

April 10, 2006 (Monday)

The Englishman Was Humorous.

ERGO Logical. Teach Debate To

Improve Humour.

今日会った英国人はユーモラスであった。だからロジカルだった。ユーモアを鍛えるならディベートを教えろ。

Both the teacher and the student must enlighten each other at the same level through cross-examining each other till the depth of their problem.

(Krishnamurti)

The guide and the guided can tutor each other for further illumination.

(M. Matsumoto)

Japanese Eton's parks debate.

A boy's boarding school modeled on Eton has sparked concerns that egalitarian education, which many believe has underpinned Japan's economic success, could be undermined by a trend towards elitism. Kaiyo Academy, built with 20 billion yen (¥ 97 million) in corporate donations, opened at the weekend, stirring debate about the future of education. Some 123 12-year-old boys wearing crisp black uniforms took part in the enrolment ceremony. (AFP)

The above article (page 31) on THE TIMES for today set me off on an expensive (¥ 310) 9-hour driver guide tour to Cambridge University, an elite educational class consisting of King's and Queen's colleges and Eton, hence today's essay topic: Education on debate, logic and humour as a bonus.

Humour is derailed train of thought. Weather-beaten rock. An accident that either turns listeners on or off. A risk worth taking. These are now part of my left-handed dictionary. And I owe the man a debt of gratitude for the enrichment of my logic that goes "rusty" with absence of debate.

The man, JIM DAVIES (60) is a former Group Captain in the Royal Air Force and diplomat-awarded an O.B.E. (Order of British Empire) by the Queen. An elite (Cambridge) and experienced (ten years) British Tours guide, married to a French wife (historian), two brilliant kids univ. grads. Intelligence does run in families.

He speaks English, French and Welsh (The Celtic language of Wales). His strength in mathematics and physics got him into Cambridge instead of Oxford. Both campuses encourage debate and competition - competitive debating, and tutorial (one-on-one professor-to-student) dialogue. He's a poet-turned humorist-debater.

Proof? The Welsh are the Irish who cannot swim. (Jim CAN swim.) Disraeli answered, "I'm of a religion of few wise men. The name of the religion? Wise men never tell." A Jewish humour. An Australian joke: No we don't want to come back to

England, that's where our ancestor came from (exiled as criminals). The United States wasn't created by prisoners; it was built by criminals themselves. Margaret Thatcher: All political careers fail. All scientists are proven wrong. Einstein was a bad scientist. Isaac Newtown was worse. His was a case of a mathematical genius gone away. He was from Cambridge Univ. We missed the authentic copy of Principia Mathematica, because the library was closed when we got there. Sir Francis Bacon, who could very well have been William Shakespeare, a questionable identity.

Jim displayed his intellectual integrity by taking no sides on virtually any controversial topics I raised on the road, in and out of central London, on the way to and from Cambridge. He's a mad fan of Carl Popper, Jewish philosopher who hugely influenced George Soros, who said, "Truths like all hypotheses are destined to be broken. – disproved. You can never successfully prove anything." Jim is detached and skeptical, or simply logical. Wait, he's a disciplined optimist, or simply a humorist.

If both Oxford and Cambridge want to go private to combat financial difficulties, you might as well take a leaf out of Edward de Bono's book, and let George Soros buy into them. His money can buy anything, name or fame. No, you wouldn't sell out, or bought off. That would be the last step you'd take. And that's lateral think. De Bono, my elitist friend, went to both Oxford and Cambridge to put on a "green" (creative) hat.

He laughed, laughed and laughed.

He and I knew Cambridge would never sell out the soul of its spiritual founder Aristotle, founder of logic to a global speculator and a debate-promoter with a logical head that says money is an ultimate equalizer. Aristotle might say, why not?, because he is known for his politically incorrect statement that the majority of human beings could and should be enslaved because they are naturally slaves.

Money doesn't bother Britain; but the lack of money worries Britain. Financial Times for today accepts the foreign ownership of its industry, a UK defense company (BAE systems), arguing. "The British attitude is logical, foreign takeovers have been good for the country. They have brought investment and raised management standards." (p. 17). Logic says if all British seek logic to avoid emotional solutions to emotional problems such as an immigration policy (more than half of London residents are foreigners), Jim is logical. I sought his logical answer on my hypothetical question: "What would you do as a diplomat and advisor to Japan's Government, if China continued to threaten Japan militarily into submission?"

He said, "I'd advise your gov. to take sides with Russia as a counter-threat to China." Logic seems to work, because of its inherent mercilessness. Amnesty International says at least 3,400 people were executed in China in 2004 – nearly 90 percent of the global total. (F.T.)