace.

Japan doesn't appear to be resting on its laurels. The Nozomi bullet train that runs between Tokyo and Hakata already travels at an amazing 300 kilometres per hour. But a current research project is developing a maglev (magnetically levitated) train that has been tested at speeds of over 550 kph. 5

England seems to be great at creating fictional trains, but it needs to invest in its real ones as well. If it followed Japan's example, England might even manage to get its new trains to run on time.

(Asahi Weekly, December 22, 2002)

Language Tip

There are several ways to tell others how you get from one place to another. The preposition *by* is used with modes of transportation (vehicles), e.g. bus, plane, train, car or boat.

**I went by bus from Manchester to London.
Is he going by plane or train?**

The preposition *on* is used with words like *foot*, *horseback* and *skis*.

**I came here on foot.
They rode across the desert on horseback.**

On is also used to describe a specific plane, bus or train.

**We arrived on Flight 85.
She left on the 7:00 train.**

Notes:

- 4 2 **extensive** 「広範囲にわたる」
 2 **avid** 「熱心な；熱烈な；熱狂的な」
 2 **trainspotters** 「鉄道ファン」
 3 **Thomas the Tank Engine** 「機関車トーマス」青い機関車トーマスとその仲間達を主人公とする英国の幼児向け絵本・テレビ番組・映画など；W. Awdry 原作。
 4 **The Little Engine That Could** Watty Piper 作の子供向けフィクション。
 5 **The Hogwarts Express** ハリーポッターに出てくるホグワーツ特急のこと。
 8 **platform nine and three-quarters** 「9¾ 番線」
 9 **Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry** 「ホグワーツ魔法魔術学校」
 12 **derailment** 「脱線」
 13 **made it to** 「うまくたどり着く」
 15 **inflatable dartboards** 「ふくらませることのできるダートボード」つまり、極めて非効率のこと。
 18 **Dead on schedule** 「ちょうど予定通りに；時間ぴったりに」
 19 **pulled into** 「入線して；駅に到着して」
 19 **directly in front of me** 「ちょうど私の真ん前で」
 26 **high-speed cross-country trains** 「高速で地方と地方を結ぶ列車」（ロンドンと地方を結ぶ列車ではない）
 27 **high-speed train tracks** 「高速列車用の軌道」
 5 1 **mundane** 「普通の」
 2 **resting on its laurels** 「現在の栄光には満足していない」
 4 **maglev (magnetically levitated) train** 「リニアモーターカー」
 8 **on time** 「時間通りに；予定通りに」

Exercises

COMPREHENSION

I. Fact or Opinion?

Read the sentences below. Circle F if the sentence is a fact, O if it is an opinion.

1. F O British trains are terrible.
2. F O Harry Potter rides *The Hogwarts Express*.
3. F O Japanese trains are faster than British trains.
4. F O Britain should invest a lot more money in its train network.
5. F O Japan needs more maglev trains.

II. What's Your Opinion?

Read the statements below. Circle A if you agree with the statement, D if you disagree.

1. A D Japan loves Thomas The Tank Engine.
2. A D Japanese people expect trains to be on time.
3. A D Japan needs even faster trains.
4. A D Japanese trains are the best in the world.

WORD BUILDER

III. Using Key Words

Fill in the blanks below with these words.

platform **strike** **struggled** **avid** **fictional**

1. England has many _____ fans of trains.
2. *The Hogwarts Express* is a _____ train.
3. A rail _____ will stop trains from running.
4. The train departed from _____ nine and three-quarters.
5. The train _____, but finally reached the top of the mountain.

IV. Recognising Antonyms

Underline the word on the right that means the opposite of the word in bold on the left.

- | | | | |
|----------------------|------------|---------------|--------------|
| 1. extensive | large | narrow | broad |
| 2. unreliable | dependable | untrustworthy | unbelievable |
| 3. expensive | fancy | brand | cheap |
| 4. effective | infected | ineffectual | successful |
| 5. mundane | exotic | dull | boring |

ON YOUR OWN (For Homework: Optional)

Internet Search Find more information on the maglev project. When will the project be completed? How fast will the trains go? When completed, how much will the project have cost? Present your findings in class next lesson.

Pros and Cons If the government has only a limited amount of money to invest in transport, what are the advantages and disadvantages of investing the money in roads compared with public transport like trains and buses? Be ready to discuss this question in class next lesson.