The “Deai Photo Essay Cafe” website, launched in October 2004, is a place where students from all over the world can communicate through photo essays they create themselves. The project is based on “Deai: The Lives of Seven Japanese High School Students,” a photo, video, and text resource, focusing on the lives and personalities of seven real Japanese high school students.

The goal of this project is to have secondary school students who have studied using Deai reflect about themselves based on what they felt or thought about in connection with the stories and messages of the featured Japanese students.

By publishing the entries via the Deai Photo Essay Cafe Website, the project also seeks to give students using Deai a chance to get to know one another.

By the deadline in March 2005 photo essays had been received from about 170 junior and senior high school students in Australia, Canada, China, Korea, New Zealand, the U.K., the U.S., and other places where the Deai Kit had been distributed. All of the entries offer vivid glimpses of the daily lives of students, what they are absorbed in and what they are thinking. TJF would like to express its thanks to all the teachers and students who responded to this project.

At the Photo Essay Cafe, registered members can not only view the photo essays submitted to the site but communicate with others by writing your comments or questions about their works. A reception team of Japanese high school students will consider submitted entries from all over the world and select seven individuals they would like to meet. These seven will be invited to travel to Japan for a ten-day stay during the latter half of November 2005. During their stay in Japan, the participants will visit Izena Island in northern Okinawa, where Deai student Tamaki Shun’ichi grew up, with the reception team of Japanese high school students. On the website we would also like to post their report on this experience. There is much to look forward to at the Photo Essay Cafe!

In April 2005, the TJF Photo Data Bank featuring the culture of Japanese daily life was reopened with a new design and a fresh program. Now you can search for photos in the databank in any of the three languages of Japanese, English, and Chinese, regardless of the display language. We have also added new functions such as a way to list your Favorite Photos for quick access, a list announcing New Photos in the data bank, and Access Ranking, showing the most popular photographs in the data bank. As of March 2005, approximately 3,000 photos are available and the data bank will continue to grow and become easier to use, so we invite you to make the most of it. The theme of Takarabako No. 5, Japanese-language classes using photographs, promises a glimpse of the ways the photo data bank can be used.

Takarabako is published and distributed by The Japan Forum. This publication follows the practice of placing the Japanese surname first.
Renewed appreciation for the beauty and pleasure of the language

**Koe ni dashite yoritai Nihongo** [Japanese One Wants to Read Out Loud], a selection of famous quotes and texts from kabuki, rakugo ballads, poetry, passages of classical literature, and rakugo comic stories, as well as tongue twisters and other texts, for the purpose of recitation has sold over 1.5 million copies and became a best seller in 2002. This book went far to reawaken appreciation among Japanese of the beauty and pleasures of their language.

Author Saito Takashi, professor of literature at Meiji University, is a specialist in the fields of education, studies of the body, and communication. He explains that the recitation and reading aloud of phrases that have been developed and nurtured throughout history provides the physical body with a vitality that leads to emotional strength, and argues that educators should focus more of their efforts on the reading and recitation of texts that nourish both mind and body.

Professor Saito is a consultant to “Nihongo de asobo” [Let’s Have Fun with Japanese], a television show geared towards children in the lower grades of elementary school, which made the rakugo story “Jugemu” and the kyogen play “Machigai no kyogen” hugely popular throughout the country among children. Many children memorized well-known lines from these stories.

From the rakugo, “Jugemu.” The title means what the kanji represent: ju or kotobuki (good fortune) is everlasting. The story tells about parents who want to give their newborn child a name with auspicious meaning. After much debate, they ended up giving him this long and involved name.

**Early Words**

- Tongue twisters
  - "Japanese One Wants to Read Out Loud" [Soshisha, 2001]
  - NHK ‘Nihongo de asobo” [Let's Have Fun with Japanese]
  - "Piled-on" words

**Tongue twisters**

- "Piled-on" words [kotobuki] are words that have been added to original phrases for their rhythmic compatibility or punning effect. The words have a momentum that makes them fun to say out loud.

**Let’s read out loud!**
Rakugo is a traditional performing art in which one performer, seated on stage, impersonates numerous parts to tell comical stories, tales of human foibles, and ghost stories using words and gestures and sometimes a folding fan or *tenugui* towel that substitutes for various items such as chopsticks or a *kiseru* pipe. Rakugo stories consist mostly of the characters’ dialogue. The art form is said to have originated in the mid-seventeenth century, and matured in the late Edo to Meiji periods. In Tokyo, rakugo performances are held almost every day in a Japanese vaudeville theater (*yose*) in Asakusa, Ikebukuro, Ueno, and Shinjuku. Occasional performances are also held in various theaters throughout Japan.

Tatekawa Shinosuke, one of the most popular rakugo performers today, hosts an NHK information program and radio shows while holding successful rakugo performances every year at PARCO Theater in Shibuya, Tokyo, capturing the hearts of a wide range of fans.

The rakugo presented by professional performers are of two major types. One is *koten* rakugo (traditional rakugo), stories passed down for generations whose main characters are Edo period townspeople. The other is *shinsaku* rakugo (new rakugo), which are created by contemporary rakugo storytellers and take place in the present day. Shinosuke, however, is not much concerned about sticking to these categories, calling all of his rakugo “Shinosuke rakugo.” He adds his own interpretations to the stories, extracting and performing universal themes from comedies or heartwarming talks. The themes vary, covering everything from philosophy of life, education, communication, the nature of Japanese, to modern civilization. This is the source of his great appeal with audiences.

For example, in the famous *koten* rakugo “Shinigami” [The God of Death] based on a Grimm’s fairy tale, “The Grim Reaper,” there appears a candle said to represent a person’s lifespan. In his performance, Shinosuke replaces “lifespan,” a concept somewhat difficult to grasp, with “luck.” Hence, he rewrites the original story into something more easily understood and convincingly explains that “human beings die when they use up the luck with which they were born into this world.”

In his *shinsaku* rakugo, he satirizes contemporary society’s dependence on information technology through a story called “Odoru fakkusu” [The Fax Fiasco], about the turmoil created by a mistakenly faxed note. There is also “Midori no madoguchi” [The Green Counter; the name of JR ticket reservation offices], about the odd things that people do and that happen to them mostly unnoticed through a story of an idiosyncratic passenger in a train station.

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**Taken from “Machigai no kyogen” [The Kyogen of Errors] based on Shakespeare’s “The Comedy of Errors.” The author is Takahashi Yasunari, a renowned Japanese scholar of Shakespeare. It was performed in Tokyo and London in 2001, directed by kyogen performer Nomura Mansai.**
Hyakunin Isshu

Hyakunin Isshu is a collection of 100 poems by 100 poets, one poem each, of which the Hyakunin Isshu, said to be compiled by Fujiwara no Sadaie (1162-1241), is the most famous. Since the Edo period, it has been played in school textbooks as a card game that is a popular part of New Year celebrations.

Tanka

Tanka are five-line poems composed of 31 syllables arranged in 5, 7, 5, 7, 7 syllables. Collections of 100 poems by 100 poets are called hyakunin isshu (100 poets, one poem each), of which the Ogura hyakunin isshu, said to be compiled by Fujiwara no Sadaie (1162-1241), is the most famous. Since the Edo period, it has been played as a card game that is a popular part of New Year celebrations.

Toyo University holds the Gendai gakusei hyakunin isshu [Modern Students Hyakunin Isshu] contest every year, inviting tanka submissions on the subject of modern students’ perspectives and lifestyles. In its eighteenth year, the contest recorded a total of 63,330 submissions in 2004.

Senryu

Senryu are short poems that became popular around the middle of the Edo period. There are no regulations on kigo or kireji (exclamatory words), and are composed in colloquial language. They capture the amusing and ironic in human foibles, the times, and popular culture.

The insurance company, Dai-ichi Seimei, runs the “Sarariman senryu konkuru” [Salaryman Senryu Contest] for which 100 poems are selected each year. These senryu must be written about things that occur in the home or workplace, and many of the poems are poignant reflections of the times. There were 21,878 submissions in 2004, the eighteenth year of the contest.

Itoen shin haiku website http://www.itoen.co.jp/new-haiku/

Toyo University Gendai gakusei hyakunin isshu website http://www.toyo.ac.jp/event/issyu/2004_100nin.htm

Dai-ichi Seimei Sarariman senryu konkuru website http://www.dai-ichi-life.co.jp/
Picture icons and kao moji (facial expressions created from a combination of symbols on a keyboard) have become common through the use of cell phones and e-mail. In recent years, however, code-like characters that resemble handwritten characters have begun to attract attention on television, magazines, and the Internet.

These characters are called gyaru moji (gal characters) or heta moji (poorly written characters), using combinations of symbols and the alphabet to make them look like hiragana or katakana. They are said to have been created by junior and senior high school girls through cell phone e-mail exchanges starting around 2003, but it appears that these characters are not commonly used; rather, they are enjoyed as a type of word play.

There are cell phone services that convert messages into gyaru moji before reaching the recipient, and some websites provide gyaru moji translation functions.

Let’s compare entries!

The sixth edition—the newest—of the best-selling Japanese dictionary in Japan, Shin meikai kokugo jiten, went on sale in November 2004, and has been attracting widespread attention since. The first edition went on the market in 1972, and a total of 20 million copies have been sold so far. This comes out to an average of 300,000 copies per year. This is a startling figure in a market where a book of general content is considered a best-seller when it sells 100,000 copies.

The key to Shin meikai kokugo jiten’s appeal is that it is enjoyable to read. In addition to general meanings and interpretations, it includes commentary based on the experiences and opinions of its authors and editors. These commentaries are at times philosophical and humorous.

Shin meikai kokugo jiten: A dictionary with a unique flavor

Gyaru moji: Word play in the cell-phone age

Examples of gyaru moji

|- おはよう [Good morning.] | こんちちは [Hello.] | げんき？ [How are you?] | 超さいこー [Awesome!]

*Entries translated by the Japan Forum.

http://www.tjf.or.jp/newsletter/pdf_en/NI21_JCN.pdf
http://www.tjf.or.jp/eng/ge/ge16keitai.htm
Since the 1980s, there has been heated debate about the nature of language ability that language education seeks to achieve. The definition has been expanding from purely linguistic and cognitive proficiency comprised of linguistic knowledge (sound, grammar, vocabulary, etc.) and the four skills (reading, writing, speaking, and listening)—which are considered transferable—to communication skills focused on social interaction and a more proactive, comprehensive view of language ability that includes non-linguistic aspects. We learn language not only intellectually, through mental effort. You as teachers probably know from experience that classes incorporating the physical activity and the senses are valuable not only to get the attention of students, but indeed stimulate the learning process.

The material introduced in Professor Saito Takashi’s book is appealing, but in Japanese classes for non-native speakers, comprehension is as much a priority as being able to enjoy the rhythm. Here, we would like to suggest recitation and/or reading aloud activities that utilize materials appropriate for Japanese classes.

**Objectives**

- To enjoy the rhythm of the Japanese language
- To nurture a sense for the rhythms of the Japanese language

**Level:** All

**Procedure:**

1. Write the poem “Iruka” on the board.

2. Students may enjoy the poem by listening to the teacher’s recitation of the poem while referring to the English translation. Point out the dual meaning of *iruka* to the students. (Depending on the level of the students, have them infer the meaning of the poem.)

3. In order to recite rhythmically, place an “×” and explain that the “×” is a silent beat. Recite the poem keeping time every other beat. (Each line is composed of eight syllables including the silent beats.

4. Practice reciting in pairs. While one is reciting, his/her partner keeps time every other beat.

5. Once students have captured the rhythm of the poem, recite in unison. Have a student keep the beat.

6. Next, recite while keeping time in four beat measures. (Hold one arm out in front of you and turn your palm over with every ×)

7. Recite without keeping a beat.

**Variation**

You may choose to keep the beat by showing pictures of dolphins. Picture cards that can be used in class may be downloaded at Takarabako website.

**Expansion**

Expansion ideas may be found on the Takarabako website.

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**Activity 1: Iruka**

“*Iruka*” Second verse

*Kotoba asobi uta*, Tanikawa Shuntaro, Fukuinkan Shoten 1973

Un fortunately we are unable to publish the “Iruka” poems on the website because of copyright restriction. But if you are interested, please send an inquiry to takarabako@tjf.or.jp and we will be happy to send you a printed version of *Takarabako* No. 4 which contains the two poems.

**Objectives:** To enjoy the rhythm of the Japanese language

To nurture a sense for the rhythms of the Japanese language

**Level:** All

**Procedure:**

1. Write the poem “Iruka” on the board.

2. Students may enjoy the poem by listening to the teacher’s recitation of the poem while referring to the English translation. Point out the dual meaning of *iruka* to the students. (Depending on the level of the students, have them infer the meaning of the poem.)

3. In order to recite rhythmically, place an “×” and explain that the “×” is a silent beat. Recite the poem keeping time every other beat. (Each line is composed of eight syllables including the silent beats.

4. Practice reciting in pairs. While one is reciting, his/her partner keeps time every other beat.

5. Once students have captured the rhythm of the poem, recite in unison. Have a student keep the beat.

6. Next, recite while keeping time in four beat measures. (Hold one arm out in front of you and turn your palm over with every ×)

7. Recite without keeping a beat.

**Variation**

You may choose to keep the beat by showing pictures of dolphins. Picture cards that can be used in class may be downloaded at Takarabako website.

**Expansion**

Expansion ideas may be found on the Takarabako website.

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**Note 1**

The poem’s pleasing rhythm is created from a combination of sound repetition, alliteration [head rhymes] through the fourth line, rhymes [end rhymes] in every line, and the 7, 7 syllable arrangement. Traditional Japanese poetry is characteristically composed of five and seven syllables or a combination of the two, which are considered pleasant Japanese rhythms. However, the basic units in Japanese rhythm are not odd beats, but even beats, that is, 2-beat rhythm. Placing a silent beat at each “x” creates the ideal rhythm.

The other appeal of this poem is its use of homonyms. Japanese has many homonyms because of its limited number of syllables. In the waka world, *kakotoba* (punning) is a rhetorical technique commonly used. Try experiencing it in the English translation.

**Activity 2: Kappa**

“*Kappa*” First verse

*Kotoba asobi uta*, Tanikawa Shuntaro, Fukuinkan Shoten 1973

Unfortunately we are unable to publish the “Kappa” poems on the website because of copyright restriction. But if you are interested, please send an inquiry to takarabako@tjf.or.jp and we will be happy to send you a printed version of *Takarabako* No. 4 which contains the two poems.
Objectives: To enjoy the rhythm of the Japanese language through physical movement. To become used to the rhythm of double consonants.

Level: Young students

Procedure:
1. Write the poem “Kappa” on the board.

2. Recite the poem to the students while clapping at each insertion ("\( \overline{\times} \)" is a silent beat). Instruct students to skip in a circle when they hear a clap. (In age groups for which skipping and gestures are not appropriate, have students use their hands to keep the beat.)

3. Provide an explanation of kappa, showing a picture. Make sure students understand the meaning of each word and the poem.

4. Show students a gesture for each word. Instruct students to perform the respective gesture when they hear each word during the teacher’s recitation.

5. Have students skip or perform the gestures while they recite the poem.

Expansion
Expansion ideas may be found on the Takarabako website.

Note 2
“Kappa”
This short poem is full of fun—not only the delightful hopping rhythm of double consonants, but other features such as the kappa character, the mischief of kapparatta (snatched) and kappa as homonyms, the overlapping sounds of double consonants and their amusing meanings, and the onomatopoeic expression totte chitte ta.

Kappa are mischievous legendary creatures believed to live in rivers and streams. They have extraordinary physical strength despite their small size, dragging horses and people into the water and drowning them. Their favorite food is cucumbers. They have a water-filled, dish-like part on their heads, and on their backs, a shell like that of a turtle. They lose their strength when the water in the dish dries up.

Pre-activities that stimulate the learners physically and mentally are vital not only for these recitation activities, but for any classroom activity in language study that utilizes both the body and the senses. They are a necessary step in enabling students to be more aware of their own sensations and recognize that some people have sensations different from theirs. It would be ideal if the teacher or an associate of the teacher were specialists on the topic, but that is not always the case. The following are ideas that anyone can easily put to use.

Pre-activity: Listening to sounds with eyes closed
Have students guess if they can hear a pin falling to the floor. Ask them to close their eyes and drop a pin. If they can’t hear the sound, ask them what objects they think they can hear falling to the floor and try them. (Students may be the one to drop the objects.) Instruct the students to raise their hand if they hear an object falling to the floor. After dropping the object, have students open their eyes and tell them how many people raised their hands. Have students guess what the object was.

II. Producing Sound and Rhythm: Recitation Performance
For your next school festival or assembly, why not produce a recitation performance with choreography, visual aids, or a melody that will allow even an audience who doesn’t understand Japanese to appreciate the rhythm of the language?

Performance Idea 1: Recitation Duet
“Gacho wa gaa gaa”

“Gacho wa gaa gaa”
(Paiga ippi, Wada Makoto, Bunka Shuppankyoku 2002)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sound</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ガチョウ</td>
<td>A goose honks gaa gaa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>からす</td>
<td>A crow caws kaa kaa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>みみずく</td>
<td>An owl hoots hou hou</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>うしけむ</td>
<td>A cow moos mou mou</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>かえる</td>
<td>A frog croaks gero gero</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>したる</td>
<td>Its tongue goes pero pero</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>いぬ</td>
<td>A dog barks wan wan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ねこ</td>
<td>A cat meows nyau nyau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ぶた</td>
<td>A pig oinks bu bu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>マラソン</td>
<td>In a marathon, huu huu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ひざ</td>
<td>My tired knees go gaku gaku</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>くち</td>
<td>My mouth goes paku paku</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>あせ</td>
<td>Sweat drips tara tara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>のど</td>
<td>My parched throat is kara kara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>みず</td>
<td>Gulping water is gabu gabu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ふく</td>
<td>Baggy clothes are dabu dabu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Picture cards that can be used in class may be downloaded at Takarabako website.
**Topic:** Onomatopoeia and mimetic words

**Stage Direction:** Indicating the subject of each line with pictures, recite energetically and loudly.

**Props:** Pictures of subjects covered in the recitation (goose, crow, etc., indicated in English.)

**Performance:** Have the class recite in two groups.

- **First half (Onomatopoeia)**
  
  **Group 1:** While pointing at each picture, “がちほう”
  
  **Group 2:** “ががああ” following Group 1

- **Second half (Mimetic words)**
  
  **Group 2:** While pointing at each picture (knees, mouth, sweat, throat, water in a glass, etc.), “ひざは”
  
  **Group 1:** “がくがく” following Group 2

**Stage Direction:** While tapping knees and otherwise moving to a hip hop beat, rap the poem.

**Props:** Have students prepare lyrics to be distributed to the audience. (Kana, romanization, and English translation.)

**Practice:** Tell students that they will be rapping in Japanese, and recite the poem to them while tapping your thigh at every (”x” is a silent beat). Explain the meaning of the poem.

**Performance:** Have the class recite in two groups.

- **Group 1:** First line of each stanza (school vocabulary)

- **Group 2:** Second line of each stanza (ailment vocabulary)

**Note 3**

**Performance Idea 2: Rap “Gakko”**

“Gakko”  
(Pai ga ippai [Piles of Pies], Wada Makoto, Bunka Shuppankyoku 2002)

**Note 3**

**The following activity ideas are also available on the website**

- **Taking a Shot at Classical Japanese**
- **Shiritori**
- **Heno heno moheji Contest**
- **Hayakuchi kotoba**
- **Mimi o sumasu**
- **Singing Activities**