

# KIRITAKA English Journal Vol.37

~Stay Independent, Stay as ONE TEAM~ September 27th, 2024



## Kiwi Corner



For this month's Kiwi Corner, I'd like to write about the expressions "please" and "thank you."

Recently, I watched an interesting video that came up on my Instagram feed. A man was asking his child (in Japanese) "What do you think the opposite of *arigatou* is?" The child thought for a little while, then responded questioningly "Is it *doutashimashite*?" The father then answered "no," and responded "think about the meaning of *arigatou*."



Isn't "thank you" such a wonderful phrase?

Looking at the *kanji* for *arigatou*, 有難う, you can see the meaning. Put simply, it can mean that doing something (for someone else) is difficult. The father gave the example "if someone buys you a birthday present, they have used their own money that they have worked so hard for, to buy you something special." He then answered his own question by saying, "the opposite of *arigatou* is *atarimae*." It means that doing something is obvious, or only natural. I found this video truly fascinating, as I'd never thought this way about this commonly used expression in Japanese.



The look on my face when I

One question that I am often asked as a foreign resident here in Japan is "What is something that has surprised you since you've come to Japan?" To be honest, there aren't many things anymore, but one thing that sticks out is the difference in manners between Japanese and New Zealand children. New Zealand children, from a very young age (around two or three years old), are taught to **always** use "please" and "thank you." Before I started working here at Kiritaka, I worked first heard "要らない" as an ALT at elementary and junior high schools for several years. What surprised me was that these students, **some as old as 15 (!) never said "please" or "thank you"** in Japanese! I thought maybe this was due to a cultural difference, but the word that shocked me most was the word "要らない." In New Zealand, if there is something we don't need or want, we are taught from a very young age to say "no, thank you." If we don't add the "thank you" at the end, it sounds like an order, which is very rude and disrespectful, especially to teachers or parents.

While this was shocking to me, it was a good chance for me to experience cultural differences between Japan and my home country. Furthermore, I'd like to use this topic as an opportunity to say a big "thank you" for reading the Kiritaka English Journal, and "please" continue to do so in the future!

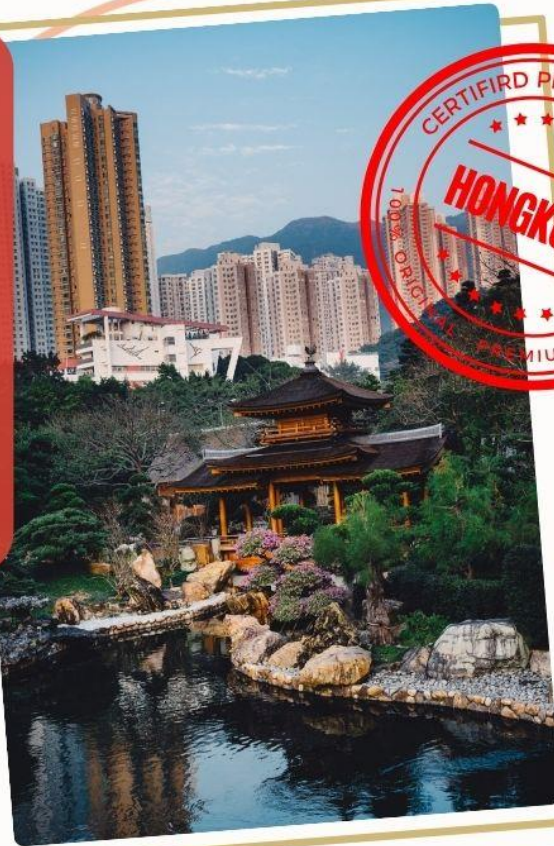
This month I'd like to introduce a song about being grateful. This song was actually nominated for an Academy Award in 2014! You can listen to it here: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IMxL3\\_P9eNE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IMxL3_P9eNE) (Liam Campbell)

# Tea Time with Choy



Hey guys! Did you know I'm not *just* from the UK — my family's from Hong Kong, too, so buckle up, because I'm about to spill the tea on one of the most exciting cities in the world!

Hong Kong is the city where you can admire ancient temples one minute, and then look up at a skyscraper so tall your neck hurts the next. It's where "old meets new" isn't just a phrase, but a way of life.



Let's be real — Hong Kong's food game is unbeatable. Dim sum? It's basically our love language. Fun fact: "**dim sum**" comes from the Cantonese phrase for "**touching the heart.**" So, when you're digging into those delicious dumplings, remember — you're not just eating, you're having a heartfelt experience! And if **egg tarts** don't melt your heart, nothing will. Hong Kong's street food scene is legendary too, with egg waffles, fish balls, and mystery skewers that are 100% worth the adventure.

One big difference I've noticed between living in the UK and growing up Asian is the food culture. When my family gets together, we order a lot of dim sum and share it. But in the UK, everyone orders their own food, and we don't share. This breaks my heart because I always want to try a little bit of everything!

Hong Kong's skyline is iconic. With more than **1,500 skyscrapers**, it's one of the tallest cities in the world! But even with all its modern buildings, Hong Kong still remembers its history. Places like **Nan Lian Garden**, a peaceful garden in the Tang Dynasty style, show the city's rich cultural heritage. It's a place where the past and present come together.

Here's a new English phrase for you: "**The best of both worlds.**" It means you get the advantages of two different things, and Hong Kong is a great example! With its busy city life and calm nature spots, you really get the best of both worlds.

Finally, my song of the month is from a legend in Hong Kong. He learned English through songs, so if he can do it, so can you!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eiRtfWgD02I>