



newsletter

京都大学 農学研究科・農学部国際交流室
International Exchange Section



国際共修と文章力

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熱帯林環境学分野

京大の中でも工学と並んで留学生の数が多き部局である農学部・農学研究科には、「すべての人に食べ物を」、「地球の陸域・水域の生物多様性と環境をまもる」など、国際的に活躍したいという意欲に燃える学生さんも多い。筆者は2013年8月にフロリダ大学から移って12年ほど京都大学農学研究科の教授会メンバーとして色々な経験をさせていただいた。退職を半年後に控え、今回の拙稿ではこのような意欲に燃える次世代の育成に欠かせない国際共修とコミュニケーション能力について書いてみたい。

今年度末までに私の研究室に所属して博士号を取得する学生11名のうち6名が留学生である。修士課程の学生も含めると、スリランカ、バングラデシュ、アメリカ合衆国、ミャンマー、カンボジア、インドネシア、台湾、マダガスカル、中国、フランスからの大学院生が熱帯林環境学分野で多くの日本人学生と机を並べてきた。学士号や修士号を取得して民間企業などに就職した学生さんたちにとっても、国際的視野を培う環境だったと思う。より大きな視座からは、国費留学の仕組みがアジアやアフリカの途上国で活躍する親日派のリーダーを育成してきたことも実感してきた。また、そのようなネットワークを築き上げ、英語だけで修士や博士の学位が取れる農学特別コースを整備・実践してきた京大の先輩教員の皆様にも頭が下がる。おかげさまで、優秀な留学生がお国に戻ったあとも出身研究室の先生を大事にしてくれて、次世代の若手が熱帯の途上国で研究できる環境が作られてきたのだと思う。その恩恵を受けた一人として、先達の皆様に改めてお礼を申し上げたい。

とはいえ、やはり、言葉の壁というのはあると思う。熱帯林環境学分野の日本人学生の中には、オランダ、米国、オーストラリアなどに半年以上留学した学生もいたし、また、タイ、マレーシア、マダガスカル、パナマなどに1ヶ月以上滞在してフィールド調査研究を行った人も多かった。毎週の研究室ゼミも基本的に英語で行っている。研究室に所属してきた学部学生は、最初は英語での会話がごちないけれど半年もすると慣れてくるのも嬉しい。やはり、20代前半までに外国語でのコミュニケーションが実践できる環境は望ましい。また、いくら自動翻訳が進んできたとはいえ、英語に加えて、もう1つ2つ外国語は学ぶべきだと思う。母国語の特徴により、自身の思考がどのように拘束されているかなどに気づくことも外国語を学ぶメリットである。すなわち、論理的思考の醸成にも外国語の勉強は大事だと思う。

一方で、留学生の皆さんにも日本語を学んでもらう努力をするべきだった、と最近反省をしている。日本の人口が激減し続ける中、日本の国際競争力を維持するためには優秀な人材は多く必要である。また、学位取得後の母国での就職が政治情勢などのために難しいこともよくある。しかし、就職に必要なとされるN2レベルの日本語を学ぶことはそう簡単ではない。さらに、日本で勉強していると、英語圏の大学に留学する場合と

比べて英語力の養成には向かないので、科学の国際言語である英語の力を伸ばすには有利とはいえない。このような状況は、なんとなく中途半端で申し訳ない。しかし、言葉の壁を超えての成功の秘訣は文章力だと思う。コミュニケーション力という、何かと聞いたり話したりする能力が重視されがちだが、私はそれよりも英語での文章力と読解力を強調したい。なぜなら、読解力と文章力は論理的思考と直結しているからである。

文章力の欠如は、母国語の種類を超えての問題であろう。「最近の学生は文章が書けない」という嘆きは、日米双方で同世代の教員からよく聞く。米国で教員をやっていたときも、実験実習のレポートを書かせては、英語が母国の学生でも文章になっていない例をたくさん見てきた。もちろん、どういうところがおかしくなりがちか、は母国語として英語を使う学生と、外国語として英語を使う学生で違っている。ワープロで作文をするようになった私たちの世代も、手書きの初稿をタイプライターで打っていた私の先生たちの世代に比べると文章力は劣っている。私の指導教員だったオーグスパーガー博士は、段落構成をしっかりと考えてから手書の原稿をしっかりと書き、それを推敲してタイプライターで打ちなおし、さらにそれを推敲して最終稿をもう一度打ち直していた。ちょっと書いては元に戻って部分修正を積み重ねていく私たちの世代は、便利なツールに甘えてしまって論理的思考力に劣るように思う。ワープロもAIによる自動翻訳も便利なツールであるが、そもそもの論理的な文章力がなければ、“Garbage-in, garbage-out” というようなことにしかならないであろう。では、もとの日本語の文章が良ければ、自動翻訳で良い英語がアウトプットされるのだろうか？それだけでは不十分、と私は考える。主語を曖昧にする日本語は、世界的に最もたちの悪い言語の一つであり、その「くせ」を理解するためにも、英語と第二外国語を学んでほしい。筆者自身、自分が学生の頃第二外国語として齧ったフランス語の学習に改めて取り組んでいる。フランス革命前のラ・ブリュイエールの随筆など、現在社会にも通用する素晴らしい考察が多く、原文で読んでニュアンスを感じ取れるとワクワクする。

京都大学全体でも、国際研究競争力の醸成と国際共修の仕組みの強化が現在大いに議論されている。そのためにも、「どうしたら女性が子育て、育児、文化的・社会的偏見に縛られずにのびのびと能力を発揮できるか」、も重要な課題である。タイやインドネシアの大学との合同シンポジウムなどに出かけると、女性教員が半数以上参加するのが普通で、京大からの参加者に女性が少ないのをいつも残念に思っていた。全ての人が能力に見合った活躍をできる社会を実現できれば素晴らしい。そのためにも、若い人たちには、日本語でも英語でも良い文章をたくさん読み、文章を自分で書く力をつけてほしい。なぜなら、文系・理系を超えて、文章力は問題解決能力の基盤になるからである。人工知能だけに頼っていると、お釈迦さまの手のひらの上で大いに前進したつもりで孫悟空だよ、と思う今日この頃である。



Graduation Hiking



京都大学3研究室(森・佐藤・北島)のマダガスカル共同研究合同懇親会(京都の居酒屋で、2023年10月)

Qin Zhang

Professor Emeritus, Washington State University, USA
 Visiting Professor at the Laboratory of Field Robotics, Division of Environmental
 Science and Technology
 April 1st, 2025 - July 31st, 2025

Gain some Zen spirit in Kyoto



Once again visiting Kyoto, an ancient capital of Japan. There are thoughts of temples and shrines here, many with rich history, quaint architecture, and elegant gardens. All my previous trips to Kyoto were for work, so I came and went in a hurry, and could not find time to do sightseeing. This time, having a teaching appointment with Kyoto University for four months, it gives me the luxury of having some leisure time to visit many temples in the region, such as Kinkaku-ji, Ginkaku-ji, Ryoan-ji, Enryaku-ji, Karashote-ji, and Toji.

I know very little about Buddhism. When was a child, I have heard the elders talking about Buddhism and was impressed that it was to worship Rulai and Guanyin, needed to chant scriptures and eat vegetarian. Later, I gained some Buddhism knowledge from literary works, knowing some basic concepts about the cycle of life and the practice of becoming a Buddha. For example, from "Pilgrimage to the West", a famous Chinese classical fiction, I learned that if one wanted to become a Buddha, who must let go of attachment and quit desire. Also from Jin Yong's martial arts novels, I learned what emptiness and selflessness is in the spirit of Buddhism. From "The Dream of Red Mansions", I started to understand what karma and reincarnation are. But that was it.

Later, by chance, I had an opportunity to read an annotated version of "the Diamond Sutra". At that time, I read it out of curiosity, and found it was very much like a storybook. Roughly remembered that the Buddha took more than 1,000 believers, traveled to beg for food, and gave lectures on the way, telling his followers that Buddha is formless and formless, and the Buddha's principles are also unspeakable. Those who can see each other with their bodies are illusory, and those who can explain clearly are all evil ways. This statement, for me, was too fantasy, so I could not stick to reading it.

The original motivation for touring Ryoan-ji was its well-known stone garden. It is a rectangular courtyard with a wooden corridor on one side of the long side, which is always filled with people who are meditating. The other three sides are surrounded by earthen walls, which have been around for some years and have a sense of vicissitude. The white sand on the surface of the court is dry and clean. The carefully raked ripples appear brightly in the sunlight due to reflection, and large blank space between stones, together with some slight moss on stone roots, gives people a static ethereal atmosphere. Maybe it was just fate, at that very moment, I heard a sound coming to my ear, "a stone is really a world". Turning my head, I saw a visitor talking to his companion. His exclamation made me feel empowered. Looking at this minimalist sand and gravel, it made me a sudden feeling that right and wrong is very likely to be the same as this appearance of white sand: although it is still but looks like it is in-waving, there is no dividing line between still and motion. There are too many plausible and plausible things in the world. Maybe what we see as "true" at a certain moment is "false" in the eyes of others. Even, at another moment, in our own eyes, it could become "false".

When I went home that night and looked through photos taken during the day, I found that no matter from which angle I took them, I couldn't count all fifteen stones in the garden. With what empowered over the day, I suddenly had a thought: why persist on counting? Countless stones could be a hint that it is difficult to seek truth under obsession. I remember that there is such a saying in "the Diamond Sutra" that everything that can be seen is a delusion, just our judgment. Right and wrong are not certain, so why not transcend right and wrong. My doctoral research was on the application of artificial intelligence, which uses fuzzy logic to understand human language and convert it into machine language to achieve intelligent control. Human beings use language to express their thoughts and to understand the meanings of others. However, their thinking process is normally different from person to person and can be changed at any time. Language is also often gray and blurry, and always with

transmissibility distortion. When people speak, each will add their own understanding and judgment, so the content of a message will inevitably change during delivery. Therefore, the true meaning of delivered language is only subjective reception. Thus, if one tries to persistently seek "truth", especially when it carries some subjective will, the real meaning of the original expression will be distorted. If one could accept a partial "yes", it may be more likely to correctly understand the "true" meaning of it. From this point of view, Buddhism and science also have something in common. Not presupposing right and wrong, not clinging to seeking the "truth", making good use of intuition may enable us to get the "truth" in a more intelligent way.

After the sprouts of Zen emerged, I felt that the surrounding natural scenery all showed a certain artistic conception, which could bring me some insights. At one morning exercise, I saw new leaves growing on tree branches in unison. It's not that I haven't seen it before, but I just have not paid any attention to it. The guidance of Zen made me suddenly feel that the new leaves are growing on top of old ones, which is not to replace, but to undertake. The old leaves, with their accumulated energy, provide nutrients needed for new leaves to grow, and the new leaves use their new life force to make the tree grow taller and bigger. It's the continuation of life. The same is true for human beings; the starting point of the new generation is the shoulders of their predecessors, and the successor bears responsibility, continues wisdom and tradition, and carries it forward. We have experienced the inheritance that stood on other's shoulders for granted. However, when a new generation stands on our shoulders, can we still take it for granted? The Tree of Inheritance grows luxuriantly, with both old and new leaves having their own functions. This is the law of life and the wisdom of nature, which cannot be violated.

Think a little further about what "Zen" is. Inspired by touring temples, my understanding is that Zen is just a kind of perception that arises under the inducement of a certain scene, or even without inducement, and this kind of perception is often the real idea of something at that moment, which is a kind of "nature" that is truly pursued rather than deliberately pursued. Of course, this is just me, a mortal, understanding of "Zen". Therefore, the realization of "Zen" is not to achieve any utilitarian purpose, but only to be able to go with the flow and make life easier and happier. Speaking of "nature", what is nature? My understanding is that it should be the existence or law of "as it is", which cannot be changed by human will, or is irresistible by human beings. I remember reading such a poem, "Bodhi has no tree, and the mirror is not a platform." Bodhi is not a tree, and Zen is just an idea, which cannot be seen or learned. Perhaps the core is to let go of obsessions, get rid of delusions, return to your heart, and go with the flow.

Perhaps this is a blessing that comes from visiting temples in Kyoto.



Stone garden of Ryoanji temple



Yushintei Tea House in the Sento Imperial Palace



Stone garden of Tofukuji temple



Japanese Calligraphy, "What's that?"



From Snow to Sakura, From Sea to Fireworks: A Student's Year in Kyoto

JIA YUHANG Ph.D. student from China
Laboratory of Fibrous Biomaterials
Division of Forest and Biomaterials Science
October 2024 – present



Ten months have passed since I left China and set foot in Kyoto, carrying both curiosity and a little uncertainty. Here at Kyoto University's Faculty of Agriculture, in the quiet space of the Biofiber Laboratory, I have pursued research while slowly weaving my life into the fabric of this city. What began as a journey of study has unfolded into something much larger—an awakening of senses, friendships, and discoveries that no textbook could have foretold.

Winter – White Mountains of Nagano

My first winter in Japan was painted in snow. Nagano, whose name I had known only through anime and the Winter Olympics, revealed itself not on a screen but before my eyes. After a sleepless night on the bus, the dawn unveiled a landscape of white mountains, glistening under a pale sky. We rode the gondola upward, hearts light with anticipation. The moment my skis touched the slope, the world narrowed to the rush of wind, the tilt of balance, and the pulse of speed. Each descent was a dialogue between fear and freedom. On that mountain, surrounded by strangers from every corner of the world, I felt a shared language in the joy of sliding over snow.



The Ski Base at the Foot of the Mountain

Spring – Petals and Partings

Spring in Japan carries a gentle contradiction: cherry blossoms bloom just as farewells are said. In March, when graduation coincides with the sakura season, beauty arrives with an undertone of departure. On North Campus, I watched the first delicate buds open, waiting for the full symphony of petals. At Sewartei, along the Yodogawa, the blossoms came in waves of soft pink, swaying like whispers in the breeze. Beneath them, my friends and I sat together with tea, talking idly, while the flowers above us reminded us that moments are beautiful precisely because they cannot last.



The Cherry Blossoms Along the Sewartei

Summer – The Sea of Ine and the Fireworks Festival

Ine lies far in the north of Kyoto, where the mountains finally surrender to the sea. Growing up inland in China, I had only ever

dreamed of such horizons. That summer, I finally stood before the famed “glass sea,” its waters shimmering as though woven from threads of light. We wandered among the quiet Funaya boat houses, their wooden walls leaning gently over the water's edge. A short cruise carried us across the bay, with seagulls circling above as if they too were our companions. The summer heat was heavy, but the sea stretched out endlessly, and in that vast expanse I felt both humbled and freed—a reminder that discovery lies not only in new landscapes, but also in the uncharted spaces within ourselves. The next day, we traveled to Lake Biwa for the annual fireworks festival. Two hours before it was set to begin, a sudden downpour caught us unprepared. At first we held out in the rain, hoping it might pass, but as the skies grew darker and the rain heavier, we sought shelter, anxiously wondering if the festival would be cancelled. Then, just ten minutes before the scheduled start, an announcement came—the fireworks would go on. We hurried back to the lakeside, hearts pounding with relief. What followed was an unforgettable display: fireworks blossomed in the night sky, breathtakingly beautiful, as if lifted straight from an anime scene. When the final sparks faded, the sound of thunderous applause echoed across the lake. In that moment, surrounded by smiling faces and a shared sense of wonder, I felt the joy of summer distilled into pure light.

Kyoto has been more than a place of study; it has been a season of the soul. In the laboratory, I measure and analyze. Beyond its walls, I learn from snow, from blossoms, from the sea. Each encounter—whether with science, with people, or with nature—adds a note to the melody of this journey. And so, as another autumn approaches, I look forward not only to advancing my research but also to deepening this quiet dialogue with Japan. A dialogue written in seasons, in friendships, and in the small yet luminous discoveries of everyday life.



The Boat House of Ine and the Seagulls



Lake Biwa Fireworks Festival

◆ 招へい研究員 Visiting Researcher ◆

Second Semester, 2025

Andria AGUSTA: Oct. 1st, 2025 – Jan. 31st, 2026

BRIN研究機関 教授(インドネシア) Professor, The National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN), Indonesia
共同研究課題:「熱帯植物由来の有用物質探索と高付加価値化」
Joint research title: “Bioprospecting of Tropical Plants and Their Added Value”

受入れ: 森林科学専攻 上高原 浩 教授

Host: Prof. Hiroshi Kamitakahara, Division of Forest and Biomaterials Science

◆ 招へい研究員特別講演 Special Lecture by a Visiting Researcher ◆

◆ **Prof. Qin ZHANG**
(Washington State University, USA)

“The Role of Robots in Smart Agriculture”

June 4th, 2025



2025年度前期行事 / Events in the First Semester, AY2025

April 4th, 2025

参加人数 107名



行事 新入留学生・チューターガイダンス&歓迎パーティー
Orientations for New International Students and Tutors & Welcome Party

会場 農学総合館大会議室・旧演習林事務室ラウンジ
Meeting Room, Agriculture Main Bldg. and Former Head Office of Forest Research Station

May 29th

参加人数 22名



行事 日帰り見学会
One-Day Study Trip

会場 人と防災未来センターと白鶴酒造資料館
Disaster Reduction and Human Renovation, and HAKUTSURU Sake Brewery Museum

June 3rd & 4th

参加人数 26名



行事 茶道体験
Japanese Tea Ceremony

会場 国際交流室
International Exchange Section

July 1st & 2nd

参加人数 18名



行事 セブタ
Star Festival

会場 国際交流室
International Exchange Section

July 4th

参加人数 25名



行事 第25回ほっこりカフェ
25th International Café Meeting: "Flavors of Ji'an, China: A Journey Through Spice, Sweetness, and Story"

会場 国際交流室
International Exchange Section



July 16th, 17th & 18th

参加人数 94名



行事 リサイクルイベント
Recycle Event

会場 国際交流室
International Exchange Section

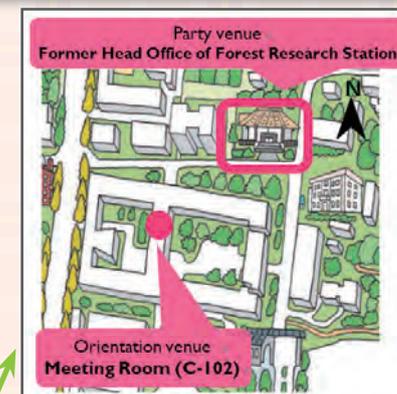
September 2nd & 3rd

参加人数 11名



行事 書道教室
Japanese Calligraphy

会場 日本語教室
Japanese Class



2025年度後期行事予定 / Event Schedule in the Second Semester, 2025

日付 / Date	行事 / Event	会場 / Venue
October 3 rd	新入留学生・チューターガイダンス&歓迎パーティー Orientations for New International Students and Tutors & Welcome Party	農学総合館大会議室・旧演習林事務室ラウンジ Meeting Room, Agriculture Main Bldg. and Former Head Office of Forest Research Station
November 14 th	日帰り見学会 One-Day Study Trip	ラコリーナ・タキイ種苗研究農場 La Collina (Omihachiman), Takii Seed Research Farm
未定 TBA	茶道体験 Japanese Tea Ceremony	国際交流室 International Exchange Section
未定 TBA	リサイクルイベント Recycle Event	国際交流室 International Exchange Section

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