

## Cultural exchange and magical ability

*Atsushi Kadowaki*

I would like to ask you a question. “What world do you live in?” Here, if you answer; “school”, “Japanese” or possibly, “science”..., I want you to be sure to read my essay through to the end, because I could change the way you think. At least, my thinking was completely changed by this camp.

We (other seven students, two teachers and I) took part in the summer camp sponsored by the HKUST that is the most popular university in Asia, this event was composed of 11 high schools from various countries; Japan, Singapore, Macau, Hong Kong, and of course, the mainland of China. We traveled there to present our research, take a mathematics examination and do performance as a cultural exchange. (Actually we danced to the J-pop.)

One day, the one thing we'd never expected happened to us... that... we became popular among the students from other countries! Thanks to this, fortunately, we could communicate with many foreign students. And I also realized that there were several differences between Japanese and the others.

Especially in the case of me, I discovered how unimpressive I was. Before going to Hong Kong, I had been proud of my ability of English and Math. Shamefully in fact, I had even thought I had been especially good at them for a high school student. However, almost all of the Chinese attending this camp talked to us in much better English than me!! They could speak it as if they were native speakers. I was also shocked at their level of Math. The Math test was so difficult that I could answer almost nothing about the problems. However for the Chinese, it seemed the level was quite ordinary, because I heard that there were some Chinese students who could get nearly a perfect score!! Umm...they are absolutely the same age as me...

They are not only good at studying but have big dreams. When I and one of the foreign friends shared dreams with each other, I was really impressed with his dream, and we promised we would see each other after both of our dreams come true. Now I believe this saying is true.

*“Open the window. It's a big world waiting for you.”*

If you think you have something you are good at, there are always a lot of people who are better at it in spite of them being the same age or under. I've learned that we must not be satisfied with the present situation and have to catch up with the world level. We need to look at the world.

Lastly and most importantly, by speaking in English, we can get along, share the ideas and respect foreign people. That's why we are studying the language, I guess. The world we are living in will become larger and larger using this magical ability.