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DANIEL AREBA MACHOKA

MY MOST SURPRISING EXPERIENCE

Hello ladies and gentlemen. I am Daniel Areba. The topic of my speech today will be 'what I was the most surprised at in my life'.

The following is a true story of my experiences when I went to Poland. On the connecting flight from Zurich Airport to Wroclaw Airport in Poland, I couldn't help but notice that I was the only black-skinned person on the plane. Since I was so excited to be on a plane for the first time ever in my life, I didn't care. However, at the airport when I was checking out the baggage, the airport security detained me until everyone from the plane

had checked out. Then they made me open my bags and scrutinized every single item I was carrying. What made it worse was that they didn't speak any English and so communication was almost impossible. In their very broken English, they asked me what I had come to do in Poland, and I tried my level best to explain it to them as plainly as possibly. Finally my sensei showed up, explaining that he would be my host, at which they let me go. Asking him why they treated me that way, he said they were not used to black visitors. I would stay in his dojo for the next 2 months during my stay as his uchideshi.

During the next few weeks my sensei kept me very busy indoors, and we would only go out during weekends. It was only after a month that I found myself free enough to walk through the town alone. Whenever I had some free town, I would take a stroll to the town center and back. For the whole period of my stay, I only saw 3 other black people. I especially enjoyed passing by kids and teenagers. The teenagers would usually stop whatever they were doing and shout 'hi' at me. If they were playing football, they would toss it at me, and I would kick it back at them. When the roads were crowded, for example in the

middle of a traffic jam, drivers who knew some English would roll down their windows and ask me ‘ Hey Bro, how are you doing? What country are you from?’ Bro? Ha ha ha, not all black people call each other bro, you know. One day a drunken guy stopped me in the middle of the street and asked me, ‘Hey bro, you got some weed?’ I immediately burst out laughing. Why does everyone assume black people smoke weed? Actually, I have never taken any weed in my life. This image is only portrayed in American movies, but does not apply in real life. I was feeling like a superstar. Back home in Kenya no one ever noticed me, but here everyone paid attention to everything I was doing. There were also some very beautiful, model-like ladies. I so wanted to chat with them, but language was always a problem. I could only manage a simple ‘hi’. Very few Polish people can speak English.

One Sunday afternoon a friend picked me up from the dojo. His wife had gone to the salon with the wife of an old school friend of his, who had in turn invited him to their home. He wanted to take me with him since I had no plans. On our way there we passed by a convenience store and bought a few beers and vodka. Immediately he opened one beer for

himself and another one for me, and we continued walking while sipping our beers. This was such a daring move for me, that I felt so excited. I would never do something like this in Kenya. The friend welcomed us warmly. He was just putting their 2 year old baby in bed, and he told us to be quiet as to not wake her up. We passed him the beers and vodka, and sat down. After taking a few snacks, we opened the beers vodka and continued drinking. I think it is Polish culture to drink lots of beer and vodka. Eventually, the kid woke up and immediately took a keen interest in my different skin colour. She would come to me and rub her hand against my skin. I think she thought I had applied some color, and she was trying to rub it off. After her curiosity faded away, we became great friends. We all laughed at this and marveled at how naïve kids can be.

Evening came and the wives arrived, looking very good in their new hairstyles. The wife of the house walked in with their 5 year old daughter whom they called 'princess'. I was soon to understand how she got this name. While we were all introducing each other, she hid herself behind her mother's skirt. I assumed she was just shy, so I casually tried to

reassure her. Soon her parents joined me, but she hid even more. Finally she gave in when her mother took her hand and stretched it towards me. I lightly shook the offered hand, and the most amazing thing happened next. She took back her hand and looked at it strangely, finally rubbing it against her clothes. I think to confirm that I had not rubbed my blackness onto her skin. Then immediately she ran away straight to her room and stayed there for the rest of the evening. No amount of persuasion could get her to come out, and even when it came time for us to leave, I still did not even so much as see her face.

Ladies and gentlemen, what do you think of my superstar-like lifestyle? It feels nice, doesn't it? I think so. It feels good when people always look at what you are doing. Thank you all for listening to my speech.

END

2

JOSEPHINE KARUMWA

SOMETHING INTERESTING ABOUT KENYA : MACHAKOS ANTI- GRAVITY AREA

Kenya is one of the most interesting countries that you can ever want to be at. I did not know that some of these places ever existed in my own country.

Last year over the Christmas holidays; I just went for a visit to Machakos. When I was on Kangundo road, Kituluni Hill 12kilometers east of Machakos town, I realized this crowd of people who seemed to be exited as they were pouring water on the tarmacked

road. So I decided to pull over the car on the side of the road. I walked to where they were and realized that the water was flowing uphill.

How interesting, don't you think? Having seen all that, I went back to the car a bit confused. I decided to try something; I let down the hand brake and surprisingly the car started moving up hill at a speed of approximately 5kilometers per hour. This made me even more confused.

I could not believe what was happening. Then this guy told me that he wanted to show me something. He pushed the car with one hand uphill and the car started moving without him even struggling. Then he came infront of the car and started pushing it downhill.

It was a bit challenging. It was like pushing the car uphill. This was really amazing.

I do not know about you, but to me, this is truly a wonder of the world. This was the most shocking thing that I discovered about Kenya.

My advice to you is if you have never visited this wondrous place in Kenya, you should make a point of doing so.

END

4

CYNTHIA WAIRIMU MURIMI

HAPPINESS

Good Afternoon to all!

My name is Cynthia and I am a Kenyan. I am a student at Strathmore University.

I want to speak about Happiness

Welcome!

Ladies and Gentlemen, are you happy? Happy people...are always smiling!

They always have positive thoughts. And because they always do good things, they are a help to others. Happy people are always bright and cheerful and look beautiful.

We were all born to be happy. We cannot live without happiness.

Shiawase, I wonder where such a beautiful word came from.

SHI! A! WA! SE!

Shi stands for 'do'. Doing good things. Being happy enables you to do good.

A stands for 'have'. Having good thoughts. A happy person has a sense of gratitude.

Wa stands for 'excitement'. Excitedly looking forward to tomorrow. Happiness means that I am excited about the day after tomorrow too.

Se stands for the 'world'. Anyone anywhere has the capacity for happiness.

Am not good at singing but won't you lend me your ears? This is a song I first heard in our Japanese class. And it's a song I immediately came to like. Won't you please sing it with me?

How Happy...!

Are those who live in the East

For they are always the first

To discover the

Newborn sun

Happy indeed...

Are they who live in the North

More than anyone else

They feel the joy

Of welcoming the spring

How happy...

Are they who live in the South

At any time of the year

They can offer flower garlands

To those they love

How Happy...

Are they who live in the West

They can give the sun

The final send-off

Into tomorrow's sky

What a Happy thing...

Just to be alive

Sad times...such will be

But

You can always dream

Of the future

...you can always dream

Of the future!

How was it? Please ask your neighbor if they are happy?

That is the end! Thank you very much...

END

5

DAVID WAGUDE

KENYAN BEAUTY

Good morning everyone. My name is david wagude. I am 25 years old. I study sports science and Japanese language at Kenyatta University. It's been 2 years since I began studying Japanese language. Today I would like to tell everyone about the fascinating beauty of Kenya.

First are the handworks at masai market. There are wonderful sculptures and artworks that will make you wonder who made them or how long it took them to make. The various traditional clothes and khangas are very distinct and wonderful.

Next, take a look at the Kenyan women in this room. They are dazzling with beauty. They are educated and strong willed. As for the Kenyan men, just like myself, there are a lot of diligent and kind people.

Third is the fascinating Kenyan music and dance. When I speak of music, perhaps you are thinking of traditional dances but I like nightclubs and I guess there are Japanese people here who have been to a nightclub in Nairobi. These clubs play music called Genge or Kapungala that are powerful and very original.

Fourthly, in sports, we have worldclass rugby team and good marathoners. In marathon, Patrick Makau is the current world record holder. I am sure Kenyans will break that record in this year's London Olympics. By the way, the volleyball world cup is in Japan but I wish that Kenyans worked a little harder.

Fifth comes Kenyan wildlife and nature. I think that if I do not speak of this, it will be difficult to understand the fuss about Kenya. The great mount Kenya is difficult to climb but

very amazing and the flamingoes of lake Nakuru are very beautiful. To me, hell's gate (rock climbing) is deeply interesting.

Also, Kenya has various tribes and cultures that respect each other and because of the unity, Kenyan people are very interesting.

Lastly, Kenyan mothers work very hard for the sake of their families. For example, my mother has been cooking and selling chapatti for 13 years. Everyone's mother works very hard for the sake of their families. Kenyan mothers are a symbol of Kenyan beauty. I am proud to be a Kenyan. You all are also glad to have come to Kenya, aren't you? Thank you very much for your kind attention.

END

6

FESTUS CHERUIYOT

MY MOST SURPRISING EXPERIENCE

Hallo. The last time I was here, I told you how terrible my Japanese was. I also told you that I was in love. My girlfriend at the time was Japanese.

Today, I have good news and bad news. The bad news is that, I didn't get married but; my Japanese got better, so it wasn't all in vain, right? For now, I will tell you about my experiences since last year.

So one day, I am walking home from school and because I had not had anything to eat, my stomach was rumbling. As fate would have it, I saw a Japanese restaurant in the distance and because of my perceived Japanese proficiency, I decide to go and show them just how good at Japanese I was.

The girl at the entrance was one of the most beautiful Japanese girls I have ever laid my eyes on. She had worn a kimono and she ushered me in. And her smile as she ushered me in-‘it’s her,’ I thought. I decided to make her mine.

Inside the room I was ushered to, no one had shoes on. An older man inside approached me and asked me to please remove my shoes before I entered. At that time, I thought to myself; “why do I have to do it? It’s not like I’m going to take a shower”. But- I still removed my shoes.

Inside the room was something else. There were no tables. There were no chairs. Was this really a restaurant?

The girl came once again and sweetly asked me to have a sit. All my fears melted away at that moment. I ordered for sushi and swiftly asked her to join me in the meal.

Soon, the food came. But there wasn't a spoon. Was I really going to eat with these long sticks?

Although it was hard, I finally managed to taste the food and it was really tasty!!But there was a problem, I didn't know how to use chop sticks and everyone in the room was laughing at me.

So I looked at the beauty again and then it hit me: 'an opportunity'! I asked her to teach me how to use the chop sticks and soon, we proceeded to eat together.

That for me- was the best, chopsticks eating experience ever!

END

7

VICTOR RUBAHIMBYA

MOTTAINAI (OH WHAT A WASTE!)

My favorite Japanese word is Mottainai meaning "oh what a waste!" Mottainai is a Japanese word used when something useful like food, water, time or other resources is wasted. "Mottainai koto" (wasteful things) lead most able bodied Japanese citizens to demonstrate the young and elderly usually express sad regret. Mottainai is a compound word Mottai-nai where mottai means dignity or sacredness of a material entity nai indicates an absence or lack. Kenyan environmental activist Wangari Maathai who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2004 learned of this word while in Japan in the famous Mainichi

Shimbun. She returned to Kenya to share the value of Mottainai through activating for environmental conservation

Because of this Mottainai makes me notice the importance of things. I could notice the importance of water as I fetched it from the well. I could notice the importance of the washing machine as I washed my clothes by hand. I could notice the importance of health after falling sick and losing my hearing temporarily due to an ear inflammation. I could notice the importance of family and friends when their absence became evident. Comparing the Japanese and Africans who suffer from poverty, the Africans have a chance to notice the importance of scarce things and so they get a chance to live joyfully because some people in Japan don't notice the scarcity of things and could cause others great sadness. The necessary things to make us happy are not more money but the heart of appreciating the things in front of us. It has taught me not to waste my dream and potential of learning Japanese that's why I work hard to improve my Japanese to one day be the ambassador of

Uganda to Japan. So this word makes me notice the importance of things that's why I like this word a lot.

I hope all of you would learn to use this word so I humbly ask you to repeat after me..... MOTTAINAI, MOTTAINAI, MOTTAINAI!!!! Thank you.

END

8

ANN WANJIKU MWANGI

WHAT I WANT TO TELL JAPANESE PEOPLE ABOUT KENYA

Hello everyone,

my name is Ann. Am 22 years old. I live in Zimmaman which is along Thika road.I take a bus from downtown and alight at Zimmaman which takes about 30 minutes.I have studied Japanese for 4 months.Because i want to go to Japan, i will study Japanese upto December this year. Am very much willing to get married to a Japanese because Japan males are handsome and very kind.

Today i want to tell Japanese people about the attractions in Kenya.

Kenya is a very beautiful country with kind people. The population is about 45 million people. There are 8 provinces. There are beautiful forests, mountains, oceans, waterfalls etc. Mau and Aberdare forests are very beautiful. The highest mountains are mt. Kilimanjaro, mt. Kenya and mt. Menengai. The ocean in Mombasa is very beautiful. There are waterfalls in Thika and in Nyahururu. Thika falls are 14 arranged waterfalls (14 falls)

In Kenya there are many animals also. Does everyone know the Kenya's BIG FIVE ? They are elephant, buffalo, lion, cheetah and rhino. In forests are hyena, giraffe, monkeys, leopards, antelopes etc.

There are much sweet foods also. In Kitale there are many maize grown. The tea plantation in Kericho are very attractive. The fish in Kisumu are very sweet. Pineapples in Thika are fresh and very delicious. In Murang'a coffee is grown and is very sweet. The rice from Kirinyaga is very sweet.

In Kenya there are many fruits of different kind also. From December to February is the season of plums, mangoes, pineapples etc. In April and May we have pears and avocados which are very sweet. oranges, apples, watermelons and pawpaws are there throughout the year and are delicious. Those were some of Kenya's attractions. Please go see Kenya's beautiful nature. Thank you for your invitation and please tell us about Japanese attractions also. Thank you very much.

END

PATRICK MURAGE KAMONDE

THE MOST SURPRISING THING I HAVE EVER EXPERIENCED IN MY LIFE

Exactly 15 years ago, as a small boy, I came to experience a cultural shock of my life, a trip meant to visit Turkana region, to me seeing cars, mansions and decently dressed people was normal.

On this day as we approached Turkana, our vehicle came to an abrupt stop, in front of us a large herd of cattle and camels, we alighted to take some pictures but the herd was unmanned, where could the herders be? It is only for us to see some small creatures hiding

behind a small tree. Oh!! Young 10 year old boys who were partially covered in clothes emerged from the bush crying, as we were later told they cried since they had never seen a car in their entire life. To me seeing a car was normal and this surprised me.

Temperature were so high and we were so hungry and thirsty that we decided to look for a restaurant to fresh ourselves, but alas!! Of a period of two hours, we found none. After a very long period we spotted a thatched house where we were welcomed with camel milk as an appetizer which I had never tasted in my entire life, rough and sour it was. Then I decided that I never drink it. Afterwards for lunch we were served with raw meat and blood which was quite unique, days later I experienced stomach upsets.

The beauty of the people was at its best, yet so simple, men dyed their hair while the women wore traditional ornaments and necklaces. The houses were made of grass and mud, the people looked contented and at peace despite the harsh weather conditions.

In this trip I experienced a lot of things. They are both good things and bad things and it was from this trip that I came to understand and appreciate the diversity of our country. Thank you for listening.

END

MY FAVORITE JAPANESE WORD

My name is Esther, thank you for taking time to listen to me.

My favorite Japanese word is mottainai. When I went to Japan for the first time I kept on hearing this word. That was in 1997 when we lived in Fukuoka the three of us, my husband and young daughter. My daughter was then only 2 years old.

In the beginning I didn't know any Japanese. It was really hard. I decided to go to Japanese language school and studied Japanese for 10 years. I took my daughter to

nursery school everyday before going to school myself. My husband worked in the Unhabitat office in Fukuoka together with four other foreigners.

When I lived in Fukuoka, my daughter in the beginning went to a Japanese kindergarten until she was three years old. Then she moved to the Fukuoka International School where she stayed until tenth grade.

My husband is Dutch from The Netherlands. At the moment he is working in Unhabitat here in Nairobi. My daughter is going to International School of Kenya (ISK).

The word mottainai has an interesting meaning. For example when you leave food on your plate Japanese people would say ah mottainai. What is interesting is that the Kenya Nobel price winner the late Wangari Maathai loved this word mottai nai, She loved it so much that she introduced it into the English language. It stands for Recycle, Reuse, Reduce she said. In the beginning I didn't know what mottai nai stood for. Then I asked my

friends and they said “don’t waste” but it was not the exact meaning. Putting it directly into English is after all the best thing.

When I was living in Fukuoka, the city was very clean and pleasant to live in. Maybe because of the existence of this word everybody cooperated and recycled, reduced and reused and kept the city clean.

Every time I hear the word mottainai I am happy there fore I like it. The meaning also is interesting.

END

KENYA'S BEAUTY

Hello! My names are Bavon Ngura. I learn at Chavakali High School. Today, I am going to be speaking about Kenya`s beauty. Kenya is located south of Sudan. Kenya`s capital city is called Nairobi. Nairobi is a word that comes from the Maasai language. It means place of cold waters. The Times Tower is the tallest building in Eastern and Central Africa. Kenya has many National Parks. Also, since there are many beaches tourists come. At the bomas of Kenya you can see Kenyan dances. It also has the famous Rift Valley. Lakes are present also for example, Lake Nakuru, Lake Naivasha and Lake Magadi. On

the lakes there are flamingoes. Kenya`s main power source come from Hydro Electric Power and Geothermal power.

Everyone from Japan, call your friends to come and enjoy Kenya on Holidays

Thank you very much

END

KINDLY PEOPLE

Someone once said that speech is silver and silence is golden. That person was right. However today I'd like to think that my speech is golden because I'll be talking about someone who completely surprises me with his kindness. His name is Yutaka. Yutaka means abundance. And as his name suggests, he has kindness in abundance.

I am a big fan of face book. When I started learning Japanese, I got Japanese face book friends so that I could practice Japanese with them. That is where I met Yutaka. He works in a certain language school in Japan. He used to correct my status updates that I

wrote in Japanese. Actually, they were always wrong! I guess he was so concerned that one day he just offered to help me with my Japanese for free.

Well, Mr. Yutaka is a gentle friend but when he teaches me Japanese, he doesn't joke. He diligently helps me out with my revision and when I submit my carelessly done assignments he scorns me. He says 'no face book for you until you have done basic grammar revision!' when I give him good work he affirms me. 'He says well done!'

I think it's really cool. He teaches me not only Japanese but also how to be disciplined dedicated and focused with my life. The most important lesson I have learnt is how to be kind. I do not know Mr. Yutaka in person and yet he devotedly holds my hand in this journey of learning Japanese. Honestly, in my whole life, I have never met such a kind person. I did not know that such good people exist. To me, he is a complete surprise.

Every day, I am highly motivated to learn Japanese because I know I have great support. He is not here to hear this but I think he is a great teacher. The Italian say that one

who finds a friend finds a treasure. I have found such great treasure in him and I am completely honored.

His kindness is so inspiring that I have decided to offer myself to be of such help to my Japanese friends who are learning English. I feel indebted and I think that one good turn deserves another.

Thank you.

Nasake wa hito no tame narazu it means 'A [One] good turn deserves another.'
'The good you do for others is good you do yourself'...

END

13

BRYAN MBUGUA KAMUNYU

MY FAVORITE JAPANESE WORD

My favorite Japanese word is Haru its meaning is one of the four seasons. The reason why I like this word is what it represents.

Haru signifies the beginning of new things, and this is very well depicted by the blossoming of the cherry tree which is the national Japanese flower.

After months of winter in which everything is cover in snow which is pure, cold, and lifeless one could compare this to one's life where struggle and extreme disappointment

has driven one into a situation where one does not feel as if they are living, do not despair after winter must come spring, such are the seasons of nature and life.

the cold harsh realities will blossom into days filled with warmth a vibrancy of colors and the sense of a future yet to be experienced, the key to such days is hope and belief one must never lose this key, if you do the door will never open for you.

Even though we do not have Haru in Kenya one can know of it in spirit and observation, the cultural value attached to the significance of spring many forms of arts have incorporated the message into their works and stored it for others to learn.

13th century Buddhist, Nichiren said that winter will definitely turn to Spring. No coldness of winter will last forever. As long as we don't give up and fight hard, the warm spring will come about. That's why no matter how harsh the situation is, we must forge on. I love spring, because it teaches me this important thing in life.

END

14

GINA ASHIMOSI

THIS IS KENYA

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen!

My name is Gina. I am a 3rd year student at Strathmore University. I come from kakamega and I love Japanese very much. Today I will be talking about Kenya. Please grant me your favor.

Kenya is a very beautiful country.

It is famous for its wildlife.

Kenya is also famous for its marathon runners .However, even in Kenya there are strange things.

There are also very many “interesting” Kenyans.

Today I will talk about the Kenyan people.

Kenyans are very “interesting” people.

Kenya has various people from different walks of life.

Kikuyus, kambas, Luhyas, kalenjins, among others.

Kikuyus are famous for their love for money but they are also hardworking people.

Luhyas are famous for their love for Ugali and because they love ugali so much they also eat habitually thus their love for food.

Jaluos are very interesting people, they are very proud people.

Kenyans are cheerful and lively people, moreover they are also very interesting.

We are very keen on everything, thus you will find Kenyans staring at people, cars, buildings...anything!

Let's talk about beer... Kenyans drink a lot of beer until they get blind!!..

Kenyans love the “haki yetu” slogan. Whenever they want something they decide it's their right and demand for it.

Ladies and gentlemen do you understand the word “pole pole”.

A 2 O'clock meeting starts at 3 o'clock. Its "pole pole"...

Students go for a 9 O'clock class at 9:30...it is "pole pole" because 'hurry hurry has no blessing'...

Lecturers also come at 9:30...however Strathmore is a bit different, you cannot be late!!

Kenya is the best in the world....

That is the end. Thank you very much.

END

16

ECHAMINYA MBARANI

MY FAVOURITE WORD

How do you do? My name is Echaminya Mubarani. I am a second year at Strathmore University. I study IT.

Today I would like to talk about my favourite word. My favourite word is chicken. In Japanese it is tori.

Tori is easy to pronounce. It can also be a title of a movie. It is also a delicious food. Saliva can come out when you hear this word. What about a song on tori. (to-ri, to-ri) Isn't it a nice rhythm?

I like the word tori very much. When I was in high school, I liked sports. And I was an athlete. But I did not like training. One day, my friend told me "You are fast and you are a good runner. Please train harder." And he also told me "please run with Usein Bolt." I told him "Bolt is very fast and I am slow." He asked me "are you a chicken?" This means "are you a coward?" Because he called me a chicken, I trained hard. I still train up to now.

I was interested in this speech contest. But I was worried. My friend asked me if I was a chicken, meaning if I was a coward? I did not want to be a chicken so I here I am participating in this speech contest.

Are you all hungry? Are you listening to my speech? Or are you thinking about chicken? When my teacher Masumi san mentions tori, I also get hungry. Tori is a very powerful word. Therefore, I like this word.

Thank you very much.

END

17

JOHNKIRK GIKONYO MUCHIRI

WHAT I WANT TO TELL JAPANESE PEOPLE ABOUT KENYA

My name is Johnkirk Gikonyo.

I study Japanese language at Kenyatta University.

I try to do a Japanese speech though I cannot say that it is easy.

So, it is my honor to stand here.

I started learning Japanese around the same time that I entered university.

I study for about 2 hours every day.

But sometimes it is difficult to study because I have many things to do, like part time job.

It is hard to manage study and work.

I think my university life is tough.

My mother pays my school fee but not living expense. So I earn for my living by selling peanuts at the tuck-shop of my university.

This work is tough.

I cook and pack the peanuts alone and I have to spend about 6 hours every time.

When I bring my products to the university, I carry them to the tuck-shop by myself so I also spend much time. Therefore I sometimes cannot go my classes.

Through my experience, what I learned is to restrain myself.

I have a big dream. That is to support street children.
They find their food from streets.

They always do Glue, whichi is not good for their health.

If they get sick, they don't have any medicine.

They sleep in cold ground.

Such things don't make them live longer.

My dream is to build Children's Home where those children can eat and study.

Though this dream is difficult to live out, I would like to read one English saying to encourage me; "Where there is a will, there is a way". It is "seishin ittou nani goto ka narazaran" in Japanese saying.

END

18

THAIRU KEVIN HINGA

THE THING THAT SURPRISED ME MOST IN MY LIFE

The most thing I have ever been surprised in my life is how a plane can float in the air. This was the beginning of the first scare in my life.

On one Christmas holiday during childhood my family decided to surprise me and take me to America for the holidays. They waited until the last day to tell me that I was going to be on a flight.

I have always wanted to go to Disneyland at least once before I die even if it is when I am ninety years old. Of course at this time Scooby doo was my favorite character. I only wished they could have told me earlier and I could have taken some flying lessons or at least run away when it neared the holidays.

I thought to myself that being that high in the air meant death. I still had so much to do. Everyone was going to America for Christmas so I was not about to be left home alone in the peak of the Christmas holidays. It reminded me of the movie home alone. If you have watched it then you know how the story goes.

Finally on the day of the trip, on board I went and trust me you could have fooled me that inside the plane was a house but not until it started moving and airborne, it was my heart sank to my stomach and I crawled behind the seat in fear. I could have wished for magic for the first time of my life but I guessed being in the air for all those hours was already magic.

It felt like totoro my neighbor in the anime and that I was actually flying. At twelve years old you can believe that this is only things that you see on television or the internet but at last I believed it was true thanks to the wright brothers.

Being grown up now there many things that have happened that I can always remember but this one is always at my fingertips.

END

MY FAVORITE JAPANESE WORD

I think all of us have the favorite Japanese word. My favorite Japanese words are “thank you” and “sorry”. In Kenya we hardly say “thank you” or “sorry” even when we are supposed to do so. During my stay in Japan, I heard these two words being used very often. In Kenya almost no one told me “thank you” or “sorry”, so I was really moved. Of course, when I am told “thank you” or “sorry”, I become very happy.

I stayed in Japan for 3 years, and during my stay in Japan, I went for shopping in supermarket. After paying my bills, the cashier thanked me. I was surprised why he did so

and all the time this thought kept on dominating my mind. When I asked my Japanese friend as to why the cashier thanked me, she told me that it is because I shopped in that shop. In Kenya, the cashier do not thank the customer because they do not know that by not thanking the customer, the customer decide not to shop in the same shop again. So when I was thanked by cashier, I was really surprised but moved in my heart.

I am a massage therapist by profession and I attend to international clients but it is only Japanese clients who thank me after receiving massage from me. After finding out why they thanked me, it was told that it is because they have received massage from me. According to me, I thought there was no need of them thanking me, because they had paid for massage. Now I am so much used to being told thank you by Japanese clients and if they don't thank me, I think that it is because my massage was not good. It makes me to have no confidence in myself. On the other hand, if they thank me, I feel confident. So even me, I have learnt to tell my clients thank you for getting massage from me.

The reason why I like the word “sorry” is because if you apologize to someone most of the time, their anger goes away and also it reconciles.

During my study in Japan, I had disagreement with my Japanese classmate. The reason why I disagreed was because we had agreed that after school she would teach me because I did not know Japanese very well. After school, because I was very hungry, I ate bread as my classmate was waiting for me.

I did not know Japanese manner very well. Because I did not think keeping her waiting was wrong. She really got annoyed at me and even me I answered her back in Swahili. As we were exchanging words, our class teacher walked in and talked with my classmate. After that my classmate apologized to me immediately. The anger that was in me disappeared and we became very good friends.

When Japanese have an agreement to meet with someone, the person who comes later apologizes to the person who came first because he or she keeps the person holding

up. In Kenya even if someone comes late, they don't apologize instead they give excuses. I realized that it was wonderful thing to think of other person's feeling.

After realizing importance of these 2 words, even me, I started using them. I do not use them as well as Japanese, but it is desire to use them perfectly well.

After coming back to Kenya, I try my best to use these 2 words. I also teach young Kenyans whom I interrupt with the importance of these 2 words. This is the end of my speech.

END

21

LUKE DAVIES

MY MOST SURPRISING EXPERIENCE

My name is Luke Davis. I want to be the best today. I am Japanese half British half. My school has been studying at the National Center Hillcrest School.

I am talking about surprised. My title is lost. I stayed with my aunt when I went to Japan. After that I stayed in the Disney resort. Disney Resort is a fun place. Fun thing is seen filled in Disney Resort. You can take the vehicle and various.

Disney Resort is 2 hours by train from my aunt so we went by bus. Japanese electric bus is great. The hotel was in the Disney resort. There was also a spa and swimming pool and an arcade.

I went with my sister, and mother and I went to Disneyland. next I went to take a fast path to long engaged in till the roller coaster is over, but I got lost in the crowd. because my sister let go of my hand.

It was a astonished I was lonely when I'm lost. It felt like my mother and sister abandoning me. I was walking around Disneyland. Asked the staff what to do while I cried a little.

Took me 4 hours before talking to staff. I was sitting in a chair and when I arrived at child care. she said Luke Davies and i answered. she had left a phone number because mother had all ready come to the center lost. Staff on the phone immediately called, and mother had come. When I saw the mother, i was very pleased. the end.

END

KENYAN SCHOOL LIFE

My name is Marvin. Chavakali High School student. Today I am going to speak about KENYAN SCHOOL.

Most Kenyan high schools students stay at the dormitory.

We wake up at four thirty am and then we bath using water. We go to class to study from five to six and then we eat breakfast. Lessons start from eight am to four pm. At five

pm we go to the dormitory and then we eat supper. We go to class to study from six to ten pm. We sleep at eleven pm.

On Saturday we watch television from one pm to five thirty pm. On Sunday, we go to church.

Most Kenyan schools do not have enough water, also food is not enough.

Every evening we eat ugali and sukuma. Students play basketball and tennis but like football most.

We study for eight years in primary, four years in high school, and four years in university. Thank you very much.

END

23

NEWTON MALALA OJIAMBO

THE THING I WAS SURPRISED MOST AT

The whole of my childhood, I grew up in the village in western Kenya. Life in the village was so confined that one was restricted to school, church and home. There was no T.Vs. Very few people owned radios by then. My family did not have any of them.

Going to school was optional. School uniform was a requirement but because of poverty, I only had a pair which served me for more than 4 years. It was worn out and had many patches and lost its original color.

I have an uncle who really loved me. My uncle stays abroad and usually comes for holidays in Kenya. That year, he had come with foreign friends and he wanted them to meet my family. He had told them that I am a very bright and disciplined boy.

During that year, he came to celebrate Christmas with us together with his friends. He brought us some gifts which included clothes. These were my third new pair of clothes to be bought for since I was born. The gifts were a shirt, a pair of shorts, a belt, shoes and a tiny piece of clothe with three holes. Wearing new clothes in my village was an achievement and the opportunity came once in several years.

My old clothes were so torn and dirty that they had lost their original colour.

That morning, I showered voluntarily. Normally, I would be cained and forced to shower by my mother. Showering was only washing the visible parts of the body to avoid punishment. But that day, I showered properly. I really feared water those days.

After showering, I rushed to change into my new clothes. I first wore the shirt, then the short followed by shoes but in inversed order; right shoe on the left leg and left shoe on the right. This was my first time to wear shoes. I only saw shoes worn by our local chief.

However, the tiny piece of clothe remained. I could not tell where it was supposed to be worn. I started guessing. I tried putting it on on my left arm but it could not fit. I thought that since it had two holes, it was meant for both arms. However, this could not work either because my hands were constrained.

After sometime, I got the perfect place. My head. I thought that was really cool and I looked handsome.

My uncle had already arrived and he was in the sitting room with the visitors. I decided to go to the sitting room to show them how clean I was and to say thank you for the new clothes. I was very happy that time.

But immediately I entered the room, everyone burst into laughter. I could not figure out what was wrong. My father hurriedly pulled me back into the bedroom. He instructed me to remove the shoes and the short and to put on the small piece of clothe first before the short. I was so ashamed and shocked.

The piece of clothe was so tight that I could not walk properly. I was not comfortable. I was really surprised that the tiny piece of clothe was called an underwear. And that people had to wear it always. My uncle told me afterwards that wearing underwear was compulsory. That really surprised me because I was used to walking free style. From that day, I started getting used to wearing under wears always.

I am Newton Malala. A student at Kenyatta university and I wore my first underwear on 25th December 1999 when I was 8 years old.

END

24

HIROMI MIDIKA HASHIMOTO

HOMETOWN

Goodday ladies and gentlemen,

My name is Hiromi Midika Hashimoto. I am 19 years old. This year, I will be starting my university studies.

Today I am here to give a speech on my favorite Japanese word. My favorite Japanese word is furusato. Furusato translated to English means hometown.

For everyone, their hometown is important to them. It makes my heart feel calm. I have two hometowns. Kakamega in Kenya and Fukushima in Japan. I love Kakamega and Fukushima. Kakamega has tasty chicken and many trees. This makes it a cool place.

My grandfather lived in Kakamega. His name was Budhia. My grandpa was a very kind man. My grandpa died a few years ago. My grandfather's house in Kakamega has many mangoes. I love mangoes therefore when I used to go to Kakamega I ate many mangoes. At my grandfather's house in Kakamega, you can see Lake Victoria because his house is on a hill.

I also like Fukushima very much. Because my favourite grandma lived there. It has many tasty apples. It snows a lot in Fukushima. The first time I saw snow I was very surprised. I made my first snowman there with my siblings and cousins. That was one of my best memories I remember there.

The tsunami was a big tragedy and made me very sad. But Fukushima people are strong people and I know they will recover soon. I like the word furusato not only because it sounds nice but because it also has a lot of meaning in my life.

And how are your hometowns? Thank you very much.

END

25

OMOSA ELIJAH

INTRODUCING KENYAN TOURISM

Good morning. Today is a very fine day.

I am Omosa Elijah Mochama. I am going to briefly introduce you to tourism in Kenya.

Kenya is found in East Africa. The equator divides it into two almost equal halves. To the West of Kenya is found Uganda. To the North it is boarded by Ethiopia and Sudan.

To the East lies Somalia and the Indian Ocean. To the South of it is Tanzania. Kenya's Capital City is Nairobi. The area of Kenyan land is about 590000 square kilometre.

In Kenya there are many rivers, waterfalls and mountains among other physical features. Mount Kenya which is Africa's second tallest mountain standing at a height of some 5199 metres is found in Kenya. The longest river on the World, River Nile has its source at Lake Victoria, of which part is in Kenya.

In Kenya there are many hot springs and waterfalls. At the Coast of Indian Ocean there are also natural beaches. In Kenya again, exists wild animals normally referred to as 'the big five'. These are, the elephant, the rhino, the buffalo, the lion and cheetah. At Lake Nakuru there also live many flamingoes. There are also many zebra in the country. The most famous place one can visit is the Maasai Mara Game Reserve. The Mara is about 250 kilometre to the East of Nairobi. By use of a bus it takes 4 hours from Nairobi to the Mara. Here the wild animals are found grazing in the fields of resting in the bushes.

At the Mara one can take ride on a hot air balloon. Every morning the hot balloon takes to the air. Before takeoff, the balloon has hot air pumped into it so as to make it float in the air over the vast plains of the Mara. The basket attached to the balloon carries people seated in it. The captain controls the direction of the balloon. When there is a need of viewing the animals from a close distance, the captain makes the balloon to come up close to the animals in the fields. The ride is not very expensive. It will cost a ride about 40,000 Yen for the ride and the meals that are served. At the end of the ride the riders are served with Ugali and Nyama choma. Ugali is a meal made from white cone while nyama choma is the Swahili equivalent of roasts meat. In the evening the riders sit outside and enjoy Kenyan beer.

Many tourist visit Kenya especially the Maasai Mara. Kenya is a very good place to visit. The cost of touring is not very high. The environment is clean and beautiful, the people are friendly and kind too. Many a times you will hear them welcome you by saying “Karibu Kenya, Hakuna Matata” which means welcome to Kenya, there is no problem.

Kenya is a good country to tour. Please come and visit Kenya. Once you come, please give me a chance to serve you as your tour guide. If you do come, I will do the guiding in the little Japanese Language that I have mastered.

I beg to end my presentation here. Thank you so much for being my guests and for listening to me.

END

THE MOST SUPRISING THING IN MY LIFE

We always hear that unless we see something for ourselves, we will never actually understand the gravity of the situation. I always believed that the statement was not necessarily true- until I learnt the fact through actual experience.

I am currently a member of a student organization called AIESEC in my university. We have a lot of activities at AIESEC and one of them is projects. Before we start a project, we usually identify a social problem in the community around USIU and then partner with a company that either works on the same issue or that is interested in such a cause.

One of the projects that we did was at a slum and its scope was four primary schools with the girl children as a target. We chose the girls because we realized that their grades were much worse than the boys because they were skipping school. When we investigated the issue; we realized that the girls skipped school during their menstruation because their parents didn't have enough money to buy them sanitary towels and afford a meal for the family at the same time. As a result, they had to stay home and use any alternatives until their periods were over. As a student organization, we decided to work on this project and were able to partner with an organization that made special sanitary towels.

Now, onto the surprising part...On the project implementation day; before leaving school, we put the sanitary towels and a number of other things in goody bags that matched the number of children. We then went to one of the primary schools and presented the children with the bags and gave an explanation and demonstration of how to use the sanitary towels. When they heard about the sanitary towel's special attributes, they were actually really happy. A little bit later, they began to rummage through their bags and

then, one of them pulled out a panty. There was a brief moment of silence- like that moment before the goal at the world cup gets scored-and then there were absolute shouts of joy from the girls.

This for me was actually really surprising because the sanitary towel's special attributes were that it is re-usable and it lasts for one whole year. That they would show more joy over panties than they did over such unique sanitary towels was just really baffling. I realized that we live in such different realities- where something so trivial that it's not worth thinking about is like a treasure to another person- and it was a truly humbling experience for me. But if there's one thing that makes me feel that the project was worth doing, and is worth doing again, it's definitely those girls' smiles of gratitude.

END