

The Japanese Studies Program



Fall 2025

れいわ ねんあきごう
令和7年秋号

日本語ニュースレター



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ケース大学での日本語スピーチコンテスト JASCO Speech Contest at CWRU



The 2025 JASCO Speech Contest was hosted by Case Western Reserve University on March 22, 2025, in collaboration with the Japan-America Society of Central Ohio (JASCO). JASCO is dedicated to "enriching lives by bringing Ohio's Japanese and American communities together," and has been organizing the annual Ohio Japanese Speech Contest since 1999. This year, 12 finalists competed in the Japanese speech contest. Among them were two students from the CWRU Japanese Studies Program: Chih-Cheng Lin and Junhao Zhen. Chih-Cheng Lin won first place with his speech, "Japan's Regional Revitalization Policy." Congratulations to both Chih-Cheng Lin and Junhao Zhen for their outstanding performances!

We would like to express our special appreciation to Tsunagari Japan for their assistance in organizing the event. We are also deeply grateful to multiple CWRU programs and endowments for underwriting the cost of the event, such as the Eirik Børve Fund for Foreign Language Instruction, the Mitzie Levine Verne and Daniel Verne endowment fund for Asian Studies, the University Diversity Collaborative, and the Asian Studies Program.



Chih-Cheng (left) and Junhao (right)



Chih-Cheng holding the first-place plaque



A group photo of the speakers and judges, including Japanese Consul General of Detroit, Hajime Kishimori (first row, center).



The 26th Ohio Japanese Speech Contest

第26回オハイオ日本語弁論大会

3.22.2025 | 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM

Tinkham Veale University Center, Ballroom B,
Case Western Reserve University

Finalists

Adam Dumbauld, The Ohio State University

文化の違いが難しいけれど有望
Cultural Differences Are Difficult But Promising

Bart Walls, University of Findlay

もっとなかよしくなりたい、
そしてなかよしくなりたい
I Want To Become Better Friends, So Let's Become Friends!

Chih-Cheng Lin, Case Western Reserve University

日本の地方創生制度
Japan's Regional Revitalization Policy

Destiny Coleman, University of Toledo

アートが私にあたえてくれたもの
What Art Has Given Me (The Things Art Has Given Me)

Ellie Kingery, Marysville Early College High School

車でつながる
Connecting Through Cars

Isaiah Conley, University of Findlay

私と日本語 / Me and Japanese
- Intermission -

Jacob Buckley, Everhealth

出会っていない友達 / The Friends I Haven't Met Yet

Junhao Zhen, Case Western Reserve University

音楽を超えた影響 / An Impact Beyond Music

Leah Wilden, Dublin Jerome High School

日本語のおかげで / Thanks to Japanese

Matt Luetgen, Crown Equipment Corporation

言語学習を理解することはなによりです
Understanding the Language Gap

Rebecca Pueschel, University of Findlay

アニメ、文学、そして、、、/ Anime, Literature, and...

William Davis, Dublin Scioto High School

新たなワールド / A New World

Schedule

1:00pm - Welcome by

Dr. Mari Noda, Interim Executive Director
of Japan-America Society of Central Ohio
(JASCO)

Dr. Beth M. Carter, Assistant Professor,
Japanese Section Head, Japanese
Undergraduate advisor, at Case Western
Reserve University

1:25pm - Speeches Part 1

2:25pm - Intermission

2:30 - Speeches Part 2

3:45pm - Announcement of Winners

3:55pm - Photo Session

Judges

Mr. Hajime Kishimori

Consul General of Japan in Detroit

Ms. Noriko Mills

President, Board of Directors of Japan-
America Society of Central Ohio (JASCO)

Ms. Orie Ozawa

Executive Director of the Central Ohio
Japanese Association of Commerce
(COJAC)



Sponsors

The Erik Beyer Fund for Foreign Language Instruction
The Mitze Levine Verne and Daniel Verne endowment Fund for Asian Studies
The Undergraduate Diversity Collaborative
The Japanese Studies program at Case Western Reserve University
The Asian Studies program at Case Western Reserve University
Tsunagari Japan at Case Western Reserve University

Japan Foundation Los Angeles
Consulate General of Japan in Detroit
Hidaka USA, Inc.
The Ohio State University Institute for Japanese Studies
David Cook
Noriko Mills
Anthony Wells



にほん ちほうそうせいせいど 日本の地方創生制度

-Japan's Regional Revitalization Policy-
チーチェン・リン Chih-Cheng Lin

げんざい にほん わかももの ちほう だいとし
現在、日本では若者が地方から大都市へ
いどう ちほう わかももの じょうきよう
移動し、地方にほとんど若者がいない状況
になっています。その結果、地方の経済が
すいたい おお もんだい しょう
衰退し、多くの問題が生じています。こうした
もんだい かいけつ にほん せいふ
問題を解決するために、日本政府は 2014
ねん ちほうそうせい せいさく どうにゆう ちほう
年に「地方創生」政策を導入し、地方
かっせいか せいこうじれい じつげん
活性化の成功事例をいくつも実現させまし
た。この日本の制度をアメリカでも生かすこ
とができれば、すいたい ちほう にぎ
とができれば、衰退している地方を賑やか
にすることができるとおもいます。

ちほうそうせい ちほう あたら しごと さんぎよう
地方創生とは、地方に新しい仕事や産業
つく く かんきよう いじゅうじんこう ふ
を作り、暮らしやすい環境で移住人口を増
やす政策です。地方の文化や自然を活かし
かんこうぎよう でんとうこうげいひん とくさんひん
て、観光業、もしくは伝統工芸品や特産品な
どのブランド化によって地方の経済を促進
します。例えば、かがわけんしょうどしま
ブオイル さんぎよう か
産物をブランド化したことで、
かんこうぎよう かっせいか ちほう けいざい かいぜん
観光業が活性化し、地方の経済が改善しま
した。



Shodoshima in Kagawa prefecture

Currently in Japan, many young people are moving from rural areas to major cities, resulting in a serious shortage of youth in local regions. As a result, local economies are declining, and numerous problems have emerged. To address these issues, the Japanese government introduced the Regional Revitalization Policy in 2014, which has led to several successful cases of local revitalization. If this Japanese model could be applied in the United States, it may help bring vitality back to many declining regions.

Regional revitalization is a policy that aims to create new jobs and industries in rural areas and increase the number of people relocating there by improving living conditions. By leveraging local culture and natural resources, the policy promotes economic growth through tourism and the branding of traditional crafts and local specialties. For example, in Shodoshima, Kagawa prefecture, the branding of the olive oil industry has boosted tourism and improved the local economy.



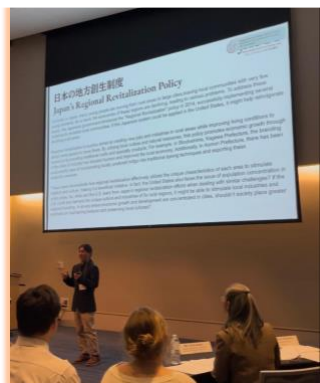
Lemon olive oil produced in Shodoshima

また、青森県では、青森県産の藍を採用し、藍染めの製品を海外に輸出した成功事例もあります。このような事例によって、地方創生はうまく各地域の特色を活かし、伝統と文化を活性化させる良い活動になっています。



Aomori prefecture

実は、アメリカでも多くの人口が都市へ集中してしまっているという問題があります。では、似たような問題に直面しているアメリカが、日本の地方創生から何を学ぶことができるでしょうか。もしアメリカでも地域の独特な文化や産業を活かすことができたなら、産業や地域ブランドを活性化できるかもしれません。現在のような経済と発展が都市に集中している時代では、社会全体のバランスや地方の文化をより重視すべきではないでしょうか。



Chih-Cheng delivering his speech

In Aomori prefecture, the successful export of indigo-dyed products made with locally grown Aomori indigo has also contributed to regional development. These examples show how regional revitalization can effectively utilize local characteristics to reinvigorate traditional culture and boost the economy.



Indigo-dyed jackets produced in Aomori

In fact, the United States is also facing a similar problem, with populations becoming increasingly concentrated in urban areas. So, what can the U.S. learn from Japan's experience with regional revitalization? If the United States can find ways to utilize the unique cultures and industries of its own regions, it may be possible to stimulate local economies and build strong regional brands. In today's world, where economic development tends to concentrate in cities, perhaps it is time to place greater emphasis on social balance and the value of local cultures.



Nebuta festival in Aomori

「愛されたいならそう言おうぜ、思ってるだけ
じゃ伝わらないね」。これは日本の歌手、
米津玄師の「LOSER」(ルーザー)という歌の
一節です。曲名だけ見るとネガティブな歌だと
思うかもしれませんが、逆にとてもポジティブ
な歌で、私が人生で影響を受けた歌の一つ
です。今日は、私の人生を変えてくれた
米津玄師についてお話したいと思います。

高校生の時の私は、将来に対する大きな夢
や希望がなく、変わらない毎日を過ごしていれ
ば、何もしなくても、最後にはすべてうまくいく
だろう、と信じていました。大学に出願する
時期になり、周りの同級生はどんどん人生の
目標を見つけていましたが、失敗するのが怖
い私は、「将来、役に立つだろう」というだけ
の理由で経営管理を専攻することにしました。

そんな時、米津玄師に出会ったのです。最初
はただ、彼の歌が好きでしただけでした。でも、ネッ
トで色々なインタビューを見て、米津玄師の
人生に対する考え方や、歌に込められた思い
を知り、彼の生き方や考え方にも影響を受け
るようになりました。

"If you want to be loved, then say so—just
thinking it won't get the message across."
This is a line from the song "LOSER" by the
Japanese singer Kenshi Yonezu. Just from
the title, you might think it's a negative
song, but on the contrary, it's actually
very positive. It's one of the songs that
has influenced my life. Today, I'd like to
talk about Kenshi Yonezu, who changed
my life.

When I was in high school, I didn't have
any big dreams or hopes for the future. I
believed that if I just kept living the same
unchanging days, everything would
somehow work out in the end without me
having to do anything. When the time
came to apply for college, my classmates
were steadily finding goals for their lives.
But I was afraid of failure, so I chose to
major in business administration simply
because I thought, "It'll probably be useful
in the future."

It was during that time that I discovered
Kenshi Yonezu. At first, I simply liked his
songs. But after watching various
interviews online and learning about his
views on life and the emotions he pours
into his music, I started to be influenced
not only by his way of living but also by his
way of thinking.



LOSER

わたし よねづけんし か し ふか りかい
私は米津玄師の歌詞をもっと深く理解す
るために、ケース大学で日本語の授業を取
ることにしました。日本語の勉強を通して、
じぶん みたい ことを見つめ、自信を育む
ことができました。米津玄師のおかげで、
かんが だけでなく、こうどう
考えるだけではなく、行動しなければいけ
ないということに気がつきました。もし、こうどう
するにはおそ おも
するには遅すぎるとおもっても、すでに
「LOSER」になってしまったとしても、そこ
からでもチャンスがかならずあるのだから逃さない
ようにしようと決めたのです。

In order to understand Kenshi Yonezu's lyrics more deeply, I decided to take Japanese classes at Case Western Reserve University. Through studying Japanese, I was able to discover what I truly wanted to do and build my confidence. Thanks to Kenshi Yonezu, I realized that just thinking isn't enough—you have to take action. Even if it feels like it's too late to act, or even if I've already become a "LOSER," I've decided not to let any chances slip away, because there are always opportunities, even from that point.



BOW AND ARROW

よねづけんし で あ にほんご べんきょう
米津玄師に出会い、日本語を勉強し、
べんきょう べんきょう すればするほどよねづけんし す
勉強すればするほど米津玄師が好きにな
りました。そしてにほんごのおかげで、かれ うた
がもっと理解できるようになり、日本語の
べんきょう べんきょう さらにたの になりました。そして何よ
りも、かれのおかげでじんせい い み い かた
りも、彼のおかげで人生の意味や生き方を
み 見つけることができました。「BOW AND
ARROW」(ボウ・アンド・アロウ)といううた
で、かれ にんげんかんけい ゆみ や ひょうげん
で、彼は、人間関係を弓と矢で表現してい
ます。その歌詞のように、かれ わたし ゆみ
って私の背中を押してくれるのです。わたし
その弓の力に乗り、けつ かぜ なが
矢」になれるようにがんば っつづ
矢」になれるように頑張っ続けます。

After discovering Kenshi Yonezu and starting to study Japanese, I found myself liking him more and more the more I studied. Thanks to learning Japanese, I was able to understand his songs better, and studying Japanese became even more enjoyable for me. More than anything, it was through him that I was able to find meaning in life and discover how I want to live. In his song "BOW AND ARROW," he uses a bow and arrow as a metaphor for human relationships. Just like the lyrics, he has become the bow that pushes me forward. With the strength of that bow behind me, I will keep doing my best to become "an arrow that never gets blown off course by the wind."



にほんじんがくせい ぶんかこうりゅうかい
日本人学生との文化交流会

Meeting with Japanese Exchange Students



On Friday, March 28, 2025, we had a wonderful exchange meeting between Japanese students from Kinki University and CWRU students of JAPN102, JAPN201, and a few Japanese heritage speakers. A total of 22 students participated in this meeting, and they had a cheerful and joyful conversation. The student groups used question cards written in both English and Japanese and helped each other in practicing their language skills while enjoying pizza, snacks, and drinks. We hope to have another cultural exchange between Japanese students and incoming Kinki University students in the fall!





しゅく ねんど ゆうしゅうがくせいしょうじゅうしょうしゃ みなさま
祝・2025年度DMLL優秀学生賞受賞者の皆様
Congratulations to the Recipients of the 2025 DMLL Awards



The Japanese Verne Prize

Katrina Montesa Aldana
Chih-Cheng Lin



The Japanese Prize

Zhihao "Kevin" Ding
Joanna Hayoung Kim
Sijia "Percy" Zhang
Lihong Zheng





しゅく ねんどにほんごせんこう ふくせんこう そつぎょうせい
祝・2025年度日本語専攻・副専攻の卒業生



Congratulations to the Class of 2025 Japanese Studies Majors/Minors

Major:

Katrina Montesa Aldana

Minor:

Daniel Thomas Albano

Zihao “Kevin” Ding

Eric Hunmok Kim

Julian T. Kim

Ana Lizeth Ramirez-Diaz

John Cullen Nagura McCormick

Gabriela Vanessa Salvador Cornejo

Joshua Tsuchido Shew



Hannah Thienhan Bui

Taehyeong I

Joanna Hayoung Kim

Chih-Cheng Lin

Hart Williams





ねんきょうと し
2026年京都プログラムのお知らせ
Kyoto Program 2026



STUDY ABROAD

JAPN 235: The Japan Experience: Kyoto - Language, Culture & Exchanges
May 2026 with Yukiko Onitsuka
yxn113@case.edu

DEPARTMENT OF MODERN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES



CASE WESTERN RESERVE
UNIVERSITY
College of Arts and Sciences





まつやまひできせんしゅ
プロゴルファー松山英樹選手
Professional Golfer Hideki Matsuyama



Jan Parker
JAPN 101 Spring 2025

Hideki Matsuyama is currently the only Japanese native on the PGA Tour. He has won 11 times since joining the Tour in 2014, including his Masters victory in 2021, when he became the first Japanese player to win a major tournament. Despite being ranked No. 6 on the Tour, he doesn't receive much fanfare outside of Japan due to his quiet demeanor and limited English proficiency.

Things were looking promising as Hideki Matsuyama entered the Masters Tournament, which began on April 9, 2025. In January, he broke the record for the lowest score in a PGA event at The Sentry, finishing at -35 over 72 holes. Given his current hot streak and the fact that he hadn't missed a cut since 2014, Hideki was certainly a formidable contender for the coveted green jacket.



Hideki Matsuyama

In the 2025 Masters Tournament, he ended his first round solidly with a +1. In the second round, he shot a very impressive -4 and eagled the second hole. On the third day, however,



Hideki Matsuyama won the Masters in 2021

he lost momentum and ended up shooting a +7. In the fourth round, he made a strong comeback, recording his best round of the tournament with an incredible -6. Despite the rally, he finished the tournament tied for 21st place.

Will he ever return to his former green-jacketed glory? Only time will tell. Despite his shortcomings in this year's Masters, his name will forever be engraved on the trophy.



さくらざか

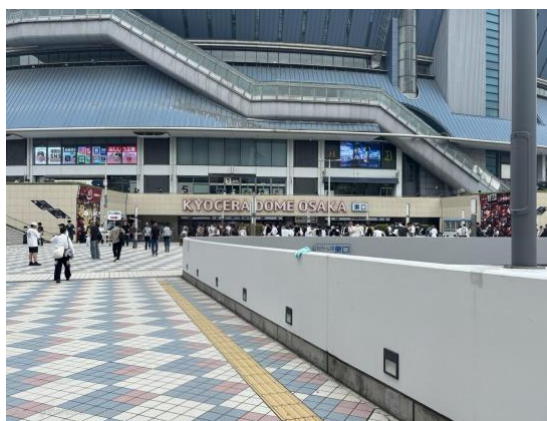
櫻坂46のライブレポ

Japanese Concert Report – Sakurazaka46



Kenta Yap (a Japanese minor)

This piece is my experience recounting my two-day attendance at the Kyocera Dome on October 23 and 24, 2025 in Osaka for Sakurazaka46's 5th Tour "Addiction."



Introduction

Sakurazaka46 is a Japanese idol group under the Sakamichi umbrella (Nogizaka46, Hinatazaka46) created under the creative direction of Akimoto Yasushi, who has other notable groups such as AKB48. Sakurazaka46 is most known for their artistic and cool style, which is a stark contrast from most other groups. I first came to know of the group in late 2021, coinciding with the release of their 5th single "Sakurazuki" and was drawn to their unique concepts and eye-catching performances. This was my second time seeing them in person, and this report will dive into my experiences over the weekend, and how it differs from when I first saw them and from the general concert-going experience here in the US.

Getting Tickets

In Japan, ticketing works on a lottery basis, with fans entering during a set period and randomly awarded tickets, which are non-transferable. This measure prevents reselling, and everyone pays the same price regardless of whether they end up in the front row or the back. While the multiple rounds of lottery supposedly increase the chances of getting better seats the earlier you apply, I remain skeptical. Still, I prefer this system, as it feels more fair and far less stressful than the first-come, first-serve chaos of the US ticketing system.

I applied through the first round of lottery tickets, about 7 months in advance, and ended up towards the middle of the stand seating on both days. Could have been better but also could have been worse.



Before the Show

The venue and surrounding areas were crowded even when I arrived at around 11 am, about 6 hours before the show. Fans

were lining up to buy merchandise, exchanging goods with others in order to collect those with their *oshi* (favorite member), or filling the nearby shopping mall for a bite to eat. As soon as I got there, I quickly went to the merch booth to pick up some concert essentials, two penlights and a rally towel. I also walked around the venue taking in the decorum set up for the concert and quickly left, avoiding both the building crowd and the suffocating Osaka heat. I met up with a friend nearby, going out for lunch at a nearby conveyor sushi chain and biding our time at a cafe until concert time.



The Show

The Osaka shows were the final leg of their 5th nationwide tour, which had begun in April. The first half of the tour consisted of smaller size venues, but the back half consisted of concerts at Tokyo Dome and Kyocera Dome which boast huge capacities and larger stages. My first time watching the group live was at Fukuoka's Marine Messe, which is an event hall, and the difference in scale between that venue and Kyocera Dome,

which is normally used as a professional baseball stadium, was the first thing I noticed. During the concert, everything felt amplified, from the loud fan-calls, the luminescence of the lightsticks, and the on-stage theatrics. Most Japanese concerts also prohibit the filming of the concert, unlike in America, which also adds a level of immersion and a fleeting sense that you must take everything in at that moment, since the experience cannot be truly relived again.

The setlist was a 25 song, nearly 3 hour epic, with only one MC break, emphasizing the group's commitment to their artistic concept letting their performances do the talking. The setlist consisted of both intense and fast songs such as "Shouninyokkyu" and the titular "Addiction," which saw the crowd participating with all their might, and slower paced songs such as "Guuzen no Kotae" and "Nothing Special," which allowed the audience to experience exceptional staging on display.

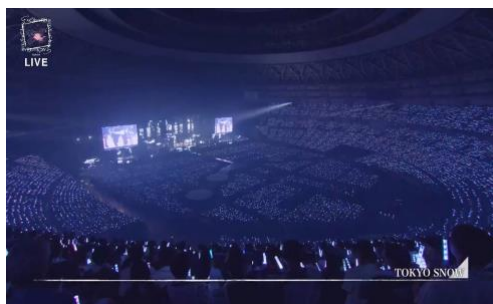
There are two songs and their associated performances in particular that I would like to highlight: "Udagawa Generation" and "Tokyo Snow."

The first song, "Udagawa Generation" uses a circus as its setting, and the concert directors used this opportunity to hire a circus troupe, including a clown, aerial silk performers, and a wheel of death, to keep the audience entertained while the group members changed into their next outfits. During the subsequent presentation of the song, these performers stayed in the background doing their acts adding to the backdrop and immersion of the song.

The song even ended with Morita Hikaru performing a magic trick where she received a bouquet of flowers from the clown, before faking a sneeze and turning the flowers a different color, which was met with laughter and cheers from the crowd.



The second song I would like to highlight is “Tokyo Snow.” This song relates the unrequited feelings towards someone to snow in Tokyo, which will continue to fall but never accumulate. The song has an airy ambience which is accentuated during the live show by images of falling snowflakes on the video screens and the white penlights of the crowd. The immersion was so strong that the arena felt genuinely cold, despite being the middle of the summer.



The concert ends with the captain, Matsuda Rina, speaking candidly about the group’s growth, the setbacks they have overcome and the future frontiers that they hope to tackle, as they close with

During this song the all penlights turn to pink, reminiscent of the cherry blossoms in full bloom, as the concert draws to a close.

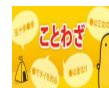


Conclusion

At the end of the concert, I felt quite weary and tired after standing and participating for nearly 3 hours with little breaks in between. However, it felt worth it as the experience going in person is completely different than watching at home. The atmosphere of the venue, the unity and energy of the fans, and the elaborate staging create an intoxicating energy unique to the concert-going experience. As I squeezed onto the crowded subway leaving Kyocera Dome, I was already wondering when I might get the chance to go again. All in all, this was a fantastic experience and hopefully can serve as a gateway into the world of Sakurazaka46, idol groups, or Japanese concert-going.



ほんごう た とり
本号のことわざ『立つ鳥あとをにごさず』



Proverb of This Issue: "It's an ill bird that fouls its own nest"

★ Reading: 立つ鳥あとをにごさず
(tatsu tori ato o nigosazu)

★ Similar expression:
"It's an ill bird that fouls its own nest"

★ Vocabulary:

立つ (tatsu) – to leave

鳥 (tori) – bird

あと (ato) – place

にごさず (nigosazu) – not to dirty

★ Lines in the four-panel comics

Characters: Teachers (T), the boy in a red shirt (B1), the boy in a green T-shirt (B2), and the boy in a red T-shirt (B3).

1. T: We are going to move to a new classroom in April. Let's clean our current classroom for the people who will use it after us.
2. B1: It's an ill bird that fouls its own nest.
B2: It reminds us of one year ago, doesn't it?
3. T: You'll be studying in this classroom from today.
4. B3: Wow, it's so shiny and clean. It feels nice.



立つ鳥あとをにごさず





きじ ぼしゅう 記事募集

SEND US YOUR ARTICLE

Would you like to write your own article to share your love of Japan, its culture, and society?
Do you want to share your favorite anime, manga, video games, novels, movies, sports, etc.?
Or would you like to share news about student activities, events, and other interesting information? Please do!

How to Submit Your Article

きじ おうぼほうほう
記事の応募方法

1. Submit an article as a Microsoft Word document!! Each article should be at least 100 words (either in Japanese or English). If you write in Japanese, please also provide a summary of your article in English.
2. Pictures for your article can be either e-mailed separately or inserted into the article.
3. Include a heading and subheading (if applicable).
4. Include your name and the course(s) in which you are/were enrolled (if applicable).
5. We are also looking for illustrations to use for the first page.
6. Send your article or illustration to Yukie Miura at yxm562@case.edu by May 8th, 2026.

* Your article can also be held for use in future issues.
** If your article requires excessive editing, you will be asked to rework it.
*** If you are currently taking a course in the Japanese Studies Program, you might be able to earn extra credit for the course(s) you are in!
Contact your instructor for more information.

The next issue will come out in May!

さんこうぶん
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