

How the Churchill Trophy Came to the World

A report based on the documents at the Churchill Archives Centre,
Churchill College, Cambridge University



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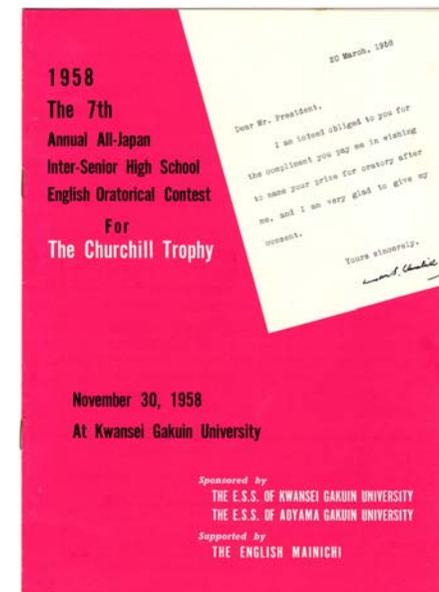


Kwansei Gakuin Archives



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神崎高明「チャーチル杯創設の経緯～ケンブリッジ大学チャーチル・カレッジの資料から～」
『学院史編纂室便り』第36号、2012年11月1日、2-6頁
<http://www.kwansei.ac.jp/gakuinshi/LEFT.htm>



Kwansei Gakuin Archives

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1. The Birth of the “Churchill Trophy Contest”

Since 1958, the English Speaking Society (henceforth ESS) at Kwansei Gakuin University has been holding an English speech contest for the Churchill Trophy, inviting the senior high school students as the contestants, and honoring the late Sir Winston Churchill (1874-1965), the former British Prime Minister, by using his name for the contest. “The Churchill Trophy Contest” was not the earliest speech contest for the high school students organized by the ESS. Even before the Second World War, the ESS had organized the English speech contest for the high school students. According to the two history books of Kwansei Gakuin,¹⁾ the Kwansei Gakuin ESS gave the first English Oratorical Contest for the junior high school students (prewar education system) in 1928. After the war, in 1950, the ESS gave the first inter Kei-han-shin (Kyoto-Osaka-Kobe) junior and senior high school English oratorical contest.

Two years later, this contest expanded into the “All-Japan English Oratorical Contest for the Mainichi Trophy,” which included senior high school



All-Japan English Oratorical Contest for the Mainichi Trophy, 1952

students. Though this contest carried the phrase “All-Japan” in the title, most of the participants in this contest were limited to those from the senior high schools in the Kinki area and the area west. In order to make the contest more inclusive, two epoch-making projects took place in 1958, during Mr. Masashi Saho’s tenure as the president of the ESS. The first one was to co-sponsor the contest with the Aoyama Gakuin University ESS in Tokyo in order to increase the participation from the Kanto area. The other was to name the contest in honor of Sir Winston Churchill who was an orator of high renown. According to *The Kwansei Gakuin University English Speaking Society: A Centennial History*, it was Mr. Yozo Tanimoto, then an ESS alumnus, who put forth the idea that the ESS would write a letter to Sir Winston Churchill and receive his permission to crown the contest with his name. The main person in charge of realizing those two challenges was Mr. Munehiro Yamaguchi, who was the then-chairman of the committee on speeches in the ESS.

The project to realize the joint venturing with Aoyama Gakuin went smoothly, but the larger issue was how to obtain access to Sir Winston Churchill. A big question mark was whether he would give his approval. A letter in English was written by the ESS head, Mr. Masashi Saho, and was sent to Sir Winston together with the letter of recommendation by the President of Kwansei Gakuin, Mr. Hidejiro Kato, via the British consulate general in Osaka. Mr. Tommy Uematsu, an ESS alumnus, then a reporter for the Mainichi Daily News, served as a facilitator to put the letter in the hands of English consulate general in Osaka. Two months later, the answer arrived in the form of a letter signed by Sir Winston Churchill himself in which he gave his approval to

the project via the consulate general. With this, in 1958, the “7th All Japan English Oratorical Contest for the Mainichi Trophy” made a new start revising the title as the “7th Annual All-Japan Inter-Senior High School English Oratorical Contest for the Churchill Trophy.” During this year, for the first time, the preliminary contest in the Kanto area was held at Aoyama Gakuin University, and the final contest was held at Kwansei Gakuin University. On the program of the contest, the letter from Sir Winston Churchill appeared. Since then, Kwansei Gakuin University and Aoyama Gakuin University alternate with each other each year in holding the final contest for the “Churchill Trophy.” In November 2012, the 61st contest was held at Kwansei Gakuin University. The above is the summary of the information the writer has obtained from the ESS alumni as well as the documents contained in *The Kwansei Gakuin University English Speaking Society: A Centennial History*.

2. The Missing Letter from Sir Winston Churchill

Unfortunately, the original letter sent by Sir Winston Churchill in 1958 has been lost. Since the letter was addressed to Professor Hidejiro Kato, then-President of Kwansei Gakuin, it was presumed that it would be kept at the university’s head office. In 1997, when a Centennial History of the ESS was being compiled, a search for the original letter was conducted at the Gakuin head office; however, the letter was not found. According to the head office staff, in 1969 the head office of the university was occupied by the All-Campus Joint Struggle Committee, and many documents were lost during the confusion; the letter might have been lost during that time. While the original letter is still missing, a copy of letter was published in *The*

KG Times, in April, 1958, the text of which is as follows:

Dear Mr. President,

I am indeed obliged to you for the compliment you pay me in wishing to name your prize for oratory after me, and I am very glad to give my consent.

Yours sincerely,

Winston S. Churchill

Only a few older ESS alumni, as part of their nostalgic recollections of days gone by, have spoken of the letter that was sent to Sir Winston Churchill and of the reply signed by Sir Winston himself. However, given that these events took place more than a half-century ago, the existence of the letter has long been forgotten by most of the alumni.

3. A Letter from England



In July, 2003, a letter was delivered to the head office in the administrative building of Kwansei Gakuin. The letter was signed by Mr. Mark Holland, president of Gale International Limited in England, and Mr. James Joll, who was the representative of Sir Winston Churchill Archive Trust. Ms. Misuzu Miyasaka, who was working at the president’s office in Kwansei Gakuin at the time, called to inform me about the arrival of the letter, as I was then acting as an advisor to the ESS. The letter said that the documents related to Sir Winston Churchill, which consisted of more than a million letters, had been preserved at the Churchill Archives Centre of Churchill College in Cambridge, and all the letters were planned to be microfilmed for the purpose of preserving them. Among the letters were a small number of documents from Kwansei Gakuin University, and they

asked for permission to microfilm these documents. The letter further stated that, upon request, they would send the university copies of the related documents when the microfilming had been completed.

As Ms. Miyasaka belonged to the ESS when she was a Kwansei Gakuin student, she remembered the Churchill Trophy, and provided me with a copy of the letter. Upon reading it, I was convinced that the letters related to the Churchill Trophy must be included in the file related to Kwansei Gakuin at the Churchill Archives Centre. I informed the university headquarters, as an ESS advisor, that I was absolutely positive about microfilming the aforementioned letters at the Churchill Archives Centre since no documents remained on our side regarding how the Churchill Trophy came to be realized. Hence a letter of approval in microfilming the letters related to Kwansei Gakuin was sent to England addressed to Mr. Mark Holland and Mr. James Joll.



4. A Visit to Cambridge

Sometime later, I wrote to Gale International Limited asking to let us know if the microfilming had been completed. Several years passed with no reply to my inquiry. Periodic searches were made through the Churchill Archives Centre on the Internet database, and I knew that the process of microfilming itself was gradually being conducted. However, no documents regarding Kwansei Gakuin was found through the several searches I made in the years following. After several more years had passed, a search of the system was made once again, also in vain. Eventually, I got an opportunity to visit England two years later in the

summer in 2012. Prior to my visit, I searched the Churchill Archives Centre on the Internet one more time. The following line caught my eye: “Kwansei Gakuin University, Uegahara, Japan, on naming of English Oratorical Contest after him [Sir Winston].” I knew then that the microfilming of the letters regarding the Churchill Trophy had been completed. I sent a message at once to Ms. Sophie Bridges, a curator at the Churchill Archives Centre, informing her that I would be visiting Cambridge to read the documents on the Churchill Trophy in summer. I received a kind message telling me that she would be arranging for my use of the reading room on the appointed day. My plan was settled. I visited Cambridge University in early July just before the opening of the London Olympic Games. Professor Yayoi Okada of the School of Sociology and Professor Masanori Ito of the School of Business Administration were then working at Cambridge as visiting professors, the former at Darwin College and the latter at Clare Hall. They kindly took me to Churchill College.

Churchill College was located in the North West part of Cambridge University; it was quiet, in contrast to Trinity College and Kings College, which were located in the central part of Cambridge and thus crowded with tourists. School buildings were seen on the beautiful green grass. The Churchill Archives Centre was on the second floor of the building next to Jock Colville Hall. At the reception, Mr. Andrew Riley, a veteran curator, welcomed me without asking my name, saying, “Welcome! I’ve been waiting for you. Sophie is not at her desk right now, but I’ve heard about you from her.” I was guided to the reading room and was offered a seat. He said that he had opened the microfilm with the reference number I had told them of

beforehand. Out of 300 letters, I was to search for the letters on the Churchill Trophy. At first, I thought it would take a large amount of time to locate the letters. However, I remembered I had read that the file number for the letters related to the KG ESS was placed in the last part of the folder. I scrolled through the film rapidly to the end and found the line "Kwansei Gakuin." "I made it," I said to myself, and I read the letter in detail. Presuming that the number of letters would be two or three at most, I scrolled back through the film. One after another "Kwansei Gakuin" kept popping up. It was a very pleasant surprise to find twenty letters all together in the end. I ordered copies of all the letters. With the printed copies in hand, I traveled back to London and read through the letters in the hotel room that night with great care.



Churchill Archives Centre



Entrance

5. Letters Exchanged between Kwansei Gakuin and Sir Winston Churchill

Of the aforementioned twenty letters, eight were from Kwansei Gakuin to Sir Winston Churchill; six were from the office of Sir Winston, including three from Sir Winston himself and three from his private secretary; four letters

were from Sir Winston's private secretary to Sir Winston; one from Sir Winston's private secretary to the British Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and; one from the British Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Sir Winston's private secretary. Of them, eight letters sent from Kwansei Gakuin had been microfilmed from the original letters. The remaining letters had been microfilmed from the duplicates.

The first letter from Kwansei Gakuin to Sir Winston Churchill was dated February 23rd, 1958. The letters were from Mr. Masashi Saho, the president of the ESS that year, and Mr. Munehiro Yamaguchi, the chairman of the committee on speeches at that time. In this letter, they requested to use the name of Sir Winston Churchill, renowned for his oratory, for the speech contest they had been holding since 1952. In addition, a letter of recommendation dated 22nd, 1958, and written by the then-President of Kwansei Gakuin, Professor Hidejiro Kato, was attached. In this letter, President Kato stated that the realization of the Churchill Trophy would greatly benefit the nurturing of the desire to learn English among the Japanese youth.

The person in charge on the part of Sir Winston Churchill was Sir Anthony Montague Browne.²⁾ He was famous for being the last private secretary of Sir Winston, who had worked for the British Ministry of Foreign Affairs before he served as Sir Winston's private secretary. He was a close aide to Sir Winston in his twilight years. After retiring from his position as prime minister, Sir Winston would often come and go between London and southern France, mostly at La Pausa in Roquebrune-Cap Martin, a well known health resort.³⁾ While Sir Winston Churchill was staying at La Pausa, he received a letter from Sir Anthony Browne dated March

1st, 1958. Sir Anthony wrote that the ESS at a Japanese University had requested to use Sir Winston's name for an English-language oratorical contest they hosted, calling it the "Winston Churchill Trophy." Sir Anthony stated that he could find no reason to decline the proposal, and even commented on the letter of request having been written in very well-mannered English.



There also was a letter written by Sir Anthony Browne on the same date to the private secretary of the Minister of Foreign Affairs. In it he wrote that Sir Winston Churchill had no reason to decline the proposal from Kwansei Gakuin University, but he wished to be informed if they have any reason to decline the proposal. In response, Mr. P. C. M. Alexander of the Ministry of the Foreign Affairs wrote back to Sir Anthony Browne on March 10th, and stated that Ministry of Foreign Affairs had no objection to approving the proposal, since Kwansei Gakuin was a reputable university. However, as part of the process, they need to solicit the opinion of the British Embassy in Tokyo. If they had no objections in approving the proposal, they would send a letter of approval by Sir Winston to Kwansei Gakuin University via British Embassy. There should have been no reason for the objection on the side of Embassy; Sir Anthony Browne wrote a letter dated March 20th to Mr. Saho, then-president of the ESS, that the proposal for using the name of Sir Winston would be granted and that he had sent a letter of approval to President Kato. The letter of approval sent to President Kato from Sir Winston dated March 20th arrived via the British consulate, which was the same letter reported in the KG Times.

Following the approval, a letter dated April 2nd was sent to Sir Winston Churchill from Mr. Masashi Saho, president of the ESS, and Mr. Yamaguchi Munehiro, the Chairman of the Committee on Speeches. In the letter they wrote that they would make the contest worthy of his name. When the contest for that year ended, Mr. Yamaguchi wrote a letter dated January 12th, 1959 to Sir Winston introducing the program of the contest in detail. He also reported that the contest was held under the joint auspices of Kwansei Gakuin University and Aoyama Gakuin University with many junior high school students participating from all the regions of Japan, and he informed him that the contest had successfully completed.



I had thought that the above would be the whole story of the Churchill Trophy letters, but actually, more letters had been exchanged between the ESS and Sir Winston. In the Churchill Archives Centre, two letters were found, one from President Takashi Komiya of Kwansei Gakuin dated September 25th, 1960, and the other dated the same day under joint signature, from Mr. Taichi Itoh, president of the ESS and Mr. Masayuki Arita, the Chairman of the Committee on Speeches. In the letters, Kwansei Gakuin University requested Sir Winston to write a message addressed to the participants of the contest. On October 6th, Sir Anthony Browne sent a draft to Sir Winston, which was then sent from Sir Winston to Kwansei Gakuin. The letter reads as follows:

I send my good wishes to those competing in the All Japan Inter-Senior-High-School English Oratorical Contest. It is most commendable and interesting that you should compete in this way and so add to your knowledge of the flowering of the English Language.

On September 30th, 1961, similar letters, one from President Komiya and the other from both Mr. Koichi Yamada, president of the ESS, and Mr. Takao Watanabe, Chief Committee for the Oratorical Contest, were sent. In response, Sir Anthony Browne again advised Sir Winston to send a message to Kwansei Gakuin as requested, for he considered the contest would exert a good influence on the relationship between Britain and Japan. Sir Winston agreed and wrote the following message dated November 24th to Kwansei Gakuin:



I send my good wishes to the competitors in the English Oratorical Contest. I hope that this competition will contribute to the knowledge of the English language in Japan and add to the understanding and friendship between our two countries.

That is all that has been archived at the Churchill Archives Centre. There is no evidence of any further communication between Sir Winston Churchill and Kwansei Gakuin. One possibility is that the Churchill Trophy Contest had become established as a nationwide speech contest by the year 1962 onward, and there had been no need of further requests made of Sir Winston. In 1965, three years later, Sir Winston Churchill passed away at the age of 90.

6. Conclusion

What is most evident from the letters exchanged between Kwansei Gakuin University and Sir Winston Churchill is the enthusiasm of the students to establish the Churchill Trophy and the strong support given by the university. In

addition, the warm cooperation of Sir Anthony Montague Browne allowed the university to realize the successful outcome of the project. Sir Anthony was well-known for his service as the last private secretary to Sir Winston Churchill, and it is clear that he took an active and important role in helping to give birth to the Churchill Trophy. After reviewing the correspondence, it seems especially important to reconsider the message of Sir Winston Churchill that the Churchill Trophy is not only for nurturing English ability of Japanese high school students, but also for deepening the mutual friendship and understanding between the United Kingdom and Japan.

Notes:

- 1) *The History of Kwansei Gakuin, Commemorating 40th Anniversary of the Founding of the School* and *The History of Kwansei Gakuin Higher Commercial School Commemorating the 20th Anniversary*
- 2) Sir Anthony Montague Browne had been Churchill's private secretary since 1952 until 1965, the year Churchill passed away. He wrote *Long Sunset: Memoirs of Winston Churchill's Last Private Secretary*. Cassell, 1995.
- 3) For five years since 1956, Churchill made a long stay in Roquebrune-Cap-Martin twice a year. During his stay there he devoted himself to writing or painting. A lot would be found about him in those days in Gilbert, Martin. (ed.) *Winston Churchill and Emery Reves: Correspondence, 1937-1964.*, U of Texas Press, 1997. In addition, the last volume of Churchill's *A History of the English-Speaking Peoples* was published in 1958 and he was in the midst of writing it, when the letter from the English Speaking Society of Kwansei Gakuin University asking for the permission to give his name to the speech contest they were holding.

Letters: Reference CHUR 2/338

- 289** A Letter of February 22, 1958, from President Hidejiro Kato, Kwansei Gakuin, to Sir Winston Churchill.
A Letter of February 22, 1958, from President Hidejiro Kato, Kwansei Gakuin, to Sir Winston Churchill (Retyped version).
- 290** A Letter of February 23, 1958, from Mr. Masashi Saho, President, ESS, and Mr. Munehiro Yamaguchi, Chairman of the Committee on Speeches, ESS, to Sir Winston Churchill
- 288** A Letter of March 1, 1958, from Sir Anthony Montague Browne, Private Secretary, to Sir Winston Churchill.
- 287** A Letter of March 1, 1958, from Sir Anthony Montague Browne, Private Secretary, to Mr. R. J. Langridge, British Foreign Office.
A Letter of March 1, 1958, from Sir Anthony Montague Browne, Private Secretary, to Mr. R. J. Langridge, British Foreign Office (Retyped version).
- 286** A Letter of March 10, 1958, from Mr. P. C. M. Alexander, British Foreign Office, to Sir Anthony Montague Browne, Private Secretary.
- 284** A Letter of March 20, 1958, from Sir Anthony Montague Browne, Private Secretary, to Mr. Masashi Saho, President, ESS.
- 283** A Letter of March 20, 1958, from Sir Winston Churchill to President Hidejiro Kato, Kwansei Gakuin.
A Letter of March 20, 1958, from Sir Winston Churchill to President Hidejiro Kato, Kwansei Gakuin (Retyped version).



- 282** A Letter of April 2, 1958, from Mr. Masashi Saho, President, ESS, and Mr. Munehiro Yamaguchi, Chairman of the Committee on Speeches, ESS, to Sir Winston Churchill.
- 279** A Letter of January 12, 1959, from Mr. Munehiro Yamaguchi, Chairman of Speech Contest, ESS, to Sir Winston Churchill.
- 278** A Letter of September 25, 1960, from President Takashi Komiya, Kwansei Gakuin, to Sir Winston Churchill.
- 277** A Letter of September 25, 1960, from Mr. Taichi Itoh, President, ESS, and Mr. Masayuki Arita, Chairman of the Committee on Speeches, ESS, to Sir Winston Churchill.
- 276** A Letter of October 6, 1960, from Sir Anthony Montague Browne, Private Secretary, to Sir Winston Churchill.
- 275** A Letter of November 26, 1960, from Sir Winston Churchill to President Takashi Komiya, Kwansei Gakuin.
A Letter of November 26, 1960, from Sir Winston Churchill to President Takashi Komiya, Kwansei Gakuin (Retyped version).
- 297** A Letter of September 30, 1961, from President Takashi Komiya, Kwansei Gakuin, to Sir Winston Churchill.
- 298** A Letter of September 30, 1961, from Mr. Koichi Yamada, President, ESS, and Mr. Takao Watanabe, Chief Committee on the Oratorical Contest, ESS, to Sir Winston Churchill.
- 296** A Letter of October 12, 1961, from Sir Anthony Montague Browne, Private Secretary, to Sir Winston Churchill.

- 295 A Letter of October 13, 1961, from Sir Anthony Montague Browne, Private Secretary, to Sir Winston Churchill.
- 293 A Letter of October 17, 1961, from Sir Anthony Montague Browne, Private Secretary, to President Takashi Komiya, Kwansei Gakuin.
- 292 A Letter of October 17, 1961, from Sir Anthony Montague Browne, Private Secretary to Mr. Koichi Yamada, President, ESS, and Mr. Takao Watanabe, Chief Committee on the Oratorical Contest, ESS.
- 294 A Letter of November 24, 1961, from Sir Winston Churchill to President Takashi Komiya, Kwansei Gakuin. A Letter of November 24, 1961, from Sir Winston Churchill to President Takashi Komiya, Kwansei Gakuin (Retyped version).



Prof. Takaaki Kanzaki at Churchill College, July 9, 2012.



Kwansei Gakuin Archives, Nishinomiya 662-8501 JAPAN

<http://www.kwansei.ac.jp/gakuinshi/ARCHIVESE.htm>

February 22, 2013

Cover photograph, KG Clock Tower, taken by Kurumi Takagi