

JETAA.NY

Newsletter for The
Japan Exchange
and Teaching Program
Alumni Association,
New York Chapter

WINTER 2005

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Ages 22 to 47!

THE "GAMES" ISSUE

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GAMES JETs PLAYED



There were a lot of games in Japan. Sometimes we played by choice, sometimes not. And sometimes we just gamed the system. Here are some of your fellow alums' experiences.

Wasabi Shumai

Enkais are always filled with funny antics from your teachers and co-workers (or at least the ones I went to were). There was the time I got stuffed into a cooler and delivered to another office party in place of the beer- but I digress. My favorite of all the games played by my coworkers during enkais was the one that the science teacher, Tomita-sensei, excelled at. I call it "Wasabi Shumai" though it was occasionally Wasabi Gyoza or Wasabi Cucumber Roll, just to keep us guessing. Tomita sensei had a particular talent for dissecting *shumai* and replacing the filling with a large wad of *wasabi* before placing it back in the serving dish, seemingly untouched. Somehow he always managed to do this before we got to the party, or at least before the food got set out on the table. So everyone knew that there would be a tainted piece of food on the table, but we never knew which one it was. The night was always filled with suspense as we munched our *shumai* and *gyoza* and tried to avoid getting a mouthful of *wasabi*. Inevitably, after enough alcohol, *Kocho-sensei* or sometimes the sweet young home ec teacher would forget about Tomita-sensei's treat, and the tears (of joy?) in their eyes would betray that they had found the winning piece! Next time you go to a big party, bring some *wasabi* and see what fun develops.
Clara Solomon, New York



Wink, Wink

When in Japan some ALTs I worked with and I, perhaps out of mind blowing boredom, fell in love with this social game called "assasin." If you don't know it, it's basically a game built around guise and winking. Players get roles determined by dealt cards, and the assasin's role is to kill - take out of the game - everyone; done by discretely winking at another player. The other major role is the detective, who is immune to winks but tries to determine who the assasin is before everyone is dead. Anyway, fresh off a session with my ALT friends, I was hanging out with some Japanese friends and suggested we play it. They said sure, "Let's play." But it might as well have been a 'hai,' because after about five minutes of careful looking with nothing happening, I said, "Hey, what's going on here?" My friend finally admitted she was the assasin but did not know how to wink, so did nothing. Fun game.
Lance Lieberman, New York

Mortal Janken Kombat

This is a full-contact variation on the ubiquitous "Rock-Scissors-Paper" game: Two people sit facing each other. Between them, placed next to each other, are a rolled-up newspaper or magazine and a hard, flat object, like a hardcover book or a tray. The two opponents play RSP. In the case of a tie, they simply play again. The real fun starts when someone beats his opponent. The winner of

("Games" Continued on page 13)

The "Games" Issue

So they want to bring the Olympic games to New York City. I guess that would make life more interesting here in NYC for us internationalized JET alum residents of the Big Apple (if "interesting" is defined as "extremely inconvenient and annoying.") But Paris is the favorite to win the bid, so I'm not going to worry about it too much.

What I am worried about is helping to make sure all of our JET alums are having fun, especially as this long winter continues to scratch and claw and hold on to NYC. And that's why this issue is the Games issue. In addition to a nostalgic look back at some of the games we played as JETs, there are some all new games in this Newsletter designed especially for JET alums that you won't see elsewhere.

On another topic, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank to the outgoing board. They brought JETAA NY to new levels, and they provided terrific support to the Newsletter, which they recently informed me I've been doing for about 5 years now. (Not an elected position, by the way.) Special thanks to Ryan Chan for taking care of so many of the behind-the-scenes logistics that enable this Newsletter to be produced and sent out to you. In any event, now maybe you guys will have more time to enjoy yourselves and play games, like some of the ones in this issue.

Have fun and let the games begin!

Steven Horowitz



It's your move.

Get involved and write for the Newsletter.

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Please check out e-mail from our Secretary and the web site www.jetaany.org for updated announcements.

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JETAA NEW YORK SOCIETY PAGEby **Yoku Shitteiro**

Holy F'en'kai! What a *shin nenkai!* Over 50 JET alums, **NYdeVolunteers**, **Japan Society** types and other **Friends of JET** showed up in the middle of a blizzard and filled the whole upstairs of **Naniwa**. It all started peacefully enough, until **Brian Hersey** (among others) got the Japanese drinking games going. The evening was highlighted by **Freezin' Ben Lang's** multiple back-flips into a snowbank, resulting in the frantic search and ultimate loss of his iPod and cell phone. (Ben obviously did not consider this scenario when originally deciding not to purchase the bright pink Mini instead of the standard white iPod.) The *nijikai* continued nearby at a bar so fun that no one apparently can remember the name.

Muchos arigatos to **Clara Solomon** and her trooper of a hubby for organizing and making the whole thing such a success.

February's **Nihongo Dake**, organized by JET alum Foodie in Residence **Lynette Martyn**, was a big success as well. Twenty people gathered for Cajun food and jazz at **Bayou** in **Harlem**. The jambalaya was spicy and the crawfish were *cho-beri oishii!* Seven diehard partiers who will remain unnamed headed next door to the **Lenox Lounge** for some jazz and drinks. All the ladies received a free rose from "**The Captain**", lead vocalist of the band, in celebration of Valentine's Day. Both venues were perfect! Keep your eyes open for the next **Nihongo Dake soiree** and try not to miss it.



Meanwhile, **Jiro Adachi**, author of the NYTimes article *How Q Got Her Groove Back*, the new book *The Island of Bicycle Dancers*, and an all-around *mensch*, entertained JET alums, **Nichibei Toastmaster** members, **NYdeVolunteers** and others at the networking event at **Kanvas** on March 4 with observations and anecdotes of interacting with the **Big Apple-issei**, i.e., the subculture of young, Japanese hipsters in NYC. Another fantastic event organized by Clara and the ever cuddly **Ryan Chan** along with help from **Jennifer Olayon** and **Kat Barnas**. Though eschewing the lure of watermelon martinis, event MC **Janak Bhimani** did a most honorable job of falling on his sword in front of the packed room like a good host should. (Did he really say he got baked with Amy Tan?)

On the cultural front, Kat Barnas put together a nifty and well-attended **Tea Ceremony** gig on February 23 in a gorgeous tea ceremony house where all learned that "muddy water is not necessarily deep." The intriguing sidenote of the event turned out to be the tour master of the house, a kindly older gentleman, who explained to everyone that he was in training to be a **kamikaze pilot** when the war ended and was later adopted by an American family.

That's all for this issue. Here's wishing everyone a most excellent *hanami* season.

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MEET YOUR NEW
2005-06 JETAA NY OFFICERS



CLAIR/Japan Local Government Center Contact
Masahiro Nagumo
 Niigata-ken
Line of Work: Assistant Director, CLAIR
Favorite Japanese snack: Natto and Gyu-don

I serve as a liaison between the JETAA N.Y. chapter and CLAIR, N.Y. I look forward to working with you all.

Yoroshiku!!!

PRESIDENT
Jennifer Olayon
 Nagasaki-ken, 1999-2000
Line of Work: Program Officer at Columbia Business School
Favorite Japanese snack: Dorayaki

Greetings JETAA NY. As we usher in the spring season, I am glad to be our organization's recently elected 2004-05 president. I don't quite think I fit the Vapors tune "I'm Turning Japanese (I Really Think So)," but let me share with you some things I love about Japan: *unagi*, architect Tadao Ando, *o-hanami* picnics, *o-hara* style *ikebana*, music of Ryuichi Sakamoto and anything *kawaii*. Together I hope we can continue to build a stronger JETAA NY community.

Subete ni kanpai!



POWER JETAA, FIGHT-O! Clockwise from middle: Katrina Barnas, Masahiro Nagumo, Cindy Chen, Jennifer Olayon and Tony McCormac prepare to battle the forces of evil on behalf of JETAA NY.

VICE-PRESIDENT
Katrina Barnas (a/k/a Kat)
 Chiba-ken, 2001-02
Line of Work: International Stuff
Favorite Japanese snack: Oyakodon (I just like the name a lot.)

I aim to be *takenoko* champion. (See page 6.)

SECRETARY
Cindy Chen
 Chiba-ken, 2001-2003
Line of Work: Research Monkey
Favorite Japanese snack: Pocky

Hello, my name is Cindy. I like grapes.

TREASURER
Tony McCormac
 Gifu-ken, 1998-1999
Line of Work: International Business Development
Favorite Japanese snack: Edamame with lots of salt

I'm pleased to be a part of the JETAA NY board as treasurer for 2005-06. We are looking forward to a strong year. Please don't hesitate to contact us with your feedback about our events and benefits.

Shannan Spisak - Outgoing President
 The bittersweet moment has come to hand-off my crown to the next leader of JETAA NY. The past three years have been memorable ones, and I will most definitely miss the excitement and fulfillment of serving our large and diverse membership. I want to thank everyone for giving me the opportunity to contribute for so long to the shape of the organization, and especially to the other officers for their unending support: Jo Sonido, our Treasurer (2002-05), Rosemary de Fremery, our Vice President (2003-05), Clara Solomon our Secretary (2002-2004), and Ryan Chan, our Secretary (2004-05). Additionally, strengthening our relationship with international chapters as well as with both the Consulate and CLAIR NY has been a rewarding experience. I leave JETAA NY in capable hands, and look forward to continuing to contribute to the growth of our organization as an active local member. Please offer your support to Jennifer as we welcome our new administration. As of April 1st, I will no longer be receiving messages at: president@jetaany.org, so if you wish to contact me, please use: sdspisak@yahoo.com - Shannan Spisak Outgoing President (2002-05)

Rosie DeFremery - Outgoing Vice-President
 I want to thank JETAANY for allowing me two years to develop myself as a leader and learn so much about JETAA and the Japanese community in New York during that time. I will always be grateful to JETAANY as it

... And now a word from the
OUTGOING JETAA NY OFFICERS

is for helping me readjust to life in the States after three years in Japan, so it was an honor to give something of myself back to the organization. My gratitude goes out to Shannan, Jo, Clara and Ryan -- it's been a real pleasure working with all of you and brainstorming on ways to improve JETAANY's offerings. Thanks as well to the staff at the Consulate and the Japan Local Government Center for all of their close coordination and support over the years! Hats off to Steven for his fantastic newsletters, Scotty for serving as our webmaster, Marc for stepping up to be our database coordinator, and the many others who have shared their energy and talents with us all. Good luck to the new Executive Board -- you have my support and I won't be a stranger. And finally, to the membership in general: if you haven't already, get yourself involved! Don't leave it all to the officers! These people are going to work hard for you. There is plenty you can do to help our organization grow and you can make a difference even by helping out in small ways from time to time. I'll see you at the next event. *Ganbarimashou.*

Ryan Chan - Outgoing Secretary
 It's been fun. Best of luck to the new executive board.

Jo Sonido - Outgoing Treasurer - Says it was a pleasure (from Japan where he is currently living and working.)

JETAA Presents

JAPAN BY MALE - Part 3
by Alexei Esikoff, Fukushima 2002-03

*The third in a fictional
multi-part series.*

The third and perhaps final installment of Alexei Esikoff's novel about study-abroad student Peter Szeikaly.

Here's the nutshell version of the plot so far. Main character is Peter: dork in the US, not in Japan. He's starting to notice a girl named Satomi. In the last section, Peter and the other foreigners went out for drinks with some of the Japanese women in their class. When Peter got home, drunk, he pleased himself thinking of Satomi. (You can read Parts 1 and 2 in the Summer and Fall 2004 issues on-line at www.jetaany.org.)

In the morning a massive headache consumed me. I made instant ramen—for some reason my body wanted grease.

Around my futon were weeks' worth of clothes. So much for order and appearance. I gathered them up in my arms—they reeked of smoke—and dumped them into the washing machine. (Yes, I had a washing machine. No, I had never used it. Yes, I was taken to cleaning my underwear in the sink with bar soap.) The clothing hole was tiny: I had to lean over and stuff everything in with all my might. My head spun.

Of course I didn't have detergent. A trip to the 7-11 was needed. I think I single-handedly kept that place in business. Outside I threatened the sun to stop shining. My poor eyes leaked and oozed.

The pimply kid was behind the counter. By now he was used to me. "Hello!" he said in English.



"What's up?" I replied, also in English. The pimply kid said nothing.

Sure enough, in the batteries-and-fireworks aisle, there was a small blue bottle called Fabric Man. I recognized the *kanji* for cotton, and decided to that this was the right product.

Ravi came in as I approached the register. "Hey dude!" "Hey."

"How you feeling?"

"Hungover."

He slapped my back. "I know what you mean." He nodded at the Fabric Man. "Doing laundry, eh?"

"Trying to."

"I'm doing errands myself. Don't you love you can pay your bills at *konvins*?" He held up some envelopes.

"Bills?"

"Didn't you get a mobile bill last week?"

Brit-speak was becoming easier to decipher. "Oh yeah, sure, I took care of that already."

"Not me. I'm such a procrastinator."

"I hear you. Later."

"See ya," said Ravi, and he turned to the pimply kid and began speaking rapidly in Japanese.

Oh crap. I hustled up the stairs, against my headache's will. Ignoring the directions, I poured two capfuls of detergent into the washing machine and hit the button that said cold (I was do-

("Fiction" continued on page 10)

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TAKENOKO: THE GREAT HOKKAIDO DRINKING GAME

by Ben Lang

In the remote reaches of Japan's great white north, on an island once known as *Ezo*, there exists an ancient game matching wit and skill; a game so intricate and complex that it has brought many an unsuspecting *go* master to his or her untimely end, all for a chance at true enlightenment.

The origin of the game is shrouded in mystery. Was it native to the *Ainu*, long the peaceful caretakers of this beautiful land? Or did it have a more sinister beginning? Perhaps even a foreign beginning? Many locals speak quietly of a Mongol warship blown off course and brought to these distant shores in the year 1274 by the *kamikaze*—the divine wind that saved Japan from the invading Mongol hordes, twice. A fateful ship that not only brought to the island that delicious barbecue dish of Sapporo Beer Garden fame, “genchis khan,” but also a seemingly innocuous game with far more insidious ends, “*takenoko*.”

Whatever its beginning, the game has been kept alive by generations of Hokkaido's best and brightest, chief among them, local *yakitori* purveyors. I, myself, spent (some may say, wasted) many years studying with a true sage of the genre, *Pooh-san* (yes, as in Winnie-the), at one of the meanest *yakitori* joints in all the land, located in the sleepy, paper-mill town of *Ebetsu-shi* in central Hokkaido.

At first blush, *takenoko* is deceptively simple. All players count upwards aloud, one, two, three, four, etc., one person at a time. However, the counting is not scripted and should one player say a number at the same time as another player, both players receive a point, or *batsu*. *Batsus* are bad. Should counting continue successfully through the entire field, the final player to speak receives a *batsu*, thus encouraging risk taking, and should a player speak out of turn (one, two... four, no three!), the numerically-challenged player also receives a *batsu*. The game continues until one player receives three *batsus*, or *batsu-san*.

The play begins with an ancient chant steeped in tradition and alcohol abuse: “*Takenoko, takenoko, nyo-ki, ki.*” Players pound the table, or some nearby object, with their hands three times on “*TAKenoko, TAKenoko, NYO-ki,*” and then clap their hands on the final “*KI.*” After which counting begins. The first player, should he or she have the fortitude, says “*ichi-noki!*,” the second, “*ni-noki!*,” the third, “*san-noki!*,” and so forth.

Hand gestures are critical to the intricate nature of this game, so players are reminded to keep their hands together after the final clap of the chant, and then, in conjunction with speaking a number, thrust their hands into the sky, much like a seven year-old boy heading for a *kancho*, and then immediately bring their hands back down when finished speaking. This aids in officiating, as it is often easier to see two players moving at the same time than to hear them speaking at the same time.

The penalty phase follows any *batsu-san*. This penalty phase is critical to understanding the far-reaching implications of the game as well as the interest that so many *yakitori* restaurant owners take in encouraging the game among their patrons. Ideally, the game should start with one full alcoholic drink for every player. It should be obvious after the previous statement that the player who receives a *batsu-san* is required to “chug” their entire beverage. What is not so obvious, is that any player unfortunate enough to receive a *batsu* at the same time as the other player's



batsu-san must also “chug” their entire beverage regardless of how many *batsus* the seemingly innocent player had previously received.

Custom demands that the players not involved in the penalty phase provide encouragement and support to those unfortunate few by singing songs, including the ever-popular and lyrically-apt “*Nonde, nonde, nonde*” and “*Sutte, sutte, sutte.*”

Once the players at fault have finished the penalty phase, their drinks are refilled and the game starts anew, with every player's slate of *batsus* wiped

clean.

Repeat *ad infinitum*.

And lastly, a word of caution: although *takenoko* has proven itself as a path to enlightenment for the most serious players, the “casual *takenoko* user” is advised to set his or her sights significantly lower, for enlightenment does not come easy, but hangovers most certainly do.

(Continued from “Movie” on page 7)

trying to make it on their own. It made me wonder what the CPS (child protective services) is like in Japan, and what happens to children that are abandoned by their parents. Where do they go? (Maura Goggins)

While it is easy for certain of us to sit in judgment in a movie theater, or at least scratch our heads thinking, “How could no one know?” it really makes one wonder how much responsibility each of us bears for those less fortunate. Who is the “Nobody” of the title actually, and do they have a responsibility to know, to help? (Isaac Leader)

Coming out of a country as ruthlessly non-interventionist even in daily life as modern Japan, where a vast majority of young urban women report being groped on the subways and three rescued NGO hostages last year were publicly humiliated and driven into hiding by government/media bullying for “meddling” in Iraq, this film would seem intrinsically to be a rebuke to this “hear no, see no, speak no evil” tendency. . . . Bravo to Mr. Koreeda for striking, intentionally or not, at the real problem within the heart of Japan's struggle for respect via “internationalization”: a massive blind spot when it comes to recognizing the humanity of the “other”, or “outsider”. This tendency was most visible to the world in aspects of Japan's military adventurism leading up to and during WWII, but it would seem that a perceived continuing inability to reconcile old race-based nationalistic notions with an increasingly multicultural and interconnected world is a primary reason why Japan has not assumed a more prominent role in civic society, despite huge economic gains and gifts to former colonies and victims.

(Isaac Leader)

JETAA NY recently gave away several free tickets for a premier U.S. screening of Hi-rokazu Koreeda's hit film, "Nobody Knows" at the Lincoln Plaza Cinemas. Here's what the ticket recipients had to say about the film.

JETAA NY at the MOVIES
NOBODY KNOWS

murderess. It succeeds on both counts, helped along by artful camera work, endearing characters, moments of levity, and a beautiful, haunting score, posing serious questions about social responsibility along the way.

The based-on-a-true-story account of 4 children left by their mother to fend for themselves in an apartment, "Nobody Knows" is shot in a documentary style with prompted improvisation by the cast of amateur child actors. Left alone, the children cope well at first then slowly sink into desperation as they realize "Mom" (played by mono-monikered actress "You") is never coming back to rescue them.



(Isaac Leader)

It is a poignant story on multiple levels, including the superb acting by the child stars, the gorgeous cinematography, the interweaving of the city soundtrack and most importantly, by the way Kore-eda allows the storytelling to develop in a truly non-Hollywood fashion. For the viewer, there's no overproduction and manufactured silliness, just a unique chance to view the innocence and charm of childhood

(Isaac Leader)

In the beginning of the film, the mother is present, albeit distracted, and often away from home. We learn rather than the one child she claims in public, whose father, she tells people, is "working abroad," that she has three other illegitimate children, who she hides from public view by not enrolling them in school or letting them leave the house. Although that is extreme and abusive, I confess that part of my heart was initially with the mother, who I pictured as a victim of modern society which offers precious little support to working mothers, not to mention unmarried working mothers. She leaves early in the morning for work (we assume), often not returning until late in the evening. But when she does return, we see a few tender moments of hair brushing, nail painting, *omiyage*-giving, and study help, all of which leads us to believe that while she is eccentric, she really does love her children and is doing the best she knows how.

(Nancy DeBroka)

in a real-world setting.
 (Bryan DeBroka)

There were moments of sheer beauty: the boy running as the camera runs with him through the streets of Tokyo by night; the joy of the little one when she is taken to wait for the mother at the train station; the children getting to have a kind of Christmas celebration.

(Anonymous)

A question that remained in my mind was what made the children stay quiet for so long? It was as if the shame that they felt, and the need to keep their "little secret" was more important than their safety. After they realized that their mother had truly abandoned them, why didn't they go to the police or child protective services? Even if they had gotten split up, surely their situation would have been better than

The remarkable thing about the film is that it can be viewed simultaneously as a horror movie and as a sympathetic portrayal of innocents caught in a tragedy, much the way "Monster" showed the humanity and heartbreak of a

(Continued on "Movie" page 6)



JETAA NY
 KATAKANA WORD SCRAMBLE

The first ever of its kind (as far as we know.) Unscramble the following *katakana* words for your fun and amusement (and frustration.)

1. ナシャタゼナルンシャンイ

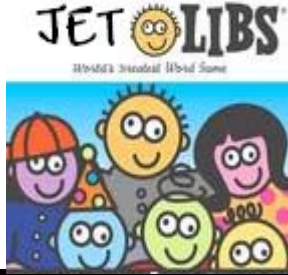
2. ップビザーアルグ

3. ノワツガドルシュツアーネ

4. ルンシャードツウイ

Find the answers on the Newsletter website at www.jetaany.org !

1. Find a willing participant who has not yet seen this page
2. Ask them for a noun, verb, etc. and fill in the blank
3. Read it out loud and maybe, just



JET LIBS #1 - WELCOME BACK

JET ALUMS!

No matter how long you have been gone, _____ (plural noun) have most certainly changed! JETAA- _____ (place) is hoping to help make your _____ (noun) a smooth and _____ (adjective) one.

Whether you are _____ (mood) to be back in a familiar culture or already miss some of the wonderful _____ (plural noun) about your Japanese _____ (noun), we are looking forward to contributing to your support network by providing _____ (plural noun) and _____ (plural noun) that will be _____ (adjective) in the coming years.

We have drawn on a variety of _____ (plural noun) and most importantly, on other members' _____ (noun), and worked hard to _____ (verb) the information on this site. We hope that it adds to your enjoyment of returning home.

Sincere thanks to all who have _____ (verb – past perfect).

All the Best,

_____ (Celebrity)
 _____ (title or position)

Source: www.jetaany.org

JET LIBS #2 - NOW TRY IT IN JAPANESE!



■ 「該当者なし」という結果に終わった「 _____ (名詞) ラッキー7 オーディション」から1ヶ月。プロデューサーつんく♂の「 _____ (名詞)。がもつと _____ (動詞) ような子に出会いたい」という _____ (形容詞) 意志の下、再び _____ (名詞)。新メンバー募集オーディションを実施します。今回、 _____ (動詞) カメラ付き携帯電話からの応募が出来るようになりました。誰でも簡単に応募出来るモーニング娘。のオフィシャルオーディションに皆様、 _____ (副詞) ご応募下さい!

Special thanks to Janak Bhimani

CROSSWORD

R
O
S
S
W
O
R
D

Across

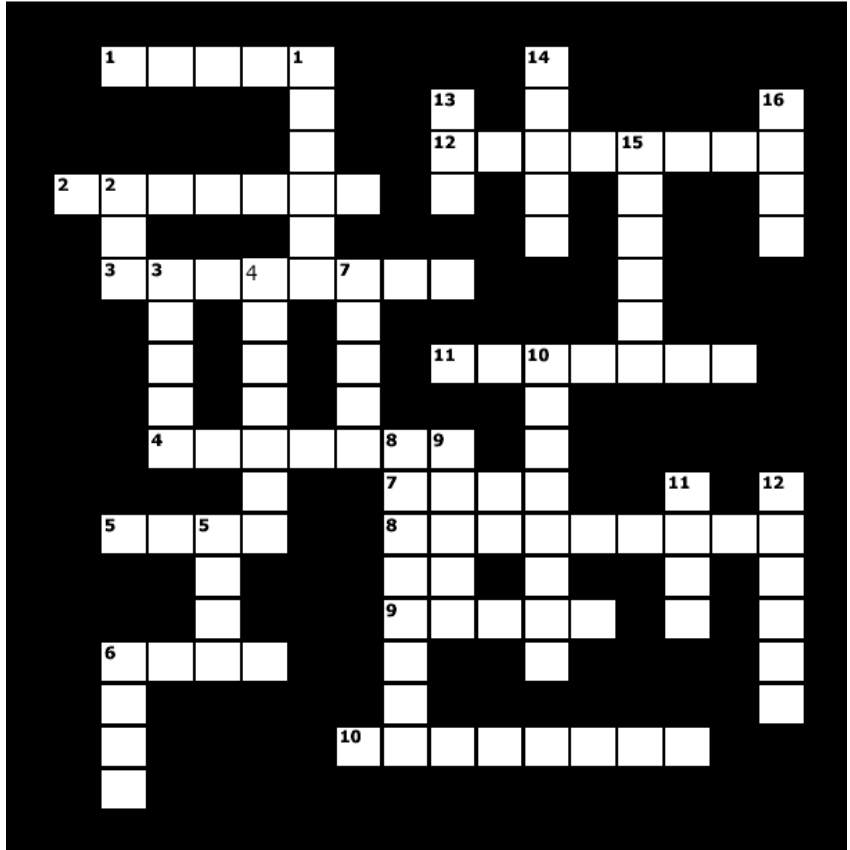
1. Hot spring
2. *36 Views of Mt. Fuji* Artist
3. Pickled plum
4. Japanese pub
5. Indigenous people
6. Thick noodle
7. woman
8. Golden Temple
9. *Kwaidan* author
10. Pinball game
11. Kyushu city
12. *Norwegian Wood* Author

Down

1. Winter Olympics site
2. *Tokyo Story* Filmmaker
3. _____ Restoration
4. Puppet theatre
5. Baseball Pitcher
6. Tokyo park/zoo
7. Island
8. World Cup final game location
9. Cartoon
10. Daibutsu site
11. Cram school
12. Famous castle town
13. Rain
14. US Naval Officer
15. Comedian/actor/filmmaker

by Lyle Sylvander

Check your answers on-line at www.jetaany.org. Click on "Crossword Key" in the Newsletter Winter 2005 section.



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("Fiction" continued from page 5)

mestic enough to know that hot water and dark laundry was a dangerous combination. I made that mistake the first time I did laundry in my freshman dorm. Some of the grayish underwear had yet to be replaced.) The machine buzzed to life. I hustled to the desk/garbage pile in the kitchen.

Frantically I threw papers around my desk. I came across my boarding pass and name tag from orientation. Some welcome notes from school, endless 7-11 receipts, a letter from my grandmother (email being beyond her capability for new-fangled technology). Finally, at the bottom, a sealed envelope addressed to Pitah Seikai. Pitah Seikai, the man for whom even bill-paying is a daunting task. An agitated groan sounded from the bathroom, but I was too distracted by the 7,890 yen cost of my first *keitai* bill. How on earth did that happen? I checked the list. Three calls to Katherine, only one of which she picked up, made up the bulk of the bill. Thank god my mother always called me and not vice-versa. Local calls—one number appeared the most, so I assumed it had to be Maggie's—made up the last third. Christ. I had to cut down on calling. Though I didn't *feel* like I spent a lot of time on the phone.

The noise in the bathroom was getting louder. Upon inspection I discovered bubbles oozing out the sides of the lid. It didn't seem panic-worthy: can't a guy have super-clean clothes?

My wallet was lying abandoned in the corner by the Playstation. Three crumpled 1000 yen bills and a smattering of change were all it offered. Dropping the money on the coffee table I hurried back to the desk. At least my traveler's checks were in the bottom drawer where I had left them, tucked into my passport.

It was Saturday. No banks were open. That meant the phone bill couldn't get paid until Monday. I checked the calendar; Monday was the due date. I didn't want to know what happened if I paid it late. Japan doesn't seem like a country where people pay their bills late. Do they have repo men? Tough sumo-sized guys who come and break your thumbs?

The washing machine squealed, which I took to mean the load was done. I pulled out the first item—a blue towel, on which a soapy residue remained. Sigh. I gathered up an armful of laundry and dripped it across the kitchen floor. Out on the porch I clipped the wet clothing to the line, getting angry at the rusty hinges on the clothespins. It was still sunny but windy—the laundry flapped. Laundry, you are mine, and I say you stay here! It took several trips back and forth between the bathroom and porch to get it all up. The cigarette in my mouth became all ashy as I needed two hands to do this. On the way back inside I stubbed my toe on the porch's mysterious clunky machine. "Ow! Fuck!" I took off my sock; there was no damage. "What is your purpose?" I asked the machine as I massaged my foot.

That was enough time spent at home. I needed to have some fun.

The *obon* festival was the first *matsuri* I went to, and that was because I stumbled on it by accident. At Super Electron I purchased a James Bond game with the emergency credit card. On my way home from Mr. Donut, eating something round and jelly-ful, I noticed the parking lot next to my rice patty had people milling around. On closer inspection, they were wandering from booth to booth. I wasn't going to stop (I wanted to play Bond) but then I noticed the turtle game (like our ping-pong-in-the-goldfish-bowl-game, but, you know, with turtles). I had to win a turtle.

The guy behind the booth wasn't as creepy as an American carry: He had teeth. However this Japanese carry used the same method as his American counterparts, cat-calling people to step right up. I gave him 900 yen, he handed me a single ping-pong ball.

I considered various methods for a while. Throwing overhand seemed too forceful, even for me. Tossing underhand, however, offered less control. (Have I mentioned how badly I wanted that turtle? I would feed him frozen shrimp and create a green leafy home for him, not some lame neon castle. I would name him The Fonz to be irreverent.)

Finally I settled in underhand. Pulling my arm back, ready to

launch, I heard "Hello Peter!"

Of course it was Satomi.

She looked baggy-eyed and was wearing a short (short!!) pink skirt and heels. There was a guy with her. My face reddened. "You never said goodbye."

She cocked her head. "You were talking to your friend."

"Ravi was drunk. I was helping him."

"Oh. I am sorry. How are you?"

"Fine. And you?"

"I drink too much," she offered playfully. "Do you want to win that turtle?"

"I hope I win it."

She gave me a thumbs up. "Good luck!"

I pulled my arm back. I narrowed my eyes. I pictured a little red target over the bowl. I pressed the X button on my controller.

Of course I missed. Satomi oohed in disappointment.

"I suck," I said, hoping to elicit pity.

She gestured to the guy next to her, who so far had contributed nothing. "Maybe Kenichi can win." She handed Kenichi money from a tiny wallet. He took his turn behind the line.

She whispered in my ear, "Kenichi plays baseball."

I hoped my scowl wasn't visible. He wasn't much taller than me but he was broad. "Good for him."

And, of course, Kenichi bagged a turtle with a satisfying wet *thunk*. The carry dumped the turtle in a baggie with a twist tie. Kenichi held up the turtle triumphantly and Satomi oohed again, but a different, positive ooh. I wanted to hit her. Or better yet, him.

Kenichi handed me the turtle. "For you," he said in English.

"You speak English?"

"Our father taught us," he answered.

I'm an idiot. "You're Satomi's brother?"

"Little brother," Satomi laughed.

"Taller brother," Kenichi said.

Satomi said, "What name will you give to the turtle?"

Telling her that he was The Fonz was out of the question.

"Why don't you name it?"

She studied the brown critter intently. (Please, I thought, don't name him Shelly.) "He is cute. His name is Frog." She giggled with her hand behind her mouth.

"Frog? But he's a turtle."

"Yes, but one of my favorite English words is 'frog.'"

Well, I wasn't going to argue with her. I thanked Kenichi gratefully. Satomi suggested *yakisoba* (I was full from my donut but neglected to mention that) so the three of us went to another little booth, where a tiny lady was serving noodles into plastic containers. To treat, I bought everyone a serving. (My wallet threatened to bite me when I closed it.) We chatted a while—mostly Kenichi and Satomi asking me questions—until I realized Frog must be suffocating. I stood to go. Kenichi stuck out his hand and we shook. I realized I hadn't thanked him yet, so I did.

"Are you sure you can't stay? We dance for the ancestors soon," said Satomi.

Dancing? That was out of the question. "No, Frog needs to go home."

"Okay. Bye-bye."

I walked towards my apartment. Frog was kicking around his bag. I stopped and turned around. "Hey, Satomi!"

She and her brother were still sitting on the bench. I noticed he was eating the remains of her *yakisoba*. "Peter?"

"Can you come here?"

She gave Kenichi a distinct glance and teetered on her heels over to me. "Yes?"

I was *trying* to get at my phone, but between Frog and my shopping bag I ended up dropping everything. Frog's bag burst with a scum-y water stench and my turtle landed on the concrete on his fours. He was very slowly getting away.

"Frog!" screeched Satomi, scooping up his lucky turtle-ness.

("Fiction" continued on page 11)

("Fiction" continued from page 10)

"Oh shit," I said.
 (What I should have said: Satomi, how about I exchange Frog for your number?)
 She handed me the turtle. "Be careful."
 "Satomi, can I have your number?"
 Uncomprehending for a moment (my stomach *dropped*) she then said, "Of course." Easy as that, I found my *keitai* and took her number and shook her hand and gathered up my game and my turtle and went home and took off all my clothes and man, I was a whole lot quicker today!

So this gym thing. Like many of my early exchanges in Japan, it was a ridiculous combination of embarrassed smiles and uber-politeness and my absolute inability to pick up on the fact that they couldn't give me what I wanted:

(It was to become one of my comic set-pieces later.)
 Picture a nice middle-aged lady behind a beige desk in a nondescript room. She's having a normal day, filling out her paperwork on how many guests there have been, what time they came, what gender they were, and if any were *burakumin*. (No, that's racist. I could get in trouble for jokes like that.) Anyway, she's having a regular day, when in walks the Big Bad *Gaijin*.

Now I was prepared for this moment, or thought I was. I had taken the time beforehand to look up "membership," "locker room," and even (I swear) "barbells." When I approached the desk, nice middle-aged lady abruptly stopped her paperwork and gave me that fake smile I was growing accustomed to. "Welcome," she offered me in the typical singsong.

"I'd like to join the gym," I said in my most politest Japanese.

"Join the gym?" she echoed.
 "Yes."

"But perhaps you cannot read our paperwork."
 "I can read *kanji*," I told her, hoping said paperwork wouldn't go beyond my scant couple thousand.

She fluttered nervously around her desk and presented me with a form. It looked fairly standard. Name, address, date of birth. For place of employment I wrote, carefully, that I was a student. I handed it back to her and smiled. She launched on a spiel:

The gym is open everyday from 7AM till midnight. No food or cigarettes in the gym. Bottled water only. Wipe each piece of equipment after you use it. Please shower before and after using the gym. The women's session is from noon until six every day. Men's sessions are from seven till noon, then six till midnight—

"I'm sorry?" I interrupted, then felt rude about it. "Men's sessions?"

Nice middle-aged lady look confused. "You must come to the men's sessions only. Not the women's."

"There are separate sessions?"

"Yes."

"So if I wanted to come at four I couldn't?"

Of course, she didn't say no. What she said is, "That's the women's session."

"Why can't men go during the day?"

She flinched. I was too direct. "Men are at work during the day."

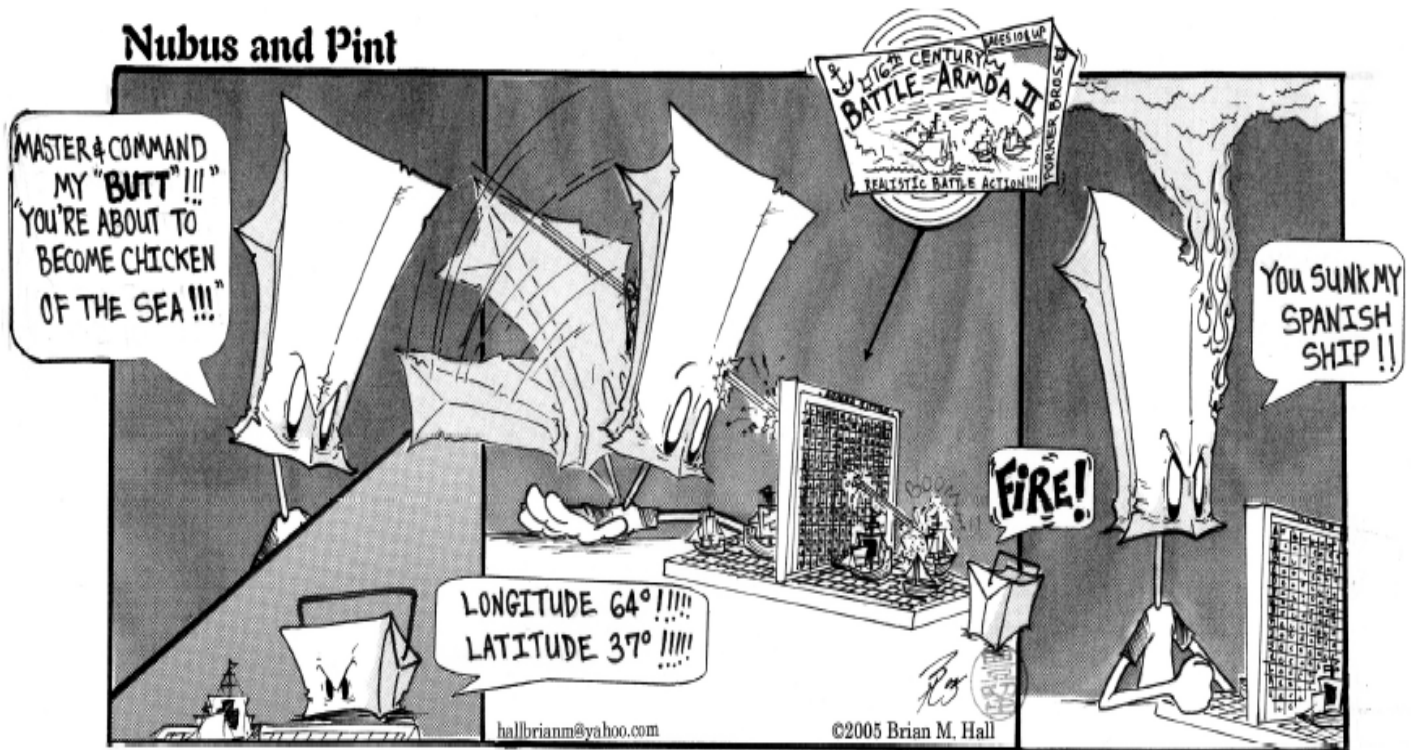
So this was a manly thing, was it? "I'm a student. My school is around the corner and it is convenient for me to come during the day." Then I slapped my money down and left. "Ha to you!" I yelled to the lady, to Japan, the world.

No, not really. I'm not that person. I didn't even mumble under my breath how utterly inane that was. What I said was, "*Wakarimashita*." I understand.

She continued the spiel. Pay per month, on the first Monday of each. *Ichiman en* per month (roughly a little less than one hundred dollars, which may seem exorbitant, but I was getting used to the idea

("Fiction" continued on page 12)

Nubus and Pint



(“Fiction” continued from page 11)

of the debt I would return to in the US). The uniform must be worn at all times.

“Excuse me?” I interrupted again.

“You must always wear the uniform.”

“A uniform for the gym?”

If she was getting exasperated she didn’t show it. “We recommend buying two and rotating them.”

“So I have to buy a uniform from you and wear it every time I come?”

“Yes.”

“And how much does the uniform cost?”

“8,500 yen.”—roughly \$70.

“I see,” I said.

“And we recommend buying two.”

...And what kind of sucker am I that I went through with the whole thing? Laid out \$240 for the first month and two uniforms (L *sizu*). Nice middle-aged lady probably rejoiced when I left. *I faced the Big Bad Gaijin and emerged victorious! Ha ha ha!*

Ravi and Bob and Maggie and I were watching TV in Ravi’s apartment and drinking Kirin out of large cans. He’d invited Maggie and me to watch this program he and Bob discovered. They called it “The Piss on the Gaijins Show” because that was a fairly accurate description of what it was.

A “reporter,” wearing a respectable suit, was approaching obvious foreigners (i.e. white, black, and brown) on the streets of Tokyo. “Would you like to be in gamu show?” he asked them.

Most looked embarrassed and said no. But then a heavysset Jamaican said yes. He then told them he didn’t speak Japanese, was this a problem? Oh no, the reporter assured, we’ll supply you with the language help you need.

There was a commercial break for Levi’s jeans starring a dreamy Brad Pitt (girls here call him Bra-Pee). I found him much more entertaining in Japanese.

Then “Piss on the Gaijins” was back with the Jamaican man in a somber suit entering an office building. The reporter went up to the man at the head desk and said he had an international chocolate expert (this was a chocolate company? It looked so uncandylike) who wished to participate in their morning meeting. With no hint of suspicion, the salaryman bowed a yes.

Ravi. “Are the Japanese that gullible, or are they sadistic?” asked

“I kinda missed what just happened,” Maggie said.

I said, “Isn’t it obvious from their body language?”

Maggie answered tensely, “You know I don’t speak as well as you.”

“You got this was a chocolate company, right?” Ravi asked.

“Yeah.”

“So the reporter has talked the Jamaican into participating in a meeting...”

Bob continued, “...by claiming he was an international expert.”

“Right.”

“Thank you,” Maggie said.

From the back of the conference room was a view of twenty men in identical suits and plastered hair sitting at an oval table. Head salaryman came in and announced they had a very distinguished guest. All the men stood, and if they were surprised when a black man entered the room, they didn’t show it. They bowed deeply and in unison.

Ravi walked the three steps to his fridge and removed more Kirin. “This ought to be good.”

The Jamaican read a speech phoenetically. “My name is Al Monroe. I work for Adult Toys International. If you have any questions about adult toys, please ask now.”

(Because he didn’t know where one word ended and another began, it sounded like “Myna-meis-Al Monroe Iwor-kfo-radu-ltoys.”)

The businessmen didn’t flinch. The head salaryman said, “We

are most pleased to have you with us today. Please, tell us about your company.”

So far, so good. Bob and Ravi were already laughing. Maggie looked confused.

Al Monroe said in halted, oblivious Japanese: “We specialize in the needs of the penis.” (He used the vulgar slang for it—*chin chin*.)

“I know what that word means!” Maggie giggled.

Al Monroe: “If your wife is not giving you enough pleasure, we can enhance her performance.” The head salaryman went over to the reporter, stony-faced in the corner, and whispered something in his ear.

“Why aren’t they rebelling?” Maggie asked.

“This is the best show I’ve ever seen,” I said.

“We have plastic and latex and nylon. Red and blue and purple!”

“This is ridiculous,” Maggie said. On the screen a few of the businessmen were stalking out of the room.

Maggie stood. “I’m going home so I can call my dad.”

“You’ll miss the ending!” Ravi exclaimed.

“That’s okay. I haven’t talked to my dad in a while.”

She left.

“Bye,” I called.

Al Monroe was getting flustered. It must have dawned on him that he was offending people. “I’m sorry!” he yelled in English as the rest of the businessmen filed out of the conference room. I was getting drunk and laughing. Ravi was too. (He had half a foot on me, but as he put it, “Brown people ain’t got no tolerance.”) The “Piss on the Gaijins” reporter filled the screen again. “Another successful meeting at the Apollo Candy Company. Coming up next week, we take this woman”—they flashed to a Western lady—“and see how she fares teaching tea ceremony.”

“Pretty good, eh?” Bob said.

“Amazing in a horribly racist way.” I agreed. I stood to leave.

“Thanks for the beer.”

“Any time, dude.”

At the door, I stopped. “If you guys want to use my Playstation, you can.”

“You have a Playstation?”

“Uh-huh.”

“Yeah then, definitely.”

“Later,” I said and went down the stairs to my own apartment. I tripped on the *genkan* step. I pissed a long time and had a cigarette on the porch. (By that time I had purchased a bean-bag-like sack to sit on while I smoked.) From my pocket I removed my *keitai* and flipped through the alphabet until I came to S. Satomi. I looked at her name a few moments before I hit send.

“*Moshi-moshi* Peter.”

“Hi Satomi. *Genki?*”

“*Hai genki desu*. How are you?”

“A little drunk,” I admitted.

“Bad boy.”

“That’s me,” I said without irony.

She laughed. Then nothing.

“Satomi...” I started.

“Yes?”

“Would you like to have dinner with me tomorrow?”

“Tomorrow... yes, but short notice. I’m supposed to—”

“Oh, then, it’s okay—”

“No, I can talk with my friends.”

“You don’t have to.”

“It’s not important.”

“Okay—can you meet me at the train station at seven?”

“The train station? Where?”

“*Where?* Where was my brain? “Uh...in front of Mr. Donut?”

“Yeah. No problem.”

“Great! So I’ll see you tomorrow.” She had barely said bye when I clicked the phone off. With shaking hands I lit another cigarette.

(“Fiction” continued on page 13)



(“Fiction” continued from page 12)

Across the street a boxy figure went into the convenience store. When it came back out in the neon light I made out Maggie, clutching a plastic bag. I leaned over the balcony and with the butt still in my mouth yelled, “Hey! Maggie! Up here!”

She looked up. “Oh, hi Pete.”

“You missed a funny ending!”

“I’ll live.”

“What didja get?”

“Just some ready-curry. And cigarettes.”

I held up my smoldering butt. “All right! Cigarettes!”

She stopped underneath the balcony. “Are you drunk?”

“No.”

“You seem too happy.”

“This cigarette’s pretty fuckin’ good.”

“Right.” She shifted her groceries to her other hand. “Why don’t you go back inside?”

“Why?”

“I’m afraid you’re going to fall.”

I woke up a little then. I was sort of horizontal over the railing. “Thanks for the advice! Have a good night!” And wouldn’t you know I woke up in the morning still in my clothes?

*** TO BE CONTINUED IN THE NEXT ISSUE??? ***

Alexei Esikoff is an adjunct professor of writing at Brooklyn College.

(“Games” Continued from page 1)

RSP grabs the rolled-up newspaper as fast as he can and attempts to bop the loser on the top of the head with it. Meanwhile, the loser scrambles to grab the flat object and use it to cover his head before he gets bopped.

This game is amusing sober, but the enjoyment increases exponentially in relation to number of drinks consumed before and during play.

Earth Bennett (Aomori '00 - '02)

Vietnamese Tic Tac Toe

Two friends and I stopped in Vietnam on our way back to the States from Japan. During one particularly luxurious day on the beach at Nha Trang, my friend befriended some adorable Vietnamese kids. After exhausting their English knowledge and tiring of *janken*, we turned to Tic Tac Toe. Melanie drew a grid in the sand, put her “x” on it and encouraged one of the kids to play with her. Next thing we knew, the kids had disappeared, and there was a ring of topless Vietnamese men standing around us looking menacing. I guess Tic Tac Toe is some sort of gambling game in Vietnam because the guys started betting money on our game. They also have very different rules to Tic Tac Toe - whenever we thought we had won, they added another line onto the grid. Finally, we both gave up in frustration and admitted defeat. The “winners” demanded a kiss in lieu of payment for the bets we had apparently lost. With a firm No and a bunch of other fast-talking English, we turned them away and high-tailed it back to the hostel. We saw this gambling Tic Tac Toe game other times in Ho Chi Min City and elsewhere, but were never enticed to play the game again!!

Clara Solomon, New York

Jump Rope

In my ‘top ten unforgettable images of my time in Japan, one of them has to be ‘group jump rope’ from Sports Day. To me, that event symbolizes Japan, the ability for 40 middle school students to coordinate their timing for jump rope, and be so good at it that they are competing against other

classes. You couldn’t get 40 American middle school students to even stand in a straight line, let alone jump rope together, and compete!!!

Paul Bodner, San Francisco

“Exciting Shorinji”

I decided I was going to get involved with some sort of martial arts while I was in Japan. I noticed at a small temple behind my apartment every other night there were a bunch of guys doing what I thought was karate, but they all had swastikas. I walked in and, using my extremely limited Japanese, asked if I could join. They said sure and next thing I knew I had my own gi with a swastika (which wasn’t really a swastika) and was learning the art of *shorinji kempo* three nights a week. After doing it for a little while, my *sensei* entered me, along with Tsuyoshi, another guy in the group, in a local tournament where we do a series of choreographed moves together. We practiced hard every time, and... did I mention that Tsuyoshi was a nice guy but had a few screws loose in his head? Anyway, we watched everyone do their routines and they all looked a hell of a lot sharper than I knew I did. Yet, when it was our turn, I was fighting for my life because Tsuyoshi was going full force, throwing every punch and kick at me as if he wanted to kill me. Fortunately I knew when to block and duck and move, though I did take a kick to the head at one point. In the end, though, the judges gave us the award for first place citing our “true feeling” in performing our routine. I don’t think they realized I was just fighting for my life. Still have the trophy though.

Steven Horowitz, New York

Crazy Karuta

You know those stringent rows and groups the kids sat in? I hated them, and so invented a game called Crazy Karuta. Crazy Karuta maintained the slapping aspect of the traditional children’s game, but the rest was a vocabulary race. I drew a bullseye on the board and the class divided into two teams. With every correct answer, a team member would race to the front to slap the bullseye. It was a very popular game; kids use to beg me to let them play, but of course we were at the mercy of the JTE. Crazy Karuta’s reign came to an end with a class of very genki 3-nen-sais. I didn’t anticipate the competitive nature of physically mature 14-year-olds. Two boys on



opposing teams got the right answer at the same time and went barreling to the board. Since it was neck-and-neck, they both took flying leaps for their last steps. And then they crashed in midair, and Soji landed on his arm. We all heard the crack. The JTE took Soji to the hospital. The next day he was back, proudly displaying his cast. Alexei Esikoff, New York

Gaijin Hockey

My JET friend Scott somehow ended up on a hockey team in Nagoya, and I used to go and watch him play from time to time. It was usually fun, the skill level was pretty good, and Japanese teams don’t seem to really be into fighting so you get to actually see their skills. Then again, most Japanese hockey teams hadn’t played against Jeff, another gaijin on the team. So one night I go to see Scott play, but this time with this new woman he’s been dating who’s just getting to know him. I’m sitting with her, trying to explain the game in broken Japanese and videotaping as much as I can. Next thing I know, Scott is involved in some sort of collision or play or something, Jeff jumps in and starts punching, and just like that there’s a big pile-up right on top of Scott (who, for the record, never threw a punch.) Still not sure if his woman friend was impressed or appalled. I think I’ve still got the video somewhere.

Steven Horowitz, New York

BOOK REVIEW

JAPANESE THE MANGA WAY:
An Illustrated Guide to Grammar and Structure

Reviewed by Brian Hersey

Learning Japanese is a profoundly rewarding experience. Like seeing the sunrise from atop Mt. Fuji. However, despite the promises in the marketing blurbs on the backs of textbooks, the process requires a long, hard slog, best done under the supervision of competent guides. Only the dishonest or deluded claim to make the process "fun" or "easy." With the right equipment and reliable instructors, however, the task can be made less arduous.

Wayne P. Lammers has created a remarkably well-crafted and useful tool for the beginning-to-intermediate Japanese student in his newly published *Japanese the Manga Way: An Illustrated Guide to Grammar and Structure*.

Old Japan hands will remember the magazine *Mangajin* that used Japanese comic strips, or *manga*, to teach Japanese language and culture from 1990 to 1997. *Japanese the Manga Way* shares much of *Mangajin's* engaging format and style. One is sort of "tricked" into feeling like one is reading a comic strip rather than a textbook, a feature that makes it an entertaining means of casual review for advanced learners. However, *The Manga Way* works because it succeeds as a guidebook with well-organized, concise, clear and accurate explanations of Japanese grammar. Without those, all of the cool *manga* in the world will not make a useful study tool.

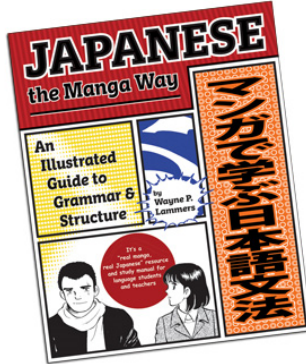
After an introductory explanation of *kana* and *kanji*, Mr. Lammers breaks his text into "lessons" that cover key grammatical points starting with politeness levels and then moving on to questions, particles, *desu* and *masu* forms, etc. The lessons build upon one another, adding complexity as the text progresses. The lessons themselves are divided into grammar points, each illustrated with one or more of the book's 493 frames of *manga*. So, for example, in the lesson introducing the topic marker *wa*, point one explains the traditional "topic marker" role. The next point explains that the topic can be the subject. The subsequent point distinguishes *wa* and *ga*. The following points explain that the topics can be a direct object, or a time, or a place and so on.

The Manga Way provides more than accurate and concise explanations of fundamental grammar points. Mr. Lammers has given a lot of thought to explaining the subtleties of Japanese to English speakers. The implications of politeness and word choice are parsed out and the nuances clarified; almost to the point of becoming a distraction from the main grammar point. Mr. Lammers' numerous tips on subtle distinctions in language use, such as the tendency for Westerners to overuse pronouns, are right on the money. The explanations of these subtleties provide the true prize of this text, something that in ten years of studying Japanese I have rarely seen.

The *manga* themselves and the book's overall layout make *The Manga Way* more accessible, less intimidating, and visually cooler than its competition. Even the best Japanese grammar guides tend to be dense and confusing. Not so with *The Manga Way*. The wide range of well-selected *manga* used to illustrate the grammar points provide an engaging set of illustrations. Mr. Lammers has provided a bit of the background for each frame in English so the reader knows a bit about the characters. As any fan can tell you, *manga* covers a wide range of topics, from romance, to child rearing, to politics, to history, to mystery. Thus, the stories keep one more engaged than an average grammar book.

In my experience, using *manga* to study Japanese, while interesting and

authentic, has some inherent limitations. Using *manga* necessarily adds complexity because the author must explain unrelated vocabulary, nuances and grammar points to make the *manga* comprehensible. This can lead to the "drinking from a firehose" problem, i.e. trying to absorb too much new information at once. Although Mr. Lammers does an excellent job of making the text more accessible, *manga* is written for native speakers. Unlike a course or a traditional textbook, where the student's vocabulary is systematically developed as the text progresses, *manga* necessarily presents the student with lots of new vocabulary at the same time it teaches new grammar points. Additionally, spoken Japanese and correct Japanese are not always the same (dropping particles in spoken Japanese, for example) which might add to a student's confusion.



Who should use this book? And how?

I recommend buying this book to anyone with a limited knowledge of Japanese heading into the JET program. If you plan to try to learn Japanese, this is an accessible text and it presents the key grammar points in a systematic, useful way. One could work through lesson by lesson and would no doubt learn a great deal. However, the text has no exercises or drills to help students practice using the new grammar patterns. As Mr. Lammers notes in the appendix, the book is no substitute for a course. He even recommends other resources to help introductory-level students.

If one insists on using this book as an introduction to Japanese, I would suggest focusing exclusively on the central points of each lesson the first time you go through it. The nuances and subtleties of usage can be skimmed over until later when they will clarify and deepen the learner's existing knowledge of the various lessons.

I suspect *The Manga Way* will most benefit those who have already begun their study of Japanese. While it might be a bit much for the true beginner, this text would be a fantastic reference and review tool for those in beginning through intermediate level (defined as the level tested in the 2-kyu exam). *Manga*, as its many fans note, provide the real-life examples of actual usage for those seeking to deepen their knowledge of spoken Japanese. *The Manga Way* will provide clear, detailed explanations that are not always provided. Furthermore, the format of the text, with the lessons titled by their main grammar point, permits the learner to refer to any specific grammar issues that arise. Thus, the student struggling with the difference between *wa* and *ga*, for example, could find a clear explanation by looking it up in the index at the back.

This remarkably well-crafted textbook should prove indispensable to anyone in the first few years of Japanese study as well as serve more advanced learners as a painless entertaining means of maintaining one's language skills. I unreservedly recommend it to anyone headed over to live in Japan with limited knowledge of Japanese. Your \$24.95 will be money well-spent and, with the dollar collapsing, you can afford it. *The Manga Way* will also provide ex-JETs with an engaging way to review and maintain their Japanese.

My only complaint is, "Where was *Japanese the Manga Way* when I set out for rural Fukuoka?"

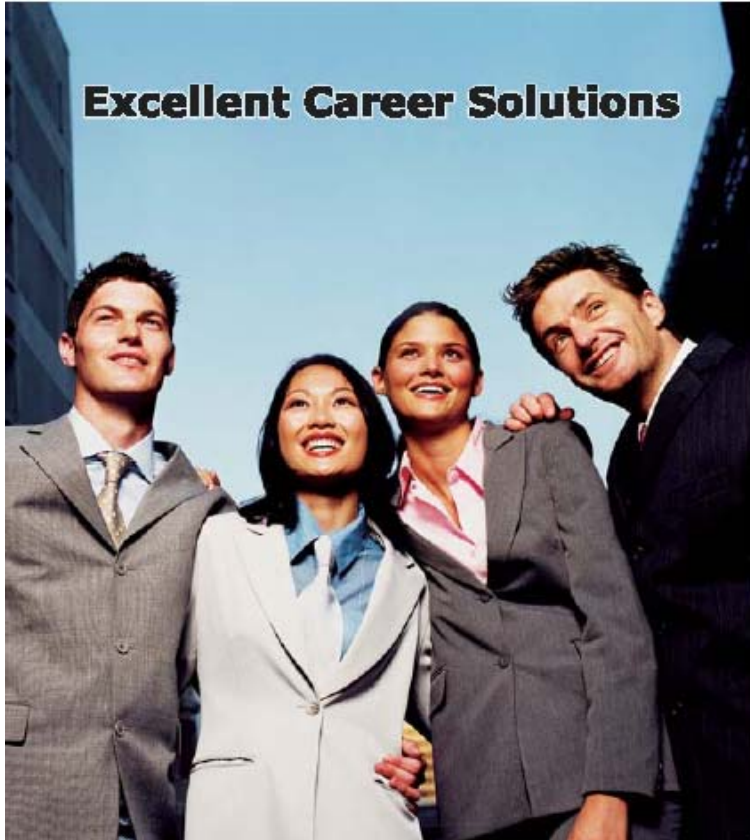
Brian Hersey is a local rock climber and an attorney.

THE "GAMES" ISSUE TOP 10!

Maybe, just maybe, the Olympic Games will come to New York City in 2012. Don't know yet if there will many or any JETs participating. But if our new officers have the foresight to put together the first ever JET Olympics, here are some of the events you as JET alums might be able to not only enter but perhaps win a medal in. And so without further ado, we present to you...

THE TOP 10 EVENTS WE'D LIKE TO SEE AT THE JET OLYMPICS

10. 100 Meter Too-Small-Slipper Dash
9. Playing Ski
8. Karaoke Endurance Marathon
7. 800 Meter Yes-I-Can-Use-Chopsticks
6. Cross-country Keigo
5. Synchronized Bowling
4. Men's Downhill Kanji Memorization
3. Raw Delicacy Avoidance Verbal Gymnastics
2. Boro-boro Mama-chari Bicycle Race
1. Cross-Cultural Jump to Conclusions



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