

The Japan Forum Newsletter

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Feature:

The Way We Are 2002 Completed

We are pleased to announce the publication of *The Way We Are 2002*, a photo collection compiled mainly from the prizewinning works of the sixth annual "Daily Lives of High School Students: Photo and Message Contest." Held every year since 1997, this contest seeks to convey what today's Japanese high school students are thinking and what kind of lives they lead to their peers overseas, through entries that consist of five photographs taken by the students themselves along with short captions and messages.

The Way We Are 2002 portrays high school students as they live in Japan today through photographs and messages, including the 26 prizewinning works selected from among the 318 entries submitted to this year's contest from students throughout the country. In order to transmit to the reader, just as they are, the events and activities of the students' daily lives, the dreams they dream and the hopes they cherish for the future, the anxieties and struggles they face, and so on, we have improved the content, with more pages and text than previous collections. In this issue of the *TJF newsletter*, we introduce excerpts from the redesigned *The Way We Are 2002* photo collection.



Meeting People —p. 8

Meet Taka

Voices —p. 12

An Imaginary Trip to Japan

Japanese Culture Now —p. 13

モーニング娘。Morning Musume:

With a little effort, anyone can shine

TJF News —p. 14



Currently Taking a Wild Ride on the

Photo & Text by **Sato Satomi, Akita Prefectural Yokote Senior High School**

"Ha, ha! I can't take it! It's too much like him!! I'm laughing so hard my stomach hurts!!" Often eliciting a reaction like this, Yonetchi's impressions of people are skillful enough to give anyone a cramp from laughing too hard. His repertoire is endless—schoolteachers, famous personalities, and more. He looks like a frivolous kind of guy—spending every free moment polishing his banter and mimicry—but in reality, he's the pride of our school and president of our student council!! "What?!" you say, "He doesn't look like the type"? Don't be rude, now. He's so popular that nearly everyone he passes in the hallways says hello, and he's got information stored away about nearly every student in the school.

As for me, passionate booster of Yonetchi, I actually got to know him only a few months back playing a badminton game. It was a really intense and exciting match and we got to cat-calling each other at such a great rate that I never would have dreamed we would grow as close as we are now. In Japan, the male-female thing still affects our consciousness, and in reality not many people have friends of the opposite sex. Thanks to our encounter, however, we've each found a new friend in the other, and brought about a change in each other's values! When you imagine that the person sitting next to you, or the person you're talking to right now might be someone who ends up playing a vital role in your life, doesn't life seem more enjoyable? I have no idea what will happen in the future, but I'm positive it will have some connection with right now. That's what my encounter with Yonetchi has taught me.



Accepting Applications for *The Way We Are* 2002

Those interested in acquiring *The Way We Are* 2002 (A4-size, 64 pages) should write to TJF by e-mail or fax giving the following information: name, e-mail address, name of your school or institution, and delivery address. The first 100 people to apply by October 31st will receive the collection free of charge. Contact information:

E-mail: forum@tjf.or.jp

Fax: 81-3-5322-5215

The TJF objective of conveying the true faces and real lives of Japanese high school students to their peers overseas via the works in this collection has not changed, but for the high school students who participate in the photo contest, creating an entry offers an opportunity to seek a better understanding of themselves and others. Reflecting this aspect of the contest, we have modified our editorial policy: beginning with *The Way We Are*

2002, the collection will be designed and published mainly for a readership of Japanese high school students. For this reason *furigana* above Chinese characters (*rubi*) are not included and a printed English translation of the text is not appended.

An English version of the text of *The Way We Are*, however, is planned for inclusion on the photo contest's English website. Scheduled for launch during the current fiscal year, the new English website will feature translated excerpts from *The Way We Are* and a revised Japanese version for students of the Japanese language.

From this year forward, *The Way We Are* will be sent only to those who request a copy. Although we regret the inconvenience, we ask that even those who have received the photo collection unsolicited in the past submit an application if they wish to receive this year's publication.

Yonetchi Highway



Photo Captions:

1 An enthusiastic crowd around Yonetchi congratulating him when it was announced he had been elected head of student council. A new student council president is born.

2 The moment he steps into the student council office he assumes the demeanor of a student council president. "Sometimes I feel a bit bewildered, but I have a duty to meet my responsibilities as president," he said with such seriousness that I almost wondered—is this somebody else?!

3 "Oideyasu" ("Welcome" in Kyoto dialect) they all croon, swept up in their impression of *maiko-san* (apprentice geisha). And there's the usually fearsome teacher, not completely immune to their wiles!

4 Watching a Hanshin Tigers baseball game on TV with his grandfather, of whom he is very fond. Even grandfather looks a bit overwhelmed by Yonetchi's impression of the voice of commentator Kakefu, good enough to fool the famous former ball player himself.

5 Although he is almost in his third year of high school, even now he loves to play in the snow!! Singled out for a barrage by everyone else at the call to start a snowball fight, Yonetchi cries, "Why me?! Cut that out!!" as he weaves and dodges.



Subject Information



よね ざわ まさ ふみ さい
米澤将文 (17才)

Yonezawa Masafumi, age 17

Even though I'll be studying for entrance exams this year and won't likely have time to watch baseball, the Hanshin Tigers seem invincible this season under manager Hoshino! Right up until just before the exams, it looks like I'll be riveted to the TV with my grandfather, who's a Hanshin fan too. Go, Hanshin! Go, manager Hoshino! Don't fail the exams! Now, I've gotta hit the books!

I think another thing I have to work on is romance! At Yokote High there are a whole bunch of cute girls with great personalities who manage to do sports and study hard, too! All my friends have someone they're dating . . . I'm the only one who doesn't . . . (sniff, sniff). In many senses, I've just gotta keep working on myself!!

1 Student council (president) **2** Anything!! **3** One-liner comedy, computers **4** Misora Hibari, Yoshi Ikuzo, the Beatles **5** My junior high school teacher and Tanaka Kakuei (former Prime Minister) **6** Detached in prosperity; calm in adversity **7** All the people I've met up to now!! **8** Reading the "Quote of the Day" section in the newspaper. **9** I love seeing everyone smile!! Actually, that's what I thrive on. **10** I want to become a junior high school social studies teacher!! If I could ask for more, I'd want to be a teacher at the local Kanazawa Junior High. I'd be a coach in some athletic club and take the team to victory at the nationals.

1 School club **2** Favorite food **3** Hobbies, special skills **4** Favorite music **5** Person I respect **6** Favorite words/phrases **7** What is most important to me **8** What I enjoy most **9** What kind of person I am **10** Future ambition

Even when they are apart, the members of her family are connected by an invisible bond

Rika's family consists of Rika, her mom, dad, older brother, older sister, and pet dog Mac—so, five people and one animal. But Rika lives with only two people and one animal: her mother, grandmother, and Mac. Her dad and brother live in a different house. Her sister is married and lives in Tokushima prefecture. Rika and her siblings are connected by blood, but all three have different surnames.

There are probably people who hear all this and imagine her family must be scattered and broken. But Rika's family is different. Her dad comes over to her house almost every week on Sunday and they all eat dinner together. One Sunday I joined them. Her mom made *okonomiyaki* (a pancake stuffed with cabbage and other ingredients) and her dad made *yakisoba* (stir-fried noodles). Rika was eating everything with relish.

A family is more than just living together in the same house. Seeing Rika made me feel that a family is a relationship in which all the members need each other and, even when apart, are connected by an invisible bond.

Photo & Text: Nakasai Chiya, Osaka



Big dreams

Shiyo has big dreams. I, too, have dreams I want to make come true. Once we discussed each other's dreams—seriously, but sometimes laughing. That's why, when I photographed her this time, I again had the sense that Shiyo's ideas are amazing and inspiring. You see, I'd never thought about things like wanting to protect the planet or to take a job that will help bring happiness to people around the world, as Shiyo does.

I dream of becoming a teacher. If there's something in common between our dreams, it's that we want to work with people. It's something that seems easy but isn't—interacting with others is very difficult. But I think it's the most important thing a person can learn. For that reason, I wish everyone would be more active about interacting with others. Something good is sure to come of it. I just know it.

Photo & Text: Miyoo Makiko, Osaka





A Stylish Life Linda's Way

Photo & Text by **Ueda Shizuka, Osaka City Kogei High School**

I'm not sure why, but everyone calls her "Linda." We study design at our school, so there are a lot of interesting characters among us. To me, Linda stood out from all the rest. It's not just that she was beautiful and stylish, but that she gives off a curious kind of aura—an aura that kept everyone at bay. And yet, everyone wanted to be Linda's friend. That's how attractive she is, and I envy that about her.

Just by chance, I suddenly became quite close to Linda. Linda is extremely poised and has a strong personality. That's why she seems a little atypical of high school girls these days. And she's very hip.

Linda frequently spends her free time shopping by herself or going to a café alone and sketching pictures in her notebook. I think she's someone who really cherishes the time she has to herself. I felt quite envious when I first observed her attitude of "I'm gonna do it my way, and who cares what anyone else thinks." In talking to her, however, I realize it's not just self-centeredness. She cares about her relationships with friends and others just as much as anybody else. She never fails to give her friends a present on their birthdays. I even received an adorable ring from her as a birthday gift.

Linda also worries a lot about not fitting in with others. Around other people, in fact, she's not the type to give way freely to chatter. I thought she didn't say much because she was deliberately playing it cool and collected. It's not that she doesn't like to talk, it turns out, but that she could never bring herself to speak when she had something she wanted to chat about.



1



3



2



4



5

A friend I can say anything to and clash with openly

When our opinions differ, I sometimes clash with Yukie, but I think the best thing about our relationship is that we feel free to tell each other whatever's on our minds. Until now, I didn't have a friend I could really be honest with; I was always expending a lot of effort to keep in people's good graces.

But then I met Yukie and realized the importance of being able to lock horns with someone in earnest and say anything, and I came to understand the warmth of a friend who can accept that from me. Yukie will point out to me when I have done or said something wrong. It makes me immensely happy to think she really cares about me that much.

I think friends have to be able to quarrel, to speak frankly, and to confront each other head on. People to whom you can reveal your true self, and not some self you construct to suit others, and will accept you for who you are, are the ones who will be true friends.

Photo & Text: Nishiguchi Izumi, Osaka



My cell phone doesn't run my life

Yoneda always has his cell phone in his hand—on his way to and from school, during class, between classes, at lunch, and after school. It's like his cell phone sets the rhythm for the rest of his life. Nowadays, almost all Japanese high school students carry cell phones. Cell phones can now record video clips, and it's likely they'll have even more convenient features in the future.

But as cell phones become ever more convenient and we come to rely on them, won't our phones end up controlling how we live? When we misplace them we may become distraught and unable to function. I asked Yoneda what he thought about that idea, and he said: "It's me who has to charge the battery on my cell phone to keep it working. So I don't think you can say my cell phone runs my life."

While the cellular phone continues to advance as an important means of communication, as a means of managing one's daily affairs and acquiring information, and as one method of expressing oneself, I'd like to see it prevented from being used for criminal activity, etc.

Photo & Text: Doi Toshiki, Wakayama prefecture





Subject Information



つじの さやか (18才)
辻野雅香 (18才)

Tsujino Sayaka, age 18

I had a private exhibition of my paintings in November. I wasn't able to produce the kind of work I'd envisioned within the allotted time, but I had accepted that from the beginning. Still, I wanted to do something while still a high school student that I would always remember.

It was quite a learning experience, I was able to get ideas for what I want to do next, and above all, I was happy there were people who recognized my abilities. I was also astounded when younger students and people I'd never met would come up to me from time to time and tell me they were moved by my work. I really felt like there was a part of me in them. It was not a matter of gain or loss, but I truly

felt a sense of warmth. Perhaps there's nothing I can do for those people, but I want to say, in a small, quiet voice, "Thank you."

① Music club ② Figs, cola ③ Playing the bass guitar, painting pictures ④ CORNELIUS, Kaji Hideki ⑤ Okita Soshi (a member of the Shinsengumi, a special police unit at the end of the Tokugawa shogunate) ⑥ None ⑦ People, including my family and friends, time spent alone plunged into my fantasies, and things that form a part of me and have influenced who I am. ⑧ With graduation near at hand, I am trying to enjoy my remaining days at school, and etch into my memory an image of my current self, my friends, teachers, classes, and other aspects of my life at school. ⑨ Someone who really mulls things over. I'm always conscious of myself and others. ⑩ I am really interested in Europe, and I think I'd like to live there someday. I want to find out what life is like for people in Europe. I plan to continue painting pictures in the future, so it would be great if I could do relaxed private exhibitions.

① School club ② Favorite food ③ Hobbies, special skills ④ Favorite music ⑤ Person I respect ⑥ Favorite words/phrases ⑦ What is most important to me ⑧ What I enjoy most ⑨ What kind of person I am ⑩ Future ambition

Photo Captions:

- ① When I went to hang out with Linda at her house, she made me a chocolate snack. She seemed very happy there, cooking and stirring the chocolate.
- ② Linda at one of her favorite cafés. It was very pleasant having tea in a café where the sunlight streams in.
- ③ Linda often buys CDs judging solely by their jacket designs. All of those she selected showed the best of taste.
- ④ Tidying up after an exhibition of her own works. Linda's works were truly stylish, and communicated her particular character with great immediacy. It must have been pretty tough for her to carry home pieces that were as large as she is tall.
- ⑤ When she's painting her pictures, Linda seems very happy. In her stylish living room, which looks like a studio, she squirts out loads of colored paint and paints lavishly.

We have to pass on the message of how terrible war is

After World War II, Okinawa was occupied by the United States. The year we visited Okinawa—2002—marked the thirtieth anniversary of its reversion to Japan. On the first day of our trip, at the Peace Park, there was someone who told us about what it was like during the war. Gutcheon said that he learned a lot, too. But several people were dozing off during the talk, and Gutcheon grumbled, "Those guys are the worst. Hey! Listen up and pay attention!" If we don't listen closely to these stories, we won't be able to pass on to the next generation the terror of the war.

Gutcheon often says, "What matters most in humans is the heart"—are they resolute enough, thoughtful enough, or decisive enough. War is a terrible thing and should not be allowed to happen ever again. This trip made me realize that Gutcheon possesses both the "resolute heart"; he believes we have to pass on that conviction to the next generation, as well as the capacity to listen to the tales of those who experienced the war.

Photo & Text: Horio Tadashi, Gifu prefecture



I couldn't get into university by recommendation

Last year I applied for entrance to university using the recommendation system to three schools, and I can't believe I failed them all. It was a shock at first, but that was quickly replaced by panic and misgivings. I wondered whether I was really that stupid. Since I had failed to get in by the recommendation system at all three schools, I anguished over whether it would be possible to get in by taking the standard entrance exams. Overwhelmed by these thoughts, I felt at times like giving up on going to university.

But I want to be a singer-songwriter, and if I were to start looking for work immediately, it would mean less time to prepare myself than if I went to university, and it would be more difficult to realize my dream. After considering this and a variety of other factors, I decided to take the standard entrance exams after all. I'm really nervous, but in my own way I'm doing the best I can.

Photo: Kawashima Akane, Osaka Text: Ryosuke, Osaka





Matuo Megumi

So he says it's his beloved girlfriend that soothes his weary mind and body. On the days he doesn't have practice, they're always hanging out together. Wish them lots of happiness . . . !

高校に入ってから、やりたいことが増えて、1日、1時間、1分、1秒が、もったいないと思えてきた。(智恵)

進路の話や、将来どんなことをしたいのかと、よく尋ねられる。正直って、私はまったくわからない。でも、私は将来のことが不安ではない。いつか私だって、自分の夢を探しだせると思っているからだ。(ジョイ)



Rachi Hanae

During the clean-up hour, when I peeked into the classroom, Satoko was actually sweeping.



Amemiya Koji

For a guy on the short side, the game left him short of breath. His last summer with the club had ended . . .



Yokota Karin

Not to be outdone by the sound of the surf, nature-loving Joy laughs out loud with her big sister.

卒業まじかで、一日一日が大切に思えてくる今日この頃。私の大事なものがあって、今の私が存在します。だから、ちゃんと「ありがとう」って言いたい。(晴香)



Ishikawa Naoko

Even after we graduate, we'll be friends forever; I'll never forget this smiling face.

何でも話せる友だちがいて幸せだなあとつくづく思います。友だちが今の生活の9割以上を占めているから、なくてはならない存在です。(菜生)



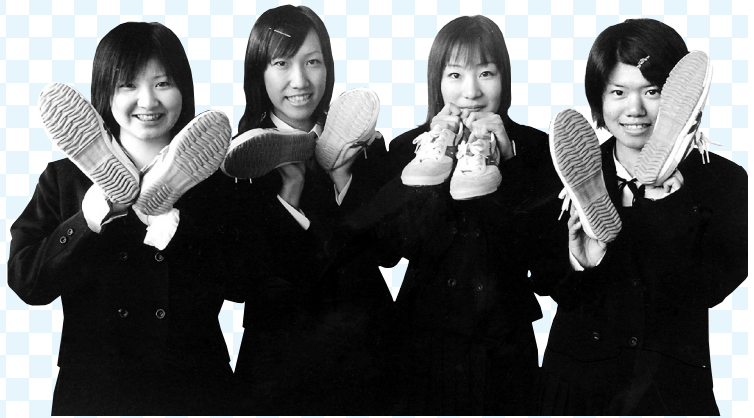
Osawa Noritaka

I made this curry myself!



📷 Ito Haruka

To fulfill her dreams she works hard at her part-time job. A girl is intense when she is pursuing a dream.



📷 Kato Ayu

For some reason, everybody removed their shoes and said, "Take a photo of this!"



📷 Joy Nelson

Karin, who takes good care of her teeth, goes about her nightly routine of brushing her teeth while reading her favorite manga.

ちかごろの生活を^{せいかつ}変えて、^{きもち}気持ちまでも変えてしまふんやから、これが恋^{こい}っていうねんやったら、^{こい}恋はすごいことやと思うな! (衣里)



📷 Sugita Motoki

Before going to the studio with the band members. Coffee is like a drug, heightening the tension—it's essential!

まいにち^{まいにち}の毎^{まいにち}日が楽しいことばかりではないし、うまくいくわけでもない。でも、へこたれない。負けない。(美希)



📷 Shimono Rumi

Hanging around a local store, someone said, "I'm so hungry—let's get something to eat!" Takoyaki (battered and fried chunks of octopus) on top of okonomiyaki . . . now that's *really* Osaka for you!

べつ^{べつ}に変わった生活^{せいかつ}してないから、毎日^{まいにち}同じ時間^{おなじ}をただ過^すごしている感じ^{かんじ}。自分^{じぶん}の自由^{じゆう}を奪^{うば}わなければ、どうでもいい。こんだから、たいした生活^{せいかつ}を送^{おく}れてないんだ。(圭介)



📷 Tsutsumi Kazuki

Keeping in touch with friends by cell phone.



📷 Okumura Ako

At the school Culture Festival. Riding piggyback on a friend