pet peeves

2005,1,31

Every day I am annoyed with one of my staff. She is as old as me and is famous for her ego. She has been working at many offices and got into many troubles. I heard when she worked at other offices, her parents often came to the office and complained to the director. She is not a little girl. She is a middle-aged woman. I can't believe it! Even if someone greets her, she never responds. On Friday morning she called me and said," As I have a cold, I will be absent today." When she came to our office this
morning, I said to her," Good morning. How about your cold? " She ignored me. About thirty minutes afterwards she suddenly said to me, " As you don't value me, everybody doesn't obey me. Everybody picks on me! Everybody doesn't greet me and doesn't agree with me. It's driving me crazy!" I talked it over with her for one hour. At last she seems to think about herself a little. But I think she will forget everything tomorrow.

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New Zealand

2005,1,30

This afternoon I went to NOVA. Why do I go to NOVA so often? Of course I want to be able to speak English well. Another reason is... I have too many tickets to use. When I entered NOVA in last October I decided to take a man-to-man lesson. The price of it is much more expensive than that of a group lesson. So I bought many tickets. Recently I realized that a group lesson is more interesting than a man-to-man lesson. I must use many tickets in a time limit. Today my instructor was a woman from New Zealand. I asked her where is the best place in NEW Zealand. She said," Queenstown is the best. Auckland is a big city but it's not so good. South island is better than North island. You had better go to Christchurch by air plane." I wanted to go to New Zealand more and more.

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review the lesson

2005,1,29

I looked back at this week and I thought it was very busy. Of course I went to my office everyday and after work I went to NOVA three times, on Monday, on Thursday and on Friday. In addition on Tuesday I went to Aburatsubo, the top of the Miura Peninsula
on business with two men. After work one of them told us to go to the eel restaurant at Kurihama. At that restaurant the master took the live eel out of the water tank and cooked it in front of us. I took about half an hour to cook it. It was very delicious and he treated us to dinner. The Kurihama station is the terminal of the Yokosuka line and I waited for the train twenty-five minutes at the platform. It was very cold at that time and I came back to my home late in the

evening. At NOVA we can't use any Japanese. We have a textbook but we can't know what page we will learn in advance. Every time the instructor speaks many difficult words that I don't know. I must ask them in English, "What is the meaning of ・・・・?" After we see the picture we must speak about it with the partner immediately. I must respond quickly and concentrate on the lesson. At the end of the lesson the instructor always asks me, " Do you have another lesson?" " Oh, no. I'm very tired. It is as much as I can do." I think I must review the lesson but I can't every day. Today I reviewed lessons that I learned this week.

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weekend

2005,1,28

The week is over at last. I'm tired now. I will be careful not to catch a cold.

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my plan

2005,1,27

I read about an old woman who studies English in Canada by herself in the newspaper in this morning. I have forty annual paid holidays this year. If I can get ten holidays in this golden week I want to go to America or New Zealand. But I may change my office in April. If I don't move, I think I will put into action my plan. I've never been abroad alone and it may be a big adventure for me. But thinking about my plan greatly excited me.

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a garlic toast

2005,1,26

This morning I cooked garlic toast for breakfast. I will note how to cook it.
First get garlic, butter, parsley and French bread.
Next mince parsley.
Then grate garlic and mix it with butter and minced parsley.
Then slice the bread.
Then spread the butter on the bread.
After that toast the bread in the oven.
Finally serve them with coffee or tea.
I read that soybeans are very healthy in the newspaper and I eat Nattou or drink soymilk every day.

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climbing Mt. Fuji.

2005,1,25

Every morning I can see Mt. Fuji. These days it is covered with snow to the foot. As often as I see Mt. Fuji I want to climb it. I've never climbed Mt. Fuji and in my family only my elder son has ever climbed it. When he was a high school student, there were some international students in his school. He climbed Mt. Fuji with his foreign friends in the summer holidays. My husband took them to the foot of the mountain by car but he didn't climb it. It was over seven years ago and he doesn't remember the event clearly. Today he said, "I've forgotten what country they were from but they were speaking English. Perhaps the boy was from Australia and the girl was from Canada." When I meet my son next time, I'll ask him about the story of climbing Mt. Fuji. If I will climb it, I must do it in summer. I think it's very dangerous to do it without enough experience and outfits in winter.

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What's the cooking?

2005,1,24

Today I learned how to give cooking instructions in English at NOVA. I'm not good at cooking but every day I cook something. But it's very difficult for me to explain how to cook in English. My Australian instructor said she doesn't know the way to steam eggs. So I asked her, " Have you ever eaten Chawanmushi? It is steamed. " "What is
Chawanmushi? I don't know it." I will explain to her how to cook it and ask her to eat my Chawanmushi together at my home at the next lesson.

How to cook Chawanmusi (four portions)

First get two eggs, shrimp, breast meat of a chicken, shiitake mushrooms, ginkgo nuts and honewort.
Next make two cups soup stock with dried kelp, salt and soy sauce.
Then mix eggs and soup with a whisk.
Then strain the soup with the eggs.
Then put ingredients into four china bowls.
Then pour the soup with eggs into bowls.
After that put the bowls in a pressure cooker, screw down the lid and steam it. Fire the pressure cooker for one minute and wait for ten minutes as it is.
Finally take a bowl out of the pressure cooker and serve.

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the beauty salon

2005,1,23

This morning I went to the beauty salon near my house to cut my hair. Actually I've been to this salon since I moved to my present house about twenty years ago. The manager of the salon is a woman who has three sons and two salons in our city. Her sons are all hairdressers and the youngest son had been working here for five years. She had been working at another salon but she came back here in January. "It's been a long time. You are the best customer for me. I'm very glad you have been coming to our salon. You haven't changed a bit since we last met. Are you wearing eyeglasses now? They really suit you. Your skin is fine for your age. Would you use this skin cream? It's very good for you I think. Now I'm studying how to dress Kimono. It takes three million yen because I must buy new kimonos. I have finished your haircut. The new haircut looks good on you. Are you happy with it? Next time you had better have your hair premed." She was complimenting me, talking sales and boasting of herself while she was cutting my hair. I wanted her to be silent. I like to read magazines at the beauty parlor. I haven't made up my mind whether I'll go or I won't go next time.

Hahahahahaha! That's a really funny story. I suppose that talking a lot is a hairdresser's "specialty"! (from Chris)

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Kamogawa country club

2005,1,22

Today I went to Kamogawa country club in Chiba with my friends. A man who is a member of this club invited us and we played at a low price. My tee shots were mostly OK but my iron shots were all bad. I can't remember how many balls I hit into the bunkers around the greens. I felt regret for my approach shots and my score. I decided to practice iron shots.
今日は、鴨川カントリークラブへ友人達と行った。このクラブのメンバーさんが招待してくれたので、安くプレーできた。ティーショットはほとんど良かったが、アイアンが悪すぎ。どれだけ、グリーン周りのバンカーに打ち込んだことか。アプローチとスコアには悔いが残る。アイアンを練習しよう。

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group lesson

2005,1,21

After work I went to NOVA. At first I took a man-to-man lesson but these days I take a group

lesson. I can take it at a quarter of the man-to-man lesson and the partner gave me an incentive to study English.

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a wake

2005,1,20

This evening I attended the wake in Yokohama because my coworker's mother died yesterday. She was eighty-eight years old and I never met her when she was alive. In Japan it is our custom to attend a wake or a funeral when our coworker's relative dies. I've attended many people's wakes whom I've never met. Actually I keep a black suit in my locker at my office to wear in the sudden case. To tell the truth I don't want a stranger to attend my funeral. In foreign countries do they do so? I brought many kodens there. In Japan we always offer money to the departed soul. Tonight eight coworkers asked me to bring their kodens. And I was given nine handkerchiefs and salt in the little paper bag in return. I will have to bring them to my office tomorrow.
昨日、職場の人のお母さんが亡くなったので、今夜はお通夜へ。88 歳で私は生前お会いしたことがない。日本では、職場の人の身内が亡くなった時には、通夜か葬式に出る習慣がある。あったことの無い人の通夜に随分出席した。実際、急な場合用に職場のロッカーに喪服を入れている。本当のことを言うと、私は自分の葬式に知らない人に来て欲しくはない。外国ではどうなのかな？今日は8 人から香典を持っていくよう頼まれた。明日、職場にお返しのハンカチを持っていかないと。

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the reasons

2005,1,19

When we go to my son's home in Nagoya, we always start at our house at about six and have a breakfast at the Fujigawa service area on the Toumei highway. We arrive at our goal at about eleven o'clock. We spend a nice time with his family and we say good-bye at about five. We drive on the Toumei highway and have supper at the Fujigawa service area again. If we are not caught in a traffic jam, we can come back to our home at eleven. It costs about seven thousand yen each way for the car. I expect it will be more inexpensive by using ETC card. Why do we go to Nagoya and come back in a day? The first reason is my son's house is small like most Japanese houses in the big cities and we can't stay there over night. (A long time ago an American said we Japanese lived in rabbit hutches. Hahaha…) The second reason is that I don't like to disturb their lives.　And I have many things to do on the weekend, going to golf school, doing housework and of course studying English. A baby will grow up soon. Now he is walking with some help, after a while he will be able to run. I hope I don't over look the process of his growth. So I asked my son and his wife to let us visit them every month. It's a big pleaser for me to meet Taiga every

month.

I took this picture at Fujigawa service area.

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ETC

2005,1,18

The day before yesterday we used our ETC system for the first time. What is ETC? I checked the word on the Internet. It's the shortening of electric toll collection system. When we bought a new car last July, we added various goods, a car navigation system, and so on. Our car speaks. If some obstacle is near the car, it says "Be careful ahead". But we didn't buy ETC system. Because I had one bad memory of using ETC. Last June I went to a golf course in Gotenba in Sizuoka with my friend. She is ten years younger than me and is used to driving on the highway. She said to me, "I like driving on the highway because I always drive to my parents' house using the highway. But I've never driven on the Toumei highway. Do you know the way to Gotenba? Please guide me." I guided her to the Atsugi Interchange safely. I was relieved. She said to me," We use ETC system so I don't have to stop at the gate. It's very convenient." She passed the gate smoothly. At that time she shouted suddenly. " I entered the lane for Tokyo. Is Gotenba for Nagoya? I made a mistake!" I shouted too. " Go straight! Don't stop. It's dangerous!" "What is the next interchange?" " I think it's Yokohama. You will get down there and turn back." Of course we were late for the start time. Should I have

guided her in what lane she should drive? The other day my husband said to me," As we go to Nagoya once a month, I bought ETC. To use ETC is convenient and more inexpensive than using a highway card. We need not stop at the gate of the highway." Be careful using the ETC.
一昨日、初めてETCを使った。ETCってなに？インターネットで調べたら、electric toll collection system の略だそう。去年の7月に新車を買った時、カーナビ等いろいろ装備をつけた。うちの車はしゃべる。近くに障害物があると、「右前方です。」と言う。でも、悪い思い出があったから、ETCは買わなかった。6月に御殿場のゴルフ場に友人と行った。彼女は、私より10歳も若くて、高速道路の運転に慣れていた。「いつも高速使って、実家に行くから高速の運転は好きなの。でも、東名は走ったことないの。道、知ってる？案内してね。」無事、厚木インターまで案内して一安心した。「ETC使ってるから、料金所で止まらなくてもいいの。便利よ。」彼女は、スムーズに通過して、急に叫んだ。「東京方向だ！御殿場は名古屋方向よね。間違った！」私も叫んだ。「まっすぐ走って、止まらないで。危ないから。」「次のインター何所？」「横浜だと思う。そこで降りて、引き返すのよ。」もちろん、スタート時間には遅れた。どのレーンを走るかも案内すべきだったのかな？先日、夫が「毎月名古屋に行くから、ETCを買った。便利だし、ハイウエーカード使うより安いし、料金所で止まらなくてもいいしね。」と言った。ETCを使う時は、注意しましょう

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never forget Hanshin- Awaji

2005,1,17

Ten years have past since there was a very big earthquake in Hanshin-Awaji. I can't forget that day. When I prepared the breakfast early in the morning on that day, my husband said to me," The news says the big earthquake appened in Kansai. Are your parents all right? " I made a call to my mother immediately but I couldn't get through to Osaka. After arriving at my office I called again. (At that time we didn't have cell-phones.) My mother shouted as soon as she picked up the phone. "Are you watching the TV? Kobe was destroyed! We jumped out of bed but we are safe here." At lunchtime when we watched the TV in the dinning room, I couldn't believe my eyes. The Torii in Ikuta shrine had fallen down. Six thousand four hundred and thirty three people were killed by the earthquake. I had some friends in Kobe and I visited there many times. In May in that year I walked around in Kobe with my friend who lived and was a high school teacher there for the first time after the earthquake. She said to me, " Some of my students lost their houses. In April many cherry blossoms came out at the gardens of the broken houses. It gave us energy." Today we prayed for the souls of the dead. We mustn't forget the lesson from it.
阪神淡路大震災から10年が過ぎた。あの日を忘れることは出来ない。あの日の朝、朝食を用意していたら、夫が「関西で大きな地震があったってニュースで言ってるけど、大阪の両親は大丈夫かな」と言った。すぐに母に電話したが、大阪には繋がらなかった。職場に着いてからまた、電話した。（その頃は、携帯電話は普及していなかった。）母は受話器をとるやいなや「テレビ見た？神戸がえらいことや。飛び起きたけど、ここは皆無事や。」お昼に、食堂でテレビを見た時、わが目を疑った。生田神社の鳥居が倒れていた。6433人の方々の命が奪われた。神戸には何人か友人がいて、私は何回も行ったことがある。その年の5月、神戸に住んでいて高校教師をし

ている友人と一緒に、震災後初めて神戸を歩いた。「何人かの生徒の家も壊れた。4 月には、壊れた家の庭の桜もたくさん咲いたのよ。元気を与えてくれたわ。」今日は、亡くなった方々の冥福を祈った。教訓を忘れてはならない。

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too late

2005,1,16

Today I went to Nagoya to visit my son's home in a day. It's a five-hour drive from my home to there. I've just come back now. It's too late to write my diary. I must go to my office tomorrow so I had better go to bed soon.
今日は、日帰りで名古屋の息子を訪問。自宅からは、車で 5 時間かかる。今帰ってきたばかり。遅いので押し、日記は書けない。明日は仕事なので、すぐ寝たほうがいいね。

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traveling abroad

2005,1,15

Yesterday I went to a Soba restaurant for lunch with my young woman coworker who went to Cebu Island in the Philippines during the New Year holidays. " How about your travel in Cebu?" "It was really fun. The sea was beautiful and I felt refreshed. " "Did you enjoy snorkeling?" "Yeah, I went there to dive in the sea." " I hear It's necessary to get a license for diving. Where did you get it? Is it difficult to get it? How many days did it take?" " I got it in Cebu. It took about five days." " Really? Did you pass the paper test in English? That's very great." " No, in Japanese. There are many schools, which are kept by Japanese. I got my license at one of these schools and after that I always stayed there when I visited Cebu." " Did you bring your equipment from Japan?" "No, I left my equipment there. I don't intend to dive at other places. I like Cebu best of all the sea." "I wish to go to Cebu at some point." I've gone abroad just ten times. I went to Hong Kong with my husband in nineteen eighty-eight. It was my first overseas travel. I went to almost all the other countries in Asia because I don't want to have jet lag. As soon as I came back to Japan I had to go to the office. I went to Sydney in Australia with my family once. At that time my sons were junior high school and elementary school pupils. One day we rode a sightseeing tour bus not for Japanese but for English speakers there. The driver explained the tourist attractions while driving a bus. We couldn't understand most of what he said. During the tour my younger son had carsickness. I asked the driver to let him sit down at the front seat with my poor English. He sat down among an Australian family by himself. Of course he couldn't speak English. He didn't learn ABC… He said to me," I dislike sitting among foreigners. An Australian boy picks on me." Over ten years have past since then. Now he has become a young

man who can speak English well and live in the foreign country alone. I've never been to Europe ,Africa or South America. After I retire from my work I would like to travel in as many countries as possible.

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the weather report

2005,1,14

The weather report says it will be snowing tomorrow. We were supposed to go to my son's home in Nagoya by car but we gave up now. It's too dangerous to drive in the snow. When my son called me, I could hear Taiga's laughter. It sounded very energetic. I heard he began to walk with support. How early he can do it! He is only nine months now. I was very surprised to hear that and long to meet him. I grudge the snow.
天気予報では、明日は雪。車で名古屋の息子も家にいくはずだったけど、今あきらめました。雪の中の運転は危険で無理。息子が電話してきた時、Taiga の笑い声が聞こえた。とても元気そう。伝い歩きをはじめたそう。なんて早いのでしょう。まだ、9 ヶ月なのに。びっくりすると同時に、会いたいなあ。雪が恨めしい。

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tour in Japan

2005,1,13

There are many places where I've never been to in Japan. Actually I've never been to Shimane, Tottori, Saga and Akita before. I've been to Hokkaido once. A long time has past since I visited Hokkaido when I was a university student. I joined the Alpine club as soon as I entered the University in Osaka. We trained hard at the campus every day and climbed various mountains near Oosaka at the end of the week. In summer holidays we went to Hokkaido and climbed many mountains there. I visited Kyushu
twice. When I was a high school student, we went there for a school trip. We sailed from Osaka to Beppu and traveled to many places by tour bus. When I was a niversity student I visited Kumamoto and Nagasaki with my friend who was from Kumamoto. My husband and I visited Matsuyama in Shikoku many times because my elder son lived there when he was a university student and my daughter in law is from Matsuyama. I'm sorry I was too busy to travel to many places for a long time. As of late I visit many places near my house many times with my husband and friends. My husband likes driving a car so much and we went for a drive to many localities in a day. Actually we drived to Kusatsu and Karuizawa in a day. We started early in the morning and came home at midnight. Of cause we went to a famous hot spring in Kusastu. But it was a very tight schedule and I was tired. I've been longing to visit Tsuwano and Hagi for a long time and I'm planning to travel there one of these days.

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It slipped my mind!

2005,1,12

I'm certain things often slip my mind these days. The other day when I talked about the tsunami in Thailand with my coworkers, I forgot the name of the resort where many people were killed for the moment. "Umm…it's a famous place. In the days of the Vietnam War American soldiers spent holidays there…. Everyday we hear on the news…" " You want to say Phuket ? " "Yeah. It slipped my mind" At home I always say "that". "Where is that?" "What's that? Say definitely" "What is that name?" "Mother, are you OK? Do you have Alzheimer's disease?" Also I sometimes forget where I put the goods. It takes a lot of time to search for my eyeglasses every day. Last year I participated in the reunion of high school. My old friends said the same thing. " I always forget why I go to another room. I go there to take something but I forget what I need. I feel I'm old now. " " Me, too. Sometimes I can't say my student's name though everyday I meet them. " I remember when they were high school students, they were very clever girls.
最近、よく度忘れをする。先日、同僚とタイの津波の話をしていた時、多くの人が死んだリゾートの名前を度忘れした。「ええっと、有名な場所。ベトナム戦争の時、アメリカの兵士が休暇を過ごした・・・毎日ニュースで聞く・・」「プーケット？」「そう、度忘れしちゃった。」家では、いつも「あれ」の連発。「あれどこだっけ？」「あれってなに？はっきり言って。」「あれの名前はなんだっけ？」「おかん、大丈夫？アルツハイマーになった？」度々、おいた場所も忘れる。毎日、メガネを探すのに時間がかかる。昨年、高校の同窓会に出席したとき、旧友も同じことを言っていた。「いつも、別の部屋になんで行ったか忘れるんよ。何か取りに行くんやけど、何が必要だったか忘れるんや。年取ったと思うわ。」「私も、そう。毎日見てる生徒の名前が出てけえへん時があるねん。」高校生だった時は、彼女達は、とても賢い少女だったのを覚えていますが。

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high school students

2005,1,11

The train and the bus were filled with high school students this morning. The winter holidays might be over. Actually it really bothers me when the students talk loudly together and put their big bags on the floor and cut in line and so on. It always makes me worry about the future of Japan to see these high school students. I worry about why they are so untidy. But I remember my sons were also untidy when they were high school students. They never got up early in the morning. And even more long ago when I was a high school student my mother often told me not to talk loudly in the train. At that time my mother was an elementary school teacher and her school was near my high school. We usually took the same train and she listened to what I was chatting about with my friends in the train.
今朝、電車とバスは高校生で混んでいた。冬休みが終わったのだろう。実際、高校生が大声でし

ゃべったり、おおきなカバンを床に置いたり、列に割り込んだり等々は、困りもの。こんな高校生を見るたび、日本の将来が心配になる。だらしないなあ。でも、うちの息子達も高校生の時はだらしなかった。決して早起きしなかった。そして、もっと昔、私が高校生だった頃、母はよく私に電車の中で大声で話さないよう注意した。その頃、母は小学校の教師で、母の学校は私の高校の近くにあった。私達は、いつも同じ電車に乗って、母は私が友達と何をおしゃべりしているか聞いていたのだ。

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Technique of throw awy

2005,1,10

What annoys me? It really bothers me when our rooms are littered. To tell the truth I like house cleaning better than cooking. Today I cleared up my house. Five days have passed since my son went back to America. There are many clothes in his closet. When will he wear them? I thought he would never wear them but we couldn't throw them away. The book that said, "You should throw away everything that you can do without " (Technique of throwing way things？)was one of the best sellers. This afternoon he sent us a video, which showed his dormitory on computer. Oh, he got many new goods in America and his room is filled with various goods.
何にいらつくか？部屋が散らかっていると、落ち着かない。料理より掃除が好き。今日は家を片付けた。息子がアメリカへ帰って 5 日が過ぎた。押入れには、息子の服がいっぱい。何時きるのかな？もう二度と着ないだろう、でも捨てられない。「使わないものは、すべて捨てろ（捨てる技術？）」とかいう本はベストセラーだった。午後、PC に寮を写したビデオが送られてきた。アメリカでも新しい物たくさん手に入れたんだ。部屋は、いろんな物でいっぱい。

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Today was very busy !

2005,1,9

In the morning I went to the public bath "Ikoinoyu". I like Akasuri (washing in Korean style) very much and I am always taking it at the super public bath. When I entered the washing room, a Korean woman said to me. " Why don't you eat Korean noodles with us? If you aren't full, please eat this food, which I cooked last night. I used spinach instead of Chinese chives. Some customers said it smelled bad." " Thank you. Let's eat. Oh, it's delicious." I had an open-air bath alone under the blue sky and felt very happy. As soon as I came back to my home, I ate race cakes
and cheese rolled with lavers quickly. After that I hurried to NOVA. It is a ten-minute walk from my house to there. This is my first lesson at NOVA in this year. A young Englishman taught me. After the lesson I participated in VOICE. We talked about how we spend the New Year's holidays with the young American and young Englishman. They said that they went to Kusatsu ski resort

together and enjoyed hot springs there. Then a middle-aged Australian who was a surfer told us about surfing and life saving. He lectured about artificial respiration while lying on the floor sometimes. We could learn both English with an Australia accent and how to life save. Hahaha… At the voice room I met a Japanese woman who seems the same age as me. She said to me," I will go to Australia for two weeks soon." "With your husband or friends?" " Oh no, I will go by myself. I will stay with an Australian family and learn English." " That's very good. I wish to do that but I must go to my office every day… so I can't. If I retire from my work I will do it surely." In the evening of course I went to the golf school. Today was very busy but a very nice Sunday!

朝、いこいの湯へ。韓国式アカスリが大好きなので、スーパー銭湯に行った時は、いつもしてもらう。部屋に入った時、韓国人の女性が「いっしょに韓国の春雨を食べない。お腹がいっぱいでなかったら、昨夜作ったこれを食べて。ニラの代わりにほうれん草を使ってるの。臭いと言ったお客さんがいたので。」「ありがとう、いただくわ。美味しいね。」青空の下、露天風呂に一人で入って、本当に幸せ。家にかえるや否や、海苔で巻いたチーズお餅を急いで食べた。その後、NOVA へ急ぐ。今年最初のレッスン。若いイギリス人が教えてくれた。レッスンの後、VOICE に参加。若いアメリカ人、イギリス人と、正月休みの過ごし方について話した。彼らは、一緒に草津スキー場に行って、そこの温泉が気に入ったそう。その後、サーファーのオーストラリア人がサーフィンと人命救助について話した。彼は、時々、床に横になって人工呼吸の仕方を教えてくれた。私達は、オーストラリア英語と人命救助のやり方の両方を学んだ。部屋で、同年輩の女性と会った。「もうすぐ、オーストラリアに 2 週間行くの。」「ご主人か友達と」「ううん、一人で。ホームステイして英語を勉強するの。」「いいわね。私もしたいけど、毎日仕事だから・・・無理。退職したら、必ずやりたいなあ。」夜は、もちろんゴルフスクールへ。今日はとれも忙しかったが最高の日曜でした。

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talent

2005,1,8

Last night my friend whom I promised to play golf together with at Gotenba in Shizuoka called me. "It was snowing in Gotenba yesterday. They told me the golf course will be closed tomorrow. Lets go to Ooiso instead of Gotenba." "Ok. Will you pick me up at seven am?" "Sure. At the entrance of your house." Today was cloudy and cold but I enjoyed golf with my school friend and her husband. On the way to my home by car…

"Golf is very interesting. Let's go to Chiba next time. I want to play within one hundred in this year." " You are a good player! Congratulations! How many times did you play eighteen holes of golf?" " Umm… three times." "When did you begin to play?" "Last summer. I bought my golf set for only fifty thousand yen." "Why don't you enter our golf school?" "Umm…I want to enjoy other sports, swimming or jogging… I'm busy on the weekend." " Your wife and I have been practicing at golf school for a long time. We bought expensive golf sets. But we were beaten by you today." " Don't worry. He has been playing tennis and baseball since he was young. I will give up competing with my husband." I am certain that I'm not talented. I shed tears.

御殿場で一緒にゴルフをしようと約束していた友人から、昨夜電話があった。「昨日、御殿場は雪だったそう。明日、ゴルフ場はクローズになるって電話があったの。御殿場のかわりに大磯のショートコースにいかない。」「いいよ。7 時に拾ってくれる？」「もちろん。お宅の家の前で。」今日は、曇って寒かったが、スクール友達と彼女のご主人とでゴルフを楽しんだ。帰宅途中の車で・・・「ゴルフは楽しいね。次は千葉に行こうよ。今年中に100切りたいね。」「上手、おめでとう。18ホールでは、何回やったの？」「3回だよ。」「いつ始めたんだっけ？」「去年の夏。たった5万円でゴルフセット買ったの。」「なんでスクールに入らないの？」「水泳とかジョギングとか、他のスポーツもしたいから。週末は忙しいよ。」「奥さんと私は、長い間スクールで練習してきたし、高いゴルフセットも買ったけど、今日は完敗だね。」「しかたないよ。若いときから、テニスや野球してるから。うちのだんなと競争することはあきらめたわ。」私に才能が無いことは、はっきり自覚しております。涙・・・

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long skirts

2005,1,7

I always wear pants in winter. If once I wear pants, I can't wear skirts. To wear pants is actually very warm and active. Today I attended the New Year party at the Hotel after five. (At that time Mr. Masaya Koizumi made a speech at the opening.) This morning I thought I would wear the long black skirt and the new red jacket because I would attend the party. I wore the flower brooch at my throat. To tell the truth I like this fashion. I felt I was elegant and I didn't feel cold. I decided to wear long skirts often this winter.

冬にはいつもパンツをはく。いったんパンツをはくとスカートはもうはけない。パンツは本当に暖かく、活動的。今日5時から、ホテルでの賀詞交換会に出席。（その時も、小泉正也氏は挨拶をなさった。）今朝、パーティだから、黒のロングスカートと赤の新しい上着を着ようと思った。胸元に花のブローチも着けた。本当のこというと、このファッションが好き。エレガントな気分になって、寒くなかった。この冬は、ロングスカートを度々着よう。

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spoken English

2005,1,6

Last night I sent an E-mail to Chris at ten o'clock pm and received his answer at midnight in Japan. Oh, how quickly he did it! It seems to me he received my E-mail early in the morning and returned it to me before going to his office in LA. He wrote at the end of his mail " Please say hello to your mother as well as the rest of your family." I didn't understand what this sentence meant exactly. I think, it means[他の家族の皆さんと同じように、お母さんにもよろしく伝えてね。]Is that right? { Yes, "Okaasan o hajime, minasan ni yoroshiku to" } Last month I received the textbook and CD from NOVA and I listened to the CD and read the textbook during the New Year

holidays. It is made up of English conversation in many situations.　I think it is written in easy English. But I found many strange phrases for me in it. I couldn't understand them. When I asked my son what they meant he answered unwillingly, " Take it easy, Mother. That's spoken language. It means what you feel. It's a bad way of Japanese who learned English in the old days to translate perfectly. " Yes, I learned English long long ago. Thirty years have past since I studied it at school. I learned "How do you do." instead of "Nice to meet you! ". It's most difficult for me to understand colloquial English. Though I check the dictionary, I can't find these phrases in it. What should I do? {It's always better to USE English more than you STUDY English. I promise that if you try new patterns and keep your English fresh, you will improve a lot! Don't worry about what you don't know! }

日本時間で昨夜 10 時に Chris に E メールを送って、夜中に返事を受け取った。なんて早いのでしょう！ロスで、早朝に受け取って、出勤前に返事をくれたのでしょう。メールの最後に " Please say hello to your mother as well as the rest of your family." と書いてあったが、この意味が正確にはわからない。[他の家族の皆さんと同じように、お母さんにもよろしく伝えてね。]ということかな？正しいですか？先月、NOVA のテキストと CD を受け取って、正月休みに予習した。いろいろな状況における英語の会話文で構成されている。簡単な英語で書かれていると思う。しかし、見たことの無い言い回しが多くて、わからなかった。息子にどういう意味か聞いたら、彼はめんどくさそうに「マジにならないで、話し言葉だから。オカンがそうかなと思ったとおりなんだよ。完璧に訳そうとするのは、昔、英語を勉強した人の悪い癖だよ。」そう、私は大昔に英語を習った。学校で勉強してから、30年以上たってしまった。"Nice to meet you! "ではなく"How do you do."と習ったのよ。私にとっては、話し言葉を理解するのが一番難しい。辞書で調べても出てないのだよ。どうすりゃいいの？

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for LA

2005,1,5

This morning my son and his girl friend left my house for Narita airport.　He will go to LA and she will go to London. He packed all night long and went to her house by car and came back to our house with her early in the morning. They carried very big suitcases and backpacks. At one o'clock I received E-mail from him on my cell hone. He said, "I have already arrived at Narita. I'm alone now and I will take a nap at the lounge." His plane would start in the evening.　I worried whether he would sleep too much.　Just now I checked the web site of Narita and knew his plane
departed safely. He is probably flying now.

今朝息子とＦちゃんは、成田空港に出発。彼はロス、彼女はロンドンに行くのだ。徹夜で荷造りして、早朝に車で迎えに行った。大きなスーツケースとリュックを持って行った。1時に、携帯にメールを受け取る。「もう成田に着いてます。一人なので、ちょっと居眠りします。」彼の飛行機は夕方出発するのだ。寝過ごさないか心配。今、成田のサイトで調べたら、飛行機は無事出発してい

た。今、飛行中でしょう。

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the New Year ceremony

2005,1,4

Today was the first workday of the year. I greeted everybody in my office “Happy New Year!” In the morning I attended the New Year ceremony that was held at the city gymnasium. There were many people at that place. I thought over one thousand people. The curtains with stripes of red and white were drawn and three women wearing Japanese Kimono played Koto music. At the opening the national anthem Kimigayo was sung by the soprano. I saw some commanders of the US Navy there. I didn’t know who they were but I thought they were men of high rank because they had many medals with their service dresses. I also met Mr.Masaya Koizumi who was the younger brother of the Prime Minister Koizumi. Mr. Koizumi is from Yokosuka and his private residence is near my office. Mr. Masaya always attends the meetings that are held in Yokosuka.

今日は仕事始め。職場の皆に「おめでとうございます。」と挨拶した。午前、市の体育館で開催された賀詞交換会に出席。たくさんの人がいた。多分千人以上。紅白の幕が張られ、着物を着た 3 人の女性が琴を演奏していた。最初に、国歌「君が代」がソプラノ歌手によって歌われた。アメリカ海軍司令官も数人見かけた。誰かは知らないけれど、軍服にたくさん勲章をつけていたから、位の高い人達なんでしょう。総理の弟の小泉正也氏にもお目にかかった。小泉さんは横須賀出身で私邸は私の職場の近くにある。正也氏は地元で開かれる集まりにはいつも出席している。

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Hakone Ekiden Ⅱ

2005,1,3

I went to Hamamiyama crossing road to cheer the Ekiden runners. Many people gathered and cheered "Do your best!" while waving flags for the runners. I visited the shrine on the way home and prayed for our peace. After coming back home I watched Ekiden on TV and noticed that the runner who was my son's schoolmate and the anchor for the Meiji University team, was substituted for by another runner. I think he was very poor but there was a severe competition. Tomorrow I must go to my office. I'm sighing deeply.

駅伝の応援に浜見山交差点に行った。たくさんの人が集まって、旗を振りながら「頑張って！」と声援した。帰り道、神社に参拝し、皆の無事を祈った。帰ってから、駅伝の TV を見て、息子の同窓だった選手は、明治大学のアンカーとしてエントリーされていたのに、別の選手に変えられていたことを知った。可愛そうだけど、厳しい世界なのだな。明日は仕事、深いため息。

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Hakone Ekiden

2005,1,2

Today is fine too. My husband washed the windows of our house in the morning. Why on New Year's Day？ He was supposed to wash them in the end of last year but it was snowing then. So he said to me,"I will do it on a fine day in the new year." In the morning I switched on the TV to watch the Hakone Ekiden. The runners of twenty universities in the Kantou area run along the road from Tokyo to Hakone. I live near the road that they run through. I was supposed to go to the Hamamiyama crossing road to cheer them. It is a fifteen-minute walk from my house to there but when I watched the TV they had already started running near the crossing road. So I gave up going there. If it is fine tomorrow, I will go. They will run from Hakone to Tokyo tomorrow. I'm sorry nobody graduated from the line up of universities in my family. The other day I read a community paper and knew one of the runners and my son graduated from the same high school. Today I asked my son if he knew the runner and handed the paper to him. " Do you know him?" "Oh, it's him. He was not my classmate but… perhaps he and I were in the same grade. He was famous as a fast runner. He's very great. " In the afternoon I practiced golfing at Asahi driving range. They gave me a pair of white Kasco socks for a New Years present. We can shoot as many balls as we want in two hours. I kept swinging my Driver in the air twice and shot nervously. My first shot was a slice ball. Next I missed twice. Oh my gosh! After that my shots were so- so as usual. I met some school friends. We are eager golfers. Ten minutes before the limit my coach came to me and said," Happy New Year! How about your shots today? " " Thank you. And same

to you. It's so-so as usual." "Don't be afraid. You had better turn your back before your arms." I tried that. The ball flew very well. But it's too late. The time limit was coming soon and I had to stop practicing. I had been wishing to be a good player and get better scores in the New Year. I know it's very difficult for me but I cannot help wishing it in this year.

今日も快晴。夫は、午前中、窓掃除。何故、正月に？昨年末にやるはずだったが、雪だった。それで、「新年になって、晴れた日にやるよ。」と言っていたのだ。朝、箱根駅伝を見るためにテレビをつけた。関東地方の20の大学の選手が東京から箱根まで道路を走る。私は、その道路の近くに住んでいる。浜見山交差点に応援にいくはずだった。そこまで、歩いて 15 分だけど、テレビを見た時には、もう交差点の近くを走っていたのであきらめた。明日晴れたら行こう。明日は、箱根から東京へ走る。残念ながら、家族の誰も出場校の出身ではない。先日ミニコミ紙を読んで、選手の一人と息子が同じ高校出身だと知った。今日、息子にその選手を知ってるか聞いて、ミニコミ紙を渡した。「彼を知ってる？」「ああ、彼か。同じクラスじゃなかったけど、多分、同じ学年だよ。足が速いので有名だった。凄いなあ。」午後は、ゴルフ練習。キャスコの白のソックスをお年玉サービスでくれた。2 時間打ち放題。2 回素振りしてから、緊張してドライバーを打った。スライスボール。次の 2 回は失敗。ア～ア。その後は、いつもどおりマアマア。何人かのスクール仲間に会う。私達は、とっても熱心なゴルファーです。制限時間 10 分前にコーチが来て、「おめでとう、今日の調子はどう？」「ありがとうございます。おめでとう。いつもどおり、まあまあです。」「怖がらないで、腕より先に背中を回す方がいいよ。」やってみたら、ボールはとてもよく飛んだ。すぐに制限時間が来て、止めなくてはいけなかった。新年には、いつも上手になって、いいスコアを出せるようにと願ってきた。難しいことは、分かってるけど、今年も願わずにはいられない。

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Happy New Year!

2005,1,1

It is very fine this morning and I can see the snow capped Mt. Fuji very clearly in front of my house. I spend a quiet New Year's day in my home. I called my mother who is celebrating New Year's Day with my sisters in Osaka. My elder son is at the ski resort in Nagano with his family and his wife's cousins. I worry whether little Taiga will catch a little cold. I believe we will have good things in 2005.

新年おめでとう。今朝はとても良い」天気で、家の前から、雪をかぶった富士山がとても綺麗にみえる。私は静かなお正月を自宅で過ごしている。姉達と大阪で正月を祝っている母に電話した。長男は、家族やオヨメサンの従妹たちと長野のスキー場にいる。小さな Taiga が風邪を引かないかちょっと心配。2005 年にはいいことがあると信じています。

an E-mail from Mt..Morris.

2005,2,28

When I turned on the computer after coming back home, I found an E-mail from Mt.Morris. Immediately I read it. I could mostly understand it without my dictionary but I didn't know the word "acres". "Our house is large and on 7 acres…" What is the meaning of "acres"? I checked it in my dictionary. Oh, it means エーカー. When I read "Gone with the wind" long long ago (of course in Japanese), I always found that word in that novel. As in Japan we use the metric system, I couldn't understand how wide it meant. But I think it's very wide. I'm really looking forward to staying there.

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preparation for the textbook

2005,2,27

Today I was supposed to play golf at Yugawara country club. When I was at the entrance of our house at seven thirty, our phone began to ring. "Today we can't play golf because it was snowing yesterday. The course is closed." To tell the truth I didn't want to play at Yugawara. When I played there the end of the last year, my score was very bad. At that time I thought I would never play there. As I finished my housework yesterday, I had a lot of free time. What would I do today? I decided to prep with the textbook at NOVA. As I passed the test the other day, I'm using a new book called zone E. We began to use the book zone D from this year. It has fifty lessons but I finished only fourteen. The instructor doesn't teach us in the numbered order. If I take a lesson without prep, it will finish without me understanding anything. It is very hard work to prep with the book from the first page to the end. But I should do it not to waste time and money. "Only by

listening you will be able to speak English." I see this copy sometimes in newspapers and magazines. Is it effective? I don't think it is so easy to master English conversation.

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tax system

2005,2,26

The other day I read an interesting article in the newspaper. In Japan we have been discussing about the environment tax in recent years. On the same day two councils were held. One of them was about the environment and the other was about industry. The environment council agreed on the introduction of the environment tax and the industry council didn't agree. We are also discussing about the repeal of the income tax cut. Someone says it is necessary for reforming the finances and another person says it is not good for the national economy. The consumption tax was introduced sixteen years ago in Japan. At that time I thought it was a good tax. If they don't want to pay the tax, they should not buy expensive goods. But in these days I think saving the money is good for the individual but it is not good for the national economy. In Japan salaried workers must pay the income tax from the salary. Actually I paid the tax from my salary. But last year I declared the income tax and paid it because I got the insurance. Though I understood it was the duty of the people to pay the tax, I felt I was unlucky. To discuss about the tax system is very difficult. People say various opinions from their situation. They say sometimes yes but sometimes no. Oh, I'm sorry I got confused trying to write about a difficult theme in English. It is more difficult for me to write about it in English.

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two native speakers

2005,2,25

When I was reading a newspaper at my desk at lunchtime, my staff called me. I found an American woman with my staff at the entrance of our office. I approached them and talked to her. She showed us her withholding tax slip. " Do you want to declare the tax? This office is not a national tax office." I showed her the map near my office and said, " You are here now. The tax office is there and the station is there. Do you understand?" She didn't seem to be able to understand the place. " Where is the base? Please tell me the tax office's phone number." " The base is there. The umber is…but the office is very busy now. Maybe you can't call them. I think you had better go there. It is very crowded these days. But today is cloudy so maybe it's not so crowded I think. Did you come here by car? There is no parking area at the tax office. You may park here. And you had better walk there. It's a fifteen minute walk from here." I told her desperately. She seemed to understand me and showed me her paper again. " My Japanese friend asked the tax office for me. They said I would get back my money. Do you think it's right?" " You are an English

conversation teacher, aren't you? Do you have any more income? " "No, only this. My husband is in the US navy." " Maybe I think you will get a lot." She smiled happily. "Thank you. I will go now." After that my staff said to me, "Great! I was surprised. You can speak English very well." I laughed and said to her, " I go to NOVA after work. The lesson fees are expensive. I could practice English conversation for free." When I boarded the train at Ofuna station on my way home, a tall foreign man motioned to me. Oh, he was Lee, the Australian instructor at NOVA! He told me that he had gone to Saitama to meet his friend. We talked about many things in the train. Strangely I could listen to him well and speak English smoothly. At the station we left saying, "Good bye! See you tomorrow!"

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my E-mail to Mt.Morris

2005,2,24

I am very glad to send you an E-mail for the first time. I will introduce myself before staying at your home in May. I was born as the youngest of three sisters in Osaka and came to Kanagawa when I was 23 years old. And I have been working as a government employee for a long time. My zodiac sign is Gemini. I have two sons but now I live only with my husband. My elder son got married two years ago and now lives in Nagoya with his wife and baby. My younger son lives in LA. When he began living in America last August, I was very worried about him. I visited him in LA with my husband last September. At that time we met your son Chris for the first time. As you know he was my son's roommate. I was very surprised that he could speak Japanese very well. And I decided to study English after coming back to Japan. We Japanese study English at junior high school and high school. We studied only reading and writing English instead of conversation at that time. And I had never had opportunities to use English for 30 years. Now I learn English conversation after work and I am being taught English using E-mail by your son. But it's very difficult for me to listen to the native speakers and I can speak a little. Please speak easy English slowly when I stay at your home. I have been to America only once and I have never been abroad by myself. I read the newspaper that said America has many great farms. Now I am looking forward to staying at your home in Mt. Morris.

When I was a little girl, I was always watching American programs like The I Love Lucy show, Andy Williams show, rawhide, Ben Kacy (doctor's drama) on TV and was looking forward to seeing American movies like The Sound of Music, Marry Popins and so on. I have been a fan of Robert Redford for a long time, too. I won't tell my age but perhaps you know my age. Hahahah… I think we will talk about many things together in easy English.

I have a regular checkup every year. When I had it last November, the doctor said to me, "You have nothing wrong in your body." I don't have any allergies, either. I had not caught a cold this winter. I like almost every food but I can't eat a lot of especially oily food. When I was young, I liked western dishes very much, for example hamburger, beefsteak, cake, ice cream and so on. These days I like plain dishes like Japanese dishes more than heavy dishes. I eat bread and butter

or cornflakes for breakfast. I drink a cup of coffee every morning. To tell the truth I couldn't live without coffee. I don't smoke but I drink some alcohol. I like to drink beer, wine, cocktails … every kind of alcohol. But I am not a heavy drinker.
I have written a long mail. I will write about my hobbies next time. Have a nice day! See you in Mt. Morris.

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Fuji Television

2005,2,22

These days the news says things about the trouble between Fuji Television and livedoor in Japan. I'm sorry it's very difficult for me to understand how to corner stocks. But it's very big news in Japan. Last year Fuji television had the best ratings in Japan.

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talking about food

2005,2,21

I bought some KURIKANOKO yesterday in Nagano. KURI means chestnut in Japanese and it is a special product of Nagano. "I wonder what KURIKONOKO is? " " It's a chestnut that's boiled and mixed with its paste." "Do you know what's in KURIKANOKO?" " I think it's chestnut paste with boiled chestnut in it." " Is it sweet?" "Yeah, pretty sweet but I think it tastes very delicious." I would like to bring some cans of them to Chicago. I think it's very important to talk about food but it's difficult for me to explain it. I had better explain the dishes that I will prepare before I make them in America.

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enjoying ski

2005,2,20

I've just come back home from Shirakabako in Nagano. I really enjoyed skiing, hot springs, various foods and so on. When I got up yesterday morning, it was snowing around our house. As we had to put snow chains on tires, it took a lot of time to get to the ski resort. My husband and I drove on the Tyuou highway from Kanagawa and my son's family drove there from Nagoya. We met at the Suwa service area at ten o'clock. Then we went to the ski resort by our car, because our car was four-wheel drive. After arriving at the ski resort, it stopped snowing. It was very fine for two days. We could ski on Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning. I borrowed a ski set from

my daughter in law and we skied alternately. I skied for the first time in eleven years. I'm not good at skiing but I could do as well as I could do eleven years ago. When she skied, I took care of Taiga in the room. I saw many kids skiing with their parents. I remembered when my little sons were skiing desperately. I want to go skiing with Taiga ten years from now, too. I decided to build up my health. We stayed at a large hotel and many foreigners stayed there. They looked like Japanese people but they didn't speak Japanese. I thought they were from South Korea and Taiwan. I went to a hot spring three times, Saturday evening, Sunday morning and Sunday afternoon. There were various bathtubs, for example a hot spring, bubble
bath and herb bath, in the big bathroom.

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my son

2005,2,18

My son is a graduate student in LA and he is working as an assistant teacher these days. I think it's very good for him to experience many things. Earning some money by himself is very important for him and very helpful for my husband and me. His computer and my computer are linked by the Skype system and MSN Messenger. When I turn on my computer after coming back home, his computer is always on line. It's midnight in LA. When I sent an instant message to him,he always answered,"I'm busy now. I'm doing my homework now." These days I don't send a message to him. I know he is alive because he is online. But yesterday he booked E-Tickets for me. I'm really thankful for him

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three tickets

2005,2,17

I can mostly understand what Chris writes on his web site without a dictionary everyday. But today's comment was very difficult for me. He
said the proverbs about time. I will ask him in an E-mail later. Today I got three tickets, from Tokyo to LA, from LA to Chicago and from Chicago to Tokyo, on the Internet. To tell the truth I asked my son in LA to book them because I don't know about airlines and a Mileage system particularly. He got the lowest priced and convenient tickets for me.

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too cold

2005,2,16

There was an earthquake in the Kantou area early this morning. I woke out of sleep at that time but I slept heavily again. When I heard the news on TV after getting up, I felt it was not my dream. This morning I was very sleepy because I celebrated myself drinking a whisky last night. Today I was thinking about going to the driving range after coming back to my home. But it was too cold to go there. I have three plans to go to golf courses in February and March. But my golf shots are very bad these days.
Actually playing golf with a bad score is not interesting at all. I think it's a waste of money.
Yesterday they said to me, "You are one of the honor students at NOVA." But I think I'm one of the inferior students in our golf school. Oh my gosh!
I was allowed to get holidays in this golden week by my boss. And I will get airline tickets on the Internet.

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Congratulations !

2005,2,15

Congratulations ! I passed the level up test today. Now I'm level five at NOVA. The test started at eight twenty pm and it was done on the TV telephone. The interviewer was in Osaka because the main office of NOVA is in Shinsaibashi in Osaka. I was interviewed for twenty minutes in English. I was very nervous and the end of the test I said to him," I will tell my husband how difficult this test is." I waited for about
fifteen minutes to receive the result. I was thinking I would not pass and it was OK. The Japanese staff brought me the paper and told me, " Congratulations, you have passed!" And she explained to me my result. Lee and Sharon gathered around me and said, " Congratulations! Great!" Sharon threw herself into my arms and I shook hands with Lee. To tell the truth, I must appreciate Lee because he recommended me to level five. Of course I owe my passing to Chris.

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level up test

2005,2,14

I'm very excited now. After the lesson at NOVA the instructor said to me, " You may try the level up test tomorrow. I will recommend you. Congratulations! Do your best." I was very surprised because they said it was very difficult to get a recommendation. Now I will practice how I will introduce myself.

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Hina dolls

2005,2,13

Today I displayed my Hina dolls in our living room. I am the youngest of three sisters and we didn't have our own Hina dolls for each other. My mother made three pairs of dolls for her daughters about twenty-five years ago by herself. My dolls are not so gorgeous. They are old and little. But I think I will have to treat them carefully. When I was young I wanted to buy gorgeous Hina dolls for my daughter. But I have only sons. If I have a grand daughter, I would like to give her pretty Hina dolls sometime.

In the afternoon I went to NOVA and participated in the Voice class. There are eight people in the room. We played some games speaking English. One of them was a game named "who am I?" First, the instructor put a paper on which was written a famous name on our back. Others could know my name but I couldn't know who I was. I asked others who I was. "Am I a famous actress?" " Umm··· may-be." " Am I a young American?" "Not young but you are very pretty. Everybody likes ou. Maybe you are American." " Umm···? I'm not a girl? " " Umm···It's difficult to answer but not a girl." At that time I understood who I am. " Do I live at Disneyland?" "Yeah! " " Oh, I'm Minnie. Mickey's partner." They clapped their hands. Next, we made a story about how we will spend our Valentine's Day. Hiromi, Youko and I talked about a gorgeous trip for Valentine's Day. Of course we had to talk in English but sometimes we did in Japanese. " We went to Las Vegas on Valentine's day. First we drove around in a limousine and ate big hamburgers in the car. After that we went to the famous Hotel and gambled. We got much money at a casino. We used only one dollar but got one million dollars. Then we went to the theater with a lot of money and watched the men's nude show. It was very interesting. After that we came back to the Hotel and ate various foods in our room. After that we shared one hundred dollars." When I told this story, everybody laughed and we got the first prize. The instructor gave us chocolates. I had a very fun time at NOVA.

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Chicago and LA

2005,2,12

I told my plan to my son in LA on Skype. When I want to talk with my son, I always use this new system. I think it's very cheap. He said, "If you will go to Chicago, why don't you stop by LA. Don't you know the airfare is the same? Though I can't look after you, you can take a bus by yourself, can't you? There are many museums in LA. You can visit our study and you can stay in my room." Oh, it's very great! I want to meet Chris again. And I want to meet my son's new friends and his professors. But it must be a big adventure for me. I wonder if I could go to LA from Chicago by myself. My plan is still uncertain but it will be bigger and bigger.

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Japanese foods

2005,2,11

When I will go to Mt.Morris, I will cook Japanese food for the host family. I think I can't take raw ingredients but I am allowed to take processed foods with me. I will cook chirashizushi, soba, sekihan(glutinous rice steamed with red beans) and rice cakes and so on. But as I'm not good at cooking, I had better practice to cook them. On the way home from NOVA, I stopped in the super market and bought some ingredients. Tonight I cooked chirashizusi and Japanese soup using convenience food. That tasted so－so. I think eggs are sold all over the world. By the way can I buy white rice in Illinois? Oh, I had better practice to boil the rice in a sauce pan. Though I always boil it in a rice－
cooker in Japan, I can't use it in America.

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the China town

2005,2,10

I ate bibinbap for my lunch at the Korean restaurant near my office. That restaurant opened a few days ago. In Japan the Korean style is in fashion and there are many Korea towns recently. I have been to the Korea towns in Osaka and Kawasaki. There are many China towns in Japan, too. Incidentally I was working at the office near the famous China town in Yokohama for nine years. Many times I went there to eat lunch and sometimes had a year-end party and a New Year party there. It was very crowded on the weekdays. They say because the new station of the new subway, the Minato Mirai line, opened by the town last February, it is crowded more these days. It is like rush hour congestion on the weekend. I feel the great Chinese energy in that town. Overseas Chinese are active all over the world and they are called Kakyou(華僑)in Japan.

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Mt.Morris

2005,2,9

I received E-mail from Yukie. She said if I would go to Mt.Morris, I would have great days and the host family would welcome me. I was very glad to hear that and I decided to talk about my holidays with my boss. We have a world atlas in my home but I couldn't find Mt. Morris in it. So I tried to find it on the web site, yahoo America, and I could find it west of Chicago. To tell the truth I worried about going abroad by myself. I must prepare for my travel thoroughly.

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ski resort

2005,2,8

Now I am wearing skiwear. I bought them over ten years ago. When my sons were little, we went skiing in Nagano every winter. As they grew up they began to go skiing with their friends. So I've never been to a ski resort for these ten years. My son's family went to a ski resort in Nagano in this New Year holidays. When I heard it, I said to my son, "Did you enjoy skiing? You had a nice

time. I would like to ski once more." " If you want to go skiing, why don't you go with my family? Let's go to the ski resort in February." Today I received an e-mail from my son on my cell-phone at lunchtime. He wrote, " I reserved two rooms at the hotel near Shirakabako in Nagano for next weekend. We will be able to rent ski wearand ski sets." It excited me. As soon as I came home, I wore my old ski suit. Those pants are pink and the jacket is white. It just fits me but it is too young for me. My husband said to me," It looks strange a little. But nobody will look at you. It's OK. You had better wear it to save money." I though so and I decided to wear it.

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Chicago Ⅱ

2005,2,7

Today I bought a book about Chicago. There are many guidebooks for sightseeing tours at the bookstore but there is only one book that was written about Chicago. I think Chicago is not a sightseeing area. What do I know about Chicago? Umm··· Let me see. When I was a schoolgirl, I learned that Chicago was a big city near the Great Lakes in America. Perhaps there is the central office of the famous department store, Sears. Oh, it's famous for gangs. The famous movies " The Untouchable" and "The Sting" were set in Chicago. Incidentally the family of my sister in law (my husband's younger sister) was living in Chicago for three years about twenty years ago. Her husband worked at the branch office of a Japanese bank and her two daughters (Takashi's cousins) went to the elementary school and preschool there. She said," It is very cold in winter. We can't go out without caps that cover our faces." That's all I
know about Chicago now. I will read the book and prepare for going to Chicago in spring.

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physical appearance

2005,2,6

Today I got up at seven o'clock and I did some housework. I ate Vietnamese noodles for an early lunch and went to NOVA. Today we learned how to describe physical appearance. So I will describe my instructors at NOVA. Nancy is a New Zealander. She is in her mid-twenties and she is not so tall. She is about one hundred sixty centimeters and she is not so thin. Her hair is shoulder-length and wavy. Lee is an Australian and he is a surfer. He is pretty tall and in good shape with short blond hair. I think he is in his late thirties. Dan is a young American with short brown hair. I think he is about the average height of Americans and he's kind of slim. Gavin is a young Englishman and he is pretty short. I think he is shorter
than my sons. He is a thin with brown curly hair. Sharon is an Australian. She is in her late twenties and she is well built with long brown hair. Sometimes she braids her hair in three strands. It seems to me they have the characters of their country. It's very interesting for me to speak

with them about their countries, their favorite Japanese foods, their favorite Japanese TV programs and so on. All of them say they like Sushi, Yakiniku and Nomihoudai but don't like Nattou. Everybody says studying
Japanese is very difficult for them and they can't master it because they can't speak Japanese at NOVA.

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Chicago

2005,2,5

If I have ten holidays in this golden week, I want to go to Chicago. I think I will be able to go to the airport but I will not be able to go to the home that I will stay by myself. I want somebody to welcome me at the airport. If he will hang out the paper with MASAHO in big characters, I will find him easily. I want to experience the ordinary life in America, working at a farm, shopping (I don't want to buy brand- name goods.), taking a walk, chatting about easy topics and playing golf. I will cook Japanese food for the host family. My main purpose of a home stay is using English so I wish to converse about many things. But as I am a bad English speaker, I want my host family to speak easy English slowly. I'm sorry I can't determine my plan now but I will make it clear in the end of March.

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a jury system

2005,2,4

I read about a jury system in the newspaper the other day. In many advanced countries they have jury systems. It is said in Japan that a citizen must participate in the trials and reflect the opinions of the ordinary people. I think the ordinary people who don't study law tend to judge things with feelings and it's not good for deciding important things. If we are selected for the juries, we must study law and check the events deeply. But it's very difficult for many people to do that. I don't agree with a jury system. I'm sorry as I am not familiar with the jury systm, I think with my feelings. To tell the truth when I was a student, I majored in law. As soon as I entered the university I knew it's very difficult for me to pass the bar examination. And I gave up studying for it. I don't have a logical mind. Some of my schoolmates could pass the
bar examination and they are around as a lawyer now. I think the judgment must be done by the experts.

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Matt

2005,2,3

Every morning I hear Chris's voice on his web site. I think as his voice is high and clear, it's easy for me to listen to. This morning I found two icons and I clicked one of them. At that time I heard another person's voice. I was very surprised but I could understand mostly what he said. His voice was deep and it's very difficult to understand. I listened to him many times. He said, "My name is Matt. I'm from St. Louis in Missouri. I'm twenty-nine years old and I just returned from a vacation in
Thailand. I like Thailand very much and would like to move there someday. Bye-bye." I couldn't get " in Missouri" . I found that Chris wrote "We met in Shimane in 1999. " in another column. Oh, it's very awesome! I wonder if Matt can speak Japanese as well as Chris ? Today is the day before the beginning of spring. Every year I scattered parched beans to drive out bad luck. But today I forgot to buy beans. As I noted it after having a bath, I couldn't go to the convenience store.
I found garbanzo beans in my cupboard. And I scattered them instead of soybeans.

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the funeral

2005,2,2

Just now I came back from Osaka. I think life is an empty dream. We must set our affairs in order every time. I could see the beautiful snow scene from the window of the Shinkansen near Maibara. But the Shinkansen was late for the scheduled time.

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my aunt

2005,2,1

My aunt (my mother's sister) died and I am going to Osaka by Shinkansen to attend her wake and funeral now. When I was a little girl, she loved me very much. I pray for her soul.

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a big mistake

2005,3,31

This morning I made a call to my son in America again but the phone was dead. I said to the answering machine," This is your mother speaking. You will get a scholarship. We received the papers. Please check my E-mail." To be honest I couldn't understand the announcement in English but I tried to record it. After coming back home I couldn't find his E- mail. We worried

about him. “Now he has a spring break. He must be going to the mountain with his American friends.” “I wonder if he could prepare the papers only in two weeks. “ Just now I noticed the answering machine in our home. I could hear his voice. He said “It’s Takashi speaking. I’ve arrived at …….” Of course he spoke in Japanese but his voice was too unclear to catch. I expect him to send an E mail to me tomorrow morning.

By the way in our office two women retired from the job today. Both of them have worked for forty-two years since they graduated from high school. We were very surprised to see them wearing the same suit but we pretended not to notice that. Did they agree to do that? No, not at all. They aren’t friends of each other that I know. One of them said to me,” No way! Today is the last day on my job but I made a big mistake. I should buy my suit at another department store. Both of us live in the same city, you know. We bought this suit at the same store by accident. “

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an answering machine

2005,3,30

As soon as I got up this morning, I turned on my computer. But I didn’t find the E-mail from my son. So I called him. To tell the truth I had never called his cell phone. Though I expected him to answer, a woman said something in English. I was very surprised and I couldn’t understand what she had said. I think this voice was an answering machine and he was staying in the countryside because he said the second quarter had finished. At that time I had to start from my house to go to work immediately. I will try to do it tomorrow morning.

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a great scholarshp

2005,3,29

I found a big envelope in our mailbox when I came home. It was good news for us. We were really waiting for it. It said my son will get a scholarship. Congratulations to him! My son came back to Japan to take that interview last December. He stayed in Japan for only three days because he was very busy in LA. It says that he must return some papers in two weeks and he must send his health certificate. Oh no, he lives in America now. What should we do? I talked about it with my husband and for now I took some pictures of the papers. Then I sent an E-mail to my son with attached files. At first they said that they would send the result of the interview in February. We were tired of waiting. And now they asked him to send a quick response. I think it’s really a bureaucracy.

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a private announcement

2005,3,28

It was raining today but it wasn't so cold. I think I will enjoy this spring soon. There was a private announcement of the personnel change in this April. I will not change offices and my problematic staff will move to another section. I was really relieved to hear that and I think I will go to America without worry.

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Calley's husband

2005,3,27

In the afternoon I went to NOVA and participated in the voice class. The instructor was a man from Scotland and he said that he always taught at Odawara NOVA and only today he taught here. As soon as I heard that I thought he must have been Calley's husband. Because Calley is from Scotland and she said her husband worked at NOVA in Odawara . I said to him," I think you must be Calley's husband. " "Good guess. " Both of them are from Scotland and came to Japan about two years ago. They had lived in Osaka since they came to Japan and in February they moved to
Fujisawa. I hear they live near my house now. We taught him about our area in English. "You had better go to the Ouba site of castle Park to see the beautiful cherry blossoms. But it's a twenty-minute bus ride from your house. Oh, I remember. There is a beautiful cherry blossom tree at the Tsuchiuchi Park. It's only about two hundred meters from your house, I think." He said our area was near the sea and a very nice place. I said to him, "Do you know this area is called Shounan? People say Shounan is one of the best places in Japan." " Oh, I see. But what is Shounan? " " It's very difficult to explain. Many people have many opinions. Some say Shounan is the coast from Kamakura to Ooiso. But some say from Zushi to Odawara." " What is the Kantou area?" " It means a large area. Tokyou, Kanagawa, Chiba, Saitama and so on. I think the Kantou area and Shounan are not formal names. My address is Fujisawa city in Kanagawa prefecture Japan. " To be honest, I wanted to ask him the difference between Scotland, England and Ireland. But forty minutes finished at once. After the voice class when I met Calley at the entrance counter, she said to me with a laugh,"My husband doesn't have hair, you know." and gave me Easter candies.

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a fine day

2005,3,26

After NOVA I went to the beauty parlor to cut my hair. At that time I received an E-mail on my cell phone from my friend. "If you are free this afternoon, would you have lunch with me?"

Immediately I sent a response. “ I’m so sorry but my schedule is very tight today.” In the evening I chatted with my son on the Internet. He said that he was in San Francisco. He was staying at his friend’s home and he would meet an
American who was the professor of Keiou Univ. in Japan. I heard he taught my son how to write a report in English when my son was a university student in Japan.

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at a party

2005,3,25

After work I went to Yokohama and had a party with fellows from work. One of them told me,” Now my office is in Tsukui, the northern area in Kanagawa. You know, it’s really countryside. I bought a car to go to work last spring. It’s a very nice place. The other day I saw fog from the river and a misty mountain. In autumn I could see the beautiful colored leaves. When it snowed in winter, the scenery was wonderful.” “Really? I would like to work there but it’s too far for me to go there every day. How far is it from your house?” “It’s only a forty-five minute drive from my house. But if I take a train and a bus, it takes one hour and half. It takes too long a time.” I came home after eleven o’clock and went to bed as soon as I arrived home.

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Taiga's birthday ♪

2005,3,24

Today is my grandson, Taiga’s birthday. I sent a birthday card by E-mail. Of course as he doesn’t have a mail address, I sent it to his parents. It was an animation card where five frogs were jumping from the pond saying “Happy birthday to you!” I wrote on it, “Happy birthday to Taiga! Now you are one year old. Every day we have been glad to see you since you were born. We keep your little shoes in our home and do you need these shoes to walk on the ground now?” At the office our part time staff gave me a beautiful floral decoration. She told me that her mother and she run a flower shop and she made this flower arrangement.

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the keyboard

2005,3,23

When I used my computer with Yukie last Sunday, I had trouble with it. There seemed to be a problem with the keyboard. Although I pressed the keys, I couldn’t write letters on the display. “ Oh, I think the cables aren’t connected property, one moment. I’ll check. “ There is a tower (a

hard drive) on the floor. When I vacuum my room, I always pull out the connecters.

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how to threw away the trash....

2005,3,22

This morning I left my home with garbage bags. At that time I saw many crows around the garbage dump. No way, I found some bags broken and a lot of garbage upset. We started to dump the garbage bags under the net since about two years ago in our city because crows eat garbage every time. These days we don't see them around the garbage dump. But today they held up the net and ate garbage. How clever they are! By the way I take out the garbage on my way to work in the morning from Tuesday to Friday. On every Tuesday and Friday we must throw away the garbage. On every Wednesday we must throw away the trash made from plastic. And on Thursday we must throw away cans, bottles and papers that will be recycled twice a month. On the other Thursday we must throw away incombustibles. In addition if we want to throw away the large trash, we must buy a seal for five hundred yen and put it on the trash. Then we must call the waste treatment center to take it off. These rules are very difficult and I always check the guidebook how to throw away the trash.

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I'm a terrible golfer.....

2005,3,21

I played golf at the Sagamino country club with the former coworkers. One of them is really good at golf. He said to me, " I hear you have been practicing at the golf school. What does your instructor teach you? You don't get better. I have always advised you how to putt but you have never listened to me. Don't hit more than four after you are in front of a green. " " I always try to follow your advice but I can't do as well as you. I have no athletic ability." To tell the truth I'm tired of playing golf. Now I felt a little depressed about my score. But I think I had better continue playing golf even if I'm a terrible golfer.

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with Yukie

2005,3,20

Today I met Yukie at my home and I told her what I want to do and see in Mt, Morris.
I prepared chirashizushi and Youkan that was made from chestnuts. I let her try to eat what I wanted to cook in America. We called Monte and Judy in America from my home. I was really

tensed up but I said to them " This is Masaho speaking. I'm looking forward to visiting your home. I'm planning to prepare some Japanese food for you. I will go to LA from Tokyo for the first time and then I will go to Chicago from LA. I will stay in LA for two days because my son lives there now. " I thought it's
very difficult to listen to English by phone. But I could understand almost everything they said. I thought Yukie got used to speaking in English. I will go to America by myself in a little more than a month. I must do my best to study English conversation.

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thirty years ago

2005,3,19

What do you think the most useful and important invention in the last hundred years is? I think it's a computer. I don't think I could live without it. It's probably the most useful because if I don't have it I couldn't contact my son in LA easily. On the other hand, if the Wright brothers didn't invent the airplane, my son couldn't live in LA. I think the world changed in the last thirty years rather than one hundred years. My mother has never driven, gone abroad and played golf. But I have experienced all of them. When I was young, I couldn't study abroad but my son is doing it now. The other day I read an interesting article in the ewspaper. A famous Japanese scholar was studying at California Institute of Technology in nineteen fifty-seven. In that age it took thirty-six hours to California from Tokyo by airplane and he couldn't come back to Japan even when his father died. If I were thirty years younger, I could study abroad. It was too difficult for an ordinary student to study abroad thirty years ago.

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the farewell party

2005,3,18

I attended the farewell party of our office at the Prince Hotel. We will have an annual personal transfer in the first of April and two women will retire from the job. We ate a delicious French dinner with several wines. At the end of the party I said the closing address in front of our coworkers. It was said 中締め in Japanese. " Today we had a great banquet. The feast was great and abundant but the time to close is coming up now. We will say good bye with the clapping of our hands." In fact last night we
held the farew

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It will be spring soon.

2005,3,17

I feel that spring has really started approaching now. I can see the beautiful Japanese apricot flower from the window of the train on my way to work. I think it's very good for us to have four seasons in Japan. Cherry trees are about to blossom soon. In Japan the school year and fiscal year start in April. Beautiful cherry blossoms go with the start of the school year and so on.

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at NOVA with Gavin

2005,3,16

Today my instructor at NOVA was Gavin from England. He taught me the day before yesterday and yesterday. " I meet you everyday for these three days! I'm glad to see you every night." " Me, too. I'm glad to meet you every day after NOVA. " He answered with a wicked smile. "After NOVA? Oh, I want to meet Gavin after NOVA but he always say no." " Masaho, you are very funny." We started our lesson with a laugh. We learned what course we want to take at a community center. I said, " I'm
thinking about signing up for swimming." "How about synchronized
swimming?" " It's too hard foe me. I think I'm too old to try it. Hahaha…" Come to think of it, going to NOVA after work every day is very hard for me but it's interesting and good for a change. So far, I'm sorry my English is not progressing so much.

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my school days

2005,3,15

My favorite teacher at the high school was the Japanese teacher who praised my composition. As he encouraged me, I wrote the short story for the school magazine. I guess he is old and I wonder what he' s up to now. I attended the class reunion last summer but nobody talked about him. I have some friends who graduated from the same high school in Osaka. I am keeping in contact with them now. We sometimes get together and eat dinner at a restaurant. I really enjoyed chatting with them.

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Japanese middle aged man

2005,3,14

This morning I received an E-mail reply from Chris. He praised my English

composition and I told my husband about it gladly. My husband said to me," American is good at a compliment." I expected him to say so. A Japanese middle-aged man never praises his wife. Why don't they? If Chris says the same thing to my son, I guess he will say, " Oh, no. Don't say such a thing to my Okan (it's Osaka Japanese, meaning mother). She is a kind of woman who is easy to get carried away."

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my ideal actor

2005,3,13

This morning I was doing the laundry when the shelf beside the washing machine suddenly felt down on me. Oh my goodness! There were many goods on it, for xample a box of detergent, a bottle of bleach, a bottle of liquid detergent and three buckets. When I saw these goods scattering all over the floor, I got upset. But it was very lucky for me the box and the bottles weren't broken. The powder was in the box and not upset. Every kind of liquid was not polluted. I cleared them quickly and cleaned my house within an hour. I live in a condo near the station. I'd rather live in a condo than a detached house because they're easier to clean up. In the afternoon I went to the VOICE class at NOVA. Today we spoke about our ideal person with each other. My ideal actor would have bright blond hair and cool blue eyes and what's more he would be honest, clever and full of intelligence. Someone said, " My ideal lady would be arrogant…..." Dan said, "What are you saying?" " Oh, no. He said elegant." Dan taught us the word "sugarcoated" Everybody couldn't understand the
word. I asked him, " Even if I can't understand what you say, and I say Hmm, is that so? Is it sugarcoated?" " My house is very small and dirty but only the entrance is gorgeous. Is it sugarcoated?" "Yeah, OK" To be honest, I could understand only half of what he said. Our branch is small and there are few instructors. The mass of instructors are from England, Australia and New Zealand. He is the only American now and he is from Minnesota. He speaks English with a Minnesota accnt.

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Christine

2005,3,12

I have a slight cold in the head. It's not so bad but as I would like to be fine next week I stayed home except for going to NOVA. I booked a lesson at NOVA some days ago and if I canceled the lesson today, I had to pay the lesson fee. So I went there. I was coming back home when I found a few leaflets in our post box. One of them was an advertisement for an English conversation school. It said in Japanese, " A message from Chris My name is Chris and I opened the English conversation school in Shounandai. As my husband is a Japanese, I will be living here in the

future. I won't bother you according to my convenience ." I was surprised to read it. Why is her name is Chris? Is Chris a man's name? At the end of the paper she wrote, " Please come to my free lesson. Christine" I understood that a man's name is Christopher and woman's name is Christine. Her house is not so far from my house. It's a twenty-minute drive. I wonder if I will apply for a free lesson but I think I can't spend time and money to learn English any more.

-△-

a little cold

2005,3,11

Today I have a little cold and a sore throat. After taking a tablet, I will go to bed as soon as possible. I want to read a book that I borrowed from the library in my bed. Its title is "English conversation at a home stay".

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the Day of the dead in Mexico

2005,3,10

Yesterday I heard about the Day of the dead in Mexico for the first time at NOVA. On that day people offer food and alcohol to the family's ancestors. I thought it was very similar to Japanese Obon in summer. There is a Buddhist festival period called bon in Japan. We make animal's ornaments by using some vegetables, eggplant and cucumber for example and display them with some foods in front of the family Buddhist altar to welcome the soul of our ancestors. Some time ago I researched what the Day of the dead is on the Internet. I was surprised that I found it was a very
pleasant festival. The ornaments of skeletons are really humorous and pretty.

-△-

a man or a woman

2005,3,9

There are many festivals in Japan. The doll's festival is the third of March and the Children's day is the fifth of May. Children's day is a festival for boys from long ago and we display the ornament of helmets and put up carp streamers. We have an ornament and a carp streamer in our house. My parents gave those goods to my older son twenty-five years ago. These goods don't seem to look old and I think we will give them to Taiga on this Children's day. My mother made a samurai doll for my younger son. I think if my younger son will have a son in the future, I will give it to him. But to be honest I want to have a granddaughter in the future. I would like to give her pretty Hina

dolls. I have two sisters and my cousins are all girls. But I have only sons and my grandchild is a boy. My cousin's children are all boys. Only girls have been born in the Japanese Royal Family sinse about forty years ago. The Prince of Japan doesn't have sons but has a daughter. It's a big problem in Japan becouse Japanese law states that the Emperor is a man. A woman can't be the Emperor. Now the Japanese government is discussing whether a woman can be the Emperor or not. I agree to allow women to become emperors. I sympathize with Princess Masako's big pressure.

-△-

the tax system Ⅱ

2005,3,8

The other day I read the report about tax systems in America. In that country if they know that their neighbor or acquaintance earns a lot of money but doesn't pay enough tax, they can report about that to the tax office. And the tax office must pay a fee to them, if it is true. In Japan we don't have such a system. Our government publishes the list of rich people instead of this system.

-△-

somewhat lonely

2005,3,7

This morning my son went to Tokyo on business from our house. After we went to work, my daughter in law went back to Nagoya with her son by the Shinkansen. I came home after learning English conversation at NOVA in the evening. I found her E-mail on my computer and we could hear her message on our answering machine. She said that she had taken a few videos of Taiga using my digital camera. Immediately I watched the videos on my computer. Taiga was eating breakfast, which I had prepared for him cheerfully. Our home has echoed with our laughter for two days but now it
is very quiet. I am feeling somewhat lonely.

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Enoshima island

2005,3,6

Today we were planning to go to the new Enoshima aquarium by car. It's only a twenty-minute drive from our home. But when we arrived there, that parking lot was full. We parked in another parking lot and walked around Enoshima instead of there. The wind from the sea was strong and it

was a little cold . But we enjoyed going deep into the cave and walking at the shrine. Taiga was having fun watching many cats and kites. This island is famous for many cats.

-△-

Taiga came to my home.

2005,3,5

This morning I went to Ikoinoyu after a long time. It is a fifteen-minute drive from my house. But as there was a traffic jam today, it took longer than usual. When I came back home, my husband said to me that my daughter in law would come to our house with our son. She was supposed to visit our house because my son had come to Tokyo on business since last Wednesday. My grand son caught a cold and had a high fever last week. She called us to say that they couldn't visit our home on Saturday. But as Taiga had been fine since yesterday, she thought she could go to our home. I vacuumed our house hurriedly. Taiga sometimes crawled, sometimes cried, sometimes laughed… I was very busy today.

-△-

publishing system

2005,3,4

In Japan people declare the income tax from the sixteenth of February to the fifteenth of March. And the national tax offices have been publishing the list of the people who paid over ten million yen income tax since over fifty years ago. It is stipulated in the income tax law. The law set down this system. Some criminals and salesmen used this system sometimes. Some people declare the tax after the deadline to escape this
system. Now we are discussing about establishing the law protecting personal information in Japan. They say this law will be established soon. The tax receipt is really personal information. Why don't we discuss to stop this system? It seems to be stopped as soon as we will establish the new law. I think it isn't reasonable to continue this system. But to be honest I 'm not worried about this system individually because I can't pay such a lot of tax. By the way Tsutsumi who was chosen the richest man in the
world by "Forbes" was arrested yesterday. He was the top of the Seibu company group which owns Seibu railroad, Prince Hotel, and the Seibu Lions baseball team for example. I hear he didn't pay so mach tax by being cunning. Oh my Gosh!

-△-

Doll's Festival

2005,3,3

Today is the Doll's Festival day. They say we should clear the dolls as soon as the festival is finished. If we display the dolls for a long time after today, the girl will not get married. But as I have no daughter and I got married long ago, I think I will display them for more time.

-△-

personality traits

2005,3,2

One of my staff is really self-centered, haughty, lazy, careless, a liar and stubborn. I've never met such a person. She is the most self-centered woman I've ever met. She never says good morning to us in the morning and never says good-bye to us. What she says and does are always strange. She sometimes comes late for work but she never apologizes. But another woman is really friendly and considerate. The young man seems to be serious but a little bit of a dawdler. I think the other man is dark, shy but
creative. My boss is easygoing but sometimes uptight. What are my personality traits? Well I suppose I'm optimistic, generous but sometimes careless. It's very difficult for me to tell my own personality.

-△-

a mail box

2005,3,1

My son got a little money last year and he paid the withholding tax. The other day we received two withholding slips from the university and the design company. I thought if he declares, he would be able to take back the tax. At lunchtime I wrote the tax paper for him. I bought some stamps to mail it to the tax office at the convenience store in front of the station. I put a stamp on the envelope on the counter at the store and I asked the clerk. " Would you please tell me where the mail box is? " " Here it is." She answered me dubiously and pointed down. I was very surprised to find the mailbox at the convenience store. " Well, I read in the newspaper that the post office was tied up with convenience stores. But…I saw it for the first time."

to Mt.Morris

2005,4,30

I woke up at 6 o' clock but my son couldn' t wake up early in the morning because he studied until midnight. He took off to LAX at 8. At the check in counter the clerk said to us," Too late. Maybe your baggage can' t catch your plane. But you will be able to receive your baggage one hour later. The next plane will take your baggage to O' Hare in Chicago." MY son apologized to me and said to me," Don' t worry, Mom. I' ll explain to Chris to call his parents. They will help you." My son saw me off at the security check concernedly. There was no Japanese except me. My seat was a window side and there was a young American family next to my seat. Two American little girls looked at me strangely. I introduced myself to their father. He smiled at me and said to me,"We' ll go to ??? to play chess." It took about 3 and a half hours from LAX to O' Hare. He began to teach his daughter how to play chess with a small chess set. On the way as our plane rolled hard, the girls cried and I felt afraid a little. After that I folded some Origami from the scratch papers and gave it to the elder daughter. She was very surprised and said tome," Make a crane for my sister." Just before arriving at the airport, the father explained to me how to go to the baggage claim area. "We'll change the plane here. It' s easy for you to go there. Only follow the people." I took their picture for the memory of my trip. At the baggage claim area Mr. And Mrs. Nixon found me easily. I was very relived and glad. And as my plane brought my baggage, we found it easily. We drove to Mt.Morris from the airport. They told me to sit down in the front seat to be able to see the beautiful scenery clearly. As they spoke English slowly, we could talk about many things in the car. At the Mexican restaurant in Rockford we ate dinner. When we arrived at their house, I was very surprised because their house was very big and gorgeous. They led me to in the beautiful bedroom and the luxurious bathroom. There was a carpet around the bathtub. I' ve never seen such a gorgeous bathroom. My life in Mt.Morris began like this･･･

6 時に起きたけど、息子は深夜まで勉強しているので、寝坊した。8 時に空港に着くと、「おそすぎるから、荷物は間に合わないよ、荷物だけ次の便になるかもね。」「わるかったけど、心配しないで、Chris に電話してご両親に伝えてもらうから」心配顔の息子と別れ、搭乗。日本人は私だけ、隣はアメリカ人のヤングファミリー。挨拶したらは、チェスの試合で？？に行くふうなことを言っていた。3 時間半のフライトの途中、飛行機は大揺れし、女の子たちは大泣きし、私も怖かった。メモ用紙で折り紙を作ってあげると、大喜び。オヘア空港に着く前に、自分達は乗り換えるけど、ただ皆に着いて行けばいいとアドバイスしてくれる。思い出に写真を 1 枚。空港ではご両親がすぐ声を掛けてくれたし、荷物も無事届いていた。景色が良く見えるようにと、車の前の席に座らせてくれる。ゆっくり話してくれるので、色々おしゃべり。ロックフォードのメキシコレストランで夕食後、ご自宅へ。大きな家でびっくり。綺麗なベッドルームと、バスタブのまわりが絨毯のお風呂に案内してくれる。こんなすごいお風呂は、見たことがない！！こうして、Mt.Morris の生活が始まる･･･。

-△-

at Verdugo hills golf course

2005,4,29

Today I played golf with Chris chatting in only English. He picked me up at 10:00. Of course my score was very bad but it was very fun. Chris said to me," Don't worry about your score. Enjoying golf is most important." He taught me many English golf phrases. "Sit down! Go left! Go go go! Talk to your ball." We played at Verdugo hills golf course. That course is a local par 3 course but very nice and the greens fee is very cheap. After enjoying golf we drove to Santa Monica and ate Italian food there. Chris called My son to come back to his house but his phone was dead. As I knew Chris was very busy, I said to him,"You had better go back to your apartment. I'm OK. I'll wait him in front of the door." As soon as he left, an Asian student who lived in the house next my son's house opened the door and said to me," Please come in." He seemed to be an Asian American and studying medical science because there was a thick medical book on his desk. He served me an apple juice and talked for a while. Soon my son came back and they talked very fast. I'm sorry I couldn't listen to them. Chris, my son and I went to the Japanese Soba restaurant. The employees were Japanese but I ordered to them," Please lotus roots." They laughed hard. After dinner we drove to his apartment and he lent his bicycle to my son.

今日は、クリスと英語だけでゴルフをした。 10 時に迎えに来てくれた。スコアは悪かったけど、とても楽しかった。「スコアは気にしない。楽しむことが一番大切。」英語でゴルフ用語を教えてもら

う。今日の Verdugo hills は、ショートコースだが、とてもいい所で料金も安かった。ゴルフの後は、サンタモニカでイタリアンの昼食。クリスが息子に電話したが、出ない。彼も忙しいので、「ドアの前で待ってるから、帰って。」と言った。彼が帰った後、すぐにお向かいのアジア系のアメリカ人学生が、ドアを開けて「入ってください。」と呼んでくれる。分厚い医学書から、医学生だと分かった。ジュースを出してくれて、しばしおしゃべりしていると、息子が帰宅し、2 人で早口に話し出した。残念ながら、聞き取れないなあ。夕食は、クリス、息子とそば屋へ。私が、日本人従業員に、レンコンを「lotus roots (ハスの根)」なんて言って注文したので、彼らは大笑い。食後アパートへ送って行き、息子はクリスのマウンテンバイクを預かった。

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in LA

2005,4,28

(in Japan)

I will start for America from my house thirty minutes from now.　Today it is very fine in Kanagawa.　I think my flight will be very nice.　My baggage is a black suitcase, a black golf bag and a black shoulder bag.

(at LA)I arrived at LAX airport safely.　I found my suitcase easily but I couldn't find my golf bag at the baggage claim area. I looked for it for a long time. At last I said to two women at the baggage claim counter, "I can't find my golf bag." The other Japanese man said the same thing. They said to us. "Golf bag? Another place, there." Why didn't they tell us such an important thing beforehand? We were very worried about it. My son was waiting for me for over　an hour at LAX. My son and I met his friend at UCLA. After that we went to an Indian restaurant for lunch. As I

thought the main purpose of this trip was speaking English with many people, I asked my son to let me meet his friends. After lunch I left them and went to the farmers market alone. Then I took a rest in my son's dormitory. At seven o'clock my son came back to his room with his two friends. We went to West Hollywood to see the exhibition of architecture by car. I talked with his friends about various subjects in the car. I treated them to dinner at a Chinese restaurant. They were impressed with my English and my son seemed to be relieved.

後 30 分でアメリカへ出発。今日の神奈川は晴れ、きっとフライトは素晴らしいだろう。荷物は、黒のスーツケース、ゴルフバッグそして黒のショルダーバッグ。(ロスにて)無事ロス到着。スーツケースはすぐ見つかったが、ゴルフバッグが出てこない。最後になって、同じくゴルフバッグが見つからない日本人男性と二人で、係員に尋ねる。「ゴルフバッグなら、別の場所よ、あそこ。」とつれない返事。本当に心配したのに、何故そのような大事なことを先に言ってくれないのかな。息子は、1 時間以上待っていてくれた。UCLA で息子の友人に会って、昼食はインド料理店へ。今回の旅行の主目的は英会話レッスン、よって多くの友人に会わせてと頼んでいたのだ。昼食の後は、一人でファーマーズマーケット(日本の朝市みたいな雰囲気)へ。しばし、息子の部屋で休んだ後、7 時に息子が友人 2 人と帰って来て、車でウエストハリウッドへ建築関係の展示(南カリフォルニア建築大学、sci-arc)を見に行く。車の中でも、色々話せた。中華料理をご馳走して分かれたが、彼らは私の英語を褒めてくれて、息子も安心した様子。(もちろん御世辞もあるだろうけど・・・)

This morning I talked with Chris on Skype. Do you know about Skype ? It's a new system on Internet and we can talk each other like a telephone on computer. And it's free even if we speak between America and Japan. What a convenient system it is! Today I was really busy packing my baggage. I made 27 Japanese Samurai helmets from Japanese newspaper for kids and bought some Japanese foods.

-△-

the difference of meager

2005,4,21

Today I had to work overtime. When I arrived at the station after work, I found the train stopped there. There was a railway accident on the Tokaidou line. I had to wait for the train to move over one hour. I was really tired.
One of my worries about visiting America is the differences in measurement. I can't understand how long a mile is or how heavy a pound is. But as I use yards at a golf course, I can understand the distance of yards. I can't understand the temperature, too. In Japan we use Celsius but in America they use Fahrenheit instead of Celsius. Why do they use such a unit? These days I always check the temperature in Chicago. I think it has a wide range of temperature there. It is hot in the afternoon but it is very cold in the evening. I don't know what kind of clothes I will have to bring.

-△-

It's OK!

2005,4,20

Today I had a special lesson at NOVA and taught Jo how to make Origami. At first she said to me that it was very difficult to explain how to make it in English. I showed her and she copied me. I only said, " Fold a paper like this." " Fold the other side the same." "Open the paper and put your finger in the triangle." "Press well." "Blow from the bottom." She was absorbed in making Origami and forgot to correct my English. At last she completed the models and said to me,"Good job! I think you will be able to teach them."

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a golf language

2005,4,19

Today I looked up golf language. I will always say, "I hooked it again. I sliced it again." If Chris hit

straight down the middle, I will say," Great shot!" Next, I'll say, "It's in the bunker." At the second hole, I will say to Chris, " It's your honor. You take the first hit." Sometimes I will say, " It's lucky to get it on the green. It's lucky to get it near the pin. It's lucky to get in the hole." But at the third hole, I sky rocketed. "That will bring rain."

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at school

2005,4,18

When I attend the elementary school in America ,I will have to introduce myself at first. I'm Masaho from Japan. Do you know anything about Japan? Where is Japan? What's the capital of Japan? It's Tokyo. Tokyo is here. What's the highest mountain in Japan? It's Mt. Fuji. Here is Mt.Fuji. I am living here. I live in Fujisawa city next to Yokohama. It takes one hour from Tokyo to Fujisawa by train. In winter we can see the beautiful Mt. Fuji from my house. Do you have any questions for me? Today I will teach you how to make Origami. Origami is one of the Japanese traditional cultures. What's this? This is a crane, one of the most famous Origami. In Japan we make a crane when we pray for peace and hope for recovery from disease. Making a crane is more difficult than making a Kabuto and a balloon. Let's try!

-△-

Expo Aichi

2005,4,17

Yesterday I went to the Expo Aichi with my son's family. It was a sunny day and we enjoyed watching various exhibitions. There were long lines of people to enter the popular pavilions. As we must wait for about one hour and half to enter the Toyota pavilion, we gave up entering. At the America pavilion my husband said to me ,"Why don't you speak to an American? Is it a good opportunity for you to try to speak native English speakers?" I spoke to some Americans and my husband and my daughter in law praised my English.

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May I help you?

2005,4,15

I met a foreigner who was looking around restlessly in the train. I found the courage to speak to him. “Where would you like to go?” “Chigasaki.” “This station is Fujisawa. Chigasaki is two stops away.” He looked to be relieved. When the train arrived at Tujidou, I said to him again. “ Ill get off here but you have to go to the next station.” “Thank you. Bye!” He seemed to be glad and waved goodbye to me. I will go to the international exposition in Aichi with my son’s family tomorrow.

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how to do Origami

2005,4,14

Today I bought some colored papers for kids in America. I practiced how to teach them to do Origami.

Please look at me. Do you know what this is? I’m wearing Kabuto, a Japanese old soldier helmet. I made this from the newspaper. I have many Kabutos and colored papers for you from Japan. Take one Kabuto and three colored papers each. Everybody wear Kabuto! Attention, please. I will teach you how to fold Kabuto. Let’s try! First, take one paper. Then, Fold in half. Make a triangle and unfold. Fold paper in half. Make a triangle. Fold like this twice. Make a square. Fold like this twice. Fold like this twice. Are you OK? Fold one paper like this. Then, turn over. Fold like this again. Open the bottom. The Model is complete.

I want to teach them how to make balloons and famous cranes. Is it very difficult for kids to do

Origami?
I think they will really enjoy making Origami with you! I'm sure they can do it, but you may have to show them several times. I think your explanation was amazing!!

-△-

Kabuto

2005,4,13

I will attend the elementary school to teach the kids "Origami". I heard from Chris that there were only twenty children at that school. (Is it right?) I think I will give them several Japanese colored papers and paper Kabutos that would be made from Japanese newspaper by me. Kabuto means Japanese old soldier helmets.

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Japanese foods

2005,4,12

Today it was raining and very cold. It seemed to be back to the winter and cherry blossoms began to drop. In Japan people say that the life of the beautiful blossom is very short. The beautiful blossoms mean cherry blossoms. Is it going to be sunny tomorrow?
I received the schedule of my home stay. My host family will hold the home party and they will let me visit their friends with them. What is the best souvenir for them? I think I will bring some Japanese foods for them, like Japanese sweet bean jelly, rice cracker, Japanese tea and so on. "I' m Masaho from Japan. Nice to meet you. These are my souvenirs from Japan. Would you mind eating them? These square sweets are made from chestnuts and very sweet. I think they are delicious but I wonder what do you think about them. These round things are made from rice and they don' t taste sweet but a bit salty. Please tell me what you feel. " I want to prepare Tirasizusi, too. "I was supposed to bring a small package of white rice from Japan. In Japan I always boil the white rice by using an electronic rice cooker. I' ve never cooked it by a pot. Of course when I went camping, I cooked it by fire. At that time I always burned it. So I brought some convenient boiled rice and some convenient ingredients from Japan. I put rice in a big bowl and mixed the convenient ingredients of Sushi with it quickly. I served it on a dish and decorated it with sliced Noris and sliced and baked eggs on the sushi rice. This dish is Japanese sushi. Please eat it! I think it' s delicious."

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the subjective moods

2005,4,11

If I were American, I could speak English well. The subjunctive mood is too difficult for me to understand. When I was a student, I couldn't understand it. I wish I had studied it harder, and then I could have understood it easily. If I could understand it easily, I could speak English as well as an American. If I had understood it enough, I could speak English well.

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the Yokohama Foreign General Cemetery

2005,4,10

Today I was very busy. In the morning I went to the old western house near the Yokohama Foreign General Cemetery. My friend and her mother are holding their individual shows there. My friend whom I met at our high school in Osaka many years ago has been making Japanese cakes and western confectionaries since she got married. And her mother who is eighty years old has been painting in oils and doing Japanese calligraphy. Both my friend and I lived in Osaka and now we are living in the same neighborhood by accident. There were many beautiful cherry blossoms in the Foreign General Cemetery and it was crowded with many people.

After that I went to NOVA because Nancy from New Zealand will go back to her country and she had her last lesson today. I promised her that I would participate in her last Voice class. She asked us many questions about New Zealand but we could answer only a few. I could answer only three questions. Auckland is the biggest city in New Zealand. Wellington is the capital. Sir Edmund Hilary is a famous climber. At the end of the lesson we ate the famous sweets from her county. (I'm sorry I forgot the name.) I think Nancy was a cute and good instructor. Good luck! I took a picture with her.

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Spring has come!

2005,4,9

Now we can see beautiful cherry blossoms in many places in our region. This morning I drove to Ooiso golf course. This golf course is a par three course and located by the Ooiso Prince Hotel. The other day the police arrested Seiji Tsutsumi who was the boss of the Seibu company group. At that time I read the newspaper and I found out that his house was next to this course. Seibu group runs this course. There are many cherry blossom trees at the course. Green fairways, pink flowers and blue sky! What a beautiful scene it was! But I felt depressed. How terrible my shots were! Last year we played golf at this course and at that time we could see the beautiful Mt. Fuji, too. Today we couldn't see Mt.Fuji. After golf we ate lunch at Denny's and we chatted about many things. One of my friends has played golf in Canada and Australia. I asked her whether she brought her golf set to another country. " I brought it. But you had better rent them. If your scores will be bad, you will be able to say that these clubs were bad for you." " Hahahaha…. It's good idea. To be honest I had played golf on Bali Island in Indonesia a few years ago. At that time I brought my golf set." To bring or not to bring, that is the question!
(Hahahahahahahha! What a great story and a great ending!!!)

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a nap

2005,4,7

I seemed to be tired tonight. After dinner I went to bed and fell asleep soon. At ten thirty my friend called me and my husband woke me up. Now it is after midnight. I will go to bed again.

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my golf plan in America

2005,4,6

I would like to play golf in LA and Mt.Morris, but I will stay in LA for only three days. I will arrive in LA in the morning of the twenty eighth of April and depart from LA in the morning of the thirtieth of April. So I think I will not have a lot of time to play golf. We had better play at a local par 3 course in the afternoon of the twenty ninth. And in Mt.Morris I would like to go as many places as possible. Especially I want to visit an elementary school. If I will be able to visit there, I would like to

speak about Japan to kids. I also want to show them how to do Origami. I will bring some Japanese paper with colored patterns. So I' m sorry I would like to play golf at a full course one time in Mt. Morris. These days my scores are very bad. Someone said to me, "I think your eyeglasses do not suit playing golf. " When I used contact lenses, my scores were better than now. In fact on last Sunday I ordered my new eyeglasses to play golf in America.

-△-

Nice to meet you.

2005,4,5

When I will meet my host family at the O'Hare airport, I will say, " Nice to meet you. It's good to finally meet you. I'm looking forward to my stay. But I think I really don't know many kinds of salutations. I think I had better practice them.
I'm going. I'm home. Let's eat. That was delicious. I'm going to bed. I'm sorry to make so much trouble. I'll be more careful in the future. Thank you. You've really done so much for me. I hope we meet again.

-△-

my travel

2005,4,4

I will go to America in twenty-four days. I'm a little worried about it. What if I can't understand what people say? What if I don't find my son and the host family at the airports? These days I always practice the English conversation at the airport and in the plane by myself.

At the check in counter:
I'd likes to check in. I'd like to check my baggage. I have two pieces of baggage to check. One is this black suitcase and the other is a black golf bag. Can I bring this shoulder bag into the plane? I would like to sit in the non-smoking section. I prefer to sit in a window seat. What time do you start boarding?

On the airplane:
Hello, which way should I go? Where is my seat? Would you put this in the overhead bin for me? May I have a blanket and pillow? May I recline my seat now? Excuse me, may I go through? May I go out? Will the flight depart on time?

Immigration at the LAX:
Is this line for non-residents? I'm here for visiting my son and my friends. I'll stay about eight days in America. For three days in LA and for six days in Chicago.

At the baggage claim
Where can I claim my baggage? Is this the baggage claim area from United Airlines? Where is the lost and found counter? I can't find my checked baggage. Please find my checked baggage. Here is my claim tag. Where is the call box?

At the customs

I have nothing to declare. They are my personal belongings and gifts for my host family. This golf set is for myself from Japan because I will play golf in America.

-△-

new words

2005,4,3

This morning I had two lessons at NOVA. At the first lesson my partner who was a middle aged woman said, "I' m really into playing with my niece." The instructor Lee told her ,"Don' t say playing with. You had better say taking care of or spending time with. Playing with suggests you're gay. Do you understand?" " Like Michael Jackson? " " Yah, good example!" Today I memorized two new words "hay fever" and "wishy-washy". " What's up? Why are you crying? Oh, you have hay fever. You had better wear a mask. " " He is a wishy-washy man." These days I' m really into studying English.
I'm glad to hear that you're enjoying studying. By the way, "playing with..." is not a bad term. However we usually only use it to talk about little kids. For example, I often say "I'm going to my friend Randy's house to play with his kids." There's nothing strange about that

-△-

today's news

2005,4,2

I will try to write today' s news in English. Every day I get news from the newspaper and sometimes get it from the home page of Yahoo Japan on the Internet. Every morning we turn on the TV but I don' t have time to watch the TV news. I only listen to the voices. In our top story, police arrested a man this morning at the shopping mall in Sendai for hitting six people with a truck. A man and a woman were killed and four people were injured. In the sports news, the baseball team Rakuten beat Seibu five to three at Miyagi Stadium in Sendai this afternoon. In weather news the cherry blossoms will bloom later than every year. In the world news, the Pope is in critical condition now. About seventy thousand people were praying for him at Saint Peter's Square all night.

-△-

my new boss

2005,4,1

Today was the first of April and the new fiscal year has started. I worked with my new boss and

staff. Actually I have worked with my new boss when we were young. I know he was a heavy drinker. As I expected, he said to us, “ How about a drink with me?” “ Um, I’m so sorry but I have something to do after work.” “What? Only one hour.” “ OK. I was supposed to practice something but I will skip it tonight. “ ”Tell me what are you practicing? ” “ Let me see. I can’t do it well now. So it’s a secret.” I was absent from NOVA and I wasted lesson fee.

Cards from American kids

2005,5,30

Today I was very busy at work and I came back home at 9:00.　And then I found a brown envelope from America on the table. As soon as I found it, I opened it. There were 22 cards from American kids and a letter from two teachers. Every kid wrote on the cards,” Thank you Masaho!” Thank you kids, teacher and Judy! These cards will be my treasure forever.

-△-

my memory of English ④

2005,5,29

I could barely graduate from the university and began to work in Kanagawa. It was not necessary for my work to use English. Soon I got married and gave birth to too boys. I was very busy working at the office, taking care of my

kids and doing house work. I forgot all about English. The years rolled on quickly. My sons had grown up and began to study English in junior high school. Sometimes I checked their English tests and I was very surprised because the English tests were not different from our time's test. "Check the parts of these words that you should pronounce most strongly. " I hought, "If they teach students such English, many Japanese will not be able to speak English in the future." But I only said to my sons," Study English hard and it will be useful in your future." Regarding myself I thought sometimes,"I wish I could speak English!" but I didn't try to study it. Time had passed again. One day my younger son said to me," After graduating from my university, I would like to study at the graduate school in America." "That's a good idea. I think you have to study both your major and English. It seems to be very difficult to get a high score on the TOEFL test, doesn't it? Do your best." in the spring of 2004 he received some letters from America. They were acceptance letters from some graduate schools. He decided to study at UCLA and started for LA last August. I visited him in LA with my husband in last September for the first time and met many Americans there. One of them was my present English teacher, Chris. At that time I really regretted I couldn't speak English and I decided to study English again. Currently, I am learning English every day happily.

-△-

my memory of English ③

2005,5,28

Thanks to rote memorization of a lot of difficult English words I could enter the university where I really wanted to enter. In my University I didn't major in English Literature but of course we had to get some English credits. Those lessons were not different from the lessons in high school. Only the textbooks were more difficult, critiques about politics, economy, art and so on. Whew! One day the professor called a female student and she read out the textbook fluently. Almost all of her classmates were surprised. The professor asked her, "Why are you so good at English?" " Because I graduated from the Christian school in Kobe. My English teachers had been native English speakers since I entered the junior high school." Then he called me and I read out uneasily. " What kind of school are you from?" "I am from the public high school in Osaka." "Teachers didn't teach you English pronunciation, did they?" Almost all of my classmates chuckled. At that time I was very ashamed to hear that. I really hated him and English. But there was one English class I was really looking forward to being present. While I can't remember what we were doing at that class exactly, the instructor was a young Canadian guy. I'm sorry he came back to Canada after a semester. At the farewell party he kissed my cheek but I've never met him since that time and I can't remember his name, maybe Mr. Garner.

-△-

my memory of English ②

2005,5,27

But in the high school, I didn't like English class. The textbooks were very very difficult and we had to understand difficult grammar and memorize many difficult words. The middle-aged teachers (someone was old) called on one of the students and he (she) had to read out several English sentences and then had to explain the Japanese translation. If he (she) couldn't do it well, the teacher scolded us. "Check the words which you don't understand before the class and memorize them after the class. If you don't study English hard, you will not be able to pass the entrance examination of university or college. It's necessary for you to study English hard, if you want to enter the university." The English tests were very very difficult and it was good for us to answer half. We didn't have an opportunity to speak with native English speakers. Most of all teachers graduated from the famous college (some one graduated before world war two) but I think they couldn't speak English. They could only read and write English as well as many old people in Japan.

-△-

my memory of English ①

2005,5,26

When I was twelve years old, I learned English in a junior high school for the first time. At that time my father, who died nine years ago, listened to the English radio program every morning. I didn't know why he studied English conversation exactly. I had never asked him the reason about that. Now I think about the reason… While he studied English at school before world war two, he couldn't study enough and he would like to study more. But I guess he had never had an opportunity to speak English with a native English speaker and he must be glad to see his grandson speaking English fluently in America from heaven. My father told me to listen to the radio program, too. But as I had to listen to it early in the morning, I gave up soon. It was easy for me to understand the English basic grammar and memorize words that were taught at school. I could get a high score on every test so I liked English class. I entered the English club, too,because my friend said to me an American woman would come to the English club and we could speak with her. I can't remember exactly but maybe we sang some songs with her. We had to pass the entrance examination including an English section to become a high school student. Thanks to studying English hard, I could pass the entrance examination of the school where I wanted to enter.

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a signal accident

2005,5,25

This morning a signal accident happened in Yokohama. The Tokaidou line and the Yokosuka line

had been stopped for 4 hours. Every day I use these lines to go to my office. I was thinking," What should I do?" Which way should I choose going to Fujisawa by bus and riding the Odakyu line, the Soutetsu line and Keihinkyukou line or waiting at home until JR lines will start to move. Actually JR lines often stopped for reasons such as snowing, strong wind and railway accidents and so on. I had enough experience in such a situation. Many wives drive to the stations of Odakyuu line with their husbands. There must be a traffic jam everywhere and a bus can't move fast. I decided to wait and called to my office. Even so four hours is a long long time. At last the train began to move and I arrived at my office at noon.

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Japanese young mothers

2005,5,24

In Japan it's very difficult to play golf for young mothers. Because it requires a lot of time and money. I began to play golf after my sons had grown up. When I go to a golf course I meet a few women. But almost all of them are middle-aged women or single women. By the way I began to study English conversation at NOVA last October. I meet many women there and I notice that they are also middle-aged women and single women. All the time mothers put their kids before themselves. Of course me, too. When I was young I couldn't spend my time and money for myself. (Regarding English conversation I didn't want to learn at that time. It began to be necessary for me to study it because my son was living in America. But now using English is very interesting to me.) Sometimes I regret that I didn't start to do that earlier. My power and memory are not as good as what they were.

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Jenny Fuji

2005,5,23

Today I listened to the speech of the famous American landlady of a Japanese style hotel in Yamagata. Her name is Jenny Fuji and she came to Japan as an assistant language teacher of the JET Program from America seventeen years ago. She appeared with a beautiful Kimono and spoke in Japanese fluently in front of many people. I summarized her speech…Japanese can't understand Japanese culture. Japanese forget the goodness of the Japanese life style in everyday life. After the lecture I had an opportunity to talk with her. I said," As my son is living in LA, I'm studying English now. My English teacher was an assistant language teacher, too." She only answered to me," Is that so?"

－△－

Sadako in Hiroshima

2005,5,22

I read the book that was written about Sadako in Hiroshima in America. Judy said to me," When you teach kids how to fold Origami, I will tell them the story of Sadako. Do you know the story? In Japan every person knows that story, don't they? " " I remember I read it in the newspaper but I don't know exactly…" " Really? Please read this book." As the book was written for kids, it was easy for me to read without a dictionary. I read it in bed and sometimes my eyes were full of tears. When Sadako was two years old, the atom bomb was dropped in Hiroshima. But she grew up to be a vigorous girl who could run fast. One day she got an illness caused by the atomic bomb. She, her family and her friends folded paper cranes everyday hoping that she eould make a recovery. At last she died and now there is a big statue of Sadako holding a paper crane in Hiroshima. I 'm hoping to visit Hiroshima and see her statue someday.

アメリカで広島の貞子の物語を読んだ。Judy が「あなたが学校で子供達に折り紙を教える時に、私は貞子の話を子供達にするわ。知ってるでしょ？日本では、皆その話は知っているのでしょ？」「新聞で読んだような気がしますが、詳しくは知らないのですが・・・」「本当？この本を読んで。」子供向けの本だったので、辞書なしでも読めた。ベッドで読んでいると、時々涙が出た。貞子は 2 歳の時に広島で被爆したが、足の速い元気な少女に成長した。しかし、原爆症で倒れ、貞子も家族も友人も皆、回復を願い折り鶴を折ったが、とうとう彼女は亡くなった。今、広島には折り鶴をかかげた貞子の大きな像「原爆の子の像」が立っている。いつか、広島に行

きこの像を目にしたい・・。

-△-

at the beauty salon

2005,5,21

I always go to the beauty salon once a month. When I went there last month, I told the hairdresser about my plan to visit a beauty salon in America. At that time she gave me Kanzashi(a pair of Japanese style hair decorations for a bride) and said to me," I have many Kanzashi and now I don't use these things. So please give them to an American hairdresser." Today I went to the beauty palor and told her about my experience in America. " When I gave an American hairdresser your gift, she was very glad and said that she would get married soon and use them in her wedding ceremony. And you know, American women want to get a tan. " " I'm glad to hear that. But why do Americans want to get a tan? Unbelievable! It's not good for the skin to have a sunburn." Many Japanese women don't want to get a tan. We always wear sunscreen not to have a sunburn. Of course me, too.

月に１回美容院に行く。先月行った時に、アメリカの美容院を訪問する話をしたら、美容師さんが花嫁用のかんざしをくれて「このかんざしアメリカの美容師さんにあげて。今は使ってないから。」今日、美容院で「アメリカであげたら、大喜びしてもうすぐ、結婚するそうだけど、式で使うと言ってたよ。アメリカの女性は日焼けしたがっていること、知ってる？」「よかった。何故アメリカ人は日焼けしたいの？信じられない！肌に良くないのに。」日本女性の多くは日焼けしたがらない。皆、もちろん私も、日焼け止めを塗っている。

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Matsu and Taro in Japan

2005,5,20

There was a big bookshelf in my host family's house. Judy had many books for children. The last day's morning of my home stay I found an interesting book there. The title of the book was "Matsu and Taro in Japan" When I glanced through the book, I was very surprised. "Oh, no! Matsu wears Kimono and rides in a rickshaw????" I showed the book to Chris. He said this book was published in 193? , before world war two." I was really relieved. At that time I didn't have time to read it, because we went to play golf again. When I came back from the golf course, I found the copies of the book on the table. Judy went to the town to copy them. Thank you, Judy! Today I read the story of Matsu again. It's a story about the Hina Dolls day in the good old days in Japan.

ホームステイ先のお宅には、大きな本棚があった。最後の朝、「日本のマツと太郎」という題名の面白い本を発見。「ええっ、マツは着物を着て人力車に乗っている！」驚いて Chris に渡すと、「193？年、第二次大戦前に出版された本だよ。」安心した・・・。ゴルフにまた行ったので、読む時間がなかったが、帰ってくると、テーブルにコピーが置いてあった。Judy がコピーしに行ってくれたのだ。ありがとう！今日、読み返してみた。古きよき時代の、日本の雛祭りの日の物語である。

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a campaign

2005,5,19

This morning our office campaigned in front of the station. And we found some Americans there because our office is placed in Yokosuka. I talked to two Americans. My boss who was looking at us joshed me, " You were chatting pleasantly. Good job. Please teach me English." After coming

back to my office, I met an American woman in the bathroom. I asked her," Can you understand how to use a Japanese style toilet?" She answered "Of course." After that we were smilling at each other.

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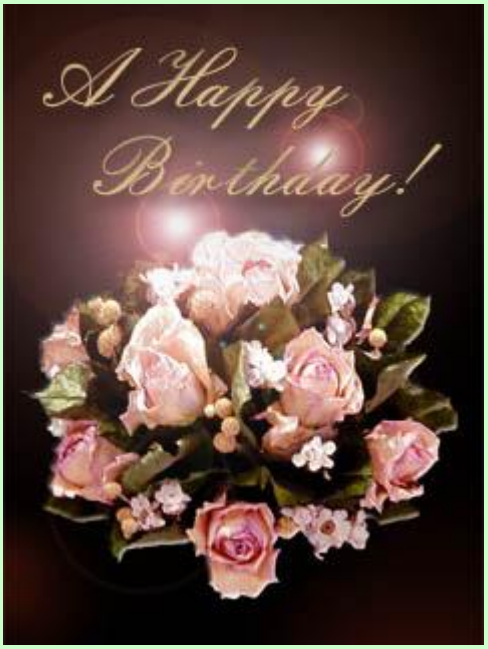
Happy Birthday to Monte!

2005,5,18

Happy Birthday to Monte!

I heard from Judy that today is your birthday. I met Chris on Monday evening in Kamakura. I was very surprised because he appeared with a Japanese man in front of me. Chris met him in Kamakura for the first time and they were chatting as friends. They looked like a Japanese comic duo.
Everybody is glad to speak with Chris in Japan. Take care and have a nice birthday.

Masaho



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How cheap !

2005,5,17

Today I went to the Japanese restaurant with my business partners after a meeting. I paid seven thousand yen for myself. The dishes were not so good. They served only many dishes. We couldn't eat it all. Yesterday I ate dinner at the Japanese restaurant with an American. We ate two kinds of salads, some grilled meats and vegetables on skewers, corn with butter and Edamame and drank a beer chatting in English. It was a very good time. At the register we were very surprised because we had to pay only two thousand yen for two. How cheap it was! The dishes were delicious and the atmosphere was not so bad. Today I found the receipt in my purse and checked again. We used two-discount tickets, so they discounted six hundred eighty yen. Nevertheless I think it was very cheap. I recommend Watamin-chi. That's a nice restaurant! But I don't remember eating Edamame. Why? Did the American eat it all or they forgot serving it?

(Chris's comment)
Regarding the edamame...I'm sorry! I think I ate all of them! Oh, no! What a terrible guest I am?! Unfortunately, I love edamame so much that I just continued eating them. I didn't realize that you

didn't eat any. (oops)

(My comment)
Regarding the edamame... I allow you this time. I can always eat them just by paying 150 yen.

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language

2005,5,16

I think to master a new language is very difficult. Many Japanese speak and write different phrases, even if we are in the same situation. Phrases are different between young people and old people, men and women, rich people and poor people. My Japanese may be part Oosaka Japanese. The language expresses our personality.

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What a waste!

2005,5,15

Today I participated in a voice class at NOVA. I felt I could speak English more fluently than I had been. One of the participants, a middle aged women, was very good at English. I asked her "Do you use English at your work?" during a rest time. She answered me," No, I don't have an opportunity to use English every day. So I came here. I worried about forgetting English." What a waste! I know some women who were living in America with their husbands when they were working for the foreign branch of a Japanese company. Now they don't use English every day. I think there are many people who can speak English well but can't use their abilities in Japan.

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the golf competition

2005,5,14

Today I played golf at Oohadano country club. I participated in the competition. In fact as I've been very tired since coming back to Japan last Saturday, I wanted to be absent. But in Japan I am not allowed to do such a thing because a green fee is very expensive and playing golf with business partners seems to be a part of my job. Sometimes I hit balls to the right and lost three balls. But as my partners were very funny, I enjoyed the playing. My friend, she is ten years older than me, talked about playing golf in Canada because her son was living in Canada. I talked about my experience of playing golf in America. Our company envied Canadians and Americans.

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The US navy

2005,5,13

These days many American Navy sailor come to my office. But I don't have an opportunity to speak with them because they come to another section instead of my section. Sometimes I meet them in the hall and the entrance. Today I met a US Navy sailor by accident in the lunchtime. I uncharged to talk to him," May I speak to you? I'm working here. I went to America two weeks ago. I visited LA and Chicago and came back to Japan from O'Hare last Saturday. On the plane I talked with a mother of a US navy woman and she said to me she would visit the US navy base in Yokosuka. Do you know such a parson? " " What's her name? " "I don't know." "How many people? Only a mother? " "Maybe her parents and their relatives. Two women and two men." " Solly, I don't know. A lot of people are in the base." " OK. Thank you." " You're welcome." I was very glad because my English was understood by natives in Japan,too.

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I recieved an E-mail again!

2005,5,12

Dear Bill & Kathy,
It is early in the morning in Japan. I get up early in the morning everyday because I haven't gotten rid of my jet lag.
I received your E-mail three times and with three kinds of pictures. They are pictures of the Nixons ,the Nixsons with me and an arranged picture(Kathy and me , some Origami and rice crackers). Thank you ! I always use MSN hotmail in Japan and sometimes such strange things happen, too. I can't understand just the same as you. A hotmail web site is the same design in Japan, too. Thank you for your kindness. PS As Chris did not correct this e-mail; I might make some mistakes in this letter. Sorry…
Masaho

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an E-mail from Bill & Kathy.

2005,5,11

Today I received an E-mail with three pictures attached from Bill and Kathy. I was very surprised and glad. I met them at the home party in Mt, Morris and Bill took my pictures with my host family. Moreover Kathy was interested in Origami especially folding boxes. I hope Kathy will be good at Origami.

Dear Bill & Kathy,
Thank you very much for your E-mail and pictures. I came back to Japan last Saturday. Now I'm thinking about my great memories of Mt.Morris. If you want to know something about Japan, please send me an E-mail. I will try to help you. Take care and have a good day.
Masaho

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my homepage

2005,5,10

My husband began to use the Internet in 1999 and my elder son taught me how to make a home page in 2001. I was very interested in making my home page at that time. Now I'm writing my

memories of Chicago on my homepage. If you have free time, please look at my home page.
My homepage address is http://www.geocities.co.jp/Athlete-Olympia/1897/ next click 今日の反省
Or click here http://diary.cgiboy.com/d01/masaho/

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Japanese lifestyle at work

2005,5,9

Today I had to go to my office. As soon as I got there I distributed my souvenir chocolate to all workers of my office and said," Thanks to everybody; I enjoyed my travel in America. Please eat my tiny souvenir." Then I entered into the room of my boss and said," Thanks to you I really enjoyed my holidays in America. This is a really insignificant souvenir but please receive it." "Ok, ok… Don't worry. I'm glad you came back to Japan again. Please tell me about your trip later." Just before closing time, my boss came to my desk and said to me," Lets go drinking. As I'm busy this week, today is best. Are you OK?" "Um…I didn't get rid of my jet lag." " Don't worry, Masaho. If you go to a bar and drink a little, you will forget your jet lag. Hahaha…. Please tell us your story in America." So I went to a little Japanese style bar with five men.

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mother's day

2005,5,8

In the morning I received a parcel for mother's day. It was a black bag, a gift from my daughter in law. Moreover I found three pictures of Taiga with frames in the bag. The other day my elder son gave me a digital audio player but I can't use it well. Its very difficult for me to master how to use a new instrument. If my son had not got married with her, I wouldn't have been given such a wonderful gift.

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I came back to my home.

2005,5,7

Thank you very much for your kindness. Now it is early in the morning on Sunday in Japan. I came back to my home yesterday evening. On the airplane I tried to stay awake to get rid of my jet lag and everybody seemed to do that. I wrote a letter to you and watched the movie "National Treasure". I thought Chris really looked like Nicholas Cage. There were parents of a US Navy woman and their relatives around me on the plane. They were excited and always chatting. I talked with them a little. I taught them about Japanese bills and good souvenirs from Japan. (Don't buy Youkan. It tastes like a snake! This is a joke. Hahahaha…)

今は、日本では日曜の早朝です。昨夜、日本に着きました。飛行機では、皆と同じように時差ぼけを解消しようと、眠らないように頑張りました。皆様への手紙を書いて、ニコラス・ケイジの映画を見ましたよ。クリスは、彼に似ているね。私の席の周りには、アメリカ海軍の女性兵士の両親と親戚が座っていて、興奮して、いつもおしゃべりしてました。少しお話し、日本のお札といいお土産を教えてあげました。(これは、冗談だけど、羊羹は買わないで、蛇のような味がするから・・・)

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My letter for you that I wrote on the plane

2005,5,6

I'm thinking about many memories of Mt.Morris. Last night I said good- bye to Judy and Chris at the room of the Ramada Inn at 11 o'clock. I slept well and woke up at 7 o'clock. I thought about many memories again. The wake up call rang at 9 o'clock. After that I ate the leftovers of the restaurant for breakfast. Then I checked my baggage again and went to the lobby to ride a shuttle bus to the airport. It was easy for me to check out at the counter of United International. The clerk explained to me how to go to the security check and the gate B17. I could listen to her and I said," Thank you. I can understand you." At that time as I was a little thirsty, I tried to buy a Coca-Cola at the small shop. I looked at the sign of the menu but I couldn't understand whether I could buy only Coca-Cola or not. As there was a line of people in front of the shop, I asked an American woman. She answered me with a smile and said to me," Your English is pretty good." After that I tried to call your home but I couldn't. The phone's voice said something,"(??? I couldn't listen to.) Push 1." I tried sometime again but I couldn't. I was thinking about the reason for a while and noticed that there were three types of telephones there. I used another telephone and then I could hear Chris's voice. At the gate of B17 there were many Japanese people and they were speaking Japanese. Soon the flight attendants came to the gate and got onto the plane. One of them seemed to be Japanese. At that time I was really relieved.

There are many differences between Americans and Japanese.　Chris spoke about that to you humorously in front of me.　I think he is right but I think mothers and family are the same in America and in Japan.　Now my eyes are full of my tears.　Thank you very much.　See you again.　Take care and have a good day.

今、多くの思い出を振り返っています。昨夜、Judy と Chris に 11 時にホテルでお別れしました。ぐっすり眠り、7時に目覚めました。また、思い出に浸り、9 時のモーニングコールで起き上がり、昨夜の残りで朝食をすませました。それから、荷物をチェックし、空港行きのシャトルバスに乗るため、ロビーに下りていきました。空港での手続きは簡単で、係りの方がゲートへの行き方を説明してくれましたが、彼女の英語の説明は直ぐに分かりました。少しノドが乾いていたので、コーラを買おうとして、看板を見ましたが、コーラだけを買えるのか分かりません。それで、列の前の女性に尋ねてみました。彼女は笑いながら「あなたの英語よく分かるわよ。」と答えてくれました。その後、Monte 宅に電話しようとしましたが、出来ません。男性の声で、「？？？と話し、最後に Push1」と言いました。何度もやってみましたが、掛かりません。なぜかなと考えて、3種類の電話があることに気づき、別の電話で掛けてみたら、やっと Chris の声を聞くことが出来ました。B17 ゲートの前には、多くの日本人がいて、日本語を話していました。しばらくして、乗務員が飛行機に乗り込みましたが、その中の一人は日本人のようでした。その時、本当にホッとしました。
アメリカ人と日本人の間には、多くの違いがあります。Chris は私の前で、それを面白おかしく語りました。私も彼は正しいと思いますが、アメリカでも日本でも、母親、家族は本当に同じだと思いました。今、私の目は涙で濡れています。ありがとう、またお会いしましょう。

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Sunset golf course, Downtown in Chicago

2005,5,5

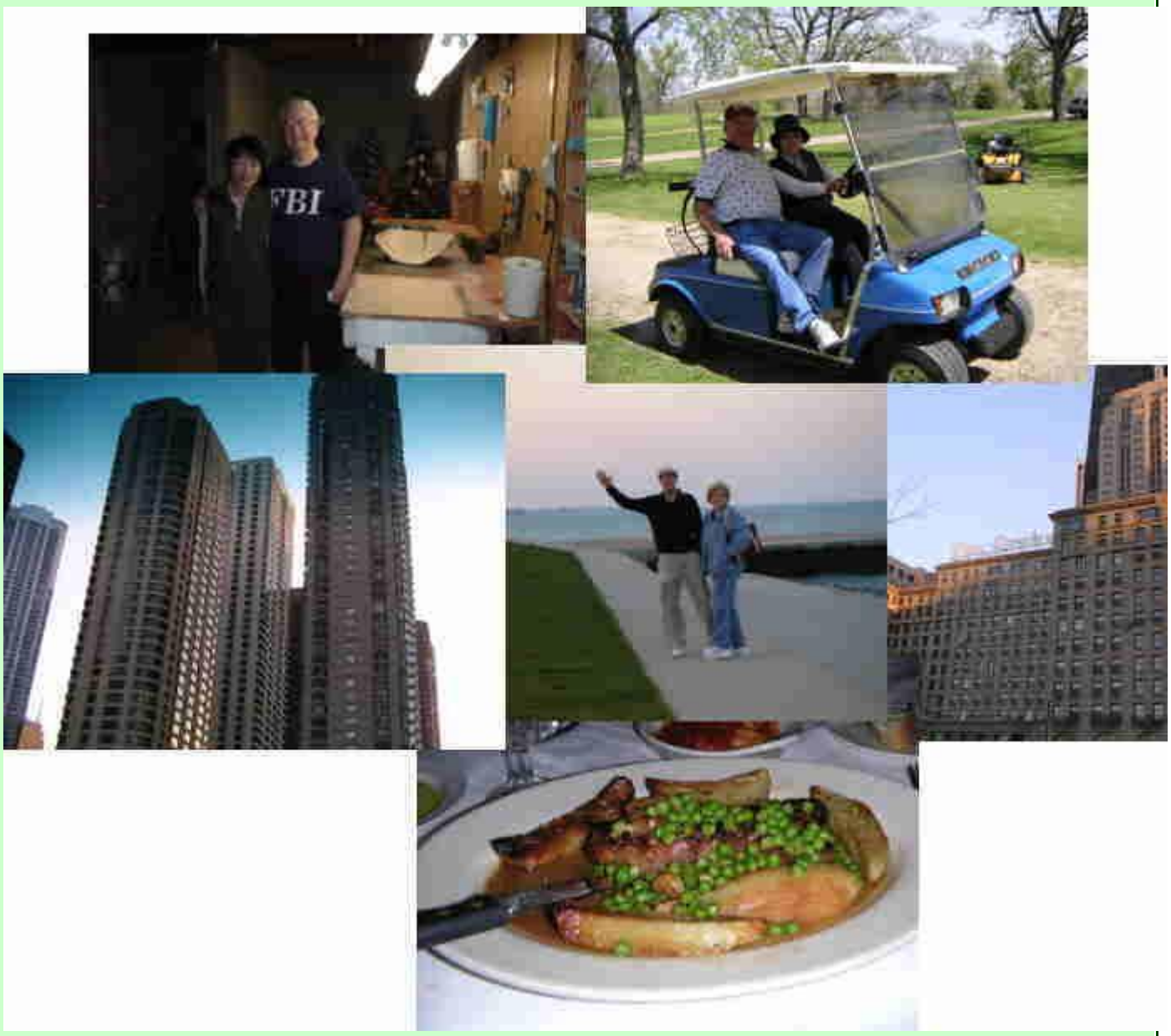
Today was the last day in Mt.Morris. Monte asked me,"Do do you want to enjoy the sightseeing in Chicago or stay here relaxed?" " I prefer staying here to going to Chicago." Chris said to me," Lets play golf again." When we arrived at the Sunset golf course, he found the name of Reagan who had come to the home party on the list. We played golf with him from the third howl. My driver shots were very well. Once or twice I hit a ball farer than two Americans. Of course I hit a ball from the red tee but it was not a problem. Great job! At the short halo I had the honor. The green was over the valley and I disliked such a situation. I hit the ball under tension. The ball skied up and seemed to reach the hill. It may be over the green a little but it's OK. I felt fantastic! When we finished the ninth hall, we met another man who had built Nixon's house.
He said that he played golf everyday here and in winter he had played golf in Texas. " My wife is very angry, hahahal." I thought it was the same in Japan. I knew such a man in Japan. Chris told me that the blue cart was not golf clubs but his own cart. He came here by his own cart and played golf here. I was very surprised. I'm jealous!

今日は、Mt.Morris での最後の日。Monte は「シカゴで観光したい、それとも、ここでゆっくりしていたい？」と聞いてくれたので、「ここにいあちです。」と答えた。Chris は「またゴルフに行こう。」と誘ってくれた。サンセットコースに着いた時、受付でホームパーティーに来ていた Reagan 氏の名前を発見。3 番ホールから彼と一緒にプレーをした。私のドライバーショットはよく飛んだ。1、2 回、二人のアメリカ人より遠くまで飛んだ。もち

ろん、赤ティーからだけど、そんなの問題じゃない。ヤッター！　ショートホールでは、私がオナーだった。グリーンは谷越えで、私の嫌いなレイアウト。緊張して打ったら、ボールは高く上がり、谷を越えた。多分グリーンオーバー、でもOK。　気分良かった！　9番ホールを終えた時、Nixson家の家を建てた男性に会った。毎日ここでゴルフしていて、冬は3ヶ月間テキサスでゴルフをしたと話していた。「家内は怒っているよ、ハハハ・・」日本と同じね。日本でも、そんな人知っているわ。Chrisは、青いカートはゴルフ場のものではなくて、彼所有のカートだと教えてくれた。彼は、自分のカートでここに来て、ゴルフをしているのだ。エエッ、うらやましい！

After lunch I said good-bye to Monte. And Judy, Chris and I started to Chicago by car. Good-bye, Mt.Morris! It was really nice town! In the car we talked about many subjects with each other. For example, drivers license of America and Japan, Japanese new bills, a woman in Wakayama who poisoned people (Masumi Hayasi) and so on. Chris said to me," There is a big skating rink in front of that building." "I've seen such a place in the movie. I forgot the title of the movie…" I sang the theme song. " It's Love story! I watched that movie with Monte before our wedding. At that time many people said to me I looked like Ali MacGraw. My hair was black and straight…" " Now I've just remembered the Japanese title. 'Aru ai no uta' means the poem of love. It was very popular in Japan, too. At that time I was a high school student…." Only Chris couldn't join our conversation. He just counted our ages. " If they hadn't watched this movie, you wouldn't be here." I was absorbed in the wonderful scene of Chicago and I was surprised by lake Michigan. It looked like an oocean. We ate dinner at a restaurant along the busy street. How huge the steak was! The waiter gave me the menu for a souvenior.

昼食後、Monteに別れを告げて、Judy、ChrisとChicagoへ出発。さようなら、Mt.Morris！　とってもいい町でした。車の中で、日本とアメリカの運転免許、日本の新しいお札、和歌山のカレー毒殺女（林真須美）のことなどを話す。　Chrisが「あのビルの前は大きなスケートリンクだよ。」と言ったので、「そんなシーン、映画で見たわ。タイトル忘れたけど・・・」とテーマソングを歌った。「ラブストーリー！結婚前にMonteと見たの。あの頃、皆が私はアリ・マッグローに似てると言ったわ。髪の毛を黒くて、ストレートにしてたの・・」「邦題を今思い出した。ある愛の詩、日本でもヒットしたわ。あの頃、高校生で・・・。」Chrisだけが、のけ者になって、私達の年を数えていた。「彼らが、この映画見てなかったら、あなたはここにいないのよ。」Chicagoの美しい景色に夢中になり、海のようなミシガン湖にも驚いた。にぎやかな通りのレストランで夕食。大きなステーキ！ウエイターさんが記念にメニューをくれた。



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Attend elementary school, Drive with the red Mustang, Home party

2005,5,4

This morning I went to the elementary school at Oregon to teach the kids "Origami". I was really looking forward to doing it. In Japan I folded 27 Samurai helmet from Japanese newspaper and bought several colored paper and a minutia Koinobori for today. I wrote a script and practice how to teach them at NOVA. Of course I practice in front of Judy in America. In front of many kids I was very nervosa. I introduced myself and said to kids," Do you have any question for me?" Many kids put their hands up. " How high is Mt.Fuji?" " How many people died on Mt.Fuji? " "Does the face of the statue tell the story? (I don't understand what's the meaning of this question.) " The Kids asked me in very fast English. Oh, no. I couldn't answer such difficult question…I got into a panic. Judy helped me. All kids could fold Samurai helmets and balloons possibly. But we didn't have enough time to teach how to fold cranes and it seemed to be too difficult for the kids. I folded some cranes in front of them. Kid and teachers were surprised and cheered me. Kids are honest in America as well as in Japan. Even if I was Japanese, they never spoke

slowly to me. I really recognized I had to practice English conversation harder.
今朝は、小学校の子供達に折り紙を教えに行った。このことを本当に楽しみにして、日本で、27 個の株とを新聞で折り、色紙、こいのぼりのおもちゃも買っていった。台本も書いて、NOVA で特別レッスンで教え方を練習した。もちろん、Judy　の前でも練習した。たくさんの子供達の前ではとても緊張し、まず自己紹介し、「なにか質問ありますか？」と聞くと、皆いっせいに手を上げた。「富士山の高さはどのくらい？」「富士山では何人位死んだの？」「仏像は何かお話しているの？（いまだに何を聞いたのか良く分からない？？）」子供達は、お構いなし早くしゃべる。あぁ～、こんな難しい質問には答えられない・・・。パニクッテしまった。Judy が助けてくれた。子供達は全員、兜と風船を折ることができたが、鶴を教える時間はもう無かったし、難しすぎるよう。私は、皆の前で鶴をいくつか折った。生徒も先生も、驚いて歓声を上げた。子供はアメリカでも日本と同じように正直。私が日本人でも、ゆっくりはしゃべってくれない。本当に、もっと英会話の練習が必要と実感。

After lunch Monte let me ride in his red Mustang and we drove to the great house that was called the castle. It was very fine and I felt very comfortable in the Open car. “I know this place. One of Chris’s friends had a wedding ceremony here. I saw the picture on his web site. “ “You have a good memory.”
昼食後、Monte が赤いムスタングの乗せてくれて、お城と呼ばれている、立派なお屋敷へドライブ。天気も良く、オープンカーは、とても気持ち良かった。「この場所知っています。Chris の友達がここで結婚式したでしょ。晴れのサイトで写真を見たわ。」「よく、おぼえているね。」

At the evening the Nixons were supposed to hold the home party. Judy had begun to cook dinner already. I began to prepare Chirasizusi soon. As I brought some convenient boil rice packs and a convenient ingredient of Sushi from Japan, it was easy. I warmed boiled rice in the microwave and then mixed them in the large bowl. I baked eggs thin on the frying pan and then I sliced on the cutting board. It’s difficult for me to slice it because the knife is different from Japanese knife. It was carved. I served Sushi on two dished and decollated with sliced Nori and sliced baked egg. I folded some boxes from printed papers and put some rice clackers in them. OK, it looked well. Three couples came to the Nixon’s home with some foods. They hugged each other and they were chatting pleasantly. I felt somewhat out of place with them. Judy introduced me with the episode of President Reagan’s boyhood house. At first I served Sushi in small dishes for each one to eat. They seemed like Sushi. What a relief! Then all of us sited down around the large table. Monte prayed to God and then we began to eat dinner. The dishes, which Judy had fixed, were very delicious especially baked potatoes with sour cream. After dinner I talked with three women who were very kind and spoke English slowly. Kathy wanted me to teach her how to fold paper boxes and we folded twice.

夜、ホームパーティを開くことになっていた。Judy ha もう料理の準備を始めていた。私もすぐに「ちらし寿司」の用意を始めた。ご飯パックと「すし太郎」を持ってきていたので、とても簡単。ご飯をレンジで温めて、大きな器の中で混ぜるだけ。フライパンで卵を焼き、錦糸卵をつくった。ナイフがカーブしていえ、包丁とは違うので少し難しかった。寿司を 2 枚のお皿に盛って、海苔と錦糸卵で飾る。千代紙で箱を折って、おかきを中にいれた。ヨシヨシ、うまくいった。　3 組の夫婦が食べ物持参でやって来た。抱き合って、楽しそうにおしゃべりを始めた。私だけが場違いな感じ。Judy はレーガン大統領の家でのエピソードを交えて、私を紹介してくれた。最初、お寿司を小さなお皿に分けてあげた。好きそうに見えたので、良かった！　次に全員が、大きなテーブルに座って、Monte のお祈りの後、食事を始めた。Judy のお料理はとても美味しく、特に「ポテ

トのサワークリーム添え」が美味しかった。食事の後、やさしくて、ゆっくり英語を話してくれた3人の女性をおしゃべり。Kathy は私に箱の折り方を教えてといったので一緒に 2 回折った。

By the way the Nixon's kitchen was very clean. There was not a mark of boiled over. Judy said to me,"I always try to keep everything in order in my kitchen. I put pans away in my cupboard." Her refrigerator, microwave and dishwasher were bigger than mine in Japan. (My son has a built-in refrigerator, microwave and dishwasher in his dormitory. They are bigger than mine, too.)

台所はとても綺麗だった。レンジに吹くこぼれのあと等なかった。「いつも、台所の整理に努めているのよ。お鍋は、みんな棚に片付けているわ。」冷蔵庫、電子レンジ、食器洗い機、全てが私のより大きかった。(息子も、大学の寮に備え付けの、冷蔵庫、電子レンジ、食器洗いを持っていて、それらは、私のものより、やはり大きかった。)

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Reagon's house in Dixson, Golf

2005,5,3

When I got up at six and went to the living room every morning, I found Judy reading books. The room was full of the good smell of coffee. We talked about many subjects-about our sons, cosmetics, Japanese superstisions, and Japanese news and so on. After a while Monte got up

and came to the living room. I talked with him about many subjects-his dreams, his trip to Masuda (a little town in Shimane. Chris lived there.) the World war two, and the history of South Africa and so on. Sometimes he corrected my English pronunciation. "You had better practice the pronunciation of L." I was supposed to cook udon for them but I overslept this morning. Judy said to me," This morning Everybody overslept. At midnight my sons came back together by accident. Please cook udon for dinner." Monte fixed Oatmeal for me and Michel said to me ,"I don't like it." while laughing.

毎朝 6 時に起きて居間に行くと、Judy は本を読んでいた。コーヒーのいい香りの中、息子達のこと、化粧品のこと、日本の迷信、日本のニュースなど多くのことを話した。しばらくすると、Monte が起きてきて、彼の見た夢、Chris が住んでいた島根県の益田市への旅行の話、第二次世界大戦のこと、南アフリカの歴史などいろいろ話した。時々、私の発音を治してくれて、L の発音を練習したほうがいいとアドバイスしてくれた。朝食にうどんを用意することにしていたが、今朝は寝坊してしまった。「今朝は全員寝坊。深夜に息子 2 人が偶然いっしょに帰ってきたわ。うどんは夕食に作ってね。」と Judy. Monte が私にオートミールをつくってくれた。そして Michel は、「それ、大嫌いなんだ。」と笑いながら言った。

After that we drove to a beauty parlor and the home of Judy's friend in Oregon. There were many beautiful houses in that town. Then Judy guided me to Lowden State Park and Dixon. There was the big white statue of Black Hawk (He was a leader of Indians)in that park. We could see the beautiful scene over the Rock River. We visited "THe Boy hood home of President Ronald Reagan." in Dixon. Judy explained to me that he was a great President and he was poor when he was a boy. I said to her," Almost all of Japanese know about him. He was a movie star and died last year. His wife's name is Nancy." When I asked the guide lady whether I might take pictures, she said to me,"You may sit down on this chair. The president had sat down on it twice." Judy was very glad and took the picture of me sitting on the President chair.

その後、美容院と Oregon という町の Judy の友人宅へ。Oregon には、綺麗な家が沢山あった。その後、LOWDE 州立公園と Dixon へ。州立公園にはブラックフォーク(インディアンの指導者)の大きな白い像があってロックリバー越しに素晴らしい景色が広がっていた。Dixon では,レーガン大統領の少年時代の家を訪問。Judy はレーガンは偉大な大統領で、少年時代は貧しかったと説明してくれた。「ほとんどの日本人はレーガンのことしっていますよ。元俳優で、昨年亡くなって、奥さんはナンシーでしょ。」案内の女性に写真とってもいいか聞いた時、「この椅子に腰掛けてください。ここには、大統領は 2 回腰掛けられました。Judy はとても喜んで、椅子に座っている私の写真を写してくれた。

As soon as we came home, Chris said to me, "Lets go play golf." I played golf with Chris at Silver Ridge Golf Course. It was sunny and there was no wind, a very good day for golf. My shot was getting better and better. On the way a man passed us and he took our picture. I gave him some

Japanese pencils for golf. He was very glad and smiled to me. When I couldn't find my ball, Chris said to me," You should watch your ball carefully. There is no caddie in America. As Chris searched for my ball but it's difficult to find, I said to him," Don't worry. I will give my ball to America." We laughed hard. Chris sliced twice and I said, " I watched your balls carefully. I think they were near the bunker." And we found his two balls in the bunker. We laughed again.

家に帰るや、Chris が「ゴルフに行こう。」と誘ってくれた。Chris と一緒に「銀畝？カントリークラブ」へ。風邪もなく、絶好のゴルフ日和。私のショットも段々よくなった。一人でプレーしていた人が追い越した時、写真を写してくれた。日本のゴルフ用ペンをあげると、大喜び。ボールを見失った時、Chris に、「注意いてボールを見ていないと、アメリカではキャディはいないんだから。」叱られた。ボールを捜してくれたが、見つからなかったので、「心配しないで。私のボールはアメリカに上げちゃうから・・。」大笑いした。Chris は 2 回スライスした。「注意してボールを見てたわよ。バンカー付近だと思うけど・・」2 個ともバンカーにあったので、また大笑い。

At home Judy was waiting for me to cook udon for dinner. "What kind of pan do you need?" " The bigger is the better." Chris laughed and said," It's really America!" I used to cook udon in Japan but at that time I was very nervous. I've never cooked in the foreign country and I didn't know how to use the kitchen fixtures. I boiled water and put dry udon into it. I boiled water in another pan and put convenient powder soup, seaweeds（instead of green onions） and eggs into it. It was very easy and I could cook udon safely. Judy seemed to be relieved. The Nixons seemed to like udon. But they didn't drink the soup and gave the remains to Chris. He had drunk all before my advice. " Don't drink." Many people don't drink udon soup in Japan." I said in my mind. I served Chestnut Youkan for dessert. Chris sliced it and they tried to eat hesitatingly. Michel shouted. "It tastes like a snake!" Everyone except Chris disliked Youkan. （Perhaps he ate it out of compassion for me.） Oh, no!! It's a famous Youkan from Obuse in Nagano. I bought it not in a super market but in the famous department store.

家では、Judy が私がうどんを用意するのを待っていた。「どんなお鍋が必要？」「大きければ、大きいほどいいんですが。」Chris が笑いながら「まさにアメリカそのものだね。」日本では慣れているけど、本当に緊張した。外国で料理したことはないし、台所用品の使い方も知らなかったから。湯を沸かし、乾麺をゆがき、別の鍋のお湯にはスープの素とわかめ（ネギの替わり）と卵を入れて。とても簡単だから、無事出来た。Judy は安心したように見えた。Nixon 家の皆さんはうどんがお気に召した様子。でもスープは飲まず、残りを Chris に回した。「飲まないで」と私が言う前に、彼は全部飲んでしまった。「日本でも、ほとんどの人は飲まないのに・・」と心の中でつぶやいた私。デザートに栗羊羹を出した。Chris が細く切って、皆コワゴワロにした。「蛇のような味だ。」Michel が叫んだ。Chris 以外は羊羹が嫌いだった。（たぶん Chris も。私がかわいそうだから食べてくれたのでしょう。）あぁ～、小布施の有名な羊羹なのよ。スーパーじゃなくて、わざわざデパートで買ったものなのに・・。

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Breakfast in White Pines, the old peoples house

2005,5,2

Today was cold ,too. Monte, Judy and I drove to the White Pine state Park and ate breakfast there. I felt comfortable in the quiet,beautiful and big woods. After that Judy and I went shopping at the grocery in Mt.Morris. We cant find such a big balance in Japan. Chris said to me, “You may practice golf in the backyard. When I was a high school student, I often hit goofballs there. “ When I hit a ball, the black dog Lucy always ran after my ball and bit it. I lost one ball. Where is my ball? Lucy, did you eat a ball? I worried that Lucy ate my ball. Chris said to me,” Lucy never eats a ball. Your ball must be under the grass. When Monte cuts the grass by lawn mower, he will find it.” In the afternoon Judy visited 94-year-old Florence, at the old people’s house with me. I folded two cranes and a box for her from Japanese paper with colored patterns. Another old woman talked to me and seemed to continue our conversation. I thought old people were the same in America and in Japan. They feel lonely. In the middle of the night I heard the sound of conversation from the living room. Michel must have come back from New York.

今日も寒かった。ご両親と一緒に「White Pine」という州立公園へ行き、朝食を。静かで、美しく、大きな森の中で、とても気持ちがよかった。その後、Judy と町のスーパーへ買い物に行く。大きな秤は、日本では見かけないなあ。「庭でゴルフの練習してもいいよ。高校生の時は、いつもボール打っていたよ。」ボールを打つと、いつも黒犬の Lucy が、ボールを追いかけて、かじる。ボールを一つ失くしてしまった。ボールはどこ？ Lucy が食べたの？ 本当に心配した。「Lucy は食べな

いさ。草の中にあるよ、Monte が芝刈りしたら、でてくるよ。」午後、94 歳の Florence の面会に、老人ホームへ。日本から持参の千代紙で鶴と飾り箱をおってあげた。別のオバアチャンが話しかけてきて、いつまでも話し続けたそう。日本もアメリカも同じ、老人は寂しいのだと思った。深夜、話し声がした。がニューヨークから Michel が帰ってきたに違いない。

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Chris comes home.

2005,5,1

It was cold this morning. Monte, Judy and I went to the church in Rockford. After the service we ate lunch with their friends. On the way home Monte and Judy showed me many places in Mt.Morris, the house where Chris was born, the church, the site of the elementary school (It was burned two years ago. Judy looked very sad there.) and so on. Chris came back to his hometown from LA and called Judy to pick him in Rockford. His parents said tome, "Chris changes his schedule every time." They came home late in the night with his huge baggage. Chris hugged his parents. He opened his bag and took out many clothes and gave some second hand his clothes to his father. He looks like a boy in front of his parents. I thought sons are the same in America and in Japan. Takashi always comes back to our home suddenly and litters the living room with his belongings. I wear his second hand sweater at home. But we never hug. If I do such a conduct, he would push me back and say to me," You are crazy."

今朝は寒かった。ご両親とロックフォードの教会へ。礼拝の後、Chris が生まれた家、町の教会、小学校の焼け跡（2 年前に火災にあったそう。そこでは、Judy はとても悲しそうだった）などを案内してくれた。ロスから帰郷した Chris からは、ロックフォードに迎えに来てと電話があった。彼の予定はくるくる変わるとご両親。母と息子は、夜遅く、大きな荷物を抱えて帰宅。ご両親と抱き合い、バッグを開けて、お古の服を父親に渡していた。ご両親の前では、少年のように見えた。日米問わず、どの息子も同じだな。Takashi も予告なしに帰宅し、荷物をリビングに散らかす。私は彼のお古のスエットを家では着ているし・・・。ただ、抱き合わないけど・・・。そんなことしたら、「気が狂ったの？」と押し返されるなあ・・。

about religion

2005,6,30

Q: Have you ever been to a church in Japan? Do you want to go to a church sometime? Do you often go to a temple or shrine?

A: I went to a church with my friends once or twice, when I was an elementary school pupil. And I've attended a wedding and a funeral at church several times. In Japan many people hold a wedding in Christian style and hold a funeral in Buddhist style. And we go to a temple and shrine on New Year's Day for sight seeing. Our prime minister is particular about visiting the Yasukuni shrine. I think many foreigners think Japanese are really strange people.

talking with Japanese in English???

2005,6,29

Q: Do your friends in Japan study English?
A: I think some of my friends whom I' ve known from many years ago study English now. After I began to study English, I met many friends who are studying English now.
Q: Have you ever spoken with a Japanese person in English?
A: Yes, I speak English with many Japanese at the English class. But I' ve never spoken English with Japanese in public. If we do such a thing, many people around us would think we were really strange. The other day I had an opportunity to speak with my son on Skype. At first I talked to him in English and he answered me in English. But after a little while he said to me," Mom, I' m too busy to talk with you in English. Tell me your point quickly in Japanese." Of course he said it in Japanese.

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about a pig

2005,6,28

In Japanese what sound does a pig make? We say a pig says "Buu Buu" in Japan. But when I was an elementary pupil, one of my classmates said, " A pig says Buhin Buhin." I don' t know whether it is true or not, because I' ve never heard a cry of a pig. Is that true? By the way when I went to Pusan in South Korea, I saw many boiled pig' s heads at a market. At first they looked grotesque but it seemed gradually to be humorous and peaceful. They use these pigs for a festival in Korea.

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about my favorite acters

2005,6,27

Q: Did you see "The Last Samurai"?
A: Yes, I watched it on DVD last summer.
Q: Do you know who Ken Watanabe is?
A: Of course, I know who he is.　Do you know that he got over his leukemia? And he got divorced a couple of years ago. At that time he had an earful of gossip.
Q: Recently Ken Watanabe is starring in more American movies. He is starring in the new "Batman Begins" movie. It is released this month. Also, he will star in the movie "Memoirs of a Geisha". That movie was a book originally. Have you read that book?
A: I read about him acting in "Batman Begins" in magazines and web sites. But I heard about the movie "Memoirs of a Geisha" from you for the first time. I haven't read the book. I'm sorry I don't like that itle "Memoirs of a Geisha".　Geisha seems to give some wrong image about Japan.
Q: Which actors do you like? Who is your favorite Japanese actor? Who is your favorite American actor?
A: I have been a fan of Japanese actors, Gou Katou and Kousirou Matsumoto. Kousirou Matsumoto is a Kabuki actor and was named Somegorou Ichikawa when he was young. He is a father of Takako matsu and the present Somegorou Ichikawa . I have been into Robert Redford since he and I were young. All of them seem to be honest. I think Brad Pitt, Tom Cruise and Nicolas Cage (?) are really handsome but I can't be into them. I think I'm too old to be a huge fan of young actors.
Q: Which actress do you like?

A: It's very difficult to answer. When I was young, somebody said to me," You are similar to the elevator girl in the famous movie "The Apartment ". Shirley MacLaine acted as that girl and I liked her. Do you know that she is a sister of Warren Beatty? Have you ever watched "The Apartment "? It's one of the Billy wilder's films.

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Hot springs and hiking in snow

2005,6,26

Q: Do you enjoy Hot Springs?
A: I like Hot Springs very much. Almost every weekend I go to a public bath by myself. It's one of my favorite things to do and I feel refreshed by a warm bath. Fortunately, there are many daytime public bathes near my house and some of them are real hot springs. In our area if we bored deeply, we can find hot springs often.
A: Have you been to a hot spring recently?
Q: Recently? Let me see, I've never been to a hot spring this year. Oh, I was too busy studying English to have time to enjoy a hot spring.
A: What is your favorite hot spring?
Q: We can drive to Hakone within one hour. So it's easy for us to go to a hot spring in Hakone. There are so many hot springs and I stayed in Japanese style hotels and enjoyed hotspring there many times. My son's favorite daytime hot spring is Tenzan. He always went there with his foreign friends. Two years ago I went to Tenzan with my son and an Englishman John. In America do you get into hot springs with swimming suits? If you want to go to Tenzan, let's go together.

Q: Do you enjoy hiking?
A: When I was a university student, I belonged to the alpine club for one summer. And years ago one of my friends suggested to me that I to climb Ooyama, the highest mountain in Kanagawa. But these days I don't have an opportunity to go hiking.
Q: Have you hiked in the snow?
A: No, I haven't but I heard about hiking in the snow.
Q: Do you like snow?
A: Yes, I like it. I think everybody likes to just watch snow. But it is hard to live in the snowy country. I always say I prefer cold weather to warm weather in the humid summer in Japan. But if I lived in snowy country, I would say that I would miss Japanese summer.

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fire fighters

2005,6,25

Q: In California there are many forest fires. Do you remember the forest fire in California in 2003?
A: Maybe I heard about it on TV but I don't remember exactly. I'm sorry I was not interested in any news in American so much before my son started to live in LA.
Q: Do you know any fire fighters?
A: No, I don't know any. I don't have relatives or friends who are fire fighters. But of course I've watched the famous movies that describe fire fighters like"The Towering Inferno" and "BACK DRAFT". And I respected their courage and energy very much.
Q: Have you ever seen a forest fire?
A: I know there are some forest fires in Japan. But I've been living in cities in Japan since I was born. So I've never seen a forest fire. I think it must be scary to see it up close.
A: Have you ever heard of "Smokey the Bear"? He is a famous character in America. He always says, "Only you can stop forest fires!"
Q: I've never heard about him If there were forest fires, he would be killed by fire. I think he was very sad.

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sayings in English

2005,6,24

Q:"A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush." Is there a saying in Japanese similar to this?
A: Yes, it's "二兎を追う者は一兎をも得ず nito wo oumonoha ittoomo ezu" It means "If we want two
rabbits, we can't catch one rabbit." It's easy for me to recall this Japanese saying. I could immediately answer.
Q: Are you thankful for all the things you have? Are you thankful for your friends and family? I hope so!
A: Of course I am always thankful for my family and friends. I've worked for many years. It depends on my family and coworkers, especially my sons. They were healthy, cheerful and good friends to each other. They never said to me, " Mom, don't go to work." My mother helped me even when she lived faraway. When one of my sons got ill, my mother came to my house and took care of him. My sons used to spend their summer holidays in my parents house and grandparents took the boys to many places, the zoo, the aquarium, swimming school, movie theaters and so on. By the way I memorized some English sayings when I was a student. But now I forgot almost all of them. I only recall, "Rome was not built in a day." "Speech is silver, silence is gold."and "Tomorrow is another day."

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My experience of the Shinkansen

2005,6,23

It was not a good experience but I had a very amazing experience on the Tokaidou Shinkansen. It happened in the afternoon in summer about ten years ago. I was sitting in the seat by myself. The train was not so crowded. When the train left the platform at Shin Osaka, a strange woman suddenly shouted," Oh, no! His mother couldn't get on the train. She was buying something at the kiosk with her baby. This boy is alone on this train. What should I do? I will get off at the next station, Kyoto. Madam, pleases take care of this boy. I will go to a conductor to tell this news." After some time the conductor came to me and said to me," We have contacted the attendant at Shin Osaka. His mother will go to Nagoya on the next train. We will hand this boy to the attendant at Nagoya. Would you mind keeping your eye on him until Nagoya?" "No, not at all. " He was sitting next to me silently with a sad face while eating cookies for one hour. I tried to speak with him but he answered only his name and his age. He was three years old. He gave me a piece of his cookie but never smiled and never cried. At Nagoya he left me to go with the conductor. At that time he waved to me and smiled at me for the first time. I wonder if he understood what happened to him. I think he was really nervous and scared.

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I love Osaka!!

2005,6,22

If you have free time, please watch this NHK program. My son's work will be introduced.
http://www.nhk.or.jp/digista/

When you leave Tokyo do you notice this difference? Why is it different? Where do people move from the left to the right? What is it like in Saitama?
I didn't notice the difference about escalators. I don't know what side people stand on in Osaka. Maybe, the left? But I always realize many differences between Kanagawa and Osaka. When I get off the Shinkansen at Shin Osaka station, I feel the atmosphere in Osaka is really different from that in Tokyo.
What other strange differences are there between Tokyo and the other cities?
Especially we find many names of food are different between Osaka and Tokyo. For example in Osaka they say Tanuki instead of Soba with deep fried tofu. Udon with deep fried tofu is called Kitsune and Soba with deep fried tofu is called Tanuki. That's really funny!! Ice coffee is called Reikou(冷コー) and Oden is called Kantoni(関東煮 カントニ) in Osaka. Mc Donald's is called Mac in Tokyo but Osaka people call it Makudo. When I came to Kanagawa many years ago I was confused about these many different names. But now I always laugh when I realize Osaka people's actions and ideas. They say "まいど、おおきに "at the famous bank. Hahahaha…But I love Osaka very much. "すきやねん！大阪"

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Osaka University

2005,6,21

I majored in law at Osaka University in the mid-seventy's. In Japan we must decide what we will study before taking the entrance examination. As soon as I entered the university I really regretted choosing the law department, because I recognized that I didn't have an ability to pass the bar exam. But I liked to study family law and I was interested in the history of women. Osaka University is a large national university and there were many students who were studying medical science, science, engineering, law, economics and so on. But women students were really a minority except for the literature department and the pharmacy department. Regarding the law department women students were only ten percent. Now I hear women students are half. Japanese society is changing and changing but I think it's still hard for women to continue their job while bringing up their kids . I really give aid to my junior women students.

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my memory about a palm reader

2005,6,20

I've never bought a fortune nor been to palm reader or fortune teller since I got married. But I sometimes read a column of astrology in a magazine and a newspaper. Though I don't believe in fortune, I would have to worry about it if I would get kyo and daikyo(terrible and the worst) I have one memory about a palm reader that I've never forgotten. When I was a high school girl, we made an excursion to Arashiyama in Kyoto. At that time an old woman read some girls' palms including me for free. She said to me," You will get married first of these girls. And maybe you will get married twice or three times." Everybody around us laughed and I was very confused. I don't know whether I got married first or not. My present husband is my first husband. Perhaps I will be single again, because on the average Japanese women can live the longest in the world. To be honest I don't want to get married again. I wonder if a rich and old aged gentleman with silver hair will propose to me in future.

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talking about music/ Tohoku area

2005,6,19

Q: What kind of music do you like?

A: I prefer peaceful music to noisy music. I like classical music better than current music.

Q: Do you listen to music in the morning when you wake up?

A: No, I am woken up by the alarm clock. Then I eat breakfast while reading the newspaper. Next, I check E-mails on my computer and get myself ready to go to office. If I have time, I practice putting on the mat. After that I hurry to the station with a garbage bag.

Q: Do you listen to music at night when you go to bed?
A: No, I always try to listen to an English conversation on MD but I fall asleep soon.
Q: Please tell me about some of your favorite bands!
Oh, what a terrible life I spend every day! To tell the truth I don't know current music exactly. When I was young, I used to listen to the Paul Mauriat Grand Orchestra and Japanese group sounds. They are mot bands, are they? I think I' m really behind the times. Hahaha…

Q: Have you been to Tohoku?
A: Yes, I've been to Tohoku several times. When I was young, I went there to go skiing and I drove to Towadako in Aomori with my husband seven years ago. At that time we visited many sights in Tohoku and we realized Tohoku was really huge area.
Q: Have you traveled to Sendai?
A: I'm sorry I only drove through Sendai at that time. As I hear Sendai is a nice city, I always want to visit Sendai by Shinkansen.
Q: Have you taken a trip to Matsushima? It is one of Japan's Three Famous Views.
Q: No, I haven't. Do you know the other Famous Views? They are Amanohashidate in Kyoto and Akinomiyajima in Hiroshima. Oh, I'm sorry I've never been to these places.
Q: Have you ever fed birds?
A: Maybe. I suppose when I was little, I fed birds in the park.
Q: Do you feed pigeons in Tokyo? Please don't feed the pigeons!!!
A: No I don't . There are many pigeons around many stations in Kanagawa but I've never fed them. They say not to feed the wild life. But I don't know why we should not feed pigeons exactly. Are pigeons wild birds? Please tell me the reason.

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My favorite sayings

2005,6,18

Q: "Which came first, the chicken or the egg?" What do you say in Japanese? Please send me the
answer in an e-mail.
A: Though I was thinking about this for a while, I couldn't recall such a Japanese saying. We say ,"doudoumeguri 堂々巡り"to describe such an argument. But it is not a saying but only a phrase. 堂々巡り means discussing about one theme that we can't come to a decision on for a long time.
Q: What other sayings do you like? I really like "fugenjikko". Maybe that is like Nike's saying: "Just do it!" What do you think?
A: I think you are right. It means, "It's important to try to do what you think it good without explaining many things.

An additional story is," There are so many interesting Japanese sayings. Please make a list of your favorite sayings. (I couldn't understand the ending part.)　My favorite sayings are "nasebanaru 成せばなる（成さねばならぬ 何事も 成らぬは人の成さぬなりけり）"It means, if you want to do something, you have to try hard to do it. If you try hard to do it, you can get a good result.　And, "jinji wo tsukusite tenmeiwomastu 人事を尽くして天命を待つ" It means, "After doing your best, you had better wait for the result without worrying about it.

When I was a girl, my mother and my teacher taught me these sayings. I always remember these sayings when I face difficult events. I understand them for my part , " It's important to do my best even if I can't get the result that I would want. Of course I taught them to my sons. But I wonder if they could understand what I want to teaching.

Regarding the education of my sons, I didn't hope to let them enter a private school or an international school. There are many kinds of people in Japan, for example rich and poor. I thought they had better understand the wide society and not to be hothouse children (frogs in a well). As we were born as Japanese, I think we have to understand our language and culture before studying English. Before entering elementary school kids can't decide what to do by themselves. So I think parents had better let them enter the ordinary school when they are little kids. After graduating from elementary school or junior high school, if kids want to enter the private school or study abroad, I think we have to try to let them enter the school that they want.

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the relationship between Japan and China

2005,6,17

Today I had an opportunity to listen to the famous professor's lecture about the relationship between Japan and China. These days China is working against Japan. He said there are many reasons for it, for example historical background, Sinosentrism and a Chinese domestic power game. It was very difficult for me to understand the lecture but very interesting. By the way I've been to Shanghai in China with my sister who has been studying Chinese for about ten years in 2000. My sister had a pen friend who was a seventeen- year- old Chinese girl and we were invited to her home. Her parents welcomed us and we ate dinner together. The dishes were very delicious especially Shanghai crab. The Chinese lady who was my sister's teacher in Osaka showed us many famous sights. She could speak both Japanese and English fluently. I hear she is in China now. Of course they were very friendly to us Japanese. I wonder what they are doing and thinking about Japan now?

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Deciding what to eat

2005,6,16

Even if we travel in foreign countries, we have to eat three meals a day. It's necessary for us to eat foods and it is one of our enjoyments of traveling. But in America I realized to understand the menu at restaurant was very difficult. Some time ago I tried to read my souvenir menu that was given to me at the restaurant in Chicago. There are many difficult words in it. What is " jumbo mushroom caps filled with an herb breadcrumb mixture in a light butter sauce "? Today I gave up reading it after finishing appetizers. Whew!!

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about driver's license

2005,6,15

Q: Why are licenses expensive in Japan?

A: I think in Japan driving a car was very extravagant many years ago, maybe just after world war two. So charges for the car, for example getting drivers license and car tax, are so expensive.

Q: Do you have a driver's license?

A: Of course I have one. It's useful for me.

Q: When did you get your drivers license?

A: About 24 years ago. As soon as my second son was born I got it, because it became necessary for me to drive a car to take my kids to the daycare.

Q: How much did your drivers license cost?

A: May be just over three hundred thousand yen. I had to take more lessons than the average person. It was hard work for me to go to the driving school while taking care of kids. But now I

think it was a good decision to get it at that time.

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my birthday.....

2005,6,14

When I turned on my computer this morning, I found an E-mail from my son's family. It says,"Mom, Happy Birthday to you! We became so happy to see you♪ Though you were very busy, you visited us in Nagoya many times. Thank you very much. We are looking forward to traveling with you in September! We suppose you work hard every day but please do your best to study English and play golf. We hope you will be a nice mom for ever." Yes, today is my birthday. But I'm not so happy, because I don't want to get older than yesterday.

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the rainy season

2005,6,13

In Japan we have the rainy season (tsuyu or baiu) now and after that a very humid summer will come. Many students are going to school until the 20th of July. I will be able to get 5 summer holidays and now I'm thinking about how I will spend it. My family, including my 86-year-old mother and my 14-month-old grandson, are fine.

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Well, that is over♪♪

2005,6,12

I could pass the level up test this morning. Well, that is over. I felt my head was filled with English, English,English･･･!! In fact I recognized that I really would be able to listen to the native speakers after coming back from America. My new challenge is to be able to speak with correct grammar. Be careful not to make mistakes about tense.

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Now I'm very nervous.

2005,6,11

Now I'm very nervous, because I will try to pass the Level up test at NOVA tomorrow morning.

When I finished the lesson at NOVA last Tuesday, a Japanese staff member said to me," Good news. Two instructors recommended you to try the level up test for 4." " Really? I'm surprised. I've never dreamed such a thing. I just became level 5 in last February. Wait a minute. I'm so busy that it's impossible for me to come to NOVA this week. " "It is OK for you to try it next Sunday. Do your best!" I think learning English is only for my pleasure and it doesn't matter to my job whether I will pass the test or not. But.. I'm nervous now. What should I do now? The instruction book says this about Level 4, " You can speak English almost perfectly while being relaxed if you speak everyday conversation. You can speak mostly correct grammar and good sentence structure. Even if you have to speak about a difficult theme, you can understand what your partner says and you can join the conversation barely. But you can't discuss such a difficult theme."

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Sashimi in a foreign country

2005,6,10

Good morning! This week I've been very busy. I've never eaten Sushi in foreign countries but I've eaten tuna sashimi in Bali. It was very delicious. The chef said to us ,"tuna sashimi is much fresher in Bali than in Japan ,because Japanese deep-sea fishermen get tuna near Bali." We have to be careful to eat uncooked food in Southeast Asia. I've been to many countries in Asia but at that time I felt somewhat out of place there especially at restaurants. I'm sorry I'm one of the Asian people but I became Americanized now.

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the reason of studying English

2005,6,9

Why am I studying English? One of reasons why I'm studying English is that my son is living in America and he may continue living there to get a job. Then I'll have to visit him sometimes. And the other reason is…I've been working for a long long time so after retiring I would like to travel in many many foreign countries especially in the United Kingdom. I really want to visit the British Museum and Buckingham Palace. If I can speak English I think I will be able to go to every country in the world because there must be an English sign most of all countries. I'm sorry there is no Japanese sign in foreign countries even in Asian countries. In addition to them, recently I found another reason. My home stay in America was a very nice experience for me. Now I'm thinking… I want to let many foreigners stay at my home and treat them kindly. I want to let them know about real Japan. An English man stayed at our home twice and last July an American stayed at our home for a week. They were friends of my son's. But at that time as I couldn't

speak English well, I couldn't speak with them so much. That was too bad!

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the rules of soccer

2005,6,8

Tonight the soccer team of Japan beat the team of North Korea two to nothing to win the final Asian heat of the World Cup. Great job! One of my son belonged to the boy's soccer team when he was an elementary pupil. Though I used to watch soccer games, I couldn't understand the rules of soccor. It was difficult for me to master them, because they moved so fast.

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a kind clerk

2005,6,7

This morning the Tokaidou line ran behind schedule, again and a train that I got in was very crowded. When the train arrived at Fujisawa, a woman hit my face shouting," I will get off here." At that time my eyeglasses were broken. I am so nearsighted that I could see nothing at all without my eyeglasses. I wore my sunglasses instead of them. Actually these days I check small numbers every day. I was sorry I couldn't read them at work, because my sunglasses are not spectacles for the aged. At lunchtime I went to an eyeglasses shop near my office and a kind clerk fixed my eyeglasses for free. "Megane drug" is a really good shop.

What's "Coldplay"???

2005,7,31

Q: This week I am interpreting for "Coldplay". They are a rock n' roll band from England. Have you heard of them?
A: I don't know about rock music at all. When we were living with my sons, they often listened to the current music for example rock and J pops. But these days I don't have a chance to have knowledge about current popular music. I've just checked about "Coldplay" on the Internet. It's a world famous rock n' roll band that was formed in 1996 in London. Their songs have got the top spot in the charts several times in the world. Interpreting for them sounds like a really great job. I'm very glad to hear that.

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about Japanese music

2005,7,30

Q: Do you enjoy taiko? Do you like traditional Japanese music? What do you think about taiko and enka? Do you enjoy singing? How about karaoke?
A: It's really the Japanese summer festival season these days. Every night we could hear taiko sounds in our town. Many kids were practicing how to play taoko for the summer festival of our local shrine. When I hear those sounds, I always feel that summer has come. By the way, in fact, I'm really tone deaf. At karaoke I can't sing songs except some old enka. It's quite difficult for me to sing fast songs in English. One of my repertories of enka is " Tugarukaikyou Fuyugesiki"

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Oh,my!!!

2005,7,29

Today I went to the doctor's office and he gave me a shot under my shoulder blade bone. Ten days have passed since I injured my right arm. But my condition doesn't change at all. I always feel a pain and my right fingers are asleep. What happened to my arm? How long does it take to heal my arm? I had four golf plans in this summer but I've canceled three plans. One of my plans is to play golf in Hokkaido at the beginning of September. I was really looking forward to that plan. Now I'm thinking I have to give up going there. I went to the office everyday this week but as I couldn't use my right hand I could only read papers and make calls. I feel sorry not being able to work enough. But I can speak, walk, eat and read. I will continue my English studying, too.

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my misfortune

2005,7,23

Now I can't use my right hand. If I move my right arm, I feel a sharp sting. I can do nothing at all. The doctor gave me a shot and gave me some tablets. But he said to me only, " Rest your arm. You will be better someday." I can't write e-mails for a while. I can speak but I can't cook and do any housework.

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speaking with a Dutch

2005,7,21

Yesterday when I rode the train, there was a big group of foreigners. (After going to the surgeon I went to my office. It was not rush hour.) Just after the train started from Ofuna, they seemed to be surprised and chatted loudly while pointing at the white statue over the window. I found the courage to speak to the man sitting next to my seat. " That white statue is one of the statues of Buddhism. We call her Kannon. The temple has that statue." He seemed to be glad and spoke to me about a lot of things. He spoke very fast so I could understand only two thirds. "We are from Holland. We went the world exposition in Aichi for two days…" I asked him,"I think you always speak Dutch. Why can you speak English so well？" "We learned English at school." What a difference from Japan!!!

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the difference between a shrine and a temple

2005,7,20

Q: Are you a lucky person? Are you often very unlucky?
A: I've never won the lottery. In such a sense, I'm not lucky person. But I'm lucky in a general sense, because I've never had an accident and my family is healthy. By the way you bought a fortune card not at the temple but at the shrine. I think it's very difficult for foreigners to understand the difference between a shine and a temple. Maybe some young Japanese don't tell the difference. A temple is a Buddhist building and there is a cemetery in the yard. On the other hand, a shrine houses Japan's original gods. There is a Torii gate at the entrance to a shrine. A torii is a simple gate that's color is red or unvarnished. Maybe you saw a red Torii at that shrine. Izumo Taisya in Shimane is one of the most famous shrines and Sensouji in Asakusa is the temple.

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my favorit season and a thunderstoem

2005,7,19

Q: What kind of weather do you like, hot or cold? Rainy or sunny? Do you like Summer, Fall, Winter or Spring?
A: I like warm and sunny spring the best of all seasons. In Japan the school year and the fiscal year begin in April with beautiful cherry blossoms. We can have a school entrance ceremony and a company entrance ceremony under beautiful cherry blossoms. I think spring is the most appropriate season for the start of everything.
Q:Do you know what a thunderstorm is?

A: Yeah, I think it's very scary. This star festival's day we had a very terrible thunderstorm in our city. At that time the wife and daughter of our ex governor were killed by the thunderstorm under the big pine tree. They took shelter from the thunderstorm and the lightning hit that tree. I really sympathized with their misfortune.

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about taking care of children

2005,7,18

Q: I really enjoy kids and so I hope I can have many of them. Actually, my mother wants a grandchild, too. I think mothers all over the world think the same way!
A: I agree with you. But it requires a lot of money and energy to bring up children, you know? Taking care of kids is really hard work mentally as well as physically.
Q: How many brothers and sisters do you have?
A: I'm the youngest of three sisters.
Q: Do you have children?
A: Yes, I have two grown-up sons, you know? May I use "children" in English, even if they have grown up to be adults?
Q: Do your friends have a lot of children?
A: Almost all of my friends have two children. But one of my schoolmates has four boys. I was very surprised to hear that from her for the first time. Moreover she is working as an eye doctor. As she has been living in Kanagawa after getting married, her parents moved to her neighborhood from Osaka and help take care of her kids. And she employs a helper, too.

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about my house

2005,7,17

Q:Do you remember your first apartment?
A: When I was sophomore university student, I lived in an apartment by myself for the first time. It was in Toyonaka in Osaka. I've never been there since I graduated from the university. I'm not sure whether I can go there without losing my way or not, if I try to visit again.
Q: Do you have any pictures of it?
A: I have some pictures with my friends at the university campus but I'm sorry I don't have a picture of my first apartment.
Q: How much is your rent now? Is it too expensive or just right?
A: Now we live in our own condo and it's not necessary for us to pay rent. I'm really happy that I bought our house many years ago.

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my summer holidays !!

2005,7,16

Q:How are you doing today?

A: In the morning I went to my office in Yokosuka and soon I went to Yokohama with my boss to explain the results of our recent work. After that my boss treated me to lunch at the China Town. After coming back to the office, I had to check many papers.

Q: Were you busy at work this week?

A: Yeah, I was very busy this week.

Q: What about next week?

A: We can have three holidays in a row from tomorrow. The last day of the three holidays I will play golf.

Q: I hope you can find some time during the week to relax.

A: I hope so. But I want to have my summer holidays in September so I have to work during July and August. I have a plan to visit LA with my husband in the middle of September. At first we wanted to travel with my son's family but my son gave up doing it, because his boss said to him,"Don't to take holidays in September." Maybe we will visit the Grand Canyon and Las Vegas from LA with Takashi. And I have some plans to play golf in summer. I'm very happy that some people invited me to play golf with them. But I'm very busy and I worry about my strength.

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Tsuwano and tap water

2005,7,15

Q: Have you ever heard of Tsuwano?

A: Of course. Tsuwano is very famous. I'm sure almost all of adult Japanese know Tsuwano.

Q: Do you think the air is better in the countryside? Do you think the water is better?

A: I'm sure the air and the water in the countryside are absolutely better than that in big cities.

Q: By the way, do you drink tap water?

A: I have a water purifier on my faucet. I think a lot of houses use such things in big cities in Japan. We can drink running water in almost all areas in Japan, because our running water is very hygienic. But it smells of chlorine especially in big cities. So we are used to using purifiers. In summer I always make Mugicha (barley tea) from tap water.

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I like driving a car!?

2005,7,14

Q:When you travel in Japan, how do you travel? By plane? By train? By automobile?
A: It depends on the place where I wan to travel.
Q: Do you drive a lot in Japan?
A: When my sons were little kids, I drove to my parents' house in Osaka with my family every New Years holiday. And now I often drive to Nagoya to meet my son's family. I always drive half way.
Q: Have you ever driven on the highway?
A: Of course but I don't like to drive on the highway by myself. When I drive on the highway, my husband always grumbles about my driving technique while sitting on the passenger seat. But I'm used to driving to Hakone by myself, because I've driven to several golf courses in Hakone passing the Seisyo Bypass.
Q: Have you been to Hokkaido and Okinawa?
A: I've been to both of those places when I was young. But it was long long ago.
Q: Where do you want to go to in Japan?
A: I really want to go to Hokkaido again. Fortunately I have a plan to play golf with my friends in Hokkaido this summer. I'm really looking forward to visiting there.

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about climbing Mt.Fuji

2005,7,13

I' was really relieved to hear that you had enjoyed the drive. Because I worried that you couldn't watch the beautiful view and I had forced you to teach me English. And thank you for the ice cream. It was delicious.
Q: Have you ever climbed to the top of Mt. Fuji?
A: No, but my elder son climbed to the top with two foreigners, when he was a high school student. I don't remember exactly but maybe they were an Australian girl and a Canadian boy. They were international students of my son's high school but I've never met them. My elder son graduated from the private high school that was famous for its international exchange. So he had some friends who were international students and he home stayed in Edmonton in Canada for 2 weeks when he was 16 years old. When many students came to Japan from America and Canada in the summer holidays, the school looked for host parents. But at that time as I was very busy, I gave up offering that. But I met them all including the Canadian girl who was my son's host family at the school. I spoke to her in my crazy English and gave her a Japanese beautiful lacquered box. I wanted to write a letter to the host parents but I gave up doing it, because at that time I felt it was very difficult for me to write a letter in English. In retrospect I had many chances to start to study English conversation. Why didn't I try it at that time? I really regret that I didn't try to study English.
Q: Someday let's take a trip to Mt. Fuji and climb to the top! Can you do it? Let's try!
Yeah, next time we should try it. I will have to work out.

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about "cute" things and eggs

2005,7,12

Q: Do you think this character is cute?
A: I think it's cute. But it's not as cute as world famous characters, Mickey Mouse and Snoopy.
Q: What do you think about "cute" things?
A: Frankly I don't like to be surrounded by many "cute" things. To see them with a little kid is OK. But I don't want to decorate my personal things with characters-especially Japanese comic characters. I tried not to dress my sons in such shirts. I really like striped and checked patterns for kids. Moreover I think adults who have many caricature goods are very childish. I know many Japanese who have the same opinion as mine, for example my sisters and some of my friends. Please don't assume that most Japanese adults like character goods. I am embarrassed to hear your impression.
Q: Do you have many key chains on your cell phone?
A: No, my cell phone is very simple with only a strap.
Q: Who are some of your favorite characters?
A: My favorite characters are Snoopy and Pooh Bear. I'm thinking to give my Taiga some goods with them. But I will never want to use them by myself.

The other day I went to a mountain near Mt. Fuji.
A: That Mountain is famous Hakone,you know?
Q: There were hundreds of people all eating black eggs. I thought, "Wow, these eggs must be special eggs. Did everyone here drive several hours just to eat these eggs?!"
A: Yes, those black eggs are called "Enmeitamago" which means life extension eggs. I'm sure they didn't come to Hakone only to eat eggs but to see Lake Ashinoko, to take a hot spring and so on.
If it were fine, we could have seen wonderful scenery at that time.
Q: Have you ever eaten "black eggs"?
A: Yeah, I've eaten them several times. So I expect I will live to be one hundred years old.
Q: How do you like your eggs? Sunny-side up? Over-easy? Poached? Hard-boiled? Raw?!
A: It depends on my condition. I'm used to cooking Sunny-side up. I've never cooked Over easy.

When I fix soup, I cook eggs poached. When I cook salad, I use hard boiled eggs. We usually eat a raw egg with boiled rice for breakfast. It's a really Japanese style breakfast.

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What's healthy?

2005,7,11

Q: Do you drink Coca-Cola sometimes?

A: Oh, Coca-Cola reminds me of the time I longed for American's life-style in my girlhood age. Of course I loved it. But these days I don't drink it so often. I don't remember exactly when and how I heard it… maybe in a magazine or on the TV, I heard Coca-Cola contains a lot of suger and it uses calcium and finally melts bone. So I decided not to drink too much of it and not to give it to my sons.

Q: What Japanese brands do you think are in America?

A: We can find in America many Japanese industrial brands, like Toyota, Sony, Canon, etc. And I heard there is Yoshinoya in LA, right?

Q: By the way, have you ever had a "Coke Float"?

A: It tastes delicious. I loved it. But I think it's not so healthy. I really think the Japanese diet is much healthier than the American diet. Judy! I hate to sound like a busybody, but you had better drink Japanese green tea "Iemon" instead of Coke. It's very healthy and tastes good if you are used to it.

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the renewal of my homepage

2005,7,10

Today I renewed my home page. When I began to make my homepage, I really got into it. And I used to renew it every weekend. But these days I am tired of doing it. I soon lose interest in things. I made the web site of "Fine" link with my home page. Is it OK? When you find this banner, please click here.

I sent two pictures to the members of the meeting at my home. I will try to describe one of the pictures. In the center, there are two Japanese men and two Japanese women in the front row and there is an American guy between two Japanese women in the second row. There is a wooden mirror in the background on the center. On the top left, you can see something that looks like a flame. On the left hand side, there is a white instrument that looks like a telephone. In the foreground, there is a table on which there are some glasses of juice and sweets.

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I' m really looking forward to go to .....

2005,7,9

Q: Do you like roller-coasters?

A: So-so. Now I don't think about riding it voluntarily.

Q: We had a great time at the Suzuka Circuit. Have you been there?

A: No, I've never been there. But I drove near it when I went to Osaka by car.

Q: What rides do you enjoy at an amusement park? Do you like the merry-go-round? Do you like shooting games? Do you enjoy bumper-cars? What about the ferris wheel?

A: When we stayed in Santa Monica last summer, I really looked forward to riding the carousel at the pier. It's very old and famous for the location of the movie "Sting". Paul Newman was working at that place. (Of course it was not in Santa Monica but maybe in Chicago in the movie.) But we didn't suppose it was in the building. I searched and searched. And when I found it at last, it was closed. It was closed at 7:00 pm and I found it at 7:15. Oh, my gosh!! I've been to several amusement parks, for example Tokyo Disney land and Universal Studio in Osaka. But these days I don't have a chance to visit there. Maybe next year or two years later, I will have chances to go to many amusement parks with Taiga. I'm really looking forward to doing it. Even if my husband stops me, I will enjoy many rides with Taiga.

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about next generation

2005,7,8

Q: What do you think about the next generation? Are kids becoming smarter? Are kids becoming more responsible? Are kids becoming more lazy? What do you think?

A: Sometimes we say," Present young guys are…" That phrase is used when we talk about a negative character. I think people say such a thing when they talk about younger people all the time. When I was young, my father warned not to wear jeans. " How do you look! Why do you wear such a strange pants? You look like a painter. Present young girls are peculiar." When my sons were high school students, they used to annoy me, because they couldn't get up early in the morning, pick up their rooms and so on. "Why are they so lazy? Did I spoil them?" But now I really appreciate what they gave me and I was given energy from little Taiga. I believe the next generation will develop the new world in the future. However in Japan the birthrate is decreasing now. Why don't young people want to get married and have kids? I really worry about a declining

birth rate.

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about a car and a terror

2005,7,7

Q: Do you have a driver's license?
A: Yes, I have one.
Q: Do you drive a car often?
A: Every weekend I drive a car to go to shopping, a driving range, a public bath and a golf course.
Q: What kind of car do you have?
A: I have a Toyota car named Wish.
Q: What kind of cars do you like?
A: I like Toyota cars best. It's strong, lasting and easy to drive.
Q: If you could have any car for free, what kind of car would you want?
A: Honestly I don't like a big car to drive. I love our present car Wish very much. It's easy for me to drive and the size is appropriate for me. Please give my husband a luxurious Toyota car called Soarea.
By the way my elder son is an owner of a Jaguar from England. He bought it on the internet auction. Now he is constantly complaining about it. It is very expensive on gas.

Q: What are you afraid of?
A: When I was little, I was really afraid of a family Buddhist altar. It reminded me of the time when my grandfather had died. I must have been about seven years old at that time. The thing I remember most about the death of my grandfather is how I was scared to see his dead body. Actually I got sick after looking at his dead face and I couldn't attend the funeral. But after growing up I got used to looking at dead faces of my relatives several times and now I'm not afraid of them. By the way my son's dorm at UCLA faces the cemetery, you know? But it looks like a park so I didn't feel scare even in the middle of the night.
Q: Are you afraid of heights?
A: It depends on the situation. When I look over the beautiful view from a large building, I'm not afraid of heights. But I think I would be afraid of heights from a bridge and tower, which are only surrounded by a fence.
Q: Are you afraid of spiders?
A: Yes, I don't like them.
Q: Are you scared of snakes?
A: Of course. When I found snakes at a golf coures, I always shouted with a loud voice "Kyaaaa…"
Q: Are you scared of water?
A: I've never nearly drowned. I have always swum in a pool since I grew up so I'm not scared of

water, because I can swim so-so. But If I had an experience of drowning, I would say I was afraid of water.

Q: Do you become scared at night?

A: No, but I think it depends on the circumstances. If I were in the mountains, I would be scared at night.

Q: Do you become scared when you see scary movies?

A: Yes, I do. These days I've never seen such a movie. By the way what is the difference between scared and afraid. Please teach me the difference.

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Japanese history

2005,7,6

Q: There were many descriptions about "Mikuni". Do you know who that is?

A: What ??? I don't know such a person. Who is she? Who is he? Soon I've noticed that you meant " Tokugawa Mitsukuni", because you went to Ibaraki. He was Mito Koumon. He is very famous for his TV drama. (Hahahaha) He traveled all around Japan with his follower, Sukesan and Kakusan.

Q: Do you read about Japanese history now? Did you learn a lot of Japanese history in school?

A: I don't read Japanese history now. But when I was a high school student, I used to memorize a chronology of Japanese history as well as English words to pass the entrance examination. (Hahaha…) I was good at Japanese history at school. As one of my sisters majored in Japanese history at the university, she taught me many interesting stories of Japanese historical people. And I used to read many historical novels written by Shiba Ryoutarou, a famous Japanese author.

Q: What are some of your favorite stories in Japanese history?

A: I like some Japanese historical persons, for example Oda Nobunaga, Sakamoto Ryoma and Takasugi Shinsaku. I'm really interested in Bakumatsu, it means the last days of the Tokugawa Shougunate. Though Ryouma and Shinsaku tried to make a new Japan, they were killed before the Meiji Restoration. Shinsaku was from Choushu (now Yamaguchi). Do you know Hagi in Yamaguchi near Tsuwano? He was living there when he was young. This is his haiku, which he made just before he died" 面白き、こともなき世を、おもしろく 住みなすものは心なりけり" It means, " Our society is not so interesting. But we can live our life usefully if we really try to do it."

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about learning English and measurements

2005,7,5

Q: Do you enjoy climbing?
A: No, these days I don't have an opportunity to climb mountains.
Q: What mountains have you climbed?
A: I climbed many mountains when I was a student, because I used to belong to the Alpine club. In summer holidays I stayed in Hokkaido and climbed many mountains, for example Tokachidake,Tomurausi and Shiretoko. It was a great experience for me and I've never forgotten it.
Q: Do you use English everyday? Please keep climbing!!
A: I'm trying to use English everyday but it's really hard work. Please provide me with English help. I will really appreciate it.

Q: Hello! What's up?
A: Nothing much.
Q: Are you having fun today?
A: Not so fun but not so bad. I'm spending an ordinary day at my office.
Q: How big is your apartment?
A: I don't know about it exactly but maybe it is around 80 square meters.
Q: How tall are you?
A: I'm a really average Japanese woman. I'm one hundred and fifty-eight centimeters tall.
Q: What is the speed limit in Japan?
A: I think it's different on each road. Maybe on many ordinary roads the speed limit is 40 kilo meters per hour and on average high ways we should drive within 80 kilometers per hour. But as almost all of the cars run faster than the limit speed, it's very dangerous to keep the limit. (Hahaha…)
Q: How far is your house from the train station?
A: It's a seven-minute walk from the station to my house so I think it is only 500 meters.
Q: How tall is your house or apartment building?
A: I live in a 5-story condo. I've never guessed at such a thing but I think it's around 15 meters tall.

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the force of nature

2005,7,4

Q: Can you see the people on the left side? They are very small compared to the waterfall!
A: No, I can't. They are so small that I can't see them on the picture and I think every thing that we worried about seems to be very small compared to nature. Why then I was really surprised hearing you pronounce Ibaraki instead of Ibaragi. Many Japanese pronounce Ibaragi but I'm absolutely certain we should pronounce it Ibaraki, because the other day I checked it on the home page of Ibaraki prefectural office.

Q: Do you remember the tsunami from 6 months ago?
A: Of course. We will never forget it.
Q: Have you been to Fukuroda Falls?
A: No, I've never been there. I only visited Mito in Ibaraki.
Q: Do you know anyone affected by the tsunami?
A: Fortunately my acquaintances were not affected by the tsunami.
Q: Do you worry about an earthquake in Tokyo?
A: Sometimes I worry about it. But I am too busy to bother about it every day.
Q: Are you prepared for an earthquake in Tokyo?
A: We train against a big disaster on the first of September every year in Japan. That day is the anniversary of Kantou big earthquake. Of couse I prepare for it. I fix furniture to walls and keep some bottles of water in my house.

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about art

2005,7,3

Q: However, what is art?
A: I think art is something that moved somebody.
Q: Recently chimpanzees painted some pictures. These pictures were sold for a lot of money! Is that art?
A: Of course they are art. Even if chimpanzees painted them, somebody likes them and wants to buy them. They should be art.
Q: I think art is something that makes you react. What do you think?
A: I think so. I agree with you.
Q: What kind of art do you like?
A: To tell the truth my son is studying media arts but I can't understand his works. I think I don't have a talent to recognize them. I'm really behind the times. I like pictures those were painted realistically. They are easy for me to understand.
Q: Have you made art before?
A: I don't know whether they were art or not but I liked to paint when I was a child. In addition to that I got many prizes for my pictures.
Q: Do you like photographs?
A: Yes I like to take pictures but my photographs are not art. They are taken only for memories and I' m sure they have never moved anybody.

When I was a baby....

2005,8,31

I'm sad to say I don't know about how I was born exactly. And I'm sure my mother has already

forgotten such things. Only one thing that remains of my time as a baby is that…
When I was a little girl my first sister said to me," When I came home from school, our grandmother told me at the entrance that the baby had been born and that the baby is a girl but not to be disappointed."

An extra talk is,
Asking questions in English is very important. Many Japanese people wait to be asked questions when they speak with foreigners. But you can ask any questions you want and foreigners are understood by people, which is pretty normal. So I encourage you to ask a lot of questions in your E-mail. Ask your questions on the phone and ask your questions when you meet someone for the first time. That's very interesting.

Today's conversation (talking with my mother by phone)
"Hello, this is MASAHO. Thank you for your kindness to Takashi."
"Not at all. Kazuho was taking care of him. She cooked a lot of delicious food. You had better call her and say thank you."
"Ok. By the way, he is on the plane, you know?"
"Yeah, yeah. He left from my home to the Kansai Airport at noon. He will go to Austria from LA just 12 hours after arriving at LA, you know. He is very busy."
"Really? I ham hearing such a thing for the first time. He didn't tell me about many things exactly."
"You are his mother and you had better catch his information more. "
"But he is not a boy now. Anyway I will eat dinner from now. Good bye, take care."

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caution!

2005,8,30

I think understanding signs is very difficult, because they are not written in perfect sentences. And it's similar to reading headlines and advertisements. They are missing the subject. In Hawaii I couldn't understand some traffic signs even if they were written in easy words. This morning I looked around in our yard on my way to work and I found many signs there. I was very surprised because I've never recognized such things. One of them is…

Caution
No parking except two-wheelers belong to the residents.
We will move bicycles and bikes without our special seal to the outside.

Management Corporation

An extra talk is,
I suppose every place in Japan has a rule pretty much like America. If you go to a local park in America, you see signs that say," No littering, No loud noises " and things like that.

Today's conversation (at the office with a visiter)
"Hoe can I help ypu?"
"I'm here because you sent us this letter. I brough all of the papers. I will show you them. Here they are."
"OK. Waite a minute. I'll check them. Please sign here."
"Is it OK?"
"Ok. The necessary steps are all taken. Thank you."

water sports

2005,8,29

Q: Have you ridden on a boat?
A: Of course I've ridden on a boat several times. But I've never ridden on a boat, which somebody owns personally.
The owner of a boat must be a very rich man. Is he a young executive or in America do normal people own boats?
Q: Do you like water sports like swimming, water-skiing and wakeboarding?
A: I can swim a little and I like swimming so-so. But I've never done either water-skiing or wakeboarding. In addition I've never heard of wakeboarding. It must be fun to do such sports. If I were young, I could try to do them. If I had not injured my arm, I could have done some water sports in Hawaii. It must have been fun.
Q: Do you want to go to "Turtle Lake" sometime?
A: If I should live in America for a few years, I would go there. But if I travel in America for only one week, I don't want to go there, because I have a lot of other sights to visit.

An extra talk is,
You can see the guy in the middle of the picture. He is my friend Jeff and he works in Chicago. But he has a summer house up on the lake. And he goes to the lake pretty much every weekend. In winter he ice-fishes in the lake and in summer he does water-skiing and wakeboarding. It's a very wonderful place and it's very quiet. Have you ever heard of a summer home in Japan? Perhaps people are thinking about buying something out of the city.

Today's conversation (in the morning at the office)
"Just before you came here, Mr. T called me. He said that he wanted to have a holiday today. He got a cold."
"That's too bad. Does he have important work to do today? Are there any deadlines for his work?"
"No. Today we don't have any important work of his."
"OK. I see. Please send me his absence report. Maybe it was kind of cool yesterday. So he got a cold didn't he? "
"I think so, too."

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the Toyota industrial museum

2005,8,28

Today's conversation (at the ticket shop)
Today I went to Nagoya to see my first son's family with my husband and my second son by car. We visited the Toyota industrial museum.
"Five adults."

“Which exhibition do you want to watch, the special exhibition or the permanent exhibition?”
“ What’s the difference between them?”
“At the special exhibition you can see some collections of the Toyota corporation for example some old good mechanism dolls. And at the permanent exhibition you can see our company’s works from the automatic textile machines to the present cars. ”
“ At first we want to enter the permanent exhibition.”
“OK. That ticket shop is over there. Please buy the tickets there. Thank you.”
“I see. Thanks.”

The official name of that place is The Toyota Commemorative Museum of Industry and Technology. It’s not so far from Nagoya Station and the atmosphere is really nice. It was built by using the old factory of the former Toyota Corporation. We can watch how to make shreadings, many old looms of the industrial revolution age, how to weave cloth and how to produce car. Sakichi Toyota, who invented some looms and established the former Toyota Corporation, told his son Kiichirou,” Never forget the soul of trying to produce new products.” After that Kiichirou decided to produce a car and contribute to the development of Japan through it. At that time everybody told him,” We can’t produce such a product in Japan.” Now we can see Toyota cars almost everywhere in the world. Toyota is one of the most famous companies in the world.

Most American families have pets. The most popular pet is a dog. However, many of my friends have turtles, cats, birds, snakes and hampsters. One of my friends has a duck for a pet!

What kind of pet do you have? What kind of pet do you want? If you could become an animal, what kind of animal would you want to be? I think I would want to be a bird.
I don't have any pets in my house now.
I'm not taking care of any pets now.
I have had some pets since I got married.
I have been taking care of some kind of tropical fish these ten years.
I had a dog when I lived with my parents.
I was taking care of a dog whose name was Ado in my childhood.
I had taken care of a dog until I got married.
I had been taking care of a dog until I got married.
I will have a cat when I retire from my job.
I will be taking good care of a cat in my future.
Twenty years from now I will have been living with a cat for ten years.
I will have taken care of several pets before I will die.
If I were a bird, I could fly in the beautiful sky. I wish I were as free as a bird. So If I could become an animal, of course I would want to be a bird just the same as you.

Today's conversation (making a reservation of massage by phone)
"Hi, this is the massage room in Ikoinoyu."
"I want to make a reservation for Akasuru."
"What time do you want?"
"At 10:30."
"I'm sorry but it's crowded at that time."
"How about 11:00?"
"OK. What course do you want?"
"Kankoku A course for 30 minutes."
"OK. Please tell me your name and your phone number."
"OK, my name is Masaho and my phone number is……..."
"Ok. I will repeat it. Your name is Masaho and your phone number is …… and at 11:00 you will come. Is that right? "
"Yes, it's right."
"Your reservation is fine. Please come here least 30 minutes before."
" I see. I'm sure I will go."
" Thanks. We'll be waiting for you."

(At the front desk of the massage room)
"Welcome."

"I' m Masaho. I had a reservation by telephone."
"Ok. Do you have a point card?"
"Here it is. I arrived just thirty minutes before. The road was very crowded. I was be almost late."
"That' s OK. Don' t worry. Here is your tag. Thanks."

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everyday conversation

2005,8,26

Q: What's your favorite kind of weather?
A: Although my favorite weather is cool, cloudless and clear in early autumn, because I can enjoy a beautiful blue sky, I also like warm spring days because I enjoy seeing beautiful cherry blossoms. I think human beings are not so simple that we can decide only one thing easily. Regarding my favorite food,
I don' t like only Japanese food but also like every kind of food.
I like every kind of food in addition to Japanese food because I' m a greedy eater.
Although my most favorite food is Japanese food, because it' s healthy and plain, I also like western food, because I sometime want to eat rich food especially when I feel hungry.

When I went to Hawaii, I talked with many people without my useful electronic dictionary. I don' t know many difficult words so I spoke to them in easy English. As soon as I talked to them, they responded to me and I could understand them easily. I' ve noticed that I could make communicate with native English speakers in easy English and it' s important to me to imagine some every day conversation without a dictionary. I will try to write my everyday conversation in various situations. It takes only 5 minutes.

Today' s conversation (at lunch time)
"What kind of food do you want to eat?"
"Everything, I' m OK. I' m not a picky eater. But today is very hot so I don' t want to go far to arestaurant."
"How about Chinese food? Will you go to the Chinese restaurant next to our office?"
"OK. The food of that restaurant is pretty good. I like it. Let' s go. "

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Koizumi Yakumo

2005,8,25

The first thing that reminds me of Shimane is Koizumi Yakumo who wrote famous ghost stories. I

read his 耳なし芳一 in the Japanese textbook and 一つ目小僧 written in easy English in the English textbook in my junior high school days. We had to memorize 一つ目小僧 for the recitation contest and I still remember the first part of it. “Kinokunizaka is a long slope in Tokyo.・・・・・“

I’m sure you are right because I’ve read such a description in the newspaper. But If I were an employee of Shimane prefectural office, I would write about his introduction like this, “The great writer Koizumi Yakumo, who is famous for his many ghost stories, had been living in Matsue about one year. He loved Shimane and got married with a beautiful and clever Japanese woman from Shimane here. After departing from Shimane he always remembered his wonderful days here and wrote many great stories about Shimane.”

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Texas and New York

2005,8,24

Q: What are some cities in Texas? What city in America do you want to go to sometime?

A: Texas? That remains me of Dallas where President Kennedy was killed by a gun. On that day I was watching TV with my father, because the satellite link between the US and Japan was supposed to start for the first time. And we knew his death by that system. I was a little girl who couldn’t understand many things but I felt that a big incident must have happened. Add to this I know Houston which is famous for NASA. I’ve always wanted to visit New York and see the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

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When I was in the first grade....

2005,8,23

Q: When you were 9 years old, what kind of kid were you? Were you a good student? Were you a bad student?

A: To be frank I was a good pupil in my elementary school age. I still have my report of my first grade in my elementary school. My teacher whose name was Mrs. Daimon wrote, ”Masaho is a really good girl. She is good at reading textbooks, calculation and drawing. She has mastered writing Hiragana and Katakana and she can write Kanji correctly. She does not seem to like sports, especially she can’t catch a pitching ball and vault over a horse but she tries to do them. I’m really impressed by her effort. Moreover she is doing positively what everybody doesn’t want to do. One thing which she annoys me is that she doesn’t like school lunch, especially she can’t drink milk.”

Looking back on my little girlhood days, I was always playing inside with my sister and my girl cousin who was living in the house next to me. My mother was an elementary school teacher so

my grandmother was taking care of us. I was poor at sports because she didn't let us play outside with our neighbor boys. Regarding milk I still remember people talking about it. The US occupation force gave a lot of milk for domestic animals to the Japanese government and it was being used for an elementary school lunch for a long long time. Is that true? In my memory we could eat delicious food in our home and I had never been hungry. But we had been drinking terrible milk for school lunch until the middle of the 'sixties. That's the saddest memory of my elementary school days. Now I'm not good at calculation and Kanji. I have been using an electronic calculator and a word processor these days. Therefore I have lost such abilities of mine. Hahaha…

I will attach some pictures of my family and me, which were taken in the 'fifties and early 'sixties. One of them was taken at my mother's friend's house in the countryside near Osaka. In the background there is an old house with a thatched roof. I am linking my arm on the girl's shoulder who is a daughter of my mother's friend. My second sister is sitting in the center and a boy who is standing on the right hand side is a son of the owner of this house.

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a 1/4 Korean girl

2005,8,22

Q: Some foreigners don't like the word "half". What do you think about it?

A: That little girl looks very cute. Maybe I met her grandmother or grandaunt at the nursing home in Mt. Morris. She and Judy were chatting there. I'm not so sure but I think the word "half" means halfway or imperfect. Therefore some foreigners don't think much of this word. I personally feel that "half" in Japanese sounds better than "a child of mixed parentage" or "a half blood" in Japanese konketsuji 混血児. Konkestuji sounds a little miserable. That word reminds middle-aged Japanese people of kids who were born between Japanese women and American soldiers after World War Two and grew up without fathers. On the other hand, "half" makes us think of cool young girls and boys. Anyway, those are my thoughts.

Q: By the way, can you tell the difference between Koreans and Japanese? What about Chinese and Japanese?

A: I've been to China, Taiwan and Korea. I suppose the air of those people is different from that of Japanese. But in Hawaii I saw many people who looked like Japanese but spoke English or Korean. By the way one of my son's friends whom I met in Hawaii was Korean American. My son said about him that he was a very excellent student. His works have gotten many prizes in the world. But he can't speak Korean. He can speak only English.

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about an illegal immigrant problem

2005,8,21

Q: Does Japan have an illegal immigrant problem?

A: Yes, I think we have a lot of illegal immigrant problems these days. The incidents that were happened by them are increasing. I couldn't forget an incident that happened a few years ago. That incident was… One day a 7 years old boy was taken away from the super market. He was a Chinese and spending a lot of time at that store by himself, because he was a child of illegal Chinese citizens and he couldn't go to school. Fortunately the police protected the boy but after that arrested his father. When I went to Shanghai about 5 years ago, a boy, maybe 8 years old, was sitting in the seat next to me. He said to me that he had spent his summer holidays at his grandparent's house in Shanghai but in Japan he was always watching TV alone after school. He was going to school so he was not an illegal immigrant. But in my opinion his parents should have let him enter an after school care for school children and help him to make many Japanese friends.

-△-

my letter to American lady

2005,8,18

Happy birthday and happy wedding anniversary to you!

Thank you very much for your mail. From the 12th to the 16th I went to Hawaii with my husband and met my son who came there with his American friends from LA. I still feel a dull pain in my right arm so I couldn't swim in the ocean. But my husband and I climbed to the top of Diamond Head and went to Pearl Harbor by bus. When we visited the Battleship Missouri Memorial and USS Arizona Memorial, we prayed for the souls of many victims of World War Two. One day my son rented a Jeep and we drove to the east coast where we could see many beautiful beaches. At that time I tried to drive a car about 10 minutes in a small town. I realized it's very difficult to drive a car in the US, because the places of the blinkers and wipers are opposite and I had to keep right. I really enjoyed our holidays in Hawaii.

Regarding the cookbooks, which you gave me, I read some pages and recognized that they were very difficult for me. I found "oz."and "Heat liquids to 120 degrees." Units of weight and temperature of America are different from those of Japan. But I will try to cook some dishes soon.

If you are Ok, I really want to visit your home someday, especially in autumn. I imagine the trees around your house must be very beautiful in that season.

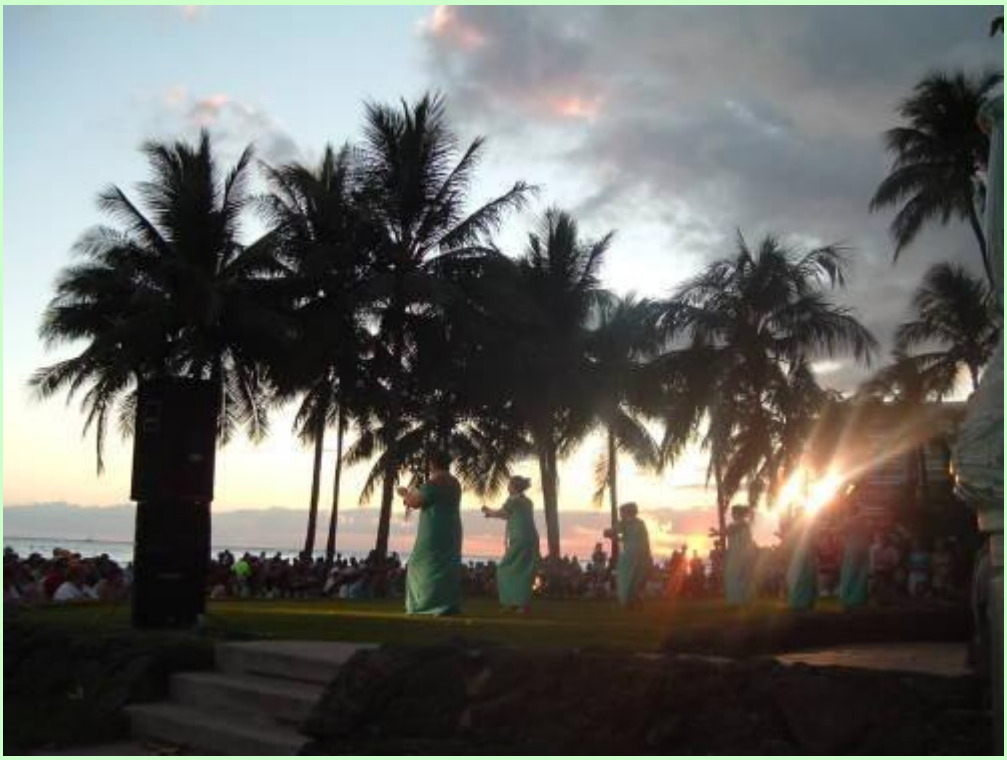
Anyway I am really glad to hear Monte and you are fine. Take care and have a good summer.

-△-

Aloha !!!

2005,8,17

I came back from Hawaii this evening. I really enjoyed our holidays in Hawaii and spoke with many people, hotel staff, some tourists from the mainland of the US, bus drivers, a taxi driver and waitresses, in English.



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good bye Hawaii!!

2005,8,16

I asked the front desk to call a taxi at noon. After that we went to the beach and I rolled up my pants to enter the sea. If I never entered the sea, everybody would ask me, "Why did you go to Hawaii?" Hahaha… I felt the seawater was a little cool. My son said to me, "You had better try marine sports next time. We could see turtles and corals. That's amazing." As I really regretted having to give up trying them, we decided to go to Kapiolani Park and visit Waikiki Aquarium. That's a simple but really nice aquarium. I recommend that. At that park some local women were dancing hula on a magnificent stage. Now my long memories of Hawaii has finished.
Thank you very much for reading my poor English.

-△-

driving in Oahu

2005,8,15

My son came to our hotel by a rental jeep and we drove to the east coast where we heard there are many beautiful beaches. We passed in front of Univ. of Hawaii and arrived at Hanauma Bay that is famous for the movie of Elvis Presley. The beach was very crowded so we only enjoyed sight seeing from the observatory. Near Mokapu Peninsula we could see many canals which was a really nice view. My son let me drive the jeep in a small town near there. Maybe I will not have an opportunity to drive a car in foreign countries in my future. It was a great memory for me. I' m moved to see many beautiful beaches where we found few people. We visited Polynesian Cultural Center and Dole Plantation. Of course we drank a very big glass of pineapple juice there. It was too sweet to drink all of it for my son. In the inland of Oahu we could see some stock farms and beautiful rainbows twice. We reached Pearl Harbor and we talked to my son about what we learned yesterday while seeing the sunset at the harbor. I hear these days many young Japanese don't know about World War Two but my son knew about it exactly. After eating dinner at the shopping center near Pearl Harbor, we drove to Tantalus which is famous for its beautiful night view. We could hear many Japanese there. Somebody said to us,"Hey, Japanese. How do you stay in Hawaii?" We came back to our hotel at 10:00pm but Kalakauwa Ave. was very busy. Many people were singing songs there. We took a walk on that Ave. and enjoyed our last night in Hawaii.

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Pearl Harbor

2005,8,14

I decided to visit Pearl Harbor when we made a plan to travel to Hawaii. Of corse we were born after World War Two but I thought it's very important to realize the most unfortunate history between the US and Japan. It was about an hour ride by bus from Waikiki to there. I was very surprised that I found many Americans, especially white people there. But I'm sorry there were few Japanese except us. Though we were Japanese, the US navy young sailor attendants were very friendly to us. Everybody had to watch the movie about World War Two before they went to USS Arizona Memorial by the boat, which is on the sea. We had to wait until 2:15pm to watch the movie. During the waiting time, we visited the Battleship Missouri Memorial. We attended a Japanese guide tour but the tourists were only my husband and I. Our guide introduced himself to us in good Japanese," My name is Paul and I'm American now but I was born in Kyusyu. I came to America to work at a Japanese restaurant in the '60s and served in the Vietnam War. I am working here as a volunteer guide." We looked around the Battleship Missouri and he told us many historical episodes about MacArthur and so on. Then we visited USS Arizona Memorial by a boat and we prayed for the souls of the many victims of World War Two. I bought a novel whose title is "A Boy at War"to understand what Americans are thinking about World War Two. After coming back to the hotel we enjoyed the beautiful sunset while seeing a hula show at Waikiki beach.

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in Downtown in Honolulu

2005,8,13

Today I decided to go to Downtown. We walked along Kalakauwa Ave., the busiest street in Hawaii, to Ala Moana Center, the biggest shopping center in Hawaii. After taking a rest at a coffee shop, we began to walk Ala Moana Beach where we could see the All US Chinese dragon boat race by luck. We ate lunch at Victoria Ward. I found " Grand mother's spicy fried rice with kimchi"in a menu and ordered it. A waitress asked me," Which do you want Sunny-side up or a scrambled egg?"(Oh, I can understand what Sunny-side up means. I learned how to cook eggs on Fine's web site!) I answered with confidence, "A scrambled egg for me and Sunny- side up for him." The dish was just like what I imagined. After eating lunch, I asked her," Can I have a doggy bag?" Then I paid the check with a tip by card. (I always thought paying checks at restaurants was very difficult but I had done it perfectly. I'm sorry it was very hot so I had to throw away our doggy bag in a garbage can after all.) Then we visited many famous places in Downtown, Mission House Museum, Kawaiaiahao Church, King Kamahameha Statue, Iolani Palace, Hawaii State Capital and Aloha Tower. We actually walked over 6 ilometers. When we took a rest at Aloha Tower Market Place, we could watch a hula show for free. They were very lovely. We came back to the hotel by a colorful trolley bus.

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the time difference between Japan and Hawaii

2005,8,12

I will start from Narita at 7:30 this evening and arrive in Honolulu at 8:00 am today – the same day. I will leave Honolulu at 14:40 on Thursday and arrive in Narita at 18:00 on Wednesday. Hawaii is 19 hours behind Japan. Now it is 9:00 am in Japan so it is 2:00 pm on Thursday in Hawaii. I hope I will not be troubled with jetlag. I think I have to sleep as soon as possible after the plane heads to Honolulu. It takes about 7 and a half hours from Narita to Honolulu by airplane.

I arrived at Honolulu airport at 8:00am. I got on a shuttle bus and checked in at the hotel safely. Our hotel was an old and small hotel near Waikiki beach and the hotel staff didn't speak Japanese. My son found the hotel on an Internet site written in English so maybe that hotel is for Americans. As soon as we checked in, we went to Waikiki beach and were really impressed by the beautiful blue sky and ocean. After that we got a bus to Diamond Head and climbed to the top of that mountain. My Japanese guidebook said that it was easy to climb to the top. But I felt it was really hard work. There were a narrow and steep slope and long steps on the way to the top. I talked with some American tourists from the main land of the US. One of them said to me," We are here from New England. It took about 20 hours from there. Maybe we came here from further than you. We had to change planes." On the top of the mountain I talked with some American women. They said," Not only your Japanese guidebook. Our book says it's easy, too. " "I saw many parents with their babies. No kidding." But the view from the top was wonderful. In the evening my son visited us at the hotel with his four friends. They were two whites and two Asians. I introduced myself to them in English. One of them said to us in Japanese. "I'm Japanese from Tokyo. I was a friend of Aaron in our elementary school days. I had been living in LA with my

parents until I was 10 years old. I'm now a graduate student of Keio Univ. Maybe your son and I were schoolmates. But we met together in Hawaii through Aaron for the first time." My son said to me," I have many plans to enjoy marine sports with my friends. But I will rent a car and enjoy driving with you in Hawaii for only one day. Make a plan where you want to go. My friends said to me that you can speak English pretty well so you will be able to go everywhere by bus. It should be a good experience for you to speak English."
The thing that surprised me about Hawaii was that there were many kinds of races, such as Hawaiian, White, Asian and Polynesian, and all of them speak English.

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famous people

2005,8,11

Q: What famous people do you respect? What famous people do you not respect? Please tell me about an episode when you met someone famous.

A: I'm sorry but I've never spoken with famous people familiarly.　I think real famous people have a lot of talent and they are always making an effort to improve their ability. It's easy for children of famous parents to be famous in their young age. We call such a person "oya no nanahikari 親の七光 " They are very lucky children. And maybe it's true that some people become famous by the stroke of luck. In Japan we say, "Fortune is part of abilities. 運も実力のうち" But continuing to be famous seems to be very difficult. We know many people who were famous but degraded soon and corrupt famous parents' children. For example former famous child actors. I respect people who won the famous position through their ability and always try to

develop their talents.

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I will go to Hawaii !!

2005,8,10

Now a very wonderful occurrence happened to me. I will go to Hawaii this Friday!!!
I was supposed to go to Las Vegas and the Grand Canyon in the middle of September for this summer vacation. But my job schedule was changed recently and it would be difficult for me to take vacation in that period. Moreover I had to cancel some golf plans because I injured my arm. I lost my entire summer vacation plans and I was really disappointed. This Monday my husband suggested to me that we should go to Hawaii this weekend and he got two airplane tickets on the Internet. It 's easy for us to take holidays in Obon お盆 and just at that time my son will visit Hawaii with his American friends. He is supposed to stay at the parent's house of his friend. My son made a reservation for our hotel near his friend's house. We will be able to meet there and enjoy holidays in Hawaii together. I feel just like I'm in a happy dream now. I had never thought about traveling in Hawaii three days ago. But I don't know about Hawaii at all. I will try to read a guidebook from now. People say," We don't need English in Hawaii. Almost all of the local people speak Japanese." But of course I will try to speak English as often as possible.

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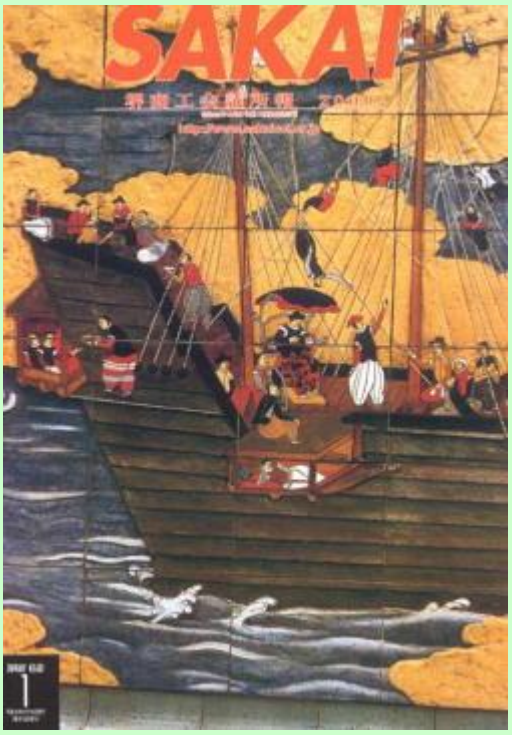
my hometown ②

2005,8,9

In the sixteenth century Sakai flourished as a trading center. There were many rich merchants who traded with China, Siam, Portugal, Spain and so on. 南蛮貿易 They self-governed their town. Some missionaries visited Sakai from foreign countries and they called Sakai "Venice in the East". (My memory was correct. I was really relived. Maybe Venice was famous for its trading and self- government in medieval times.) As San Francisco Xavier visited Sakai,there are the Xavier park in Sakai now.



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my hometown ①

2005,8,8

I was born in Sakai which is south of Osaka. The other day a newspaper said that Sakai would be an ordinance-designated city next April. The population of Sakai is about eight hundred thousand and it's pretty famous for its history. I think we can find at least two articles about Sakai in our Japanese history textbook. There are some ancient tombs 古墳（huge old emperor's tombs square ahead and round behind which were built in the fifth century. 前方後円墳 ）One of them is called Nintokutennou Ryo 仁徳天皇陵 and it is the biggest tomb in the world. I was born near there and sometimes played at the moat around it.

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about foreigners

2005,8,7

Q: Why are Japanese people so surprised to see foreigners? What do you think? Are you surprised when a foreigner says "hi"?

A: Many Japanese don't expect foreigners to speak Japanese fluently. I had never seen a foreigner who was good at Japanese except some TV personality until I met Chris last September in LA. In Yokosuka there are many American Navy sailors and we are used to meeting them. On the Yokosuka Line sometimes foreigners sit down next to us. Sometimes I see a Japanese who looks troubled when an American asks them about directions or the timetable . Once I've helped them on the road. When two Japanese women asked me to speak with an American, I passed by them. I think almost all Japanese don't have confidence in English conversation especially normal old people. So the owner was very surprised to see you in Shimane.

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Talking about sports

2005,8,6

Some people say golf fee is too expensive and it's not good for the environment. Sure, it needs large places and a lot of money, but it's really a thinking sport and it's very good for relieving our stress. If Tiger Woods and Annika played golf at a par 3 course, who do you think would be winner? I think maybe Tiger will gain a victory but it is possible that Annika will be a winner. Of course Tiger's hitting power is bigger than Annika's. but at the short hole her shot might be more precise than his. Fifty years from now, men and women will complete together in all athletic events. What do you think about this opinion? I don't think so. Because men and women are different from each other physically. I think there is one sport that women can beat men. What kind of sport do you think? Um... it's a very difficult question. I think maybe horse riding. It needs only technique and the average woman is not as heavy as a men. I think it's long distance swimming. Women have fat and it's necessary for that sport. Today we discussed in English about such an issue at NOVA. I always think discussing such a theme is very difficult even if I discuss in Japanese. I always speak my opinion on a way not to annoy my partner. One lesson hour is only 40 minutes.

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about Shounan beach

2005,8,5

Our house is near the sea and Shonan is called the "Miami in Japan". But I don't recommend that you go to the beach because it is very crowded and there is an enormous traffic jam on the weekends in summer. If you want to go to the beach, please change from the Tokaidou line to the Odakyu line at Fujisawa. Maybe you will say, "What really struck me about Shounan beach was the number of people." From this Friday to Sunday we have Bon dancing at the park in front of my house. In the evening people are dancing to taiko sounds. If you dance among the people, it might be amusing. You can wear a Yukata (Kimono for summer) of my husband's. Hahaha…

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I'm a terrible interviewer, too!!!

2005,8,4

Q: They only asked The Foo Fighters questions like:
"Japanese food, OK?"
"Like Japan?"
It was very unfortunate. What would you ask a foreign artist in an interview?
A: The other day the newspaper said, "The big show business production company began to run the English conversation school. It's necessary for Japanese entertainers to speak English in order to be active worldwide." If that comedy team speaks English in public, they should study English more. I think there are some comedians who can speak English better in Japan. Why does the producer use such a team? It's a disgrace to Japan. I think there are some comedians who can speak English better in Japan. If I were an interviewer, I would ask…
" Thank you for visiting Japan. Is this your first visit to Japan? Are you enjoying your trip in Tokyo? What is your first impression of Japan? What kind of Japanese food do you like? We have many delicious and healthy foods. Please try to eat them. How about Japanese musicians?"
Hahaha…I'm a terrible interviewer, too!!!

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a letter to kids

2005,8,3

The other day I got many cards from you. Thank you very much for them and letting me teach Origami at your class. It is my great memory. Now the Japanese astronaut Souichirou Noguchi is flying in space with American astronauts. Chris (Mrs. Nixon's son) studied Japanese and now he is teaching English to many Japanese. My son is studying media arts in America and I am studying English conversation from Chris. I think studying about another country is very important in improving the world. Please study hard and visit Japan someday.

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a Korean style cold noodle

2005,8,2

I've been to Fujimama's once and I ate a dish like fried rice. Is it "California Fusion"? It tasted like a dish, which I ate in Indonesia. There are many good restaurants near my house, from Japanese style to Italian style, and from very expensive to cheap. When somebody visits me, I choose the restaurant that is most appropriate for my visitor. Recently I often go to " Gyukaku" to eat only a Korean style cold noodles for lunch. It's very delicious and I can't cook such flavors at home. I just love those noodles. At first I got nervous to order no meat but the noodles but these days I am used to doing it.

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our life style

2005,8,1

The other day I found an interesting article on the newspaper. It says," The birth rate in Shimane is the highest of all of Japan and the overworking hours of men are least there." I think the lifestyle in Shimane seems to be better than that in big cities. I know two cowoekers of mine from Shimane. They said to me," They have few industries there , so I got a job in Kanagawa." We have to make an important decision when we get a job. But we have a saying " There is no place like home."

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the US Naive sailor in trouble

2005,9,30

When I was a little girl, I lived in a detached house with a large garden. We grew many kinds of flowers and vegetables. I remember we planted soybeans and strawberries. Do you know that a young soybean is Edamame? It was very difficult for us to produce sweet and large strawberries. Our strawberries were always small and sour. Since I grew up, I've been living in an apartment house. I can't take care of many plants except some plants grown in planters on the balcony. Now there are some aloes and some kind of greens whose English names I don't know. They are really strong and even if I don't water them, they are thriving.

An extra talk is,
I guess America is such a big country so we have space for a much bigger lawn. And people often use a lawn mower. If we live in a town, we pay five dollars to have the lawn mowed. That's a good job for young people. What kind of job did you do when you were young?

Today's conversation (I could help the US Navy sailor in trouble.)
"I want to change my car's temporary plate."
"Our office doesn't take charge of a temporary plate. You have to go to the city hall."
"Where is the city hall? Is it far from here?"
"No, it's an only 5-minute walk from here. Look at this map.
Did you get a second hand car from another sailor? He paid his car tax last year.
But maybe he didn't pay it this year. So you have to pay it."
"I want to change the car's registration from his name to my name. So I will pay the load tax but now I don't have Japanese yen. Can I pay by US dollar?"
"No, you can't."
"Ok. I'll come here this afternoon. When is the office closed?"
"Our office is open from eight thirty to five fifteen. But please come here before five o'clock. "
"OK. Do you need anything else?"
"Show him the registration card of your car. And you will sign the paper and pay money. That's all."
"OK. I'll go to the city hall and then go back to the base and change money. After that I'll come here to pay the car tax."
"OK. We will be waiting for you. After that you can go to the land transportation office. And you can change the registration of your car to your name. "
"Arigato! "
"You are welcome."

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my favorite outfit

2005,9,29

Q:What is your favorite outfit?
A:I would wear suits and high heals when I was young, but these days I prefer to wear pants. They are easy to wear.
Q:What do you think looks good on you?
A:Maybe the Japanese traditional wear Kimono looks good on me.
Q: What colors look good on you?
A:I think bright blue looks good on me because many people told me that it looked good on me when I wore a bright blue dress this summer.

An extra talk is,
Some people don't like to wear suits but I really enjoy wearing suits. Now Koizumi has instituted cool biz, which really means suits for cool business. People don't wear jackets and ties. I think jackets and ties are perfectly acceptable in the office but maybe not outside when it was so hot. (I couldn't catch this part.) Anyway please send me a picture of you wearing your favorite outfits.

Today's conversation (Talking with my friend at NOVA)
"Do you think we will use these phrases in the future?"
"No. I will never speak with foreigners in such a situation."
"Why do we study these phrases. These days I'm tired of studying English."
"Maybe someday they will be useful. We have to keep our motivation to study English."

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Happy birthday to Michael!

2005,9,28

Happy birthday to Michael! I don't know such rich people who own a private airplane. In Japan maybe only really rich people who are presidents of the big company own such expensive objects. I've never ridden in a small plane. My elder son rode a Cessna in Guam this summer. I would like to ride it someday but it must be kind of scary.

An extra talk is,
Today is September twenty-seventh. Today is my brothers birthday. Today he turns thirty-two years old. He is now getting ready to move from Illinois to Tennessee. He wants to move to Tennessee. His name is Michael. He was born in nineteen-seventy three.

Today's conversation (talking about a rumor with my colleague at the office)
" He always says one word too many, you know. The other day you came to the office a little late."

"Yeah. The train stopped and I was late. Do you mean that kind of thing?"
"Yeah, at that time he said you should have caught an earlier train."
"Why? I always come here ten minutes earlier than the opening time. I took the same train but the train stopped on the way. Why did he say such a thing? "
"You are right. We can't help being angry with him. Don't worry about it."

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old people

2005,9,27

I'm very glad to hear about Mr. and Mrs. Clark. Mr. Clark sent me some pictures taken at your house to me in May. I think these days old people are really active in Japan, especially women. At golf courses and NOVA I meet many aged people. They have a lot of money because the pension system takes great care of them. But that began being not so good for our generation. Oh, no! I'm not so young and I prefer elder people to younger people. But sometimes old people, especially men, tend to be tough and difficult such as the elderly man at the VOICE class of Fujisawa NOVA. I should take care of myself not to be such a tough and difficult woman for myself.

An extra talk is,
I guess when I was in Japan I was surprised to see how old people were just kind of satisfied with no one really treating them well. (I couldn't catch this part.) Our family would always have old people around . I used to listen to, make a conversation and talk with them. In America every one treats them pretty much same. (I couldn't catch the ending part.)

Today's dictation was very difficult for me. Maybe there are a lot of words I don't know. I realize to memorize many words is important to improve my ability of listening.

Today's conversation (talking with a visitor at the office)
"Where is the bathroom?"
"Can you see a door over there?"
"Go there and go through the door. Then you can find it to the left."
"OK. Thank you."
"You are welcome."

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describing political issues

2005,9,26

Today's conversation (discussing about political issues at NOVA)
" What do you think the most important issue is that the Japanese government should do first nowadays?"
" I think that is about the educational system. The education of high school should become compulsory education. Because we have many young kids who drop out of high school these days. Even if they want to get a job, they can't get a good job. So they can't help being part time workers."
"In my opinion it's a support system for young families. Because the birthrate of Japan is decreasing more and more. After thirty years maybe Japan will be full of old people. The government should establish the policy which makes it easy for young families to have at least two children. Of course I know it's a personal decision to have a child or not. But I am still convinced it's the most important policy for our country."
" I'm sure that improving the pension system is the most important. Aged people can't live in peace recently. We can't receive the pension until sixty-five years old. I hope Japan will be an easy country to live in for aged residents."
" The finance of Japan is in the red. To solve this problem is the most important and maybe the postal privatization belongs to the financial reform."
" Why doesn't the government use our taxes more for social welfare? The government has to make a country which is more comfortable to live in."
"To be frank describing political issues is too difficult for me. When will I discuss such issues with native speakers? I want to master everyday English. What do you think about this? "
"I agree with you. I want to master useful English for traveling.

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an English man

2005,9,25

① I've never been to England so I don't have a wide circle of knowledge about England. He seems to wear a kind of traditional costume like a kilt. Let me think,is it a costume in Scotland? I suppose James took this picture at Buckingham Palace. And I imagine the elderly man knows a secret about the royal family. He must be dying to tell that to many tourists.

An extra talk is,
Actually James is a very good photographer. He is thinking about quitting his job and becoming a professional photographer but now it's difficult. Many professional photographers earn money by shooting weddings. They also like to take pictures for portraits and company photographs. But hopefully James becomes a professional photographer. That will be great. Now he is an engineer.

Today's conversation (Talking about my experience with my friend)
"How are you doing?"

“I’m a little tired. Because the day before yesterday I went swimming, and yesterday I went to the VOICE class at Fujisawa NOVA. I stayed there from two fifteen to nine. ”
“How was that?”
“It was a very helpful experience. There were some high level English speakers. But unfortunately there was an elderly man among the participants.”
“Uh-huh.”
“He was always speaking about political issues by himself in his Japanese English. When the other participants began to speak, he stopped them. He told them that their issues were not suitable there.”
“That’s terrible! Didn’t a teacher warn him?”
“The teacher was a young American. Maybe he was a beginner. He seemed to be only taken aback by him. But fortunately he went home after two hours. After that we enjoyed our English conversation.”

-△-

You look Japanese but....

2005,9,24

When I was in an eel restaurant in Fujusawa by myself, an elderly husband and wife sat down next to me. To my surprise they began to chat to each other in English and they talked to a waitress in Japanese. I couldn’t help looking at them and found the courage to talk to the wife sitting next to me. They looked really Japanese and I believed they were Japanese.

Today’s conversation (talking with a strange lady sitting next to me at the restaurant)
“ Would you mind if I ask you a question?”
“Uh, OK?”
“Why do you speak English?”
“Actually my husband is a Japanese but I’m not a Japanese.”
“Oh, I’m sorry. Now I’m studying English conversation, so I thought you were practicing English conversation.”
“I see. I can speak Japanese, too. I speak to Japanese in Japanese to respect them. But we talk to each other in English. When I respect you, I speak in Japanese. Do you understand?”
“I see. Have a good day. Good bye.” I wonder what country she is from but I couldn’t ask her such a rude question.”

An extra talk is,
Sometimes my father said that I looked Japanese when I wore eyeglasses. Maybe he used to see Japanese wearing eyeglasses. But I don’t think I look Japanese. Actually one of my friends was born in Japan but her mother is Russian. But she doesn’t speak either Russian or English. She speaks Japanese. She got stressed because people speak to her in English.

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Where should I live.

2005,9,23

I'm always thinking about where I should live after retiring from my job. I want to go abroad many times and enjoy playing golf. The golf fee is cheaper in Chiba than that in Kanagawa and Narita airport is in Chiba. Maybe the price of real estate is not so expensive in Chiba as that in Kanagawa. But I like Fujisawa and I also miss Osaka where I was born and my mother and sister live. I'm wondering about such a thing and I can't find an answer to my question.

An extra talk is,
When I was living in Shimane, I went to Tokyo. It took by Shinkansen, bus or plane over 20 thousand yen or maybe 30 thousand yen. I drove there 20 thousand yen and that's too bad. How do you travel around in Japan. I'm always interested in good ideas.

Today's conversation (talking about a movie with my friend)
"Please tell me about another movie which you watched recently."
"OK. I watched "Stolen Summer". It's a movie about two little boys in Chicago in the seventies. The elder boy is eight years old and he lives with his parents, seven brothers and sisters. They are really big family. The father is a firefighter and they are Catholic."
"Are they from Ireland? Many firefighters are Irish Americans, you know. And they are typical Irish Americans I think. They have a lot of children and many people live in Chicago. Have you ever heard of Irish twins? It means brothers who are only one-year apart. "
"Is that so? You have a really wide circle of knowledge, don't you? Let me see, another boy is one year younger than he and he has leukemia. His father is a Jewish priest. During summer holiday they became friends and the elder boy encouraged the younger boy. But at last he died. That's the story."
"It seems to be a common story."
"Maybe. But it warmed my heart. It's a very melting story. I recommend it to you."

-△-

I'm jealous of your ability.

2005,9,22

I was supposed to visit Las Vegas and the Grand Canyon just now. But I'm sorry I couldn't go there because my job schedule was changed. Frankly I don't like gambling. I only wanted to go there, enjoy the atmosphere and watch some shows. I'm looking forward to visiting there someday.

An extra talk is,
I've been to Vegas twice. Actually one time I visited there for a birthday party and another time I drove there for work. I know Las Vegas is an amusement park really but (I couldn't catch this part.) I miss Vegas. There are high rollers and bad guys. Tell me what do you feel in Las Vegas.

Today's conversation (talking with my neighbor)
"Hi, long time no see. What's up?"
"Not so good. Maybe we have not seen each other since July. Thanks for that time."
" Did you send an e-mail to Chris? "
" No, these days I have been feeling really tired. So I couldn't. Do you continue sending E-mails to him? "
"Sure."
" You look really energetic. I'm jealous of you."
" No, I have just gone to a doctor's office. I injured my arm after that and still feel strange now. Moreover my memory is getting less and less clear recently. It's hard for me to study English. As may be expected as an English teacher, you can speak English very well. I'm jealous of your ability. There is a lot of grammar I can't understand."
" OK, I will teach you if you ask me."

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the Japanese political situation these days

2005,9,21

By the way last Sunday was the Election Day in Japan. I'm sure you had seen the result of the Japanese election but I will try to describe the Japanese political situation these days. Since the Prime Minister Koizumi tried to establish the law of the privatization of the postal system, some members of the Diet disagreed with it. So he decided to dissolve the House of Representatives. This is the way the election started. Moreover he put some women up as candidates against ex-representatives who had disagreed with the bill. As almost all of the women candidates were beautiful and smart, the mass media called them assassins and many Japanese people were interested in them. At last many Japanese supported Koizumi and the Liberal Democratic Party got many votes at the election. He beat other parties such as the Democratic party of Japan.

Q: Where was this picture taken?
A: This picture was taken at the wedding ceremony.
Q: Who is the lady in the white dress?
A: Of course, she is a bride.
Q: What is she throwing?

A: She is throwing a bouquet which she had been holding at the ceremony.
Q: Who are the people in the background?
A: They are single girls who were attending the ceremony.
Q: Why do they want to catch what she is throwing?
A: Because people say the girl who catches the bouquet will get married next time.
Q: If you catch what she is throwing, what does it mean?
A: It means I will get married soonest among the girls.
Q: Have you ever seen this custom?
A: Yeah, my daughter in law threw the bouquet at the end of her wedding ceremony 2 years ago. Actually my niece in law (the daughter of my husband's sister) caught the bouquet however she has still not gotten married. She graduated from the university this spring and got a job at a cosmetic company. By the way she had grown up in Chicago until she was 5 years old. She could speak English well at that time but I'm not sure if she is good at English or not now.

Today's conversation(Talking about the TV program)
"Did you watch the historical program on TV last Sunday?"
"Yeah, I did. But I fell asleep twice or three times in the middle of the program. It was a four hour program."
"Was it interesting?"
"Since the newspaper said it was really nice, I watched it. But I think it was not worth watching for hours. Many comedians were broadcasted on that program."
" They were only noisy weren't they? I'm sure comedians are not good nowadays. They didn't have skills at all."

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Super Size Me

2005,9,20

Today's conversation (talking about some movies with my colleague)
" How was your three day holiday?"
" My husband is in America, you know. Therefore I watched some movies."
" Please tell me about the movies."
" Do you know Super Size Me? It's a movie about a man who had been eating only MacDonald's food for one month. "
" Was it interesting? "
" Yeah, I think it's a shocking movie for Americans but it's not so shocking for Japanese. Because the drinks and food of American MacDonald's are much larger than those of Japan. S size coke is maybe as large as L size in Japan. Some Americans are very fat however there is not such a fat person in Japan. Being overweight is not so serious problem in Japan, you know. In America some people eat hamburgers three times a day. Do you know such a person in Japan?"

“ It’s difficult to find such a person. Japanese food is really healthy. We are happy.”

-△-

The Last Samurai

2005,9,19

Although I’ve never been to a sports bar in Japan, I’ve heard of it. When I was young I never heard of such bars. Maybe they came from America some years ago
as well as many other things. I’m sure many crazy fans of the Hanshin baseball team gathered at such bars in Osaka tonight.

An extra talk is,
I don’t know why Americans love sports so much but it’s almost a part of the notional personality. You can go to football games and find one hundred thousand people and go to baseball games and find 30 thousand or 40 thousand people there. Every night there is a very popular TV program, which is actually the channel ESPN. And on ESPN you can see all kinds of sports. In fact there are a lot of sports channels in America. I don’t know why they love sports. (I couldn’t catch the ending part.)

Today’s conversation (talking about The Last Samurai with my friends)
“Have you ever watched the Last Samurai?”
“Of course, it’s very popular. Moreover I love Tom Cruise. He is very handsome. But I think the story is not so good.”
“Why do you think the story is bad.”?
“ The situation is too hard to believe. That story is so different from the truth.”
“I agree with your opinion. Why can the Samurai whom Ken Watanabe played speak English so well in those times?”
“You are right! Even if he is a genius, we can’t believe it.”
“At that time we didn’t have TV, radio or tape recorders in Japan. Maybe in the world.”
“Moreover we didn’t make contact with foreign countries. The Tokugawa Shogun prohibited people to do such a thing. Who taught him how to speak English?”

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about a beauty salom

2005,9,18

I think Randy’s wife is the girl standing in the center、because she looks like she is instructing the other staff. The charges seem to be cheaper than those in Japan. I go to the beauty salon once a month and always pay about twelve thousand yen including tax for a haircut and a hair

dye. Does Waxing means removing hair? I don't know whether they can do such a thing at beauty salons in Japan. When I visited the beauty salon in your hometown with your mother, I was surprised how big it was. My Beauty Salon isn't so big and the staff is only three people.

An extra talk is,
I live in a very small town of three thousand and five hundred people but we have, I think, three or four beauty salons. I know beauty salons are very popular in America just like those in Japan. I think they make pretty good money. My mother goes to the beauty salon and talks about a lot of things in the town.

Today's conversation (talking with my friends)
"Would you like these oranges?"
"Thanks but oranges seem to be still expensive these days?"
"Don't worry. Actually my daughter- in-law is from Ehime which is famous for its oranges. The other day her mother sent me a box full of oranges, grapes and persimmons. Her brother, the uncle of my daughter-in-law, produces many oranges and so on. Now my husband is in America and I can't eat all of them by myself. My refrigerator is full of oranges. Help yourself to them."
" Thank you. I will try to eat one. It's very sweet and delicious."

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talking about eating habit

2005,9,17

The thing I was really surprised about in America is how Americans ate large portions at a restaurant. I'm a 100 percent sure that if they eat such a food everyday, they would get fat. When I choose food, I always take care of these things. I try to watch my fat intake. I try to eat vegetables and fruit at least twice a day. I try to drink milk as much as possible because it's a good source of calcium. They say calcium is good for our bones. Eating shrimp and crab too much is not good for my health because they are loaded with cholesterol. I ought to cut down on junk food. I suppose I could eat fast food less then now. I've got to stop drinking beer too much. But it's hard for me to carry out my decisions. Maybe eating food is my big pleasure and delicious food like shrimp is not so healthy.

An extra talk is,
Actually Americans are getting so big and recently it is becoming big news. I definitely recommend watching the movie, which Morgan Spurlock directed and starred in. That movie is called "Super size me". If you have a chance to go to a video store, rent it. That's an amazing movie and it's interesting to see it.

Today's conversation (talking about the movie with my friend)

"Have you watched the movie "Super size me"? "
"What? I don't know such a movie."
"You see. I guess it's a movie in which a man continues eating MacDonald's food everyday and gets ill."
"I recall it. Mass media talked about it so-so but it was not a great hit, wasn't it?"
"Maybe. MacDonalds wase disturbed by the showing."

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If I had been.....

2005,9,16

When I was young, I wished I had attractive bigger black eyes. I wished I had silk-like long straight hair. I wished my legs and my waist were not so fat. I wished I were taller like a model. I wished my skin were fine and white. If I had been such a woman, I would have been a famous movie star. But now although I'm an ordinary middle-aged woman, I still feel I'm happy.

An extra talk is,
Images are a big thing in America and Japan. You find people so worried about how they look and how they appear to people. Sometimes people worry more about image than who they really are. (I couldn't catch these parts.) What do you think about it?

Today's conversation (talking with my husband about his trip to LA)
"Have you already packed your baggage? Don't forget some books and letters to Takashi."
"Sure, they are already in the suitcase."
"What time will the plane depart from Narita?"
"You can find my flight schedule and travel insurance paper on the refrigerator."
"OK, It's time for me to go to the office. Take care and say hello to Takashi. "
"Bye-bye. Enjoy your time at home."

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Easy rider

2005,9,15

When I watched easy rider, I was young. I miss that movie. How is Peter Fonda doing now, who is a son of Henry Fonda and a younger brother of Jane? I tried to look cool in my young days. But these days I never do such an effort. I think comfortable and easy clothes are best. Honestly yesterday I wore a pair of high heels and the result was miserable. I was really tired with my feet. I think it's best for me to be looked at as what I really am. Regarding bikes, I really want my sons not to ride them. It's dangerous. The son of my friend got injured when he was touring in

Hokkaido by motorcycle. I hear his motorcycle got a flat suddenly. How scary it was!

An extra talk is,
I used to have a motorcycle.　When I was living in Japan、I had a Honda CB 400.　My friend Ernie had an 800 Kawasaki street bike. That was a great motorcycle. Americans think Japanese motorcycles are fantastic. I think Japanese motorcycles are the best made motorcycles. I compliment Japanese workmanship. (I couldn't catch the last part.)

Today's conversation (talking with my husband about his trip to LA)
"We will have a three-day weekend twice soon. What do you want to do at that period?
I can have another three-day holiday among them."
"If you can have such long holiday you could go to America. I have to attend a meeting on Wednesday so I will not be able to get a holidays. It's my responsibility to do it. "
"Can I go to the Grand Canyon with Takashi without you?"
"Ok. Don't worry about me. I will go there someday."
"Umm, I'm thinking about it. I will search for the flight ticket on the Internet."

-△-

How to explain our policy

2005,9,14

You look really comfortable on the big blue raft. I like spending time with my good friends. And I also like to be alone. I'm certain loneliness is very important to think myself and not to lose myself. I think for it's common for all people. When my kids were little, I longed to have my own time. Even if a mother loves her kids, It's important for her to spend sometime by herself to be relaxed.

An extra talk is,
I think that spending time by yourself is a great way to get rid of stress. Sometimes I am busy and would like to sit at home to read a book or go swimming or go to a park to take a long walk with no one around. What do you do when you are alone?

Today's conversation (How to explain our policy)
"Nice to meet you.　Thank you very much for spending time with us."
"Nice to meet you. Thank you for coming here from such a long distance."
"Today I'm visiting you to explain our new policy. Would you mind looking over these papers?"
"No, not at all. Please continue your explanation."
"Thanks. At first, now we are facing a serious financial problem. We have to solve this problem and we were discussing this for about one year. You can see some of the solutions on the paper. And ……"

"I can understand what you were explaining. But on the other hand I have some questions about your description."

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about our hamster

2005,9,13

That dog looks very humorous. When my sons were elementary school kids, we had a hamster called Ham. He (she?) was very cute. He was always eating sun flower seeds and holding them by his little hands and playing with the wheel in the cage. We used to give him a piece of lettuce after our dinner and look at him for a while. He warmed our hearts. One day one of my sons said to me crying a little," When I came home from school, I saw Ham moving a little and I thought he was sleepy. But soon he didn't move at all. He must have died." He buried him in the dirt of the planter that was in our porch. We bought another hamster but he died soon again. We knew that a hamster dies easily and stopped having them. I think hamsters are one of the most suitable pets that we can take care of in an apartment and kids can learn the importance of life from them.

An extra talk is,
Let's see, I guess I like to play catch, we call it fetch in America, with my dog Lucy. You can throw tennis balls, baseballs or other balls and she will go to retrieve it and bring it back. She is a very smart dog. She can sit down, lay down and roll-over. Please send me an E-mail.

Today's conversation (talking about tomorrow's plan with my boss)
"Have you already prepared for tomorrow ?"
"Sure, I've already copied three kinds of documents and made an appointment with the staff."
"What time and where will we meet ?"
"At the south exit of Oosaki at nine thirty tomorrow morning."
"Have you ever been to Oosaki ?"
"No, but I checked the place on the Internet and it takes only 5 minutes from the station to that building on foot. Not such a long distance."
"Ok, see you tomorrow morning."

-△-

the result of the election

2005,9,12

① Today's conversation (talking about the result of the election)

"The election is over,isn't it? The Liberal Democratic Party has swept."

“Many people supported the strong attitude of Koijumiz. I think his slogan was really good. Don’t stop the reform. Did you vote yesterday?”
“Umm, I couldn’t. I had something to do yesterday. Until what time could we vote? ”
“We could do it until 8 o’clock. Postal offices will be privatized, won’t they? ”
“I deposit a lot of money in the post office.”
“Me, too. Moreover I deposit a personal pension in the post office. ”
“The one thing I expect of Koizumi is to protect my money. That’s all.”
“Hahaha…. I expect a good result of the postal privatization. He is responsible for the expectations of thenation.”

② Today I read classified advertisements. One of them was searching for an English teacher for children who can teach them at her home. It says,
Do you want to be an English teacher?
We are looking for a person who,
・Loves kids and teaches them kindly and friendly.
・Loves her local area and wants to contribute to it.
・Is interested in an education and tries to teach earnestly.
・Wants to be developed through her job.
・Likes English and is able to speak everyday English.

-△-

the polling day

2005,9,11

I’ve never seen a“beer cozy” and never heard of it. Is it popular in America? I don’t have any silly things at my home. Have you ever seen a pair of Komainu, which are made of stone and placed in front of a shrine? They look humorous and I think maybe foreigners would laugh at them. By the way do “chopstick holders” mean the things on which we put chopsticks? My chopstick holders are like leaves, flowers and so on. What do you think about them?

An extra talk is,
Actually when I went to Japan, I saw a lot of strange things. But now thinking about them, they also look normal because perhaps I lived in Japan so long. What I feel very strange and unique are chopstick holders which have shapes like fish and dragons. What do you think about it?

Today’s conversation (talking about the election with my friends)

“Today is the election day, isn’t it? Have you voted yet?”
“No, but I will go to the polling place on my way home from here. I have a post card, which I need to vote in my bag.”
“That’s great. Did you decide whom you will vote for?”
“Of course. But it’s secret. ”

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my hobby

2005,9,10

①I got into reading, watching movies, knitting, playing the electronic organ, playing go, playing golf and studying English. But I’m so sorry I couldn’t master them at all. After retiring from my job I want to try them again. I’m really looking forward to trying such things again.
An extra talk is,
I don’t have so many hobbies. I guess I enjoy sports and I like to play guitar. But I haven’t played guitar often lately. Maybe someday I will be able to practice more often. But now I’m a little busy. So I didn’t’t spend a lot of time doing that. (Very difficult)

②Today’s conversation (talking about my fingers with a doctor at his office)
“What’s wrong with you today ?”
“Thanks to you I don’t feel a pain in my shoulder and my arm. So I haven’t come here for about one month. But my fingers are still asleep. It’s not so bad but I’m a little worried about it.”
“Have you already started playing golf? ”
“No, I would like to do so soon. But I can’t grip anything strongly.”
(Pushing my fingers)
“Are you feeling pains?”
“Not so much.”
“Do you want to have a shot? I’m not sure it will have an effect. Do you want to have a shot or not?”
“ Please give me a shot.”
“This injection will hurt. Are you OK?”
“OK. I can stand it.”

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how to get rid of stress

2005,9,9

I always get stressed about my work. When I don’t have another plan, almost all of Saturday morning I go to a public bath and receive be done Akasuri, which is a Korean style massage, to get

rid of my stress. Luckily there are some public baths where I can go there by car within 30 minutes. Moreover the fares of those places are very cheap. The most expensive one is 900 yen and the cheapest is 390 yen. We can enjoy there all day long if we want, enjoying some kinds of bathtubs, relaxing in a few kinds of saunas and eating at the dining room. It seems to me one of the best ways to get rid of my stress is to spend time in such a place.

An extra talk is,
I have been playing basketball from a boy maybe for fifteen, maybe twenty years. We had a lot of good basketball players in the town so we came to the gym and it used to be good fun. That's a good game and good exercise. We play for about two hours three times a week. That's good exercise to keep in shape.

Today's conversation (talking with my colleagues about the typhoon)
"The typhoon No.14 has gone away. The weather forecast said it was very big so we were really worried about it."
"Yeah. But it was not so strong here. It was only raining hard."
"It hit Kyusyu at first and then went ahead to the Japan Sea. It went over the Japan Sea to the northeast and hit Hokkaido again."
"It's really unusual. Typhoons usually hit Kyusyu, Shikoku and the Kii Peninsula, don't they?"
"Yeah, I've never forgotten Muroto No.2 Typhoon that hit the Osaka area when I was little. It was really scary. It was the biggest typhoon in my entire life."
"Is that so? "
" In the Kantou area the average power of a typhoon is smaller than that in Kansai. It becomes smaller as it proceeds.

-△-

my image of Japan

2005,9,8

①"A beautiful elegant lady wearing Kimono at the garden of an old temple" It's my image of Japan. Of course I'm not such a woman. But I'm really worried about noisy and improper Japanese girls like Yamanba girls. Oh,no! Where is" Austere beauty and elegant simplicity"? Is it lost now?

An extra talk is,
I think it's interesting how the Japanese tourist industry tries to promote the traditional Japan but there is not a lot of tourism going to the traditional Japan. Kyoto isn't very traditional anymore and Tokyo is not traditional at all. When my father went there, he really enjoyed all places of Shimane. He was much more interested in Shimane than big cities.

② Today's conversation(talking about My new camera with my son)
"Your digital camera looks really big and old."
"I want a new one. But this can be used enough and it seems to be a waste of money if I buy new one. "
"I bought this one the other day. This camera has 5 million pixels and I can take a video with voice. Moreover it ran in the neighborhood of about nineteen thousand yen. I think this is the best camera for now. I recommend this Kyosera camera. "
"That sounds good. Would you mind bidding off within twenty thousand yen at the Internet auction for me. "
"OK."
"And I want my old camera to be knocked down at the auction."
"Ok. I will do it. Maybe it will be bid off for at least seven thousand yen."
"Thanks. You can accept that money for a charge if it is sold."
(10 days later)
"Mom, I had gotten the camera for nineteen thousand and nine hundred yen. Maybe you can receive it tomorrow night. "
"Thank you. I will pay the money next time. "

(Now I have a nice, small, useful and black digital camera. I'm very pleased about my new camera.)

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a tea box

2005,9,7

I can see the word " Japanese tea" on the box and its inside is covered with metal. I know such boxes have been made in Japan and are used to keep Japanese tea for a long time. It must have been made in Japan and used to export Japanese tea to America from Japan in the sixties. Maybe that tea might have been used at the Japanese restaurant in Rockford. A box, which is covered with metal, can protect goods from the moisture. That's really suitable to keep tea and we still use such boxes in Japan nowadays. The other day the newspaper said that the valuable film which had been taken by Yukio Mishima, the famous author who had committed suicide by Hara-kiri, was found in the best condition because it had been kept in the tea box.

An extra talk is,
This is a box that I found in my parents' basement. I think that it was bought at an auction somewhere. But I will give you a hint. Rockford is a town near my hometown. And I could see a picture of Rockford on the box.

Today's conversation (talking with my husband about the typhoon)

"I heard the weather forecast and it said the typhoon is near Okinoshima."
"Is it in Shimane? I think it's very rare a typhoon hits the area of the Japan Sea. Should I take my umbrella or not?"
"The typhoon is very big and it will be raining hard in many places all over Japan."

-△-

my friend

2005,9,6

He seems to be excited watching a football game on TV. How thick his arms are! What nice days he is spending playing golf every day ! I'm so jealous of his life. To be honest all my friends aren't crazy. If I had a crazy friend, it would be really funny to spend time with her.

An extra talk is,
I've known Ernie all my life. He and I had never been friends until maybe my first year of high school. And then I think we had a mutual friend named Corey and we became friends. Now we are best friends. Probably he will be in my wedding I imagine. I'm looking forward to seeing your friend. Please send me a picture of your reunion if you have time.

Today's conversation (talking with My husband about the typhoon)

"It is still raining hard."
"A new typhoon is coming to Kyushu now."
"Last night it was raining very hard, you know? I don't like rain. I will be wet. I have to change my shoes after arriving at the office."
"Up to now the Yokosuka line hasn't stopped."
"Ok, I'm leaving from now."

-△-

a grammar book

2005,9,5

Today's conversation (talking with my friend at NOVA)
"It's been a long time. How is your lesson? "
"Not so good. I try to come here as often as possible but this textbook seems to me very difficult. There are many difficult words and idioms."
"Yeah, I can understand less than half even if I take a lesson."
" Me, too. The other day I bought a grammar book. Now I'm reading it."

“ I dislike grammar. It’s difficult and boring. ”
“ Everybody doesn’t like grammar. But I’d learned it pretty long ago and I’ve forgotten about it at all. So I decided to review it. This book is interesting and now I’ve gotten rid of some confusion. I’d appreciate it if you did. This sentence is written in the subjunctive mood. I’ve come to be able to understand such things.”
“Really? What is the title of the book?”

Today’s conversation (talking with my neighbor)
“I bought a new bicycle about one month ago. But that was stolen the other day.”
“ Really? Did you write your name on it? About 10 years ago my son’s bicycle was stolen. But one week later a stranger called me and said that she had found the bicycle lying near the shrine for a week. She thought it must have been stolen and called me. I had written my son’s name on it.”
“ I hadn’t written my name on it. I should have written my name. It’s too late.”

Today’s conversation (talking with a Englishman)
“Could I ask you a question?”
“Yeah, you could.”
“Why did you call my hairstyle Bamboo hair?”
“I’m sorry. I made a mistake. I should have said Bomber hair.”
“Ok. But it was really funny. After hearing you, we were laughing and laughing. You must be a funny person.”

Today’s conversation (talking with a man whom I’ve never met before)
“Would you mind if I ask your name?”
“No, Of course not. My name is Masaho.”
“Um, Masaho ?”
“Yeah, it’s a very rare name. Actually, I’ve never met another Masaho in my entire life.”
“I think so.”
“When I searched Masaho on the Internet, I found some Masahos. But they were all men.”
“I think it’s a nice name. It’s very easy to remember you.”
“Thank you. By the way, what’s your name? ”

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I like pizza !

2005,9,4

Did you get them by delivery service or go to the restaurant for take out? I couldn’t understand what “pick up “means. English is very difficult. Maybe you might go there and bring it home. Is that right? When my sons were at home, they really liked delivery pizza. We used to order it at

that time. I don't remember exactly but maybe I paid about 3 thousand yen for two with some drinks like cokes. Recently I've never ordered it. Of course I like pizza and I always buy frozen pizzas which are produced by Chateraise, the popular Japanese food company. The pizza of that company is cheap and kind of plain for Japanese people. My favorite pizza is what is topped with onion and bacon. It's very common. By the way I ate pizza at California Kitchen in Hawaii. Is that restaurant a popular chain in America?

An extra talk is,
In America most pizza restaurants have dining rooms where you sit down and order the pizza and eat it. Of course they offer delivery and take out. But most people don't want take out and delivery. They just go to the restaurant, order pizza, sit down and have it. Tonight my father wanted to watch the interesting program on TV and he wanted to eat pizza so I went to get it. I hope sometime we will eat pizza together.

Today's conversation (talking with my friend about my son)
"Has your son gone back to America? "
"Umm, he is in Austria now. He went back to LA last Monday from Kanasai airport and went to Austria from LA on the same day."
"Wow, why didn't he fly directly from Japan to Austria?"
" He told me the airfare was cheaper than that from Japan to Austria. And he went there with his American friend."
"Is that so? How long does it take from LA to Austria? "
"I don't know such a thing because I've never been to Europe."

-△-

the terrible hurricane

2005,9,3

This is a shot that I took of an America woman whose name is Judy. She always gets up early in the morning and reads a book or a newspaper on the nice sofa while drinking a coffee. Since it's hot in summer these days, she seems to drink a kind of cold drink like soda and eat a kind of fruit like a grape. I miss her.
The dictation is,
Do you see somebody？ Who do you think that is? Do you see some type of drink? What kind of soda do you think it is? Do you see a lamp? What do you think it looks like? Do you see a flag or a national flag? What kind of flag do you think it is? Do you see some sort of newspaper? What kind of newspaper do you think it is? Do you see some food or other type of something ? What kind of something do you think it is?

Today's conversation (talking about the big flood in America)

“Did you watch the news of a big flood in America?”
“Yeah, it’s terrible. I can’t believe it.”
“Me, too. Why did such a disaster happen in America? Do you know how many people died?”
“I heard over one hundred people were killed by that flood. The numbers of victims are increasing more and more maybe.”
“Where is New Orleans?”
“It’s in the south area in America. Maybe near the Caribbean Sea. Hurricanes usually hit that area.”

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about three picturs

2005,9,2

I’ll send you three pictures. One of them I took at my mother’s house in Osaka on new year’s day in 2004. You can see the sun rising from the Ikoma Mountain, which is between Osaka and Nara. Since I took it at 6:30, it was not necessary for me to get up early in the morning. I kind of like this photo. The orange color is really nice. It might have been better if some cranes weren’t in the foreground. The other pictures are what I took at Waikiki beach the other day. Many people were still swimming at the beach and quite a few people were enjoying watching hula dancing on the stage near the beach at dusk. About these pictures, maybe I should have taken them from more the left side.

Today’s conversation (with my colleague on the way to our office)
“Summer holidays of schools have finished. The train was very crowded. It’s too bad.”
“Yeah, I couldn’t sit down on the train.”
“Me, too. Moreover students are very noisy.”

“That’s true. They are putting big bags on the floor, chatting loudly and sitting on the floor.”
“Some girls are doing their make up in the train. I can’t believe it.”
“Absolutely. They would be prettier without cosmetics.”
“I agree with you. Nowadays why are students so lazy?”

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the electoral office of Koizumi

2005,9,1

We are facing the Lower House election nowadays. I will attach a picture of the electoral office of Koizumi. It’s a 5-minute walk from my office to there. I’m convinced that he will not stop over there because he is really busy giving to speeches all over Japan during the campaign.

If I had not injured my arm, I would go to Hokkaido to play golf from the day after tomorrow. I wish I had not injured my arm in July. I wonder when my arm will get better. It is time I recovered. If I my arm doesn’t recover, what should I do? If I would not be able to play golf, I would lose my pastime.

An extra talk is.
I think maybe the most popular sports in Japan are soccor, baseball and Sumo. These three sports show up on TV a lot. Maybe golf, probably soccor and baseball. That’s interesting. I’ve never seen football. Many Japanese people play golf, soccor and baseball. What sports do you play?

Today's conversation (with my husband this morning)
"Why did you get up so early ?"
"Today is the day of disaster prevention. So I have to go to the office earlier than usual."
"I see. Take care. Have you watched the news on TV? There is no big plane accident, isn't there? Maybe Takashi is on the plane or has just arrived in Europe. "
"Nothing. It's still 5 o'clock."
Oh, I will sleep for a little while."

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not to lose my teeth

2005,10,31

Today's conversation (talking with the dentist at the dental clinic)

"Today I will fix your four front teeth. They are not so terrible. Don't worry about it but if you feel pain, please hold up your left hand."
"I see."
I think anyone doesn't like a dental treatment. Of course me, too. I had a dental check at my office the other day and the dentist told me I had four bad teeth. Oh,my dear! I decided to go to a dental clinic as soon as possible so they don't become worse. I thought I had better go to a clinic near my office and searched for one on the Internet. It was near the station so I decided to go there. I made an appointment and the dentist treated me as soon as I arrived there. It was very convenient and fortunately the dentist was a beautiful lady and she was very gentle. I decided on my own to go there many times maybe until the end of this year. To tell the truth I got a prize as the pupil who had the most excellent teeth in my elementary school days. I had no bad teeth at

that time. But many years later there are now many treated teeth in my mouth but there is not one artificial tooth. I decided to take good care of my teeth so I don't lose my teeth until the end of my life.
" Now I've finished fixing your teeth."
" Is that so? Thank you very much. I didn't expected you to fix my teeth so quickly."
" You keep your teeth clean. Please continue to use dental floss. About half a year later please visit us again. I will check your teeth."
" I really appreciate your concern. Good-bye."

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What should I do?

2005,10,30

I'm not so young now but I can still experience many new things. I feel it's very good for me. Today I drove my car to the driving range. It's very common but I went there with an American guy. I've never driven a car with a foreigner riding. So I was a little nervous. I asked him not to talk to me in English while I was driving. If I talk with him in English, I can't concentrate my attention on the driving. Fortunately I could drive safely and park my car well in the narrow parking space. Moreover I could drive while chatting in English. But unfortunately my golf shot was terrible. Oh my gosh! My driving technique was good but my driver shot was bad. What should I do? I'm very worried about my next golf outing.

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I hate a smoker!!

2005,10,29

Your aunt Sue looks very young. I can't believe she is 82 years old. Regarding smoking I'm convinced there is nothing good at all about it. It's malignant for not only the person smoking but also for people around that person. It is completely worth than useless. I can't understand why people who smoke spend so much money to be unhealthy. These days we can find many places where people can't smoke in Japan. Actually my office prohibits us from smoking inside. One of my colleagues always goes outside to smoke. Maybe he moves from his desk once or twice an hour to smoke outside. Fortunately nobody in my family smokes cigarettes. My husband and my two sons don't smoke. Do you think I'm a strict mother and wife? They decided not to smoke voluntarily. Im proud of that.

An extra talk is,
I used to smoke when I was in college and when I first went to Japan. But now I quit smoking and I'm so glad I did so. Sometimes maybe once a month I have a cigarette with a friend. But now I'm

so glad that I quit smoking. That's so much more healthy. Do you smoke? (I couldn't catch the ending part.)

-△-

The way we were

2005,10,28

I will try to translate my favorite song. This song was very popular in the seventies and we can still listen to it often as background music in Japan. This music was the theme song of a popular movie. I watched this movie many times and always cried watching the ending scene. This music reminds me of my youth.

Memories
Like the corners of my mind
Misty watercolor memories
Of the way we were
数々の思い出
私達が築いてきた思いでは、涙でにじんだ水彩画のように、私の心の片すみに残っているわ

Scattered pictures
Of the smiles we left behind
Smiles we gave to one another
For the way we were
私達の思い出の日々に、お互いに微笑みあい、後に残してきた微笑は、この絵の中に散らばっているわ

Can it be that it was all so simple then
Or has time rewritten every line
If we had the chance to do it all again
Tell me – Would we? Could we?
その頃は、全てが単純だったのかしら、それとも時間が全てを変えてしまったのかしら もう一度やり直せるなら、どうすればよかったのか、何ができたか教えて

Memories
May be beautiful and yet
What's too painful to remember
We simply to choose to forget
数々の美しい思い出
でもまだ思い出すのがつらいから、ただ忘れることを選びましょう

So it's the laughter
We will remember
Whenever we remember
The way we were
The way we were
だから、私達の日々を思い出す時は、いつも笑っていましょうね

Oh, it was too difficult for me to translate that. Maybe I might not have a talent to write romantic Japanese.

An extra talk is,
Once again let me talk to you about Butch Walker who is amazing. (I couldn't catch these parts.) My friends Ernie and Randy really like him and got me interested in Butch Walker's news. I appreciated it. Whom do you recommend to listen to? Let me know some your favorite artists and send me your translation.

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about current music

2005,10,27

Actually the current music both Japanese and western is just not my style. But I know Ami and Yumi. They have a high popularity in America, you know. I heard their animated cartoon was really popular in America recently. The other day I said to a young English man, "Umm, I'm sorry but I'm not interested in current music. I don't know what kind of music is popular nowadays." He answered to me," That's OK. It's the same as my father. He usually listens to only The Beatles." " Maybe he is as old as me. Hahaha…." At that time I realized Japanese and British were not so different. When I visited my sister's Chinese friend's house in Shanghai around 5 years ago, the Chinese girl let us listen to some pop music sung in English but her mother listened to only old Chinese opera music. I'm certain people love music that was popular in their younger days forever. Maybe it's common all over the world. But I will try to listen to Butch Walker. Soaking in new experiences might be good for not getting old.

An extra talk is,
I was so impressed with Butch Walker and bought his CD. And every song on there is fantastic every song on there. I don't know if he had a chance to be listen to anything. But I really recommend him. It is fantastic. He is a great stage presenter. Take care and I will see you soon. Maybe someday I will be a famous singer.

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eating outside

2005,10,26

In Japan elementary school kids usually go somewhere interesting place and eat lunch box outside twice a year, in spring and in autumn. In Japanese we call this "Ensoku(excursion). It reminds me of the time when I went to Mino water fall,it's famous for its maple trees and monkeys, in Osaka. And also we usually held a party under beautiful cherry blooms in April. We call it Ohanami. We usually drink alcohol, eat delicious food and sing songs together. But sometimes we are on a spree and have the neighbors complaining.

An extra talk is,
Yes, my family ate a lot there in summer. But I was really surprised that Judy called me and said they ate out in this time of a year. That's very unusual but I think they had a good lunch. Maybe I will go back home and when it's a nice weather, I will eat outside. Look forward to seeing you soon. Take care.

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about town square

2005,10,25

If we ask a person who is not a citizen of Fujisawa, "Do you know anything about Fujisawa?" they might answer as follows, " Oh, do you live in Fujisawa which is famous for the Shonan beach? That's wonderful." But the beach doesn't seem to be a town square. There are many great parks, for example Tujidou Beach Park, Shinbayasi Park and the site of Ooba Castle Park in my hometown, Fujisawa. However it's very difficult to say what park is our town square. I think we don't have a concept of Town Square in many cities except a castle town such as Matsue in Japan.

An extra talk is,
In Mt. Morris, the town square used to be a college. Now all those buildings are used for business. We also have a big stage like an out door theater, this monument, many trees, picnic tables and a gym where we can play basketball. What about your town square?

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my memory of games

2005,10,24

Today I checked my Japanese-English dictionary and found this illustrative sentence. この漢字にルビを振ろう。 Let's put kana alongside these Chinese characters. I'm sure recently we use

"rubi"not to describe the font size,but to refer to "furigana". And I also checked 床 toko in 広辞苑 Koujien, the most famous Japanese dictionary. Toko has several meanings. One of them means a bed or futon. (Is futon an English word?) We usually use took in this meaning. For example, 寝床、床につく。床ずれ. And another meaning is the place that is higher than the ordinary floor. Tokonoma 床の間 means a place that is higher than ordinary tatami mat floor. Can you understand? But I think these days we don't use toko in this meaning except Tokonoma. At least I and people around me only use Tokonoma.

I really miss Paper sumo. I would get it as an insert of a magazine for kids. But I'm not sure whether my sons would play it or not. They might have played it once or twice. Actually my sons got into video games in their elementary school days. They were totally addicted to Super Mario by Nintendo. When I came home from work, I always found them playing with Nintendo games and I was absolutely worried about them. I sometimes tried Nintendo but I couldn't play as well as them. To tell the truth my elder son is still a huge fan of video games. He plays them on the computer almost every weekend. He says it's really useful to get rid of stress. I guess I can take it or leave it. His wife must be worried about it and warn him not to be absorbed in it.

An extra talk is,
I always enjoy introducing a little thing in Japan to elementary kids or junior high school kids. They seem to enjoy that. Most of the children don't know about Japan except what they see in movies. Unfortunately most of that is Ninja and Karate. But I know all kids are interested in Japan, Mt.Fuji, Hiroshima, Tokyo and sushi and that type of Japanese food. What would you like to introduce to an elementary school kid about Japan. Think about and let me know.

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an election day

2005,10,23

Today is an election day of the member of the House of Councilors. It is taking place only in Kanagawa. The previous member, Saitou, resigned his position of the member of the House of Councilors in order to run against the Prime Minister Koizumi in the former election of the House of Representatives. So we have to elect a new member. The three candidates are all women. The candidate of the Liberal Democratic Party is the previous Minister of Foreign Affairs, Yoriko Kawaguchi. The candidate of the Democratic Party in Japan is Hiroe Makiyama. She has a qualification of a lawyer in America. But I think almost everybody hadn't known her until she ran for this election. The last candidate is Kimie Hatano who belongs to the Community Party. She was an old member of the House of Councilors and she had worked as a teacher until she got that position. The mass media says this election is a fight between three mothers. I wonder who will be elected for this position. But maybe the result seems to be clear before the election.

Umm, I will try to describe five differences between America and Japanese classrooms. It seems to me a kind of difficult thing. For the first thing, there are less student in America than those in Japan. For the next thing, I noticed the American kids don't wear uniforms. The third thing, the shape of the chair is different. There is a shelf under the chair. The fourth thing, they use a chalkboard but many Japanese schools use a blackboard. Oh, I finally reached the last answer. It's hard to answer but hairstyles of kids are really diversified. Don't they have school rules in America?

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a vegetarian

2005,10,22

My hometown Sakai is a big industrial city and it's famous for its history. What are the special products of Sakai? I heard they are knives and bicycles but I don't have confidence in that answer. So I have just checked on the Internet. The home page of Sakai city says," Our traditional industries are cutleries, bicycles, kelp, Yukata, incense sticks and carpets. But now to the next topic. I can eat almost all kinds of vegetables, like onion, spinach, broccoli, tomato, cucumber, pumpkin and so on, but I don't like carrot. These days we can find various kinds of vegetables that came from other countries at a grocery store but I've never seen corn-on-the-cob. I think the most convenient cooking to eat many vegetables is Nabe in Japan. It's easy to eat various kinds of vegetables when we eat Nabe and moreover we can cook it easily

An extra talk is,
Boy, I think it may be a year ago. I actually took a vegetarian diet for one month. It's healthy. It's kind of difficult to find what you eat but you can still eat pasta, all kind of soup and noodles. It makes you think about cooking. It was an interesting experience. Have you ever tried eating vegetables for one month or becoming a vegetarian for one month? Try it sometime.

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about teachers

2005,10,21

I was taught by three women and one man in my days as an elementary pupil. And actually my mother was an elementary school teacher like Judy. I haven't met them for a long time but my mother has been keeping in touch with them, especially the three women, since she retired from teaching. She often talks about their present lives to me. All of them retired now. I think they were good teachers but if I venture into my memory, I didn't like one teacher. I thought she was partial to some people. But she became the principal afterward and now she and my mother are good friends. They sometimes talk about me. I hear she has been single and now she lets a young

foreigner lodge in her house as a volunteer. One day I called her from my mother's house but her telephone was dead. Since I was young, I couldn't understand her greatness. Of course I was never taught by my mother at the school. She taught at another school and she became the teacher of my old school after I graduated from my school. It's a rule in Japan. When the children are pupils, their parents shouldn't teach at the same school. I'm sure my mother was a good teacher because many previous pupils, who are elderly men and women, are still visiting my mother often. I really hope all of them will live a long life cheerfully. Regarding the British accent, Monte told me that women sounded very attractive. Now I am being taught English from a young American man and woman, young English men and woman and an Australian man. My ability is far from telling the difference of accents between them but I'm sure the Australian accent is really difficult to listen to. And the British accent seems to be more difficult than the American accent for me. And some schoolmates say the same thing. My young woman teacher from England is a very tall and beautiful lady with her big eyes and long straight brown hair. Her voice must be very sexy for native English speakers especially for American men. I'm sorry we, Japanese students, can't recognize how her English is charming. We only have a hard time to listen to her. Hahaha…

An extra talk is,
I was really excited to see Mrs. Hoff. She was my first grade teacher so then I was seven years old and I met her many years ago. And I think she has two or three daughters. One was a couple years older than me and the other was the same age. She was a very nice lady. She speaks with a British accent. I think a British accent is a very nice accent. Let me know your favorite teacher. How did they affect you?

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I love Basashi !

2005,10,20

I've never ridden a horse but I had an opportunity to watch a horse race from a special room. It was really wonderful to look down at the horses running around through the wide glass window. My sons had some experiences to ride a little horse in their boy hood days because the neighbor who lived in front of their grandparents' house took them to the farm sometimes in summer holidays. He was a member of that farm. Regarding Basashi I ate it for the first time in Kumamoto when I visited my schoolmate's parents' house in my days as a university student. Kumamoto in Kyusyu was famous for its Basashi. At that time I ate it hesitatingly. But these days we can eat it anytime and everywhere. And I feel Basashi with ginger tastes delicious. I hear Korean people like the meat of dogs. It sounds really cold-blooded. Maybe it's the same reason why Americans think it's strange hearing we eat horse.

An extra talk is,

It's funny because Japanese people actually eat a raw horse, Basashi. But when I say that, American people really think it's strange. I believe that they think that is strange because horses are such partners of Americans. They are a persona and the idea of a cowboy riding on a horse in the Wild West in American pictures. What do you think about horses? Let me know. Take care.

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When I was a kid...

2005,10,19

Today's dictation is,
What's up everyone?　What are you doing today?　If you have free time today, please call me. Let's chat. My phone number is　〇〇〇. Please make a call today. See you later. Bye-bye. Oh, an extra talk is,
I started to learn to play the piano. At the store pianos are valuable. It's amazing. Do you play the piano? (No, but I had been practicing the electric organ for ten years. But I stopped it about ten years ago and I have not touched it for a long long time. I played it two weeks ago because my grandson seems to be interested in it. But I'm sorry I couldn't play well.)

My favorite class might have been Japanese in my childhood days. I'm interested in writing compositions and books. My dream was to be an author like the American author Louisa May Alcott Wolcott who had written" Little Women" I miss a lot of free time in my girlhood days. And if I had had an opportunity to go abroad, I would have studied English harder.

An extra talk is,
Kids nowadays are saying, I think,"I couldnt catch the sentences?" when they looked at toys that they played with. On the Internet they make home pages and they have digital cameras and when they go outside, they play all kinds of sports. They would be too resourcedful(?), who knows.

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the Rising Sun and the Kimigayo

2005,10,18

Regarding the national flag the Rising Sun and the national anthem Kimigayo (That means the Emperor's nation.), I think it's really a serious issue in Japan. But I've never considered that theme and I don't have the correct knowledge about it. So the following opinions are my speculations. When I was a little girl, the Rising Sun was displayed at the hall of my public school and we sang Kimigayo at ceremonies. And many houses displayed the Rising Sun at their entrances on the national holidays. My mother used to do it. From when did Japanese people begin to stop to doing it? Japan fought the Allied Forces during World War Two owing to the

Emperor and the Rising Sun. They seem to remind us of the militarism. And these days those are symbols of the Right. If I display the Rising Sun in the window of my house, my neighbors would guess that Masaho might belong to the Right group. In the seventies or the eighties some people especially some teachers objected against displaying the Rising Sun and singing Kimigayo at the graduation ceremony. And people are still discussing about it. Actually when I attended the graduation ceremony of my son's high school, which was a public school, the president said to the attendees, "If you agree with the principle, please stand up and sing Kimigayo."and some attendees didn't stand up. But many Japanese people painted the Rising Sun on their cheeks and cheered the players at the Olympic games and the World Cup games. In thinking about these things I can't help thinking Japanese are strange people. Moreover I have a question about why America allowed Japan to use the Rising Sun ,to sing Kimigayo and to continue the Emperor's system after World War Two. Truman and Macarthur might have respected the Japanese history and the traditional culture.

An extra talk is,
I think Japanese are sometimes surprised to come to America and see many American flags. I discussed this with my friend who went to New York and she said she was very surprised to see many stores carrying American flags as well as clothes. (I couldn't catch the ending part.)

Today's conversation (talking about the helping colleagues with a funeral)
" Yesterday Mr.N's father died. He is to hold the funeral the day after tomorrow. We have to help him at the ceremony hall at that time."
" How many helpers will he need?"
"The front desk, the accounts and the directions. At least ten people will be required."
" Masaho, would you mind helping him at the front desk?"
"No, not at all. I can do it."
(I worked at the front desk at the funeral hall and had to stand over two hours. Two young men had to stand on the road giving directions in the rain. We had never met the deceased but we had to help with it. I think it's really Japanese style.)

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the memorial hundredth e-mail to Chris

2005,10,17

Just one year will have passed since I started to study English again after a long while. I entered NOVA on the 22nd of October and sent my first English E-mail to Chris on the fifth of November last year. And this e-mail is . I am reflecting on my English study during this one year. At first, my skill to write English has improved clearly. On this point I really appreciate Chris. If he were not my teacher, I couldn't continue writing English everyday. On the second point I recognize I have

become able to speak with foreigners but it's far from fluently. On the third point I still can't listen to native speakers well. My worst weak point is that I don't know many words. If I knew more words, I could understand what foreigners speak more and speak English more easily. But I know to memorize many words is really hard for me. What should I do? In Japan many high school students use a word book to memorize many English words. I also did it in my school days. But now I'm not a student so I wouldn't like to do such a thing. I decided to increase my vocabulary by writing many words and reading difficult sentences such as newspapers written in English. It's really hard for me to read a newspaper everyday. Recently I found two websites where someone writes a short piece of news in English and an explanation in Japanese. I will try to read them everyday. Anyway I can study English by these means by myself. But I can't have a conversation with a foreigner by myself. Please speak English with me and correct my English. By the way my son still studies media arts at UCLA and lives in the same dorm in front of the cemetery. His works including "Open the blind" got some awards. He is to visit Singapore and Switzerland to accept them this autumn. He has been to Singapore once in his boyhood days. I don't know whether he is to come back to Japan in winter vacation or not.

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TOEFL and about teachers

2005,10,16

This morning I wrote a comment on Henry's web site,
Don't give up! I can understand how TOEFL is difficult. I don't remember exactly but my son tried TOEFL many times. He also studied how to get a high score at the special school. (The Princeton Review of Japan) He entered the graduate school of UCLA in autumn in 2004. When I met him this summer he said to me," Last year I couldn't listen to what native Americans were speaking correctly, but now I can understand almost perfectly." I think regarding TOEFL the listening test is the most difficult for Japanese.

Teachers of public schools are public servants. We can't fire public servants easily. Maybe if they commit a crime, they should be fired. But in the case where many students and their parents say she (or he) is a bad teacher, we can't fire her. Public servants are protected in their status by the law. Moreover it's very difficult to judge teachers as good or bad. Many students feel she is bad but a few students feel she is good. Furthermore we pay taxes that are the resources of teacher's salary. We have to share a good teacher. Having a good teacher just at one school seems to be unfair. I understand what you are saying, however these are why teachers have to change their school sometimes in Japan.

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how to study English

2005,10,15

I can't understand why they wrote letters not in English but in Japanese. Did they think the kids of Oregon elementary school were studying Japanese? No kidding! Maybe teachers thought Chris could translate them to English for the Americans. I love Japan and I think maybe Japanese is a beautiful language. But I'm sorry, Japanese is used by only one hundred and thirty million people. If we want to study abroad, work with foreigners and travel abroad, we have to master English. The Nobel Prize winner has to give a speech in English, you know. Studying English seems to be our destiny. By the way the newspaper says maybe the Japanese government will decide to teach English in elementary school in about two years. There are two different opinions about that decision. One opinion is children should master Japanese first. Another opinion is they should start to study English earlier than now to be able to speak English. I don't have knowledge about the education system so I can't say. There are many kids who are studying English at NOVA. Today I saw one kid crying in the lesson room. After that I asked the young English teacher why he had picked on a little boy as a joke. He answered the boy was 3 years old and he had begun to cry noticing his mother disappeared. If I were his mother, I would not make my 3-year-old son study English. He seems to be too young to study another language. Regarding your opinion about internationalization I agree with Chris. I think the JET program is a really nice system on the point of letting young foreigners understand about Japan.

An extra talk is,
Japanese use the word internationalization for like 国際交流 but really it's not what internationalization is. Sometimes they bring a foreigner to talk about something but what a real act of internationalization is using their skill or engaging someone from a foreign country on your role. What do you think about internationalization?

Today's conversation (Talking about my teeth with the dentist)
"I've just checked your teeth. I found four bad teeth but they aren't so terrible."
"Is that so?"
"And you took care of your teeth pretty good. But you might want to consider using dental floss. Have you ever heard of it?"
"Yeah, of course I know I had better use it but I don't have time to use it."
"Umm. You don't use any artificial teeth. That's great. Many people at your age use some. Please keep your teeth for another thirty years. Therefore you should take care of your teeth with that."
"Thanks for the advice. I'll try it."

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about swiming

2005,10,14

Swimming is one of my favorite sports but I hadn't had an opportunity to swim for a long while. Last year one of my staff told me there was a good gym near Yokosuka station. We can use the heated swimming pool and training machines as long as we want for 700 yen there. Today I was supposed to go there after work but I got to had to go to the dentist. I think it's one of most suitable sports to get rid of stress. By the way we had been living near the Shonan beach until we moved to our present house. It took only five minutes from our house to the beach but we had swum in the sea only a few times. Shonan beach is very famous and the beach is very crowded with surfers and young people from the various areas. To tell the truth the locals don't swim in the sea so often. We always went to the swimming pool with our little boys. There were two large pools along the beach. One of the pools was closed about five years ago and now there is a skate park. Maybe it's crowded with young people nowadays.

An extra talk is,
Actually most people swim in the Pacific Ocean in California, a side of America. Many people think the Pacific Ocean is very warm. Actually the Pacific Ocean is cold because the water comes from Alaska. Another side, New York area, the Atlantic Ocean is much warmer than that in California. Because it comes from the south. When I went swimming in California, the ocean was certainly cold.

Today's conversation (talking with a receptionist of a dental clinic.)
" Good afternoon. This is T dental clinic."
" Hello. Can I make an appointment?"
"OK? Can I have your name? Have you ever been here? "
"My name is Masaho. I'm calling you for the first time. I would like to make an appointment for this evening after five thirty."
"Today is fully booked. Is it an emergency? What are your symptoms?"
"It's not an emergency. I had my teeth checked at the physical checkup at my office. And the dentist told me to go to a dental clinic and have my teeth cleaned. He also said I have a few bad teeth to be treated. But I don't feel sharp pain"
"OK. How about tomorrow? You can make an appointment at just five thirty tomorrow evening."
"I see. That would be great. Please make an appointment at that time. Thank you."
"You are welcome. Take care."

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I was a little ashamed but ....

2005,10,13

When I was an elementary school kid in the sixties, I disliked our school lunch, especially skim milk. At that time I'm sure nobody liked school lunch. Japan was not as rich as now and school lunch tasted terrible. But thirty years later, my sons didn't say such things in their school days. I

was not an education-conscious mother so I'm sorry I didn't know what kind of food my sons were eating for school lunch. I guess their school lunch was much different from the school lunch which we had eaten long ago. I'm certain school lunch is part of a well balanced diet and it's necessary for the growth of children. It's also helpful for mothers on the point of relief of housework.

An extra talk is,
For school lunch we used to have pizza, hot dogs, hamburgers, chicken sandwiches, (I couldn't catch the word) and, what would I say, Texas toasts (?). Not all are very healthy. (I couldn't catch the ending part.)

I saw a white young couple confused on the passage at Oofuna. Since they looked in trouble, I decided to help them. The guy was looking for signs and the girl looked angry.
" Where do you want to go?"
"Shibuya."
"Ok. You have to ride a train on the Tokaido line and change the train at Shinagawa.
"Yeah, I will change to the Yamanote line."
"Come on. Here is a platform of the Tokaido line. You can ride a train for Tokyo. I don't remember exactly but it takes about 45 minutes from here to Shinagawa."
The guy checked the sign and found Sibuya.
"Can I go to Shibuya directly from number two ?"
"Umm, if you can catch the train on the Shounan Shinjyuku line, you will go there directly. But there are few trains."
The guy said to me with a loud voice smiling happily.
"Arigatougozaimasu."
I was a little ashamed but felt really happy. But I forgot to say," You are welcome."

-△-

a cat and a dog

2005,10,12

The dog said, "What's up? You look lonely."
The cat replied,"I'm a little angry with my master."
Then the dog asked the cat, "What do you think about your master?"
"Her temper is variable. Yesterday she was taking care of me all day long but today she has a passionate concern for another cat. So I'm lonely. Would you mind playing with me?"answered the cat.
"Hmm. Actually I heard all pets are similar to their master. You are sort of selfish. Yesterday you gave me the cold shoulder. But I will forgive you. You look cute and we are friends. Let's get along fine!"

When my sons were little, sometimes we had home parties with their friends and their mothers. And I've been to a home party at my schoolmate's house. We brought foods for each other and after eating dinner we helped to wash dishes. We didn't need to use much money. I suppose holding a home party requires much energy and people prefer meeting at a restaurant to a home party these days in Japan. But I'm sure inviting guests sometimes is good for us for another reason. We have to clean our house in order to invite guests. A home party arouses me to clean up my room. That's why I say it's good for us.

An extra talk is,
I think in America we have so much space at home. It's easy to gather friends. It's common. We usually have a Sunday dinner with people and it's much cheaper than going to a restaurant. That's for sure. Please send me a picture of your home party.

Today's dictation is,
Good morning, everyone! I had a wonderful time visiting aunt Sue and aunt Bob. I hope you heard their message. Now I am driving from Kansas City to Mt.Morris. I will drive for about 6 and half hours, maybe 7 hours. I drive very fast and I will be home by afternoon for lunch with my parents.

-△-

what game do I describ?

2005,10,11

Today's dictation is,
Hello, everyone! It's seven o'clock on Monday night and my aunt Sue and I drove down to Kansas City. And today I visited my aunt Bob and my other aunt Izzy. Izzy is 93 years old. But here is aunt Sue. I couldn't catch her completely. Maybe she said," This is Chris's aunt Sue. We have just finished dinner and I will come back home."

It's a game for two players. You need a square wooden board on which there are three hundred and twenty four squares, many white round stones and black stones. You can put a stone on a square alternately and when your stones surround your opponent's stones, you can take these stones. The winner is the person who gets the largest space. It's really a thinking game and I was taught how to play it by my deceased father in my teens. I had never beaten him. We can play it on the Internet and on computers nowadays. I want to try it again but now I don't have much time to do it. Do you guess what game I described?

Today's conversation
"It's been cool these days."

“I suppose autumn has come.”
“Yeah, one third of October has passed. Time is passing really quickly.”
“We have only two and half months left in this year. The other day I ordered new year’s cards.”

-△-

at New Enoshima aquarium

2005,10,10

The day before yesterday my sons family visited our home from Nagoya. My grandson, a eighteen month old Taiga can walk pretty well and utters a few words, such as mama, please, dropped down and so on. He always walks around, finds something he likes and smiles. When I stop him from moving and say to him, “ No.”, he gets angry and makes a sulky face. It looks very funny.

Today’s conversation (talking with Taiga at New Enoshima aquarium)
We went to New Enoshima aquarium on the ninth of October. That aquarium opened last spring and it is a favorite with many children. It was very crowded but the show with the dolphins was fantastic. They could jump very high.
“Look there. Here are many beautiful fish. What kind of fish do you like?”
“Wow.”
“You can see something strange. What are they? They are jellyfish, you know.”
“Umm.”
“What big turtles they are. Are you surprised?”
“Oh!”
“What is their name? They are seals. Look over there. They are penguins. How pretty they are.”
“Yeah.”
“The show with the dolphins is going to be opened. Wow, they jumped well. They are awesome.”
“Oh. ”(Taiga was clapping his little hands sitting down on the buggy.)

-△-

at our former house

2005,10,9

I' m sorry but I haven't been a volunteer these days. When my sons were elementary kids, I served as an organizer of a children's club in our residents association. And my husband served as officer of the residential association three times. I sometimes cut grass in our common yard with my neighbors. But I' m sure those are not volunteer works but our duties.

An extra talk is,
I think I like this picture because this symbolizes the American countryside, an old man and a young boy riding on a tractor and a dog. I think this is a great symbol of America.

Today' s conversation (talking with my son at our former house)
"I drove to Yokohama with my son' s family and visited the large apartment houses where we had been living until about 25 years ago.
"Do you remember the room number of our old house?"
"Sure, come in here. This room is our old house."
"Oh. Now a foreigner is living there with a Japanese woman, isn't he?"
"Maybe. The doorplate is a foreigner's name. Let's go there. You were always playing here. There are a slide and two wooden horses like at that time."
"Are they the same as 25 years ago?"

“No, but they are at the same place. Look at that breezeway. You looked down the street from there and your head got caught between the fence.”
“My grandmother always says that was an accident.”
“I couldn’t imagine today’s incident 25 years ago that I would be visiting here with my grandson.”

-△-

the yahoo auction

2005,10,8

I bought my new digital camera, my useful electronic dictionary and my MP3 player on the yahoo auction. To be accurate my elder son bid for them for me. He is a really good auctioneer. He knocked the price down much cheaper than the listed prices. Of course they were not secondhand but new. I guess they had some reason to be sold so cheap; maybe they had been displayed for a little while at stores. But they work as well as brand-new. He told me the victory depends on the bidding of the last ten minutes.

Today’s conversation (asking the station attendant)
“Would you mind helping me?”
“What happened?”
“I’m waiting for my son’s family here and I’ve just now received his call. He said he had left his cell-phone in the bathroom of the rapid train. He changed from the rapid train to the normal train at Hiratsuka station. And the moment the train started from the station, he remembered it. ”
“Waite a minute. Look at the TV monitor. That train will pass through this station just now. ”
“Ah, it has passed.”
“OK. I will call the Yokohama station. Maybe an attendant will find it there.”
“Thank you. I really appreciate your kindness

-△-

American football

2005,10,7

I know foot ball games are really popular in America but it’s not so popular in Japan. I’ve never watched them on TV or at the stadium. It reminded me of UCLA. I suppose many Japanese think UCLA is a university of American football. Actually someone asked me if my son was an American football player. Hahaha…. And I also had such a thought before my son decided to enter that school. But I know a woman who played Touch football at the university. I heard that game was for girls and similar to American football. She told me there were only a few universities, which had such a club in Japan. Is it popular in America?

An extra talk is,
The Oregon high school won the game against Stillman high school. I think they won 26 to 11. It was a lot of fun. I saw old teachers and some of my former students whom I taught at Oregon high school. I just had a wonderful time. And also my good friend Corry was an announcer of football game. He did a good job.

Today's conversation (talking about swimming with my colleague)
"Will you go to the swimming pool after work?"
"Yeah, I decided to go there once a week. It's good for my health. Swimming is a really good work out."
"I think so. Let's go together and take a bus at 5:40. That bus stops in front of the pool."

-△-

I've never found a cockroach in my house.

2005,10,6

I don't know why there were so many strange characters on my previous e-mail. I don't know whether it was a problem with my computer or hotmail services. Sometimes strange incidents happened on my computer but the next time it disappeared. Computers are really strange and a tough tool to me. Maybe many ordinary people have the same opinion.

① I've never been stung by a bee. Recently I heard the news that said a middle age man was killed by hornets in a forest. Be careful! I don't know the English names of many insects except a cockroach, a spider, a beetle, a grasshopper and a butterfly. I hate cockroaches. But I've never found them in my house since I moved to my present house around twenty years ago. It's my pride. It proves how clean my kitchen is.

② Today's conversation (talking with my boss at the office)
"I'm sorry but we had a problem with our job."
"What happened?"
"My staff made a mistake the other day and we noticed it today for the first time. "
"You must have taken care of him. You should be expected not to make trouble."
"I think so. It's my fault. It's my responsibility to keep a careful watch on my staff."

-△-

TV

2005,10,5

These days I have little times to watch TV. I only watch news and a few special programs.
We have satellite TV but paying money for it seems to be a waste of money.
When my younger son lived with us, we had another satellite TV, which is called Sky Perfect TV, because he studied English watching CNN. Does CNN always broadcast American news? I' ve never watched "24". But one of my new friends, whom I met at the English conversation school, has many DVDs of it. She asked me whether I would like to borrow them or not. But I'm certain I don' t have much time to watch them so I refused. She also told me they were too interesting to study English. She used to get into the story and always forgot listening to English.

Today' s conversation(talking with my friend at the Battleship Mikasa Memorial)
"Do you know about the Russo-Japanese War? I' ve just finished reading the famous and long book "cloud above slope 坂の上の雲" written by Ryoutarou Shiba. Have you ever read it?"
"Of course. But I read it over ten years ago. It' s a story about that War. I' m sorry I don' t remember the story exactly. But I still remember the famous sayings at the Japan sea fight."
"Yeah, you say… "It is fine today but the waves are running high. 本日天気晴朗なれども浪高し" and "The rise and fall of the emperor's Japan depend on this fight. 皇国の興亡この一戦にあり""
"Yes, you are right. I think they are really good Japanese and they have Meiji sprits. I' m happy to visit the Battleship Mikasa Memorial today."

-△-

Love Story

2005,10,4

I watched the movie Love Story several times and also read the novel. That movie was a great hit in 1971 in Japan. Ryan O' Neal was the hero and Ali McGraw, who had straight black hair and really looked like a young Judy, was the heroine. The story is a typical love story. A young rich and excellent guy who studied law met a poor but smart girl at the library of a university (maybe Harvard). They fell in love soon and though his parents didn' t approve, they got married. But the heroine got leukemia and in the end died. The theme music that was composed by Francis Lay was very beautiful and popular. We can still hear that music many times as background music at restaurants and shopping stores and so on.

Today' s conversation (talking about my favorite flower with my friend)
"What kind of flower do you like best?"
"Let me think, it' s very difficult to answer. Umm, I like cosmos in this season."
"There is a famous Cosmos park in Yokosuka, right? Could you go there with me?"
"OK. Let's go there. And how about going to Mikasa park to visit the battle ship Mikasa after that?"
"What' s the Mikasa?"

"It's the battle ship which played an active part in the Russo-Japanese War. The Russo-Japanese War broke out just one hundred years ago. This year is an anniversary year."

-△-

about a census

2005,10,3

Today's conversation（ talking about the effective way of studying English with a good English speaker ②)

"Nowadays we can see movies and dramas with English subtitles on DVD, you know. It's really effective to study English in such a way."

"I see."

"I think it's lucky for me to find such a way to study English. If I had studied business English, I couldn't master English conversation."

"Is that so? I think you have a sort of talent for language. Anyway you are great. Thank you for teaching me such a nice way of studying English."

"You are welcome."

Do you know anything about a census? It's a Japanese basic and important examination of residents, which is made every five years. Many governmental policies depend on this census. The national census also targets foreigners. These days since there are so many people who live alone and foreigners in big cities, that seems to be really difficult. I wonder how census takers explain the census to foreigners.

-△-

my scary memory

2005,10,2

It was maybe fifteen years ago. When I went to Taiwan, I went to Faren, which is a small town

south of Taipei, and came back to Taipei by a really small plane. And that plane rolled and rolled. So I felt very scared. Moreover the Japanese famous woman author Kuniko Mukouda had died in a plane accident in Taiwan about five years before that time. Yeah, I thought the plane might have fallen at that time. It was the scariest experience in my entire life.

Today's conversation(talking about the effective way of studying English with a good English speaker①)
"Why can you speak English so well? Have you ever studied abroad or lived in America?"
"No, I studied English only in Japan."
"Did you major in English at the university?"
"No, I studied it by myself."
"Really?"
"It was about fifteen years ago I started studying English. My fianc, of course he is my present husband, lived in America. So I began to study English by a NHK radio program. I watched many English TV dramas. And after studying by myself, I went to another English conversation school for three years."
"Unbelievable. What kind of TV drama did you watch?"
"Friends. That English was not so difficult. I recommend it to you."

Today's conversation(talking with My golf coach at driving range)
"Long time no see. How is your shot today?"
"It's terrible. Today I came to the driving range for the first time after I injured my shoulder two and a half months ago. I still can't grip the club strongly."
"OK. Don't be impatient."
"But I can't hit the ball well. I am really disappointed."
"Take it easy. Start over again."

-△-

a census

2005,10,1

I saw such grills at the department store in Hawaii this summer. Of course I don't have such a grill and I've never cooked and eaten on my small porch. If I did such a thing, my neighbors would complain to me. "You bother us. We are annoyed with the smell and smoke. Stop cooking on the porch." If I could cook by using a grill, I would like to cook fish for example salmon and sea bass. It must be delicious.

An extra talk is,
I guess in summer we use the grill probably more often than using the oven. Because the summer is so hot if we use the oven inside. The house is hot so it's nice to use the outside grill. We also

eat outside a lot on the porch. Have you ever eaten on your veranda?

Today's conversation (talking with a census taker at the entrance)
"I'm a census taker. I'm here to receive your questionnaire."
" Oh, I'm sorry I haven't written yet. Today is October first so I thought you would come here next Saturday morning. But if you wait a minute, I will write as soon as possible."
" No problem. I'll come here at nine o'clock again."
"Ok. Please visit another home before me."

Be careful!

2005,11,30

December will have been passed away. A cold winter is coming near. There is a cold and strong wind outside in this evening. I seem to have caught a head cold. Now I feel something strange with my nose. I guess I had better go to bed instead of studying English. Moreover today's poem is really difficult to listen to. I listened to it twice however I'm sorry I couldn't understand even the image. I gave up dictating it. I looked at a picture of a very pretty high school girl whose hair is long, silver, and straight on your web site. Please be careful not to be picked up by a bad boy.

-△-

to tell the trith it's very difficult....

2005,11,29

Today I tried to dictate Monte's stories and poems. To tell the truth, it's very hard for me to dictate them. But I think as he recorded them for us we have to try to listen to them to reward his efforts. About poems I can understand their mood and meanings but maybe I can't comprehend them perfectly. There seem to be many differences between American poems and Japanese poems. I think American poems look like Japanese satirical haiku, we call them Senryu. Anyway I've done it.

Judy Nixon has gone to a teaching meeting at the town. There are six different churches in Mt. Morris and they have joined together in order to help students who are having trouble in school. So Judy goes up there once a week to help the students doing particular subjects and she enjoys it very much.

Lets see, now , here is another poem.
The title is , this is called no difference.
Small as a peanut and big as a giant are all the same size when we turn off the light. Rich and poor as a mite all were the same when we turn off the light. Red, black, orange, yellow or white, we all

look the same, when we turn off the light. So maybe the way to wake everything is to forget to just reach out and turn off the light.

And now the poem.
The homemade boat.
This boat we just built is just fine. And don't tell us its size and back diband. It's a bottom I guess I forgot.

Today I picked up a couple of jobs for a local camping yard and a local nursing home. And when I tried to go to the store to buy the (?) for my (?) But the resells are 3 dollars and 50 cents. And I just came home. When I was outside, I put up some Christmas decorations, great large flowers made of wood and a little welcome sign on the front door. And now perhaps another poem.
This is about Chester. Chester is a little boy.
Chester came to school and said (?). The teacher said it's time you know it. The word is? instead of?

-△-

What is Shutter Gai?

2005,11,28

Actually I had worked for the department where we try to promote shopping malls. At that time I studied how to promote them and I went to Togoshiginza near Musashikoyama to inspect there with my colleagues. Togoshiginza shopping mall is one of the busiest in Japan. These days many people go to big shopping stores in the suburbs by car and many old shopping malls in front of the station are declining. It's a big problem in Japan because the power of the town is lost. They say there are some reasons why old shopping malls are decreasing. One of them is caused by the owners of shops. They have been running their shops as a family and actually the owner is old now. But their children don't want to work for their father's shops. The real estate in the shopping malls are very expensive and the owners are still rich even if their shops aren't prosperous. They easily get money if they sell their shop or build an apartment house there. So they don't want to work hard for their shops. I'm sure its true. But I was very surprised to see the shopping malls in Tokyo when I went to Musashikoyama this June to participate in the meeting of Fine. They were still busy. In our town there are many shops which are closed in the shopping mall. We call such shopping malls Shutter Gai instead of Shouten Gai.

-△-

See you again sometime!!

2005,11,27

I will try to translate the sign.
Dangerous! Don't ride a bicycle here.

This morning two foreigners went back to their countries, the United States and Singapore. Actually I was really interested in the Malay girl and worried about her. I went to that country over ten years ago and I thought I knew about that country. Some races, such as Chinese, Malay, Indian and so on, live there. Their official language is English and the famous politician is Lee Kuan Yew. I recognized my knowledge was really superficial. She taught me many differences in our cultures. At first she said to me, "I'm a Malay and I can speak both English and Malay. I speak Malay with my family and speak English at school. I can't eat pork." I noticed she was a Muslim. And she brought many convenient foods because her mother was worried she couldn't eat Japanese foods. And I found on them there were seals for Muslims. Actually she did eat quite few foods that I cooked, such as Miso soup, some vegetables, yoghurt and rice crackers. She didn't bring a coat. She said," In my country it's summer all year lomg so I couldn't buy such clothes." When she came back to my house, she shivered and I turned on a heater. I set it to 23 degrees but she asked me to set it to 28 degrees. "I still feel cold." To tell the truth her English was very hard for me to listen to. I've heard people don't speak English but speak Singlish in Singerpol. But an American guy and my son and she were chatting smoothly and pleasantly. Maybe it's my fault that I couldn't listen to her well. But we made friends with each other and I gave her my old coat that I bought about ten years ago and it was too showy for me. I told her that she could throw it away at Narita but she told me that she

would keep it forever. Now they are on the plane. I really hope they have a good trip. See you again sometime and somewhere.

-△-

Why do we call him Takashi?

2005,11,26

I will introduce a similar story to your story concerning the name. We called my first son Testu chan with chan but we called my second son Takashi without chan. When my second son was born, my first son was still 2 years old. At that time I stayed in my parents home with my sons. My parents said to my first son," Your brother was born. From now you have to become his elder brother. Takashi is your younger brother (Otouto in Japanese),you know." Sometimes they said to him, "This fish is very delicious. You had better eat fish (Ototo in Japanese)." Ototo means fish and we usually say this word to little kids. So my first son was confused and called his brother fish (Osakana in Japanese). And he couldn't pronounce Takashi chan well so he always called his brother only Takashi. And we still call my second son Takashi without chan.

-△-

every mornin....

2005,11,25

Usually I wake up at six o'clock and check e-mails on my computer. Then I prepare breakfast and eat it while reading the Yomiuri newspaper in my small dining room. To tell the truth I don't eat Japanese style breakfast. I prefer western style, for example a piece of bread, a coffee and yoghurt, to Japanese style breakfast. Actually I make yoghurt by myself once a week. One thing I really like is to drink coffee. Reading a newspaper while drinking coffee is one of my favorite times.

I dictated your talk.
Hello, everyone! How are you today? Well I will return to Chicago next Wednesday, November the thirtieth. I look foreword to having my eye surgery. The surgery will make my eyesight perfect. So when I return to Japan, I won't need my glasses and contacts. It will be a whole new world. Well, when I will see you next time, I will see you perfectly. And I look forward to keeping in touch with you until then. Take care and if you have time, come to the Fine event this Saturday, November the twenty sixth. The event will be in Musashikoyama and then we will go to a restaurant together. Thake care and have a good day. (I'm sorry I can't go there. Because it's too far from my house to there.)

-△-

my favorite furniture

2005,11,24

When I moved to our new apartment house over 20 years ago, I ordered new system furniture made by Yamaha. At that time I couldn't make up my mind easily. What kind of furniture should I buy? White furniture might be better than dark furniture. It might brighten our mind. But I guessed it would easily become dirty and we might bocome tired of that color. Well, I decided to buy dark brown furniture. Over 20 years later I don't regret my decision at that time. It doesn't look so old after a long time and it's still very useful. When I got married, my parents bought me a set of furniture. My cupboard, dining table and chairs were made of unvarnished wood and I really liked them. But they became dirty soon and I had to refurbish them. From that point I'm sure brown furniture is better than white furniture.

Tonight an American guy and a Singaporean girl came to my home with my son. My son and his American friend went to Singapore to accept an award at the competition in Singapore about two weeks ago. They met a Malay girl who was studying digital arts there. They stopped over in Japan from Singapore and went back to LA. Since their work got another award from Keio univ. in Japan, they came to Japan again. Keio univ. invited them to the award ceremony in Roppongi Hills. And the Malay girl came to Japan and they will stay at my home for three days. Tonight I showed my magic with a can to the two foreigners. Actually I found an empty can from in the trash box, because I always keep many cans there and throw them away every other Wednesday according to our city's garbage collection plan. I washed it again and filled it with entered water to two thirds. I could stand it slantingly well. They laughed and clapped their hands.

-△-

after retiring from my job

2005,11,23

I was really surprised to look at the can standing slantingly by itself. Now I don't have such a can in my refrigerator but I will buy a can of tea and try to do it. Maybe I will try it in front of our guests from America and Singapore. Well, I have a lot of things that I want to learn after retiring

from my job, for example Go, electronic organ, weaving, social dance and so on. By the way what's the meaning of this phrase? I can do a couple of card tricks, but that's it. I guess it means, ２、３のトランプの手品が出来るけど、ただそれだけだよ。

-△-

funny poems

2005,11,22

Now for a short poem
Thanks giving dinners are sad for Santa Claus. Christmas dinners are dark and blue when you talk and see it from the turkey's point of view.

My eyes are dark brown because I'm a Japanese. And they have single- edged eyelids, which I don't like so much. I longed for big and double- edged eyelids when I was a girl.

And now another poem.
Sunday's dinner is sunny. Eating a feast is just bad luck when you see it from the viewpoint of a chicken or a duck.
I have today watered the yard and cleaned up a lot of leaves because a lot of leaves are falling from the trees. And I went to my neighbor's yard and cleaned up her leaves. She is an old woman and a widow. Her husband died about 15 years ago. Do you have leaves in your town? (There are a lot of fallen leaves in our condo's yard. Every morning cleaning men and women whom we employ rake them instead of the inhabitants. I really like to walk on fallen leaves and hear the rustle of leaves.

-△-

these days I was busy...

2005,11,21

On Saturday I went to play golf in Tochigi and stayed overnight there. I read your last e-mail on the evening of Sunday. Sorry about not being able to respond quickly. The weather was fine and I really enjoyed playing golf. Regarding my score it was not so good that I can tell you about it. But I could hit balls so-so and I was satisfied with some driver shots. By the way didn't you listen to the Fine's audio? Monte read some poems such as Cats, Fish and An early bird, to us and I dictated them. Hahaha. Well, my son will come to Japan with his American friend soon. I will go to Roppongi the day after tomorrow and meet him at the award ceremony.

-△-

my short trip

2005,11,20

I just came home from the short trip in Tochigi. Yesterday I played golf with my friends and stayed at the small hotel on the golf course. The dishes were very delicious and more fees were very cheap. That fee was only twenty thousand yen, including the golf fee, lunch, dinner, breakfast and the lodging fee. Moreover they took us to and from the station by car. I recommend Tochinoki country club. Today we went to Shiobara and saw beautiful autumn colors in the mountains and in Utsunomiya we eat gyouza, which is a special product there. I was very surprised because there were many restaurants of gyouza, which is one of the Chinese snacks, in front of Utsunomiya station. I took the Shounanshinjyuku line from Utsunomiya and I was able to come back to the nearest station from my home without changing trains. . I was satisfied with this trip and I decided to continue to practice golf.

-△-

golf again

2005,11,19

From now I will go to a golf course in Tochigi. I will go to Tokyo by the Tokaido line and then I will change trains there. From Tokyo I will ride the bullet train, Shinkansen, to Utsunomiya in Tochigi. Moreover I will ride the Tohoku Honsen to Yaita. It takes about two hours and a half from my house to that station.

-△-

I miss Monte's voice.

2005,11,18

I miss Monte's voice. Oh, that reminds me of the time I drove to the big house that was called the Castle, belonging to the church, with him in his red convertible. It was very fine and the sky was blue on that day. I could see many beautiful houses in Mt. Morris. Anyway we enjoyed our short trip chatting in English. When we got there, he explained about your friend's wedding ceremony, which had been held there, and I took many pictures. It was very exciting. Of course I tried to dictate his story.

At this time of the year it is very pretty at my house in the United States. It is now the fall season. The four seasons are called spring, summer, fall and winter. During the fall season the leaves on the trees turn very beautiful colors before they finally fall from the trees. Many people who own houses sweep up the fallen leaves and burn a pile of leaves. The weather during the fall season is very mild and pleasant. It is during the fall season that we celebrate the ancestors who first came to America from England. That holiday is called Thanks Giving Day. Many people travel to their mother or grandmother's house to have a family meal of turkey, mash potatoes and pumpkin pie. It is a wonderful time together. What is your favorite holiday? And what special activity is there during that holiday?

-△-

When I was a junior high school girl,

2005,11,17

The thing I remember most about my junior high school days is how we used to always chat about a classmate boy with my friends. He was very smart and always playing soccer on the playground because he belonged to the soccer club. We used to look at him from the window of the classroom at the second floor and cheer him.

An early bird
Now I have a cute and little poem.
If you were a bird, be an early bird and catch worms for your breakfast plate.
If I were a bird, I'd be an early bird. But I were a worm, I'd sleep late. (Understanding poems seem to be very difficult. There must be ellipsises.)

-△-

how to use Fine

2005,11,16

Almost every morning as soon as I get up I turn on my computer and I listen to the Fine's audio diary. Now I can read your diary without a dictionary so I try to listen to it without reading the sentences. After coming back home I write my response to the Fine's diary in English and try to dictate an extra talk. It's very useful to improve my English. It's not so hard for me to write English everyday. Making it a habit to use English is very important and is not so difficult. The thing I want most from Fine is to let us have an opportunity to talk with you in English. It seems to be easy to talk with you on Skype even if you live in America. I'm sure the man-to-man lesson is the best if we study English conversation. If the level of the students is same, a group lesson is good but if the level is different, sometimes it might be a waste of time. So we make an appointment and we talk with you. Such a system seems to be better.

A little fish eats a tiny fish
A big fish eats a little fish
So only the biggest fish gets fat
Do you know any folks like that?

An extra talk is,
Well, I've gone to church all my life since I was a little kid. Recently I try to go there every week and read a Bible once in a while and meet a many good people in church. In both Japan and every country I can go there to meet really great people. Once I will try it again. It's a wonderful time to spend.

-△-

about kids

2005,11,15

The two girls look so cute. Kids don't look tired. They, especially boys, are always interested in many things around them. They open the door of the closet, pull out many things from the closet, turn on and off household appliances, find something like a coin and suck it. Be careful. Maybe after 3 years old they don't do such dangerous behavior but before 3 years old parents can't let them be free. It's the parents' responsibility to take care of them all the time.

Now here is a little poem. Cats Can anyone lend me two eighty-pound rats
I want to lead my house of cats (But I'm sorry I can't understand the meaning of this poem. I guess in this poem you might use a kind of inversion.)

-△-

my poem

2005,11,14

I will try to write a poem in English. Maybe this is the second experience for me to write it in English. When I was a high school student, I did it as my homework. I learned some poems written by Walt Whitman and the teacher instructed us to write a poem in English. I know about rhyme. We call it 韻を踏む in Japanese. On my way to my office I tried to make my poem but it was too difficult to write it. I'm poor at English so I couldn't find suitable words. My poem is terrible but please read it.

The old temple is standing quietly
In the old capital
The trees are colored beautifully
Near the mountain
The breeze is blowing
The leaves are swinging

-△-

a pipe for mails

2005,11,13

I am convinced you were crawling through a pipe for mail,because there are no lines and it looks clean. The door doesn't look so modern. It must be a pipe for mail in an old building. They put mail into a pipe and mail gathers in one room. I haven't dictated some extra talks yet but I would like to get a free dinner. I hope my answer was correct.

-△-

until 100 years old in good health

2005,11,12

I visited the Yokohama International Triennale of Contemporary Art with our guest. It's an exhibition of modern art held in Yokohama. My son and the American guy are studying media arts in UCLA and they are interested in such arts. I'm sorry but to tell the truth it's hard for me to understand modern art. Sometimes they seem to be pure trash to me.

I don't have any relatives who are over 90 years old. My mother is now 87 years old and I'm sure she is the oldest of my familiar relatives. I think my family members could live long lives but my two grandmothers died around 88years old over 20 years ago. My father died when he was 84years old. I hope my mother will live until 100 years old in good health.

-△-

Why do you go to a church?

2005,11,11

Today I took a half-day off to take care of our American guest. But since he and my son went out until the middle of the night and after that they worked together last night, they didn't get up until nearly noon.
Regarding a church, I've been to a church in Japan twice or three times when I was a little girl. Because my cousin convinced me to go there. But we were not Christian and we stopped going there without notice. As we have Christian relatives, I've attended the funeral ceremonies a few times. Actually the funeral ceremony of my mother in law was held in the church. She was a believer in Jesus Christ. I see what you mean, but in my opinion attending the Mass in order to speak with foreigners seems to be rude to God.

-△-

an impact of TV

2005,11,10

Today I had an opportunity to listen to the lecture, that was titled" business scandals and crisis management" from the commentator of Fuji television, Mr. Hiroshi Oobayashi. I was very interested in his speech and learned many things, for example, how strong the effect of TV was and we should never say lies in front of cameras and so on. If they say lies in front of cameras, many people can watch it, find out their lies and blame them. In the end they have to quit their jobs. The impact of TV is really big. Well, now to the next topic. Regarding chatting with foreigners at a hotel lobby, it seems to be a little embarrasing for me.

-△-

a happy birthday!!

2005,11,9

Today my son and his American schoolmate guy came to our house from Singapore. Since their work got an award at the competition in that country, they were invited there and they stopped over in Japan on the way to LA. They were very tired and as soon as they arrived at my house they drove to the hot spring in Hakone. Actually to day is also my son's birthday. I bought a cake and had been waiting for him.

Now I can listen to your audio blog. Of course I tried to dictate what I couldn't understand.
Well, for myself I prefer a bed to a futon just because I grew up with that. I slept on a futon a lot when I was in Japan but (I couldn't catch this part.) What do you prefer to? Let me know. (I prefer

a bed to a futon. These days I guess more than half of the people sleep on beds in Japan. It's more sanitary than sleeping with a futon.)

I've known obachan and her family for 6 or 7 years and they are special parts of my life. Someday I would like to have her and her husband come over to Mt. Morris. I don't know if it will be able to happen. It would be nice but old people don't want to travel as a young ones do.

-△-

too small to invite

2005,11,8

Now I live in a condo. Maybe it's about 75 square meters but I guess it's a normal floor space in a city area in Japan. And we have two six tatami mat rooms in my house. One of them actually has a tokonoma but I use our Japanese style rooms like a western style rooms. There are big closets, a desk for my computer, a chair and a dresser in the six mat room. Moreover I lay a green mat where I practice golf putting and I use tokonoma as a closet instead of decoration of Japanese flower arrangement. No way! My son would use another Japanese style room and there are his bed, a bookshelf, a desk and a chair on the tatami. Come on! To tell the truth my son will come back to Japan with an American guy tomorrow and they will stay at my house. Oh my gosh. What should I do? Maybe my son will stay in our living room and the American guy will stay in my son's room. Last summer another tall American guy stayed at my house for a week and at that time he slept on a futon and my son slept on a bed in the same room. I guess he thought, "Umm, his parents might not be so rich because they live in such a small house." or " What a miserable nation Japan is. Real estate is so expensive that they live in such a small house." But he said to me just before saying good bye," Thank you very much for your kindness. Your home is very comfortable." Now I really want another room, maybe an eight tatami mat room like a Japanese style hotel. If we had such a room, we could let foreigners feel more comfortable. It will also become easier for my first son's family to visit our house. Moreover I will be able to spend a nice time sipping a Japanese style tea in this room for a change.

-△-

from Holland

2005,11,7

I'm sorry I don't have a person whom I could call as my extended family. So today I will introduce my new Dutch acquaintance to you. One day when I was on line, he sent a message to me. He seemed to be a sincere man and we began to talk on Skype with each other. His English sounded very good and he told me that in Holland many people could speak English as well as him. He is as

old as me and actually he has two granddaughters. He let me see their picture. They are very cute. He said to me," My daughter's husband is an international truck driver so I went to England, France, and Spain with him. It was a really good experience. " His English was not so difficult and it was easy for me to listen to him but at first it was hard for me to believe. I'm a Japanese and Japan is an island country so I couldn't imagine the occupation of an international truck driver. Speaking English is good for me in terms of being interested in many countries.

-△-

Thank you for all of your help.

2005,11,6

Many teachers at NOVA sometimes said to me, "Where have you been hiding?" But I don't know what this phrase means. I asked them," What's the meaning of this phrase? " They answered to me, "Don't you know such easy English? It's a very common phrase, Masaho." "Oh, no. Please teach me in Japanese." " I can't speak Japanese." I guess it means,「しばらくぶりだけど、どうしていたの？」Is it right? And I tried to ask someone by writing my question on the notice board of mixi. As soon as I wrote it, many people taught me the meaning of that phrase. So I wrote on the notice board again like this. Thank you very much!! I'm really surprised because you responded so early. (A girl who lives in LA advised me I had better use quickly in stead of early.) I will never forget this phrase. Thank you for your extra (?) advice. I really appreciate it. It's difficult for me to understand a nuance of English. Thank you for all of your help. Now I can understand the nuance of this phrase.

-△-

Oh,my! 2

2005,11,5

Today I went to the driving range. Last Sunday I went there and I couldn't hit balls well at all. I shanked and sliced a lot. I have two golf plans this year. If I don't hit balls straight, I will bother my partners. Oh, no. I have to practice a lot. I decided to make golf a priority. Actually today I hit many balls straight and I was really recharged. I thought I would practice one day at a time from the beginning. By the way I met a white man at the golf range today. He hit balls in the same place as you (Chris). It was the second time I've met foreigners there. Of course the first man was Chris.

Actually I've never missed the train by drinking but I've sometimes missed the train by working. When I was working at the main office, I worked until midnight at times and I came back home by taxi. Of course I didn't pay the money by myself. We used the tickets. As soon as I came home, I took a bath and went to bed. The next morning I got up at 6 o'clock and left my house at 7:10.

When our governor who belongs to the Democratic Party in Japan changed in 2003 the congress was confused because many members belonged to the Liberal Democratic Party. The congress was held until the middle of the night. I couldn't catch the last trains and even if I come home by taxi, I couldn't have enough time to sleep. At that time I stayed at the hotel near my office and slept for 4 hours. Oh my Gosh. I thought it was not an ordinary person's life. I longed to transfer to the branch. If I worked for the main office, I couldn't't study English now.

-△-

Oh,my!

2005,11,4

Now the station is under construction and it's very difficult to find a platform. I lost my way at the station. One of my jobs will be due to finish on Monday so I was very busy today. The requests at my work are changing and changing. It's up to me to finish their requests within a deadline. I shouldn't be expected to finish so many things. I'm tired and I' m fed up with my duty. But as I get my salary, I have a responsibility to carry out my duty.

I go to NOVA almost every other day. But I don't have an opportunity to use English, especially to speak English. So I began to use Skype recently. I began to use it over one years ago, but I only use it with my son in America. When I use Skype Me, many guys call me from all over the world but almost everybody want to talk with me about sex. Oh my…. I don't want to speak about such a topic. If you have time and use Skype, please call me someday. I want to speak with you in English in earnest. My Skype name is Masahomama. (An Australian guy, Chris was not such a person.)

-△-

my family

2005,11,3

Actually I have two sons and one grandson. To tell the truth when my second son was born, I was really disappointed. I longed to have a girl. But now he has grown up to be a nice guy and he gives me much satisfaction. If he hadn't begun to study in America, I wouldnt have begun to study English again and visit America. I'm really proud of him. And when I knew I would be a grandmother, I was really surprised. I thought I was too young to be a grandmother. But now Taiga gives me much pleasure. I really appreciate all of them including my first son and his wife. They are my important family. Maybe I will have more grandchildren in the future. I wonder if one of them will be a girl? I'm also looking forward to having a granddaughter.

An extra talk is,
I suppose I will grow up someday and have my family. And my parents will become grandparents. They are looking forward to that a lot. I think I will have twin boys and another girl or boy. Having four children would be good. What do you think about it?

-△-

We should say.....

2005,11,2

Today we studied about a human rights issue in our office. There is much discrimination in our society, such as sexism, gender bias, ageism, racism, and discrimination against handicapped people. Frankly there had been the glass ceiling, a barrier for women not to get a higher position at many organizations, maybe until ten years ago. But these days I'm sure it is getting better and better in our office. As we realize we use many discriminatory words, some words, both English and Japanese, have been changed and changed. For example Japanese used to call foreigners Gaijin but these days we have to call them Gaikokujin. Isn't foreigner a discriminatory term? I can't understand the nuances of many English words. We know we have to say, a flight attendant instead of stewardess, Native American instead of Indian, Inuit instead of Eskimo, chairperson instead of chairman. Today I got one paper and I found one example. It says we should not say, " Columbus discovered the New World." We should say, " Columbus discovered the North American continent." Of course I can understand what it means. The Native Americans had been living there until he arrived there and saying that neglects them. But I can't help feeling something strange. What do you think about these tendencies? Oops, I forgot one question. Do you still use Indian summer that means warm days before winter maybe in November? We Japanese call such days Koharubiyori. Today is very warm and lovely but I think we usually say Koharubiyori from late November to the beginning of December. Koharu means October of the lunar calender. Today is too early to say Koharubiyori.

-△-

a light blue dress

2005,11,1

Ms. Izzy looks very young and the light blue top suits her very much. Actually this morning I saw the picture of the new Minister of Gender Equality and Declining birth rate,Kuniko Inoguchi in the newspaper. She wore a long blue dress like a evening dress. The color was almost the same as Izzy's top. Ms. Inoguchi doesn't look that good in her dress and it looks kind of strange. I'm sure Ms. Izzy looks good in that color better than the new Japanese famous woman Minister. Why did Ms. Inoguchi wear such a dress? Another female Minister, Ms. Koike didn't wear such a long

dress. I respected Ms. Inoguchi who was a great international political scholar and a mother of twin girls but after the election we often heard rumors about her in many weekly magagines, which were not good. They said she was arrogant, proud and conceited. When I saw her picture, I was convinced the rumors were true. We expect her not to be a poor actress but to be a good politician.

An extra talk is,
I just recently went down to visit Aunt Izzy . Even though she is 93 years old, she is so energetic and so lovely. She still walks up and down stairs and still goes to church by herself. And she really enjoys them. She said she wants to live to be over one hundred. See you around!

When I was on line tonight, a stranger called me on Skype. He was an Australian guy named Chris in Sydney. I talked with him in English for an hour. He had been a teacher at NOVA until 2003 and he had been living in Fujisawa. He missed Fujisawa and he called me because he sawthat I lived in Fujisawa. Actually I introduced myself as," I' m Japanese in Fujisawa." on Skype. We enjoyed our conversation in English and he taught me some phrases, such as " autumn colors" and " If you find me on line, please call me."

Good bye, 2005！！

2005,12,31

No. 2 Emperor Jitou

Spring seems to be over and summer has come. We can see the white clothes among the Mt. Kaguyama where they have a custom to air white clothes during summer.
春(はる)すぎて　夏来(なつき)にけらし　白妙(しろたへ)の　衣(ころも)ほすてふ　天(あま)の香具山(かぐやま)

No. 57 Murasaki Shikibu (the famous woman writer in the Heian period)

I could meet you at long last. However you left from me as soon as I recognized your face. It just likes the moon which we can see through the clouds.

めぐりあひて　見(み)しやそれとも　わかぬ間(ま)に　雲(くも)がくれにし　夜半(よは)の月(つき)かな

No. 5 The priest Sarumary Dayu

I really feel lonely when I hear the deer's cry in autumn. He is looking for his wife crying on a lot of colored fallen leaves in the mountain.

奥山(おくやま)に　紅葉(もみじ)ふみわけ　鳴(な)く鹿(しか)の　声聞(こゑき)くときぞ　秋(あき)はかなしき

No. 6 Tyunagon Yakamochi

Now there is a heavy frost on the bridge of the Palace. It looks really white and I see it's already midnight.

かささぎの　渡(わた)せる橋(はし)に　おく霜(しも)の　白(しろ)きを見(み)れば　夜(よ)ぞ更(ふ)けにける

No.8 The priest Kisen houshi
Now I'm living in the southeast of the capital at peace. I know it is rumored that I live here , in the country ,because I lost my love. I don't mind such a rumor.
わが庵(いほ)は　都(みやこ)のたつみ　しかぞ住(す)む　世(よ)をうぢ山(やま)と　人(ひと)はいふなり

No. 10 Semimaru
This is the famous barrier where we have to say good bye and we can see each other again. I wonder if I could see them again here.

これやこの　行(い)くも帰(かへ)るも　別(わか)れては　知(し)るも知(し)らぬも　逢坂(あふさか)の関(せき)

No. 11　Sangi Takamura

I was ordered to study in China.　No way !　I didn't want to go to such a far country. Of course I refused. Then I am exiled to Oki in present Shimane. Dear fishermen working on the ocean, please tell my friends that I'm going to the lonely island on the small boat.

わたの原(はら)　八十島(やそしま)かけて　こぎ出(い)でぬと　人(ひと)には告(つ)げよ　あまのつり舟(ぶね)

-△-

Have a good new year!!

2005,12,30

I will go to my mother's house in Osaka with my first son's family and come back here on the first of next year. Anyway have a good new year.

-△-

My timetable of yesterday

2005,12,29

6:00 am Woke up
6:15 am Ate breakfast
7:10 am Left house
8:00 am Arrived at the Yokosuka in JP line and took a bus
8:20 am Arrived at my office
8:30 am started the morning work
12:00 am finished the morning work and ate lunch
1:00 pm started the afternoon work
5:15 pm finished the work and participated in the yearend party at the dinning room
6:15 pm the party was closed and left the office. Had transportation.
7:45 pm Arrived at home
8:00 pm watched TV reading a newspaper
8:30 pm studied English
10:00 pm Took a bath
11:00 pm Read a book in a bed
12:00 pm Got to sleep

To be honest now I'm really interested in Lasik Surgery. Actually I know some doctor's office where we can have that surgery. But I'm not only nearsighted but also astigmatic and presbyopia. Oh my gosh! Do you think it's still effective for me or not?

I will go to my mother's house in Osaka with my first son's family and come back here on the first of the next year.

-△-

Does Godfather mean "boss of a gang"?

2005,12,28

Of course I've watched the "God father" series. I've been convinced that"Godfather" means "boss of a gang" until now. I checked my useful dictionary and knew it had two meanings, "keeper" and "boss of a gang". I think the original meaning might have been keeper. A boss of a gang might have been the Godfather of many kids whose fathers were his followers. Wow, your Godfather is a Congressman, isn't he? That's great.

An extra talk is,
I'm so proud of Uncle Don. He had been a lawyer here in Mt.Morris maybe for 20 years and he got married and had kids. And then he was elected to Congress. Now he lives in a town house in Washington and comes back here to his district once in a while. It's very great. I had not spoken with him for probably 10 years. So it was great to keep in touch. Well, who would be your Godfather if you had one?

-△-

What is the most important governmental duty?

2005,12,27

I think today's topic is really difficult to answer even if I try to answer in Japanese. At first, I have to say I'm sorry but I've never thought about that topic enough. I'm sure the administrative reform is an important theme in Japan now and we can't discuss about this theme without thinking privatization of many governmental organizations. They say the good points of the privatization are offering of better service and cutting of expense. Ithink the bad point is the service might be worse and the residence of responsibility might be unclear. What is the most important governmental duty? I think it's to do the work that costs a lot but is still important to do for improving our life. In other words, it's not a profitable job but it's necessary for everyone, poor and rich. From that point I think NHK and the Post Office should be privatized. Minimum-security services and health care should be run by government. And some institutes

should be privatized, too.

-△-

Chrismas was over.

2005,12,26

Today I got a holiday to play golf in Chiba. I left from my house to catch the train at 5 am. It was completely dark but it was not so cold. Just as I arrived at Kurihama, my friend welcomed me and we went to the port to ride a ferry bound for Kanaya in Chiba. It wasn't until the ferry reached Kanaya port, that we got a chartered bus of the golf course. The weather was fine and there was no wind. Moreover the golf fee didn't cost an arm and a leg. It cost 8500 yen including a delicious lunch. Sometimes I hit a ball for a long distance but my score was not good enough to mention. Now I've noticed today the atmosphere of a town was quite different from that of yesterday. We could see the Kadomatsu instead of a Christmas tree in front of the store. Christmas was over and we are waiting for the New Year.

I can see the beautiful Mt. Fuji covered with snow over there from the beach in Tagonoura How beautiful it is! Now it is snowing on the top of MT. Fuji.
田子の浦に　うちいでてみれば　白たへの　富士の高ねに　雪は降りつつ

I'm wondering about how to spend a long long night. Oh my dear… I hate to spend a night by myself. But I'm sorry I can't visit my love tonight.
あしびきの　山鳥の尾の　しだり尾の　ながながし夜を　ひとりかもねむ

-△-

Merry Christmas !

2005,12,25

Merry Christmas! I' went to Nagoya to meet my son's family yesterday. A few days ago they had a lot of snow in Nagoya. The ground was covered with 20 centimeters of snow. The news said it has not snowed so much since 48 years ago in Nagoya. But it was fine yesterday and the Shinkansen was only ten minutes late to arrive at Odawara in the evening. Actually the train bound for Nagoya was not late.

Why then, I don't understand these phrases at all. I checked them on space ALC and tried to explain them.

"The dog days of summer" means the period of hottest days during summer.
"dogging it," means to talk badly say about somebody.

"hair of the dog" means to drink again to get rid of a hangover.
"dog-eat-dog" means to compete with each other enthusiastically.
"in the dog house" means a husband who is always beaten by his wife.
"two (or three) dog night" means a very cold night. Because in that night some dogs gather together to be warm.
"call off the dogs" I couldn't find the meaning.(This means to give up trying to beat/find someone.)
"big dog" means the person who is a director or a manager.
"that dog won't hunt" I couldn't find the meaning. (This is telling someone that,"Your accusation is not logical.)

-△-

my nickname

2005,12,23

I tried the game. I thought about it for only five minutes.
M・・・meaningful
A・・・awesome
S・・・sincere
A・・・amazing
H・・・honest
O・・・ordinary
An Austrian guy who was a teacher at NOVA called us by our nicknames, such as Charming Chie and Super Shoko. He called me "Meaningful Masaho. At that time I didn't know the word " meaningful". So I asked him, " What is the meaning of the word of meaningful? Which does it mean good or bad?" He answered, " Don't worry. It's suitable for you, Masaho. " I checked that word in my dictionary as soon as I heard it from him. It means" important, serious or useful". Ok, it might mean I' m a thoughtful woman. But I still don't understand what the nuance of that word is. Would you mind teaching me about it?

An extra talk is,
Well, it's almost Christmas only three more days. What do you think you are going to do on Christmas Eve and Christmas day? Will you go to church? Will you go on a date or spend a quiet night at home with your family? Take care and keep in touch.

-△-

Is it from France?

2005,12,22

Those girl and boys look very cute. I tried to explain these words in English without my dictionary but I couldn't do it at all. I checked them in my dictionary and described them in my own words.

・ Patio came from Spanish and means a garden surrounded by buildings. We sometimes eat lunch with my neighbors in a patio.

・ Wiener came from Germany and means sausage. I usually eat a wiener for breakfast.

・ Smorgasbord came from Sweden and means a meal at which we can eat many kinds of food from big common dishes. We also call it "Viking" in Japanese. That restaurant is famous for its nice smorg""
asbord. We can eat like a horse cheaply there.

・ Potpourri came from France and means dry leaves and flowers with good smell. I usually place potpourri in a bottle in the bathroom.

An extra talk is,
Well, today is December the twenty first and four more days to Christmas. On Christmas Eve my family and I go to church. And then on Christmas day we wake up early and exchange presents. And then we enjoy a large meal with our friends. We look forward to hosting you sometime here in America for a lovely Christmas.

-△-

at the Kinkakuji

2005,12,21

Of cause I remember the news that President Bush and Prime Minister Koizumi visited the Kinkakuji temple in Kyoto. Maybe Mr. Koizumi might have said,"Rising sun" and Mr. Bush had a blank look. I heard they went there about 8 o' clock so the sun had already risen. I think he should have said to Mr. Bush, " Oh, it's very fine today. I'm very glad to be here with you and your wife. Look there. The golden wall is shining under the bright sun. Are you enjoying this Japanese old temple and our traditional culture?"

An extra talk is,
Monte and Judy came to Japan once together in 1999. They visited me when I lived in Masuda in Shimane. They really enjoyed their two weeks there. Then in 2000 Monte came to visit me in Akagi, when I lived in Shimane. He stayed for one month and really enjoyed the time in Japan. They look forward to coming back someday soon. (If he comes to Japan, could he visit my home? I will entertain him.)

-△-

I wrote a preface of my new blog.

2005,12,20

I wrote a preface to my new blog.
Do you know 100 Poets and Poems? They are Japanese old poems written about 1000 years ago. In that era Japanese old nobility were required to write poems. It was one of their cultures. Men used to write an amorous poem to send it to their girl friends. And women also used to return the poems to them. The noble women wearing gorgeous kimono and having long and straight hair always fell in love. And she wrote her emotions in the poem. That was her everyday life. Sometimes they were moved by the beautiful environment and wrote it in the poem, too. I will try to translate these poems into English here. If you have time, would you mind enjoying them for a little while?

-△-

I like light violet best.

2005,12,19

Today I try to guess what these colors mean without my useful dictionary. Maybe some of them are common to Japanese and English.

・ He's yellow. (He's crazy.) He's scared. 彼は臆病だ。
・ They beat him black and blue. (He's in bad mood to hear what they were saying.) They hit them very hard and he is hurt. 彼らは、あざだらけになるまで、彼を殴った。
・ They caught the criminal red-handed. (The murderer was arrested. I guess red means blood) 彼らは犯人を現行犯逮捕した。
・ My account is in the red! (I used more money than my income.) 私は赤字です。
・ That only happens once in a blue moon. (That's very lucky.) それはごくまれにしか、起こらない。
・ That rookie is so green. (That rookie is very inexperienced.) その新人は、あまりにも未熟だ。
・ Today is a red letter day! (I made a lot of mistakes today. I remember my replay e-mail from Chris. Hahaha) Today is a wonderful day! 今日は記念すべき日だ。
・ We need to cut through the red tape. (We have to try something dangerous sometimes.) We cant bicker about the little things and the small requlations. Government has a lot of red tape. 複雑なことは、はしょる必要がある。わずらわしい役所仕事
・ This project is our great white hope. (Maybe this project will give us success. It's easy. Because we say in Japanese," Someday my prince will appear riding on a white horse.) This project is our best shot at success. この計画は、素晴らしい、大いに期待されているものだ

An extra talk is,
There are many different colors in English. They are red-orange, yellow blue, indigo violet. But there are also strange colors like sea green. There are more different types and I think its the same in Japanese. What's your favorite color? (Do you know these colors in Japanese? 薄墨色 (light black) くれない (red) もえぎ(yellow green) We can find these colors in the classical Japanese books and old poems like 100 poets and poems in the Heian period. To be honest I

don't know what kind of color they mean. I like light violet best. But I don't have confidence in what kind of color light violet means in English.)

-△-

mending fences

2005,12,18

I'm sure your picture must have been taken at the Aoba Castle in Sendai. I checked the phrase "mending fences " in my dictionary. It means, " to reconcile". We use it for example," I had fallen out with my friend but recently we mended fences with each other." Actually we have a similar saying to "Good fences make good neighbors." in Japanese. That is 親しき仲にも礼儀あり and it means "We have to be moderate in the relationship with familiar people." Does " A hedge between keeps friendship green." mean the same ?
Regarding local dialect in Japan I love Osaka dialect. It sounds funny and softens people's minds.

An extra talk is,
Mending fences is a common term, particularly among the people that live in the country. I think that people that live in the city have very boring English. People who live in the countryside use more interesting expressions and phrases. Is that true in Japan? What do you think about local dialect in Japan?

-△-

About our diet

2005,12,17

Actually the average life expectancy of Japanese women is the longest in the world, you know? I think it owes to our diet. We are used to eating low fat foods, such as rice, tofu and fish everyday. That might be healthy. By the way, Judy said some words. It sounded "yum yum". What did it mean?

An extra talk is,
Many people in America actually eat deer, but rabbit is a little more unique. Some people eat rabbit. Some people eat squirrel. In fact my mother, when she was younger, used to eat pigs brain. What do you think about it?

-△-

道程　高村　光太郎

2005,12,16

It's really hard for me to understand poems, especially written in English. I think they sometimes use an inversion to rhyme. That poem "The Road Less Taken" reminds me of the Japanese poem "The step 道程 " written by Koutarou Takamura in 1914. I tried to translate it but I couldn't make it rhyme.

There is no way in front of me. There is the way behind me where I passed through. Oh, the great nature like my great father who brought me up! Please keep your eyes on me. Please let me have your strong mind for the long long way I have to go.

僕の前に道はない 僕の後ろに道は出来る ああ、自然よ 父よ 僕を一人立ちにさせた広大な父よ 僕から目を離さないで守る事をせよ 常に父の気魄を僕に充たせよ
この遠い道程のため この遠い道程のため

An extra talk is,
This is a very famous poem by Robert Frost. He was a quite talented guy. This was written in 1915. Let me know your favorite poem.

-△-

I try to write my diary in English next year,too.

2005,12,15

Today it was freezing cold. After work I went to the bank and deposited the yearly lesson fee of Fine to study English next year too. About Anjin, who was the Samurai with blue eyes, he was pretty famous and a lot of people know him in Japan. Look at these web sites.
http://www.city.yokosuka.kanagawa.jp/emaki/kamakura/kamakura_data2.html
http://www.city.yokosuka.kanagawa.jp/bunkazai/kuni09.html
I'm so sorry but I completely don't know the saying "Is there something in the water?" Would you mind teaching me that meaning? I was awful tired today.

三浦安針像（自然・人文博物館蔵）

An extra talk is,
Recently many of my friends are having children. Sometimes they ask me,"Oh, Chris! When will you have kids?" I say," Well, I've not been married yet. Perhaps it's too early for that. " But someday I look forward to haveing many kids. How many children do you have? Please send me your mail. Let me know how you are doing.

-△-

I've appeared on TV twice.

2005,12,14

If NHK comes to my town, I will introduce the Ooba castle Park to the audience. It's famous for many cherry trees and the memorial place where we can see lots of tiles. On each tile there are prints of feet or hands. And one of them is actually the tile of my family. When the city hall built this park about fifteen years ago, we applied to get a tile. That park isn't so far from my house. It takes about 15 minutes by car but I've never gone there since it was completed. Oh, no. I decided to go there next April and recall our old days seeing beautiful Sakura . Actually I've appeared on TV twice. First I appeared on the gymnastic program with a gymnastic teacher in my first year of work. At that time I was working for the board of education. One morning the gymnastic teacher, who appeared on the TV to introduce exercise every week, said to me,"Hey, Masaho! Today I need an assistant. I know you are good at stretching. Can you appear on TV with me? You can do it. "I performed a bridge in front of the camera. The second time I explained the policy of our office to the audience. The interviewer asked some questions to me and I answered them for 15 minutes but the theme of that program was so serious that I couldn't speak with a smile. But I treasure the video of that program. These programs were broadcasted by the local TV station and unfortunately the audience ratings were really low. They couldn't get as high of a ratings as NHK and Fuji can do. My name was introduced by the subtitle but nobody said to me, " I watched you on TV."

an extra talk is,
Well, I was so surprised to turn on the TV and see two people from Tsuwano.
In fact the house that would have been a live shot was Hak's house. And I
spent the night there many times. I saw Hak's father, mother and family there.
When I lived in Masuda, I used to travel to Tsuwano quite often. The people
were really nice. And I suggest if you have time, please try to take a
trip to Tuwano. It's called little Kyoto.

-△-

http://masaho100poems.blogspot.com/

2005,12,13

This morning I could hear you clearly and I tried to dictate an extra talk as usual. Whew!
Well, medical science is really amazing. He arrived on the 14 th and he had a heart transplant. A young boy died in a car crash. But the heart came to UCLA and the surgery was performed from about midnight to 5 am. The dead guy's heart was put in somebody else and worksed. That's amazing. That's unbelievable. Anyway get time to write an e-mail.

Ms.KG taught me about translating Japanese classical poems in English. I think you know about 100 Poets and Poems a little. These are Japanese old poems written in the Heian Period, about

1,000 years ago. We had to memorize them in our school days. I will write the original poems below my translations in English. If you can't understand them, don't worry. I'm sure even my sons can't understand them enough because they didn't study classical Japanese in class in earnest. I really liked it but I can't understand them well without a dictionary. There are many Americans who can speak Japanese well now but I've never heard about foreigners who are good at 100 Poets and Poems. If you mastered them, you would be famous in Japan. You might become the first American champion at the 100 Poets and Poems contest.

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Good job!

2005,12,12

I was really moved with your story. And it reminded me of your previous blog and the picture at LAX. I think it was a good job for you to visit him in Hiroshima. I'm sure he appreciated your visit. Is he studying English? If I were him, I would study English hard to express my thanks to America. (I can't hear you clearly today. I can hear the audio of yesterday so I think it's the problem with your system.)

-△-

Richard Chamberlain

2005,12,11

I know the movie Shogun in which Richard Chamberlain and the Japanese actress Youko Shimada starred but I haven't watched it. Actually I remember Richard Chamberlain who appeared on the famous TV drama "Dr. Kirudia". Do you know that drama? It was very popular in Japan in the sixties. Of course I was very little at that time so I don't remember the story but maybe that scene was at the hospital. Someday I want to look for Shogun at the rental video shop to watch. It sounds very interesting. By the way we don't call him Date but we always call him Masamune. We always call the historical Samurai by his first name such as Nobunaga, Shingen and Masamune.

An extra talk is,
Wow, I hadn't seen Shogun for maybe 15 years. But I remember a part of the movie. He was send to some island. He had to learn perfect Japanese in one year or Shogun would kill all of the people in the island. Wow that's a pressure of learning a new language. Do you think if you came to an island in America for one year, you could speak perfect English? Take care and keep studying hard. (In my opinion it depends on the level of speaking foreign language. I still can't speak perfect Japanese. I've forgotten many Kanji after using my computer and there are many difficult words that I don't know in the newspaper. So I always use my dictionary, Kojien, to read and write Japanese. I heard his model is Anjin Miura. （三浦　按針） Maybe he was so smart that he became able to communicate with Japanese people in easy Japanese. Shogun gave Anjin the

territory in Miura peninsula (now Yokosuka) and his grave is still in Yokosuka. The station, which is near there, is named Anjinzuka, which means the grave of Anjin. If I stayed in America, I could speak everyday English more fluently. But I 've already studied English for a long time and maybe understand basic grammar.)

-△-

the great three Samurai

2005,12,10

Actually I will have to work tomorrow, Sunday. So I don't have a lot of time now. I have to go to bed soon. I think many Japanese know the story about George Washington and the cherry tree. I read his biography when I was a young girl. Do you know Nobunaga Oda, Hideyoshi Toyotomi and Ieyasu Tokugawa? They were very famous Samurai in Sengoku era (the Warring State Period). We have episodes that describe their individual characters. Nobunaga said, "If a bird doesn't sing, I will kill it." Hideyoshi said,"If a bird doesn't sing, I will make it sing." Ieyasu said," If a bird doesn't sing, I will wait for it to sing." Whom do you like best among the three Samurai? I think many Japanese like Nobunaga best of all of them. Me, too. They say Nobunaga was very unusual and cruel but he was very attractive and handsome. He was killed by his subject, Mitsuhide Akechi, at Honnouji temple when he was 49 years old.

An extra talk is,
Well, certainly the uproar in Japan is about apartment houses that were built by Hyuza corporation. I was wondering how that turned out. Sometimes I watch the news on the Internet but sometimes I don't. Please tell me what you think happened to the apartments. I hope you don't buy one. Take care.
(One of those apartments was in Fujisawa and our city hall checked it again. They say that apartment would be destroyed if an earthquake recorded at 5 hit our city. Oh, no. The inhabitants began to move there in this autumn. Now the people concerned about the incident, such as the architect, the builders, the selling company and the government, were summonsed and the government is considering what they should take in remedial measures. I think they should tear down such buildings. We can't go near such buildings. It's very dangerous.)

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my English-English dictionary

2005,12,9

Oh, no!! I don't know those words at all. I'm sure Japanese of our generation didn't study everyday English at school. I didn't remember exactly but we had to read English of a difficult story. Just before visiting your home I checked vocabulary about house keeping and I noticed I

don't know many words about cooking and domestic articles and so on. But maybe native English speakers usually might master these words from their family in their childhood days. Today I checked these words by my English- English dictionary and guessed their Japanese words. Actually there are English-Japanese, Japanese-English, Japanese (koujien), classical Japanese, Chinese character, proverb dictionaries in my useful electronic dictionary. But usually I only use three kinds of dictionaries, English-Japanese, Japanese-English, Japanese (koujien). These days I had opportunities to use the classic Japanese dictionary, because my new friend who is a member of Fine gave me a quiz. She tries to translate Japanese old poems in English and I tried to guess what it is. That's really interesting. And my dictionary helped me very much.

pacifier (a specially shaped rubber object that you give a baby to suck so that it does not cry) おしゃぶり A baby usually sucks a pacifier after 3 months old.
diaper (a piece of cloth or other soft material that is put between a baby's legs and fastened around its waist to hold its baby poop) おむつ or おしめ These days many mothers use diapers made of paper for their babies in Japan.
blankey (slang) (I couldn't find this word in my dictionary.) Please tell me the meaning. This is a slang term fpr a special blanket that a small child always carries around.
jumper (dress without sleeves, usually worn over a shirt) ロンパース I gave a jumper for their baby as a new born present.
baby-buggy(things like a small bed on wheels, that a baby lies in to be pushed around outsides) 乳母車 but these days we call it バギー Many babies who begin to walk don't like to sit down in baby buggies.
thumb-sucking (thumb: the part of your hand that is shaped like a thick short finger and helps you to hold things suck: to hold something in your mouth and pull on it with your tongue and lips) 乳首 or おしゃぶり It's not good for a baby to give them something to hold that they can suck.
PJ's (a soft loose pair of pants and a top that you wear in bed) パジャマ Those PJ's with a animal print is very cute.
night-night time (slang) (I couldn't find this word in my dictionary.) I guess おねんね A baby needs a lot of night-night time.
crib (a bed for a baby or young child, especially one with bars to keep the baby from falling out) ベビーベッド I think they had better rent a crib for their babies, because they use such a thing for only 6 months.
stroller (a small chair on wheels in which a small child sits and is pushed along) 折りたたみ式ベビーカー I know parents must not use a trolled for their babies. bunk bed (one of two beds that are attached together, one on top of the other) 二段ベッド I bought a bunk bed for my sons but they don't like to sleep on the second rack.

An extra talk is,
So basically I want you to look up these words and tell me what they mean in Japanese. Also try to use them in the sentence. For example, when I was a child, I used a pacifier until I was 2 years old then I quit it. Or, perhaps a baby needs a diaper change and I saw something funny. What do

you think those mean? Take care and let me know.

-△-

my Christmas list

2005,12,8

Regarding my Christmas list I want these things from Santa. For the first I want a vacation and want to study English at a school in America. For the second I want a native English-speaking tutor who always teaches me English at home. For the third I want a maid who always takes care of me. For the fourth I want a small golf course for my own. For the last I want to take a rest at a hot spring. Maybe Santa might say, "You are greedy. I can't put the present into your sock. Be moderate!" I love the Christmas Light in MM21 in Yokohama. Hurry! Actually I will go to the famous restaurant there and enjoy French food for the year-end party tomorrow.

An extra talk is,
Well, my parents have just recently decorated the house for Christmas. They put up the big Christmas tree and several small Christmas trees. They like to put the candles in the window and have some lights on the house. I will take some more pictures of our house and put them on the blog. Anyway please tell me what illumination or what Christmas lights you like in Japan.

-△-

Sasuke??

2005,12,7

To tell the truth I don't know about " costume play" exactly. Of course I like to dress up sometimes but I've never been interested in such a thing. I sometimes see girls who wear clothes with lace like a cute girl in comics but I only think they are strange. I'm sorry but I don't think she is pretty. They look kind of foolish. By the way, about a politician with a mask, he is an Iwate prefectural councilor, whose name is the great Sasuke. I remember there was the discussion about his mask. But I don't remember whether he was allowed to attend the prefecture assembly with his mask or not. Now it's not big news.

An extra talk is,

Well, in America we don't have the term costume play. I think that's Japanese English. But I guess that's a different form of entertainment. I remember, there was a little different, but that was a politician who was in a Japanese diet and who was a former pro wrestler and he went there wearing his mask during the parliament meeting. Do you remember that? I don't recall the man's name. But if you recall it, please let me know in e-mail.

-△-

a terrible crime

2005,12,6

Every morning I read a newspaper and I find some miserable incidents. There are many crimes in which young students commit. And there are also many sorry crimes which victims are really little kids. Sometimes their parents kill their own children. We call it child abuse and this incident is one of the biggest problems. The other day another 7-year-old girl was found dead in Tochigi, you know? Oh, no. What kind of person kills the little girl who can't defend herself? We can't forgive such a person. About the incident in Hiroshima they say that the Peruvian killed the girl to assault that girl.

An extra talk is,
Well, fortunately it looks like they have caught the criminal in Hiroshima. That's good. I was really happy to see that they caught him. He is from Peru and was working at a factory in Hiroshima. He was laid off and he decided to commit a crime. That's a bad situation. That was very terrible for the parents of the young girl. It was an awful situation. What's going on with that? Please tell me the most recent information in that case.

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Thank you for your e-mail !

2005,12,5

Thank you very much for your e-mail. Winter has come to Japan. I feel today is very cold but actually the temperature is 7 degrees Celsius. I'm sure you think it's not so cold. I live in Shonan, the coastal area west of Tokyo, and it's really rare that the temperature is below zero. In December there is no snow in our area and even in February we have little snow. It snows only a few times in whole winter here. If it snows, we have only a half inch. Now we can see the beautiful Christmas decorations in many places, especially at shopping stores in Japan. When my sons were little boys, we bought a little Christmas tree made of plastic. But last year I gave it to my grandson. So I have only a poinsettia in my living room for Christmas. Many Japanese, including me, are not Christian but we enjoy Christmas. We decorate Christmas trees, give presents to each other and eat cake. I think it seems to be a little strange to you. I really want to celebrate a

real Christmas in your home with you someday. I heard your voices on the Fine website. I really miss your voice. I think you can be a good English teacher for Japanese. Please let me hear your voice on the web site more. I also saw the pictures of your sisters in Kansas City. They looked very healthy. I'm glad that your sisters are enjoying their long lives. Take care and have good Christmas.

-△-

Why can't I speak English well?

2005,12,4

Of course I know the story about Christopher Reeve. Actually my favorite movie of him is not "Superman" but " Somewhere in Time". Do you know this movie? It's a really romantic and strange movie. I guess this movie was not a great hit when it was released about 25 years ago. Several years ago one of my colleagues introduced me to this movie and gave me the video. And I know there are still eager fans of this film in the world. If you are interested in this film, please look at these web sites. http://www.ueda.ne.jp./~peg/
http://www.somewhereintime.tv/

Anyway I've never ridden a horse. In Japan horseback riding seems to be a pastime of very high-class people. About people who inspire me, I have a lot of such people, for example my mother, my sons, my friends, some famous sports players and so on. When I study English, I always think why can't I learn to speak English fluently? Even my son can speak English well but why can't I? Who taught him easy English 10 years ago? Who inspired him to study English in earnest? It's me. Now he never does such things for me but I am studying English to be able to speak as well as he. He is my goal. Maybe he would say to me, "Mom, your age is different from my age. You had better give up."

An extra talk is,
Well, I was very fortunate to rode a horse. I had ridden a horse quite a few times but certainly I had fun. I don't know why it is in Karuizawa but in Karuizawa there is a great horse-riding club where I can ride freely. I think that the cost is maybe just five thousand yen or four thousand yen for several hours. It's a very good deal. (いい値段だ) (I couldn't catch this phrase.) Or you can come to do a home stay at my house and go horseback riding for free. That would be exciting.

-△-

Shadowing

2005,12,3

I use a little English everyday. But to be honest I don't read English out loud so much. Reading

out loud seems to make me a little tired. I know both shadowing and dictation are the most important ways to improve my ability of English. OK, I promise I will try to read English out loud from now on. (I miss Judy's voice. I don't know if her voice is sexy or not. But I think her pronunciation is very easy for me to catch. I guess since she was a teacher, she is used to pronouncing clearly to explain to many kids.)

An extra talk is,
Hello, this is Chris again. That was my mother. What do you think about her sexy voice? Hahaha

-△-

a White Christmas ♪♪

2005,12,2

Of course I know Michelle Wie from Hawaii. I really recognized that golf requires muscle. I'm convinced that men never want to play golf in a women's tournament, because they are afraid of being beaten by women. If they play golf at a par three course, I think sometimes women beat men. Women are behind men in physical ability but they have good technique. Maybe in riding horse, shooting and pool I think they can beat men.

An extra talk is,
Well, this morning I was so surprised because I woke up and saw snow on the ground. When I went to bed, there was no snow. But when I woke up, there was a lot of snow. That was why I was very surprised. Normally in Chicago they don't get a lot of snow in winter but we get some. Hopefully this winter it will be a white Christmas. Having a white Christmas means having snow on the ground when it is Christmas, that's December the 25 th. Let's hope for a white Christmas just like the song that Bing Crosby sings. " I'm dreaming of a white Christmas." something like that. (I have an old record in which Pat Boone sings a White Christmas. Do you know him?)

-△-

I lose my confidence !

2005,12,1

I'm very glad to hear you were able to go back to your house safely. Is it very cold in Mt. Morris? Please say hello to your parents from me. My son came back to Japan twice in November. But he was very busy and we didn't't have a lot of time to speak together. He had to renew his driver's license and went to the NHK studio for two days. He will appear on the NHK program at the end of this year and they recorded that program last weekend. He stayed at a hotel in Tokyo and he went back to LA. Sometimes I lose my confidence in studying English. Today is such a day because I couldn't speak well at the school.