



HPDU Competition 2019

Co-sponsored by The High School Parliamentary Debate Union & English-Speaking Union of Japan

【2019 ESUJ Award: ESU Debate Academy】 Awarded by English-Speaking Union of Japan (ESUJ)

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Dear ESU, ESUJ, HPDU and all members that sponsored for our trip,

First and foremost, we want to thank you for granting us the opportunity to come to England and learn so much about debate. It is thanks to you that we were able to have this one week experience. With no doubt, it has been an unforgettable seven days that will stay in our memories for a lifetime.

On July 28th, 2019, our ANA flight arrived at Heathrow airport. Looking back on this one week adventure in England, we have grown, both physically and mentally, compared to the three of us who got off from that plane. With wonder, excitement and a tint of nervousness, the three of us and Mr. Lai embarked on a journey that we will never forget. We would like to explain to you in detail about our experiences in England, but for the sake of clarity, we will divide our report into two sections.

<Part 1 Debate Academy>

The first and most crucial part of this trip took place in Uppingham, Rutland. As our bus strolled down the serene pastures of the British countryside, we were welcomed by our friendly peers that had also come to take part in Debate Academy. As soon as we arrived, we were given name cards and a welcome kit, and were soon ushered into our own boarding houses.

The ESU Debate Academy was divided into four sections; class lectures with our mentors, debates, electives of a specific area, and nighttime socials.

Our class was made up of about fifteen people, with two mentors that looked after us with great care. The majority of our day was spent in this classroom, as we learnt and discussed about specific areas of debate. Lectures varied from argumentation to having good delivery, but all were carefully organized and rich in content. By the end of the week, our foundation knowledge for debate had increased significantly because of these lectures.





Nonetheless, what encouraged us to grow the most was the actual debates. In one week, we participated in 8 rounds, each with a unique motion and different teammates. To introduce a couple of examples, some of the motions included: This house believes that patriotism does more harm than good, this house would introduce a maximum 40 hour working week, this house regrets the commercialization of Pride, and so on. Throughout the matches, we were astounded by the high level of debaters from around the world. Not only did they have an astounding amount of knowledge, they were also capable of forming them into solid arguments that they could present in a debate.

Everything from content to style was simply amazing, and we were encouraged to improve and learn from them. Moreover, the mentors that looked over us each match gave every one of us thorough feedback that we could immediately put into practice in the next round. Their observation skills and critical eyes allowed us to recognize our strengths and weaknesses, that we plan to keep working on in the long-term.

Another unique aspect of this academy was the afternoon electives. Each mentor presented a topic, and we were able to choose an area that we were interested to learn about. Electives ranged from building logic to whether the Illuminati exists, but regardless of which classroom we entered, we came out with new perspectives and interesting knowledge about the world we never would've known otherwise. This allowed us to be exposed to new perspectives and new topics of interest to be found.



Compared to the rigorous schedule of lectures and debates, the night time socials was a time when we got together with new peers and simply have fun. Some of the activities were playing sports in the school grounds, a walk around the village and a movie night. As one of the few participants from foreign countries, we were both excited and nervous to talk to other teens, who had grown up in a completely different environment from us. We wondered whether we would be able to get along, or if we would be able to get close at all. Contrary to our fears, every participant at Debate Academy welcomed us wholeheartedly, and were especially keen on hearing about life in Japan. As we shared experiences and played games together, we learned that debate does not build up barriers, but tears them down for all of us regardless of our backgrounds.





After a tiring but ephemeral seven days, our stay at Uppingham School was finally over. When we came here, we nervously stepped into our dorms not knowing what was going to happen. We lined up for food with quick glances and stayed still in the classroom. On the last day, however, we ate our meals with a group of close friends we made over our stay, laughing about the most simplest things. We rushed out of the dorm with our suitcases, scrambling for some final photos and goodbyes. All in all, our stay at Debate Academy taught us the simple joy of learning with peers at the top level. We gained perspectives and ideas that we would never have known in Japan, and we were motivated to keep striving so that we could compete with them again. It has been a great milestone in our debating career, and we cannot thank you enough.



<Part 2 Sightseeing in London>

Our schedule at Uppingham School was sadly over, but two days of touring awaited us now. As soon as we arrived back to London, we dropped our luggage in the hotel and quickly set off to town. We had a schedule planned, as our local friends in Debate Academy taught us the best places to go.

The first location we visited was Covent Garden, a market in the districts of London that sold great food and souvenirs. Climbing up the 193 steps was a pain after our long train trip back to the city, but we realized it was worth it after looking at the amazing shops. After a short look around the market, our hands were already full with shopping bags and a gelato cone. We were amazed at the beautiful buildings of London, but were soon to be even more dazzled by the night lights of the city. As we crossed the bridge to the London Eye

after dinner, we could not resist but stop every few steps just to take a photo of the river and the streets of London. Although we were exhausted from the long day of travel, we were able to fully enjoy some of the best tourist spots of London in these short hours of our first night.



On the next day, we woke up and headed off again to the Globe Theater and St. Paul's Cathedral. With a sandwich in hand, we strolled by the peaceful streets of London, listening to the church bells and soft commotion of the morning city. Soon, we headed off to a huge shopping mall in the central district where we bought expensive sweets and ate lunch in the food court. We were surprised at the diversity of the cuisine there, from Chinese to Lebanese. In the afternoon, we walked across the city to Buckingham Palace. The place was crowded with tourists and the sun was glaring down at us, but we managed to get a group photo before finally arriving at a park nearby. After a good rest, we set off to our final destination of the day and the last dinner of our stay in England. It was an Italian restaurant near our hotel. We were careless enough to order an amount beyond our capacity, only to find out that the plates were far bigger than what we imagined. With a full stomach, we regretfully carried back the food to eat at midnight, pledging to write this in our report, as I am doing now.



Our final day in London started with a stop at Harrods, where we simply looked around, astounded at the luxurious building. We soon left to eat at a Michelin approved restaurant of fish and chips. We never expected that a simple plate of fried fish and fried potatoes could be so delicious, but that was exactly the case. After a great meal, we headed off to the ESU building nearby. We thank the generosity and hospitality of ESU to take us on a tour through the historical headquarters of its union, where a wooden plate gleamed with gold letters of the names of former presidents, most commonly from the royal family. We were also surprised by the long drawing rooms and grand halls of the building. The trophies of annual competitions, carefully placed in a glass case was also very memorable. Overall, we were very glad to have visited the ESU before our departure, and we thank you for the kind hospitality that you've shown us.

To be honest, we never expected our debating career to take us on such an adventure like this week, not only in terms of debate but also of valuable life experiences and new friends. Again, we would like to wholeheartedly thank the ESU, the ESUJ, HPDU and everybody involved in making this trip possible. Japan's English debating community is growing but there is still a long way to go to get to the top level. We feel that it is very unfortunate that some talented debaters in our community do not get a chance to nurture their skills in a more competitive environment such as that that we experienced at Debate



Academy. Therefore, we cannot thank you enough for granting us the opportunity to experience what it's like to compete with the top level of debaters, and learn from the top coaches in the world.

