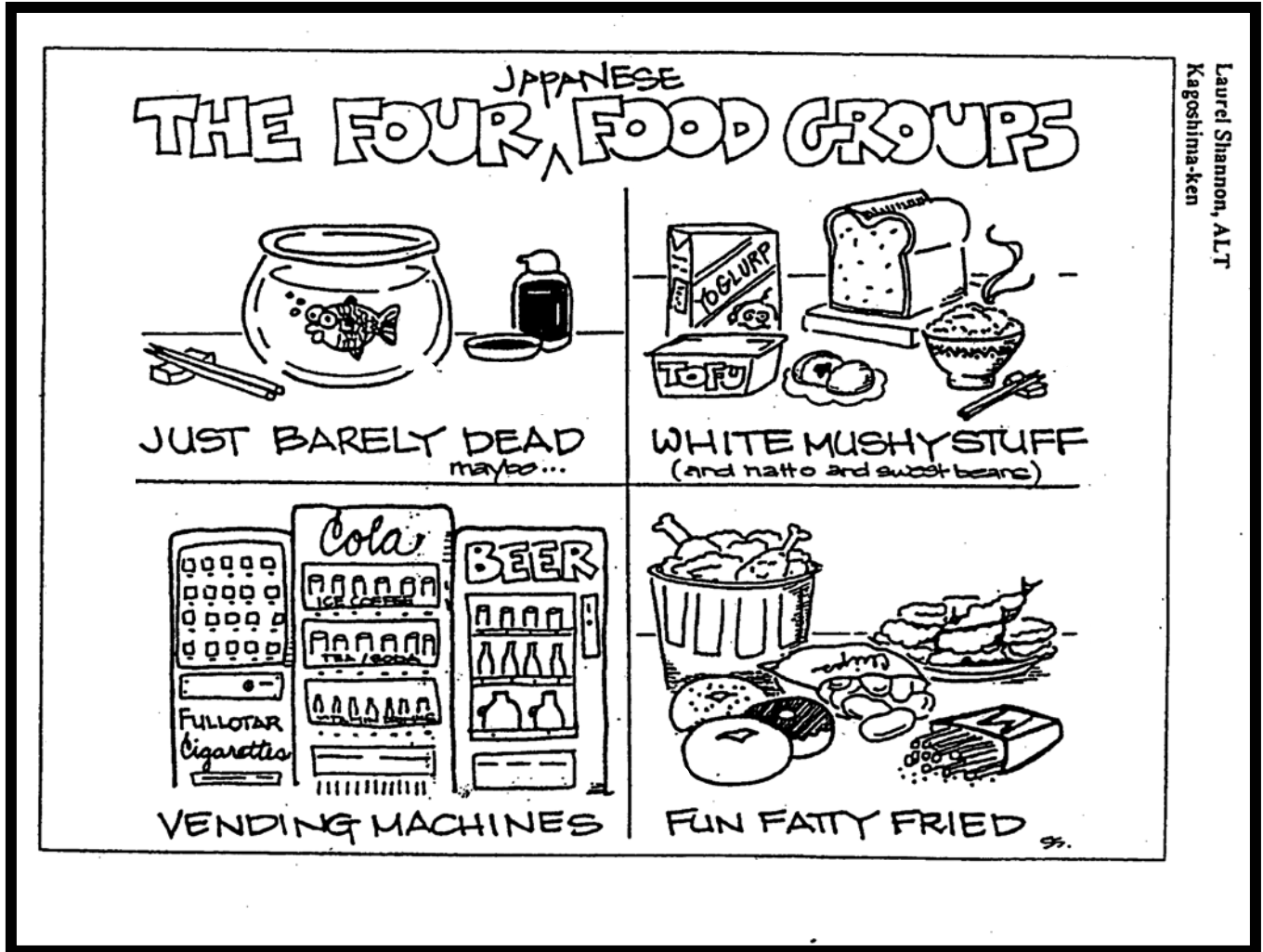


# The Unofficial JET Survival Handbook for 2005

Compiled and reported by the Southeast Chapter of the JET Alumni Association



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## Alphabet Soup

**AJET** Association of Japan Exchange and Teaching Program participants. Joining is highly advisable, but optional. [www.ajet.net](http://www.ajet.net)

**ALT** Assistant Language Teacher. An umbrella name that includes AETs (Assistant English Teachers), AFTs (Assistant French Teachers), AGTs (Assistant German Teachers), etc.

**CIR** Coordinator for International Relations. Those JETs engaged in international activities. These participants are placed in offices of local governments or related organizations such as international associations, universities, convention bureaus and so on. CIRs rarely work in schools, but occasionally they may be called to teach or present in schools.

**CLAIR** Council of Local Authorities for International Relations. CLAIR is the governing body that oversees the JET Program. CLAIR is also a sponsor of the JET Alumni Association.

**ESID** Each Situation is Different. JETs are placed throughout Japan in a variety of settings (rural, urban, junior high school teacher, high school teacher, etc.) so that while it is possible to provide some sense of what life is like for an individual JET, these experiences may not be transferable.

**JET** Japan Exchange Teaching (Program). May also be used to refer to a participant of the JET Program.

**JETAA** Japan Exchange Teaching Alumni Association. We hope you'll be a member post-JET. The International website is <http://www.jetalumni.org/> and our chapter is [www.jetaase.org](http://www.jetaase.org)

**SEA** Sports Exchange Advisor. These JETs promote international exchange through assistance in sports training and the planning sports related projects.

**SIG** Special Interest Group. A smaller organization within AJET targeted to a specific group. For example: are geared towards women, gays and lesbians, JETs of Asian-/ African-/ Latin-American decent, and religious groups.

# Departure Sequence: What to Expect When you First Arrive in Japan

## Arrival in Tokyo: July 24

When you arrive at the New Tokyo International Airport in Narita, you will be greeted in the arrival lobby by CLAIR staff, Tokyo Orientation Assistants (current JET participants) and travel agent representatives. All arrival staff will be wearing JET t-shirts of the same color, and should be very easy to spot. You will be directed to a shipping area where luggage can be forwarded to your Contracting Organization. You may take one large piece of luggage (suitcase or rucksack) and one hand-held carry-on with you to the hotel for Tokyo Orientation. Any other luggage must be forwarded to the Contracting Organization.

If you have more than one piece of luggage, and the belongings you need for orientation are divided among your bags, you will be required to repack on the spot. Please keep this in mind when packing for departure. After the baggage is shipped, you will transfer by chartered bus to the arranged hotels in Tokyo. All participants must travel on the arranged buses as names are recorded and essential information is provided by Tokyo Orientation assistants during the bus ride. Participants are NOT permitted to arrange alternative transportation. If you have people you would like to meet while in Tokyo, ask them to meet you at your hotel, NOT at the airport.

## Post Arrival Orientation in Tokyo: July 25-26

The Post-Arrival Orientation will be held in Tokyo. ***Attendance at the orientation is mandatory.*** The purpose of the Post-Arrival Orientation in Tokyo is to provide a basic introduction to life on the JET Program. The Orientation includes:

1. An introduction to the significance of the JET Program, presented by Japanese government officials.
2. An introduction to the positions and duties of JETs, presented by officials from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, the Ministry of Public Management, Home Affairs, Posts, Telecommunications, and CLAIR.
3. Workshops including the job skills needed by JETs to fulfill their positions, conducted by Tokyo Orientation Assistants, CLAIR, and selected professionals.

4. Workshops and speeches introducing skills useful for daily life of JETs in Japan, conducted by Orientation Assistant, CLAIR Program Coordinators, and selected professionals.
5. A forum to meet other JETs, supervisors, and Tokyo Orientation Assistants representing their host prefectures where JETs can have specific questions about their locations, positions, and responsibilities answered.
6. An opportunity for JETs to make physical (jet lag), mental and cultural adjustments before setting out for their assigned host prefectures and contracting organizations.

### **Introduction to Host Institutions: July 27**

Each prefecture handles this a little differently, but essentially, a group of prefectural representatives will meet you in Tokyo at the Orientation and accompany you and the other new JETs to your prefecture. After arriving in the prefecture, you will be introduced to a representative from your host institution, and this representative will take you to your new apartment, an intermediary accommodation, the school, or the Board of Education. Although you may be tired and jet-lagged, there will be many obligatory introductions in the first few days of your arrival. First impressions are very important in Japan, so our advice is to try to make the most of this with your energy, enthusiasm, and wrinkle-free clothes!

Most host institutions will have an apartment (or house) for you as soon as you arrive. You may either be placed in the apartment of your predecessor, or they will have chosen a new apartment for you. In some cases, a host institution will house the incoming JETs in a hotel the first few days or week, and you will be responsible for finding your own apartment with guidance from your host institution. In any case, preparations have been made to provide you housing.

You have your house, you have your luggage, you are now ready to begin your life in Japan!

## Suggested Pre-Departure Preparations

In the weeks ahead you'll have lots to do to prepare for your upcoming year (years?!) in Japan on the JET program. This section has a list of things to prepare for. While we have tried to think of everything, we can not certify this list as complete.

### Packing for One Year in Two Suitcases



While packing, please remember that you are limited to ONE carry-on and two suitcases. Remember that one suitcase will be sent directly to your host institution upon arrival at Narita Airport in Tokyo. It is suggested that you pack necessary items in your carry-on, should your bags become lost

- ◆ Protect clothes from leaks by placing toiletries in a plastic bag.
- ◆ Stuff socks and rolled-up belts into shoes to save space.
- ◆ Roll clothes to save space. Most clothes can be rolled to save space. Start with items like jeans & put them in at the sides of the suitcase and then fill the inside with smaller clothes such as T-shirts. Use space-saver bags (found at Linens and Things, Target, The Container Store etc.) for ultimate results!
- ◆ Pack a box of winter clothes and ship them by the cheapest way possible just before you leave in July/August. It may take a few months, but will allow for more room in your suitcase for warm-weather clothes, gifts, your CDs, your pictures, and other items you might need more immediately in Japan. For the sake of comparison, a 20 pound box shipped by the U.S. Postal Service to Japan using Economy (Surface) Post costs \$40.

### Find someone to **REALLY** send you the things you need.

Many people will offer lots of help, offering to send you anything you want or need, at the drop of a hat. While those are generous offers, they may not happen. We recommend that you find one person—not necessarily a family member—to really help you out. One approach is to give a friend your credit card to send stuff every month, and then treat him or her to dinner every time via the card.

### Buy blank VHS tapes and ask a few well-chosen people to record your favorite TV shows.

Prepare pre-addressed bubble envelopes (it's quite the tease to get a damaged tape in the mail!) and give a friend or family member money for postage. The easier it is for those sending you stuff the more likely it is that you will receive it. I found that 10 tapes worked well.

**Make business card with your contact information in Japan before you go; pass them out.**

You can find a number of on-line companies that provide cards for free if you can tolerate their advertising printed on the reverse. This will make it easier for your friends to keep in touch.

<p><b>Legal/Financial Obligations to Take Care of Before you Leave</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Power of Attorney</li> <li>◆ Payment of bills</li> <li>◆ W2 forms</li> <li>◆ Creation of a will</li> <li>◆ Magazine subscriptions canceled or diverted</li> <li>◆ Mail order catalogs canceled or diverted</li> </ul>
<p><b>Important documents and \$\$\$</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ \$2500 - \$3000 (ATM transactions provide the best exchange rate, but traveler's checks also work well)</li> <li>◆ A passport (preferably your own)</li> <li>◆ Certificate of US Residency</li> <li>◆ A photo copy of passport (one for home too)</li> <li>◆ A plane ticket and folder for the return portion</li> <li>◆ Contract from host institution, if received</li> <li>◆ State Driver's License</li> <li>◆ International Driver's License (available at AAA- good for one year)</li> <li>◆ International Youth Hostel Card (available at most travel agencies)</li> <li>◆ List of emergency phone numbers</li> </ul>
<p><b>Hygiene</b></p>	<p>While a full complement of cosmetics and hygiene products are generally available in Japan, you may not be able to get your favorite brand. If you have a strong connection to specific products or have special needs, pack extra or plan to have someone send you care packages.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Cosmetics</li> <li>◆ Deodorant</li> <li>◆ Toothpaste (with fluoride) &amp; toothbrushes</li> <li>◆ Complete toilet kit for visiting hot springs</li> <li>◆ Condoms; spermicidal foam</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Products for African-American hair</li> <li>◆ Tampons or sanitary napkins</li> </ul>
<b>Clothing</b>	<p>What to wear to work varies as widely as types of sushi in Japan! The best advice is to dress conservatively and more formally for the first week of work. During this time, observe what your peers (in age, gender, and position) are wearing, and adopt what you wear accordingly.</p> <p>Another concern is that the Japanese are a relatively petite people with small feet, so it may not be easy to shop locally. Check out the Links section for recommended on-line catalogs that ship to Japan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Men: jacket, slacks, shirts, polo shirts, tie, black tie; white tie</li> <li>◆ Women: dresses, skirts, suits, blouses, sweater sets, scarves, hosiery</li> <li>◆ Sportswear and casual school clothes</li> <li>◆ Dress shoes, shoe trees (cedar will ward off mold), polish and laces</li> <li>◆ School shoes (slip-on indoor school shoes + indoor/outdoor sports shoes)</li> <li>◆ Walking/hiking shoes, thick socks for hiking</li> <li>◆ Underwear, bras (your size and style may not be available in stores or boutiques)</li> <li>◆ Rain jacket, poncho, galoshes, and/or Wellingtons</li> <li>◆ Union suit or long johns for alpine JETs</li> </ul>
<b>Medication</b> (see page 8 for more details)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Birth control pills</li> <li>◆ Prescriptions (must have YOUR name on label)</li> <li>◆ Vitamins or herbal supplements</li> <li>◆ Doctor's explanation for long term drugs (more than a month)</li> </ul>
<b>Teaching Materials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Contact your local/state chamber of commerce or tourism bureau for videos and other materials about your hometown.</li> <li>◆ Self introduction materials (maps, brochures, pictures of family &amp; home)</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Holiday items e.g.; ornaments, cards</li> <li>◆ Video of family/house/town if available</li> <li>◆ Current American music</li> <li>◆ Prizes for students (stickers, rubbers, stamps, coins, flag pins, pop star pins)</li> <li>◆ Learn about your own junior/senior high schools.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Other</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ English/Japanese dictionary</li> <li>◆ English/English dictionary</li> <li>◆ Handbooks of English grammar</li> <li>◆ Japanese guide books</li> <li>◆ Camera</li> <li>◆ Cookbooks (if you can't cook, you'll learn)</li> <li>◆ Measuring cups &amp; spoons (If you're using an American/English recipe, you'll need measuring cups based on 1 cup = 250 ml. A Japanese measuring cup is 200 ml.</li> </ul>

## Prescription Medication Info from the JET Office



The Japanese Customs department places strict restrictions on the amounts and types of medications and toiletries that can be brought into or sent to Japan. If you are planning to bring a supply of such products with you when you come, or are considering having them sent to you while you are in Japan, please read the following very carefully.

<p><b>Over-the Counter Medications:</b> (Customs Limit: 2 month's supply only)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Most things are available (certainly in the larger cities), though often at a higher price than at home. You only need to bring brand items to which you are especially attached.</li> <li>◆ Please be aware of Japanese customs restrictions. Medicines that are sold over the counter in your home country are illegal in Japan if they contain stimulants (i.e medicines containing <b>Pseudophedrine</b> such as <b>Actifed</b>, <b>Sudafed</b> and <b>Vicks</b> inhaler). <b>Codeine</b> is also illegal. Check the contents of cold, allergy, sinus, and pain medications extra carefully.</li> <li>◆ Medications/antiperspirants, sanitary products, dental products such as fluoride toothpaste and dental floss, etc. are restricted to 24 pieces per product.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Prescription Medications: (Customs Limit: 1 month supply only)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Bring unopened in original packaging.</li> <li>◆ Bring a copy of the prescription.</li> <li>◆ Bring a letter from your doctor stating the purpose of the drugs.</li> <li>◆ In principle, you can bring up to a month's supply. If you bring more, the medicine may be seized and you could be charged with intent to sell illegal substances. Once your supply has run out, take the prescription to a doctor in Japan. Comparable medication is available.</li> <li>◆ Some associations such as the Epileptic Association of America have listings of comparable medications in Japan and medications that are legal for import.</li> <li>◆ Bring extra copies of your prescription along with the medications' generic names. Even though foreign prescriptions cannot be filled, you will need to show them to your new doctor, so that he may help you find a comparable medication.</li> <li>◆ Some prescription medications that are legal in your country may be illegal for import to Japan. In this case, "importing" means to receive the medication while in</li> </ul>

	Japan. Therefore, you can bring your own one-month supply with you, but cannot have more sent over later. If found, the medication will be confiscated and destroyed. Please check with Japanese customs to find out whether your medication is legal for import.
<b>Vitamins</b> <b>(Customs Limit: 4 months' supply only)</b>	Japanese brands tend to be expensive, and often only basic vitamins/multivitamins are available. If there is a brand or particular vitamin/mineral supplement that you insist on taking, you should bring a 4 month supply with you and then have another 4 month supply sent when required.
<b>Cosmetics</b> <b>(Customs Limit: 24 pieces per product only)</b>	Japanese cosmetics tend to be expensive and often suited to Asian skin and hair. If you have a particular brand or product to which you are attached, you may wish to bring a small amount to tide you over until you can find a suitable replacement.
<b>Sending Medications</b>	The same rules apply to medications that are sent to JETs residing in Japan. You may have medications sent, if it is within the limited amount (and a prescription is included with prescription medication). If you want to import more than the customs amount, you must apply for a certificate, providing documents 1-3 listed below, as well as an invoice/receipt, plus an Air Way Bill or notice from Japanese customs. If the certificate is granted, it should be sent with the medication to Japan. Please remember that some medications are prohibited from import, and will be destroyed by customs. Likewise, if you import more than the allowed limit, the remaining amount will be confiscated and destroyed.

**NOTE: SHOULD YOU NEED TO BRING ANY MEDICATION IN EXCESS OF THE AMOUNTS STATED ABOVE, YOU WILL NEED TO APPLY DIRECTLY TO THE JAPANESE MINISTRY OF HEALTH, LABOR, AND WELFARE.**

- ◆ Before bringing extra quantities of medications, you must first receive permission from the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare in the form of a "Yakkan Shomei" certificate.
- ◆ In order to apply, you will need the following documents (available from the Consulate)
  1. 2 signed copies of the Application form (Import of Medication)
  2. 1 signed copy of the Declaration
  3. Explanation of products
  4. Prescription for your medicine
- ◆ In addition to the above, JETs wishing to bring the medication to Japan with them will need some kind of document indicating the date of arrival in Japan. If this is necessary, please

contact the Consulate and we will provide you with a letter stating the date you will arrive in Japan.

- ◆ If there is any inconsistency in the application form, there is the possibility that the application will be rejected. Therefore, please submit the application forms as clearly as possible.
- ◆ Please bear in mind that there is a chance that your application may be denied. Be sure to have all your application paperwork in order, and be prepared to make alternative arrangements (such as finding a comparable medicine in Japan), should your application be denied.
- ◆ Please submit your application as soon as possible directly to the Kantou-Shinetsu Regional Bureau of Health and Welfare:

Section of Medicinal Inspection and Guidance  
Kantou-Shinetsu Regional Bureau of Health and Welfare  
Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare  
Saitama-shintoshin-Godochosa 1, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor, 1-1 shintoshin  
Chuo-ku, Saitama City, Saitama Prefecture, JAPAN 330-9713  
Tel: +81-48-740-0800 Fax: +81-48-601-1336

## So, you're going to Japan...Nihongo ga wakarimasuka?!

### VOWEL SOUNDS IN JAPANESE:

"A" sound as in father, Austria, coffee

"I" sound as in peace, cheese, Tahiti

"U" sound as food, blue, Yahoo!

"E" sound as in pet, mental or polenta

"O" sound as in ocean, Arizona

### GREETINGS:

**Hajimemashite.** It is nice to meet you.

**Dozo yoroshiku onegaishimasu.** Please treat me well.

**Ohayo Gozaimasu.** Good Morning. (this can be shortened to "Ohayo!" or, for young male teachers, something like "oh'ss!" but be careful not to get too casual too quickly)

**Konnichiwa.** Hello. (not used with the same frequency that hello is used in English)

**Konbanwa.** Good Evening. (wait until it is well on its way to darkness before you use this one)

**Sayonara.** Good-bye. (not used as often as in English—has a connotation of "until we meet again," i.e., a significant parting)

**Ja, ne. or Mata ne.** Bye-bye!! See you later. Bye. (Very casual and used a lot among friends.)

**Moshi, moshi.** Hello. (For use on the telephone ONLY.)

**Oyasumi nasai.** Good night. (Used just like in English either as good-bye at the end of the evening or as just plain old good night.)

### INTRODUCING YOURSELF:

Master this self-introduction and you'll make a very favorable impression. Begin by bowing deeply, with your eyes downcast. Do not make too much eye contact.

**Minasan, hajimemashite.** It is nice to meet all of you.

**Watashi wa (name) desu.** I am (name).

**Amerika no (state) kara kimashita.** I am from (state) in the USA.

**Dozo yoroshiku onegaishimasu."** Please treat me well.

And if you are feeling adventurous, add the following to your self-intro right before the "dozo:"  
**"Kono ichi nenkan o tanoshimi ni shite imasu."** (I am looking forward to the coming year.)

**USEFUL SET PHRASES IN JAPANESE:** (you'll use and hear them countless times a day!)

**(Dozo yoroshiku) onegaishimasu.** Literally, "I am humbling myself to seek your/ a favor".

Many feel that no one set phrase in Japanese used more than this one. It conveys the underlying cultural ideals of Japan more than any other. Often when we ask someone to help us in English, we finish with "Thanks for taking care of this for me." In Japanese, "thanks!" will be replaced with an "onegaishimasu" phrased in varying levels of politeness and respect. You'll always be seeking the favor of someone, from submitting your holiday request to asking for help at the photocopier.

**Daijobu desu.** Literally, "it's alright." This is a great one. It can be used to describe how you relate to anything from raw fish to Japanese squat toilets! It is used in the same multitude of ways that it is used in English.

**Domo arigato gozaimasu./ Domo arigato./ Domo. Domo, domo.** "Thank you." Like English, gratitude can be expressed in varying degrees—you'll just have to pay attention to the usages of these words. Arigato gozaimasu is usually sufficient.

**Ganbatte kudasai!** It is translated into English as "good luck" but I think the literal translation conveys its meaning much more clearly—"please persevere, keep you chin up, try your best." There is definitely more pressure on you when you are asked to ganbatte kudasai. You will be asked or told to ganbatte especially when you first get to Japan and to your new school. The appropriate response is not thank you (as it would be in response to good luck) but...

**Gochisosama deshita.** Literally, "it was a wonderful feast." Always use this after you finish a meal (even if you aren't a big fan of raw sea cucumber!)

**Hai, ganbarimasu!** More casually, **ganbaro!** "Yes, I will do my best!" That's all they can ask of you, right? If you want to really impress your coworkers, the principal, your supervisor, etc., you can say the following: *isshokenmei ganbaritaito omoimasu.* (I want to do my absolute best).

**Iie, kekko desu.** Just in case you are not **daijobu** with the raw fish and pickled plums, wave your hand gracefully in front of your face and say a very polite "no thank you," "iie, kekko desu." For the sake of adventures in international living, use this only after you have given everything and everyone a fair shake, the old "college try." That is the key to success, is it not?

**Itadakimasu.** Literally, "I humbly accept this." Most often used like "Bon Appetit" before you begin eating (but can also be used instead of/in addition to thank you when someone gives you a present,

**Itte irrashai!** Literally, "please go and come back" Shopkeepers most frequently use this phrase.

**Itte kimasu!** Literally, "I am going and coming back." It is used when you leave the house or go to run an errand to a place like the post office from the school. Again, you don't use sayonara in this case-it's too final. Put everyone at ease and say "itte kimasu!" instead.

**Ki o tsukete kudasai.** Basically, "take care of yourself/be careful." It is used when parting, much in the same way it is used in English but has the connotation that you need to pay attention and avoid danger/trouble.

**Odaiji ni.** "Get well" or "please take care of yourself." It is used when someone is sick.

**Ojama shimasu.** Literally, "I am intruding." Used when entering someone's home as you take off your shoes and step up into the home, acknowledging that you may have interrupted the family/hostess in some way by visiting- a formality.

**Okaeri nasai!** Basically, "welcome home." You can figure out when to say this one, can't you? Yer mum.

**Osaki ni shitsurei shimasu.** Basically, "I am leaving before you, forgive me for being rude." You will use this on your way out the door at the end of the day, most likely in conjunction with the phrase above, **otsukaresama deshita** because more than likely, you will leave school before your fellow teachers." **Osaki ni shitsurei shimasu.** **Otsukaresama deshita.** (reversible)" I am sorry for being rude and leaving before you. Thanks for all of your hard work today. "**Osaki ni** by itself can be used anytime you start to do something before someone else, such as begin to eat, go to bed, basically, or for when you think you might be inconveniencing someone else. Also, **shitsurei shimasu** is often used as the final thing you say as you get off of the telephone with someone, i.e., a very polite good-bye.

**Otsukaresama deshita.** Thank you for your hard work. This is often used instead of good-bye. When you leave your school at the end of the day, you will want to make sure that you say this to your coworkers as a way to acknowledge that you have all completed a long day at work. Another usage is similar to hello. When you pass a fellow teacher in the hall you may very well use **otsukaresama** (by itself) instead of **konnichiwa** as a greeting to acknowledge the presence of the person you are passing.

**Sumimasen.** It can be used in three different ways: excuse me, thank you, and I am sorry. You may be familiar with the "excuse me" version of this word but you may not know the apologetic or gratitude forms of the word. Many are surprised when to find it used instead of "thank you" during those times when someone would bring me something like a cup of tea.

**Tadaima!** Basically, "I'm home!" Used in family situations, perhaps for home stays.

**SOME USEFUL EXPRESSIONS FOR VEGETARIANS:**

**Watashi wa niku o tabemasen.** I do not eat meat.

**Watashi wa sakana igai ni niku o tabemasen.** Except for fish, I do not eat meat.

**Watashi wa igakuteki na riyuu ni yori niku o taberaremasen.** I cannot eat meat for medical reasons.

**Watashi wa shukyoujyou no riyuu ni yori niku o taberaremasen.** I cannot eat meat for religious reasons.

**Watashi wa niku (sakana) ni arerugi ga arimasu.** I am allergic to meat (fish).

**Kore ni \*\*\*\* haitte imasu ka.** Does this contain \*\*\*\*

**\*\*\*\* nashi de tsukuremasu ka.** Can you make it without \*\*\*\*



## Gift Giving in Japan: Arming yourself with Omiyage



Omiyage is the Japanese word for souvenirs or gifts. Gifts are often given to recognize the importance of a relationship and to facilitate introductions. This gesture is not considered to be a form of bribery. Souvenirs are a much appreciated recognition that, while you were away having a good time overseas or elsewhere in Japan, others worked hard to “hold down the fort.” You will find your desk at times overflowing with sweet bean paste buns or crackers.

Take presents for key people who will be helping you: your principal and vice-principal, other office staff, and of course the English teachers you will be working with. The value of the gift should correspond to the rank of the recipient or the importance of the role they will play in your daily or working life. This calculation is an art and not a science. Your thoughtfulness is what matters most. Gifts that bear an emblem of your home state or a local sports team are particularly good.

Finally, you may want to take small, extra gifts for neighbors and others who may become important in your daily life. A traditional gift for neighbors is a **tea towel** or **hand-cloth**. Some JETs have taken souvenirs of their hometown (**pins, postcards, and key chains**), **pens** and **liquor**. The possibilities are endless. **Pencils, stickers** and other small items are useful as rewards for classroom games. An affordable place to get lots of giveaways is the \$1 Store!

## Living in Japan

### THE JET'S BUDGET\*

Of course, ESID (Every Situation Is Different), so every budget will be different. The following is an anecdotal account of some JETs' budgets just to give you an idea. (n/a = info. not available)

Category	Inaka (rural)	Suburban	Urban
Rent	free	¥20,500	¥60,000
Water	free	¥1,600	¥2,000
Electricity	free	¥3,500	¥3,000 (more in winter)
Natural Gas	free	¥3,500	¥4,000
Kerosene	n/a	¥2,500 (only in winter)	n/a
Newspapers, cable, etc	¥10,000	n/a	n/a
Domestic Phone	free (up to ¥10,000)	¥15,000 (lotta internet)	¥11,000
International Phone	¥15,000	¥9,000 (use callback)	¥0 (email instead)
School Lunch	n/a	¥7,000	n/a
Groceries	¥9,000	¥12,500	¥15,000
Car Insurance	free	¥5,300	¥15,000
Parking	free	¥10,000	¥15,000
Gasoline	¥6,000	¥2,000 (lotta walking)	n/a
Entertainment	¥5,000 (nothing to do)	¥20,000	¥30,000
Cell Phone	¥4,000 (no usage)	n/a	¥8,000
Savings	¥70,000 easy	¥120,000	¥30,000 (scrimping)

### Notes from Allison (suburban):

The first thing I do on payday is head to the post office and send a money order home. I find that if I don't do this end up spending what I should be saving. I usually send a lot of money home at the beginning of the month so by the end of the month, I don't have much left, but it is not a problem. I can do without many things here because my priority is getting my money back home. I find that I can get by on very little if I need to—a skill developed in my university days!

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\* JETAA-SC

I also save any "bonus" money I receive—so if I get a refund for school lunch, travel expenses, etc. I don't spend it, even if it is only a couple hundred yen. I use this money to fund things like vacations. It makes a big difference. I also find that if I keep track of how much each bill was each month, it makes me more conscious of ways I can cut corners. So if the phone bill was a little higher than it should be, I try to be a little bit more conservative with my phone time and online time.

I have been able to travel, despite my savings priority. On the months I do travel, I don't send as much money home. I have traveled a lot in a year and a half. I went back to Canada twice (and will go back home this summer, too), and I went to the Philippines and Thailand. I have also been on a few spending sprees in Tokyo. I bought a car recently (160,000) too.

So, depending on your lifestyle, in combination with where you live, it is possible for some to save a lot and still have fun too. I recommend that if you are really serious about saving, start sending money home after your first paycheck and then do it every month on payday. Make it a habit. Get used to living without that 100,000 or however much you want to save per month. Once you are used to it, living within what you have left over becomes very easy. Conversely, if you get used to spending all that money, it will be hard to live without it. I know people in similar situations to mine (as far as bills and rent are concerned) who have not saved a dime. It really does depend on your priorities and your lifestyle choices, but developing responsible savings and financial habits will pay off in the end.

#### **Notes from Wendy (rural & urban):**

I'm in the unique position as a type change of having lived in probably one of the cushiest country ALT positions in the nation, and then moving to a fairly expensive city as a CIR. In my opinion, the biggest difference between savings and non-savings is where you live.

I had it great in the inaka—better than most anyone should expect really. I was also in probably one of the most remote areas in the country. Moving to Sapporo has made a whole lot of great stuff a lot closer (see Food & Entertainment budgets!). But it really does make a difference. Plus note Sapporo is a lot cheaper than most large Japanese cities as far as most stuff is concerned, esp. rent.

I also didn't have to pay key money. Anyhow, thought the above would be an interesting comparison.

In my opinion, you can save money in Japan, regardless of where you live. Live frugally-buy recycled furniture from recycle shops, don't travel during your vacations, eat at home whenever possible and pack lunches for schools (or eat school lunch). Plenty of foreign exchange students get by on a lot less than ¥26,000 a month while supporting families here. And while the JET Program officially frowns on doing "side jobs," plenty of people do it and it can be a good way of earning some extra cash if you do it discreetly\*. My two financial drains are the car and the travel-neither one is absolutely necessary, but nice to have. Doing without these would let me pocket more savings.

Besides, these days in recession bound Japan, being cheap and frugal (setsuyaku) is considered a virtue, and there is an increasing trend among Japanese to forgo the expensive and look at value. Discount stores (100¥—about a dollar—stores are pretty common), flea markets, all-you-can-eat buffets—cheap is in. You just have to know where to look. Don't forget “gomi hunting” or trawling the streets for discarded items still in great condition. Don't worry, your neighbors will be doing the same thing after dark too.

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\* You can also work for food! Trade an evening of English conversation for a Japanese home-cooked meal. With the price of food in Japan, it's a very profitable barter.

## **DEALING WITH CULTURE SHOCK\***

### **Culture Shock** by Adam Murphy

Here it is. All you ever wanted to know about culture shock and living conditions. I'll start by putting the same disclaimer as everyone else: culture shock and living conditions depend on the person and place in which he/she is placed. Except for the extreme cases, there are almost always more positives than negatives. Japan is obviously a different country than the States. Try to find the similarities and appreciate the differences, and you will have a great time. First, let me start off with ways to avoid culture shock.

**Stay as busy as possible, both inside and outside of your work environment.** I can't stress this enough. Try new things. Join clubs. Join sports teams. Register for classes. Volunteer. Go out with anyone who asks (as long as they're sane. Due to the language barrier, this may take a little time to recognize). You have two lives: your work life and your non-work life. Making a concerted effort to learn Japanese will make both these lives more enjoyable. You will meet more people, and you will open more doors. It was my experience that those who took the time to learn the language had a much richer experience.

**Keeping a balance in everything you do is key.** You are going to Japan to communicate your culture and beliefs to those around you. While conversely, you are going to Japan to absorb the culture and beliefs of the Japanese and of people from other countries (and other areas of the States) who reside in Japan. It is perfectly OK to revert back to what is familiar, but be open to the new things around you. There are some JETs who basically only hung out with non-Japanese, who only ate Western food, and who were obstinate in their teaching ways. Do not be so rigid. This will only increase the culture shock. Keep a balance. There will be times when you want to speak English with a Westerner, and watching an English-language movie will not cut it. There will be times when you want a pizza (and not one with corn and seaweed on it). If you have been cooped up in a small town for a while, you will want to venture into the city for a change of pace. Trust these

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\* JETAA-SC

instincts. Following your instincts in situations like the aforementioned will allow you to assuage some of your frustrations.

You will endure many challenges. **Prepare to be treated differently, both positively and negatively.** Occasionally, you may feel like a second-class citizen. Other times, you may feel like a celebrity with no privacy. Feeling like an outsider may prove frustrating. On the other hand, you may feel like the most popular person in the world sometimes. You may have people leaning on your every word. You have people put you on a pedestal for absolutely no good reason. How you deal with both the good and bad may dictate how comfortable you become in your new home.

**Adjusting your way of doing things to the Japanese way of doing things may be the most difficult.** Being flexible yet firm with your beliefs is another key to minimizing culture shock. Coming with guns slinging and imposing the American way of doing things is not a good approach, although it happens more than you would think. On the other hand, just because the Japanese generally are not as demonstrative with their feelings does not mean you have to be. If you feel someone has crossed the line, and you will know when that is, make sure that person knows it. Sexual harassment is one such example. And it happens to both sexes.

**The living conditions vary from one person to the next.** However, there are a couple of points that apply to almost everyone. If you are unhappy with an aspect of your living situation, tell your office. Also, make sure you get to know your neighbors. It is customary, and who knows, you may make a great friend. Wherever you are, know that you will be the object of attention and your actions will probably be common knowledge. If you are a private person, make sure you are discreet about what you do. In general, just be responsible and courteous, and it should work out fine.

Wherever you are placed, **keep in mind that this should be fun.** Try not to dwell on the negatives and what you don't have. You are going to Japan to get away from the States for one reason or another. It is a totally new experience, where what you get out of it is what you put into it. Most importantly, as the British say, have a laugh.

## **Some Survival Strategies by David Aldwinkle, a naturalized Japanese citizen**

Taken from a speech to HAJET (Hokkaido Association for Japan Exchange and Teaching) at one of their semi-annual get-togethers.

**a) Learn Japanese.** There is no way around this. Watch TV, crunch kanji with an electronic dictionary, read signs, be curious about the media around you. Converse, travel, don't be friendly to a fault but don't be averse to partying, either. Don't settle for English-bubble isolation no matter what the supposed advantages are. Learning the Japanese language and availing yourself of its knock-on effects is the key to everything. Everything.

**b) Expect "Off-Days."** Hangovers? Biorhythms? Sunspots? Whatever the cause, you will be tongue-tied and twisted some days no matter what you do. Solution? Don't be hard on yourself. It's not fossilization. Just tedium. Let it go and go to bed early. Tomorrow will be better.

**c) Cultivate Relationships with the Trustworthy.** You need confidantes to survive, and only the trustworthy will do. So distance yourself from Japanese flakes (those who say one thing and do another constantly), culture vultures (those who latch on to you as a means to study culture), or groupies (those who latch for reasons you can guess). Rule of thumb: If ever they don't do as they say, stay away. Japanese generally follow the same rules themselves.

**d) Avoid "Gaijin Negativity Pools."** Group gripes may serve as temporary stress relief, but inevitably they will crystallize your abstract feelings into indelible points of view, tainting your tenure. Don't stay away from your friends entirely, but try to get them to tone it down, or steer conversations into more constructive waters.

**e) Respect Your Inchoate Need for Personal Space.** Even the most public of figures needs solo time. Every so often, shut the door to your bedroom, watch a Hollywood video, eat a big pizza, or even go for a hike. The bottom line is that every now and then you must escape Japanese people. That's not a shame--that's a fact of life. Don't equate immersion with self-sacrifice or anti-culturation. Forsaking your culture is not what it's all about anyway.

**f) Learn What Others Are Thinking.** "Telegraphing", a boxing term for anticipating where the next punch is going to land, is where you do your best to think like the other side in an interaction. Invaluable for predicting pitfalls, this will serve to explain away even the most confounding situation, particularly bureaucratic. When the timing is right, ask people to explain why things are the way they are. You won't always get satisfactory answers, but it's far better than the alternative of wallowing in ignorance. And, as your language skills improve, elaborate explanations will come to make more sense and help you make more sense of Japan.

**g) Don't Take Culture Shock on the Chin.** This is going to be hardest for JETs with "guest-ism" mentalities to accept. I say: Be vocally angry at the impolite shopkeeper, demand the waitress speak to you if she turns to your Japanese friend, get answers in Japanese in the face of English answers if that's what you want, ask Japanese friends to stand back while you deal with an annoying situation, disagree with the pedant who requires race for cultural understanding, don't allow cultural overgeneralizations to stand without even a polite snipe. Actually, letting people know your feelings might be just what they wanted; Japanese are not always willfully shutting you out or trying to sound racist. Often they just don't understand your side, and often do appreciate criticism phrased properly. Describe your discomfort constructively. But above all, don't allow the residue of resentment build up inside layer after layer and drive you out of Japan.



## JAPANESE FOOD

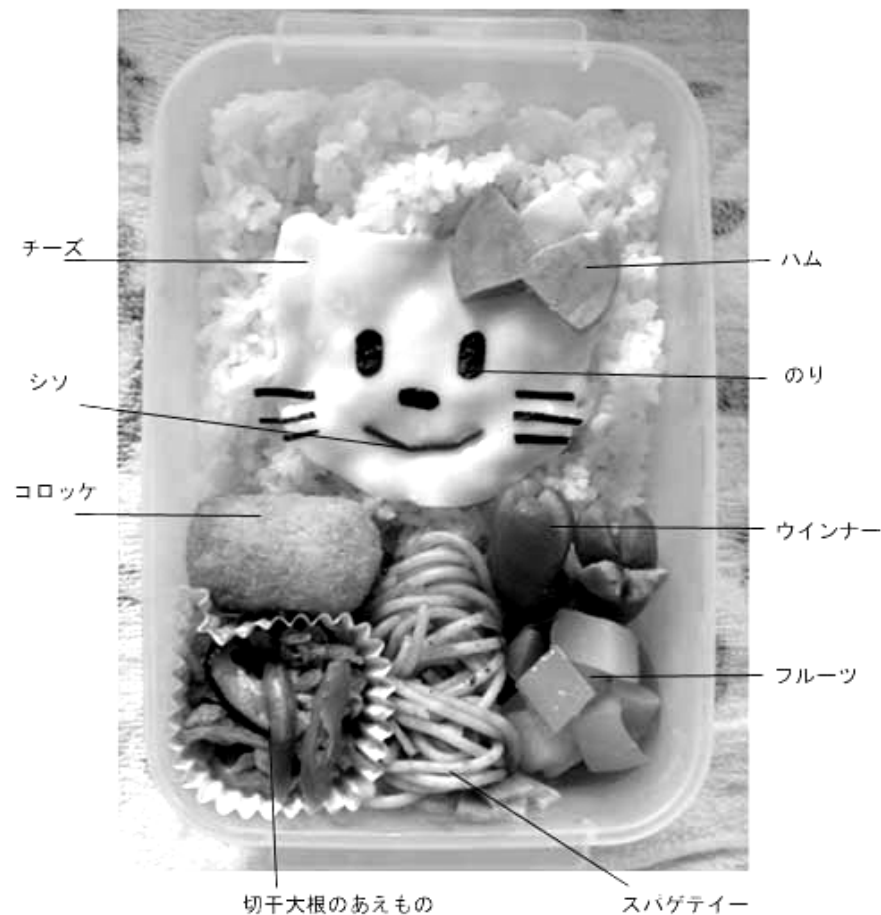
Japanese food is diverse and complex. There are many resources beyond this handbook about how to eat well in Japan, but two that are highly recommended are AJET (Association of Japan Exchange and Teaching) publications:

- ◆ **JAPAN ON A FULL STOMACH:** How to cook your favorite familiar foods (in Japan) and the secrets to the wonderful world of Japanese cooking. AJET members: 1000¥, Non-AJET members: 1300¥.
- ◆ **GUIDE TO BEING AND REMAINING VEGETARIAN (AND VEGAN) IN JAPAN:** A wealth of information for vegetarians eating and living in Japan (this edition is new and includes information for Vegans too!!). Glossaries, appendices, pictures and resources. AJET members: 1000¥, Non-AJET members: 1300¥.

While Japanese cuisine has a long and tasty history, modern Japanese cooking incorporates ingredients from other countries. (For additional verification on the infinite creativity of Japanese food, watch the infamous Iron Chef show on the Food Network—a full hour of intense culinary combat.) Soon you will have a list of your favorite dishes, and some of them may be from the following pictorial list:

### ねこちゃん弁当

### Kitty Cat Lunch Box





### **MENRUI/NOODLES**

There are two kinds of traditional noodles: UDON and SOBA. Udon is made of wheat flour and is popular in Western Japan, including Kyoto and Osaka. SOBA comes from a plant called buckwheat which is easy to cultivate even when the weather is cold or where the soil is not so good. It is popular in Eastern Japan. Both dishes are prepared in a hot soup with various ingredients. Also the

noodles can be dipped in a cool broth and eaten. A Chinese type of noodle known as RAMEN is very popular too. (280yen-600yen at local restaurant)



### **DONBURI MONO/Bowl of rice with a topping**

Rice is served in a bowl with various kinds of ingredients on top. Typical ingredients include Japanese fried foods such as pork cutlets, boiled eel, chicken and egg, and tuna sashimi.

(450yen-1,000yen at local restaurant)



### **NABE**

A soup base and ingredients are put in a clay pot and heated. There are all sorts of ingredients which include fish, shellfish, a variety of vegetables, and meats. The soup stocks are seasoned by soy bean paste, soy sauce.

(2,000yen-5,000yen per person at local restaurant)



### **SUKIYAKI**

Beef, vegetables and tofu are put into an iron pot, seasoned with soy sauce and sugar. When it is heated, the ingredients are then dipped in a raw, beaten egg and eaten.

(3,000yen-5,000yen per person at local restaurant)



### **SHABUSHABU**

High grade sliced beef is put into the boiling water for a few seconds until the beef cooks and the color changes. The slices of beef are then dipped into a sauce based on soy sauce and eaten.

(3,000yen-5,000yen per person at local restaurant)



### **TEMPURA/Japanese fried food**

This typical Japanese dish was adopted from the Portuguese. Fish, shellfish, vegetables are dipped into the batter of wheat flour dissolved in water, fried in hot cooking oil. The tempura is then dipped in a special broth and eaten.

(700yen-5,000yen per person at local restaurant)



### **SASHIMI/Slices of raw fish**

Sashimi is raw fish, cut in appropriate sizes, which are dipped in soy sauce and eaten. The taste will change depending on how the quality and preparation of the ingredients.  
(1,000yen-5,000yen per person at local restaurant)



### **SUSHI**

The most popular item of Japanese cuisine is sushi. Sushi is made by laying slices of raw fish on rice and rolling by hand. the varieties of sushi are endless and range from raw fish and vegetables to cooked eel. There is even sushi made with omelets.  
(1,000yen-5,000yen per person at local restaurant)



### **ONIGIRI/Rice balls**

Rice balls are made by rolling rice which is put a pickled plum and fish in the middle

The Recommended Reading section has links to websites for recipes and ingredients. Here is a short list of uniquely Japanese ingredients:

***Enokidake*** (*enoki* or snow puff mushrooms): clusters of long, thin, white stemmed mushrooms with a delicate crunchy flavor. Keep in the fridge and use quickly. Rinse and trim off the stem before use. Add to soups, simmered dishes and salads.

***Gobo*** (burdock root): *gobo* is a long, thin fibrous root that that is rich in Vitamin B. It has an earthy flavor and crunchy texture. It can be eaten as a pickle or a vegetable. Rinse and scrape away the brown earthy covering.

***Konnyaku***: a processed potato product that is generally sold in brown or white blocks. It has no fat and is high in dietary fiber. Alone it's tasteless, but like tofu absorbs very well the flavors around it. It's often added to stews and simmered dishes.

***Mowashi*** (bean sprouts): there are two kinds, the smaller type comes from *mung* beans and the larger type is made from soybeans. They should be eaten within three days of purchase.

***Naga-Imo***: this baby is long with tan skin and it secretes a starchy liquid in the same way that kora does. Another kind of yam is *yamaimo*.

**Negi:** mild flavored leeks.

**Renkon** (lotus root): this veggie is the tuber of the lotus plant. You should scrub or peel the earthy brown exterior before eating. This veggie is crunchy, tasteless and commonly used in tempura.

**Sata-imo:** this tuber is small, dark, hairy on the outside and gray on the inside. You can steam it, deep fry it, or eat it candied like sweet potatoes.

**Shimeji:** small brown button headed mushrooms that grow in a cluster. They have a slightly nutty taste and a slippery texture.

**Shiso:** green perilla leaves. They have a distinct flavor that is somewhat peppery.

**Shiitake:** these mushrooms are rich in amino acids and have an earthy flavor. They are available both fresh and dried. The dried ones need to be rehydrated in hot water for at least 30 minutes. Don't forget to trim off the tough ends.

**Takenoko:** baby bamboo shoots, available from early March until May. Before you prepare them, their bitterness needs to be removed by boiling them in water. You shouldn't eat them raw because they contain cyanide which is removed in the cooking process.

## Life as a JET: Perspectives from Experience

**LIFE AS A VEGETARIAN JET\*** By Mieko Ueha

If you are a vegetarian, you may have heard that Japan is not the most vegetarian friendly country. This is true, depending on how restrictive your diet is. If you eat fish, you shouldn't really encounter any problems since seafood is more prominent than meat in the Japanese



diet. I personally do not eat fish or meat, but I do eat foods made with dairy products and eggs. While I had occasional problems, nothing is impossible as there are vegans (people who eat a plant-derived diet and consume no animal products) also living in this country.

Although being a vegetarian in Japan won't be as easy a lifestyle as it probably is in your home country, you need not worry. The first thing you should do is to inform your supervisor and school (if you're an ALT) that you are a vegetarian. Religious or health reasons are generally accepted without difficulty. However, if you decide to give personal reasons, ethical or environmental, be prepared to answer many questions, as they will be very intrigued. I originally became a vegetarian in an attempt to lose weight, but now I simply choose not to eat it. No matter what reason you have for being a vegetarian, stick to who you are, after all, we are here to promote internationalization and this is part of the foreigner in us.

One of the most frustrating things about being a vegetarian in Japan is eating out. First you have to explain that you are a vegetarian, which can be an interesting task when you have very limited Japanese skills. (Check out the **Some Useful Expressions for Vegetarians** section on page 14). Second, I have found very few places that are actually willing to prepare a dish so that it meets my dietary needs. You will probably find yourself being invited to many dinner parties (enkai), so it is always best to tell them ahead of time what you can and can't eat. If a restaurant knows in advance that there is a vegetarian coming they are more likely to prepare meals for you, rather than if you just throw that bit of information at them at the last minute. It may also save you from an otherwise embarrassing and uncomfortable situation, if you let your host know of your dietary needs

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\* Oita AJET Life as a JET [http://www.geocities.com/oitaajet/Life\\_as\\_a\\_JET.htm](http://www.geocities.com/oitaajet/Life_as_a_JET.htm)

beforehand. Also beware that some Japanese people tend to think that meat means beef, so you can still eat pork or chicken. Or that just by removing the meat from a dish it will make it okay for you to eat. So just because they tell you it is vegetarian, I would always check to make sure it really is before I dig into it.

With all the negatives aside, let's get to the positives of being a vegetarian in Japan. There are lots of yummy veggies, fruits, and other non-meat foods to eat (see pages 25-26 for a short list). At the supermarket, you should be able to stock up with tofu, rice, noodles, vegetable, and fruits. If you can't read kanji, you might ask someone to take you shopping to show you the kanji for meat and fish so you can check the ingredients on some packed foods. When in doubt, the Foreign Buyers Club and Tengu Natural Foods are just two great sources for purchasing vegetarian ingredients and foods, in English!

**Foreign Buyers Club** (Tel: 078-857-9001, Fax: 078-857-9005)

**Tengu Natural Foods** (Tel: 0429-85-8751, Fax: 0429-85-8752)

### **LIFE AS A GAY JET: MOVING TO JAPAN AND YOU'RE GAY?**

By Brian Woodworth (briancwoodworth@yahoo.com)

So you're moving to Japan and you're gay, lesbian or bi-sexual? No problem! Although every situation will be different, here are a few things to keep in mind:

- Keep in mind the Japanese customs, values and culture. For the most part, Japan is a conservative country. Japan doesn't look down on being homosexual so much for religious reasons, but Japan is a conformist society, so being gay may be seen as strange because it is non-conforming with the norm. However, like the rest of the world, Japan is more and more accepting of homosexual lifestyles. There are even TV shows with female impersonators that are very popular. And from time to time, there are TV specials on gay lifestyles. There's also an annual gay pride parade in Tokyo. Couples holding hands, kissing or any forms of PDA is rarely seen, straight or gay. Like in the U.S., the larger the city, the greater the chance you'll find gay social life. Most major cities have gay bars and clubs and many of the smaller ones do as well.
- Stonewall is a special interest group for JETs. You can sign up at Tokyo Orientation or via mail afterwards. Stonewall puts together monthly newsletters about gay JET related topics, social

gatherings, contacts and networking (there will be many other gay JETs on the program, and more than likely, several within close proximity of your home). Stonewall is in the “know” about everything gay in Japan. I encourage joining.

- In Japan it’s very common for people of the same sex to go out in groups together. Therefore, it’s rarely considered strange for people of the same sex to be close friends and hang out together, and seldom will it be questioned. Many Japanese men also carry ‘man-bags,’ or purses without any homosexual references.
- Should I come out while on JET? .... That’s up to you. Feel out the atmosphere first. Most JETs are either tolerant or cognoscente of the fact that there are gay people on the program. Most Japanese will not assume you’re gay. The Japanese tend to be very reserved and normally don’t share personal information with coworkers. As such, the topic of dating or your sexual orientation may never come up. If it does, go with your gut. Telling a coworker that you’re gay will probably be met with shock and perhaps laughter, and may be brushed off as a joke. You can gauge reaction by inquiring about homosexuality with other hot topics around the world and in Japan: (i.e.: wearing uniforms vs. street clothes, drug use, or single parent households). In general, the younger teachers are generally more open and accepting.

(Brian was an ALT in Toyama City, Toyama-Prefecture for '95-97. He worked at a private senior high school and also worked at City Hall part-time during his second year.)

### **LIFE AS A FEMALE JET: SOME THINGS TO KNOW BEFORE YOU GO**

By Jenny Wilson (iki\_jennifer@yahoo.com)

I served as an ALT on Iki Island, Nagasaki-ken from 2002 until 2004. There I learned the process of growing rice, the art of bowing, and mastered the technique of the squatty potty. I immersed myself with the culture by getting involved with numerous after-school club activities and persons within the community. Through this I gained a greater respect of my surroundings and began to understand the Japanese way. I think the best way to maximize your time in Japan is by surrounding yourself with all things Japanese and seeks to understand its beauty rather than hold to western ideology.



- ◆ Curiosity is natural. You are a foreigner whom everyone in your town is interested to know. Be understanding when you are asked personal questions which would otherwise be considered offensive (i.e. about your “size”, your age, your boyfriend, etc.).
- ◆ Japanese men rank ‘above’ their female peers. A western female working in the Japanese workplace will find this cultural difference to affect her relationships with her male co-workers. Do not be offended if you are asked to pour drinks for your co-workers.
- ◆ Sexual harassment is NOT illegal. If you find yourself a victim you should contact your Prefecture Advisor or local CIR representative. If you feel you need counseling or support of any kind PLEASE do not hesitate in contacting the CLAIR JET line @ 03-3591-5489 the Peer Support Group Hotline @ 0120-43-7725, JETAASE executives, or your school supervisor.
- ◆ It is difficult to find clothing that fits the western frame. One store to look for in numerous cities/towns is UNIQLO (www.uniqlo.com) whose sizes are comparable to that of the US. If you are in need of lingerie it is best to have a family member or friend ship them directly to you. Remember that it is considered inappropriate to wear sleeveless or v-neck shirts to work.
- ◆ Finding personal items (such as tampons, deodorant, and toothpaste with fluoride) is difficult and can be shipped via sea mail for a more economical price. Most Japanese cosmetics and cleaning solutions for your face contain whitening ingredients.
- ◆ It is *almost* impossible to get the birth control pill in Japan. Take your own supply of whichever form of birth control you prefer, but make sure to comply with the prescription medication information found on page 8.

*When you travel, remember that a foreign country is not designed to make you comfortable. It is designed to make its own people comfortable. –Clifton Fadiman*

### **LIFE AS AN AFRICAN AMERICAN JET: A COUPLE OF TIPS AND OBSERVATIONS**

By Najwa Waheed Naohara (bignaj@hotmail.com)

**Tip #1-** Bring your own cosmetics. Many African-Americans and people from the Caribbean tend to use oil-based hair/skin care products and these products might be very challenging to find in Japan. So, please bring your petroleum jelly, hair perm, hair grease/oil, shampoo, hair extensions/weave, foundation, lotion, panty hose for darker completions, etc. I recommend bringing a 3 month supply with you on the plane then have additional supplies shipped to you.



**Observation #1-** Many foreigners experience being stared at while they are in Japan, there may also be some instances of whispering and possibly pointing if you are especially “foreign looking.” I have had a small child lick my hand to see if I taste like chocolate. Some Japanese people might seem very interested in your hair, especially natural hair styles like locks, braids or afros in which some young Japanese people have a lot of interest. I have found this is usually out of a sense of curiosity rather than rudeness and should all be taken in stride. Smile a lot, it helps.

**Tip #2-** Bring soul food or something that reminds you of home. I love soul food at Thanksgiving, so I had a can of collard greens, a can of black-eye peas, and a can of sweet potatoes (quite different in taste from Japanese sweet potatoes), shipped over from home. You can buy corn meal in Japan but turkeys, even turkey parts, are rare. Sharing this food with Japanese friends at Thanksgiving makes for a great party. You can talk about the history of soul food and it’s relevance in African-American history or even share a few recipes. For more information and recipes, try <http://southernfood.about.com/od/africanamerican1/index.htm> or [www.Foodnetwork.com](http://www.Foodnetwork.com).

**Observation #2-** Knowledge of African-Americans in Japan comes mostly from movies or tv. During my three years on the JET program I was told I looked like Tyra Banks, Tracy Chapman, Naomi Campbell and Whoopi Goldberg. Also, it was sometimes presumed that I am very athletic. Sharing your unique cultural experience as an African-American with people for example, Kwanzaa, stepping, the history of Blues or Rap music, fraternities/sororities, the Civil Rights movement, etc. is part of the international cultural exchange element of the JET program. I think you will find that not only Japanese people but JETs from other countries will be very interested. I have included a short list of websites below that talk about these subjects.

- [www.officialkwanzaawebsite.org](http://www.officialkwanzaawebsite.org)
- <http://blackquest.com/link.htm>
- <http://www.africanamericans.com/HistoricallyBlackColleges.htm>

## LIFE AS AN ASIAN-AMERICAN JET

By Theresa Kanter

From 1998-2001, I was an ALT for junior high schools and high schools in Hashimoto

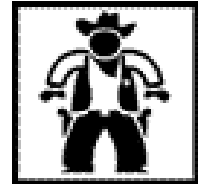


City, Wakayama Prefecture. My mother is Vietnamese and my father is European American, so I have Asian-American features, but I never thought I looked Japanese. However, while on the JET Program I was often mistaken as Japanese. Prior to leaving on the program, I didn't think being an Asian-American in Japan would be a unique experience, but it is in several ways.

- If Japanese people think you are Japanese, they will expect you to speak fluently. Before I became confident in my Japanese language skills, I was in a few awkward situations where Japanese people were trying to communicate with me and didn't understand why I could not! I quickly learned to say, "I don't understand Japanese (nihongo wakarimasen)" which often resolved the situation, but did still leave some people confused. After several months, I was able to explain my heritage in Japanese, which was often the best solution.
- Foreigners that stand out (people with

By John Crow

"What's your ethnic background?" The answer to that question would have



normally been "I'm half Japanese."

However, while in Japan from 1999 to 2002 as an ALT in Arao City in Kumamoto Prefecture, that answer became "I'm half American." Living in Japan as a HANBUN-JIN (as I would say) or HA-FU (as the Japanese would say) was great! I was actually shocked on occasion when at either of my two senior high schools a student would be surprised, almost dumbfounded, when I would speak English because they thought I was Japanese.

I won't reiterate Theresa's points because they were the same for me but I will say that I never really thought of myself as Asian-American growing up. I just thought of myself as American. It wasn't until later in life that I liked the distinction and wanted to associate myself with the Japanese side of my family. Although I will always be "American" I like being Japanese-American. I'm proud of the fact that I have two heritages from which I can learn from in my life.

Actually while in Japan I experienced

white or dark skin) often received celebrity treatment in my suburban community. I did not know this happened until I was at dinner with some white English JETs and the Japanese diners at the next table offered to buy our meal and drinks. I was surprised (and slightly envious) at the celebrity treatment that my friends said happened to them often.

- While I didn't stand out as a foreigner, I often appreciated being able to blend into the Japanese crowd. I traveled a lot throughout the country, and I felt less conspicuous and safer as one of the crowd. If I noticed a lost foreign tourist, I could always step out of the Japanese background and offer help in English before blending back into the crowd.

more interest in my bicultural background than in the U.S. In the U.S. there are so many races, ethnicities and people of mixed races that we are used to seeing them and don't pay them that much attention or interest. When people in the U.S. find out that I'm HA-FU they're more like, "oh" and that's it. In Japan, people would say, "really, which one of your parents is Japanese?" Or "where are they from in Japan?" And these led to other inquisitive questions. There was more interest in who you were and where your parents came from in their related countries than in America. Maybe that's just the kindness of the Japanese in general.

Although you may not "stick out" nor garnish as much attention as your white or dark skin counterparts, it's always nice just to sit back and watch the show.

# What to Expect on the Job

## THE ENVIRONMENT OF THE JAPANESE WORKPLACE



### Professionalism and Responsibility by Denise Sakauye\*

There is nothing more embarrassing in Japan than a loud foreigner, usually drunk, who thinks he owns the whole country and abuses the hospitality and patience of the Japanese people. When it comes to maintaining a level of professionalism as a JET, the most important thing to remember is to keep a sense of balance. Everyone should have a good time while they spend their time in Japan, but your own personal need to have fun and "express" yourself should be balanced by your position in Japan and your local community. For some lucky JETs, you can blend into your surroundings inconspicuously, but for most JETs, you represent the JET program and can either help or hinder Japanese perceptions of foreigners.

Since many Japanese people won't have a chance to really interact with many foreigners, your role is vital to internationalization in Japan and breaking the stereotypical images of foreigners.

Internationalization is one of reasons for the JET program, so if you want to earn your keep and send a positive image to the Japanese, you need to be aware of your role both inside and outside of your job.

A helpful piece of advice I received before I left for Japan was to **dress in business attire during the first week of school**. A week should give you enough time to determine what is expected. Another tidbit is to observe what your co-workers are wearing and dress accordingly. In the schools I went to, the teachers dressed business casual every day. However, the JET in the next town wore suits every day since that is what her teachers wore. Also, it is a good habit to be on time for morning meetings.

Other advice I was given for acting within Japanese society's expectations was **not to be destructive or too loud and obnoxious in public**. Unlike America, your Japanese supervisor

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\* JETAA-SC

could be blamed and held accountable for your actions within and outside the workplace. In essence, your actions not only concern you but also may have other far reaching repercussions.

Overall, I must admit that the best advice was to **have a positive attitude while trying to integrate into the Japanese way of life**. If you make a conscious effort to learn and respect the Japanese culture and people, your actions will show it, which in turn will make life enjoyable for you and will pave a bright future for other JETs.

### **Another Perspective** by KJ Karacsony

I challenge you to arrive at work on time and dress professionally to show respect for your colleagues and supervisors. I challenge you to make an effort to understand your duties and roles in your jobs, that you may seek to be a contributing member of your school or government staff. I hope that you will be a role model of integrity and decency at work and at home. Being in JET, you see, is a full-time occupation. Unlike a job in the US, your day won't end at 5:00; you will be a foreigner around the clock. You will be watched. And you will be heard. You are the message. What will you say? I hope that you will say that America is a country that believes in the integrity, peak performance and social responsibility of each individual. I hope you will say that by being a positive role model in your community and at your job.

I am not saying these things to be a joy-killer, but rather to encourage you to seek ways to make your life abroad even better. It is my desire that your time in Japan be the best it possibly can. I hope that you will create wonderful memories and leave great impressions with those whom you come in contact with. May you become such a positive influence in your JET that by the time your stint in Japan ends many tears are shed for your leaving.

JET Program participants are adventurous people who are willing to step out into unknown territories. You have been selected for your accomplishments, pleasant personalities and courage. You are risk-takers who know how to mix fun with professionalism and spontaneity with responsibility. May you grow this year in your pursuit of becoming the best You you can be. May you balance business with pleasure and excitement with intelligence. I hope you challenge

yourselves to be the best JET participant you can be, by pursuing happiness and a high level of professionalism and personal responsibility.

## **FOR COORDINATORS OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS\***

### **Interpreting**

As a CIR, your office may ask you to do some interpreting work at courtesy calls, receptions, meetings, or as a group guide-interpreter. Before you accept any interpreting assignments, make sure your office understands that you have not had formal training and that they should not expect a professional-caliber performance. Your lack of experience should not keep you from doing interpreting, however. You can practice and prepare to make your interpreting skills as professional as possible.

#### Types of Interpreting

- ◆ Consecutive
- ◆ Simultaneous
- ◆ Whispering

#### Practice and Preparation

- ◆ Shadowing
- ◆ Reading
- ◆ Building vocabulary
- ◆ Note-taking
- ◆ Research

#### Tips for Interpreting

- ◆ Be calm and don't rush.
- ◆ Don't bring a dictionary to an assignment.
- ◆ Bring a note pad and pen.
- ◆ Be neutral. You are an interpreting machine.
- ◆ Do not allow the speakers to address you directly. Again, you are only a machine.
- ◆ Ask for clarification when you do not understand.
- ◆ Use a consistent level of Japanese.
- ◆ If interpreting a speech, see if they have a copy prepared beforehand.
- ◆ Look for patterns in speech.
- ◆ Know the titles of those you represent.
- ◆ Eat beforehand.
- ◆ Know your limitations.

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\* JETAA-SC

## **Translating**

Firstly, written translation requires a lot of research. It's not as simple as substituting one word for another. Many times there are set phrases that you may not be aware of that you must find. Also, you must remember that some Japanese phrases do not translate well into English, and in times like these, you must maintain a translation that is consistent with the author's original intent and written in eloquent English. Translating may be difficult at first, but it is something that improves "on the job," and you'll find it getting easier and easier.

Here are some hints that may help you when translating.

- ◆ When you receive an assignment, make sure it is approved by your supervisor. Many CIRs get too many assignments at once from different people, and letting your supervisor know what you're doing can help avoid this situation.
- ◆ Try to ask people to give you a sufficient amount of time to complete an assignment. The time will depend on the length and level of difficulty of the task, but many CIRs ask for two weeks as a general rule.
- ◆ Look for similar translations done previously.
- ◆ Don't be afraid to cut up long Japanese sentences.
- ◆ Ask for technical terms in advance, if possible.
- ◆ Ask for clarification when necessary.
- ◆ Keep the English natural.

## **Proofreading**

Many of the hints for translating apply to proofreading. Additional hints for proofreading include:

- ◆ Get a copy of the Japanese original.
- ◆ Use a colored pen. (If you are afraid you'll hurt the person's feelings, use a pencil.)
- ◆ Make sure the language and flow of the translation is consistent.

Some translations you are asked to proofread, including those done by professional translators, may need rewriting. In this case there are two things you can do, tactfully ask the translator to rewrite it, or do it yourself. This is up to you and your supervisor to decide.

*Some expressions used here were taken from *The CIR Handbook and Japanese for CIRs* both published by CLAIR.*

## FOR ASSISTANT LANGUAGE TEACHERS



### **Junior High Schools in Japan** by Cory Crocker

There are three grade levels in Japanese junior high schools, with "1st graders" being 11 or 12 years old (equivalent to 7th grade in the US) and 3rd graders being 14 or 15 (9th grade). Students are divided into classes within their grade and spend the entire day with their class. Larger schools will have seven or eight classes per grade level and smaller schools may only have one or two classes per grade. Class size is typically very large with as many as 35 students in one class. Classes are not grouped by ability, so lesson plans must be designed to reach all levels of learning. Junior high school students are preparing to take the high school entrance exam at the end of the 3rd grade. Many students will study at private schools (juku) in the evenings to prepare for this exam.

### **Japanese Junior High School Students**

Japanese students have the same pressures in their lives as American teenagers do. They are trying to succeed in their classes and in after-school activities, and at the same time, they are trying to fit in with their peers. Out of the four schools that I worked in, I would describe the students at two of the school as being very well behaved. The students were generally quiet and paid attention in class, followed the school uniform rules and were very interested in learning as much as possible from me. However, in my other two schools, the students would walk in and out of class, not pay attention, remove their clothing (!), fight, and refuse to study English. Whether well behaved or not, Japanese students will be very interested in you and will want to interact with you.

- ◆ Have a friendly relationship with the students, but also make it clear that you are a teacher and are in a position of authority.
- ◆ Try to befriend the loud, obnoxious students in the class. It helps to have them on your side.
- ◆ Participate in after-school activities. Students will feel more comfortable with you in class if they get to know you outside of class.
- ◆ Have patience. Remember, they are only kids.



## **Junior High School Lesson Plans**

English education is usually introduced in the 1st grade of junior high school, but you will find that over half of the students have taken an English class before. While it is important to offer your ideas and opinions to the Japanese teaching staff, remember that you are an assistant and your job is to help the English teachers. Some teachers will want you to take control of the class and plan the lessons, while other teachers will tell you what they want to do, or will unfortunately simply try to use you as a tape recorder. Creating lesson plans with your team-teaching partner can be extremely frustrating, but it is important for you to cooperate with the Japanese teaching staff and to improve the quality of English education at your assigned school.

- ◆ If you are bored in class, you can be sure that the kids are very bored.
- ◆ Speak slowly in a loud, clear voice in class and when discussing lesson plans with other teachers.
- ◆ Use a lot of visual materials to illustrate the lessons. Visuals help to keep the students' attention and can make your lesson easier to understand.
- ◆ When you are making lesson plans, remember that people learn in three different ways: Some learn visually, some by simply listening, and others learn best by actually doing something hands-on.

## **Japanese Teachers**

All of the teachers at my schools were extremely friendly and generous. Some JETs worked with teachers that were resentful of their presence, but I believe that the majority of the teachers you will meet will be excited to have you at their school and will go out of their way to help you. Japanese teachers are very busy and have a lot of responsibilities outside of their lessons. An ALT will usually have a lot of free time, so try to help the teaching staff as much as possible. The Japanese teachers can be very intimidated by you, so it may be up to you to break the ice and make them feel comfortable.

- ◆ Be aware and abide by the cultural traditions and school rules, such as removing your shoes before entering the school, morning meetings, eating and drinking restrictions, etc.
- ◆ Being on time, dressing appropriately, and acting professionally are all important.
- ◆ Make all possible efforts to attend after-school events, parties, etc. The teachers' room can be a pretty quiet and awkward place until the teaching staff gets to know you.

## **School Rules and Discipline**

Discipline in Japanese schools is very different than in American schools. There seems to be more rules-everything from wearing school uniforms to appropriate hair color and style to eating candy at lunch. However, you will find that there are fewer methods of enforcing these rules. For example, a teacher cannot make a child leave class or give a student detention. The classroom environment is also very different in Japan. Japanese teachers seem to be more tolerant of students talking in class and may permit students to play rough with each other. "Bullying" is a very big problem in a lot of schools. While it is usually not the JET's responsibility to enforce the school rules, you are a teacher and are in a position to help the Japanese teaching staff.

- ◆ While some teachers may physically punish students, a JET should never strike a student.
- ◆ Don't lose your cool and go into a rage. The students will not understand you and will probably only find it amusing.
- ◆ If discipline is a problem in your classes, begin to work out the problems with your English teacher.

## **Items to Bring to Japan for Your Classes**

The following items might be useful in your introduction classes or in your lessons throughout the year.

- ◆ Photographs of your family, home, car, friends, etc.
- ◆ A videotape of your life in America.
- ◆ American money, stamps, maps, etc.
- ◆ Interesting items, picture books, etc. from your hometown or state.
- ◆ Video clips from American TV shows, commercials, news, weather, sports.
- ◆ American magazines.
- ◆ Children's books.

## **Types of High Schools** by Christine Chuang

Depending on where you are placed, please remember that the school system in Japan is quite different from the US. In Japan there are two "kinds" of high schools. The list is as follows:

1. Academic: The students main concerns are to pass the all important entrance exams, so the Japanese teacher may ask you to be the "human tape recorders" or to think of activities to stimulate the class (make things more fun).
2. Trade: The high school in these areas are mostly students who want to focus on a special field, like commerce. Most of the students who attend these schools are not necessarily interested in learning English because they need to take English classes to pass high school.

You want to make your classes fun and interesting for them to want to learn and stay awake in the class. About 10%-15% of the students will go on to college (4 yrs. or 2 yrs.). You will know the difference by the class i.e., A class=college bound; B class=not college bound.

Please also note: School activities and clubs are mandatory and it is year-round. Students only have one month off for summer vacation, so their free time is very limited. All students will not understand the concept of 'free time' as in "What do you like to do in your free time?" You will get a lot of blank stares. For students in sports clubs many of them will be very tired in classes. It is not unusual for the students to fall asleep in the class because they have to train with the team and that may mean morning (5am) and/or after school practices (3pm to 9pm). There are also culture clubs (English, flower arrangement, tea ceremony, etc.), which you are expected to take part in (English).

From a personal perspective you need to find out what type of a high school you'll be assigned to think about what to bring and what to prepare for. I taught at a commercial high school and in general the students there were very polite, but from what I gathered from other JETs in my area some of the students are not so polite (agricultural, fisheries,). They can be a bit rowdy in the classrooms. But don't despair if you inspire the class or get to know them outside of the classroom (which I highly suggest) everything will be fine.

### **How to Make Lessons Interactive** by Kent Yocum

1. You forget 9 out of 10 things. So teach everything ten times. Read it, speak it, think it, hear it, feel it, taste it, see it, smell it, and do it over again, and again.
2. Hands-on Activities. Don't just stand there, stupid. Remember that professor who just read lecture notes? It sucked! It will suck for your kids if you do the same. Make their bodies and body parts move, not just their mouths and brains.
3. Entrance Exams. Take one so you know what the "skills" are. The Japanese teachers focus on teaching their students the test skills. If you know what they are, figure out a great fun way to teach and reinforce those skills.
4. Games in the Classroom. There is nothing wrong with playing games as a method of teaching, but if the game is just fun and with no educational value, then it's probably a waste of time and the teacher won't want you in the classroom. Sometimes, you do need to have fun for fun's sake.

## **Sample Lesson Plan** by Julie Dair

From: Japan Foundation and Language Center Pedagogy Workshop 1997

Presentation: students are listening and watching.

1. Give a variety of examples (rather than explanations in Japanese). Japanese Teacher of English (JTE) will usually do this before you come to class.
2. Show meaning through a range of contexts/situations likely to be encountered (realistic).
3. Show students what they will be able to do at the end of the lesson.
4. Use students' ability to guess (this makes it more interactive and fun).

Input: students are mostly listening.

1. Give abundant input.
2. Give contextualized input.

Output: students are speaking and listening.

1. Give contextualized accuracy-oriented practices (choral repetition, drills). JTE and you will correct any mistakes.
2. Give opportunities to let the students express their own meaning (activities). Use peer correction more from this point.
3. Give opportunities to interact among students (games).
4. Make an information gap (interviews, games).

Make sure students are ready for REAL WORLD TASKS.

1. Real World Task: students are speaking.
2. Students express their own meaning.
3. Students interact among themselves.
4. Students interact spontaneously.
5. Student role-play within situations/contexts likely to be encountered.
6. An information gap may exist (motivates students to "solve a problem.")
7. There is minimal teacher talk, corrections, or explanations.

General Checkpoints.

1. Make sure the purpose of each activity is clear to the students.
2. Check the students' comprehension before proceeding to the next stage.
3. Maximize the use of English in instruction.
4. Correct errors in an appropriate way.

## Computing in Japan\*



Computers play such a large role in our lives these days, from computer games to word processing (including this handbook), to email, the godsend of communication methods.

Thus, it is a big surprise to arrive in Japan and discover the paucity of computing going on in a nation commonly considered by many to be the most technologically advanced nation in the world. Sure, things are changing, but consider this: School records and bank procedures are all done by hand. Yikes! In contrast, bank ATMs are so sophisticated you need a Master's in Computer Science to operate them.

### Bring Your Computer?

SO... The question is, how can you continue using your computer in Japan? First of all, your best bet is to bring a notebook computer, as it is expensive to send a desktop machine to Japan not even considering the possibility that it will get damaged along the way. However, notebooks are definitely more expensive, so you need to calculate how much performance you want for how much money you are willing to spend. Regardless, most computers these days come with a worldwide power converter, so a transformer will not be necessary (but better check the specs to make sure).

If you're more of a techno-geek, something you might consider is bringing your hard disk with you and buying a new desktop machine in Japan. This really isn't recommended unless you know your computers. With a Mac, it won't be so difficult, but with Windows, you'll need to get the right drivers for all the hardware before it will really work properly. Still, this would probably be pretty cheap, easy to carry, AND you get to have a nice big monitor (instead of that crappy LCD screen).

### Where/What to Buy

**What:** We highly recommend getting a name-brand computer (IBM, Compaq, Fujitsu, etc.). One reason is most notebooks come with worldwide warranties so that if something happens, you'll be able to get it fixed at an authorized service center in Japan under warranty. (This statement only applies to the **business** models, not the consumer models—make sure you are getting the correct warranty when you shop.) Generic/clone models are by far cheaper, but you're stuck if something turns out to be defective.

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\* JETAA-SC

**Where:** CompUSA, Best Buy, Fry's, etc. Don't forget to consider Dell and Gateway, both of whom are inexpensive AND provide quality machines. Online shopping is also available at <http://www.computershopper.com>. In Japan, Akihabara (in Tokyo) is the electronics Mecca, but you can get good deals at other electronics stores like Bic Camera, Yodobashi Camera, and Sakuraya Camera (they started as camera shops but evolved into general electronics stores).

**Mac vs Windows:** There are a lot of people who are zealous about their platform (especially Mac people), but what if you don't know how to choose? The best advice is to stick with what you know. If you don't know either platform, then what to do? Mac: Easy to use, but expensive. Great for graphics and Japanese, and you can't beat the cool factor. Windows: Getting easier to use, but still requires more technical know-how (standard Microsoft support answer to any problem: reinstall the operating system). Nonetheless, WinTel (Windows + Intel) machines are much cheaper, and they are, for better or for worse, the business standard.

### **Modems**

Despite the differences in the phone system, modems made for use in the US generally work well in Japan. Any laptop modem will work fine, but as Americans are used to faster Internet speeds, we expect most of you will opt to use broadband.

### **Using Japanese?**

#### **Macintosh:**

Mac users have it easy. Invest in the Japanese Language Kit and many, if not all, of your applications will suddenly be able to type in Japanese. Wow! Mac OS9 comes with JLK built-in, but owners of older Macs will have to buy it. Make sure that the programs you intend to use Japanese in are all WorldScript-compatible. If they are recent versions (within the last two or three years), they almost certainly are (known exception: Eudora 4.3). Any authorized Apple reseller can get the JLK for you if they don't have it in stock already. If you can't find any place to help you, try AsiaSoft (<http://www.asiasoft.com/> or 800-882-8856) on the web.

#### **Windows:**

You have several options if you want to use Japanese on your computer. It depends on how much Japanese you want to be using.

1. If you are going to be using Nihongo every day, your best bet is to install Japanese Windows 98 and use Japanese software. Definitely an expensive way to do it. You may even consider buying a computer in Japan (see above).
2. For light users/novice speakers of Japanese, look into programs like OmniPen or Asian Double Byte Manager. However, these types of software do not give you a perfect Japanese environment and they do have their own problems. If you're not technically savvy, this may be more trouble than they're worth. World Language Resources (<http://www.worldlanguage.com/> or 800-900-8803) sells these sorts of products. Expect to spend over \$100
3. What if you just want to do email and web browsing? You can do this for free if you don't mind using Microsoft's Internet Explorer and Outlook Express (or you may want to get over your anti-Microsoft loathing) by installing a free component called Global IME  
<http://www.microsoft.com/windows/ie/downloads/recommended/ime/default.msp>  
Those using IE5 just need to run their Setup program (called "ie5setup.exe") and click "Customize Browser" to add Japanese functionality.

## **Email/ISPs**

Ahhh, the number one reason people want to bring computers to Japan. Current users of major Internet Service Providers (ISPs) such as AOL, Mindspring, and Earthlink, may be able to keep their current accounts and dial in from local access numbers in Japan, usually for an additional fee (could get expensive). Contact your ISP administrators or wander about their respective homepages for more information. If you go with this route, you would pretty much have to conduct all your email in flash sessions (i.e., login, download, logoff, read/write, login, send, logoff), since browsing will probably be pricey. Earthlink also offers web-based email for its users (other ISPs might as well), so you could keep your current account (and let your parents/sibling use it for surfing) and still get your email from Japan. You'd still need Internet access however (see below for further pros and cons).

Or you could get a local Japan ISP. Just five years ago, there were hardly any ISPs and they were all expensive, but Japan has gone through a similar Internet boom as the US, and so now ISPs are a dime a dozen, with rates comparable to those in the US. Your colleagues or other JETs will have more information for you when you get there. If you have cable TV access, you may want to consider getting a cable modem instead. ISDN access is also available.

Another option is to get a web-based account such as Hotmail, Yahoo, Angelfire, Xoom, etc., and then find an Internet connection in Japan, whether this is dial-up, through your school/Board of Education, or at a public terminal (library/cafe).

**Pros:**

Web-based mail is free, accessible from anywhere in the world, and you are always available at the same email address.

**Cons:**

In Japan, you have to pay for phone time (no free local calls) and web-based accounts take a lot of time since you have to be online to use them. (However, both Hotmail and Yahoo and maybe others do let you treat web mail as POP mail). Another con to this method is that all your email will contain their advertising.

**DVD-ROMs**

If you've got a brand-spanking new computer with a nifty DVD-ROM on it, you're going to run into a problem with region coding. DVDs and DVD drives are encoded so that only DVDs purchased in those areas should work on drives/players from the same areas. There are websites that can make your DVD region-free, but these methods may or may not be entirely legal. Please be aware that any modifications to your DVD-ROM drive are done at your own risk.

**Links**

- Installing East Asian Language Support  
[http://newton.uor.edu/Departments&Programs/AsianStudiesDept/Language/asianlanguageinstallation\\_XP.html](http://newton.uor.edu/Departments&Programs/AsianStudiesDept/Language/asianlanguageinstallation_XP.html)
- Writing Japanese Under Windows 2000  
[http://newton.uor.edu/Departments&Programs/AsianStudiesDept/Language/japanese\\_write.htm](http://newton.uor.edu/Departments&Programs/AsianStudiesDept/Language/japanese_write.htm)
- Computers: Bring or Buy <http://www.jetsetjapan.com/infozone-comput-borb.shtml>
- Computers: Getting Online <http://www.jetsetjapan.com/infozone-comput-onli.shtml>
- Computers <http://www.eltnews.com/guides/living/com.shtml>
- Lenovo/IBM ThinkPads: <http://www-6.ibm.com/jp/pc/engmodel>



## Recommended Resources: Links, Readings, and JETAA Contact Information

### LINKS AND SUGGESTED BOOKS



#### Especially for JETs

- ◆ AJET (the Association of Japan Exchange and Teaching) is an independent, self-supporting volunteer organization that promotes and supports exchange and teaching in Japan in cooperation with the JET Program <http://www.ajet.net/>
- ◆ Beyond Sushi, by JETAASC member Ken Januszewski, another wonderful description of the JET life.
- ◆ BigDaikon is the place for past, present and future JETs (members of the Japan Exchange and Teaching program) to meet, chat, discuss issues, share problems and solutions and to relax. <http://www.bigdaikon.com/>
- ◆ Importing Diversity: Inside Japan's JET Program, by David L. McConnell—published Feb 2000.
- ◆ Jetset Japan is a comprehensive lifestyle and community website, exclusively serving the needs of the members of the Japan Exchange Teaching (JET) Programme in Japan., the number one website for JET Programme participants <http://www.jetsetjapan.com/>
- ◆ Learning to Bow, the classic book by Bruce S Feiler about the JET experience during the early years of the program. A definite must for any JET.

#### Teaching English

- ◆ ELT News is the web site for English Teachers in Japan. More commercial than Genki English, but it does have good resources. <http://www.eltnews.com/features/resources/>
- ◆ GenkiEnglish. This site is a collection of games, songs and ideas for use by teachers of languages to children. <http://genkienglish.net/>

#### Living in Japan

- ◆ At Home In Japan. An on-line tutorial to help you becoming familiar with Japanese culture, even before you get there. <http://athome.nime.ac.jp/>
- ◆ Bob & Angie's Cooking Site [http://www.bob-an.com/recipe/English/index\\_e.html](http://www.bob-an.com/recipe/English/index_e.html)
- ◆ Japanese Mom's Home Cooking  
[http://www.nsknet.or.jp/%7Echrkaji/yasuko/index\\_e.html](http://www.nsknet.or.jp/%7Echrkaji/yasuko/index_e.html)
- ◆ Japan-Guide.com delivers comprehensive, up to date information on traveling and living in Japan, first-hand from Japan. <http://www.japan-guide.com/>
- ◆ Multilingual Guide to Living in Japan (developed by CLAIR)  
<http://www.clair.or.jp/tagengo/index.html>
- ◆ Recognized Local International Exchange Associations (developed by CLAIR)  
[http://www.clair.or.jp/e/other/map\\_jpn/index.html](http://www.clair.or.jp/e/other/map_jpn/index.html)
- ◆ Tokyo Food Page is a restaurant guide for Tokyo and a Japanese food guide for everyone.  
<http://www.bento.com/tokyofood.html>

## Japanese Language

- ◆ Irrasshai: The Japanese Language and Culture Distance Learning Course. Produced by Georgia Public Broadcasting Education Services. Check your local listings for broadcast times! <http://168.28.132.151/peachstar/irasshai/homepg.htm>
- ◆ *The Kanji SITE* is aimed primarily at people who are studying for the Japanese Language Proficiency Test, but has a great dictionary system for all students of kanji, and it doesn't require a Japanese character download! <http://www.kanjisite.com/>

### Remembering the Kanji Series

This series of books by James Heising et al have helped innumerable people learn kanji as well as hiragana and katakana. There are three *Remembering the Kanji* books as well as

*Remembering the Hiragana* and *Remembering the Katakana*. You may want to get them all!

- ◆ [Remembering the Kanji I](#)
- ◆ [Remembering the Kanji II](#)
- ◆ [Remembering the Kanji III](#)
- ◆ [Remembering the Hiragana](#)
- ◆ [Remembering the Katakana](#)

### Basic Japanese Through Comics

The now defunct *Mangajin* magazine published these two books to help you learn Japanese by reading *manga*. A great way to learn colloquial Japanese!

- ◆ [Basic Japanese Through Comics Part 1](#)
- ◆ [Basic Japanese Through Comics Part 2](#)

## Regional Magazines in English

- ◆ Fukuoka Now <http://www.fukuoka-now.com/index.php>
- ◆ Kansai Time Out <http://www.kto.co.jp/>
- ◆ Metropolis, based in Tokyo. <http://metropolis.japantoday.com/default.asp>

## Japan through Gaijin (Foreign) eyes

- ◆ *36 Views of Mt Fuji*, by Cathy Davidson, one woman's voyage of self-discovery in Japan.
- ◆ [Life in a Japanese School](#) by Maiko Covington. Essays by an American exchange student in a Japanese high school. <http://members.chello.at/theodor.lauppert/japan/maiko/>
- ◆ [Lost Japan](#), by Alex Kerr, a look at how Japan has changed over the author's 30-year stay.
- ◆ [Max Danger: The Adventures of an Expat in Tokyo](#), by Robert Collins, a hilarious chronicle of the author's true-life experiences.
- ◆ [The Accidental Office Lady](#), by Laura Kriska, an insightful look at the non-JET working world in Japan (which we JETs often forget exists).
- ◆ [The Lady and the Monk: Four Seasons in Kyoto](#), by acclaimed travel writer Pico Iyer, recounting his year spent in Japan.
- ◆ [The Roads to Sata](#), by Alan Booth, a travelogue of one man's ambulatory journey through Japan. You might also check out [Looking for the Lost](#), which recounts some of his shorter tours.

## Japan in General

- ◆ Bushido: The Warrior's Code, by Inazo Nitobe, a short book which succinctly explains the code of conduct for samurai warriors. A wonderful insight into the spirit of traditional Japan.
- ◆ Confucius Lives Next Door, by TR Reid, a look at Confucianism and its influence on Japan.
- ◆ Dave Barry Does Japan, the funniest look you will ever have at this country. If you can find it as a book on tape, this is one instance in which I would recommend the audio version over reading the book.
- ◆ Giants of Japan: The Lives Of Japan's Greatest Men And Women, by Mark Weston, a biographical compilation of the key figures in Japanese history, business, literature, the arts, and social movements. An easy read and infinitely useful in understanding Japan.
- ◆ Grand Sumo, by Lora Sharnoff. Everything you ever wanted to know about sumo.
- ◆ Japan: A Bilingual Atlas. Need a map of Japan but don't read kanji? Get this.
- ◆ JGuide or the Stanford Guide to Japan Information Resources is a topically arranged directory of online information resources in and about Japan. <http://jguide.stanford.edu>
- ◆ Lonely Planet Japan, the best travel guide available.
- ◆ Transcending Stereotypes, a collection of writings examining Japanese culture and education.
- ◆ You Gotta Have Wa, by Robert Whiting, an analysis of Japanese baseball, and by extension, society.

## Fiction and Literature about Japan

- ◆ Kokoro, Natsume Soseki. What library would be complete without this classic work?
- ◆ Black Rain, by Masuji Ibuse. Not the movie, but an account of the bombing of Hiroshima.
- ◆ Memoirs of a Geisha, by Arthur Golden. The movie, directed by Rob Marshall and starring Ken Watanabe, is currently in post production!

## JETAA RESOURCES AND CONTACT INFORMATION

- ◆ Pre-Departure Orientation Handbook for 1999 JET Program participants from Southern California <http://www.jetaasc.org/php/index.php?index=handbook>
- ◆ 2001 Orientation Pack from Oita Prefecture: this link will lead you to even more first-person accounts of life as a JET and covers such topics as being a one-shot ALT, owning a motorbike and learning Japanese. <http://www.geocities.com/oitaajet/predeparture.htm>
- ◆ **JETAA –Southeast**. We are always working on improvements and updating information and we welcome your suggestions on this handbook. Please don't hesitate to also contact us about your upcoming JET experience.

Website: [www.jetaase.org](http://www.jetaase.org)

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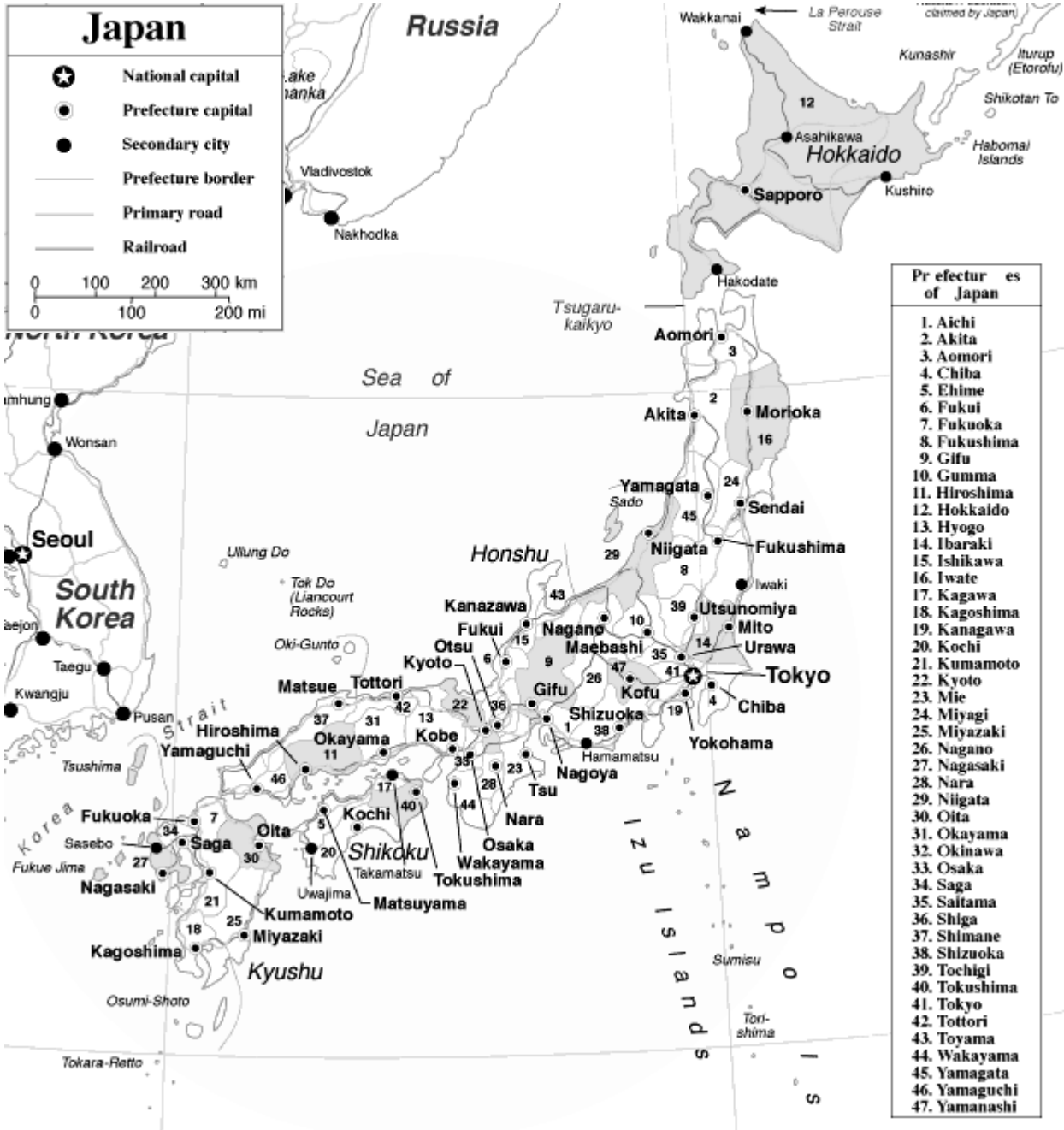
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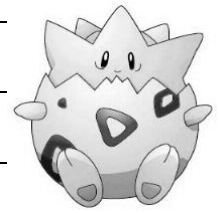
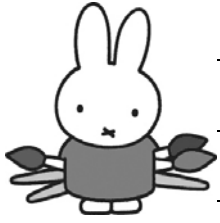
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# MAP of JAPAN



[http://www.cnn.com/TRAVEL/CITY\\_GUIDES/WORLD/Asia/japan/bigmap.html](http://www.cnn.com/TRAVEL/CITY_GUIDES/WORLD/Asia/japan/bigmap.html)



A series of horizontal lines for handwriting practice, consisting of 20 evenly spaced lines.

