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Feature:

Teaching Language to Children: Its Significance and Methods

As part of programs aimed at Japanese-language education for promotion of intercultural and international understanding, the Japan Forum has held the "Lesson Plan Contest" in alternate years since 1995. In March 1999, the winners in the elementary school and secondary school divisions of the 1997 contest were invited to Japan. With the cooperation of the Nishimachi International School they presented model classes using their prize-winning lesson plans. A seminar was also held, attended by 100 persons engaged in Japanese-language education, educators broadly involved with foreign-language study and teaching for cultural and international understanding, government administrators, and researchers. The presentations and discussion sought to reexamine the question of what it means to teach language to children, whatever the language and whatever the status of the person involved, as well as the methods by which it is taught.

Classes incorporate discussion with various illustration aids.

Personal Experience as a Teaching Resource

Hu Xing-zhi
Lecturer, the Institute of Japanese-Chinese Studies, former teacher, Kanto International Senior High School

Hu Xing-zhi
B.A. Tokyo University of Foreign Studies. M.A. (Lifelong Education) Tokyo Gakugei University. From 1988 to 1997 he taught Chinese at Kanto International Senior High School and was involved in development of Chinese language textbooks for the senior high school level.

At the senior high school level, foreign-language education consists of three endeavors: enhancing awareness of cultural differences, deepening appreciation of the language and culture of one 's own country, and cultivating receptivity to different languages and cultures. In pursuing these goals, I have found it helpful to draw on my own personal experience in illustrating situations and helping students expand their understanding.

Enhancing Awareness of Cultural Differences

In teaching Chinese in Japan I make it a rule to assure that students are aware of the differences between the two countries. Just because both use kanji to write with does not mean that they share the same culture. For example, intuitive, nonverbal communication and empathy with others, as expressed by the words *ishin denshin*, may be greatly admired in Japan, but in China straightforward, verbal communication is more highly prized. By explaining to my students the nature of these different ideas and behavioral patterns, I believe I can help students expand their own horizons and see the options from which they can learn about life. I encourage them to become more aware of cultural and language diversity by being sensitive, in the good sense, to their feelings of strangeness and resistance to cultural differences.

I also try to avoid making sweeping statements about "China" or "the Chinese." China is a vast country of great diversity and I believe it is dangerous to try to generalize too broadly.

Deepening Appreciation of Own Language and Culture

After returning from a short-term study program in China, one of my students once remarked how frustrated he became when he could not answer the questions people put to him about Japanese culture. As he discovered the hard way, learning about another culture is also a process of coming to reflect more closely on our own culture and language. It is just as important to be able to explain your own culture to others as it is to understand and accept other cultures.

As students advance in their language learning they will be expected to express themselves. I meet many high school students in Japan today who do not have much confidence in themselves; some even lack the fundamental pride in being Japanese. In order to gain confidence in themselves and pride in their identity, they need to think about what they are. If they do not know themselves or have a measure of self-confidence, in the good sense, their attitudes toward other cultures may get out of proportion, giving them either an inferiority complex or filling them with a dangerous sense of superiority.

Cultivating Receptivity to Other Languages and Cultures

It is my hope that when my students study Chinese and Chinese ways of thinking they will cultivate in themselves a receptivity to the world's diversity by relating it to themselves and their own language and culture.

In teaching the Chinese language, it is not my intention to try to inculcate my students in the ways of thinking and behavioral patterns of Chinese. I hesitate to tell them what I consider "common sense" or "good manners." I make no attempt to foist Chinese culture on my students, presenting them instead with stories of my own cultural missteps and other experiences. I tell them, for example, of the time I took a present of chrysanthemums to a friend's house. I didn't know that in Japan, unlike in China, chrysanthemums are mainly associated with flowers for the *butsudan* altar in homes or as offering at the graves of the dead. I present such situations to my students and ask them what they think and how they would respond. While enjoying the

process of solving such cultural riddles, they can develop an interest in the ideas and traditions that lie behind language and culture and study the behavior and customs that express them. In the process, I hope they will acquire the capacity to understand such differences and accept them for what they are.

This approach has earned me the nickname "*nazo*-Chu," or " the mysterious Chinese." I'm quite content with this nickname and am looking forward to continuing the pleasures of solving more riddles along with my students.

*The Japan Forum is presently engaged in programs to promote the teaching of Chinese and Korean in Japanese high schools. Details on the status and challenges of these programs will be discussed in a feature published in *Kokusai Bunka Fōramu Tsūshin* (TJF's Japanese-language newsletter), No. 45.

What It Means to Teach Language

Yoshida Kensaku
Professor, Sophia University

Teaching language is much more than giving instruction in simple, superficial linguistic elements and forms. No matter how well you understand grammar, how excellent your pronunciation, or how large your vocabulary, those skills mean nothing if you cannot use them to communicate with people or for your own spiritual or intellectual growth.

Ms. Kambe's explanation of her theme-based syllabus is an excellent example showing that language is not an end itself, but a means for learning about something. Mr. Hu, for his part, teaches language through very specific examples and situations in order to help each individual student learn about the diversity of culture and humanity. Ms. Kashimura spoke about the importance of using teaching materials that deeply affect students, of impressing them with the importance of cultivating their skills of self-expression, and of viewing communication as the occasion of learning, bringing the students into contact with all kinds of people and with other worlds outside the classroom. Her approach demonstrates cogently that teaching language must be education in "humanity" that far transcends the teaching of language per se.

Language is one of the most important tools upon which human beings rely for their survival. Of course, you can live without being able to speak; communication can be achieved through gestures, posture, facial expression, attire and other non-verbal forms of communication. But without words and their structures there are many things that cannot otherwise be understood or transmitted accurately. The reason language is important is not because of some intrinsic value in words and forms themselves, but is because it is linked to the creation of meaning and communication with others. We treasure language because of the role it plays as the most basic tool of human affairs in transmitting feelings, meaning, and intentions.

Language education is the teaching of communication. It is the way we awaken awareness in students to the tremendous diversity and splendor of our world. It is the pathway for cultivating recognition of universality, the understanding, in other words, that amid all the diversity, in the final analysis human beings all over the world are basically the same.

One of my colleagues, Professor Donald Doyle, often reminds his students that they should approach something they don't know with a skeptical "Ha?" Then, when their understanding is clear, they will say, "Aha!" expressing their intellectual comprehension. But that alone, he says, is not enough. Even if they achieve such intellectual understanding of something, it is not enough unless they can feel a sense of wonder that elicits an "Ah!!" A teacher's aim must be to get students to understand with their hearts that which they have already grasped with their brains.

Yoshida Kensaku
Professor, Faculty of Foreign Studies, Sophia University. M.A. Sophia University, Ph.D. University of Michigan. His specialty is applied linguistics. He is a leader in the fields of English teaching methodology, bilingualism, and education for intercultural communication.

Foreign-language Classes for Encounter and Empowerment

Kashimura Mineko
Teacher (English), Edogawa Ward Third Komatsugawa Junior High School

Kashimura Mineko
B.A. Faculty of Foreign Studies, Sophia University. She has been engaged in teaching and research on international exchange and education for international understanding since 1990. For her classes she uses teaching materials she originally developed in the fields of human rights, environment, cultural understanding, and development. She is a member of *Shin-Eiken* (New English Teachers' Association) and editor of the monthly *Shin Eigo Kyōiku* ("New English Classroom.")

The teaching of culture brings all sorts of encounters. "Cultural understanding" begins, I believe, with recognizing that there are cultural differences even between yourself and the student who sits next to you in class. It is crucial to face those differences patiently and grapple with them honestly.

The Meaning and Challenge of Secondary School Education: Re-thinking the Significance of One's Life

When we speak of foreign-language education there is a tendency for the foreign-language part to be relatively emphasized, when of course the work of teaching other languages is simply added to the fundamental task of education in the broader sense. In order to help young people live and grow today, I believe that secondary school education should help them understand and appreciate their reason for living, feel their connection with the world as a whole, as well as give them the desire to relate to other people and the courage to deal with its rigors. Students who reach secondary school age are at a stage of life when they are becoming very self-conscious of themselves; they are not interested in anything that does not resonate with their own pursuit of such questions as "Why was I born into this world?" or "What am I going to do from now on?"

My daily challenge is to construct classes for my students that will encourage them to build links and connections with others through learning that will help enhance students' self esteem and give them greater confidence in themselves.

Making Foreign-language Education Real: Activating Mind and Body

So how can we attain this objective in the course of foreign-language teaching? Let us ask ourselves how best this can be achieved given the nature of the subject itself. Here are four points to be kept in mind: First is encounter with teaching materials that make students think and reflect. I choose themes that are both global and local in significance—whether it be the problem of street children in Brazil or the issue of trash disposal in our own community—and get the students to think about them as immediately relevant to themselves.

Second is to have students learn to talk about themselves. For example, the final class for the third year junior high school students is devoted to speeches by each student on the theme of "My Dream." There are some students who think they don't have any dreams, but often they realize this for the first time with this assignment and it is just as meaningful to get them to think about why they don't have a dream as well.

A third point is to give students the experience of learning through relationships with others. I think that cooperative learning is very important. The new Ministry of Education Guidelines for the Course of Study for school curriculums emphasize "practical communication" and I believe it can be said that learning to communicate is also learning to get along with and relate to others.

A fourth point is to go out of the classroom and establish communication with and links with people in the real world around us. Learning English helps us establish this kind of interchange and sense of the real world. I try to give students the experience of being connected with other people through a foreign language by holding various international exchange events in the classroom or by exchanging messages with the world outside the classroom.

I myself try to be conscious of being active, both physically and mentally, making use of the principles and methods of global education and peace education as I work to achieve "foreign-language teaching that brings to students human encounter and self empowerment." In the actual plannning and conduct of such lessons, I keep following three principles in mind:

1. Development of Original Thematic Teaching Materials

Broadening and deepening classroom learning activities by linking global and local issues such as human rights, environment, development, and community studies to each unit of the class textbook using supplemental materials.

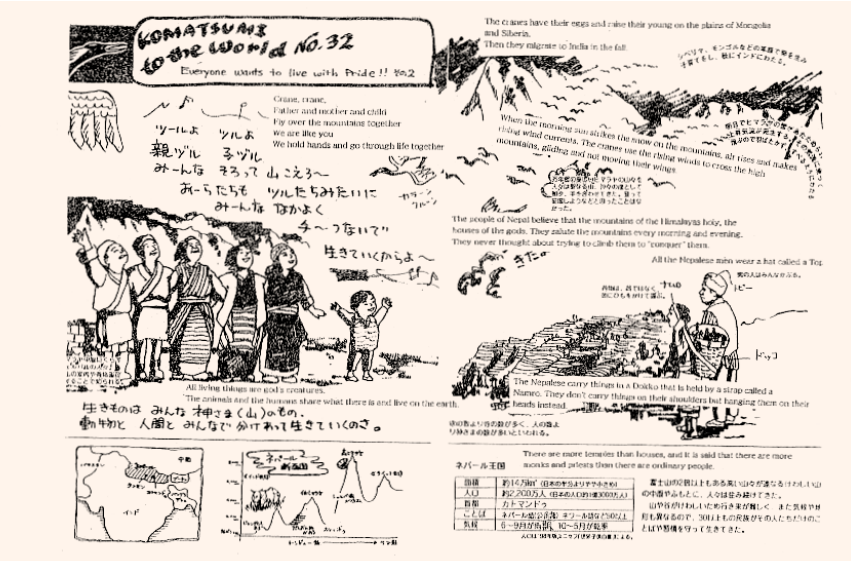
2. Classes Activating both Mind and Body

Encouraging participatory learning in which students engage both their brains and their bodies, activating all five of their senses, and learn to relate to one another.

3. Integration of Unit Theme and Language Components

Giving students a firm grasp of grammatical rules and basic vocabulary incorporated into lessons shaped by thematic learning.

Original Teaching Resources



The junior-high school English textbook, Sunshine Book 3, includes the story of a doctor named Kawahara who founded the Asia Health Institute (AHI) in Nepal. After reading the material in the textbook, however, students are often left only with the impression of the hard and difficult conditions of life in Nepal. They do not have enough information to achieve a balanced understanding of the nature of international cooperation programs. To supplement the textbook, Ms. Kashimura therefore developed original reading materials and worksheets using the AHI *Newsletter*. Incorporating text and illustrations that show the warmth and sentiments of the people who live in the beautiful landscape of the mountains of Nepal, she draws attention to what can be learned from the way people live. Her aim is to create an opportunity for learning in which students will not simply feel pity for the hardship and poverty of the Nepalese and assume their only link with such people is by contributing to a charity or aid fund, but will be empowered by learning that makes them feel the links between their own lives and those of other people living far away.

The children are busy with books.

Language for Enrichment of Life

Kambe Yoshimi
Teacher (Japanese and Social Studies), Katoh Gakuen Gyoshu Elementary School

Kambe Yoshimi
B.A. Faculty of Education, Yokohama National University. She has been involved with the English immersion program at Katoh Gakuen since its inception in 1992 and in charge of Japanese language courses for the students in the immersion program.

In the English immersion program at our school, the elements of English (e.g., sentence structure, vocabulary, etc.) are not taught in a bare-bones theoretical fashion, but presented through skillful and natural integration into specific settings and contents through thematic learning.

Thematic Study

Let me give an example showing how we approach a theme such as, for example, "animals":

Study animals to see whether they are herbivores or carnivores (science)
↓
Visit the zoo and see the animals firsthand
↓
Sketch the animals and write explanations of the pictures (crafts and English) / Sing songs on animal themes (music) / Listen to, read, tell, write, and perform stories about animals (English) / Act out the characteristics of animals (athletics)

An immersion program class in session.

The students are naturally aware that they are studying English, but even more than that they think of themselves as learning about the animals. Thematic study, in which study of the language and study of the subject matter at hand go hand in hand, makes it easy for students to grasp the material and enables them not only to understand the content but acquire a natural use of language. There are limitations of time and in other respects, but we should be aware of what students are learning in their other subjects and adjust what they are doing so that it relates as much as possible to other subjects. We believe this will make it possible to learn language naturally as it is manifested in the content of what they are learning.

Integration of Speaking, Listening, Reading, and Writing

Language learning comes even more naturally and easily when students study reading and writing, not separately, but together, reading in order to write, writing after reading, etc. By, for example, drawing a picture of an elephant and writing an explanation of the picture below it, then reading the explanation to the teacher and classmates, the child advances in writing, reading and speaking ability. For something that one has written oneself, reading it out loud has meaning because it supports the impulse to share it with others. If this sharing is done among friends and classmates it also provides listening practice.

In this way, rather than teaching language as a nebulous conglomeration of grammatical rules and vocabulary, it becomes the teacher's challenge to show how skillfully he or she can incorporate the material to be taught into the content of the lessons. Toward that end, a teacher always has to have his or her antennae out, striving to cultivate the ability and ingenuity for turning ordinary things into teaching resources and devising ways to weave them into the curriculum. Certainly this

The classrooms at the Katoh Gakuen Gyoshu Elementary School are decorated with the colorful and creative artworks of the students.

approach can be adopted regardless of whether we are teaching a foreign language, the Japanese language to native speakers, or Japanese to non-native speakers.

Helping Students Toward Richer Lives

In the course of their Japanese classes my goal for Japanese native-speaking students is for them to find their lives enriched through the study of language. I want them to learn the joy of finding a book they like and staying up all night to read it to the end, the satisfaction of looking up facts they do not know and learning how to summarize and digest them, the surprise of discovering new things by talking to others, and the fulfillment of getting others to listen to what you say and understand you better. And through these endeavors, I hope that their lives will grow broader and richer. By studying not only their own language but other languages they will discover how much larger their world can become.

Immersion Program

This is a second-language learning program begun in Quebec in 1965. Students study their regular school subjects in the second language.

Immersion is divided into early, middle, and late immersion depending on when it is introduced. Immersion is either total or partial depending on how much the second language is used in school subjects.

The English Immersion Program at Katoh Gakuen

Introduced in 1992, it parallels the regular curriculum taught in Japanese. The first class of students enrolled in the immersion program are now second-year junior high school students. As they advance, the school will establish immersion-program classes at the senior high school level as well. Immersion-program classes in the lower elementary grades, excluding Japanese language classes, are taught in English, but the content follows Ministry of Education curriculum guidelines.

Immersion-program teachers are all native-speakers of English. The condition for participation in the immersion classes is sufficient Japanese-language ability to understand textbooks written in Japanese in their grade. Ninety percent of the students in immersion classes are native speakers of Japanese, both of whose parents are Japanese.

Katoh Gakuen Web site:
http://www.katoh-net.ac.jp/

Seminar:
"Teaching Language to Children: Its Significance and Methods for Foreign-language Education Aimed at Cultural Understanding" with the winners of the Second TJF Lesson Plan Contest

Date: March 16, 1999, 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.
Place: Nishimachi International School, Tokyo
Sponsored by: The Japan Forum, Nishimachi International School
With support from: ANA
Participants: Approx. 100 persons involved with Japanese and foreign-language education and education for cultural and international understanding and members of the media.

Morning Session: Model teaching / Q & A

9:00-9:45 a.m.	Model teaching by the contest winner in the elementary school division Lesson title: "Mixed Pizza" by Sagae Satoko, Japanese language teacher, Thurgood Marshall Elementary School, Florida, U.S.A.
9:45-10:15 a.m.	Q & A
10:30-11:15 a.m.	Model teaching by the contest winner in the secondary school division Lesson title: "Do You Keep Pets?: Tamagotchi" by Janina Carlon, Japanese language teacher, Armidale High School, New South Wales, Australia
11: 15-11:45 a.m.	Q & A

Afternoon Session: Panel Discussion
"Teaching Language to Children: Significance and Methods for Foreign-language Education Aimed at Cultural Understanding"
Chairperson: Yoshida Kensaku
Panelists: Hu Xing-zhi, Kashimura Mineko, Kambe Yoshimi

1:30-2:00 p.m.	Comments by the panelists
2:00-3:15 p.m.	Discussion I (seminar meeting)
3:30-4:30 p.m.	Discussion II (section [subgroup] meetings)

The Way We Are

Club Activities at Japanese High Schools

:Photographer

Volleyball

Taking a break during volleyball club practice, Mikiko chats with a friend. She loves physical exercise, but also enjoys such domestic arts as knitting. "I'm knitting a scarf," she tells her friend, "Is that so?" is the response, "A present for somebody special, perhaps?"

Toyono Fumiko, Hokkaido

Tennis

Yuka has been playing tennis since junior high school. She's known for her "cut-serve." Yuka always seems happy when she's playing tennis. "Ready? Here it comes!" she shouts.

Morita Hitomi, Hiroshima prefecture

Cheerleading

Chiharu is not just an ordinary girl cheerleader, but performs a role usually played by the boys on the cheerleading squad. Here you can see her cheering a baseball game with as much gusto as any of the guys. "Go! Go! Sato!" she calls out the batter's name.

Okumura Aya, Ibaraki prefecture

Pop Music

Fine Arts

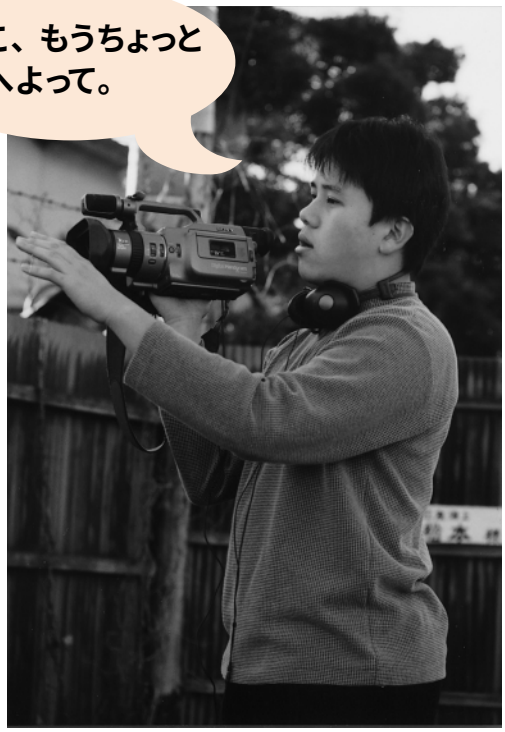
Yuka wants to go on to college in the fine arts. Holding a brush, she becomes the image of the serious artist. After seeing the movie "Titanic," she spent two months painting a picture of the Titanic. "There," she elates, "That's the color I want!"

Fujii Tamami, Hyōgo prefecture

Kyūdō (Japanese archery)

Yaeko is a member of the Japanese archery club and practices every day until dark. Sometimes she complains that the training is hard, but as soon as classes are out she's always raring to go at it.
"The crucial thing is concentration," she tell us.

Shin Nahoko, Fukuoka prefecture



Broadcasting

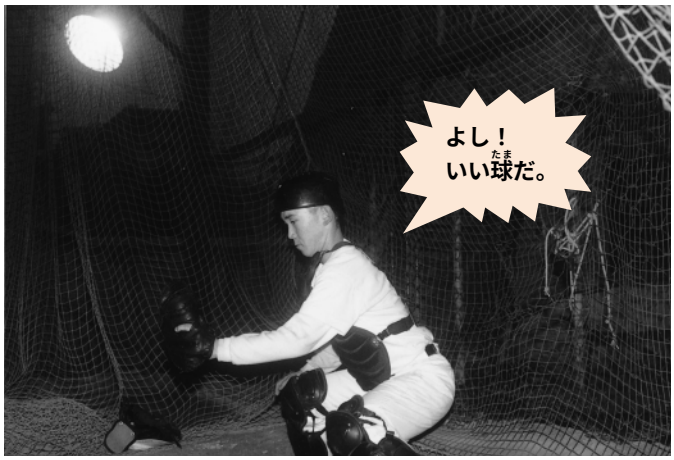
Shōtarō is shooting video as part of his activities in the broadcasteing club. He plans what to film, does the shooting, and edits and produces the film himself. His dream is to work in top-level international filmmaking some day. "Hey, you!" he calls, "Move just a bit to the right, will you?"

Katō Akira, Gifu prefecture

Practicing guitar in the music room at school, Hiroki is preparing for performances for the school festival. He not only plays but composes songs and music himself. "Hmm," he muses over a tune he's written, "how does this sound?"

Yamashita Hanae, Tokyo

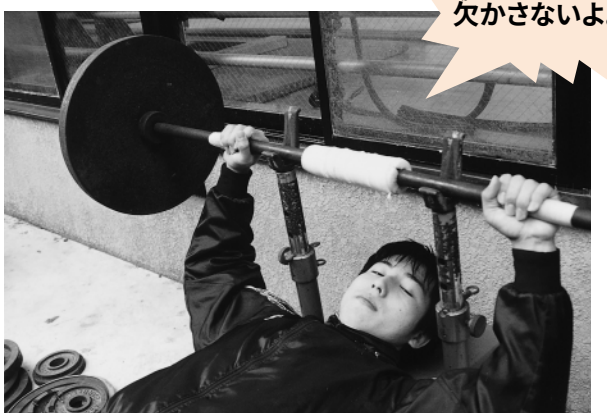
Baseball



Daisuke is the catcher for the baseball team. Today, too, he's at practice from the time classes are over until late in the evening. Daisuke takes loving care of his equipment. "Yosh'!" you can hear him cry, "Good ball!"

Okano Mari, Hiroshima prefecture

Judo



Masayuki is second to none in his devotion to training and the captain of the judo club. Changing into his gear and entering the dojo, his expression stiffens. "I never skip training," he says seriously.

Kimura Tomoki, Hyōgo prefecture

Track

Preparing to run in a long-distance relay race, Mariko has early morning practice everyday now. She wants to continue running in competitions even after graduating from high school and hopes to keep involved with track and field by becoming a physical therapist. "Gotta keep at it!" she mutters, "The big race isn't far off."

Itō Eriko, Gifu prefecture

A Day in the Life

旬の食べもの
Shun no tabemono
Seasonal Foods

Minori no aki, shokuyoku no aki
Autumn: Season of harvest, season of hearty appetites

秋

From around the middle of September, the humid, sweltering heat of summer abates throughout most of Japan, morning and evening temperatures begin to fall, and the drier, cooler weather of autumn sets in.

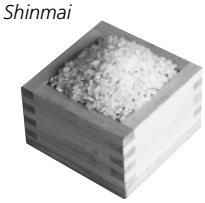
The favorite phrase for autumn, the season of harvest, is "minori no aki," and indeed, it is the season tables are laden with a wide variety of delicious things to eat, when the rice matures and is harvested, fruit ripens, and fish taste their best. Autumn, the season of harvest that yields the rich variety of nature's abundance, is indeed the *shokuyoku no aki*, a season of hearty appetites. For this installment of "A Day in the Life," therefore, we look at foods people enjoy most during this season. The following are those that Japanese traditionally associate most closely with fall.

Photo: Kodansha PEC (2, 3, 11, 13, 19), Kodansha Publishers (4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 14, 16, 17, 18)

新米 (*Shinmai*: New Rice)

Rice is the staple of the Japanese diet. Between September and October, the rice ripens, and soon the freshly harvested grain is available on the market as *shinmai*. When cooked, new rice is soft and glistening as well as faintly sweet, and people look forward to its appearance on the market each autumn. Appetites increase when the rice that forms the centerpiece of the meal tastes better. Specially marked "shinmai," a 10-kilogram bag costs about 5,000 yen.

1. *Shinmai*



2. An autumn meal

きのこ (*Kinoko*: Mushrooms)

Mushrooms are another feature of autumnal eating. Filled with nutrients drawn from the forest floor, mushrooms are rich in flavor and aroma. Among them the *matsutake* mushroom is king. *Matsutake* gathered in groves of *akamatsu* or red pine in Japan are considered the finest in flavor and fragrance and command such a high price that most people can only afford to eat them once a year, if at all. The subtle flavor of this delicacy is often enjoyed by cooking a single *matsutake*, sliced into small pieces, with rice (*matsutake gohan*). *Shimeji* and other varieties of mushrooms freshly gathered in the wild or in nurserys are enjoyed in various preparations: boiling in soups, frying with other vegetables, or roasting. A roasted mushroom flavored with a few drops of *yuzu* (citron) or *kabosu* lime is a particularly savory treat.

Enjoying the foods of the four seasons: A sense for *shun*

Autumn is a time when good food is in especially abundant supply, but in each of the other seasons, too, particular fruit, fish, or vegetables are at their best. Because of the frequent and regular changes of the Japanese seasons, it has been traditional since ancient times to follow the local bounty of nature's annual cycle in eating. By serving each food as it comes in season, people savored the palpable sense of the changing seasons.

What is *shun* (旬)?

The period during which each type of produce is at its height is called its *shun*. The foods in season in spring in Japan are strawberries, bamboo shoots, and *asari* (short-necked clam) amog other shellfish; for summer, watermelon, peaches, tomatoes, Japanese cucumbers, and sweet corn; those for autumn described above, and for winter, spinach, *daikon* giant radish, *negi* (Japanese leeks), *mikan* tangerines, as well as cod and yellowtail, among other fish.

In recent years there have been great advances in greenhouse farming technology, preservation of foods by refrigeration and freezing, and development of distribution networks and better, faster transportation. This means that most vegetables and fruit are generally available in supermarkets all year round. Frozen fish and other seafood products, including those caught in faraway seas, are available in quite ample amounts throughout the year. All this advanced technology, however, cannot maintain the optimal nutrition and subtle flavors of foods eaten fresh and in season. Orchard-grown fruit and vegetables from the fields is much less expensive to produce than that cultivated in greenhouses and prices are cheaper because they come on the market in large quantities. They are also low-energy consuming, considering the extra costs that go into transportation and maintenance of hothouse-grown produce.

Seasonal foods are closely linked, moreover, with particular events of Japan's traditional calendar as well as with favorite pastimes and pleasures, enlivening the rhythms of daily life. Throughout the ages, seasonal foods of the four seasons have been the inspiration for poetry, a rich and gentle subject for the reflection of human sensibilities. Japanese culture has continually been enriched by the foods naturally available from its forests, fields, and seas, skillfully prepared, and tastefully served as part of ordinary daily life.

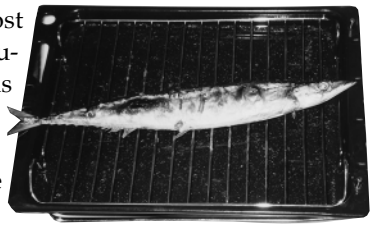
野菜 (*Yasai*: Vegetables)

Absorbing the nutrients of the earth throughout the summer, vegetables—*satsuma-imo* (sweet potato), *sato-imo* (taro potatoes), carrots—also arrive at harvest time in autumn. One of the regular excursions of the kindergarten, day care center, and elementary school year is the *satsuma-imo* dig when the children go themselves to unearth sweet potatoes grown in nearby fields.

5. *Satsuma-imo* dig

魚 (*Sakana*: Fish)

The variety of fish most closely associated with autumn is *sanma* (saury). This long, slender fish is shaped like a short sword, the characters used to write the name 秋刀魚 (lit., "autumn sword fish") are read irregularly for *sanma*. Between October and November, *sanma* put on fat, the amount rising from 8 to 20 percent, increasing its attractions to diners. *Sanma* is usually eaten salt-grilled and eaten with grated *daikon* and *shoyu* as condiments.



6. *Sanma* on the grill

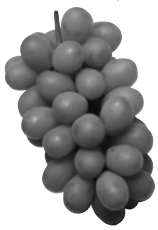
3. *Matsutake*

4. *Shimeji*

くだもの (*Kudamono*: Fruit)

Autumn is the season of plentiful harvest of fruit: grapes, *nashi* pears, chestnuts, persimmons, and more. The sight of these colorful fruits at the grocer's display and their sweet fragrances is irresistible. Many people take this season to go to orchards and vineyards to enjoy the pleasures of picking fruits themselves to carry home and share with their friends. Persimmon trees grow in many people's gardens where the fruit turns bright orange in the fall, making persimmons one of the most familiar of fruits to Japanese.

7. *Budō*:Grapes



8. *Nashi*: Crispier and juicier than a Western pear

9. *Kuri gohan*: Rice cooked with chestnuts

10. *Kaki*: Japanese persimmons are sweet and crispy and ripen before frost.

11. *Ichigo*: Strawberries

13. *Wakatake-ni*: Boiled *wakame* kelp and bamboo shoots

12. *Takenoko*: Bamboo shoots

春 (Spring)

夏 (Summer)

14. *Suika*: Watermelon

15. *Kyūri*: Japanese cucumbers

16. *Hōrensō*: Spinach

17. *Daikon*: Contains abundant diastase, an aid to digestion

18. *Mikan* : Rich in vitamin C

19. *Nabe*: Hot pot combining fish and vegetables in season warms you to the core

冬 (Winter)

Amazing Workings of Nature

Produce in season not only tastes its best but offers optimal nutritional value. Vegetables and fruit, for example, contain plentiful vitamins and minerals. Spinach is a good example. Spinach is a winter vegetable that grows best in cold weather. A comparison of spinach grown by artificial means in the summertime with that grown naturally in the fields in winter shows that the latter is twice as high in vitamin content. The season for fish is just before spawing season when their flesh is rich in fat and protein. *Shun* refers to the season when the life force of plants and fish is at its height. With cell division occurring at a rapid pace, the enzymes in their tissue are at their most active. This means that such foods in season are filled with a high enzyme content that helps to strengthen and invigorate human health as well.

Foods in season, in fact, are a symbol of the marvelous mechanisms in nature that link nutritional balance to the miracle of life. For example, in winter, when the light of the sun is dimmer, spinach efficiently absorbs the sun's energy and stores it in its leaves. During this season, the leaves grow thick and dark green in color, and their flavor and sweetness increases. With weak sunlight, meanwhile, the human body requires more vitamin. Spinach, therefore, is a perfect food to provide the needed vitamins and nutrients human beings need during the short days of winter.

Then there is the watermelon, which flourishes in the most intense heat of summer in dry, uncultivated earth, harboring moisture within its thick, hard skin. The watermelon is 91 percent water and high in sugar content. Again, it is an admirable source of precisely the liquid and nutrients human beings need in the heat of summer.

We are surrounded by this sort of natural bounty, which yields to us from season to season the vital energies of the natural world in its intricately linked mechanisms. Certainly it is important to think how we can best live in harmony with these mechanisms. Should we not try to be aware of and appreciate how closely we are linked to other living things, rather than constantly trying to control and conquer the powers of nature?

What are the best-tasting foods of the place where you live? Are there seasonal foods around you as well? What kind of nourishment do they contain? How are they prepared? How are they related to the natural environment and climate of your locale? We hope you will take a moment to think about the links between human beings and nature as they relate to food.

ACTIVITY

(1) Read the following names in hiragana and work out what fruit or vegetable each name indicates. Draw a picture of each food.

a. ぶどう
b. くり
c. なし
d. さつまいも
e. すいか
f. いちご
g. みかん
h. たけのこ
i. ほうれんそう
j. だいこん
k. きゅうり

(2) What does *Shun* (旬) mean?

(3) During which of the four seasons does each of the foods listed adove taste best in Japan?

・はる
・なつ
・あき
・ふゆ

(4) What kinds of vegetables and fruit are grown in the area where you live. Write them in the chart below.

	[1]	[2]	[3]
たべもののなまえ (Name of food)			
どのきせつにたべますか (Which season is it eaten?)			
どんなあじですか (How does it taste?)			
どうやってたべますか (How is it prepared?)			

(5) What kind of nutrition do the foods listed in (4) above provide to the human diet? Think about the connection between the natural environment and climate and the way you live.

Translation Pathfinders: A Creative Profession

Translators are needed more than ever today, and students of language and devotees of Japanese culture often ask: What are the qualities that make a good translator? What do I need to do to become one? What qualifications or credentials do I need to acquire? Can I make a living? What kind of work is there? How do you get work? The answers to these questions would fill a book, but here are some suggestions from a translator who specializes in non-fiction, non-technical, general texts translated from Japanese to English.

Lynne E. Riggs *(Translator, Center for Intercultural Communication)*

So far, translation is not even recognized as a profession. Some universities are beginning to offer courses in translation and advanced degrees, but the vast majority of working translators haven't earned or needed such qualifications to be successful. The best translators have solid academic credentials or are extraordinary self-learners, training with experienced senior translators, and a great deal of on-the-job experience.

What are the qualities that make a good translator?

Professional translation is work with texts and language, not so much with people, so it tends to be solitary work. Some think that anyone can translate if they but know two languages. To be a professional you need much more. You have to love language and writing and be well-versed in both. Usually a translator works from a foreign language into his or her own, so writing skill in the recipient language is a basic requirement. Translating non-fiction texts takes one into a wide variety of subjects, so it helps to have broad interests and a flexible mind. You have to have respect for the Japanese language and the conviction that meaning can be transferred from one language to another.

A strong mastery of Japanese is a given, but knowing a lot about Japan is the prerequisite for reading between the lines, understanding context, and deciphering ambiguity. Many J-E translators start out with speaking fluency and three or four years of Japanese-language courses for a solid grounding syntax and grammar. An extended sojourn living in Japan is crucial. Experience takes you from there. Relying on dictionaries and a library of reference works in your field, experienced colleagues, the Internet, friends, relatives, and contacts in your daily life, you build the tools of your trade around you as you go.

Humility, tolerance, stick-to-it-iveness, and patience with detail are also useful attributes.

Can I make a living?

A quite good one, if you pick a field in which you have some previous training or special interest, cultivate a steady clientele, and approach your work professionally (i.e., make your time available, charge what your work is worth, perform conscientiously, and take responsibility for the product). Most successful translators work freelance, but many do so after working in some kind of translation or editorial office or with experienced senior translators in their early careers.

A freelancer has to manage his or her own time, take care of accounts, deal with clients, and keep on top of the technical tools of the trade (computers, software, databases, etc.). At first it is hard to work fast enough to earn a satisfactory wage, but this gradually improves.

Many translators work in or with small enterprises for professional support and as a buffer against income irregularities. These offices offer a good environment for teamwork between foreign and Japanese translators and between editors and translators. Work for large agencies is an alternative, but can be frustrating, both for lack of cooperation and feedback and when deadlines are tight and pay is low or irregular.

It is hard to give any figures on how much J-E translators earn and what their output per day might be. A translator working in an ad agency could conceivably receive as much for one line (40 characters) of text as another working on a scholarly text would get for 1000 characters' worth. A line from a consumer marketing report and a line from a thesis by intellectual historian Maruyama Masao take different amounts of time to finish. A successful corporation will willingly pay twice as much for the 800 characters of their "message from the president" as a poor archaeologist can afford for as much of his study of artifacts of the Jōmon period.

A translator with the discipline to maintain an average daily output can do quite well. One constant challenge is to maintain a flow of work, but not too much. This flood or famine situation can be controlled to a certain extent by cultivating a circle of professional friendships through which to pass on overflow or absorb the overflow of others. The irregularity of a translator's income is another occupational hazard.

What kind of work is there?

The word "translation" evokes for most people either literature or computer manuals. Literature makes the biggest splash when a novel sells and becomes the talk of the critics, but it's hard to make a living on royalties. Most literature translators have a permanent job, such as in teaching, or do technical or other translation on the side. With technical manuals, you can make a good living, but there is no splash, and you may long for a way to work more creatively with words. For those with a technical background and an interest in Japan, however, translation can be a good marriage of skills.

In between these two extremes, there is a vast market for translation in non-fiction writing: scholarly papers, research reports, Japanese government publications, journalism, cultural exchange, art or craft catalogs, film or narration scripts, language teaching or educational resources, corporate brochures, symposium reports, and the list goes on. These are fields through which a translator with a liberal arts background, a solid knowledge of Japan, and an open mind can roam as a professional. It's a wonderful way to indulge a hunger for knowledge and diverse interests while being useful and earning a living.

Non-fiction translation is one of the fields in which there is an urgent need for dedicated professionals, but it demands a whole set of skills that many freelance translators find daunting. Works of literature or fiction, not to mention technical manuals are translated relatively straightforwardly, without rearranging or amplifying the text. In non-fiction work, expository writing rules are different in Japanese and English and things may need to be explained to a non-Japanese readership that could be abbreviated in the original. In this type of work, therefore, the translator is required to be an editor and creative writer as well. In the next article in this series, we'll look at the complexities of non-fiction translation.

TJF News

Review

From June
to August 1999

Workshop on Photographic Resources Held in Australia and New Zealand

In June, with the cooperation of the Japan Foundation Sydney Language Centre and the Association of Colleges of Education in New Zealand, TJF held workshops in Sydney and Wellington on the photographic resources it has developed for Japanese-language teachers in elementary, middle, and high schools. Approximately 15 teachers participated in each of the two workshops, held at the Japan Foundation Sydney Language Centre and the Japan Information and Culture Center in New Zealand, respectively. Both workshops were the scene of lively discussion.

The workshops began by introducing sheets of photographs selected from the entries submitted to the Daily Lives of Japanese High School Students Photography Contest sponsored by TJF, and "A Day with Kentarō" photographs presenting a day in the life of a third grader in a Japanese elementary school (A3-size color photographs with explanatory materials). The participating teachers were then invited to discuss ways the photographs could be used in Japanese-language classes. The response to the materials was unexpectedly positive and many ideas were presented. They reconfirmed our belief that such photographs of the daily lives—the way they are—of students of the same age and grade level in Japan as Japanese-language students overseas need to be incorporated into the curriculums of both New Zealand and Australia. The participants also renewed our confidence in the potential of the photographs as resources for Japanese-language teaching.

There are a large number of students in elementary, middle, and high schools in both countries who take Japanese, and Japanese occupies an important place in foreign-language education there. It is clear that Japanese-language education has put down strong roots in part because it is a foreign language students are strongly motivated to learn in the context of close ties with Japan. At the same time, Japanese-language education is also seen as instrumental from the point of view of education for cultural understanding. The teachers participating in this workshop showed that they were seeking not only to teach their students Japanese language but also to cultivate their thinking powers and widen their perspectives through study and encounter with Japanese society, thereby helping them grow as human beings. We felt that the photographs of everyday lives of high school students could contribute to this effort to cultivate understanding prior to actual

TJF Home Page What's New?

Download TJF Publications in PDF Format

Publications available in PDF format can be displayed on your computer in their original page layout by using the freeware Adobe Acrobat Reader 4.0. In this format you can peruse the content and print out desired pages as well as quote them in your teaching worksheets by copying and pasting text. Those who do not have Japanese language fonts in their computers can obtain the capacity to display on the screen and print out Japanese by installing Asian Font Package, available for downloading on the Adobe website.

Now available on the TJF website are Nos. 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14 of *The Japan Forum Newsletter* (English), at <http://www.tjf.or.jp/eng/ae/ae04nletter.htm> and Nos. 42, and 43 of *Kokusai Bunka Fōramu Tsūshin* (Japanese) <http://www.tjf.or.jp/jp/aj/aj04tsush.htm> in PDF format.

Also available for downloading in PDF format are all thirty-nine of the lesson plans contained in the first and second editions of *Opening the Minds and Hearts of Japanese-language Students to Culture*. The site <http://www.tjf.or.jp/eng/he/heindex.htm> is full of ideas for making Japanese classes more fun.

Membership Registration <http://www2.tjf.or.jp/>

Beginning in June 1999, when you enter a message or other information on TJF-Net it is necessary to input the ID and password you received by e-mail at the time you registered membership. We have included this step to prevent commercial exploitation of the Net and postings that violate public order and decency and to enable members to engage in smooth and fruitful information exchange. We look forward to your cooperation in this regard.

experiences in international exchange.

While there continues to be a dearth of appropriate teaching resources and original materials, the LOTE (Language Other Than English) Centre in Brisbane and the New South Wales Department of Education and Japan Foundation in Sydney are engaged in developing CD-ROMs containing games children can play while learning Japanese as well as video resources showing the everyday lives of Japanese people that help learn about Japanese language and culture. In autumn 1999, the *Nihongo Tanken* Japanese Language Centre will open in a suburb of Sydney. This Centre, built in the form of a traditional-style dwelling, has great potential as a facility where people can encounter Japanese culture on a tatami floor. TJF plans to cooperate with the exhibits for the Centre with a series of panel photographs from the Daily Lives of Japanese High School Students series.

"The Way We Are 1998" Published

In fiscal 1998, TJF held its second Daily Lives of Japanese High School Students contest. From the 165 entries submitted to the contest (total 825 photographs), the works of 26 finalists were selected for inclusion (with messages from the photographers) in *The Way We Are 1998* (A4-size, black-and-white Japanese edition), published in June. This volume is aimed at high school students overseas, particularly those studying Japanese language, to show readers in other countries what the ordinary daily lives of their peers in Japan are like. *Rubi* are provided for all the kanji in the text and the content edited for easy understanding. The text is currently being translated into English and will be made available as an appendix to the Japanese edition. At the back of the volume are comments and photographs received from high school students and teachers in the United States, Australia, and China in response to the publication of the photograph collection bsed on the first contest held in 1997. We look forward to hearing what new discoveries and thoughts will be forthcoming when this second volume of photographic messages reaches the hands of high school students overseas.

Message from the New President

For all of us living in this era of globalization, mutual understanding across national boundaries is more important than ever. I hope especially that those of younger generations will think of understanding between people as the key factor that could determine the destiny of humankind.

It is difficult, indeed, to believe that the wars and slaughter between countries and ethnic groups and in the name of religion and ideology that embroiled so much of the world through the twentieth century and that continue to smolder in various regions even today, are indeed the acts of intelligent human beings. Certainly the fate of humankind in the twenty-first century depends on whether we can find the means by which the peoples of the world can live in harmony. Our most fundamental task toward this goal is to forge understanding across borders.

The information society has established itself around the world and communication is easier than ever as far as technology is concerned. The problem remains whether people have really opened their hearts and become more receptive to those outside their ken.

It is no easy task to remain calm and composed when we come face to face with the "other." When we come into contact with other countries, other cultures, and people of other complexions, we must strive to maintain a high level of intellectual and emotional maturity. This endeavor begins with cultivating the judgment that enables us to see the other objectively and the equanimity with which to gauge the depth of our own and the other's feelings and thoughts.

I am particularly proud of the projects that the Japan Forum has been undertaking in assuming the heavy responsibilities of fulfilling this basic challenge through promotion of various exchange in the realms of language and culture. TJF is committed to carrying on and further developing this task. We look forward to your continued support and goodwill.

Watanabe Kōji
President

Watanabe Kōji is former Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and Ambassador to Russian Federation. Currently he is Senior Fellow at the Japan Center for International Exchange, Executive Advisor of the Japan Federation of Economic Organizations (KEIDANREN), and Governor for Japan of Asia-Europe Foundation.

Third Lesson Plan Contest Applicants Invited

Grand Prize:
Ten-day visit to Japan

Other prizes:
Gifts of books and other teaching materials on Japanese language and culture

Deadline for entries:
September 30, 1999

Requests for application forms should be directed to the Idea Contest, the Japan Forum
(Tel: + 81-3-5322-5211/
Fax: + 81-3-5322-5215/
e-mail: forum@tjf.or.jp)
Booklet on Selected Lesson Plans: For sale. Contact TJF Tokyo office or liaison in USA/Australia.

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What Is the Japan Forum?

Quest for Common Understanding

The Japan Forum (TJF) is a private, independent, nonprofit foundation established in Japan in 1987 and funded initially through a major grant from Kodansha Ltd., Publishers, and donations from five other Japanese publishing related firms, and other organizations. TJF continues to rely on donations, in addition to investment income, business revenues, and membership fees, for the funding of its operations. The main objective of TJF is to promote cultural exchange and mutual understanding among people of different cultures. Language lies at the heart of every culture. Those who inhabit the global community of the 21st century will need to develop new skills to traverse the boundaries between cultures—boundaries essentially defined by language differences. In recognition of the central importance of language skills in facilitating communication and mutual understanding among people around the world, TJF conducts a variety of activities centered around its two essential concerns: language and culture. In all these efforts, TJF honors the individual peculiarities of respective cultures and embraces their underlying commonalities, in order to illuminate both the individuality and the universality of every culture.

To date, these efforts have focused primarily on Japanese language education in elementary and secondary schools in the Asian-Pacific region and Chinese- and Korean-languages instruction in Japanese high school, and we are planning to expand our program to include information on the teaching of other Asian languages in Japan.

TJF also works to disseminate vital information related to language and culture through its publishing activities and book donation program, and now through the use of the Internet as well.

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