



Hāf a A d a i

Letter of Japanese
School of Guam
October Issue
Mizuki Ide
Principal 9/27/2023

Travelers and cosmopolitans

From September 11 to September 15, I accompanied a group of fifth graders and eighth graders on a school trip. The destination was Kansai, Japan. It rained in the afternoon on the second day, but the rest of the day was fine, and I think it was a wonderful school trip.



What surprised me the most was the large number of foreigners. I have led my students on many school trips in Japan, so I have been to many famous places in Kansai many times, but I have never seen so many foreigners. It is impossible to look to the right or to the left without seeing a foreigner. Especially in Kyoto, I even had the feeling that we were surrounded by foreigners. This may be due to the rapid increase in inbound visitors after the Corona convergence and the depreciation of the yen, but I was surprised at how much things had changed in such a short period of time.

At the same time, there is something I thought about during this period. Is a foreign traveler an "cosmopolitan?" English is generally used as a lingua franca in the world, so English is generally understood by foreign travelers. Of course, for those from English-speaking countries such as the U.K., the U.S., and Australia, wherever they go, they may feel as if they are in their own backyard, with English signs everywhere and English being spoken to some extent. In this sense, I feel envious of them. So, are people who travel from English-speaking countries to other countries cosmopolitans? The answer would be no.



According to the Dajirin dictionary, an "cosmopolitan" is "a person who is active and prominent in the world, educated and well versed in languages, and is accepted throughout the world. In other words, being able to speak English is necessary. In other words, being able to speak English is necessary, but that alone does not make one an cosmopolitan.

I believe that many parents want to raise their children to be bilingual, if not cosmopolitan. According to one source, "Bilingualism is not simply monolingualism x 2. A perfect bilingual is one who lives in a country where two languages are spoken at the same time, and has mastered both languages and cultures at the same time. So, although it is an ideal, it is rare," he says. When I hear this, I realize how difficult it is to become truly bilingual.

Then, there are those who wonder if it is okay to be "semi-lingual" or "bilimited," which is just before bilingualism. I am sure that this is a matter for each family to consider, but in any case, it will take a great deal of effort to reach these goals. I hope that families, students, and schools will work together to nurture global human resources so that we can nurture children who will go out into the world.

I look forward to seeing, someday, among the many foreign visitors to Japan, graduates of the Japanese School of Guam who have grown up to be cosmopolitan who are active on the world stage.

