



◇My First Radio Show◇

Last month I ran the Coordinator for International Relations' show at Radio Niseko for the first time. The show is called "To the World's Ears" (Sekai no Mimi e), and it runs for 50 minutes, and we talk about cultural exchange and interesting information on international topics.

I've loved listening to the radio since high school. I would listen to the radio while doing my homework, waiting for my favourite songs to play. I often thought about what kind of songs I would put on if I were the DJ, and what I would talk about on the radio.

But when I actually got the chance to do a radio show,

I found that putting it together was more difficult than I had anticipated. I really had to keep an eye on the clock, paying attention to how long each segment would be. I wanted to tell everyone about all my favourite movies

so I prepared a lot of content, but in the end I didn't have the time to present all of it. When I get talking about my favourite movies, I really can't stop! On the show I talked about how I started studying Japanese in middle school and the kind of movies I like to watch in winter. I had a lot of fun listening to my favourite songs from movie soundtracks along with everyone. For my next shows I plan to talk about Japanese movies that Japanese people don't know were a big hit in China as well as period piece movies.

-Yiyang Ke



CIR Yiyang Ke at Radio Niseko. You can listen to the show every Friday from 3-4PM on 76.2MHz Radio Niseko. Our next show is Jan., 11th.

◇Proportional Representation◇

Last month was election month, as the loudspeaker-mounted vans roaming around town let us all know. While I cannot vote, the election interests me, and I did a little bit of research on Japan's electoral system. I was interested to find out that Japan uses a mix of proportional representation and single-member districts. In my home country of Canada there have been many discussions on the implementation of proportional representation, and there was even a vote on the implementation of the "single transferable vote", but the system was rejected, most likely because most people don't understand what it is. While it's easy to understand the "first past the post" system (whoever gets the most votes wins), systems of proportional representation tend to be quite complex. Many of the former colonies of the British Empire – Canada, the US, India, as well as England itself – use first-past-the-post, 150 of the 193 countries of the United Nations, Japan included, uses proportional representation.

The problem with first-past-the-post is that it often results in a minority government, where a party with less than 50% of the vote can become the government party. This has happened in Canada twice in

recent years with the Conservative party getting elected to minority government, though currently the Conservative party is in majority. Some argue that proportional representation, which generally results in more political parties in power, creates a divisive government, and first-past-the-post creates a stronger, more united government. But giving more parties a voice cannot be a bad thing, and proportional representation does not prevent one party from creating a strong majority, as was clearly demonstrated by the LDP (Liberal Democratic Party) in this last election.

I do believe that Canada and other nations still using first-past-the-post only will eventually join the rest of the world and switch to include proportional representation. Perhaps Japan's mix of proportional representation and single-seat constituencies may serve as a model. Until then, I hope that Japan will set a good example now and in elections to come.

◇Health Crisis◇

Developed nations are now all facing the same health crises, with rises in type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and other conditions connection to weight gain and obesity. The US is doing particularly badly, with the majority of Americans being overweight and one in 3 adults being obese. Other nations in the Anglosphere are only slightly thinner, and the numbers seem to be rising as every nation develops. Even the notably thin Japan is getting fatter, though in a lopsided way: almost 40% of Japanese men in their 40s and 50s are overweight, while only 20% of women are. While Japanese (especially women) still enjoy some of the highest life expectancies in the world, recent concerns about metabolic syndrome have led many to wonder whether that will still be the case in the future. The steep rise in obesity in children in many developed nations – even Japan – is drawing attention all over the globe.

While the sedentary lifestyle that accompanies white collar work is most definitely part of the problem, much of the blame can be traced back to eating habits. I know many Japanese wonder why so many Americans are overweight, and the answer to that question is a complicated one.

It's easy to blame individuals for being overweight, but the reality is more complicated, especially in America, where the food culture is essentially the result of capitalism. The foods that are the cheapest to produce are not the healthiest foods. One item that has come up in the news many times is high fructose corn syrup. It's a product synthesized from corn, very sweet, and cheaper to produce than sugar. It's also worse for your body than alcohol, and it's in everything in America. Fast food and junk food is also far cheaper than fruits and vegetables – the poor simply can't afford to eat healthy food, and with rising poverty in America the waistline also expands. With the hours that they work, most Americans don't have the time for a sit-down meal, and end up eating huge amounts of fast food as a result.

There are many in America right now pushing for a "sugar tax" in an effort to slim the nation down. We'll have to see if that happens, but personally I don't think it's likely, as Americans tend to hate both taxes and people telling them what to do (or eat).

I personally find it distressing to see American eating habits slowly seep throughout the world. The traditional Japanese diet is some of the healthiest food you can eat. The benefits of staples such as natto, miso, and green tea are well-documented. It would be nice if these kinds of foods could be popularized in developed nations instead, though somehow I don't think natto will ever catch on globally.

-Jennifer Ward

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