

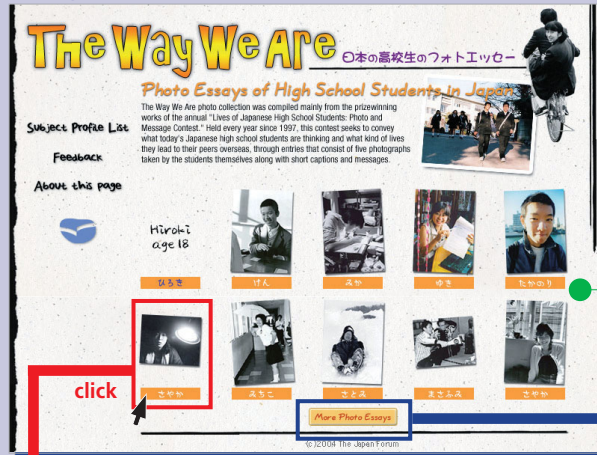
Photo essays by Japanese high school students

<http://www.tjf.or.jp/thewayweare/>

As introduced in column one, the Japan Forum will launch a new English Web site, The Way We Are: Photo Essays of High School Students in Japan, to display works submitted to TJF's annual Lives of Japanese High School Students: Photo and Mes-

sage Contest and information relating to these works. As we tour the new Web site in this issue, we will give readers a look at the real faces of today's Japanese high school students.

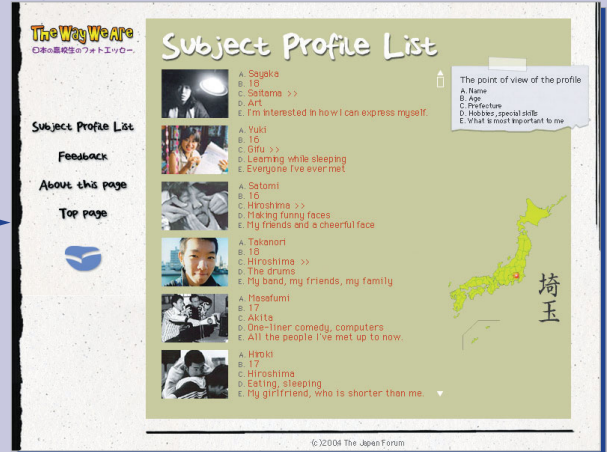
Top Page



When the new web site opens up in a browser, the portraits and names of 10 high school students appear on the top page. To begin with, the page will feature the photographs (50 in all) and essays of 10 students.

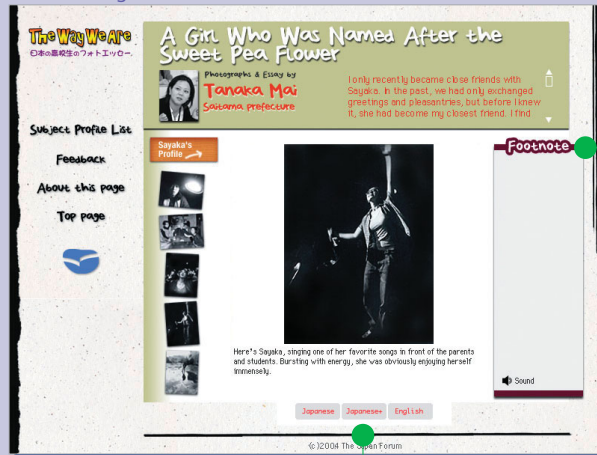
By clicking on one of the portraits on the top page, visitors can access each subject's individual page. These individual pages each feature five photographs with captions, a profile of the subject, and an English translation of a text message by the photographer and the subject from the 2002 contest.

Subject Profile List



TJF plans to periodically expand the content by adding new photographs and essays from among the prize-winning works of past and future contests. A page has also been set up listing all the high school students featured on the site. It is designed to allow visitors to observe each of the students' hobbies, hometowns, treasured items, etc., and use this information to help select the high school student with whom they have a particular affinity from among the many featured on the site.

Individual Page



Where necessary, footnotes and links to explanatory photos and in-depth explanations will be appended to the English translations. For some photos, Web site visitors will also be able to listen to an audio recording. These and other features will make the site an enjoyable venue for high school students overseas who are learning about Japan and the Japanese language to come in contact with that language and the Japanese high school students who speak it.

Two easy-to-understand rewrite versions of the Japanese captions and essays (one with and the other without *yomigana* readings) are provided for language learners. High school language learners overseas can be assigned to read the Japanese while referring to the English text for support.

Now let's take a look at the page about "Yuki-san," one of the subjects at the site.

My Role-model Konishi-senpai



Konishi-senpai sprinkling water on her home vegetable garden. That day, we were playing around so much that we both ended up getting totally soaked.

Going into nap mode, she mumbles, "This stuffed animal feels sooo good!!!"



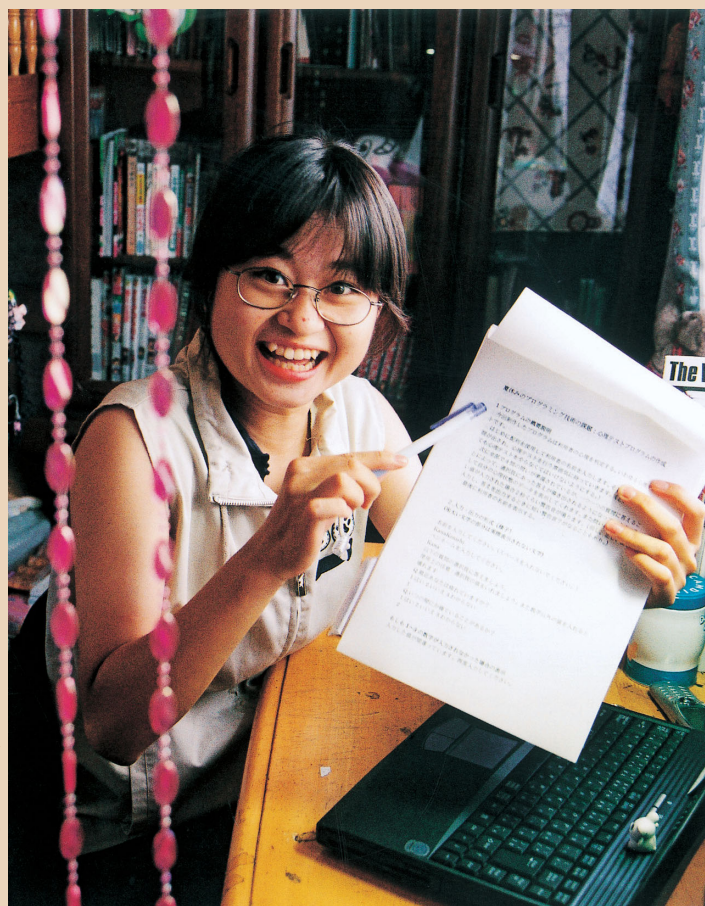
"Look at this! This homework problem is really tough!" she says, holding up her homework for me to see. I was even more stumped by it . . .



Here she watches her younger sister play the electric organ, teaching her and singing along with her. "she's just what a big sister should be," I thought.



Here her father is showing her his factory. she and her sister listen closely as their father explains the equipment he builds himself in his workshop.



The Girl I Look Up To

Photos & Essay by Esaki Yuka, Gifu prefecture



While I was photographing her for this contest, I realized that all of us—my role-model Konishi-senpai* (Yuki), myself, and everyone else—are supported by many different people, and that we all get through life by bolstering one another. Until now, I had been convinced that I was the only one whose effort wasn't rewarded, and that I alone was really trying hard. That made me tend to be resentful of people around me and envious of others. But now I have become aware of the many people who support me from behind the scenes; I know they are there.

That is the way the world today is, I think, with all of us supporting each other in one way or another. But in fact, we're not headed in a very good direction right now, with people hating, attacking, and retaliating against each other. I think it is best just to apply yourself and if there's something you envy, you should try to get closer to it, even a little, yourself. It's also important to cooperate with the endeavors of others. We should make this a world where we can join together in peace to discuss issues and compromise so that all parties can be satisfied. As I gradually think about and come to understand these things better in the future, I want to try my best to be even a little more like Konishi-senpai, the girl I look up to.

Footnote

*senpai: someone who entered the school, university, or place of employment before you did. The term senpai is used to mean seniors in general, but it is also used to refer to individuals with the person's name—usually their surname but sometimes their first name—plus "senpai," as in "Konishi-senpai."

Profile



ゆき (Yuki), age 16

Hobbies, special skills: Learning while sleeping.

Favorite words/phrases: Never give up. (*akiramenai*)

What is most important to me: Everyone I've ever met

What I enjoy most: Doing fun activities in photography club and increasing the number of club members

What kind of person I am: I tend to be a person who just goes ahead and does things without saying much about it, but I often fail. I am also slow to pick myself up again.

Future ambition: To take up a job that involves cultivating people. To get up the nerve to converse normally with the boys in class.

I'm going to be a third-year student next year. I'm a little uneasy, what with the economy in a slump recently and wars going on all over the world. Because I go to a technical school, moreover, I'm one of only two girls in a class of thirty-nine, and I worry about a lot of things, like how I still can't get up the nerve to have a regular conversation with the boys. For someone as shy as me, you'd never believe my dream is to go on to college and become a school teacher. Such a dream seems almost impossible to achieve, but I won't get discouraged. I'll just keep on doing my best, day by day.

Scenes from the diverse lives of students to be found at the site.

With People



When he is with his friends, Tatsuyuki is always cheerful and fun to be with.

📍 Maeji Akihiko



A fisherman who sold Kumiko some squid smiles and chats.

📍 Kikuchi Megumi



When I visit, Nobuhiko's w
out to greet

📍 Inoue K



The living room in Mika's grand
is where the family congregates and sp

📍 Go'o Kumiko

Working

は〜い、
通してください!

Helping out at the restaurant
her father runs, Onaka-san
is a loyal daughter.

📍 Sonoda Tadashi



Nobuhiko works part-time
doing *nengajo* deliveries during
the *O-shogatsu* holidays.

📍 Inoue Keita



high school

In addition to the ten photo essays on the site at its opening in July, we will continue to increase the number of works available, adding more from the prize-winning entries from the first contest in 1997 onward on a regular basis. This issue shows a variety of high school students in Japan, including some to be introduced in later issues. All these entries are already available on the Japanese TWWA Web site at http://www.tjf.or.jp/photocon/pastwork/b_2003.htm.

Enthusiasms



Whole family comes
me.
eita



Yokota-kun won out over several strong opponents
at his last Kendo tournament.

Amemiya Koji



A dance at Nana-chan's
last school culture festival.

Gomi Wakako



Miki-chan photographing in a field of
cosmos with a fisheye lens.

Go'o Kumiko



ちよつとそれ
と取ってちょうだい。

mother's house
ends time together.



"Taji-taji-kun" goes into the studio alone to
practice his drumming for the recording.

Uemoto Ichiko



When wrestling practice
starts, Ikawa-kun
undergoes an abrupt
change and puts on a
serious face.

Matsuo Megumi

だいこん
りっぱな大根でしょ?

At Home

う〜ん、^{むずか}難しいなあ。

Shinobu-chan studying
for the entrance examinations
for nursing school.

Kon Kanako



At night in her room,
Tsutsumi does a nose pack
and paints her toenails.

Kondo Yumiko



Kozue digging daikon radishes.

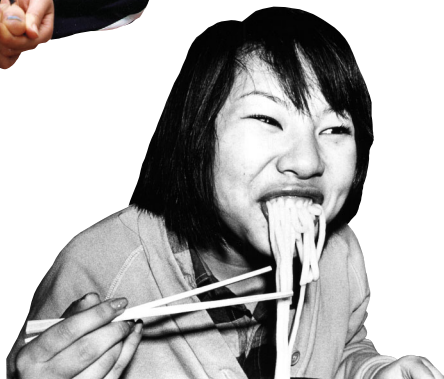
Arai Satoko

Erina working at a
convenience store.

Nakasai Chiya

Michiko was talking about being on a
diet until a minute ago, but as soon as she
has a bowl of *udon*, her favorite noodles,
in front of her, she can't help indulging.

Morita Hitomi



Reveling in his relaxation,
Ikawa-kun reads a manga comic in the bathtub.

Matsuo Megumi