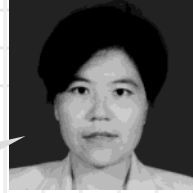




THE JAPANESE AND THE BATH

—How to Take a Bath—

Taking a bath is a very familiar theme. By studying Japanese bathing customs we can learn how close bathing is linked to the climate and culture of a country. The students learn about the different kinds of *furo* and other vocabulary connected with the bath. In a discussion at the end of the class, we look for points Japan and China have in common with regard to taking baths.



Liu Shuyan

Changchun No. 8
Middle School,
Changchun, China

OBJECTIVES

LANGUAGE OBJECTIVES

- To learn Japanese vocabulary related to bathing
- To learn sentence structures ~といわれている and ~たがる

TARGET FUNCTIONS	TARGET EXPRESSIONS	TARGET VOCABULARY
❖ Describing different kinds of baths and bathing behavior	❖ 汗を流す ❖ ~といわれている ❖ ~たがる	❖ 風呂敷, 浴衣, 浴槽, 水浴び, サウナ, シャワー, つかる

CULTURAL OBJECTIVES

- To understand Japanese bathing customs
- To rethink bathing customs in China
- To identify similarities between bathing behavior in Japan and in China

SOURCE MATERIALS

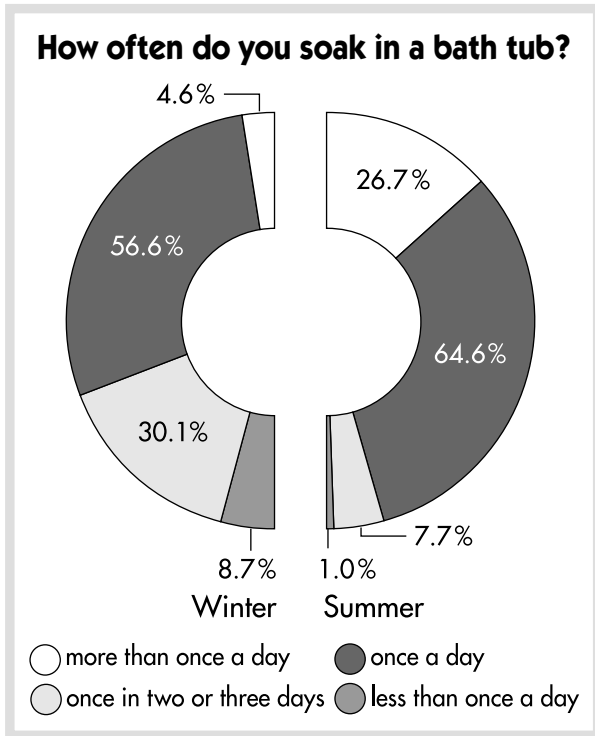
Furoshiki

Pictures of Japanese-style baths*

Yukata

Geta

中日交流標準日本語 (a high school Japanese-language textbook in China), 人民教育出版社
Survey articles*



Source: Urban Life Report No.15, Urban Life Research Institute, 1989

PROCEDURE

Prerequisite study

Reading geography textbooks and thinking about the impact of natural phenomena such as climate and topography, monsoons, and volcanic activity on the Japanese lifestyle. Understanding the relationship between Japanese people and the bath after reading handouts. The handouts include questionnaire survey results giving detailed information about how often people in Japan take baths (see the graph above).

1. Introduction (5 mins.)

The teacher focuses the attention of the students in the Japanese language class by bringing in a *furoshiki* and asking, "What is this?" "When would you use it?" The teacher then introduces the topic of the lesson by giving the correct word for the carrying cloth and explaining how to write it in Japanese characters, as well as describing in simple terms its origins and uses.

2. Discussion on the differences between Japanese and Chinese baths (10 mins.)

The students learn about the role of the bath in the Japanese lifestyle. The teacher shows pictures of a Japanese bath, explains its features and how it is used, and discusses the differences between Japanese and Chinese baths.

3. Discussion on the relation of bathing to geography (3 mins.)

Students discuss the Japanese people's particular style of bathing, relating it to Japan's natural features such as climate, topography, and volcanic activity.

4. Writing the characters (2 mins.)

Students practice writing the characters for bath as the word is easily confused with the Chinese word 風呂. The teacher takes this opportunity to bring the students' attention to the connection between Japan and China as reflected in their writing systems.

5. Learning the bathing style (10 mins.)

Students learn how to describe various bathing styles including going to the public bath, cold-water bathing, saunas, and showers, and study the Japanese expressions used in bathing such as 汗を流す (take a quick bath to "wash off sweat"), つかる (soak in the tub), 浴槽 (bathtub) and 浴衣 (cotton kimono). After explaining about the use of the 浴衣, the teacher has one of the students put on a 浴衣 and wooden sandals (on bare feet) and do a *Bon-odori* dance to music. (The students think this is very funny, but their interest will be captured.)

6. Explaining the sentence structure (15 mins.)

The teacher explains the structure of ~といわれている and ~たがる, and the students make up a conversation on the topic of the bath, using what they have learned in Part 5, then practice the conversations among themselves.

7. Discussion

The students discuss what they have learned about Japanese baths, and identify the similarities between Japanese and Chinese baths.

STUDENT RESPONSES

- I thought the *furoshiki* was a scarf.
- Japanese people use their *yukata* in many ways, don't they.
- When I watched Japanese TV dramas I used to wonder why there were so many bath scenes. Now I understand.

REMARKS

From Local Culture to Global Culture

Foreign language is said to be a tool of communication for understanding another culture. But until now, foreign language education has emphasized language to the exclusion of culture. In high school, particularly, the foreign-language syllabus has focused almost entirely on vocabulary and grammar in preparation for the university entrance exams. Recently, however, the importance of cultural understanding has begun to be recognized. Some people say that culture is a tacit form of language. In order to fulfill its role of teaching students to communicate in other cultures, foreign-language education cannot afford to ignore matters of culture.

There are various ways in which culture can complement language teaching. Firstly, adopting culture into foreign language education stimulates the students' desire to learn and enhances the effectiveness of the language teaching itself.

In real life situations it is not easy to speak a foreign language naturally and without giving offense. Every language is steeped in its own cultural background and subtle nuances, and it is not enough to know words and grammar to enable real communication. When studying a foreign language one must also learn about the people who speak that language, their culture, their way of thinking, and their lives.

As we approach the multi-cultural future of the twenty-first century, there will be many more

opportunities to encounter people of other cultures and languages. If we are to avoid cultural conflict, we must be sensitive to the language, culture, and history of other peoples. Therefore, it is important to integrate both language and culture into foreign language education and to promote them equally.

So how should we encourage cultural understanding? First, I think we must situate the culture within its geographical and physical background. While Japan has been influenced by other Asian cultures such as China and Korea, it also has customs and lifestyles that differ from those of other countries. The staple food of rice, widespread use of houses built of wood, and the love of baths, for example, are all linked to Japan's geography and climate. Even the greetings Japanese people use and the opening phrases of their letters referring to the weather can be related to the impact of the climate.

On the other hand, even though cultures may possess different characteristics, they also have similarities. In this age of globalization, even as countries strive to preserve their own cultures, they remain open to the influence of others. Culture is changing from a "local/indigenous culture" into a "global culture." In time the world that we live in may become one "global village." This is what I want to convey to my students through foreign-language education.

COMMENTS

The idea of doing a *Bon-odori* dance in a *yukata* may capture students' attention as "picturesque" and therefore make an audio and visual impression, but when we think about how people wear *yukata* today and the season for *Bon-odori*, this connection seems a bit remote from the realities of Japanese life today.

Without pursuing the *Bon-odori* connection, it is certainly a good idea to consider how the climate and culture have encouraged Japanese love of bathing and the related culture of human relations. That should pave the way for a unique approach to comparing the two cultures. Close observations from this perspective should make a manageable hour-long lesson and also an appropriate unit in terms of language learning.

In addition to this material covering the Japanese love of bathing in general, it might make an ideal resource to interview individual Japanese about their bathing habits and draw upon those interviews for the class.

お風呂と温泉

日本人が外国旅行から帰ってきて、まず、したいと思うことは、ゆっくりお風呂に入ることだと言われています。長い間、外国で生活している日本人も、その国の言葉で話し、その国の習慣で食事をしていても、お風呂だけは日本式のお風呂に入りたがります。ある本には、90パーセント近くの日本人がお風呂が好きだと書かれています。日本人が好きなお風呂の入り方は、浴槽にいっぱいになったお湯の中に入って、首までつかることです。体を洗うのは、浴槽の外です。ですから、お湯もあまり汚れません。このようなやり方は、世界でも珍しいと言われています。

日本の夏は、暑くて湿度も高いです。汗で体がべとべとしている時や雨に降られてぬれた時など、お風呂に入れば、さっぱりして気持ちがよくなります。また、寒い冬には、熱いお湯にしばらくつかってれば、体が暖まってきます。日本のお風呂は、疲れもとることができて、健康にとてもいいのです。では、なぜこのような習慣になったのでしょうか。

その理由の一つに火山があります。日本は、世界でも有名な火山国です。そのために温泉がいろいろな所にあります。温泉のお湯はいつでもたくさん出ていますから、好きな時に入ることができます。いつごろから日本人は、お湯につかるようになったのか、あまり知られていませんが、山の中でクマやサルが気持ちよさそうにお湯につかっているのを見て、まねをしたのではないかとされています。いくつかの温泉には、けがをしたクマやサルなどの動物たちが、お湯につかって体を治したという話が伝えられています。温泉のお湯の中には、体にとてもいい物が含まれています。ヨーロッパなどでは、温泉のお湯がよく飲まれています。日本でも温泉地に長い間泊まって、病気を治すことがよくあります。

有名な温泉地には、ホテルがたくさん立ち並び、観光地となっています。若い人にも人気があり、お風呂に入りながら自然を楽しむこともできます。

各家庭でも、温泉をまねてさまざまな薬をお湯に入れることがあります。お風呂は日本人の生活や健康と深く関係し、なくてはならないものになっています。

全日制普通高級中学教科書『日本語』第一冊（人民教育出版社発行）第12課より引用



lizuka Yoshiteru