**What is the truth for you?**

Chuna Kim

May I ask you a question? How do you do a research when you have something　you need to know? Now, there are a lot of tools to find the information. If you search for the information in the wrong way, however, you might hurt someone. Today, I’d like to speak how important it is to do a research on reliable sources of information.

Ms. Motoko Mekata, a professor of Chuo University, says “when you find information, you have to make sure who is saying that and from what position.” Even after doing your researching, and observing the real state, we can’t tell the truth. For this reason, you need to be very careful, and otherwise you may harm someone unconsciously.

To be frank with you, I realized the importance of this issue just recently. I was a leader of a private screening of the movie, “SAYAMA mienaitejou wo hazusumade” or “until removal of invisible handcuffs”, which is about a false charge in Sayama case. This was a murder case about a high school girl who was killed in Sayama. Then, the police arrested a 24-year old man called Kazuo Ishikawa. However, he has been claiming his innocence for 51 long years. I believe he is not guilty, and therefore I wanted to show this movie to Chuo university students. Then, one of the staff asked me, “Is this case really a false accusation? I can‘t really tell. Wikipedia and newspapers don’t say that.” I was surprised and scared at the same time because he only used two tools which can lead people in the wrong direction and he thought Mr. Ishikawa might be guilty. Are internet sites such as Wikipedia always correct? When they are wrong and you don’t know that, you might harm someone. Let me tell you why.

I’ll discuss the Internet; you can search information easily, but at the same time the information could be written without careful consideration. Most online information shows no source. Neither has the name of the writer. Is the writer a professor? Or is he an unqualified person? Generally, it is the latter. In that case, how do you prove the article is right? Where there is no name there is no responsibility. Without name, people can make any groundless arguments. Recently, the membership in Japan is increasing of the Civil Association is against Privileges for Resident Koreans. The freelance writer, Koich Yasuda says that some of the members get the information what rights Koreans in Japan have from the Internet. This information is false but they use the information to make hate speeches in cities where Koreans live. As a result, a lot of Koreans are wounded by such words from an unreliable source.

Books also make mistakes, and they may say the wrong things, but at least we can know who the writer is. That’s a big difference, isn’t it? We can know what position he or she takes in the argument. This is very important as we can know why the writer says so.

Please remember what Professor Mekata warned as I said in the beginning, “When you find information, you have to make sure who says that from what position“. In the Sayama case, a lot of information indicated that Mr. Ishikawa was a murderer. But I can never think he is a murderer after I read books and watched that movie.　He is labeled criminal even now, but I’m sure he is innocent. This is my conclusion after very careful search. Careful is the key word. Please always ask yourself, “Is this really true?”

**‘4 Rs’ for the earth**

Akari Totsuka

Toothbrush, paper-diaper and half-split chopsticks. Can you find one common point in these three? Yes, they are all disposable. We usually use them only once and then throw them away. The more we use disposable things, the more garbage we produce. A large quantity of garbage is a serious problem in this country. According to OECD, -Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development- in 2008, the number of incinerators was 55 in the U.K., 351 in the U.S.A., and surprisingly 1,243 in Japan. These data show that this problem needs solution. I’d rather suggest you not to use disposable commodities as one of the solutions.

When we use a hotel, they sometimes prepare a toothbrush for us. We don’t need to prepare it by ourselves. Then, once we use it, we usually don’t take it back home. Only one toothbrush is not heavy at all and we can bring it in our trips. Having a toothbrush with us could be a habit.

When you were small, most of you used paper-diapers., didn’t you? The average number of thrown away paper-diapers is 6 per day. In Japan, mothers purchase them packed in a big plastic bag to make their babies use every time. On the other hand, in developing countries, they are so expensive that mothers buy one by one and use them only on special occasions such as a party, a long trip or sometimes when they cannot easily take care of their babies. The value of paper-diapers differs among countries. It’s easy to produce, easy to buy and easy to use them in Japan, and therefore so large quantity of trashed paper-diapers becomes one of the causes of garbage problems. One solution is using cloth-diapers. Long time ago, babies used to use cloth-diapers, and mothers washed them by hands. Mothers could know babies’ health condition by seeing the state of feces. In view of reducing trashed paper-diapers and checking babies’ health, we should use cloth-diapers.

The most wasteful thing, in my opinion, is half-split chopsticks. In order to produce them, so many trees are needed. We use them only once. As a result, forests disappear and garbage appears. Then, garbage stations take some spaces of nature. This problem has another solution of using own chopsticks, or if there are both half-split chopsticks and plastic ones in the restaurant, choose plastic ones. The number of trashed half-split chopsticks will be smaller thanks to this action.

I gave three examples today, but there are many other disposable commodities, too. Those should not be disposable. We must use reusable commodities again and again, and that protects our environment. Through this speech, I would like to remind you of ‘4Rs’ i.e. Recycling, Reusing, Reducing and Refusing. Today, I mentioned about refusing to use disposable commodities. Then, it’s your turn to think about other ‘R’s. To solve the problem of garbage and to protect the future of our earth, why don’t you put 4 other ‘Rs’ into practice?

**Japanese view of Japan**

Kei Sato

Today, let me speak about my interests in the “Japanese view of Japan”. A TV program features foreigners’ opinions that Japan is a developed, popular or kind country. This is “foreigners’ view of Japan”. These reputations make us feel happy and proud of identity as Japanese. Certainly, some travelers say “Japanese are very kind or Japan is comfortable to stay”. But now I want to ask you,” Are we proud of ourselves? ” My interests came from that TV program. I felt that foreigners know better and more about Japan than us Japanese. I want you to think about how we think of Japan.

First, I mention Japanese traditional culture, especially constructions. We are likely to reconstruct old houses regularly and most of them are different in styles. For example, Ise shrine has been reconstructed every twenty years in order to keep divine sacred spirits and move the object of worship to modern houses, and they are not unified in appearances. To the contrary, European buildings have been preserved as the time of first construction and their appearances are unified like a picture. We Japanese tend to have an inferiority complex toward Europeans because their buildings are integrated and are nice-looking. But the number of travelers to Japan is increasing because they think of Japanese houses as novel buildings or these are rare for foreigners. In summary, not only Japanese but also foreigners have some inferiority complex to each other.

Second, I refer to Japanese personality. Perhaps everyone knows that we treasure conformity or harmony, in Japanese “和”. Because of this humanity, we respect orders and rules. For example, when we get on trains, we usually keep our turns and don’t shout on the trains. These humanities are often praised by foreigners because they don’t care too much about the rules. But in a sense, we tend to think too much about conformity or harmony, and therefore foreigners sometimes think Japanese are indecisive. Yet both of those factors constitute our present personality. We can be proud of ourselves.

Third, I want to speak about the attractive points of Japanese people. In 2020, the Tokyo Olympic Games will be held. IOC staff praised the Japanese cooperative spirits. JOC appealed Japanese financial, and security aspects and especially hospitality, in Japanese ”omotenashi”. These effects enwrapped IOC hearts. In this event, Japanese mind led to success. Other countries also did their best, but I am sure we all can make the best Olympics with dedicated attitude.

According to these examples, firstly we can know again that humanity or culture we Japanese take for granted is not always natural. Secondly, we can also find our nice and unique points. There may be some cases that we will suffer culture-shock. But it is OK. The views of foreigners are different from those of Japanese. As I said, I would like you to guess how we think of Japanese. Some media feature our positive points only but in order to know how we think of Japan, it is the nearest way to know both plus and minus aspects. As a result, I’m sure we can love Japan. How do you feel about my opinion?

Thank you very much.

**Finish all dishes!!**

Mayu Kurokawa

Do you finish all dishes served for you every day? Some people may think there is no food problem in Japan, but in fact, Japan has a serious food problem.

Let’s take a look at the situation of world food supply. The number of people who die of starvation is between 40 and 50 thousands, and 70% are children. To tell the truth, there are twice enough grains for people all over the world. Then why do many people die of starvation? The reason in the case of developed countries is that 60% of grains are used as livestock feed. Eleven kilograms of grains are needed to produce 1kg of beef, 7kgs of grains for pork, and 4kgs of grains for chicken. Isn’t that amazing?

Now, let’s turn our eyes to domestic affairs. More than half of food consumed in Japan is imported. While we import 55 million tons of food per year, we dispose 18 million tons. Japanese rate of food disposal is higher than that of the U.S., the no.1 consumption country. The amount of wasted food is comparable to feed three thousand people for a year. Japanese dispose nearly the largest amount of food in the world.

Another reason is our Food Sanitation Act. Japanese government forces all companies to put signs on every production to indicate the expiration date. And all productions must be disposed after that date. If all of us follow this act, the amount of disposed food will be huge. I’d say this act encourages us to throw away food. This law aims to prevent food poisoning, but it forces people to dispose food as a side effect.

Let me give you one example. One of my friends works at a convenience store, and she sometimes brings food with an expired freshness date. We have been willing to eat them unless they are perishable, but none of us has ever had a stomach ache after eating them. Japanese are too nervous about the freshness date. We need a system to reduce disposal food before we worry about the freshness date.

Japan is a small country. Our ancestors have been able to get fresh vegetables or fish easily and as a result, we’ve come to set a high value on freshness. Sliced raw fish called “Sashimi” and fresh Japanese sake called “Shinshu’’ are good examples. On the other hand, Europeans tend to set a high value on matured food. They often think older wines are better. Fresh wines such as “Beaujolais Nouveau”, enjoyed only for tasting the new wine of the year, are worth little although we Japanese love them.

There are some ideas to reduce waste of food. Let me introduce 3 of them. The first one is called ‘’food bank.’’ It was implemented in America. A food bank group receives non-standard products, and gives them to welfare facilities. Second idea is food cycle. It is an idea to convert wasted food into compost, sell them to farmers, and the vegetables grown with the compost will be sold at supermarkets. The last one is food cycle law, the way to set a target value for food waste generations.

It is important to put these ideas into action, but the most important thing is each individual’s attitude, “to finish all dishes served’’. When we go to a restaurant, we sometimes order too much. Each person should always think about Japanese traditional value, not to place too much importance on freshness of food, and not to make ourselves too sensitive to the expired date. I strongly believe that we can surely reduce the garbage if you follow my idea.

**Change regrets into chances**

Sekine Kazunori

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Today, I would like to talk about regrets. Through our life, we might have regretted why we did something or we did not do something many times. What is worse, most of us have a negative image of regrets. When we regret, it is natural to be worried why we did not make other choices. In such situation, there must be two different ways of perception. One is to regard regrets as chances to grow up. The other is to regard regrets as failures. To choose the former way is essential because we don’t have enough time to make regrets many times. Time never waits for anyone. Thus, I’ll talk about how to change regrets into chances for growing up. I’m sure there are three steps. The first is to think why we could not choose other choices in order not to regret. The second is to think what was lacking. The third is to think how to choose other options.

The first step helps us to find the reasons why we made the choices that we regretted and what were the factors which made us choose such a choice. There must be some reasons and factors. If we don’t understand those, we might make regrets again. The second step helps us to clearly find what we should do in order not to regret. Understanding what is lacking leads us to be motivated and we don’t have to make blind efforts. The last step helps give us concrete images that we can make other choices and succeed. Once you overcome a regret with those three steps, it is easy to overcome other regrets by applying those same three steps.

Next, I would like to talk about my own story about how to change regrets into chances. My regret was born when I was in the second year of high school. I entered the track and field competition. Without enough practice, I could not get satisfactory result and I felt deep regret. Then, I recalled these three steps. As for me, the first step, to think why I could not make other choices, was to think about the excuse that I did not have enough time because of studying. The second step to think what was lacking was inadequate resolution seeking. I was afraid I could not get the good result even if I only concentrated on practicing for track and field. The third step, to think how to choose other options, was to remember how much I loved track and field and to have an image of when I succeeded in the competition. Thanks to these steps, I could continue to practice hard for track and field and get the satisfactory result in the last competition when I was in the third year of high school.

In conclusion, what I want to say most through my speech is that it is a wasteful use of time to regard regrets as just regrets. Regrets only give us bad effect until we do something after regretting. To make regrets means to bump against the wall. However, once you go over the wall, it becomes a fort to protect you and at the same time it becomes evidence that you overcame a regret. Regrets include many chances to grow up and can become the turning point of our life. When you regret, please don’t think that you made a failure but think that you are given a chance to grow up. What we gain is much more than what we lose because of regrets.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.

**The importance of objective thinking**

                                                                  Mayu Fukuda

How do you make an important decision in your life?  What is your decision usually based on? In case of marriage, you may be captured by your intense feelings for your partner. However, is it really OK to marry someone just because you feel it’s right to do so? When you decide to marry your partner, you have to think about various issues like parents, work, money, and children. A lot of people tend to consider them subjectively. Actually I was like that. Today I’d like to talk about the importance of objective thinking. Through this speech I want to tell you that having objective thinking or broader view points is essential in making a successful decision in life.

I’d like to share with you one story which made me realize the importance of objective thinking. The story goes like this. A certain volunteer group went to a developing country and made a well to help people in the area. People there had long suffered from lack of water, so the volunteer group thought that making the well would solve the problem. They made a well and came back to Japan and proudly reported what they had done. Surely many people who listened to their report admired their accomplishment. I thought too that it was a successful project. But do you know what happened to the people in the area afterwards? The well triggered a conflict in the region and people started to fight. Though this part of area in the country was put in a good environment thanks to the well, another area did not change. So people in another area became jealous. Until now, the country’s environment has not recovered and people are still fighting and struggling.

What the volunteer group thought a successful project turned out to be a failure because they couldn’t imagine the consequences of making the well in the area. We thought this story subjectively; we only thought they could contribute greatly, but once changing our thinking objectively, we can find new aspect which we hadn’t realized at all. When I heard this story, I realized how narrow my thinking was. And I started to think this story taking into various aspects into accounts. For example, if the volunteer group listened to what the area’s people had wanted more carefully, they could have done better for the people, and possibly the conflict might not have occurred.

Through this story, if we have objective thinking we can get better results and I found the importance of objective thinking. This year, I belong to an FLP seminar about the international cooperation and study about a society we want to make with economic development”. If people just contribute money or provide something, is it really good for developing countries? Even if they are poor, they live with good relationships with each other, and then if we give some change and cause trouble in their society, that may give a negative effect.

In conclusion, I insist that we have to think best not for ourselves but for others. And we should think deeply and take action very carefully. One of the causes of conflict is closely related to our narrow views. If these people have objective thinking, the situation may be changed. It is difficult to eliminate wars, but we may reduce conflicts if we can consider various factors surrounding the situation.

Finally, how can we come closer to objective thinking? In my opinion, objective thinking means considering as many different views as possible. In other words, gathering various subjective elements makes objectivity. We should become familiar with many ways of thinking and communicate with people having different backgrounds.

**The way to be happy throughout the world**

Kotomi Fukada

Free trade is not identical to free. Today’s trading system is opened by the agreement of WTO. In developed countries, many products are sold at low prices, while in developing countries, they are less so. Therefore it is difficult to sell their products in large quantity. Moreover, producers in developing countries gain only a few percent of profits because intermediaries get the benefits. It’s supposed to be treated equally between developing and developed countries. I’d like to show one of the suggestions to solve this problem.

First of all, do you know what fair trade is? Dealers have to trade in right prices in order for poor producers to produce commodities stably and live independently. This is the definition. This system makes producers get more profit than usual trade because it cuts middlemen as much as possible. I guess the biggest characteristic is, however, guarantee of minimum price. Even if international market price is decreased, dealers must pay certain amount of money. Plus, there is additional money called fair trade premium. It is used to improve the community, for example, education, health and infrastructure. In this way, fair trade brings about more happiness to poor producers.

Furthermore, not only producers but also consumers gain benefit. Most products carry a label. It is the mark to certify fair trade products. Consumer can easily understand whether it is a fair trade product or not. Common fact to most of fair trade products is organic. Not only food but also cosmetics are to be applied to this category. According to a recent research, many Japanese people care about quality rather than brand or quantity.

Unfortunately, fair trade has a negative aspect, too. A few days ago, one of my friends said to me, “I cannot understand the merits of fair trade for consumer. It’s just high price.” Then, I explained the positive aspect to him as I explained. But after all, he was not satisfied with my explanation. One of the reasons is that my explanation was not enough. To tell the truth, you also understand fair trade like him, don’t you? In fact, many Japanese people understand as such. Only 26% of them can recognize fair trade precisely. This is lower than in some developed countries such as the United Kingdom, Switzerland and the United States. The difference between Japan and these countries is how many stores there are handling fair trade products. In Japan, we are not able to buy fair trade goods everywhere because there are only a few stores to sell them. This fact closely relates to the rate of recognition.

Some famous companies, such as Starbucks and MUJI, come to commodities business little by little these days. This is an acceptable change and chance to spread fair trade products. Besides, there are groups doing enlightenment campaigns. One of them is FACT, Fair Trade Chuo University Team. I’m a member of this. In order to diffuse fair trade, we sell goods and foods in co-op and hold café during Hakumon festival. In this way, we have more opportunities of exposure. It’s important to get familiar with fair trade itself and to understand it correctly. I have a favor to ask you. Please remember this phrase, “To buy fair trade products is a responsibility for every consumer”. Fair trade is one of the ways for us to be happy throughout the world.

**For realizing equality**

Kei Muraki

Good afternoon ladies and gentleman.

Do you think our society is sexually equal?

Indeed, our women can go to school, work and do things just like men, but

sexual discrimination is still there in Japan.

Today I’d like to talk about sexual discrimination in Japan.

On June 25, 2014, I was really shocked at a piece of news.

At the Tokyo Metropolitan Assembly, Miss Ayaka Shiomura of Your Party rose to question the issue of increasingly delayed marriage and childbirth in Tokyo.

As she was doing so, other party men said sexually discriminating comments like “You should hurry and get married yourself!” and “Hey, why don’t you give birth to a baby yourself!”

Shocked by the comments, she continued to question managing her wry smile.

After the session, she proved these comments were said by one of the Liberal Democratic Party members.

It is a shame that these comments were said in the official assembly and by a Liberal Democratic Party member despite that Prime Minister Shinzo Abe vowed to make corporate Japan more women-friendly.

This news symbolizes Japan has sexual discrimination.

In the past, it was said “women are homemakers and men are to work outside”.

It was natural that women should do housework and child-raising.

Women have been encouraged to participate in society and do the same work as men since The Basic Law on Gender Equality was constituted.

Many women are active in business, political place and global society.

Sexual discrimination, however, remains yet.

For example, in the law, age of marriage is different between male and female.

Although both men and women work outside, housework is still a job for women.

Company executives are mostly men yet.

Last year female politician in Japan was only 7.9%.

In addition they are discriminated as you can notice.

This is peculiar to Japan among developed countries.

What should we do then to solve the problem of sexual discrimination?

At first, we should transform current Japanese system into women-friendly system.

For example, if a baby is born, both men and women are forced to take child-care leave and can easily return to work afterwards.

Then men become more cooperative to child care.

Another idea is to set a quota on the number of women in business and governmental organizations.

Female job opportunities will then increase and female opinions will be reflected.

Secondly, we should abandon the classic way of thinking that women have to keep the house.

All of us should recognize women and men are equal.

In conclusion, women and men are same human beings and it is natural that we should be given the same rights.

We must not discriminate because of sex.

In 2020, the Olympic Games are going to be held in Tokyo.

By then, women and men need to make this country more comfortable, cooperating with each other.

Thank you for your kind attention.

**Web of Life**

Mao Abe

We are living in a “web of life”. As you know, “web” means the nest of spiders, but in this speech, I’d like to use this word as a metaphor that means “All things are connected”. If we cut 1 thread, it gives damage to many other parts, and if we cut some particular thread, whole of web might collapse. All the things we are doing have big influence on environment surrounding us. Today, I’d like to show you a serious problem to let you realize that we are living in the “web of life”.

The problem is happening in Africa, but it has much to do with all over the world. Now, 22,000 African elephants are killed in a year. In other words, people are killing 180 elephants a month. The number of elephants killed and naturally died is much bigger than the number of newborn elephants. African elephants therefore are exposed to the danger of extinction and 100 years later, all African elephants are said to disappear. We are giving big damage to biodiversity. We tend to think this problem is just about animals in Africa, but it’s not. In this speech, I’ll explain the causes and effects.

No.1: The purpose of killing elephants is getting elephant tusks and selling them. In fact, poaching for elephant tusks and their international trading are banned by Washington Convention. However, African elephants are still being killed every day. Elephant tusks are used for just ornaments or stationaries to symbolize the wealth of people. In spite of alternative materials like plastics, many people want to use elephant tusks to satisfy their desire. To tell the truth, most of these demands are from Asian countries including Japan. If the demands are reduced, poaching of elephants will accordingly decrease.

No.2: Let’s think about other causes. After announcement of Washington Convention, the number of elephant tusks in market came down and the value of them went higher. Main purpose of poaching elephants is getting a large amount of money. According to website information, 1 elephant tusk has the price 20 times as much as average annual income in Africa. Many African people are economically in great difficulty, and they are forced to do this illegal action to make a living. We are partly responsible for making African economy more serious. In addition, many developed countries like Japan are destroying African forests to get resources. It is closely related to making environment more difficult to live for African elephants.

No.3: I’d like to talk about surprising effects. In September 2013, terrorist attacks happened in Kenya, and more than 100 people were killed and injured. Can you see the relationship between terrorism and elephant poaching? The fact is, this terrorism was committed with the money from trading of elephant tusks. In some parts of Middle East and Africa, there are several armed groups who kill elephants for the purpose of terrorism. In other words, this problem is not only about African elephants, but also about large number of humans. I wanted you to realize how our actions are connected, and how large network they have.

I raised just 1 example, but it’s enough to suggest that your action and decision can possibly be big problems to others, and things are connected somehow. As illustrated in this example, problems we caused sometimes turn back to us in an unexpected way. Causes and effects are always linked together. Each of us has to recognize our responsibility and importance of expecting what will happen. We are making many mistakes in daily life, but we can solve or improve the present situation by changing our thinking. I’m happy if I could deliver the message today that we can utilize “web of life” in good ways, too.

**One Concept to Stop Suicide**

Hiromu Kuwabara

When I was a first year student in junior high school, I was bullied by my classmates. That was really horrible. One day, I suddenly wished to kill myself. But I couldn’t. I didn’t have the courage to do it, fortunately. These days, people face many troubles in daily life, and some of them commit suicide. What can we do to prevent people from killing themselves? The goal of this speech is to offer one way to stop suicide.

According to Cabinet Office of the Government of Japan, about 27,000 people committed suicide last year due to troubled relationships in their jobs, schools, and families. Economic difficulties, such as debt, are serious, for sure. Data from Life Link, an NPO, to stop people from committing suicide, show about 20% of university students think they want to kill themselves after they start their job hunting. There are many different factors in suicide. These can be categorized, and I’ll focus on one category; that is communication. Communication is the key to relationships between people.

Now, I’d like to introduce the concept of “Bunjin”. This word was created by Keiichiro Hirano, the Akutagawa Prize winning author, and means that the human identity can be divided. It is the opposite of being an individual, which cannot be divided; so another name is “dividual”. Nowadays we believe we have our own personality, and we acquire special abilities; we go on trips, we read books, and we study. I do not deny you doing these things, yet I cannot support its purpose because I believe human identity consists of many characters. For example, in ESS, my images are noisy, Otaku, no good at talking, and old. However, in other places, my images are different; good at talking and a leader. I’m sure my friends in my hometown have these different impressions. This is “dividual”. Each becomes clear only through communication, and so identity does not have only one axis. Do you know why I introduce this idea, then? Why should we know this? Why is it necessary to divide our identity? And why does this contribute to stopping suicide?

Imagine the case where we believe we cannot divide our identity. If we are denied our identity by others in daily life, we will be shocked very much, and feel our existence is denied. And it is difficult to overcome such an injury. This is seen in situations where people face trouble or experience big failures, as in job hunting or entrance exams. On the other hand, if we believe we can divide our identity, we will not suffer so much. This is because if we are denied one “dividual”, we can choose another “dividual” and our existence will not completely be denied. Even if you are bullied at work or in school, your identity is not totally denied. You have other human relations with your family and other friends.

Suicide is a deep and real concern for me and I strongly believe that the concept of “dividual” can contribute to reducing suicides. Our identity is based on communication. That’s why I want to ask all of you, “Are there big merits in persisting on one individual?” If you can say “No”, why not adopt the concept of “dividual”, which is more flexible?

I thank you.