

Living in nations beyond culture...

## WHAT'S A HOMOGENOUS CULTURE?

*Does one month of MAGA threaten to destroy multiculturalism?*



*"Once upon a time the English knew who they were... They were polite, unexcitable, reserved and had hot-water bottles instead of a sexlige"  
by Jeremy Paxman,  
The Englis*

“What do ‘the real British people’ think about immigration?” asked by a granny

March kicks off properly on Japanese girls' day. On the third of March, the end of the harsh winter is marked with the celebration of the start of spring.

Since the Trump Admin took over US politics, the whole world has suffered from his utterly brutal indiscreet actions. It is rocking not only American's life. It is undermining world peace with an attack on the very idea that diverse people's can and should coexist in peaceful societies.

Last month, I gave a talk entitled “The country of Tea, Gardens and Beatles” at the lifelong learning centre in Osaka. 25 people, average age 70 attended my talk to a warm reception. Only about 20% of those attending knew the UK is constituted of four distinct nations with nobody realising how silly it is to call the whole UK “イギリス” in Japanese, blatantly ignoring the Scots, Welsh and Northern Irish.

The title of my workshop had been determined by the organiser, with many Japanese believing in the stereotype of the UK as the country where people enjoy tea with a cup and saucer, with regular ‘afternoon tea’ in their beautiful country-manoor English Gardens, much akin to the novel ‘The secret garden’ by Burnett. That all people can sing along to The Beatles effortlessly.

This forced me to consider the responsibility speakers and others have in representing culture - how to both be generous towards people's conceptions while also shedding light on the reality of their assumptions? And what if the values of the culture you love are those unrecognised by the people you're speaking to. Everyone knows Japan as a polite and responsible place - but identifying the virtue of the UK in it's broadmindedness and multicultural history? A harder task when those hearing you

expect talk of a homogenous culture similar to the parody of Japan they subscribe to themselves.

Therefore, I kept the theme but updated actual state of the UK. The Brits love a cup of tea in a mug with milk not cream. The Brits are enthusiastic gardeners but only small number of people have a garden like “The secret garden”. It is true that The Beatles are still popular but there are in fact the UK music scene is much more diverse and rich than the image of one band.

I answered the granny's question by defining the real British in all contradictions; the British are insular, stubborn, nostalgic, self-mocking, cautious but outrageous and cannot live as the single race.

Like my Hina dolls, the cross and cat are very suited them to them, don't you think so?

# THE LESSON SCHEDULE FOR MARCH & APRIL 2025

**Group Lessons- T2 Beginner**  
from the 4th February 20:00~21:30

## Lesson3

Tuesday 4th March  
Tuesday 11th March

## Lesson4

Tuesday 18th March  
Tuesday 25th March

**Group Lessons- T3 Beginner**  
from the 23rd April 20:30~22:00

## PRIVATE LESSONS SLOTS

### MARCH

#### Monday

1. 9:30-10:30 (Booked)
2. 11:00-12:00
3. 12:15-13:15(Booked)
4. 20:00-21:00 (Booked)

#### Wednesday

1. 20:00~21:00
2. 20:00-21:00

#### Thursday

1. 9:30-10:30 (Booked)
2. 11:00-12:00
3. 12:15~13:15

#### Friday

- 1.10:00-11:00 (Booked)
- 2.12:00-13:00(Booked)
- 3.20:00~21:00

### APRIL

#### Monday

1. 9:30-10:30 (Booked)
2. 11:00-12:00
3. 12:15-13:15(Booked)
4. 13:30-14:30
5. 20:30-21:30

#### Wednesday

- 1.11:00-12:00
2. 12:15-13:15
- 3.20:30-21:30

#### Thursday

1. 9:30-10:30 (Booked)
2. 11:00-12:00
3. 12:15-13:15

#### Friday

- 1.10:00-11:00 (Booked)
- 2.12:00-13:00(Booked)
- 3.13:15-14:15

## JAPANESE CULTURE FACTOID

### 卒業式の風習~学ランのボタン

#### School Graduation custom~

#### Boys' uniform, 'Gakuran's'Buttons

March is the end of the academic year in Japan. It is exam season as well as the month of graduation.

This season of transformation makes students more unsettled and nervy than normal. The tension building up to the final exams, the graduation ceremony, and the realisation of the last opportunity to confess their feeling to each other before parting ways.

There is a custom in the way of confessing to someone you fancy by

asking to keep the boy's 'Gakuran' button.

'Gakuran' is a matching black trousers and a tunic with a standing collar and five gold buttons. If a girl fancies the boy, she asks her dearest to have one of the gold buttons. If he gave her the second from the top, it means he also fancies her.

Some popular boys end up with no buttons left. A boy with a fully fastened jacket feels like being sent to Coventry...

This custom started during WWII when the student gave his second button to the woman to remember him. In 1885, Yuki Saito's 'Sotsugyo(graduation)' hit a chart, and this custom became popular.

This custom is going out of fashion because the blazer is getting popular for the boy's uniform. Instead, recently, students have been exchanging bouquets. This is not only from girls to boys but also boys to girls, girls to girls and vice versa! Yet, the desirability of the second button lasts forever? ( I guess?)



## 3月のオノマトペ ぽろぽろシクシク

### What sound is this?

- ・ぽろぽろ = You are crying, with large teardrops flooding out.
- ・シクシク = You are quietly weeping.

### For example

- When I listened to the sad story, I could not stop the flow of tearsぽろぽろ.
- A little girl is looking down and シクシクweeping.



ぽろぽろ



シクシク

February is only 2 or 3 days less than other months. Therefore, we say “にがつはにげる” (February runs away). I feel especially hasty and uneasy. The freshness of 2025 has gone, and we are charging into the gritty dairy matters... This year, we feel particularly harsher than ever after starting the Trump administration. Our morality has been shaken, and people have become numb to the bluff. I try not to be pessimistic, and I set my March's keyword- “愛- Love”. It is cheesy, but in this dog-eat-dog world, all we need is love... I hope I can send my love to you all by providing engaging lessons!

Please tell me your opinions and feedback!