

THE DAILY YOMIURI

NATIONAL



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Chris Flynn, center, holds his trophy after winning the 2003 Toastmasters All Japan Championship for Public Speaking speech contest on Sunday.

'I Love Japan' speech wins contest

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Chris Flynn, a 43-year-old Australian, won the English section of the 2003 Toastmasters All Japan Championship for Public Speaking speech contest on Sunday with a speech titled "I Love Japan."

Flynn, an English teacher at Kyushu Institute of Information Sciences, spoke on his experience of how the attitudes of many Japanese toward foreigners are friendly and accommodating when they stay for short visits, but change when they become long-term residents, with the most frequently asked question being when they would "be going home."

Flynn concluded his speech by saying that although acceptance of foreigners may have increased only slightly in the 15 or so years he has lived here, "I'm going to stay because I love Japan."

Flynn and 10 other contestants gave speeches that lasted between five and

seven minutes at the Daiichi Hotel Tokyo in Shimbashi, Minato Ward.

Before the speech contest, which was hosted by the Kanto and IFC Chiba Toastmaster clubs, debate matches between Toastmaster clubs of Japan argued the pros and cons of six topics, including whether married couples should use separate surnames and whether English should be designated as the official second language of Japan.

Toastmasters International is a California-based organization that aims to improve communication and leadership skills.

Ken Izumi placed second with his speech titled "Learning by Doing," and Machiko Tamura placed third with some entertaining tips on how to resist telemarketers.

Princess Takamado followed the award ceremony with a speech on the importance of communicating so that other people receive and understand the message being conveyed.