

That picture must have been taken in the morning.

2006,1,31



An extra talk is,

In America we use many many colors for a lot of things. Our clothes are very colorful and many houses are very colorful. What is your favorite color?

This is a picture of the beach painted by a famous Japanese painter. In the foreground you can see something that looks like hydrangeas. Above them there are flowers which look as if they are white hydrangeas. If you look to the background you can make out what appears to be some kind of hill. If you look to the center you can make out something which could be two boats. On the left side is a thing that seems to be a fence made of stones.



-△-

✚ I have a head cold.

2006,1,30



Yesterday I attended the anniversary ceremony at the temple of my aunt who passed away last year . It was held in the Buddhist style. I had to sit down over one hour at the very cold room listening to the sutra, which the priest had been reciting. If the big room of the temple had not been so cold, I wouldn't have caught a cold. I wish that room hadn't been so cold. I wish I had worn heavy clothes.

-△-

✚ **Is it a good experience?!**

2006,1,29



There must be many courts in America because I hear they tend to sue to solve everyday problems. As I majored in law at the university, I visited a court to study. Moreover I had an experience to sit on the bar for my job. However fortunately I've never appeared in the court individually. "Law and Order" might be a kind of show like an advice column.

An extra talk is,

This is Judy, Chris's mom. "Law and Order" is my favorite show to watch on TV. I watched it every day. I have been to a court room to testify on two occasions. I hope you never have to go to a court room for a problem.

-△-

✚ **the presidents of the U.S.**

2006,1,28



I don't have a wide circle of knowledge about the politics of the United States. They have the two great parties, the Republican Party and the Democratic Party. The first President of the U.S. must have been George Washington. Lincoln is famous for his policy about the emancipation of slaves. John F Kennedy was killed and I memorized his famous inauguration address when I was a high school student. If he had not been killed, the history of the world might have been changed.

An extra talk is,

Our last name is Nixon just like the ex-President Nixon. We have very very good friends whose last name is Regan. We think it's very funny to people that Nixons and Reagans had dinner together.

-△-

✚ **the President Reagan's boyhood house**

2006,1,27



You must be standing in front of President Reagan's boyhood house in Dixon. I still remember

that house. If I didn't go there, I couldn't answer well. I wish I could have spoken English better. If I had been good at English, I could have understood the lecture explained by the guide lady more.

An extra talk is,

Well, certainly I'm lucky to live in a place that has a lot of wild animals. Sometimes it's OK but sometimes they eat trees or plants in the garden. Sometimes we have to actually take care of them but, yeah, always it's fun to see deer and other kinds of wild animals.

-△-

✚ Lucy

2006,1,26



Lucy must have felt sharp pain. The person who had shot Lucy must apologize to her.

An extra talk is,

Well, we found out the dog had been apparently shot. They are small b.b.s though it was still not fine. But we are wondering who had shot her. That seems to be really strange. But the doctor said to me there is no problem. (If you had spoken this part more slowly, I could have caught it. You should have spoken more slowly.) In any case Lucy was hoping to be fine. Don't worry.

I'm afraid I couldn't get your two best students. I wish they had spoken more clearly.

-△-

✚ I made it !

2006,1,25



① Of course I've found Duke's quotes, not only one but two. I did it ! I made it !

There've been a lot of stories about how I got to be called Duke. One was that I played the part of a duke in a school play— which I never did. Sometimes, they even said I was descended from royalty! It was all a lot of rubbish. Hell, the truth is that I was named after a dog!

俺が「デューク」って呼ばれているのには、多くの説があったね。一つは、学校の学芸会で、俺が「公爵」の役を演じたからということだけど、俺はやっていないよ。時々、俺が王族の子孫だからと言う人だっているのだよ。全く、くだらないね。本当は、犬の名前から来ているのだよ！

I've always followed my father's advice: he told me, first to always keep my word and, second, to never insult anybody unintentionally. If I insult you, you can be goddamn sure I intend to. And, third, he told me not to go around looking for trouble.

俺は、いつも親父の教えに従ってきたさ。第一に、言ったことは守る、第二に、無意識のうちに他人を侮辱しない。もし、俺があなたを侮辱するなら、俺がそうするつもりだと分かるだろう。そして、三番目に、親父は問題を起こすようなことはするなと言ったのさ。

② Could you correct the following English? (I wrote them only to practice auxiliary verbs.)

There are still a lot of discriminations against women in many companies in Japan.

Men might be suitable to be nurses because they are strong and good at taking care of injured people. He can speak English very fluently. He must have studied English hard in his school days. But he told me that he hadn't been good at English when he was a student yesterday. She might not have been good at English in her school days. Because she seems not to understand how to study it. I noticed that people who could speak English very well were good at both Japanese and English. That would require the same ability, a kind of talent concerning language.

③ Did your friend buy the golf course? Did it mean he bought that golf course, not a membership?

He must be a millionaire. He must have come into a fortune. He should let his friends play golf at that course for free.

Won't you go to Colorado to snowboard in February? Anyway I'm looking forward to your prize. Please speak to me in English and correct my pronunciation. Good night.

-△-



Who is the Duke??

2006,1,24



I could answer that his name was John Wayne as soon as I saw your picture this morning. Unfortunately I didn't have enough time to e-mail you my answers. If I had sent you an e-mail at that time I could have gotten a prize. I should have sent you my e-mail. But I have confidence in my answers. Can I get a prize?

Q: What is his name?

A: His name is John Wayne, a very famous western movie star in America.

Q: When was he born?

A: He was born in the twenty-sixth of May in 1907.

Q: Where was he born?

A: He was born in Winterset in Iowa.

Q: What was his REAL name?

A: His real name was Marion Michel Morrison.

Q: What was his wife's name?

A: He got married three times. The first wife's name was Josephine Saenez. The second wife's name was Pilar Palette Weldy and the third wife's name was Esperanza Bauer.

Q: What was his first movie?

A: It was BIG TRAIL. He was named John Wayne for the first time in this movie.

Q: What was one of his famous quotes?

A: He was called Mr. America.

An extra talk is,

Well, my mother is a big fan of the Duke. If you don't know who the Duke is, just e-mail me his name and you can research the other quiz questions. But in any case I hope you know the Duke. He was a very famous movie star back in the day and I believe he died maybe 10 years ago but I'm not sure. But he is a very famous guy who starred in many many movies. Well, I look forward to your answers and you should look forward to your prize. (You are kidding. He died the eleventh of June in 1979.)

-△-



the illegal conducts ??

2006,1,23



I heard tonight Horie, the president of "live door" was arrested. He must have admitted to the illegal conducts. He can't be innocent. If he had been honest, they couldn't have arrested him. I think there are a lot of people who regret buying stocks of his company. They should think, "I wish I hadn't bought them. I shouldn't have spent so much money for them."

Thanks for sending me your message ...

2006,1,22



I received a message from a strange girl who majors in English at a university. I wrote a response to her.

Thanks for sending me your message and being interested in my translation of 100 poems. I think you had read my profile written in English. I would be older than your mother because my two sons are older than you. I'm very glad you have sent me a message. I began to study English again in the autumn in 2004 after a long long period, you know. My goal (or dream) was to visit America where my younger son is studying, by myself. I've already done it last April. Now I really enjoy myself studying English. On the other hand I really regret that I hadn't been studying English since I was young. If you like both English and Japanese classical poems, I think you should try it with me. Anyway I would appreciate your visit and look forward to your comment on my poor translation. Take care and please study in earnest.

Today my son fixed my computer from LA in America. As he needed some Japanese music, I borrowed them from the library. I put CDs on my computer and he transferred music files from mine to his computer. He must have used a remote help function. It was kind of strange to look at the mouse point moving by itself on my display. If we hadn't had computers, he couldn't have done such a thing. If we couldn't use computers, I would send some CDs to him by airmail. Without computers, he couldn't complete his work. Computer must be the most useful invention in the history of mankind.

a lot of snow

2006,1,21



This morning we saw a lot of snow on the ground. It had been snowing since maybe the middle of night. And when I went shopping in the evening, a light snow was still falling. I pulled on my boots when I went out. Otherwise, I would have slipped on the road. If it hadn't snowed so much, I could go play golf tomorrow. I wish the weather had been fine today. If only the weather weren't so bad.

I wish I could go to Australia where its summer now. Well, I met an American guy in LA in the summer in 2004 who can speak Japanese as if he were a Japanese. If I hadn't met him there, I couldn't have home stayed in Chicago. If I hadn't played golf in America, my home stay would not have been so fun. I wish I could home stay in America again. I'd love to visit there again, but I can't get a long vacation now. It would be nice to visit there in the Christmas season. But it might be very cold.

An extra talk is,

Well, so far many people came over here for home stays, both in Chicago and in LA. And everyone seemed to have a good time. One person wanted to play golf and the other people wanted to travel around the mid west. Another people wanted to go see several concerts in Chicago. Another person wanted to go to see a particular band and a particular stadium. We had one person who had wanted to see a basketball game and a baseball game. All of them were very excited and they were good opportunities for them to expand their horizons. What would you like to do?

-△-

If Galileo had heard it,...

2006,1,20



This poem sounds wonderful. Who wrote this poem? When was this poem written? This poem must have been written by a little kid or it must have been written before the sixteenth century. If Galileo had heard this poem, he would have shouted like this, "No way! You must be joking! Actually the earth must turn around the sun. I will demonstrate my supposition." You could think I'm a hard-boiled woman to think like this. I just practiced how to use subjunctive mood. I usually get up at 6:00 in the morning and it's still dark at that time. The sun begins to rise about 6:30. But my friend who lives in Kagoshima told me that at 6:30 it's still dark in Kagoshima. I left my office about 5:30 pm and at that time it's already dark here but it's still bright in Kagoshima at the same time. I live farther east than him. Maybe the sun rises 30 minutes earlier in Kanagawa than in Kagoshima.

An extra talk is,

Do you think you could memorize this poem and recite it? Please try. Maybe you could practice it during your train ride to work and from work.

✚ Dear KG,

2006,1,19



Thanks for your message. I will introduce my old Barbie doll to you. I found her among my old belongings in the closet in my mother's previous house about 6 years ago, just before she would be thrown away as garbage. I couldn't help taking her to my house because she was one of the most important memories of my childhood days. I'm sure she came to me in 1964, because I still remember that I went to the department store to buy her black dress just after watching the program of The Tokyo Olympic Games on TV. My parents must have bought her for me just before that time. I really got into her and made her many dresses by myself. Now she is in an old box, perhaps that was made in 1964 and has only one sweater that I knitted for her. There might have been her many of her dresses in that closet when I found her but I didn't carry them out. If I had carried her other dresses out at that time, she would have many old dresses. I wish if I hadn't thrown away so many of her dresses. Anyway I've taken some pictures of her and I will send them to you with this e-mail. What do you think about her? Would you mind telling me your opinion of her after seeing her pictures? What would you do if she were your doll?

Sincerely



-△-

✚ If I lived in countryside,.....

2006,1,18



The subjunctive mood

If I lived in the countryside, I could enjoy an expansive life. If I had grown up in the countryside, I would have enjoyed wild games. If I had lived in the countryside, I would know many plants' s names. I wish I lived in the countryside. I wish I hadn' t moved to Kanagawa. I would prefer not to live in a big city after retiring from my job. I would love to live in a small town in the future. Would you like to live in a big city next year? I would like to, but my husband doesn' t want to live in the Kansai area. Would you talk to him about moving to Osaka? Could I move to America after retirement? Could you move there with me? I was wondering if I could go to America by myself.

Would it be all right to live in America to study English next year? Would you mind if I live in America with my son? (These are all written in the subjunctive mood. Some of them are true but others are not true. I only wrote them to study how to use subjunctive mood. I've just finished reading a book that explains subjunctive mood. Do you understand how it's difficult for me, maybe for almost all Japanese? Of course I knew that I should say, "Could you have a coffee?" if we would like to speak politely. But I didn't know why we should use the past form. I've finally understood it's the subjunctive mood.)

An extra talk is,

I've grown up my whole life out in the countryside. My town is only about (?) 3 thousand people and I live about 5 kilometers outside of it. But it's a wonderful place. In the country everyone is very friendly. And I like the Japanese countryside. People are very active and there are lots of activities and happenings that are very cheap. And so it's a good place to live. What do you think about it?

-△-



Winter words

2006,1,17



Sadly I don't know the words concerning winter at all except some words. If I knew such words, I could explain them without using a dictionary. I wish I could, but couldn't. Anyway I should try to write English as usual.

Snowball fight: It's a game where many kids make snowballs and throw them at other kids. Almost all kids seem to love this game.

Snowman: It's a figure made of snow.

Snow angel: It's a figure on fresh snow. We have to lie on fresh snow to make a snow angel.

Frost: It looks like snow and we can see it in the cold morning. I suppose it is made from water in the air.

Snowstorm: It's a condition when it is snowing hard.

Avalanche: It's very dangerous. It's a condition where a lot of snow on the mountain suddenly falls down.

Ice storm: It means the storm with small bit of ice.

Frostbite: I used to have frostbites on my toes in my childhood days. I was itching my toes.

Recently I've never heard about it. It might depend on nutrition.

Snowflake: It means a little snow.

Snow shovel: We use it to take off the snow on the road.

Snowplow: It's a car to remove the snow.

Dusting: I couldn't find this word in my dictionary. It might mean the snow covering a little on the ground.

An extra talk is,

It's always great to go play catch outside with Lucy. Even though she is a big, (?) and fat dog, she loves to catch and she loves to be outside playing with people. Unfortunately it is winter now and she has to stay and look up. (If you had spoken more slowly, I could have caught the ending part.)

-△-

a terrible day

2006,1,16



This morning fortunately it was not so cold but I found the ground wet. It must have been raining during the night.

Today was a terrible day. A man who had gotten angry at my staff's attitude came to my office and scolded me while hitting on a desk. I apologized to him about our mistake. There might have been a misunderstanding between him and my staff. If I hadn't apologized to him, he would have hit my stuff. I wished one of my colleagues could have met him with me. If such an incident had not happened, it would have been a nice day.

-△-

Japanese restaurants in foreign countries

2006,1,15



Your story reminds me of the Soba restaurant in LA where I ordered lotus roots. That Japanese waiter must have felt funny when he heard my English. Well, I've eaten Japanese food in the US and in Bali in Indonesia. Of course I would recommend Sushi to foreigners. At first they might confuse it with raw fish but they must come to like it after having a bite.

An extra talk is, Well, JMK Nippon is actually owned by a Japanese couple. And almost all of the

people who work there are Japanese. They have two sides. One is kind of like an Izakaya and another is a restaurant area where the cook and chef, excuse me, cooks stand in front of the tables. Sushi in America is really expensive. Maybe, boy, probably 7 dollars a plate. So you can imagine such a price compared with in Japan. (Actually in Japan there are lots of high-class Sushi restaurants where we should pay over 10 thousand yen, you know. However I'm sorry I've never been to such a restaurant.

-△-

That looks cool.

2006,1,14



I guess that picture is very cool. It looks like something lonely but there is the shining sun in the top. It looks like a beam of hope and it might have changed the image of this picture. I mean this picture must have looked very lonely without the sun. But it seems to be refreshing and kind of bright through the sun. Regarding the driveway I think there are a lot of houses with a driveway in the countryside in Japan. I've seen a house having a basket hoop on the wall from a window of the train on the Tokaido line. But the road in front of the house must not be the driveway. It must be a public road.

An extra talk is,

Wow, the driveway is, I guess, something probably unique to America maybe just because the society has a lot of cars. I mean when people go to the store, they often drive to that store and don't walk there. So maybe they are so fat. Hahaha... In any case I think the driveway is a great place to ride a bike, play with friends and play basketball. Most homes in America have a basketball hoop in the driveway. That's pretty normal. What do you think about driveways? Have you ever seen one or have you ever seen the basket hoop in the Japanese driveway? Let me know. Take care.

-△-

That's unbelievable !

2006,1,13



I tried to dictate Ernie. It was very very difficult. He should have spoken it more slowly and

clearly. In America almost all native speakers might speak like him, not so clearly. He must not have been used to speaking with Japanese. If he had been used to speaking English with Japanese, he would have spoken more slowly.

Good afternoon. My name is Ernie Hayenga or Big Ernie if you wish to call me that. I'm a surveyor and I'm 30 years old. I live in Mt. Morris in Illinois in the United States of America. I'm 6 feet tall and 300 pounds in weight. I'm large but I can move as quickly as Sumo. I like fishing and golf. And every Sunday I'm on my couch to watch football games.

-△-

✚ I wish...

2006,1,12



Today I couldn't hear Ernie's voice. I heard his arm was as thick as my leg from you. He must be really big but his voice might be soft. I was supposed to play golf with him in Mt. Morris but he was out of town. If I had played golf with him last May, we could have been good friends. I've never met him but I gave him one of my golf balls through Chris. I hope he still has it. But he might have lost it.

-△-

✚ I should study....

2006,1,11



I realize my weak points of English are "the past perfect", "the subjunctive mood" and "auxiliary verbs" such as could, would, should, might. I will try to use such words deliberately.

You must have been a good basketball player when you were a high school student. You might be good at basketball even now. I should have been good at basketball when I was young. (I was not a good player.) She'd have been a good player to participate in the Olympic Games. (She didn't take part in the Olympic Games.) It has past eleven thirty and I should go to bed now.

An extra talk is,

As I said yesterday, in America high school sports are very popular. Most high schools have at least football, basketball and track. And some have soccer, volleyball and golf. Some schools have

even skiing if they are in the mountains. I would enjoy that. Well, what was I saying, I was particularly excited that the high school was going to have a game. My friend and I often go to the local high school games and cheer the friends of the them. In fact I had an old video that I would love to show you. Please ask me about that.

-△-

✚ **It's incredible!!**

2006,1,10



I was really poor at ball games when I was a student. My old friends must have been surprised when I told them that I really enjoyed playing golf at the school reunion.

“ You couldn't play golf . You used to be so awkward at ball games.” “ You must have spent a lot of money to practice. “ “ I wonder how you got like that. Perhaps your husband taught you how to play golf.”

An extra talk is,

Well, I know the sports here, in Mt. Morris and in Oregon are really popular. And in all the classes in America there is a fuss with basketball, football and baseball. Those are the three biggest. Of those probably the most popular is football. And it's great entertainment to go to the high school game in the local area. And it's truly cheap. Maybe two or three dollars. Which also helps the team to buy their uniforms and particular equipment. It's good for everyone.

-△-

✚ **What am I translating ? !**

2006,1,9



Emperor Koukou

It's snowing now and my sleeves of Kimono are getting wet. However I'm plucking some greens in the cold field for you, my love.

Tyunagon Yukihiro

I'm going to Inaba, present Tottori, departing from you, my love. Good-bye! However if you want me to come back, I could run to you as soon as possible.

Ariwara no Narihira (he was said to be a very cool guy.)

How beautiful Tatsuta River is! It's covered with many beautiful red colored leaves. I've never heard of such a fantastic scene since the ancient period when many strange incidents happened.

-△-

 **for the environment**

2006,1,8



You wanted to be a garbage man, right? You bring a garbage bag to the driveway every Tuesday morning, right? In Japan not only in Yokohama but also in many cities we have to separate many things. When I moved to Fujisawa from Yokohama over 20 years ago, we had to separate our garbage in Fujisawa. In Yokohama recently Mayor Nakata decided to do it. It was completely backward, you know. Anyway in our area every Tuesday and Friday is a burnable garbage day. And every Wednesday is a plastic garbage day. Every other Thursday is an unburnable garbage day and a recycle garbage day. Moreover we have to buy a seal for five hundred yen and put it on the large garbage such as a desk, TV and so on. It's really complicated but we should do that for the ecology.

An extra talk is,

Well, when I was a quite young kid, I thought someday I wanted to be a garbage man. In America we have big garbage trucks. And garbage men ride on the back of the trucks and hold on to the bar. So when I was a kid, that was a very cool looking job. Now I think maybe I couldn't be a garbage man. But who knows maybe someday I will be. Well, I look forward to talking with you soon. Enjoy your weather. (Today your voice sounds normal. You might have gotten rid of a cold.)

-△-

 **It's freezing cold.**

2006,1,7



It's been really cold these days. In Japan it wasn't so cold in recent years. I took out my thick coat from the closet, which I hadn't worn for years. It doesn't snow in Fujisawa but the temperature shows only 1 or 2 degrees every morning. There is a thermometer in front of my office so I always check the temperature every morning. When I listened to your voice, I guessed you were reading news like an announcer. But actually you have a sore throat. Take care. I hope you will get better soon.

An extra talk is,

Well, you can tell by the sound of my voice that I don't seem very well. I got a little bit of a cold and my throat is sore but I will be able to feel good. Hopefully I will be good by the end of the week. Look forward to speaking with you soon. Take care and have a great day and stay warm.

-△-

a terrible incident

2006,1,6



Recently a terrible incident happened near my office in Yokosuka. Early in the morning on the third a Japanese middle-aged woman was killed at the entrance of a building. And yesterday the US Navy arrested an American sailor and now they are looking into him. The Japanese government requires the Navy to hand him over to the Japanese police. Do you know this news? Actually the murder site is 3 minutes walking distance from my office.

I think I'm a timid player like Judy. In my real life I can't help thinking of the result. I've always chosen the way that would get along. Now I regret a little bit about my way. From now I want to live a little more risky. That would be amazing.

An extra talk is,

Well, there is a famous saying in America. Which goes, "You play like your practice." You can tell the person's personality by the way they play games. 42 is a wonderful game for judging someone's personality. Perhaps if you come to America sometime, I can teach you how to play 42. I'm looking forward to doing that.

Japanese traditional card games

2006,1,5



I've never played 42. I miss Mr. Miller. I played golf with him maybe for 3 holes. Please say hello to him from me. Well, I will try to describe Japanese traditional card games. Can you guess what kind of card game I explain? We have several games to play by using them. The one set is made up of 200 cards. There are only later parts of poems written on 100 cards and on the other 100 cards there are all the poems and figures of three kinds of people who write each poem, women wearing beautiful kimono, men and priests. We usually call women cards Hime and priests cards Bouzu.

The easiest game:

That's a game for some people especially some little kids. We can also play it with only two. We use only 100 cards painted with figures of poets. We pile up these cards. We take one card after the other from the top of the pile. If we take a men card, we can keep it. If we take a Bouzu, we lose every card that we have kept and put them at the common space. Bouzu cards are unlucky cards. If we take a Hime, we can get all cards of the common space. Hime cards are really lucky cards. We finish the game, when we take all cards from the pile. The player who gets the most cards is a winner. It's a really simple game but it's a good game for little kids to understand our classical culture.

The common game:

That's a game, which requires at least three people. One of them is a person who always read poems out loud by using 100 cards with painted figures. A teacher or a mother usually does this role. The players are over two people. I guess four or five is better. They use 100 cards with only half later part of poems written. They sit down on the floor in a circle and put cards inside the circle. The reciter begins to read a poem and then the players take the card on which the same poem is written. They can take the card as soon as the reciter begins to read. The reciter begins to read from the top so the player who memorizes the whole poem is able to take them more quickly than other players. The person who has taken the most cards is winner. This game is good for students who study our classical literature. The students have to memorize all of the 100 poems for their homework in winter holidays at many junior high schools in Japan.

The game for the competition:

I'm sorry but I don't know about the rules of this version. I've only glanced at the shot of the

competition on TV. Two people wearing Kimono hit the cards very quickly. It seemed to be a kind of sport.

Do you know what kinds of games I've described? Have you ever seen the game or the cards? Have you ever played it? Have you memorized some of the poems yet?

An extra talk is,

I grew up playing 42 with my parents. 42 is a kind of the game that the old people play. But it's a fantastic game. In fact I introduced it to many of my friends and now they often play 42. Let me know the game you like to play.

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About the newspaper

2006,1,4



To read the news written in English is really difficult for me. I think a newspaper represents the cultural level of that country. To read newspaper requires a considerable education, even if we read it written in our native language. So it's still too early for me to read the news written in English without a hitch. Actually in Japan many universities use articles of newspapers, especially editorials, for their entrance examinations. When I was a high school student, teachers used to recommend to us to read and summarize articles of newspapers. My father used to help me to memorize Kanji. He would pick up some Kanji from the editorial of the newspaper and I would write them after dinner. And it was very useful for me to get high scores of Kanji tests. Any way, I can understand that news story because I've already read it in the newspaper, of course written in Japanese. But I can't understand this part, "using a woman problem". What does it mean? I'm sure "woman problem" means a kind of trouble like adultery. I've never read such a description in the Japanese newspaper. Please tell me about it. Denounce means criticize. Claim means complain. Leverage means an advantage. Beijing means the Chinese government and Tokyo means the Japanese government.

An extra talk is,

Well, China and Japan relations seem to be relaxed a little bit. Frankly China is making a lot of money in the European market by selling cheap goods to America and Japan. A lot of Japanese companies and American companies sell goods to Chinese consumers. Hopefully China will

recognize the needs of the international community and perhaps even help deal with North Korea troubles as well. Let's hope for the best. Well, have a wonderful day.

-△-

About my new year's holidays

2006,1,3



I welcomed this New Year at my mother's house in Osaka with my son's family. I went to Nagoya by the Shinkansen to meet my son's family and after that we drove to Osaka. I happened to sit down next to two British girls on the Tokaidou line to Odawara. One of them was a teacher of NOVA in Tochigi and another girl was her friend from a small town near London. They were on the way to Hakone and I taught them how to go there. At the platform of the Shinkansen of Odawara an American woman asked me where the non smoking car is. I'm sorry I couldn't answer her well because I didn't know enough about her question. In Osaka I had a lot of free time. My two sisters are really good at cooking and my daughter in law took care of her son. I was only chatting with my mom and playing with my grandson. In the morning on the first day of the New Year we went to the Houryuji temple in Nara by car. This temple is the oldest wooden building in the world. It was built by Syotokutaisi about 1400 years ago. I recommend foreigners to visit there. I think they had better study Japanese history a little to enjoy Japanese old sights.

Take care not to feed so much

The thing that surprised me about America was how large the food was. Is it the same for dogs? I'm sure the diets of them depend on their masters. I hope Lucy will be slender soon. The thing I remember most about our dog is how we used to always feed him our scraps. He always ate them happily because he didn't know rich food. We would always feed him after our dinner. Actually he was very healthy and past away maybe when he was 15 years old.

An extra talk is,

I think that is really true about the people in America are overweight. In the nineteen sixties the average of American woman's dress size was about, an American size was about 6. Ten or fifteen years ago the average American dress size was about twelve. Now, I believe the average American dress size is fifteen. The need was said we started to work out more and eat better. Perhaps having a Japanese diet with rice would be better for us. What do you think? Keep in touch. (I think Japanese eating habit is better than that of Americans. Actually my present dress

size is the same as that of my high school days.)



-△-

✦ **It's really romantic!**

2006,1,2



I will try to translate 100 poems into English bit by bit in this year.

No. 2 Emperor Jitō

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 me as soon as I recognized your face. It is just like 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 Sarumaru 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.

わがいほ庵(いほ)は みやこ都(みやこ)のたつみ しかぞす住む よ世(よ)をうちやま山(やま)と ひと人(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 い行くもかへ帰るも わか別れては し知るもし知らぬも あふさか逢坂のせき関

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)

No. 12 The priest Soujyou Henjyou

I want to see the beautiful dancers for a while. They look like celestial nymphs dancing among clouds. I wish the wind would blow hard and make them remain.

あまつ風 雲のかよひ路 吹きとぢよ をとめの姿 しばしとどめむ

No. 13 Previous Emperor Youzeiin

I love you deeply from my heart. The water from Mt. Tukuba gathers into a big river. My love seems to be the same as that river. They are really deep and clear.

筑波嶺の みねより落つる みなのか 恋ぞつもりて ふちとなりぬる

No.14 Minister Kawara no Sadaijin

Now my heart is really disturbed. Why am I so worried? For whom do I have a painful experience now? It's for you. I can't help feeling sad when I'm thinking about you.

みちのくの しのぶもちずり たれゆえに 乱れそめにし われならなくに

Today I felt a little sore in my throat. Maybe I might have caught a cold. I read in the newspaper that having a wet mask was good for throats. It's true. After having a wet mask on my mouth, I feel really better.



-△-

✚ Happy new year ♪

2006,1,1



Happy new year ♪ In retrospect ,last year 2005 was really good for me. What's my goal for this year? My new year's resolution is to get closer to a native speaker. Oh, it's too early for me to say such a goal. Hahaha. Of course I will study English in earnest. For that purpose I will continue to write this diary in English in 2006. I hope we will have good days in 2006.

By the way I've never tried Yoga yet. Actually I tried it after reading your explanation but it was still difficult for me to do that. I think it's too difficult to try some exercise only by reading some instructions. I need a video, too. Hahaha. I will try to an explain how to do exercise. I do it every morning. Do you know what kind of exercise I described?

- 1 Lie on your back on the floor.
- 2 Put your hands under your head.
- 3Raise your upper half body vertically.
- 4Stay in the pose for a while.
- 5Lie down on the floor again.

6Do the same movement 10 times.

It helps you not to get fat around your stomach.

An extra talk is,

I had tried Yoga for several times and it was a very interesting activity. It's very good for health and deals a lot with controlled breathing, which is a good way to help your breathing and muscle work. I really enjoyed it and I recommend it for everyone. If you have an opportunity, you should try it out. In any case when you have time, tell me about your Yoga experience. I'm looking forward to hearing about it from you.

It looks storage.

2006,2,28



On weekdays I never sleep for a long time but on weekends I usually oversleep. I get up at seven thirty on Saturday. I can't sleep so much. I mean, middle-aged people can't sleep for long hours. Probably it's a result of ageing. Somebody said sleeping requires a lot of energy so elderly people cant sleep enough. I don't know if it's true or not scientifically but as far as I am concerned , I think it's true.

When I was young, I always felt sleepy and sometimes I couldn't help taking a nap during the class time, especially English class. It was definitely boring. The teacher usually pointed to someone and he started to read the English textbook in his terrible pronunciation and then he had to translate that into Japanese. Usually it wasn't good Japanese. Because he tried to translate them literally,he couldn't help saying strange Japanese. It sounded like a lullaby and we, not only me but also many students, couldn't help falling asleep. Moreover we were always sleepy because we couldn't sleep enough to prepare our lessons those days. It seemed to be a really vicious circle.

These days many people began to wear white masks on their face. I'm sure it looks kind of strange to foreigners. In Japan people who have hay fever have been increasing recently. And they usually begin to wear masks to protect pollens in the end of February. Fortunately I don't have hay fever. I usually wear a mask when I catch a cold. I can breathe warm air through a mask. In such a meaning, it seems to be good for my throat. It might be effective to cure a cold.



My son is still studying at UCLA in LA and at the end of February he came back to Japan with his American schoolmate for only three days. Now their works are shown at the Media Arts Festival, which is been held at Tokyo Photograph Museum in Ebisu by the Agency of Cultural Affairs of the Japanese government. So the Agency invited them and they stayed at a hotel in Meguro, which is not so high class. I said to the American, "Is this your second visit to Japan? Where did you stay for your previous visit? If you will be famous artists, you will be able to stay at the gorgeous hotel. I'm sure maybe next time you can." I got a day off and went to the museum with my husband and my sister to meet them on last Friday. We ate lunch at a Tonkatsu restaurant. That American guy can't speak Japanese at all so I explained about food to him in English. "You should grind this sesame by using this stick like me. Can I pour this sauce into the bowl? You can eat Tonkatsu with this sauce. That waitress said that you could eat as much rice and cabbage as you like." Now he is very busy to creating the work and writing an essay to be able to graduate from the school. I have a plan to attend the graduation ceremony this June. I really want to express my gratitude to his professor and friends in English at that time. Will I be able to do it well? I should practice speaking English as hard as I can to do it well.



I heard that in Russia politicians asked the opinion of a fortuneteller. I think it's incredible. It doesn't sound logical and scientific. When I was young I really liked to read horoscope pages in magazines but recently I'm not interested in such pages. Because now I have a husband and sons and I don't imagine that my life will change in the future. I'm a Gemini of the horoscope and they say the people of that zodiac sign have two personalities. It's hard for me to believe that.

My image of a house with a basement is that a very rich person has such a large house. He must keep the highest-grade wines there. There might be a home theater where he can watch movies on the wide screen. I'm sure many Japanese images of that are such things. A stationary bicycle means the implement like a bicycle, which we usually use when I want to exercise. Many people buy it on a TV shopping program but they tend to stop using it only 10 days after they buy it.

An extra talk is,

When I was in high school, actually a lot of my friends come over and the basement was nice because it was a separate place in a house. You can have fun and not worry about making noise especially late in the night. Well, let me know if you have ever been there in Japan and another country.

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When we take pictures...

2006,2,25



When I want to take pictures with my friends, I always can say, "Let's take a picture!" When I would like to take pictures of a strange person like a foreigner who looks cool, I should say, "May I take your picture?" After that I should say, "Thanks for letting me take your picture." When I want my picture taken in front of a famous building, I should say, "Could you take a picture for me?" When I go sightseeing and want to have a picture taken with my friends, I should ask somebody, "I'm sorry, but would you mind taking a picture of us?" And then I should tell him how to take a picture by my camera by saying "Please push the big button on top." After That We should say, "Thanks so much for taking our picture." to show him our gratitude.

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the gold medalist

2006,2,24



Shizuka Arakawa got the golden medal at the Torino Olympic games. She is the first woman who got the gold medal for Asian figure skaters. She is taller than the other medallists, an American and a Russian. I think Japanese people are now changing and changing. Now we are not small, yellow and behind other nations physically.

I absolutely agree with your opinion. Only chatting with your friend doesn't seem to be good. It might be better to have the same pastime and goal to keep a good relation ship with your friends. We need a good rival to improve our ability and we must be able to form friendship between ourselves and our rivals.

✚ Yokosuka station

2006,2,23



Have you ever been to Yokosuka Station? It's an old station and there are no stairs in that building. In Japan we usually have stairs in many stations. Why do you know there are no stairs? That station was built for the Japanese navy in the Meiji era and the Emperor sometimes visited the navy by the train. They thought if there were stairs, somebody might have looked down on him. So they didn't build stairs in that station. In the Meiji era people thought the Emperor was God and they really honored him. What do you think about this story? When I arrived at that station for the first time about two years ago, I was very surprised to find a well-built young guy wearing a white uniform with a signboard. On that board they wrote " the guide for the entrance ceremony of National Defense Academy". It strikes me that Yokosuka is a very unique city.

✚ Does it sound strange ?

2006,2,22



It was pretty warm today. I felt too warm because I wore a thick coat and I had a fur scarf around my neck. These days I can't sleep for a long time. It might be an age thing.
I sometimes go to a one hundred yen shop in front of the station to buy stuff such as stationery for myself. But I've never bought gifts at that shop. I mean, it strikes me that a cheap gift seems to be rude for the receivers. We Japanese usually think if we respect a person, we should give him an expensive gift. Does it sound strange for American people? I usually buy goods at super markets but I always buy gifts for other people at department stores to show the respect for the receivers.

An extra talk is,

Well, perhaps I think it's the difference between America and Japan. I know in Japan that the gift giving is a custom and usually things are really expensive. And sometimes they are kind of real things. But I know in America Its pretty common to go out and give gifts, something nice, for neighbor kids. I like to visit my friend Randy and I usually stop out at the one-dollar store. And I get something to give the girls. People would appreciate that. In America you don't worry about prices about gifts. What do you think about the custom? Do you often give gifts in Japan to

friends and relatives?

-△-

✚ **That was a really nice room.**

2006,2,21



The thing I was very surprised about your house was how beautiful the room where I stayed was. And I also felt how comfortable the bed was. The floor space of that room might be larger than a ten mat room of Japanese style. Judy must have a lot of talent in interior decoration.

An extra talk is,

Well, my mother is certainly a quite talented redecorator and she changed everything. It looks like a completely different room. But it's very lovely and even now I enjoy sleeping there sometimes because it's very quiet and peaceful. Perhaps when you can do the home stay in my house, you could try to sleep in that room as our old guests. In any case We look forward to hearing you will come soon.

-△-

✚ **A terrible incident happened again.**

2006,2,20



The other day a Chinese mother who got married with a Japanese husband killed two little kindergartners. Her daughter and those kids go to the same kindergarten and she killed them by knife in her car because she thought Japanese kids must have bullied her daughter. She had been having a mental illness because she couldn't speak Japanese well and couldn't make friends with Japanese mothers. In January a US Navy sailor killed a Japanese middle-aged woman near my office in Yokosuka. In my opinion if he could have spoken Japanese a little and the victim could have understood English a little, such a terrible incident would not have happened. I think studying Japanese is very difficult for foreigners and we should support them by teaching Japanese and speaking Japanese slowly for them. And I'm convinced the US Navy should teach sailors who are staying in Japan easy Japanese conversation. I sometimes teach Japanese to a Korean woman who is working at a Korean style massage room in the public bath while having massage. And recently I began to teach Japanese to an Australian guy and an American guy on

Skype. All of them can speak basic Japanese so I only correct their Japanese. So it's not so difficult for me to teach them but I think it's really difficult to teach Japanese to foreigners who don't know Japanese at all. Both the Australian guy and American guy told me that they had studied Japanese by using a textbook named "Japanese for busy people". Do you know this textbook? Is it a famous textbook for native English speakers who start to study Japanese? Someday I want to teach foreigners how to speak Japanese as a volunteer. Actually my sister works as such a volunteer for people who are Japanese but grew up in China after World War Two and came back to Japan recently. My sister has been studying Chinese for ten years and I think she can speak Chinese better than my English.

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The old picture

2006,2,19



I'm sorry I can't recognize both you and your husband because it seems to be really difficult to guess your former appearances. And it's also hard for me to hear western people's names. Can you do the same things, to recognize Japanese people and to memorize Japanese people's names, easily? We have a family reunion at my mother's home on New Year's Day almost every year.

An extra talk is,

This was a very very fun time. I enjoyed getting together with my brothers and sisters. This was taken at the Ever Lake, at the cabin on the lake. My sister and her husband owned the cabin. That sister who owned the cabin and her husband, both have passed away now. I hope that sometime you can have a family reunion and you talk to your brothers and sisters often. Take care and have a great day. We hope to see you soon.

-△-

They are really good at English.

2006,2,18



These days I have opportunities to write e-mails to my Japanese friends and to speak with them

in English. And recently I changed my lesson style at NOVA so I'm allowed to take difficult lessons among high-level students. Now I take lessons by using the TV. I can speak with many students who are good at English all over Japan. Almost all of them can speak English better than me and it's really effective for me. I'm sometimes afraid if my English is correct or not after talking with them. As I write such phrases here, please correct them.

-△-

Australia

2006,2,17



I've been to Australia, but only Sydney, once. I hear there are some other beautiful places such as Melbourne, Perth and Cairns. I really would like to visit that country again. People seem to be friendly and cheerful there. And I also want to go to New Zealand especially the South Island. It reminds me of my former English teacher Nancy. She fixed very delicious sweets of that country for us and recommended visiting there. It has to be a wonderful country. Maybe within three years I will visit there and enjoy the beautiful scenery.

Yesterday I talked with a Japanese woman who was good at English in English. She told me that she had two children and one of them was still 4 years old. And she said that it was really hard for mothers to get a job even if they could have spoken English fluently. I told her that I had left my sons at the day care center and I could have continued my job. She told me again that she couldn't enter her kid in a day care center. I answered that I could understand such a situation because I was working for the department dealing with child welfare about 3 years ago. If Japanese women could enter their kids in day care centers easily, they would have more children and the birth rate in Japan would be increasing.

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Should I use how or what?

2006,2,16



"How are you doing today?"

"Well, I came back home just before 7 and ate dinner. After that I read an English book."

“Huh? Your answer is not exactly correct.”

“Um, maybe I should have said, fine? ”

“Exactly you should have. If I asked you what are you doing today? , you could answer that. How about your answer? When I ask, how was your day?” “Let me see, today was pretty good.”

I think knowing correctly the difference between what and how is kind of difficult. I sometimes make a mistake. Are these phrases correct or not?

What’ s the population of Fujisawa?

How old are you?

What’ s your weight?

How much do you weight?

How tall are you?

What are the hours?

How long are you open?

Then,what should I say for \$2.7 million? Should I say two point seven million dollars? Is it right?

When my second son was born, he was three thousand three hundred and thirty grams weight. It was over the average baby’ s weight at birth. But he didn’ t like to drink milk. He became a very skinny baby soon. Oh, my Gosh! Moreover he couldn’ t walk until he became fifteen moths old.

“He might be a very weak kid. If he is not be able to walk until one and half years old, what should I do?” One day he was suddenly stranded by himself and stepped forward, one, two, three. That was great. Now I always advise a lot of young mothers that they need not be worried about their baby. Almost every baby will be able to walk, talk and say good by to a diaper.

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the Valentine Day

2006,2,15



In Japan women usually give chocolates to men around them, not only boyfriends but also husbands, coworkers, sons and so on on Valentines Day. You must have been given a lot of chocolates from Japanese girls when you were a teacher in Shimane. I’ d been giving chocolates to many coworkers for many years. But this year my boss said to us that he wouldn’ t like to receive chocolates anymore. So I didn’ t buy any at all. Concerning such a custom, the chocolate company suggested it and we only obey such commercialism. But I felt kind of sad on that day.

I remember that we had a costume parade on a field day in my high schooldays. I'm sure it must be continuing still now. Because my son's high school held such events often. It requires a lot of energy but it must be a good memory for students.

An extra talk is,

Homecoming week is also when many people who graduated from the high school will come back, just to visit during the time to see the football games.

-△-

Mailboxes

2006,2,14



I find a lot of mail in my mailbox everyday and almost all of them are directjunk mail. As these days we can use E-mails, it's really rare to find private letters here except from my mother. I sometimes receive mail from banks and stock broker houses. There is a lot of my personal information there. Last spring the personal information protection law was established in Japan and now people are discussing about the importance of the protection of personal information. I lock the mailbox but many inhabitants of my condo don't do that. Why don't they do that? It absolutely seems to be strange to me. It would be careless. In America do they lock mailboxes?

No, we usually don't lock mailboxes in small towns, however people usually lock their mailboxes in large towns or if they live in apartments.

An extra talk is,

One of my friends is a postman. And he really enjoys his job because he likes to drive a car and he also enjoys reading things. Sometimes he will stop at someone's house and deliver mail by hand instead of putting the mail in the mailbox. Maybe that's just a personal way of being friendly. Anyway I look forward to hearing about what mail you get in Japan. Take care.

✚ **When we make a request politely,...**

2006,2,13



"I know these days we are very busy but would you mind if I take a day off the day after tomorrow? "

"I think now you have an important job to finish. When is the deadline for that job? "

"It's two days after tomorrow and I'm sure I will finish it tomorrow. I wonder if you can check that document the day after tomorrow even if I will not be at the office. And if I have to correct that, I will be able to do it by the deadline."

"I see. I've just remembered one thing. Will you have to attend the meeting on that day? "

"Yes, I know. However my son will take the entrance examination the day after tomorrow and I'm really worried about him. I would like to take him to the school. He is still twelve years old. I think I will be able to arrive here by the beginning of the meeting and I will attend that meeting."

"OK, don't worry. You can take a day off all day long. I will ask another staff member to attend it instead of you."

"Thanks. I really appreciate it."

"Let me just say one more thing. If you had known your son's schedule, you shouldn't have accepted the offer of the meeting."

"I see what you are saying. I have to think more carefully about that from now on."

✚ **I have an MP3 players.**

2006,2,12



In my opinion MP3 player is very useful to study English.

I personally believe listening to English every day is very important.

I personally think it's easy to use MP3 players.

I personally feel iPod is more expensive than the other MP 3 players.

From my point of view to use a new stuff is important to keep up with young people.

I see what you mean, but on the other hand MD players are still good to handle.

I understand what you're saying, but if you begin to use iPod, you will agree with me.

I can see your point, but I think we can't use MP3 players without a computer.

Yes, but you have to consider not to be up-to-date.

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the satiric cartoon

2006,2,11



The thing I was very surprised at about Moslems was how religious they are. I hear they go to a mosque several times a day, even in the middle of the night. “An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.” This is the famous phrase in their scripture, The Koran. They might be attacking and tend to seek revenge for their opponents.

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It must be cool.

2006,2,10



If I could understand the lyrics of many famous western songs, it must be interesting to listen to them. If I could watch movies and understand their parts without reading subtitles, it must be wonderful. It's one of my reasons why I study English. If I could sing a song in English at Karaoke, many people who listen to my song would guess I was cool.

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how to use Web art designer

2006,2,9



It's my custom to use Web art designer software made by IBM when I make a collage on my computer. I asked my son to teach me how to use it when I tried to do it for the first time maybe 5 years ago. “Hey, can you teach me how to use that software?” He explained to me how to use it while moving a mouse quickly. “Thanks. It looks pretty easy. I will try to do it.” 15 minutes later I called him again. “Sorry. Come here. I forgot how to do the next step.” “I'm busy. You should take notes. Can you understand?” 30 minutes later I called him again. “I know you are very busy but would mind teaching me only one thing?” “You should think by yourself. You always ask me

everything. I'll lend you this book. If you don't think by yourself, you will never master it." Next day I asked him again, "I hate to ask, but would you mind very much if I ask you one more question? Of course I checked the book but I can't still understand one thing. What's the difference between GIF and JPEG? " " You can check it easily on the Internet. Why don't you search for it by yourself? Don't depend on your son." Now I'm pretty good at using the computer. I'm a kind of computerholik. I made this collage after I went to Tochigi in November.

An extra talk is,

Well, normally when I create a collage, I just use a simple program called paint. And paint is found in the accessories in the start menu. It's a very simple program but its very easy to use and very effective. Perhaps you should make your collage by using that. Let me know your questions.



✚ the difference of mobile phones

2006,2,8



The thing that I noticed on my first trip in America was how they used the different types of mobile phones. My son bought a new mobile phone in LA and he also rented a mobile phone for us at that time. We usually used mobile phones that we could fold and we often sent e-mails on mobile phones. On the other hand American mobile phones looked flat and simple. We couldn't see the people who were talking on the mobile phones while walking on the street. They didn't seem to send e-mails and play video games on mobile phones. In my opinion Japanese people probably like multifunction machines. But I don't like such things. Why should I watch websites on a small display of a phone instead of a big display of my computer? It's incredible and it isn't my taste.

-△-

✚ an American football

2006,2,7



I've never watched an American football game except watching some scenes in movies. If I had watched that game, I would have become a huge fan of it. Watching that game with many friends must have been exciting. I wish I had watched it with you. I could have mastered some sports English.

An extra talk is,

Well, my friend and I went over to Ernie's house. And we made a lot of food and we bought a beer. We had a Superbowl party. About 8 of us were gathered together there and we were watching the Superbowl together. Is there any sports event like that in Japan? And do you get together with friends to watch it? Let me know.

-△-

✚ three e-mails

2006,2,6



I wrote three e-mails to my friends in English. All of them are Japanese. It would be very nice to write an E-mail even to Japanese to improve my English. It might sound strange to ordinary people.

Thanks for your message. As I have something to do on Friday, I didn't have enough time to speak with you. Sorry. If you want to speak with me in English and found me on line, please send me a message. My name on Yahoo is masaho. I'll be waiting for you. See you!

I'm very glad to read your diary from Perth. And congratulations on your success with the test. I'm looking forward to a good story from you. Anyway have a good day and take care.

Do they have a lot of snow in your town usually? The weather forecast says it will be snowing during this night. Take care not to slip on the snow.

No. 18 Fujiwara Toshiyuki

I really long to meet you. Sometimes I can meet you in my dreams however I'm still worried about what other people are thinking about us at that time. Why can't I meet you in public?

住の江の 岸による波 よるさへや 夢のかよ
ひ路 人めよくらむ





Last night Masaho shampooed my hair and made a new dress for me. Does it look wonderful on me? I'm wondering if I was born in somewhere in America in 1962. Could you read an expression written on my body? Anyway could you comment on my new dress? Have a nice holiday!

The gossip

I glanced at the news about Brad Pitt on the website but to tell the truth such a rumor left me cold. Regarding Angelina and Jennifer, I can take it or leave it.

An extra talk is,

Well, this certainly has been in the news over in Japan, I'm sure. But Brad Pitt was married to Jennifer and he divorced her. And he got fed up with her and he went out with Angelina. They starred together in the movie called Mr. And Mrs. Smith. I've personally not seen that but someday I should check it out. Anyway when you have time, tell me what you think about Brad and Angelina. Do you think Angelina is better or do you like Jennifer? That's a kind of a bet in Hollywood. Which do you prefer Angelina or Jennifer?



Today's diary is very difficult for me to listen to but. I remembered about Groundhog Day. I must have read about that story in my English textbook when I was a junior high school student.

Anyway spring might be getting near both in America and Japan.

An extra talk is,

Well, Punxsutawney is a small town in Pennsylvania and it is still named Groundhog.

People call him Punxsutawney Phil. And every year he comes out and if he sees his shadow, it means that we've got to have 6 more weeks. If he doesn't see his shadow, it means the winter is coming to an end. We celebrate the start of spring. Groundhog Day is famous by a movie starring Bill Murray called Groundhog Day. (I wish you had read this part more slowly.) It's terrible but kind of funny.

-△-

Economy is really difficult!!

2006,2,3



I read the Japan economy newspaper, Nihon Keizai Shimbun, every morning. I've seen such a graph in it recently. I'm sure that the graph means the average prices of Japanese stocks. The newspaper says, "Thanks to yen's depreciation, economic expansion and a jump of resources, profits of Japanese main companies are increasing." It's really difficult for me to understand this article. Why is the high price of resources good for the company? The Japanese government has already tried tax cuts and administrative reform. What should they do about the price of oil? Economics is really difficult to understand and the economy is difficult to control. There are some people who are called economists but probably nobody guesses the economic trend correctly. In 1776 Adam Smith wrote in his famous book "Wealth of Nations" as follows,

"...he intends only his own security; and by directing that industry in such a manner as its produce may be of the greatest value, he intends only his own gain; and he is in this, as in many other cases, led by an invisible hand to promote an end which was no part of his intention."

I think maybe God who has an invisible hand only could control economy even in the 21st century.

An extra talk is,

Economics is certainly interesting subject for me. Do you enjoy learning about economics?

Personally I think I agree with the governor Ishihara in Tokyo. He made a comment recently about repealing all taxes except consumption tax. There are two reasons. One is it would encourage

savings. Two is it would actually bring prices down and not up. That would be confusing but if you like to know more about it, please write me e-mail and ask me questions.

-△-

✚ I don't like him.

2006,2,2



I can understand what you are saying however I can't help criticizing Horie. He must have had too much confidence in himself and nobody around him could advise him to consider the law. We have a saying such as "The pitcher goes often to the well, but is broken at last." おごる平家は久しからず I just remembered this saying when I heard of his incident. If he had been more thoughtful and modest, he wouldn't have been arrested. I don't have Livedoor stocks and didn't try to buy them. Honestly I don't like him and can't sympathize with him at all personally.

An extra talk is,

Well everyone, I think Mr. Horie is in a lot of trouble. Unfortunately I think he is just kind of greedy probably in order to avoid the government tax and to avoid regulations of Japan. (I wish you had spoken more slowly. If you had spoken more slowly, I could have caught this part.) He also made his company very profitable so stocks would rise. It's very confusing situation and very unfortunate that it had happened. Although I'm sure people in Fuji TV are very happy about his arrest. (I think the president of Fuji TV is worried about the price of stocks of Livedoor because Fuji TV is a big stockholder of Livedoor. Now the stocks are dropping and dropping.) Anyway I'm looking forward to talking with you soon. Tell me about your opinion.

-△-

✚ I have a head cold.

2006,2,1



Now my nose is running but I don't have a fever. Sometimes I have a slight cough and a sore throat a little. My eyes are itchy. Do I have hay fever? No, it's too early to get hay fever. I must have a head cold.

I like pictures however I display only my grandson's pictures and my sons' pictures when they

were very very young in my home.

You look absolutely cute in your pictures. I have a lot of pictures from when I was a baby and some of them are black and white pictures changing to sepia.

An extra comment is,

We do have many many pictures in our home. Many of the pictures are family members and then we just have pictures to be displayed. We like to have a lot of pictures on the wall in our home.

a personal transfer

2006,3,31



Today I chatted with Monte on MSN messenger. He seemed to be fine and taught me about Kennedy family. I have to transfer to another office in Yokohama from the office in Yokosuka from this April. I was a little bit promoted. It's still OK but I really want not to work in the busy office. I hope I will enjoy a lot of free time. Anyway please correct my English.

-△-

 **Ralph Lauren**

2006,3,30



An extra talk is,

Personally I really like Ralph Lauren clothing. I think it's simple, classic and very easy to wear. It's also similar to another American brand called Tommy. Have you ever heard about Tommy? In any case Ralph Lauren started his company on a very small base and now it's the largest clothing company in the world. What a great success story it is! Let me know what you think about Ralph Lauren.

Sorry but I don't know about Tommy ... Maybe I've heard the name sometimes but I was not interested in it and might have forgotten it. But of course I know the name of Ralph Lauren. It's really popular and even I have bought some clothing of that brand. I'm sure it's reasonable. It's not so expensive compared with the other famous brands such as Christian Dior.

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An extra talk is,
Well, today's posting has a lot of questions in it. Asking questions are very important part of learning English. There are many different ways to ask questions and there are many different ways to answer those questions. I think everyone should practice how to ask as well as how to answer. I recommend you to look for new ways of asking the some questions.

So I will try to ask these questions in the other ways.

Do you like baseball? What do you think about baseball?

Do you play baseball? Is your favorite sport to play baseball?

Have you played baseball before? Do you have an experience of playing baseball?

Where do you play baseball? What kind of place do you play baseball?

What baseball team do you like? Would you mind telling me your favorite baseball team?

How often do you go to a baseball game? How many times do you watch a baseball game?

When do you watch baseball on TV? Can I ask you when you usually watch baseball on TV?

Do you know the Chicago Cubs? Have you ever heard about the Chicago Cubs?

Did you know the Chicago Cubs is my favorite team? Did I tell you that I like Chicago Cubs best?

Have you been to Chicago? Do you have an experience to visit Chicago?

Do you want to go to a Chicago Cubs baseball game? Would you like to watch a Chicago Cubs baseball game?

Where is Chicago? Do you know the place of Chicago?

Do you know where New York is? Could you tell me the place of New York?

How do you get from Tokyo to Los Angeles? Please tell me how to go to LA from Tokyo.

How many baseball teams are in the Major League? Would you mind if you could tell me the numbers of the Major League?

-△-



I've never been skiing this winter because now my daughter in law is pregnant. My new grand son will to born next June. The doctor told her that a baby must be a boy the other day. And I have a plan to attend the graduate ceremony of Takashi at UCLA next June. I will be busy in June and

really look forward to June.

An extra talk is,

Snow boarding is a certainly one of my favorite activities. I really enjoy it because it's healthy. You are outdoors so you board in nature and other good thing is to do with friends. When I lived in Stings in Colorado, I snowboarded almost everyday. At That time I was living with Matt. Matt now lives in Thailand so I can imagine he will come to Japan sometime.

-△-

✚ Takashi's Seasons

2006,3,27



Would you mind watching "Takashi's Seasons"?

I watched my son's graduation piece named "Takashi's season" on his web site. If you have a time, please look here. <http://www.takashikawashima.com/> (It takes a few minutes to download it.) I'm sure it's a really wonderful. It reminds me of the beautiful Japanese traditional scene. Why could he create such a nice work? He must have understood about good points of Japanese everyday life. To tell the truth I hadn't been a good mother of him. I had been too busy to teach my boys the Japanese excellence. However he had been studying them. I'm really proud of my son. Anyway we say seeing is believing. Please watch "Takashi's season".



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✚ What are media arts?

2006,3,26



I'm sure your friend is from Australia. She must be very cheerful. Is she going to study media arts? My son study media arts, too, you know. When I met my sons' American schoolmate in Tokyo, I told him that it was really difficult to explain what media arts were. "I always say it's art like a movie that is created by using computer. But to tell the truth it's hard for me to understand about it. Explaining about it is very very difficult even if I explain in Japanese. People

who is the same age as me can't understand about it in Japan." The American guy began to laugh and told me that his mother had said the same thing as me. It might be difficult for middle-aged people to understand the meaning of media arts all over the world.

An extra talk is,

I've known Alex quite sometime now. She is one of my good friends in Tokyo. I'm sad that she would leave Tokyo and go back to her home country. But I'm sure she will do justified. I look forward to seeing her again.

-△-

too early to bloom

2006,3,25



Spring has come in Japan. We can see cherry blossoms blooming near my house. The time when cherry blossoms bloomed was earlier than usual this year. I'm sure they would bloom at the beginning of April every year. It's the 25th of March and I think it's too early to see cherry blossoms in our area. In Japan almost everything begins in April such as the academic year and financial year. Sakura is really suitable to celebrate the start of everything. I'm a little bit worried about the too early blooms.

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the numbers

2006,3,24



An extra talk is,

It is important to learn the numbers. We use numbers in English a lot just like you use numbers in Japanese a lot. I can counsel people to count stairs at a station and also try to count maybe your steps when you are walking to the station. Just for mastering English counting numbers is a great activity.

I agree with you because to express numbers correctly is very very important. At the store it's really important to listen to a price correctly. If we make a mistake in understanding a price, we can't decide well if we should buy something or not. When we meet somebody and make a

reservation, understanding the time is really important. When we ride a taxi and tell a driver where we want to go, we also should say an address correctly. If we can't pronounce the address clearly, the driver might go to a wrong place. Moreover unfortunately to pronounce numbers correctly seems to be really difficult. To pronounce the difference between fifty and fifteen well is difficult and also to listen to them is the same. I should try to count numbers in English at the station every morning.

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Wow, what are these?

2006,3,23



I saw the pictures. Wow, what are these? Who made them? They look very strange. Are they sweets? The shapes of them look like Sushi but they are really different from real Sushi. Are they very popular in America? They must taste strange. It's incredible to make such food and eat them. I can't help saying Americans' tastes are odd. There is no way we Japanese eat them.

I distinctly remember what happened when I went fishing for the first time. It was a very hot day and I got sick as soon as I boarded the small ship. The smell of bait that was rotten mince fish was terrible. I had to lie down on the hot floor all day long. I never want to go fishing especially in summer on the sea.

An extra talk is,

Well, personally I enjoy fishing a lot. I go fishing at my lake at home as well as the river near by. Normally we catch a lot of catfish and some bass. There are also a lot of other fish but my favorite is probably catfish. They put up a good fight. Take care and talk with you soon.



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✚ the memory of a vegetarian American

2006,3,22



Last autumn a vegetarian American guy stayed at my home for three days. I was really worried about his food and invited him to a Tofu restaurant. Actually his father was a diplomat and he had been living in Japan when he was an elementary school kid. He said that his best memory of Japan had been Dunkindoughnuts and Yokumoku cookies, which were a kind of expensive and famous cookies, and I also loved them. He seemed to buy many goods in the stores. After going back to LA I found two packages of Dunkindoughnuts, of course they were empty, and three packages of Yokumoku cookies in the room. He must have eaten doughnuts by himself in the room and indulged in his good childhood memories. He also gave me the Yokumoku cookies to express his gratitude.

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✚ Why didn't they eat everything?

2006,3,21



Today my English teacher's parents from England came to my home. I cooked some Japanese foods, such as Sushi, Miso soup and Chawanmushi for them. But they didn't eat much. They left a dish half eaten. But they are really polite, friendly and talkative; especially the father talked a lot. They must not have been used to eating Japanese food. If they had been used to eating it, they could have eaten it all and I wouldn't have been disappointed.



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✚ Japanese customs

2006,3,20



Please describe something about the wedding ceremony in Japan.

In Japan we used to hold a wedding ceremony in Shinto (the Japanese original God) style. But these days many people do that in many styles, such as Christian style, non-religious style. A bride usually changes her dress two or three times, for example from Kimono to a white wedding dress. It requires a lot of money and some couples tend to stop such customs to save money.

How do you celebrate a birthday in Japan?

Japanese mothers used to cook red rice that is rice cooked with red beans to celebrate their kids. We had a custom to cook a red rice to celebrate on New Years Day, a birthday and a wedding ceremony. But recently such a custom seems to decrease.

Because many children prefer a birthday cake to a red rice.

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Sometimes I write my opinion about a strange theme in English here. I'm sure you think why does Masaho write these things. Now I have a lot of opportunities to speak about many issues in English and sometimes I couldn't speak well. After such opportunities I would like to write English about that topic here. I think it's really important to review here. Could I do it here? I really have been enjoying listening to and reading Fine's blog. And I have been writing my comment about it every time. But now I don't have much time to write the comment and the topic which I explained before. I'm sorry but sometimes I can't help skipping to write the comment of Fine. But I decided to still continue to dictate an extra talk.

What do you think about zoos?

Do you support the opinion that we should take care of animals in zoos or do you oppose such thoughts? I think kids should recognize there are many kinds of animals in the world because improving their knowledge and understanding that the world is very big are really educational for them. Animals are really suitable beings because they are cute and funny. Many kids must shout pleasantly and be interested in many kinds of animals when they see them in a zoo. I know some people say it's really cruel for animals to be kept in a small cage. However they take care of animals very politely in zoos so animals don't seem to be so miserable. In my opinion thinking about human children should be a priority.

-△-



I always lose my confidence when I take lessons with high-level students on TV. My vocabulary is very poor and my pronunciation is very very bad. I always forget articles and make many mistakes about the tense when I speak English. I can't help recognizing that my level was obviously lower than them as soon as the lessons start. The thing I was very surprised at about the students whom I took the same lesson with was how they could speak English fluently. One and a half years has past since I began to practice English conversation. Is it a long time or short time? One of today's partners was an English teacher at high school. She looks like the same age as me. She might have been studying English for over forty years. Don't worry about your English, Masaho. Don't compare yourself with such an expert. I was cheered up.

✚ about TV

2006,3,17



I've never been to Odaiba but I've seen the building of Fuji TV many times. When we see the seascenery of Tokyo from the high building like Roppongi Hills, we can recognize that building easily. It might be a landmark of Odaiba.

We have a lot of TV programs nowadays and I like news programs best.

I think TV companies shouldn't broadcast violent movies during primetime.

We can get a lot of information from local news.

It's very useful to watch national news to understand the world situation.

We sometimes watch breaking news on TV when a big incident happens.

Many housewives spend a lot of time watching sitcoms on TV.

We can get a lot of vivid information from live broadcasts.

Nowadays cable television is very popular in Japan.

A remote control system is very useful but sometimes we lose the TV remote control.

We can get information easily by satellite broadcasting.

✚ An English couple

2006,3,16



Thanks for your E-mail. I would like to meet your parents. Please tell me where and when I should go. I'm not used to sending an E-mail in English from my cell phone. It's really difficult and I can't write well. Hahaha... I will send you this mail from my office. Please don't use this address when you send me a mail.

From Masaho

Thanks for your mail. I'm sure I will go to Chigasaki station at 7:30 pm on Sunday night. I think the ticket gate is the best place to meet you. And if your parents would like to visit a Japanese home, they can visit my home on the 21st, Tuesday.

I will prepare Japanese food for them and also guide them to many places by car. Please don't hesitate. It's my pleasure.

My house is near the station. It takes about 7 minutes on foot from the North exit. (the opposite side of NOVA). The 21st is the best day for me because on the 25th I have to go to my office. Please tell me what you would like to do on that day. An English man who was my son's friend stayed at my house twice and some Americans have come to my home. Don't worry about it. My husband and I are used to taking care of foreigners. But my husband can't speak English at all. Hahah...I'm looking forward to seeing you.

-△-

✚ **Ocyanoma Ryugaku**

2006,3,15



I changed my lesson style at NOVA from Studies at the school in front of a station called Ekimae to studies in a living room called Ochanoma last February. Ochanoma Ryugaku is a lesson style which we practice English conversation with native English speakers by using a TV and microphone. I had to connect to a TV on the broadband by using special equipment. After that my TV changed to a TV telephone. I can make a reservation for lessons by using a TV telephone and I can take a lesson at the reserved time in my living room. NOVA says there are about one hundred and fifty thousand students who are registered on Ochanoma all over Japan. I don't know if it's true or not. Teachers gather at the same building in Osaka and teach us by using TVs. I think there might be over one thousand teachers who work for that job. So our teacher and partners are new every time. The teacher who was from Chicago and knew Mt.Morris was a young woman and I'm sure I will never meet her again on TV. I think almost everything has a merit and a demerit. The merits of Ochanoma are, for the first I can take lesson from early morning to the middle of the night. After eating dinner I can take a lesson and early in the morning on Sunday I can take a lesson. For the second I can speak with many teachers who are from the US, the UK and Australia and so on. Against them, the demerit is that it's really difficult to make friendships between teachers and students. I can listen to the teacher very clearly through the earphone. However the picture is not so clear. At first I was worried about the picture. When my room is messy, I can't take a lesson. However as soon as I took the first lesson, I noticed it's not necessary for me to be concerned about such things. The picture is out of focus and nobody can recognize if my face is made-up or not. Anyway I bought many tickets for NOVA and I've not used half yet. It would be better for me to enjoy lessons of Ochanoma.

✚ **A railway accident happened .**

2006,3,13



When I arrived at the Yokosuka station after work, the trains of the Yokosuka line and the Tokaido line were stopping. We had to wait for the train to begin to start for a long time. On the platform I listened to the announcement of the station employee and some people began to depart from the station. There were three US navy sailors by me and they looked like they were worried about the situation. I decided to explain the situation and talked to them as follows.
“ Could you understand the announcement? A railway accident happened near Yokohama and the trains are stopping now. The train hit a person. But the train will be able to move soon. But it will go to Yokohama. It will not go to Tokyo. If you want to go to Tokyo, you had better go there by the Keihin kyokou line from Shioiri station near the base. And you can get the ticket for the Keihin Kyukou line for free.” They could understand my English and we were chatting for about fifteen minutes until a train arrived at the station. They were on the way to Kamakura to eat dinner for a change of atmosphere and they were from Colorado, Oregon and San Diego. The youngest guy told me that 25 percent of the US sailors have Japanese girl friends and his girlfriend was also a Japanese and lived in Fujisawa. Anyway today’s experience was really important for me. I had been thinking that the US sailors were kind of rude and hadn’t tried to speak with them. But they were friendly and I also had confidence in my English because they could understand my English and praised it.

✚ **They looked like Takarazuka stars.**

2006,3,12



Today I met two ladies for the first time who came to Kanagawa from Nagano. One of them is really good at English and I knew about her for the first time on the web site. After that we became friends with each other.

She looks like a Takarazuka star. That’s my first impression about her. She is a tall, slender, and cute, middle aged Japanese woman. She also has a great knowledge about English grammar. Aoko, please write a meaningful comment about English forever, especially for me. Hehehe...

When she appeared in front of me with her friend,Aoko, I thought the Takarazuka stars came to me. Yes, they are really tall and slender like Takarazuka actresses who act male parts. I heard that she was a huge fan of that musical. She seems to be a quiet woman but actually she has a strong mind. I hope we can see each other again someday.

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How to interrupt....

2006,3,11



“Last Sunday I went to the wonderful restaurant in Yokohama. The food was really fantastic. I’ m sure it was the best dinner I had ever eaten. But the food cost an arm and a leg. “

“By the way where is the restaurant? ”

“ It is in MM21 in Yokohama.”

“That remains me a famous movie. Have you watched Sayuri yet? “

“ No, I just can’ t get into movies. Where was I? To get back to the restaurant, that name is the Queen Alice and the owner is that famous chef named Ishinabe.”(いいえ、映画には興味ないの。どこまで話したっけ？ レストランの話しに戻って、その名前はクイーンアリスで、オーナーシェフは有名な石鍋さんよ。)

“I know this is changing the subject but why don’ t you like watching movies? “ （ちょっと、話変わるけど、何故、映画は好きじゃないの？）

“ There is no big reason. I always begin to nap when I watch a movie. Well anyway you should go to that restaurant someday. You would be surprised if you ate that French food. Have you ever eaten a foie gras?”

“Excuse me for interrupting, but this might be a good time to say good bye. I just remember something to do this afternoon.”

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Homeless people

2006,3,10



① PS: Regarding my strange e-mail written in Japanese, please don’ t worry about it. I noticed

that you had changed your e-mail address and your address was not a hotmail address. And I tried to invite you (using your new address) to be my member of MSN messenger. But it was not hotmail and I'm sure the strange e-mail was sent to you automatically. Anyway sorry to give you a bad impression. Can you still use your previous e-mail address? And am I still a member of your MSN messenger?

② Homeless people

These days we see a lot of homeless people on the street and in the park. I think it's a big problem for city halls

to solve this issue. To tell the truth it seems to be really unpleasant and kind of scary to see homeless people sleeping on the road. Why don't they work for themselves? How did they drop out? In my opinion at first city halls should make them live in shelters and reeducate them to be motivated and work. Anyway I hope there are no homeless people near my house. I think my opinion is kind of egoistical but I'm sure everybody wants the same thing.

③ Today I took an English conversation lesson on TV and I was very very surprised. Why was I surprised? Our conversation was as follows.

I think you are an American. Where are you from in the US?

I'm from Chicago. Have you ever been there?

Yes, I stayed in a small town named Mt.Morris for one week.

Wow, when did you visit there?

Last May. Do you know Mt.Morris? It's a really small town near Rockford. The population is only three thousand. Why do you know such a small town?

Actually one of my father's friends lives in that town. I visited there many times.

Wow, I think the world is very small.

Exactly.

(I was very surprised and I forgot to ask his name. That's a shame. He might be your father's neighbor.)

-△-



This morning I found an E-mail from Monte on my computer. He wrote that he had sent me many e-mails but all of them had returned to him because he made mistakes in my e-mail address. That's a shame. Anyway I wrote my answer to his e-mail.

Dear Monte,

Thanks for your E-mail. I'm really glad to receive it. Oh, you had sent me many e-mails however I couldn't receive them. That's a shame. I heard you changed your e-mail address. Don't you use MSN messenger now?

I only have a basic knowledge about US politics and I know that it's very difficult for me to read and understand the articles about politics. However if you send me some articles, I will try to read them. And I'm sure it's really interesting and useful for me. Thanks for your offer. I'd really appreciate it.

Now Chris is in Japan. Though I haven't met him yet, he must be enjoying his days in Japan.

I think you had already heard this from Chris, however we have to have our cars checked every two years. The law concerning traffic systems provides for it. It costs over 150 thousand yen, not so cheap. And we also pay the toll to drive on high ways. Chris told me that's one of the reasons why he didn't want to live in Japan.

I hope you will be able to spend wonderful times with your relatives and your old friends in Kansas City. Will you meet your old friend there for the first time in 35 years? That sounds great. He must be so changed. I wonder if you can recognize him. I met my high school friends for the first time in a long time last summer. I spent a really fun time with them. I would like to visit your home again someday. I guess I will visit you within three years. Be sure to be healthy until that time. I will also study English hard to communicate with you well. Take care and have great days.

-△-



To KG

When I say 'a friend of mine', I think I would like to emphasize that I have a lot of friends and I mean only one friend among them by that phrase. And I guess I say 'my friend' without such a thought. I think 'my picture' means a picture that belongs to me so I can also see your face on that picture. And I'm sure 'a picture of me' means that I can see only my face on that picture. Do you understand what I want to say? But to tell the truth, I think it's not so important for me to

study such detailed grammars. Improving my vocabulary seems to be more important for me than studying that. But sometimes I really want to solve these detailed questions. By the way did you hear that Chris came to Japan? Actually I was very surprised to know that news. Have you ever met him? Do you have a plan to meet him?

Thanks for letting me know that web site. That's nice. You would teach me that site because you read my diary in which I wrote my opinion about Fine. To tell the truth I'm tired from studying English now. I'm spending almost all of my free time studying English. Why do I study so hard? I don't know. It's kind of my custom and hobby. Hahaha... (Please read my comment on my BBC)

Beauty myth

These days I hear many young women try to have cosmetic surgery and I also see many high school girls with makeup. I think the true beauty is not appearance but it's in their mind. They only want to be good looking. I think it's stupid. Regarding super model in my opinion they must have a lot of frustrations because they can't eat enough. They always might be hungry. Keeping slender must be very tough. Almost all girls want to keep thin and don't eat enough. Their diets are not good at all. I'm afraid for their future because they need good nutrition in their young days. Please teach me the difference between a cosmetic surgery and plastic surgery.

-△-

trouble of a computer

2006,3,7



Now I have a Chinese friend who is living in Beijing. She is a university teacher and we sometimes talk with each other in English by using MSN messenger. But recently we can't connect with each other. We can send messages well but we can't speak. We can't understand why it suddenly became impossible to do it. I think there is some trouble with the international connection system between Japan and China. Computers are really useful however sometimes strange troubles that I can't fix happen.

-△-

about an ATL

2006,3,6



Honestly I hadn't known about an ATL until I met you. Actually my first son graduated from the private high school that is famous for its international education and I had met a foreign teacher at the school. But I don't know if he was an ALT or not. And I had never met such teachers at my second son's school, the public school. When I asked my son about an ALT of his school last year, he answered that he had been taught English by him only twice or once in his entire school life. Regarding my school days such a system hadn't begun. If I had had an opportunity to be taught by ALT, it would have been wonderful.

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three questions

2006,3,5



Today I have three questions. Would you mind answering my questions? For the first, could you teach me the detailed difference of these two sentences, A and B? A: I want to have my picture taken. B: I want my picture taken. I really want to know the difference of nuance between them. For the second, could you teach me the detailed difference of these two phrases, C and D? C: a picture of me D: my pictures I know the meanings of these phrases are the same but I still wonder that there must be the difference between them. For the last, you corrected my English sentence last time. And you wrote "Shizuka Arakawa is taller than other medalists, an American and Russian women." Why did you write "an American and Russian women." It seems to be strange. Why did you use an article "an" to American and why didn't you use an article to Russian. I thought that maybe "American and Russian" is treated one word. But if it is right, you can't use women. The word, "women" is the plural form. Now I can't understand this article.

-△-

about attitude

2006,3,4



To feel happy every day seems to be obviously wonderful. In my opinion it's very important to keep motivation if we want to get results. We must not lose our 'can do' attitude. I think attitude has two meanings. One of them means the opinion and feeling and the other means the

way you behave. Today I think you used the word of attitude in the meaning of the first.

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 **audio posts**

2006,3,3



An extra talk is,

I certainly enjoy putting these audio posts on the Internet; I think that's very fun. And I hope you enjoy them. If you have any suggestions for audio posting or diary subjects, please let me know in an e-mail. I'm looking forward to hearing your opinions. Take care and keep in touch.

I think many students whose levels of English conversation are really different listen to this audio posts. Sometimes they are very easy for me but to tell the truth I like such posts. I mean, when I can listen to you easily, I can have confidence in my ability of English and it lets me cheer up. In the case of difficult posts, I loose my confidence and it's hard for me to continue reading and listening to them every day. Individually these days I have to take very difficult lessons at NOVA so I really want to enjoy listening to these posts without a dictionary. And if it's OK, I hope you'll let me listen to the American people's everyday conversation.

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2006,3,2



I didn't know the difference between a fireplace and a mantelpiece exactly. I guessed a fireplace meant a simple piece of equipment in which we make a fire and a mantelpiece meant the frame which was built by something like blocks. Now I know that my idea is right. Why don't Japanese people know this difference? I'm sure actually they were from the western country. In Japan our traditional heater is Irori which is a fireplace in the center of a room. I read many books written in western countries like "little women", when I was a girl. And I got knowledge of a mantelpiece in the books. It was translated as mantelpiece in Katakana. We call such a word gairaigo which mean the words from the foreign countries. On the right side I can see the door and I can also see the lamp on the small table on the left side in your picture. In front of the fireplace there are logs that might have been cut by Monte and a small mat. I have strong confidence in my answer.

An extra talk is,

Well, Japanese are famous for bringing gifts to (I couldn't catch this word.) at home stay and other trips overseas. A lot of times Japanese spend a lot of money but I think if you go and get kendama and other things at the one hundred yen store, people would be just as satisfied. In America we don't have a custom of giving gifts as often as Japanese do. So Americans are happy with anything but I will say the Kendama will be a very popular gift.

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✚ Shizuka Arakawa's performance

2006,3,1



I'm convinced that the stories of Akinori Iwamura and Shizuka Arakawa were extracted from articles of a magazine or a newspaper published in America because I found a lot of difficult words there. And I recognized the sentences were not simple. They were kind of complex and oratorical writings. I've never heard about the story of Iwamura until I read Fine's diary. I was really interested in how Shizuka was introduced abroad and I was satisfied with that article. She looks smart and cool. She said at the interview, "I have to study English to be active in the world from now on." I absolutely agree with her. It's necessary for Japanese to master English to be famous in the world but I'm sure it's still more important for us to understand our culture and to round out Japanese.

An extra talk is,

Well, I didn't watch much of the Olympics but I did see Shizuka Arakawa's performance. And it was fantastic. I couldn't believe how flexible she is. And her jumping was wonderful. She was very tall. What did you think? You must have been so proud of her.

the desertification

2006,4,30



An extra talk is,

This is the first time I will go to one of 123's events. She participates in many of those small events around Tokyo. And she is quite a talented stylist. If you come tonight, you will meet her. See you soon.

I know the desertification means the situation where there are no plants. Why do they collect the donations for it? What is the connection between them and Africa? Do they belong to an environmentalist group? Are they concerned with ecology? Frankly I can't understand the reason why they do such a thing.

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Green Day

2006,4,29



Sakura season has been over. Now we can enjoy the green fresh leaves. You said, "I thought "Green Day" was a band?!" Did you think it's a name of a group of musicians? Do you know what we called this national holiday in the old days? I will give you two hints. Now we have the national holiday of the same name as the previous today in December. Today had been called ??? in Japan until 18 years ago. I think it's not so difficult a question. If you know the Japanese recent history, you can answer easily. But nowadays many kids might not know this answer even in Japan. I'm waiting your right answer.

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too expensive

2006,4,28



An extra talk is,

Actually you can know the purchase of the membership to use the health club of this hotel as well as the pool. It's only about eighty dollars, which is about nine thousand yen. One of my friends actually has a membership there. So every morning he goes to the Intercontinental Hotel to swim in the wonderful pool and then he goes to work.

Swimming at the gorgeous hotel before going to work, that sounds cool. That reminds me of the time when I swam in the pool in the Osaka empire hotel about ten years ago. I had a good experience there and after that I checked the price of the member ship of that gym. I don't remember exactly but it might have cost two hundred fifty thousand yen to be a member and we also would have to pay over twenty thousand yen per month. It's very expensive compared with the fee of that famous hotel in Chicago.

Doesn't it sound too expensive? Isn't it a little bit expensive? Don't you think it costs too much? Weren't you surprised to hear that? Why does almost everything cost more in Japan than in America? In my opinion the real estate in Tokyo is really expensive so it must become more expensive than it is in other place. Do you think Tokyo is a suitable city to live? It's convenient but it's too busy and there is very little nature. Honestly I wouldn't like to live in Tokyo. Even if I go there for shopping, I get tired. I prefer shopping in Fujisawa to doing it in Tokyo.

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about self-reflection

2006,4,27



Well, self-reflection is a very important concept because it allows you to look at your past mistakes and achievements. And from them you can learn something by yourself. By improving yourself a little bit everyday I think you can end up with wonderful things. The important thing to remember is to know the tasks are not finished just in one day. You have to keep striving just like English.

I agree with you. I sometimes reflect on my younger days and regret them. Why didn't I study harder when I was a university student? I should have studied abroad at that time but it was really difficult for us to do it about thirty years ago. They say, Youth is wasted on the young. Does it mean that young people have a lot of possibility but they can't understand how to spend their youth? Why didn't I continue to study English? I had been very busy because I had to work and raise my sons. It's really hard work to take care of kids especially boys. If I were younger I could master English more quickly. But I'm becoming more knowledgeable with my age. Now I know we shouldn't give up anything even if we aren't young. Better late than never. Twenty years later I might enjoy my life. I will travel all over the world speaking English fluently.

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What happened with your HP?

2006,4,25



Sorry to call you in so late evening. But now I can't see your web site. I clicked Fine's address but another HP appeared. Its name is Fine. us, the same name as yours but it's completely

different from yours. I can't believe it! I don't know what kind of HP it is. Maybe it's a Japanese company's HP. There were a lot of contents like a shopping site. Where is your HP? I clicked your address several times but I can't find your Hp. Can you understand what I mean? Anyway please check your HP as soon as possible.

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✚ I'm a little bit embarrassed to say that.

2006,4,24



"After NOVA what will you do?"

"I'm going to a driving range."

"Do you play golf? Is it your pastime?"

"It used to be. I got into playing golf but now ... I'm into studying English. Hahaha, I'm a little bit embarrassed to say that. Because my English is still too bad."

To tell the truth I haven't said that I'm busy studying English in my new office. Almost everyday I go to NOVA after work. Even if I work over time I still go there. Needless to say my ability of English is still low. Studying harder, I came to know my English is worthwhile. It means I have spoken to many Japanese who can speak English fluently. So I'm ashamed to say That my hobby is studying English.

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✚ The rumor

2006,4,23



Today I heard a terrible rumor at the Voice room of NOVA. Two big murder cases happened in Japan about ten years ago. One of them was an Oomu cult affair. Asahara who was the founder of that cult gathered many young people and they killed many ordinary people by poison called saran at the subway. Of course he was arrested and now he is on trial. And another awful incident was Sakakibara incident. It was a murder case which was caused by a fourteen or fifteen-year-old boy. He killed two or three elementary school kids. At last he killed a six-year-old boy and cut off his head and put it in front of the gate of the elementary school. Can you believe it? He was arrested and he spent several years in a detention center and after that he was released. Now he

is living somewhere in Japan. Someone said to us in English, "I heard Sakakibara is now living in Fujisawa." "Oh no, is it true? It sounds terrible." "I know such a kind of rumor. And I also heard two children of Asahara lived in our city." "It's true. His children were in the custody of the child welfare center here for a little while." A young American teacher looked surprised to hear our chatting. Now I have no idea about these solutions. Some town has to receive them but...it must be kind of a tough situation.

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about holding hands

2006,4,22



An extra talk is,

Holding hands is I guess just one of the forms of physical contact that is in America used to being. You don't see them in Japan. Tell me what your opinion is about holding hands.

The thing that surprised me very much in Korea was that I saw many couples of girls walking while holding hands on a road. What do you think about it? To tell you the truth I don't want to hold hands with my husband in public. I would be embarrassed if we did such a thing. And I also guess they must be extramarital relations when I saw middle aged couples holding hands. But on the other hand elderly couples who are holding hands look really heartwarming. This is my frank opinion about holding hands.

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Whats the meaning of Calves??

2006,4,21



An extra talk is,

Well, I normally like to go to the gym about three times a week. When I'm in Japan, I go to the gym called Takara Dojyo which is here in Tokyo and That is where Sakauraba from PRIDE trains. It's a great place to work out and everyone is very friendly. It's good fun, too.

You wrote many difficult words on your website. I checked them on ALC site. I could understand the meanings of Pull ups,Sit ups, Squats and Stretching. On the other hand I couldn't catch the

meaning of others. Are they words of exercises? I think they mean the parts of our bodies. Please would you mind teaching me the meanings?

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✚ **my advice to a Chinese woman who studied in America**

2006,4,20



As for your interview for a job, I will give you some advice. First of all you had better wear a dark suit and black high heels. You shouldn't wear too much make up. Wearing light makeup is better. Secondly take care not to be late for a meeting. You should arrive at a meeting place at latest ten minutes early. Thirdly after arriving at the place on time, you should knock on a door before you open the door. Then after an interviewer told you to come in, you can open the door and enter the room. Don't enter the room before you get the answer. Fourthly you should bow politely in front of the interviewers. It's really difficult to bow correctly even for me. I can't explain well how to bow. Maybe ninety-degrees is better than forty-five degrees. Nodding might give them an impression that you are rude. Take care not to nod. For the end you have to answer politely, clearly and succinctly. You shouldn't brag about yourself too much. I think in both America and China they require to be aggressive at the office. Aggressive usually means a good point in your country but in Japan people don't like aggressive persons especially with regard to women. We usually tend to like modest and delicate women better than aggressive and active. It sounds strange compared with American's thoughts for you. But you had better understand our thoughts. I'm sure you know this proverb," When in Rome, do as the Romans do." It's important.

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✚ **a white American girl from Florida**

2006,4,18



The other day I met a white American girl from Florida. She told me that she could speak both English and Spanish because her parents were from Puerto Rico in the Caribbean Sea. That reminded me of the movie " West side Story." Have you ever watched that movie? I watched it when I was a little girl. It might have been a revival movie. I still remember the great songs and the wonderful dancing scenes. The hero and the heroin were from that island and they were poor.

Actually the enemies were laughing at their English pronunciation. Well, she taught us how to dance Salsa in a Voice room of NOVA. She was really cute and cheerful. To tell you the truth I was not interested in foreign countries and didn't know many circumstances of them until I began to study English. I have learned many things about America, Canada, England, Australia, New Zealand and even South Africa. Many teachers talked about the topics of their mother countries. And some of them were actually not white people but a Chinese Canadian, a Chinese Australian and so on. They look like Japanese however they are native English speakers. Those countries are huge but the populations are not big. They must have been promoting the immigration policy. What's more I realized how I didn't understand about Japan and didn't have a wide circle of knowledge. And I also understood that when we speak English, the contents were more important than our pronunciation.

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✚ Welcome to Japan again!!

2006,4,17



Welcome to Japan again. I'm glad to hear you have come back to Japan safely. What kind of job had you been doing in NYC? I'm looking forward to hearing about it from you. Anyway, would you mind correcting my English?

It must be a satellite photo of the main office of Fuji TV. I began to use goggle map about 6 months ago. I was really surprised about that satellite map. Actually when I checked my condo, I could see not only the roof of my house but also our cars parking in the yard. It was amazing. But for the bad point it was not easy to recognize the location, when we use it. I mean there aren't names of streets and stations etcetera on that map. It's really inconvenient.

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✚ the difference between Canada and Japan

2006,4,16



"When your gold fish dies, what would you do?"

" In Japan I think almost everyone buries it in the ground."

"In Canada we flush it in a toilet."

"No way! It sounds cruel."

"When your big dog passed away, what would you do? In Canada we bury him in our garden."

"In Japan recently funeral directors are pretty common."

"You must be kidding."

"No, not at all. It's true because we don't have big gardens especially in big cities. And having pets is really popular in Japan. Many people love pets as their family. They would like to treat dead pets politely. The funeral directors put dead pets in coffins and burn them. After that they return the bones in a small white box to the owners. Many ex owners display them on the shelves with pictures of their pets."

"Really? It's incredible. How much does it cost?"

"Maybe it costs over ten thousand yen."

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Music is wonderful 🎵 🎶

2006,4,14



An extra talk is,

When I was an elementary school student, I started to play the tenor saxophone. It was really enjoyable for me. I really enjoyed the opportunity to play that instrument because many children didn't have an opportunity. Did you practice to play instrument when you were child? Well, when I went to college, I quit playing the saxophone. That was very unfortunate. Now I'm learning to play the piano and I want to buy a new saxophone. That would be a treat.

I will try to write a short passage with these words, music, notes, chord, rhythm, instrument, concert, stage, orchestra, and recital, instead of explaining them.

Music is one of the best things that make our life happy. And if you can play some instruments, it might be wonderful. When you try to learn how to play the instruments, you have to master some music theory such as chord and rhythm. And then you would be able to read a note or scores. After mastering them you can play it. Somebody having really good talent for music can play it without music just by their ears. And when you improve your skill, you can play it on the stage. An orchestra might back you. We call it a recital. It must be wonderful. Holding a concert sounds great. You should try it.

✦ An Australian photographer

2006,4,13



The other day I met an Australian guy looked over forty years at Fujisawa NOVA. He told us that he was a part time English teacher and his regular occupation was a photographer. And he showed us a magazine titled Outdoor Japan. Actually he was the photographer who had taken the wonderful surfing photo of that cover. Do you know Brad Delaney? I said to him, "I know this magazine. An American named Chris told me about this book. He might be working as a translator for this magazine. Actually he was a interpreter for Fuji Rock Festival, too." He checked the last page of the magazine and found your name there saying, "He must be good at Japanese. He might know about me. Is he a surfer?" After that he told his interesting life until that time to us. He doesn't take a picture of professional surfers but amateur surfers. It's the character of his photos.



✦ Is Wasabi English?

2006,4,12



An extra talk is,

Well, did you notice the word Karioki? Karioki is Karaoke in Japanese But in English we pronounce Karioki. It kind of like Karite. What's Karite in Japanese. Well, of course it's Karate. Well, some words come over from Japan and it's easy to pronounce like Sushi and Sashimi. Others are more difficult like Karate and Karaoke. What other words do you think we use in English from Japan.

The other day I had an opportunity to explain about Sashimi to an Australian guy. I said to him, "They are a cut raw fish such as tuna, raw shrimp, raw squid and so on. We eat it with a soy sauce and um I don't know that English name but... It's like a ginger and garlic. That color is green and we always eat it after graining." "Do you mean Wasabi?" "Yes, exactly. Is it English?" "Absolutely, many Australians know it." Tsunami might be a famous English from Japanese. The

teacher taught us about it in my high school days.

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about cell phone

2006,4,11



Q: What programs do you want to watch on your cell phone?

A: Why can I watch a TV program on such a small screen? Were we so busy to watch to watch it outside? I can watch it on a big screen sitting on a couch. Sorry but it sounds kind of stupid.

Q: What kind of cell phone do you have?

A: My cell phone is AU and it's not up-to-date. But it's still OK. I can send an e-mail and call to anywhere by using it. I don't expect my cell phone to have many kinds of functions.

Q: How many hours per day do you watch television?

A: Probably on 15 minutes I watch only news on TV.

Q: How much does your cell phone cost every month?

A: I don't know exactly because I'm a family member of my husband. So the telephone bill is charged directly to his bank account every month. But it might be not so expensive because he has never warned me not to use so much.

An extra talk is,

Well I will answer the questions. First what programs do you want to watch on your cell phone?

Let's see, I want to watch Downtown Hehehe and sports, patiquarly Sumo tournament and baseball.

What kind of cell phone do you have?

I have J phone which I suppose it's convenient. I'm not sure it's cheapest but I like it.

How many hours per day do you watch TV?

Probably only one hour. I try to watch TV not so often.

How much does your cell phone cost every month?

Well, my cell phone bills about eight thousand yen. I know some people spend 3 or 4 Man on their cell phone. That's certainly a lot.

How much does your cell phone bill?

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In Kawasaki NOVA there were over ten students, too. A teacher from Australia asked us one quiz. It was about IQ test. When and where was that test invented? Actually I had no idea but the teacher wrote some hints, it mean he wrote 4 answers about each questions. I guessed it must have been necessary to sort soldiers. So it might have been invented during World War one, in 1916. Stanford University might be more famous for its science subject than Paris, Cambridge and Yale. I answered that IQ test must have been invented at Stanford in America in 1947. I was the only one student who answered the quiz collect. My English was worse than other many students, maybe it was the middle class, but I was a little bit proud of myself. But the teacher didn't know the purpose of that invention. I mean that I still don't know if my guess which it must have been invented to sort soldiers is right or not.

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Have you ever heard about the Voice class of NOVA? It's like a meeting where some Japanese and a native English teacher talk about many kinds of themes. It costs about two thousand yen for a day. That room opens in many NOVA from two ten to night o'clock almost every day. And we can enter those kinds of rooms in NOVA anywhere all over Japan and anytime for one ticket. They sometimes sell a free pass of voice class for one month or two months. I bought that pass for two months the other day. It cost only nineteen thousand and eight hundred yen. And I can participate any voice classes in Japan anytime. Actually I participated in three voice classes yesterday. Well, I went to a gallery in Ginza to watch my son's work and after that I went to NOVA in Ginza. I was very very surprised because that NOVA was really gorgeous. The floor was covered with red soft carpet and lights looked like chandeliers. The front desk and doors were made of brown lumber like mahogany. And there were over ten students. Some of them told that they lived near Ginza. They must be very rich because the price of real estate near Ginza is very very expensive. After that I went to Shinbashi NOVA that was in a business area. The air of that NOVA is absolutely different from other NOVA. There were four middle-aged men and all of them looked like high-class English speaker and they were talking about the responsibility of companies and stocks. I could understand their story about 75 percent but I was fed up with such theme. So I left that room after 40 minutes, it means one class. Then I rode the Tokaidou line and went to Kawasaki NOVA. Anyway I decided to participate in Voice class as many times as possible. If I do

it fifty times, it costs only four hundred yen per one time. It's really cheap and nice.

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✦ About living near sea

2006,4,8



The good point of living near sea is that we can see wonderful scenery of blue ocean. And we also enjoy marine sports such as surfing, swimming. The climate might be calm near the sea. I mean it's not hot in summer and it's warm in winter. On the other hand the bad point is the wind from the sea is really salty. Everything gets rusty easily. We can't air washing cloths and futon. We call it damage from salt. During the rainy season, from June to July, that is absolutely terrible.

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✦ If I had more money...

2006,4,7



At first I would employ a maid. Because I can have her do housework instead of me and I can enjoy more free time than now. Then I would quit my job and go abroad if I had much more money. But actually there are a lot of dangerous areas like Iraq in the world. So I should say I would travel all over the world except such areas. I will go only safety countries. That's my dream. But it requires a kind of courage to quit my job. Because now pension plan is not enough and I can receive all of it until sixty-five years old. From sixty to sixty five we can get only half pension. And now I can get a pretty good salary from my government. In Japan almost all of local governments still adopt wage system based on seniority as you know. It's the reason why I still hesitate to quit my job now.

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✦ Driving a car in America

2006,4,6



The thing that surprised me about LA was there were a lot of gavages like an old tire in the side of free ways. It seemed to be really dangerous but they can always drive a car on free ways for

free. In Japan the high ways are very very clean but we should pay much money when we drive there. I have an experience of driving a car in Hawaii last summer. Of course I must have driven on the right side in Hawaii and I felt very scary to do it. Because I'm used to driving a car on the left side in Japan. I drove a car in a lonely and small town in the north area. And what's more my son who is used to driving in America advised me how to drive a car but it was still scary for me.

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What should I do?

2006,4,5



A Nova teacher from New Zealand told us that she had lost her wallet but after a week later a Japanese guy had found it and returned it to her. She is thinking Japan is a really safety country and Japanese people are really honest and considerate. We denied. "I'm glad you had a good experience in Japan and your impression of Japan became wonderful but your case is really rare. When we lost our wallet, almost every time we can't get it again, especially there was money in it." "What will you do when you find a wallet on a road?" "Of course I will take it to a police office because there might be important goods like credit cards and they can find a owner easily." "How about only money?" "Hahaha, if it's only fewer than one thousand yen, I might pick it up and use it by myself. But if it's over one thousand yen and less than five thousand yen, I might neglect it. Because after I use it, I must feel a kind of ashamed for doing it but it's too cheap to send it to a police office. It seems to be delicate value." What's your opinion about it?

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a Japanese drivers license for foreigner

2006,4,4



Today I watched a Japanese car license of a foreigner for the first time. It's the same as mine, written in Japanese. Of course the name was written in Katakana and they write the United States of America in the space where we should write our legal address on the family registry. To tell the truth a black American who was a teacher of NOVA showed us his license. He told us he loved cars and he needed Japanese license if he wanted to drive a car over one year in Japan. Within one year they can drive cars if they have international licenses. "Did you take an

examination in Futamatagawa? (We have to take a driving test in Futamatagawa in Kanagawa.) Were questions written in Japanese? You can read Japanese very well.” “Hahaha, it’s written in English and for only foreigners who has car licenses of their own countries. It’s easy to pass. We should answer only ten questions.” Anyway I realized I could learn many things from foreigners, not only English but also their customs, their thoughts and Japanese system for foreigners when I speak with foreigners. That’s great.

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the first day in my new office

2006,4,3



Today was actually the first day in my new office and a fresh woman just graduated from a university entered my section. She was born in 1983 so she is two years younger than my younger son. I can’t help realizing I got old. Regarding the new office the atmosphere is pretty good. I always think it depends on members. I mean if there is a kind of bad staff, the employees, especially boss around her or him get tired. I have to commute from my house to the south area in Yokohama. At first I ride the Tokaido line and change to the Yokohama Subway. It takes about one hour from my house to there. It’s shorter than before and I can sit down on the subway. It’s still OK. Anyway I will have to do my best in my new office for a while.

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about my job

2006,4,2



I have been working for a long time as a civil servant just after graduating from the university. The best thing of my occupation is I can get salary constantly every month. But to tell the truth my job is not so exciting. When we receive a written appointment, We have to work for the department written on it. Even if it’s not our favorite department, we have to transfer to that section. I have been working for many different departments, such as secretary section and the section to promote shopping mall.

Many high school students walk parallel on a sidewalk every morning and they don’t seem to care of other people. I’m sure it’s a kind of rude and one of the most terrible things in Japan now.

What's a public bath ?

2006,4,1



Thanks for your e-mail. Let's enjoy chatting with each other on the messenger board. It's still interesting and useful for me. Yesterday I learned the new word "conservative". Thanks. Have a good day.

Almost every weekend I go to a public bath near my house. We have two spaces there. One of them is for men and the other is for women. And there are several kinds of bath tabs, such as large filled with hot water, middle size medical bath, small size bubble bath and sauna bath. Two of them are open-air bathes. At first we take off our clothes in a dressing room and then we go to the bath tab area. So everybody is naked there. We have a lot of such kind of facilities in Japan and some of them are hot springs. We don't feel shame there even if we are naked. It's really hard to explain about it. Please imagine about a big swimming pool. We say seeing is believing so please click here. It's a home page of My favorite public bath. The home page of kind of public bath is here. When you visit Japan again, please take a bath there. Its really wonderful place.

The Uda method

2006,5,31



Today I received a package of a DVD that let us practice how to improve our English pronunciation. It's quite an expensive DVD but I couldn't trust if it would be effective or not . So I had my elder son bid for it on the Internet auction. There was a reason why I decided to try to improve my pronunciation. I met some young students whose pronunciation was really good at NOVA. To be honest they couldn't speak English so well but it sounded quite well. I had an inferiority complex compared with them. Anyway from tonight I'm going to practice the method of Mr. Uda while watching the DVD.

A new teacher

2006,5,30



A young teacher from Oregon came to Japan just one week ago. I recommended her to eat Sushi at a belt conveyor sushi restaurant. " You can eat any sushi which looks delicious freely there

and moreover it doesn't cost a lot. One thing you should remember is golden dishes cost around five hundred yen each, expensive and plain dishes cost only one hundred yen, very cheap. In July you can enjoy many fireworks here. You ought to go to the beach to see the fireworks wearing Yukata. Yukata is a sort of simple Kimono for summer. It's not so expensive compared with a real Kimono." She looked very excited with hope.

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✚ English men

2006,5,29



English men

Now I'm interested in England. I've never been to Europe but someday I would like to visit there. I had a lot of opportunities to speak with teachers from England. I noticed that they never said they were from the United Kingdom. They always introduced themselves like this, "I'm from England." And they believe the language that people from England speak is true English. One of them asked me, which English was familiar to me British English, or American English. I answered like this, "Sorry but American English is easier for me to catch because I've watched many American movies. So I'm used to hearing it." He didn't get angry but looked really disappointed and told me. "I see but just imagine if the Chinese government changed their language and they began to speak Chinese Japanese. After that they said that their Japanese is common Japanese. What do you think about it? " They seem to be loyal to their country but they often make fools of their royal family. One of them said to me Prince Harry doesn't take after both his parents. "He is alike only that soldier." " Uh? Does it mean ... ? I've heard a lot of gossip concerning Princess Diana but..." I was really astonished at his words.

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✚ I've done it!

2006,5,28



Today I went to the driver's license office in Futamatagawa to renew my driver's license. After that I participated in voice classes in Futamatagawa NOVA and Yamato NOVA. When I purchased a voice free pass ticket two months ago, I decided to use it as many times as possible. Actually my ticket expired today. I've been there fifty days during sixty-one days. I've done it. Just

imagine speaking with English native teachers so many days. I've met over fifty native English speakers from America, England, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa and Wales. I've also met many Japanese students, from people who could speak English really well to young girls who were good at only short answers, there. I was impressed by many people and got a lot of knowledge. I've gotten a lot of courage but I don't know if my English has improved or not. Anyway now I'm satisfied with my effort. And I've noticed my weak points such as bad pronunciation and poor vocabulary. I will describe my experiences here from tomorrow.

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The due date

2006,5,27



Now my daughter in law is expecting. The due date of my new grandson is the tenth of June, two weeks from now. Her doctor said that her baby was a boy and he would be two thousand eight hundred grams. It means my second grandson could be born vigorously and grow up safely. I was very glad to hear that and I'm really looking forward to seeing him. What will we call him? Whom will he look like? Anyway I'm praying for the safe birth of the new baby.

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a very bad example

2006,5,26



He is a Japanese student in his early twenties. Today he ate a club sandwich with a cup of coffee for breakfast. Then during coffee break he ate a doughnut, a very sweet doughnut. For lunch he ate a hot dog and drank a coke. He drank a coffee again to take a rest at four p.m. In the evening he went to a restaurant with his friends and drank two glasses of beer while eating a huge beef steak. And after that he enjoyed eating an ice-cream cone just before going to bed. I guess his diet of today is quite bad. He got too much sugar. He has to cut down on sugar and try to watch fat intake. Then he tries to eat fruit and vegetables at least once a day. He had better drink a veritable juice instead of a coke and give up eating sweets like a doughnut and so on. I'm sure if he continues such kind of diet, he would have a life style related disease someday.

✚ About nutrition

2006,5,25



Today I will try to write about nutrition more concretely. We call them, carbohydrates, protein and fat, the three major nutrients. We need these nutrients and moreover some vitamins and minerals. Meat, pork, fish and eggs contain protein. Soybean is also a good source of protein. The source of carbohydrates is rice, bread and potatoes. We can get fat from oil, butter and meat. Vegetables, fruits and seaweed contain a lot of vitamins and minerals. We Japanese had been eating rice, fish, and soybeans, like Miso and Tofu, instead of meat. (Actually the ingredients of Miso and Tofu are soybeans.) It was a quite ideal diet but now we prefer a western diet to our traditional diet. We can live the longest in the world now. But I'm a little bit worried that we will not be able to live longer than now when present kids become old. In addition to nutrition they say vinegar is good for keeping healthy and porifinoul contained in red wine and cocoa is good for beauty. We should consider such kind of advice.

✚ eating Toro every day

2006,5,24



By the way I met a woman the other day at a local meeting. As she had only a few wrinkles in her face, she looked to be in her early sixties. But actually she was seventy-eight years old.

"Why do you look so young?"

"Thanks. My family runs a Sushi restaurant. So I've been eating Toro (the best Sashimi of tuna) for a long long time. It contains a lot of collagen. It's really good for my skin. Hahaha... You ought to eat Toro rather than buying expensive cosmetics. It's more effective than such a sham."

"But eating Toro would be more expensive than that. You can do it because your husband is an owner of a Sushi restaurant. I will go bankrupt soon if I do such a thing."

"You could do it."

I'm not sure if eating Toro every day is healthy or not.

one day at a time

2006,5,23



After work I went to Fujisawa NOVA to participate in a Voice class as usual. At first there was only one student. It's me. An Austrian teacher advised me that my level of English was quite near level three. "Do you tell your teachers that you want to be high level? You should because they probably think you don't want to level up." Actually I want to be level three. It's my goal but I know the textbook of level three is quite difficult. I've already bought it and now I'm studying it by myself. It's too difficult for me. If I took the lesson of level three, I couldn't understand it. It might be a waste of time and money. And I also want to study pronunciation by myself by using a DVD. Don't be in a hurry. Just taking it one day at a time is better.

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About eating habits

2006,5,22



I'm not familiar with nutrition but of course I have a basic knowledge about it. The English word diet has two meanings. One of them means eating habits and another means an effort to loose weight. In Japan we always take this word for the late meaning. Basically the most important thing for a diet is to eat many kinds of food everyday. Unbalanced diet isn't healthy because we need a lot of nutrition. Then we should take care not to eat too much and drink alcohol too much. Of course drinking coffee and sweet drinks like coca cola is not good. Moreover you had better eat fast food as little as possible. If you consider these easy rules, you can enjoy healthy days.

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Boiling water

2006,5,21



Last night I burned my right foot. When I spilled boiling water on my foot, I poured it into a cup from a kettle. "It's hot. It's hot." I shouted and cooled my foot with a cooler soon. The boiling water might have splattered from the mouthpiece of the kettle because it was very hot. I should have taken greater care. Anyway now there are two red stains on my foot but I don't feel pain anymore. The symptom is not serious and I'm relieved now.

✚ **A movie or a book**

2006,5,20



Do you usually read a book before watching that movie or do the opposite thing? I usually do only one thing. I mean when I was moved by books, I didn't try to watch those movies. When I read "the Bridges of Madison County", I couldn't read it without my tears. When I watched that movie starring Clint Eastwood and Merrl Streep after that, I was really disappointed. The two stars were quite different from my image of the hero and the heroine in that book. Yesterday the famous movie "The Davinci Code" was shown all over the world. That book is really popular even in Japan. One of my friends recommended me to read it and many people want to watch that movie. I heard it's a story about Jesus Christ. To tell you the truth I'm not interested in that story because I'm not a Christian and I don't have a wide circle of knowledge about Christ. I think I can't understand that story exactly. But if that movie will be a great hit, I will watch that movie not to be out of date. And if that story is so complicated that I can't understand the movie, I would probably read that book.

✚ **Working in a foreign country**

2006,5,19



Working in foreign country

I gave an advised the Chinese woman who wants to work in Japan. She applied to get a Japanese citizenship recently because her husband is a Japanese and she decided to live in Japan forever. But she has to wait for more than six months to get the Japanese passport. Getting Japanese citizenship seems to be quite strict even if they are married with Japanese partners. She is in her early thirties and well educated. Actually she graduated from the master course of an American Univ. in New York and has two kinds of master degrees, accounting and so on. Moreover she has a qualification as a tax consultant in the US. Of course she can speak both English and Chinese fluently and also speaks Japanese pretty well. But it sounds a little bit strange sometimes. She got the first grade in the test of Japanese for foreigners. She said to me, " It's quite easy for Chinese to get the first grade because we can read Kanji. It's quite advantageous for Chinese to pass the first grade. I know my Japanese isn't good enough to work in a Japanese company and I don't have an experience of working in Japan. It's quite a disadvantage to me." I cheered her up

and advised her like this, “ The older you get to be, it will be more difficult to get a job. You had better not hesitate to have an interview. By the way, do we need a visa when we visit China now? We needed a visa five years ago.” She answered to me, “Now you can go there without a visa if you stay under 2 weeks. The world is changing and changing.” In my opinion living in a foreign country, especially working there seems to be still hard. But now the world is getting smaller and smaller. We should offer the opportunity for foreigners to work in Japan. From such a point of view English conversation schools are a little bit valuable for improving internationalization.

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I really regret it!

2006,5,18



I was supposed to ride a helicopter when I worked for the secretary department about seven years ago. Now I forgot the reason why I wasn't able to do it but I really regret it. If I had ridden the helicopter at that time, I would probably have enjoyed it. Just imagine if I could have ridden a helicopter at that time. I could have seen beautiful scenery. I wish I had ridden a helicopter on a fine day.

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About my job

2006,5,17



I commute to my office over one hour each way and have to check very small figures in documents there everyday. I have to check over six thousand data by the end of July. Now I have stiff shoulders and a thick head. I feel a pain on my right elbow and wrist. Moreover I feel asleep on the top of my right fingers because I have to put my seal on so many papers. Frankly now I'm fed up with my work. I can't help saying my job is kind of hard. But my staff is working in earnest everyday. They are inputting many data into computers without complaining. I really appreciate their efforts. And I know to earn money is not so easy. I shouldn't complain anymore.

✚ Mother's day

2006,5,16



The day before yesterday was mother's day. We were talking about how we express our gratitude to mothers in both America and Japan at NOVA. A twenty- three- year old American teacher from New England told us he had sent a flower bouquet to his mother by using the Internet. A middle aged Japanese woman asked him if he had given his mother red carnations or not. And she explained that in Japan children usually gave red carnations to mothers and gave white carnations to dead mothers on mother's day. He didn't know such kinds of customs. It sounds a little bit strange to me. Because according to my memory mother's day and that custom started in America originally. Anyway the customs are usually changing and changing. People tend to forget their origin. I know many young Japanese also don't know our customs. In my case I received pajamas from my first son's family and my second son's present was a business class ticket for an airplane. It means that he has a lot of mileage and booked a business class seat for my travel to LA for free by using his mileage.

✚ Happy birthday!!

2006,5,15



Thank you for chatting with me sometimes. You taught me some English such as “ conservative” and “ If it's OK with you”. I really appreciate it. Now I have a plan to attend my son's graduation ceremony at UCLA in the middle of next month. After that I'm going to visit San Francisco and Yosemite national park.

I would like to visit you again but Mt. Morris is a little bit too far from the west coast. And I can take days off for only one week. That's a shame. Anyway I'm sure I will visit you again someday. I'm looking forward to seeing you. Take care and enjoy your nice days with Judy.

✚ Rosa Parks

2006,5,14



To tell you the truth when I hear the word Australia, that reminds me of the country of only white people. When I studied world geography in junior high school, we learned so. But in the seventies they changed their policy and now many immigrants live there. Actually I met many Asian Australian teachers who look like Japanese. They say now there is no discrimination between whites and Asian people in that country. Today I will try to describe Rosa Parks. She was a black American and passed away last autumn. In the fifties they had discrimination between races in America. There were three areas in a bus which means one area was for whites, another area was for blacks and the last area was for both of them. And black people could sit down in the last area but when a bus was crowded, they had to give their seat to white people. One day she was quite tired and she didn't offer her seat to a white person. Finally she was arrested and after that black people began to protest the discrimination. Now she is called Mother of the Modern Day Civil Rights Movement.

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I helped a Chinese guy!

2006,5,13



It happened on my way home from the station on Thursday evening about 9 o'clock. I was waiting at the crossing when a strange guy in his early thirties touched my shoulder. I quickly noticed he was a Chinese or a Korean. I can't speak both Chinese and Korean at all but he could speak English a little. Actually he was a trainee who learned some Japanese technology while working in the factory in Fujisawa. He came to Japan the day before that day and stayed in an apartment house of the company only for one night. He lost his way even though it was an only ten minute walk from the station to the apartment. He showed me the address and his name plate but I couldn't guess where his apartment was. I was thinking about what I should have done and then I called to the apartment by my cell phone. I explained the situation to the man who answered the phone and asked him to come to the station to meet him. He had to walk out from the South exit but he walked out from the North exit. I told him to wait for the superintendent in front of the ticket gate and left him. After that I was a little bit worried about him but he must have met the superintendent. He really appreciated my help and I also was satisfied to help him thanks to my broken English. But frankly I think he might have been a bit careless. Who forgets the direction in a foreign country when he visits for the first time? He shouldn't have gone out without a map.

✚ **my personality**

2006,5,12



Today my boss requested me to write my good points and bad points. I had been considering it for a little while. Some people say that I'm earnest but I know it means I'm too serious. And actually I don't think so of myself. I am considered to have a strong sense of responsibility but I don't think so of myself. I sometimes get into something that I'm interested in. But I'm apt to trifle with something that seems not to be important and interesting. In my opinion almost everything has both sides. Finally I wrote as follows. "It's a little bit difficult for me to say my good points and bad points by myself. I'm an ordinary middle aged woman." Actually I have to check a lot of documents everyday at my office. It's kind of boring and it requires patience. To tell you the truth I always try not to yawn. But my boss seems to think that I'm a suitable person for my job and I'm finishing my duty silently every day.

✚ **a time limit of a driver's license**

2006,5,11



My birthday is in June and I received a post card from the driver's license office the other day. I will have to renew my driver's license by the day just one month after my birthday. In my memory we had to renew it during the period from one month before our birthday to the birthday. It means the deadline of renewal was our birthday. I know some people forgot to do it and they had to take a special procedure. There were so many such people that they might have changed the rule. Please tell me when the term of validity of a driver's license is in America. Do we make the birthday the deadline only in Japan? Anyway I will go to the office as soon as possible, so my important liense doesn't expire.

✚ **Sumo**

2006,5,10



An extra talk is,

Well, I can certainly say that Americans enjoy sports. We just love all kind of sports. Rockford has a minor basketball team. Chicago has a Chicago basketball team and Michel Jordan played there. We watched a lot of hokey, football, basketball and baseball. But we don't watch a lot of soccer although many kids play soccer while at a young age. What sports are you interested in? Do you watch a lot of sports on the weekend?

Have you ever watched Sumo at Kokugikan in Ryogoku? I've never watched real Sumo. Today I heard about it from a New Zealander. I think it sounds a little bit strange because I'm a Japanese and she is actually a foreigner. Anyway she recommended me to watch it at Kokugikan. The image of watching Sumo is very expensive but in fact it costs only three thousand yen if we watch it from the back seats.

I should advise you to go to Ryogoku.

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Which type is better?

2006,5,9



The purpose of each English learner might be different. Some of them study English to study abroad and others have to study it because they need it for their job. My first goal of studying was really simple. I only wanted to become able to go to America by myself. But now my goal has changed. I really want to speak English well. It means to speak it logically and politely. I met many Japanese who could speak English very well. I noticed we could sort them into two types. Some students, almost all of them are young, can pronounce well but can't speak long sentences well. They always say brief answers such as, "Really? You could be. Oh, my god!" I think they might have grown up in foreign countries or been living there for a while but they are people without education. Others are middle aged people whose pronunciations are not so good compared with such young people however they can explain many topics very well in English. They can speak English clearly, fluently and logically. Their vocabulary is really rich and of course I can't understand some of them. They seem to use the most proper words. I respect them. I envy them and I would like to be such an English speaker. When I speak English, I can't use my dictionary. So I usually try to write an e-mail to you without checking a dictionary. Would you mind correcting my English if I use a unsuitable word even if it's correct grammatically?

✚ Is he a good teacher or a bad ?

2006,5,8



Today a Japanese guy spoke about his experience of an English lesson to us. When he took a lesson with three other students, a teacher, who was a black American, stopped his speech and said to him, "Your English is broken. It hurts my ears." He continued like this, "His words really hurt my mind. Now I don't have confidence in my English. He is a terrible teacher. After that I will complain about him to the Japanese staff." Another teacher who was listening to him with me asked, "Do you know his name? What did his appearance look like? He must be K. He is really strict but a good teacher. It's his style to stop students when they speak wrong English. Because we have to teach four students for only forty minutes. It's too short. And probably you will never forget your mistake. What do you think about it, Masaho?" "Well, I've noticed that many teachers don't correct my broken English. If they don't correct my wrong English, I would believe my wrong English is correct. So when I take a personal lesson, I always ask a teacher to correct my wrong English. But when I take a group lesson, I don't ask him to do it. Because if he does it every time, our lesson wouldn't move forward. I don't want to irritate other students besides me. In such a point of view, I think he might be a good teacher. English is a strange language for Japanese. If teachers don't correct our wrong English, we can't improve our English. But some teachers told me that if they always corrected my English, I might lose my confidence. So it's a reason why they don't stop my talking every time. I'm sure it depends on the case."

✚ About birth rate in Japan

2006,5,7



I will try to write my opinion why the birth rate is decreasing in Japan in my e-mail. Please check it after that.

First of all the average marriage age of Japanese women is getting older and older. Because recently many Japanese women are well educated and after graduating from school they have a lot of opportunities to enjoy their single lives. They can get salaries by themselves and travel all over the world. Who wants to get married and lose their free days? Now it's not a purpose for young Japanese women to get married. In the old days generally Japanese women couldn't earn

a lot by themselves and they had to get married to exist. Then even if they get married, they don't want to have many kids. I mean they would like to have only one or two kids. Because raising kids is a really hard work and they need a lot of money to bring them up. In Japan the education at an elementary school and a junior high school are compulsory education. So kids can study there for free but if they want to allow their kids to enter a good high school and a good university, they have to pay a lot of money to let kids study at a Jyuku after school. Some of them want to let their kinds get an education at the good private school. I wrote good school some times and good school means very difficult school to enter. They have to get high scores in entrance examinations to enter such schools. Training kids requires a lot of money. On the other hand it's really hard for many married women to work outside. It means to enter kids to the day-care center is still difficult in Japan. The day-care centers are obviously lacking in Japan now. I think they are main reasons for declining birth rates in Japan. After all now Japan is a very very difficult society to live and raise children. In my opinion we should help young couples financially and morally. We have to create many day-care centers and real good schools. It means we have to prepare the easy society to work while raising kids for young mothers. After that many young people come to get jobs easily, don't feel anxiety and hope to have many kids. But I know to say opinion is really easier than putting through the policy.

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 **It must be Opera House in Sydney.**

2006,5,6



I've been there about fifteen years ago with my family. Now I have confidence in my answer. But to tell you the truth it was really difficult to answer correctly without your hints. At that time I really wanted to listen to a concert there but my sons didn't agree with me. They were eager to pet koalas so we visited three zoos. At first we went to the nearest zoo from Sydney bay where we didn't pet them. Then we went to another zoo which I forgot the name. At last we went to the third zoo which was pretty far from the center of Sydney and we were able to hold them. At that time none of us could speak English well. How could we go there? I might have spoken my terrible English. Anyway we enjoyed the trip in Sydney. I compared the picture of Haneda airport with that of Chicago O'hare. The latter is much huger than the former. And that reminds me of the time when I visited there just one year ago. I also searched for Mt. Morris on goggle map. I found Sunset Golf course, Silver Ridge Golf course and White Pine Forest there. I miss your hometown. I will probably visit there within three years. I'm really looking forward to doing it.



Q: Where are you going this Golden Week?

A: I have a lot of plans to do this Golden week. Does this question mean,” Where will you go this golden week?” I’ m sometimes confused the phrase of “be going”. Does “Be going to do” mean a future tense?

Q: Do you have plans to travel?

A: Yes. Strictly speaking it was not a trip but I visited my son’ s family in Nagoya.

Q: How long will you be on vacation?

A: I have continuous three-days off from Wednesday to Sunday. On Wednesday I cleaned my house. From Thursday to Friday I went to Nagoya. And on Saturday and Sunday I will have a rest at home. But during these days I’ m going to study English as usual.

Q: Did you have to work on Monday and Tuesday this week?

A: Yes, of course. I’ m a really earnest worker. It’ s a kind of joke. To tell the truth I have a plan to take days off in June to visit America. It’ s a reason why I did work on Monday and Tuesday.

Q: Did you buy a plane ticket?

A: For golden week I didn’ t. But for the trip in June I’ ve bought it.

Q: How much was your plane ticket?

A: I don’ t know exactly because my husband bought it for me. From this point of view I’ m a really easy-going person.

Q: Did you return to your hometown and visit your family?

A: During this golden week I didn’ t. I didn’ t return to my hometown Osaka but I called my mother living there.

Q: How crowded was the train?

A: I went to Nagoya and came back to my home by Shinkansen. Actually it was not crowded. I didn’ t buy reserved seats but I could sit down on seats easily on My way to and from Nagoya.

Q: If you stayed in Tokyo, did you notice how empty the streets were?

A: I don’ t think it’s empty in Tokyo. Actually I walked on the street in front of Nagaya station and I noticed it was very very busy on Friday. I’ m convinced it must be busy in Tokyo during Golden week.

Q: When you return from vacation, will you show me your pictures?

A: Yes, I will attach a picture of Taiga and me with this e-mail.

Q: What was your best memory from Golden Week this year?

A: I enjoyed spending time with my grandson Taiga at the small farm in Yokkaichi in Mie prefecture.

Q: Did you try something new this year?

A: I participated in the voice class of NOVA in Nagoya. It's kind of an existing experience. During break time students spoke Nagoya dialect but during lesson time they spoke normal English. I mean they spoke English in Japanese pronunciation like many students in Kanagawa.

Q: Did you travel with your family or by yourself?

A: I traveled with my husband.

Q: What are your plans for summer vacation?

A: It's not for summer vacation. But I have a plan to attend the graduation ceremony of my son in LA. After that I'm thinking about traveling in San Francisco and Yosemite National park with my husband. My son will be busy to prepare to get a job so I will try to go there without his help.

Q: What are your plans for Golden Week next year?

A: I have no idea now. I will make my plan just before the next Golden Week. It will depend on my situation of next year.



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✚ the previous Emperor's Birthday

2006,5,4



That's a shame. Your answer to my question is not right. We call this year Heisei the eighteenth in Japanese style. It means Emperor Hirohito, we call him Showa Emperor, passed away eighteen years ago. He was born on the twenty-ninth of April. So in Showa this day was the

national holiday called The Emperor's birthday. However our Emperor changed after his death and now The Emperor's Birthday is in December. If this national holiday had vanished, we would have had only two national holidays in this week. I'm sure the Japanese government established the Green Day on the twenty-ninth to let the golden week continue. Moreover we can enjoy the beautiful fresh leaves on this day. It must have been a good decision.

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Constitution Day

2006,5,3



Today is Constitution Day. What do you think about the ninth article of the Japanese Constitution? According to the ninth article we shouldn't have any armies but we have the Self Defense Forces. They are kind of armies, aren't they? Some people say that they are armies so having the Self Defense Forces is against the Constitution. The other people say that they are real armies so we should change our Constitution. Anyway over fifty years have past since it was established. The Japanese society and the world situation have changed from that time. I think now it's time to consider our onstitution.

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Megumi

2006,5,2



An extra talk is,

Well, the world knows that North Korea is a certainly (I couldn't catch the word) country. They treat citizens terribly and caused troubles with Japan (I couldn't catch this part.) as well as nuclear weapon that they are developing. And also they abducted Japanese citizens. So many people in North Korea want to leave from their country. They have to seek a solution. I'm sure everyone including China, Russia, South Korea, Japan and United States is looking forward to the good solution. I just wonder how long we can wait. Let's hope for a peaceful solution about this problem.

I'm always concerned about Mrs. Yokota's daughter, Megumi. When she was taken away from Japan, she was the only a junior high school student. How scared she felt at that time! I also

can't forget the scene on TV that two couples and a woman who were abducted by North Korea came back to Japan. I was crying while watching the TV news program. I have no idea how to solve that problem. They should return many people whom they took away from their mother countries. However it might be difficult for them to do it. The events don't seem to be so simple.

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California

2006,5,1



The thing that surprised me about California was actually you can ski there. Our image of California is a beach with palm trees. I'm aching now all over, especially on my calves, because I played golf yesterday. I'm exhausted because I couldn't get out of a sand trap.

An extra talk is,

Some of those photos are photos taken by some of my friends in California. This particular photo was taken by Kevin. He is one of the people who put together the web site. And the designer's name was Ben. Both of them are very very helpful for improving Fine. But he enjoys the woods and the countryside. Do you? Take care.

busy days

2006,6,30



I was quite energetic in California but I caught a cold on the way to Japan. Because I was tired and the air in the plane was very dry. And after coming back to Japan I have a lot of work to finish. I've been working at the office in a terrible condition this week.

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the famous restaurants near Solvang

2006,6,29



Thanks for correcting my terribly long travel sketch in Ca. I will upload it on my website soon with some pictures. After that I will show you that address. Actually we stayed at the small motel near Solvang (It takes about 30 minutes from Santa Barbara by car.) for two days and ate dinner at the same restaurants where you had been to. And Takashi said the same thing as you. One of

them is famous for the movie.

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✚ **I'm always coughing.**

2006,6,27



I slept from 8:00 to 6:00 last night. I might have gotten rid of jet lag but my condition is still bad. I wish my cold symptom will be better soon.

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✚ **Jet lag**

2006,6,26



I couldn't sleep deeply in spite of being sleepy last night. I haven't gotten rid of jet lag. Moreover I caught a cold. Now I'm in a terrible condition. I was coughing quite often at the office.

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✚ **I arrived at my home safely.**

2006,6,25



Now I'm in an airplane. This morning we went to LAX by shuttle bus safely but Lax was very busy. There are some policemen and a dog in front of the entrance of United Airlines. There were long long lines of passengers but I asked many things to the staff and rode the plane safely. 5 hours later we will be at Narita. I had a lot of great memories from this trip. I talked to many people including a Korean girl and an Israeli woman and her son in English. I took a picture with a black 12-year-old girl whom I met at the motel this morning. I taught some Japanese to an American family who were going to have a one week tour in Japan at a waiting room at LAX. All of them said they could understand my English. The Chancellor of UCLA said in his speech "Continue to challenge yourself. Continue to discover, to learn, and to grow." I'm not a student and I'm not young like them. But I decided to continue to study English more and more.

Thanks to everybody I really enjoyed my trip in California. I arrived at my home safely at 8:30 pm.

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✚ in Santa Barbara (6/23)

2006,6,24



We visited Santa Barbara today. It's a very beautiful town where all the houses have white walls and orangeish brown tile roofs. I've never been to Spain but it looks like towns in that country. We walked State Street where we could enjoy beautiful jacarandas along the street and went to the station to see an Amtrak train. After that we went to the pier. The beach was so beautiful. After eating lunch at a Mexican restaurant we visited the County Courthouse. It was wonderful. We can enter the inside for free and from the top of its tower we could see the whole town of Santa Barbara. There were some policemen and TV cameramen there. The atmosphere was a little bit tense. One of the policemen said to me that they had an important trial on that day. Next we drove to the old mission. It was wonderful, too. It was one of the oldest churches in the US. Luckily there was not such a terrible traffic jam near LA and we arrived at my son's dorm at about 6 o'clock. My son cooked Thai curry for us. He has to move to a new apartment by the end of July. I will never visit this dorm again. I missed this dorm and took some pictures. He took us to a motel near LAX by car. We didn't annoy him anymore so said good-bye in front of the motel. We decided to go back to Japan by ourselves.

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✚ Solvang (6/22)

2006,6,23



This morning I visited a little Danish village, Solvang with my husband while my son was watching the world cup soccer game on TV at the hotel. There were a lot of souvenir shops like a Christmas shop and I bought some souvenirs for my grandsons and the other people. At the one of the shops a clerk asked me if I had been to Whites Pines Park in Illinois because at that time I wore the T-shirt that Monte had given me at that park. I explained to her why I wore such kind of T-shirt. Both she and I were so surprised. I ate an ice cream and Danish sweets.

They were so sweet. In the afternoon we visited Firestone Winery and a beach by car. Then we took a rest at the hotel. We were a little bit tired because we were outside until 10 o'clock everyday. In California the sun sets at 8:30 now. It's around 6:00pm but of course it's still bright. And I'm on a full stomach. I have been eating so much since I came to the US even though I always leave part of meal every time. My son whose weight is the same as that of him in Japan said to us, "If I would have been eating like Americans, I would die soon." The thing I was very surprised in America is they serve too much at restaurants. From 8 o'clock we went to a famous restaurant called Los Olivos Cafe to eat dinner. The food and wine were delicious but now I feel my stomach has been getting bigger and bigger since I came to the US. Anyway I'm full now.

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✚ **Now I'm in a small hotel near Santa Barbara. (6/21 in the US)**

2006,6,22



6/21

Now I'm in a small hotel near Santa Barbara. This morning we started from Oakland and came here through Silicone Valley. On the way here we ate lunch in Palo Alto and stopped off at Stanford Univ. I was a little bit excited at the very famous university. We drank an orange juice there and I was very surprised because they served another juice while I went to the restroom of the restaurant. After arriving at the hotel we went to the famous restaurant named Hitching Post to eat dinner. Very delicious!! A wine that we drank was not so expensive but quite good. I think vegetables, orange juice and wines in California are quite delicious. The climate might be much better here for plants than that in Japan. I thought the distance between LA and SF is not so far because both of them were in California but actually it was longer than that between Tokyo and Osaka. It takes about 6 and a half hours from SF to LA. I recognized the US was a huge country afresh.

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✚ **in SF**

2006,6,21



Now I'm in SF and enjoying my trip here. Why do they live in such a town where there are a lot of

steep slopes? It's incredible!! Anyway I visited many famous places by cable car. My son has an American friend who lives in Berkeley and he went to meet him by car. My husband and I decided to go to Fisherman's Wharf by Bart, a very fast train. On the train two American middle aged women were sitting in front of me and I asked one of them to let me know when we arrive at Embarcadero, the nearest station to Fisherman's Wharf. After that we began to enjoy chatting. One of them asked me as follows," I saw a very beautiful Kimono at the museum and actually it was eleven or twelve layered Kimono. Why do you wear so many Kimono?" "Sorry I don't know the reason. It was a Kimono over one thousand years ago and only high-class women wore such kind of gorgeous Kimono. We call it Jyuni Hitoe. Jyuni means twelve and Hitoe means a simple kimono. Now only Japanese Royal family wear Jyuni Hitoe when they hold wedding ceremonies." She was interested in my explanation and she asked me to send an e-mail giving me her business card. We arrived at Fisherman's Warf safely and ate seafood and the famous food, a bread bowl with clam chowder. After that I tried to buy tickets to go to Alcatraz Island but it was sold out. But it's OK. We bought one-day free pass tickets and went to Cable Car Museum, Grace Cathedral, Nob Hill, Union Sq, Japan Town and Almo Sq. by Cable car, Muni Bus and Muni Metro. After my son picked us up by his car, he tried to drive on Bart Lombard St. that is the sharpest curved street in the world. We ate dinner in Chinatown again and walked to Coit Tower. The view from it was so wonderful. Today we stay at Park Plaza Hotel near Oakland International Airport again.

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We are going to drive to SF (6/19 in the US)

2006,6,20



I forgot to install some software on this laptop. I can't use Word and any image processing software. I have my useful dictionary but using it here seems to be a little bit troublesome. I'm sure there are a lot of misspellings in my diary. Sorry. Today is fine, too. In the dinning room of the Holiday Inn a waitress talked a lot with me. She explained to me that SF was very close to here. It takes about 2 hours from here to SF by car. Is it close?

About noon we arrived in SF through the Bay Bridge and had lunch in China Town. After that we appreciated art at the SF Museum of Modern Art. I saw the famous toilet bowl there but to tell the truth I couldn't understand art. My son made a fool of me. After that I asked my son to drive around the city. There are a lot of beautiful Victorian houses and I was very impressed by them. I got out the car and took some pictures of the beautiful row of houses. At that time a strange

white middle-aged guy suddenly talked to me in Japanese. He had been living in Aizuwakamatsu in Fukushima and is studying Japanese at the community school from a Japanese. We talked with each other in both English and Japanese for a little while. The view from the twin peaks was wonderful but the wind was so strong. When I saw the sea sitting on a bench in the Marina, a white middle-aged woman smiled at me. She was from Florida and came to SF to commemorate their honeymoon 25 years ago with her husband. We drove to Berkley through the golden gate bridge and visited CUB. That campus was really quiet and academic. We ate dinner at an Italian restaurant near the university. Tonight we are going to stay at a hotel in Oakland.

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✚ from Santa Nell (6/18 in the US)

2006,6,19



Now we are staying at the Holiday Inn in Santa Nella, a small town between LA and SF. We drove here on 5 freeway and it took about 4 and half hours from my son's dorm by car. During the 5 hours the scenery from the window did not change so much, and we could see only huge brown fields and mountains. My son said," In spring they were covered with green. But in summer we don't have rain so they turned brown." When we arrived here at 8:45pm, it was still bright. We ate dinner at a local restaurant "Andersen's Restaurant" and the food were quite much the same as everywhere in the US. I was already full when I had eaten one third. At the convenience store I saw strange colored bread. Those were pink. It was unbelievable!! Of course I took a picture of them. Please look forward to seeing them. Before starting from LA I did housework in my son's house. And I mastered how to use a big electric washing machine in the US.

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✚ Congratulations!! (6/17 in LA)

2006,6,18



I'm a little bit excited so I couldn't sleep deeply. But I'm really fine.
In the morning I took a walk around UCLA. (My husband and I stayed at my son's dorm to save money. Hahaha...) We ate lunch at a Japanese restaurant Torafuku.
At 3 o'clock we went to UCLA to attend the graduation ceremony that was held outside at UCLA.

Today was quite hot; maybe it was over 30 degrees. All of the graduates wore the black gowns and the caps. To be honest that outfit doesn't suit my son at all. Hahaha... Asian students don't seem to look well in it. Anyway my son got a master's degree of fine arts safely. Congratulations!! There were a lot of speeches of Professors, student speakers and so on. Sad to say it was too difficult for me to understand perfectly. After that a simple party was held in the campus and I met his professor and friends. I was talking quite a long time with an 87-year-old woman from SF. She came to LA to attend her granddaughter's ceremony. Her granddaughter who majored in Painting knew my son and recommended me to see the golden gate bridge in SF. From 8 pm we ate dinner with my husband's second cousin's family at an Arabian restaurant in Westwood. He is an architect living in LA and graduated from the master course of UCLA about 25 years ago.

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✚ in LA(6/16)

2006,6,17



I'm now in LA in the United States. Our airplane arrived at LAX on time safely. Last night I drank champagne, a cocktail and Sake on the airplane and I threw up. Oh my dear! I've never done such a thing. I'm a little bit regretful that I was thoughtless. But as I learned the phrase "throw up" the other day, I could explain my condition to the flight attendant correctly in English. Hahaha... (I rode on a business class seat of United airline so flight attendants were only Americans.)

When I arrived at LAX, I couldn't find my son and a telephone booth but an airport staff helped me. I visited Rodeo Drive and the LA County Museum by bus with my husband. Anyway today I had a lot of opportunities to use English such as asking an American how to ride a bus. And I could enter the museum for free. Because a kind American explained to me we could enter it for free after 5 pm. I'm really glad that I could communicate well with many Americans today. (I didn't imagine that the phrase "throw up" would help me, when I read about strange Sushi shaped sweets. Anyway the flight attendant could understand my English and handed some towels to me.)

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✚ **Dear Chris,**

2006,6,16



I'm going to head to LA this evening. I've already packed and I'm going to start for Narita soon. To be honest I've been studying English in earnest for one and a half years. Of course I try to speak to many people in English. I'm really looking forward to talking with them. I wonder if they will understand my English. Anyway I would like to enjoy my trip in the west coast in the States. I'm bringing my laptop computer. Please send me a reply as soon as possible. I will write my diary in English even if I stay in LA.

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✚ **brothers**

2006,6,15



Yesterday my first grandson Taiga looked really glad to have his younger brother. That reminded me of the time when my second son was born. He was born at eight in the evening and the next afternoon my parents visited me at the hospital with the baby's brother. My first son was smiling and interested in his new brother. He begged to see the baby and really wanted to pat him. I really want my grandsons to be good brothers and good friends to each other.

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✚ **a new baby**

2006,6,14



The little baby was sleeping peacefully. Sometimes he tried to cry with the frowning red face. It was really funny to look at his show. Anyway I met my new grandson in Nagoya. I left my office at two fifteen and came home at eleven. There are a lot of bullet trains, Shinkansen, between Shinyokohama and Nagoya. It's very convenient.

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✚ **A newborn baby**

2006,6,13



My second grandson was born in Nagoya this morning. Both he and his mother are fine. He weighed over thirty three hundred grams, a pretty big baby at birth. But my daughter in law had a quite easy delivery. Now I'm very happy. We are going to visit the hospital in Nagaya to see the new baby tomorrow evening by Shinkansen.



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✚ The murder case in Akita

2006,6,12



In April a nine-year-old girl was found dead in the river in Akita. She was living in a small town with her mother who was thirty-three years old. The police decided that she was killed by accident after the investigate. About one month later a boy who lived near her house was strangled and he was found near the river. She and he were friends. Many mass media gathered in that small town and at last the police arrested her mother. She confessed that she killed the boy suddenly in her house because when she saw him, she reminded her dead daughter. There are a lot of strange points in her story. Some people say she neglected her daughter and didn't take care of her. She might have killed her daughter by herself. Anyway she will tell the truth to the police soon. And we will know what she did.

✚ I feel a little bit guilty but...

2006,6,11



My grandson is still in his mother's womb. The baby seems to love his mother. That might be a good and safe place for him. All right. There is no choice. See you later in the beginning of July. Now my first grandson is going to a day-care center everyday. He is having fun there with many of his friends. He is learning some songs and has been able to speak well. And my daughter in law booked a hospital where she can stay with her family. It means nurses of that hospital take care of the mother's other children. It's really convenient. In Japan the birth rate is decreasing now. The government established a lot of policies that support young families. In addition to these policies, obstetricians are thinking of many measures to get many patients. The competition among obstetricians seems to be very severe. They offer many useful and helpful plans to pregnant mothers. I think it's really good for young families. Now I can't help my son's family even if I'm not going to America because I'm working at the office every day. But now I'm not worried about them. The hospital and the day-care center will help them instead of me.

✚ About Tofu

2006,6,10



Today was my new grandson's due date but he hasn't been born yet. My daughter in law is still at home taking care of her first son. If he isn't born tomorrow, I can't meet him until the end of June. Because I'm going to come back to Japan from America on the twenty fifth. This morning I took a lesson on TV and a young Canadian teacher asked me about Tofu. She is a vegetarian and used to eat several kinds of Tofu in Canada. She told me that she could find only one type of Tofu, a soft type at the super market in Japan. I explained as follows. "I guess you can buy at least two kinds of Tofu at almost every supermarket in Japan. One of them is Kinugoshi, a very soft type of Tofu and the other is Momen, not softer than Kinugoshi. Kinu means silk and Momen means cotton. Do you know that Tofu is made from soybean milk? When we make Kinugoshi, we strain it by silk cloth. On the other hand when we make Momen, we strain it by cotton cloth. So Kinugoshi is softer and finer. But both of them we can eat raw." She noted my story and really appreciated my explanation. I explained many things about Japan to foreign

teachers many times. To be honest it's more interesting than studying the textbook.

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the graduation ceremony

2006,6,9



Now I'm really looking forward to attending the graduation ceremony at UCLA. It is going to be held on the seventeenth. I can't imagine how the ceremony is held in the States. The other day I bought my garment which was made of a Japanese traditional patterned cloth. I'm going to attend it wearing that outfit and I will say to Americans as follows. "Nice to meet you. My name is Masaho and he is my husband, U. We are T's parents. We came here from Japan yesterday to attend this ceremony. When my son moved to LA about two years ago, I was really worried about him. He is a Japanese so I thought he couldn't understand classes and make friends. But thanks to you he's done well and today he got a masters degree. I'm really glad and really appreciate your kind. Thank you very much."

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the skyline

2006,6,8



An extra talk is,

Well, the Chicago skyline is quite famous. New York skyline is also very famous. There is the Empire state building and they used to have the Trade Center Towers but unfortunately those were hit by terrorists and came down. Tokyo skyline includes Tokyo Tower, Roppongi Hills, the Shinjyuku Ministerial building and the other large buildings. Several large apartment buildings as well. What would the skyline look like? Let me know.

In Fujisawa now that illegal condo called Grand Stage, one of Aneha's buildings is the most famous I think. They are destroying it now by using our taxes. Why do they use our taxes? It's a sort of waste of the tax. Someone thinks so but I don't. If the city hall congress didn't decide to do it, who would be able to tear it down? Nobody can't. It means we can't go near that building. And it's in front of the station. I'm sure it was a good resolution. Regarding a skyline I like that of Minato Mirai twenty-one in Yokohama. I used to see it every night from the window of the train. It

looked very wonderful, especially in the evening. And we can see that famous Mt. Fuji from my house. Mt. Fuji reflecting the sunset is really beautiful. It turns red with the sunset.

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It's kind of tiresome.

2006,6,7



An extra talk is,

Well one thing I was really surprised when I came to Japan was the style of houses (I couldn't couch this word and imagine)... apartments are in the countryside. Of course the apartment in the city has to be small because there isn't a lot of room. However when you go to the countryside they have a lot of room but the apartments are still relatively small. That was very surprising.

Do you use the word "room" as a meaning of space? I'm not familiar with the real estate business but I think they should save the cost of building. Building standardized apartment houses must be cheap compared with original apartments. And they can save the property tax. The cheaper a rental fee is the easier they can get a tenant.

What do you think about this format? オーディオポストを文書の中に入れると、8つのポストを掲載するのが可能になる。Is that OK with you? Sorry but to tell you the truth I don't like this format. Because it's not convenient. I mean when I open an audio, your blog disappears so I have to open your site again to read your English sentences. It's kind of tiresome. I prefer the previous style.

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The time difference

2006,6,6



The time difference

When I listened to your blog at first, I thought Chris had made a mistake. "He forgets about Hawaii." But it was my hasty judgment. You mentioned about both Alaska and Hawaii. Today's quiz is quite easy for me because I always consider the time in LA. I always add seven to the time

in Japan to know the time in LA. For example when I turn on my computer at seven pm as soon as I come home, I find my son is on line. (Both of us use skype and MSN messenger.) I think as follows. “ It’ s two in the middle of night. He might be studying or Net surfing. Anyway he seems to be fine. That’ s good.” Now it’ s eleven thirty in the evening on Tuesday in Japan. It means it’ s six thirty am on Tuesday in LA. He must be still sleeping.

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About my house

2006,6,5



About my house

I live in a simple condo with my husband, which we bought over twenty years ago. We have already repaid the mortgage. It has a really common plan of a house as that of a condo in a city area. We call our house a typical three LDK type condo. When you open the door you can see the hall which goes to the right side separately. In front of the door across the hall there is a six tatami mat room. And to the left side there is a small western style room. To the right there are the kitchen and the sanitary area. They are across the hall from each other. The kitchen is on the left side and the sanitary area is opposite of it. To the top of the hall there is the living room, the biggest room in our house. And this room is connected to the kitchen and the end of the hall. Next to the living room there is a six tatami mat room to the right side. And this room is connected to the sanitary area but they are separated by a wall. The above describes the outline of our house. Can you draw the plan figure of my house? Then please let me know these questions about your blog. You wrote as follows. (On the right are closets.) Is it an ellipsis of “ On the right there are closets.”? I think we should write as follows. (When you go into the living room you can see two balconies and the kitchen is to your left.)and there is the kitchen to your left. (Next to the living room is a bedroom.) Next to the living room there is a bedroom. (Down the hall from that bedroom are two other rooms which have closets.) Down the hall from that bedroom there are two other rooms which have closets.

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San Francisco

2006,6,4



I'm going to start for LA on the sixteenth of June. Now I'm reading a guidebook of SF and the Yosemite national park and I'm wondering what kind of clothes I should bring. Because SF is pretty cool but Yosemite seems to be very hot now. What place do you recommend me to visit in SF?

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the Statue of Liberty

2006,6,3



Today's extra talk,

I love Google local. I think it is so fantastic because you can look up an address anywhere in the world and then see a picture of the place. In Japan it is very helpful because it's difficult to find a direction. Particularly Tokyo because the roads aren't straight. How do you find directions in Japan? See you later.

I'm sure it's a picture of the Statue of Liberty in the New York City harbor. I've never been to New York but that statue is quite famous so I know it. In My memory it was a gift from France to America and it was completed in eighteen eighty six. I would like to visit China again and see the Great Wall. It must be magnificent.

I have one question. You wrote in your blog like this. Do you know what this is a picture of? Do you know when it was built? Do you know where it is? But can I say as follows? What are the differences between them? What do you think this picture is? (× When do you know it was built?) (× Where do you know it is?)

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I prefer sending e-mails but ...

2006,6,2



An extra talk is,

Well, I saw this performance for the first time last year. And it was amazing. I was very impressed with the stage show as well as the deep meaning. They talk a lot about how we communicate with people by e-mail. On the other side of the world we don't stop to say hello to neighbors who live

next to us. That's a very impressive point. Please tell me if you heard of them.

I'm very glad to read your new blog again. And of course I've dictated your extra tale but I can't understand your story enough. Did they perform the show which taught us the importance of communication with each other? Did they criticize our nowadays habit of using an e-mail instead of talking with each other? Can I watch that show in Mt. Morris or in Rockford? I personally prefer sending e-mails to calling because I don't want to bother the people whom I have to contact. And I always ask my friends to send me an e-mail if an engagement is not urgent. But I'm also a little bit worried that we've lost something important in our everyday life, for example greeting with each other and chatting with acquaintances.

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Bobby's way

2006,6,1



I met a Japanese middle-aged man who always spoke English with very difficult words. He has a doctor's degree in pharmacy and memorized a lot of difficult words by reading an English Japanese dictionary, not a wordbook. It was amazing. Actually many English native teachers didn't know any of the difficult words that he used. One of the teachers gave him an advice not to speak such difficult words. He said to that man his English sounded a little bit strange. I realized my vocabulary was quite poor and I had to memorize more words to catch native speakers correctly. When I was a high school student, I memorized English words on the train to go to school by using a wordbook. I still sometimes see such students on the train. But I'd forgotten them all and now my memory is not so good compared with my young days. Oh my ... What should I do to improve my vocabulary? One teacher recommended me to read many English websites without a dictionary. And I found Bobby's website written by that American baseball coach of the Lotte Marines. Look at here. <http://www.bobbysway.jp/> It's quite interesting and easy to read. Moreover there are Japanese translations. What do you think about his English? To be honest I think the Japanese of this Japanese version is not so natural. We can suppose easily this Japanese is the translation from English. Someone of the Lotte Corporation would translate his original English into Japanese. There seems to be a lot of things lost in translation.



He might be busy.

2006,7,31



The day before yesterday my son moved to a new apartment in LA. He is going to come back to Japan in August for only a few days to report his achievements to the Ministry of Education because they gave him a scholarship. I'm not sure but probably after that he will visit London, Austria and Australia until the middle of October because he is invited to the exhibitions and the congresses. If I had long summer holidays, I would go to Austria. I wish I could visit at least Sydney to meet him.

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✚ Betty Friedan

2006,7,30



Today's topic is about the famous woman activist Betty Friedan who wrote that best seller "The Feminine Mystique". She graduated from a famous women's college but gave up studying more at UCB because her boyfriend didn't agree with it. After having the second baby she was dismissed from her job at the newspaper. She was not satisfied with her life as a housewife so she began to study her former schoolmates' opinion. After that she wrote that famous and effective book in 1963. She became famous and established NOW, the National Organization for Women and led a huge demonstration in NYC for women's right in 1970. She also wrote some books concerning elderly people when she got old. And she passed away in February this year. Actually I read that book translated into Japanese in my university student days. It was a sort of Bible of women students even in Japan in the seventies. What title do you know we had in Japanese about this book? Please guess. I found her obituary in the newspaper this February and

I was very surprised at her age. Because I hadn't known her other books especially books for old people and my image of her was still as a powerful middle-aged woman.

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We are proud of the Japanese astronaut, Takao Doi

2006,7,29



I still remember some astronauts' names because they were quite famous even in Japan. Now about five Japanese astronauts flew to space. One of them, the Japanese astronaut Takao Doi graduated from the same high school of me. He is one year younger than me. I probably met him somewhere at our high school long ago. After coming back to the Earth, he visited our school and made a speech at the hall. He said, "I belonged to the astronomical club here. To be an astronaut had been my dream since I was a high school student. Everybody, please try to realize your dream." I'm sorry I couldn't attend his lecture but I read the story in the newspaper. He encouraged all of his schoolmates including me. We are proud of him.

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Project Mercury

2006,7,28



After carrying a chimpanzee, NASA sent a Navy pilot Alan Shepard into space on May the fifth in 1961. His flight lasted only a few seconds longer than fifteen minutes and he came back to the ocean safely. Millions of people who watched TV shared the excitement of the flight. Ten weeks later Gus Grissom went to space again. After landing in the ocean, a serious trouble happened but he escaped safely from the spacecraft filled with water. The first astronaut who could circle the Earth on February twentieth in 1962 was John Glenn. After that he became famous and he was elected to the US Senate and in 1998, at age seventy-seven, he returned to space in an historic flight. Next the astronaut Gordon Cooper stayed in space 34 hours circling the Earth 21 times. Their Mercury project succeeded perfectly.

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the space race between America and the Soviet Union

2006,7,27



After World War Two many of Germany's top rocket scientists who had developed rockets as weapons came to the US and worked with Americans to develop and test new rockets. It was the start of the Space Age in 1955. At first the American government decided not to mix military and civilian rocket programs. But after the Soviet successes with its Sputnik satellites, the US changed its space plan and created NASA. Their aim was to send American astronauts to space before the Soviet Union. The man-in-space program was named Project Mercury and NASA built a spacecraft and chose seven astronaut candidates quickly.

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How far will corn's price drop?

2006,7,26



The leading grain in the US is corn and it's produced in the Midwest in the States like Illinois, Iowa and Minnesota. Now corn is consumed as not only food but also a plant-based fuel instead of oil. It had been extremely hot in the beginning of July and they had been worried that they would not be able to harvest enough corn. But last week's rain made many farmers feel relieved a lot. The price of corn usually depends on its volume. Now Chicago Board of Trade suspects the price of it will be getting lower.

My image of the US had been a big and strong country. And the main industries were giant industry and service industry but actually agriculture is also their important industry. There are huge cornfields around Mt. Morris and we can also see many Orange trees in California. I also found out Corn is a resource of thousands products. It's good for the environment to use corn instead of oil.

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volunteer computing

2006,7,25



Today's topic was quite difficult to understand for me. I mean I can understand the English but can't understand the subject matter. I think it depends on the lack of my knowledge, especially

about computer and medical science. Anyway the summary is as follows. Now millions of computers are used all over the world. Actually even while they are turned on, many people don't use them all the time. (I'm sure its true. For example I turn on my computer as soon as I come home. Then I fix dinner and eat it without turning off the computer. Over one hour later I sit down again in front of the computer.) By the way there are still many young kids who die from malaria in Africa, Now researchers are trying to help such miserable kids by using our unused computers at home linked to the Institute in Swiss. We can check the website and then download the software. After that we can cooperate with that great project. They call such a system volunteer computing. This is the summary of the topic. My big question was why they need computers to beat malaria. They can treat kids by medicine, can't they? I checked the web site concerning today's topic written in Japanese. I still can't understand the difficult medical science but I found the Japanese website where we can download such a software to help African kids.

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The outside concerts

2006,7,24



It took a pretty long time when I downloaded today's VOA audio file into my MP3 player this morning. I realized it because it included a lot of wonderful music as soon as I heard the file. I could enjoy some wonderful music while studying English. Well, today's topic was about out side concerts. In the US they take place outside concerts in some areas. Two of them are Pavinia Festival near Chicago and Barkshire Music Festival in Virginia. They are kinds of traditional concerts that have been opening since the early twentieth-century. Actually famous musicians like Gershwin, Barnstein and Koussenvitsky performed at these parks. I'm jealous of Americans who can listen to the wonderful music under the beautiful sparkling stars. But I'm worried about one thing. There is no mosquito, isn't there? Do they have mosquito coils?

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Hoover Dam

2006,7,23



There are some famous and big dams to prevent flooding, provide water and produce electric power in the US. They are Hoover Dam, Oroville Dam, Grand Coulee Dam and so on. Among them

Hoover Dam would be the most famous Dam. It was completed on the Colorado River near Las Vegas in 1936. Lake Mead is the lake which was created by the building of that dam and people can enjoy swimming, boating and other activities there still now. Hoover Dam reminds me of President F. Roosevelt. I learned that he put through the New Deal by creating the TVA and Hoover Dam to solve the economic panic in the thirties. But I'm a little ashamed to say that I hadn't known where this dam was until I read this article. I can get a lot of knowledge while studying English. That's interesting!!

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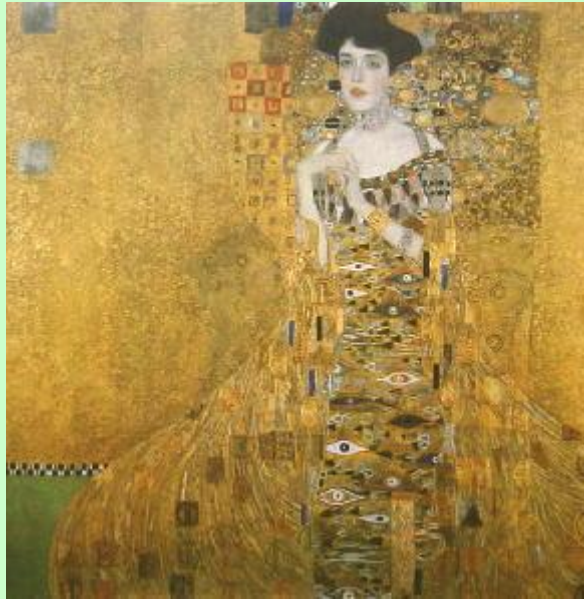


Adele Bloch-Bauer One

2006,7,22



Do you know this famous picture? I was really surprised when I found this picture in the VOA Special English website because actually I appreciated this painting at LA County Museum of Art in last June. The website says, "Recently the Neue Galerie, a small museum in NYC bought this painting painted by Klimt for the highest price ever paid for a painting. Klimt painted this one for a rich Jew, Mr. Bloch-Bauer in the early 20th century in Austria. During World War Two the Nazis seized this painting. In 1998 an elderly woman who belongs to the Bloch-Bauer family and living in LA regained her property after a seven-yearlong argument in court. And she sold it to the gallery in June." I'm ashamed to say that I hadn't known this famous painting until I saw it at the museum. Why could I see it there just before the auction? I have the pamphlet of LACMA at hand but I hadn't read it yet because it was written in pretty difficult English. I've just read it now to solve my question. I'm sorry but I still can't understand it perfectly. Anyway they write as follows. "We are extremely grateful that the heirs of Ferdinand Bloch-Bauer have allowed the LACMA the historic opportunity of sharing these paintings with American publics. It is the particular honor to welcome the paintings to this city." I have no idea if they knew that the heirs had decided to sell the painting to the museum in NYC. If I had been able to read English more fluently, I would have enjoyed this painting more at LACMA. That's a shame.



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✚ Education report

2006,7,21



Today's topic is about teachers in the US. I'm going to sum it up here. Today they have several severe problems about teachers in the US. At first almost half of new teachers quit their jobs within five years. At the same time, many teachers lack the required knowledge to teach math and science. To solve these problems they should pay higher salaries to them. Especially if some teachers have special skills or work in difficult conditions, they should pay extra salaries to them. Also they need to train them in a new method. In addition to them, more black, Hispanic, Asian and Native American teachers are required. I think it's a really common opinion and we have the same problems in Japan now. I have some ex schoolmates who are teachers and they say that they are extremely exhausted to treat problem students. One of my friends said, "I'm a math teacher but I don't have time to study by myself at all. I'm always busy to do life guidance for bad students and to deal with complaining parents." In my opinion our future can't help depending on children. About twenty years later they will support our life after retirement. Governments should spend more budgets for educating them. Actually the budget for education has been less than that for public works. Why haven't they been spending more money for education? I'm not sure but they say because kids don't have voting rights. Considering around us people who relate to education don't seem to have a lot of power; the presidents of big companies seem to have a lot of money and pressure politicians a lot. Anyway we shouldn't

forget children and teachers who can affect a lot for children's future are very important for our future.

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Problem with young people

2006,7,20



Today's article is a little bit difficult for me; I mean both the theme and English sentence structures are difficult. It's a report from the United Nations Population Fund. There are still a lot of under 16 year old kids who have to work to support their family economically in the world and of course they can't get good steady jobs by which they can improve their skills. This is the summary of today's topic. Now I'm going to turn my eyes to the present situation in Japan. There are many young people who are working as part time employees. We call them "freeters". They say actually many of them want to be full time employees but they still can't get stable occupations. It's a kind of big problem now in Japan because 10 or 20 years later we will not have enough well trained workers in Japan. In addition I would say the difference of incomes is increasing among young people in Japan now. The government tries to make some policies which support freeters nowadays.

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Carrots

2006,7,19



We can find many kinds of carrots all over the world because it's quite easy to raise and harvest carrots. And they contain a lot of carotene. I mean they are very healthy. But I'm sure many kids don't like them especially in Japan. Actually when I was a kid, I couldn't eat them. Not only me but also many pupils left pieces of carrots when we ate curry as school lunch and the teacher scolded us. But I became an adult and went to a Kushiyaki (grilled meat, fish and vegetables on skewers) restaurant. At That time they served us some raw vegetable sticks including carrots. It was really delicious. I noticed a raw carrot was sweet. After that I came to like carrots. Anyway we should eat carrots a lot to keep healthy.

✚ Independence Day

2006,7,18



America declared independence on July the fourth in 1776 and this year was the two hundred thirtieth anniversary of independence. I heard from my son on that day they have a lot of fire works to celebrate everywhere across the country. Many cities and towns held parades to admire great heroes in America's earliest days like George Washington and Thomas Jefferson. And many people enjoyed picnics with their family and friends eating watermelons. Why in America does the whole nation celebrate this day? On the other hand in Japan we don't warm up on our national holidays. I think people gained independence and freedom by themselves in the US. Therefore people still make merry traditionally on that Memorial Day.

✚ VOA Supecial English

2006,7,17



Do you know about Voice of America (VOA)? It's the American government's website which they renewal many topics including news, American history, famous people's biographies and science every day. In addition to it there are some audio files of articles. I happened to find it about six months ago but at first I recognized it was hard for me to understand it. Recently I happened to find again that there was Special English versions where topics were written in easy English and read slowly for people who were not native English speakers. Actually it's proper difficulty for me to listen to and read, and moreover the articles are very interesting. I can download audio files into my MP3 player easily and listen to it on my way to my office. After coming back home I checked if I could catch the article correctly or not. It's a kind of interesting work. I don't feel I'm studying English. I can enjoy this task. I'm going to try to write something concerning the topic in English as many times as possible.

✚ Paul Simon

2006,7,16



Simon and Garfunkel were really popular in the late sixties in Japan. "The Sound of Silence" and "Bridge Over Troubled Water" were great hits in those days. Now we can find "El Condor Pasa" in the music textbook in Japan. Actually my sons used to play it by recorder in their elementary school days. When I was a high school girl, I belonged to the broadcasting club as an announcer. On my first broadcasting day I introduced their music. "Welcome to this MBC music program in lunch break. Today, we will play some records from movie music. At first I will introduce two songs from the hit movie "The Graduate". They are "The Sound of Silence" and "Mrs. Robinson". Please listen to these records continuously. " I heard now Paul is over sixty years old and has just produced a new album called "Surprise". That's great!

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Superman

2006,7,15



Actually I watched the TV drama of Superman when I was a little kid. It was very very long ago and I don't remember exactly but I can still recall that black and white picture and the famous phrases at the beginning 'Look! Up in the sky! It's a bird! It's a plane! It's Superman!'. And I know the popular four series movie in the seventies and the eighties starring Christopher Reeve. But I can't remember if I watched them or not. I might have watched one or two of them on TV. He was flying in the sky with a beautiful heroine, right? I'm sure Marlon Brando played his father who sent him to the Earth from his home planet Krypton. Anyway I heard the new Superman movie earned a lot of money in the US. He might be a hero in the US forever. The man of steel who fights evil to keep justice is just Superman.

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Eisenhower Interstate System

2006,7,14



While I was visiting California, I drove to SF from LA. I stayed at motels for 6 nights. Staying at motels was quite nice because it costs fewer than one hundred dollars for three people including breakfast. I had a lot of opportunities to speak with many people at a dining room in the morning. Today I read an article about the Interstate Highway System in the US. It was really interesting because I just experienced driving there. I also have ridden a car in Illinois. I was a little bit

surprised to know that the federal Interstate Highway System was created after World War Two. President Eisenhower suggested building it to defend the country. He thought they should have built a road system to permit military vehicles to go to many areas quickly. I heard in Germany Hitler had built the autobahn to use it as a runway for a national emergency. Do they use it for the same purpose? Anyway I want to travel all over the US by car someday. But it would be impossible for me to drive a car in the US. Driving a car in Hawaii was very scary for me and I decided I would never drive in the US not to cause an accident.

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Education report

2006,7,13



They say now in the US there are more women students than men. More women than men have earned four –year degrees since 1982 and some people are worried about boys: there is a crisis for boys. I'm not sure but the situation of this issue is the same in Japan. Actually when I was a university student, women students were less than ten percent at my school. Our reunion still sends me a report once a year. And about a few years ago I noticed an article in it. They wrote that year more women students had entered the school than men. I thought times had changed. Why can more girls than boys get four-year degrees in both America and Japan. Maybe girls are more earnest than boys all over the world and they are adequate to study at school. They also say men hold more positions of power and earn money on average than women do in the US. I'm sure it's true in Japan, too. I have no idea but after graduating school do men demonstrate their ability?

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Too dangerous!!

2006,7,12



I've heard from you that it's really hot in summer in Chicago. Today I read an article about heat exhaustion and they said that in 1995 more than six hundred people had been killed by hot weather in Chicago. Is it true? Sometimes I hear the news that someone died while running on the very hot day. But over six hundred people passed away only in Chicago during only one summer, right? I can't believe it. When I was a junior high school student, I belonged to a tennis club. We

had to exercise under the shining sun every afternoon. We perspired a lot but we couldn't drink water until we finished our training. An upper-class student ordered us not to drink water. She said to us," If you drink water now, you will feel tired more. Put up with your thirst." Today I recognized that was very dangerous. We were lucky we didn't suffer from a severe exhaustion.

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Yosemite national park

2006,7,11



I was supposed to visit Yosemite when I went to California in June. But it takes about 4 hours to go there from SF by car so we gave up visiting there. Today I found an article about Yosemite on the web site of VOA Special English. I could learn how that beautiful place formed and how they made it a national park to preserve and protect that great beauty. I could understand how wonderful that park is and decided to visit there someday. Actually I know we can go there from SF for a one-day trip by sight seeing bus. But I would like to stay there for at least three days.

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really humid

2006,7,10



Do you have a cold? Take care and I hope your condition is not so bad. By the way I've never heard that a cold can be infected through e-mail. You are kidding. Now I know some people are having colds because the weather is not good. It's really humid and it's hard for us to sleep deeply in the evening without an air conditioner. If we sleep in a room where we keep the air conditioner turned on, we easily end up catching a cold. I notice that the weather in California is a lot better than that in Kanagawa during summer. While I stayed there, it might have been over thirty degrees. But it wasn't so humid and it was relatively comfortable compared with Japan. I also noticed the humidity in Japan is good for our skin. Because Japanese middle aged women have a few wrinkles compared with American women. It's true. Anyway take care to keep good health.

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the star festival

2006,7,9



Now they are having a big Tanabata festival in Hiratsuka. I saw many people wearing Yukata on the Tokaido line. Actually Hiratsuka is after the next station from my station. I went there many times when my sons were young. However now I'm unwilling to go there because it is crowded and I don't think decorations are so beautiful. Many shops participated in that festival by displaying gorgeous decorations with bamboo. There are also many street venders. It's a kind of commercialism. But someday I will visit there with my grandsons. They will be very glad to buy Takoyaki or cotton candy there.

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watching movies

2006,7,8



Today I watched the movie "Catch me if you can" on DVD. We have some DVDs at our home that my son collected a few years ago. When I was young, I watched movies at theaters and on TV. We couldn't select the movie that we wanted to watch at that time. It depended on the TV programs and movie theaters. About twenty years ago Video players began to be big. I was really happy when I found my favorite movie "the way we were" at a rental video shop. It was really popular in the early seventies. I rented many videos and watched them by myself after my sons went to sleep. But now I'm not into watching movies. Nowadays we can watch movies on DVD and we can select subtitles written in Japanese or English. They say watching movies is one of the good ways to improve your English skill. I think so, too. And I noticed I could get some scenarios with Japanese comments. Actually they sell the book about "Catch me if you can" I decided to buy it with "I am Sam." starring Sean Penn and "Back to the future". I would like to improve my English enjoying movies.

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a friend in Holland

2006,7,7



Today I had an opportunity to chat with a middle-aged man in Holland on Skype. Actually I've

been known him for over a half year. As we used a web camera, we could see with each other. Actually he lost his job several months ago and has been out of work. But he lives a neat house and doesn't look having a problem. I'm sure that they have good welfare policies and the nation give him enough unemployment insurance. And he can speak English very well. I heard many people in Europe spoke English well. I don't know why but their languages might be similar to English. I asked him if he knew big news that North Korea had fired missiles into Japan sea or not. Of course he knew it and said that was really scary. I asked him another news: the Japanese Prince and Princess will visit his country in August. However he doesn't know that news. In fact according to the news the queen in Holland invited them. People in Europe might not be interested in Japanese Imperial family.

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the medicine for a cough

2006,7,6



I still have a cough and a stuffy nose. Yesterday we had a meeting and actually I had a fit of coughing for a while during the meeting. This morning my boss gave me a small bottle of brown liquid. It's a homemade medicine for a cough. It was made from quinces and liquor. I was so happy because he was concerned about my condition. I'm going to drink it and go to bed as soon as possible. I hope I will be able to get rid of my bad cold.

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a little bit difficult to understand....

2006,7,5



I've never ridden a snow mobile. It reminds me of the accident in a ski resort. I mean I sometimes saw it checking skiers if they enjoyed skiing safely or not. I thought when they found someone who broke thier legs, they took him to a base. Today I can't understand your story correctly. Do the inhabitants in Mt. Morris go to Wisconsin by snow mobile through a path? And they also go to a bar to drink alcohol by snowmobile, right? Can you drive it on a path without snow? And please let me know the meaning of " How typical ".

✚ Why do I study English??

2006,7,4



Thanks for your comment. I'm very glad because you always encourage me. By the way what's the meaning of a dictionary for kids? Is it a dictionary for American kids or a dictionary for Japanese junior high school students? If it means the former, how did you get it? I think you can guess my age easily but to tell you the truth I'm about ten years older than you. I can work for my present job until sixty years old but I'm a little bit fed up with my job now. Please imagine I have been working for my present local government since I graduated from university. I'm thinking about retiring a little bit earlier than our retirement age. And after retirement I would like to do some volunteering where I can use English such as a guide and a host mother for international students. Anyway I would like to make good use of my English in the rest of my life. Actually I have an elder sister who has been studying Chinese for over ten years and now she is working as a volunteer. She sometimes takes care of some Japanese who came back to Japan from China recently. I mean they are actually Japanese but had been living in China since the end of world war two. They can't speak Japanese well so my sister chats with them in Chinese and sometimes teaches them Japanese. I'm not sure about my retirement time now but I'm searching how I will use my English in my future. I want to find my goal of studying English again.

✚ books for kids

2006,7,3



I bought some books written in English in LA. They are stories for kids like Anne of Green Gables. Today on the train to my office I read "A to Z mysteries The Absent Author" written by Ron Roy. It's a book for kids, probably about 10 year old kids. But there are a lot of strange words for me but I could understand the story without a dictionary. It's a very interesting book. By the way how do American kids read books when they find unknown words? Do they check it by a dictionary or skip it? I read a lot of books in my elementary school days. I don't remember exactly but I probably skipped a difficult Kanji when I found it in the book. I might have memorized many Kanji in such a ways. Anyway reading books for kids must be a good way to improve my English.

✚ Dear Ms.,.....

2006,7,2



I wrote an e-mail to an American woman whom I met in SF.

Dear Ms.,

I'm the Japanese woman whom you met on Bart. Thank you very much for chatting with me at that time. I was very glad that you gave me your business card. As I said to you I visited LA to attend my son's commencement at UCLA. On that day my son visited his American friend in Berkeley and my husband and I went to SF by ourselves. Thanks to your help we could go to Fisherman's Wharf safely. After that we visited many places like Grace Cathedral, Union Square by cable car and bus. SF is really great and we enjoyed that town. I was surprised a little bit that there were so many steep slopes in SF. We also visited Stanford, Solvang and Santa Barbara on the way to LA. We had a really good time in California and came back to Japan at the end of June.

On the train you asked me about Japanese twelve-layered Kimono, Jyuni Hitoe. Jyuni means twelve and Hitoe means simple Kimono in Japanese. And noblewomen wore Jyuni Hitoe about one thousand years ago in Japan. We call that period Heian in our long history. Now the Japanese Royal family wear Jyuni Hitoe for their wedding ceremonies. I'm going to attach two pictures which are our Emperor's wedding picture and Prince's wedding picture. (Sorry, they are really small.) After coming back to Japan I searched websites of Jyuni Hitoe. I had never heard of them but actually some shops rent Jyuni Hitoe these days. Please look at this website.

<http://www.heian-soen.jp/taiken/> This is written in Japanese but you can enjoy pictures and there is a page written in English. <http://www.heian-soen.jp/taiken/english/index.html>

If you are interested in the Heian period, please look at this blog.

<http://masaho100poems.blogspot.com/>

This is my blog where I translate some Japanese old poems into English but it hasn't been completed yet. Thanks for reading my e-mail.

Take care and have a good day.



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✚ I determined to enjoy using English again.

2006,7,1



I've been exhausted since I came back to Japan and felt that I lost my goal to study English. Because one of my reasons why I began to study English was speaking with Americans on my son's commencement and saying my gratitude to them. I had done it already. In addition to this reason I recognized that living in the US is a quite easy way to master English compared with studying in earnest in Japan. In the US everybody, even homeless people, speaks and writes English and We can master real English there. I began to lose my strong mind of studying English in Japan. But of course it's better for me to continue to study English in Japan. Now it's one of my everyday customs. I determined to enjoy using English again.

Monjayayaki

I hadn't heard about Monjayayaki until I moved to Kanagawa from Osaka because it's a special food in Tokyo. Osaka is famous for its Okonomiyaki. But I think now we can eat Monjya in Osaka because Japan is a small country and we can eat many local special foods all over Japan in big cities. Honestly I prefer Okonomiyaki to Monjya. I've eaten Monjya several times at restaurants. Anyway I'm going to write how to fix Monjya.

Ingredients

•flour •sliced cabbage •deep-fried small flour balls •chopped pork (or small dried shrimps) •sauce

1. Mix all ingredients with a lot of water.

2. Heat an iron plate.
3. At first put only cabbage and the other ingredients on the plate and stir-fry for a little while.
4. Then make a circle like a bank with those ingredients and after that pour the liquid into the circle.
5. When the liquid begins to set on the plate, you can eat it by using a spatula by yourself.

An extra talk is,

Well, when I lived in Tsukishima in 2003, many people came to visit and all of them wanted to go and eat Monjayaki. So I ate Monjayaki very often and learned how to make it pretty well. My favorite restaurant in Monja Town is pretty far down the street and on the left hand side. And it is called Kazaguruma. And a guy who ran it was a very deep voiced gentleman, with really great personality. Try to go there sometime. It's delicious.

a code- sharing flight

2006,8,31



How is a code- sharing flight? I bought a ticket of Air NZ to fly to Auckland and another girl bought a JAL ticket. But our airline schedules are the same. We will start from Narita at the same time and arrive at Auckland at the same time. I think the two airlines have a code-sharing flight. It means two airlines make a contract to fly one airplane cooperatively. That reminds me of the time I went to Shanghai about 5 years ago. Actually I bought an unknown Chinese airline's ticket and I was worried about it. My airplane will be able to fly to China safely, won't it? But I noticed I could ride on the same plane of ANA (All Japan Airline) just as I checked in at the Kansai Airport. Honestly I got really relieved at that time. But I don't know which ticket was cheaper, JAL or ANZ. It seems better for me not to care about it. I've already bought the ticket. Even if I know it, I have nothing to do now. It's too late. What's done is done. Can I say, "That's locking the barn door after the horse is out."?

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+ Washington DC

2006,8,30



Washington DC is actually the capital of the US. Just after the independence there were a lot of arguments between northern states and southern states about where they placed the capital. Of course northern states spoke against placing it in the South because they had slavery. Congress

members from southern states opposed to decide the capital in North. At last they provided land along the Potomac River to make the capital named “Washington” there and they also named the larger federal area “District of Columbia”. Washington was named for the first president and Colombia was named for Christopher Columbus who discovered the new continent, America. Colombia also means the US when they use it in poems and songs.

I’ve known Washington DC is the capital in the US since I was a little kid. However this time I learned what DC means and why they decided Washington to be the capital for the first time. Anyway listening to VOA is really educational for me. I know you can see very beautiful cherry blossoms along the Potomac River that Japan gave as a present to the US. Now, can you see cherry blossoms in the other places but Washington in the US?

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The Whale Rider

2006,8,29



By the way tonight I watched the movie “The Whale Rider “ created in NZ. I think it’s a movie that shows a fusion of tradition and the new. I will try to write about the story. It’s a story of Maori chief’s family, especially the chief’s cute, brave and smart 12-year old girl. In Maori society only boys were expected to be a chief and the present chief really wanted his grandson. When she was born, her mother passed away with her twin brother. Her grandfather was really disappointed with the death of only his grandson and he didn’t seem to love the little girl. Her father, the chief’s first son, had gone to Europe resisting his father and old Maori customs. However the girl had grown up to be a clever girl among her relatives. Actually her grandfather had been loving her and taking good care of her. After the chief knew his first son had gotten married with a German woman, he decided to look for his successor from the boys in the village and began to teach them their traditional martial arts, song, dance and so on. He scolded her when the heroine wanted to join boys because women couldn’t do such kind of things in their old rules. By the way whales are actually their special and holy animals. They have a legend: their ancestors came to the island by riding on whales. One day he threw out his necklace made of whale teeth that is chief’s proof into the sea. Some boys dived into the sea but nobody could find it. A few days later the girl picked it up from the deep sea. She also got the first award in the speech contest. She gave a wonderful speech in front of the Maori people. She talked about their brave ancestors. Now she is the bravest and smartest child in the village however her grandfather still didn’t recognize her to be his successor. After a little while many whales were found on the

beach. All inhabitants in the village tried to push them back in the ocean but they couldn't. Suddenly the girl rode on the biggest whale and led him into the ocean. She helped many whales. At last the old chief found his successor. It must be his granddaughter. Now people have a hope in the future. This brave girl will be the leader of Maori people.



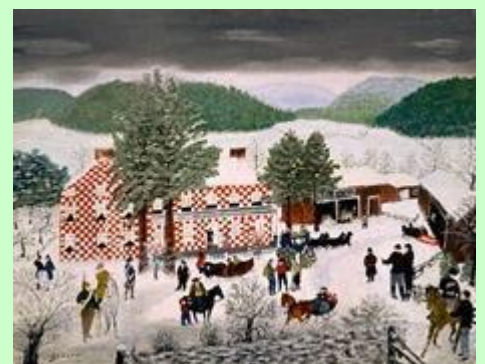
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✚ Grandma Moses

2006,8,28



Today's topic is about Grandma Moses who painted very heart-warming pictures. She had been a wife of a farmer in New York State and began painting after 75 years old. Soon her paintings got to be famous and she had painted more than one thousand and 6 hundred pictures before she died at the age of 101. The new show of her pictures is being held in Cooperstown, NY now and after that the same exhibition will be shown in four cities in the US. I love her pictures. I looked at some of her paintings at the Yasuda Seimei museum (now the name is Sonpo Japan museum) in Shinjyuku about 15 years ago. It's a private museum of a big insurance office in Japan. They were really simple and heart-warming and made me happy. After that I borrowed a book of her life: of course written in Japanese, from a library and I was well impressed with her life. She must have had a talent and creating something every day might have given her



energy. I think her life is one of the good examples how people should spend their old days. Anyway she left a lot of wonderful paintings and we can still enjoy them all over the world.

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Crib

2006,8,27



Now they have a problem of plagiarism at Ohio University. Recently they found about forty master's thesises in which there were copied materials and the writers are accused of plagiarism. They have to rewrite their thesises again or try to prove that they did not plagiarize. Many of them were international students and some of them graduated from school 20 years ago. What's more two professors were fired because they didn't recognize the copying and stop it. Is it big news in the US? When I was a university student, I had to write some reports. In fact I quoted many descriptions from some books to write them. I always thought my reports looked like patchwork. What should I do if my old school will revoke my graduation because of plagiarism? I'm a little bit sympathized with the former students of Ohio Univ.

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Pity Poor Pluto

2006,8,26



Pity Poor Pluto

Today's headline of a Japanese newspaper was the same as the news of both VOA and Time for kids. It's news about Pluto. The International Astronomical Union decided that Pluto is not a planet but a dwarf planet. Because its orbit around the sun crosses paths with Neptune's. News on TV also said that American people were really disappointed because it had been discovered by an American in 1930. People love Pluto, the same name of the popular dog. And an announcer introduced how American kids remembered the 9 planets. They called them "My Very Educated Mother Just Served Us Nine Pizza." From now on they should call them "My Very Educated Mother Just Served Us Nuts." Actually we Japanese called them "Sui, Kin, Chika, Moku, Do, Ten, Kai, Mei." In future we should teach kids, "Sui, Kin, Chika, Moku, Do, Ten, Kai ". That's sounds a little bit strange like a Osaka dialect.

✚ Indian staple crops, lentils

2006,8,25



The following is the summary of the topic from VOA. The lentil that contains a lot of protein is a staple crop in India and it's really necessary for Indians who usually don't eat meat. It's also good for soil because its roots are home to bacteria that put in nitrogen, and is a good fertilizer of plants. In the US the price of lentils is increasing a lot nowadays because of the ban of export that Indian government decided in June.

I think perhaps I've never eaten lentils. Umm...I'd say I've never cooked it by myself. Did I eat them included in the curry at the Indian restaurant in Yokohama? That reminds me of the very delicious Indian restaurant near my former office. I would go there to eat curry and to drink the deep tasty tea for lunch with my colleagues when I worked at the office in Yokohama. The owner was a middle aged Indian guy and he could speak Japanese pretty well but sometimes his Japanese sounded a little bit strange. One day he said to his staff, " Hey! This human being (Ningen) needs another spoon. Can you give this Ningen new one? " Yes, I'm actually a human being and we could understand what he said. But he should have called me this lady or this customer. We couldn't help chuckling a lot.

✚ solar cooking

2006,8,24



Today they introduced solar cooking. There are three types of ovens that we can cook by energy of the sun. Actually they are a box cooker, a panel cooker and a parabolic cooker. And we can make the first one from boxes or heavy paper by ourselves. The good point of solar cooking is we can save a lot of fuel. But it takes quite a long time to fix food by such kind of ovens.

I've read articles about solar cooking in a newspaper, magazine and a flier written in Japanese. It sounds quite interesting but I've never tried it. Anyway I'm too busy to spend a long time to cook in such a way. I'm sure I will try to make an oven by myself and fix foods by it after retirement.



Recently Tom Petty released his own third album, Highway Companion. He created this album with his old partner, Jeff Lynne. Critics say this album is worth hearing. I think Tom used to be popular as a leader of the Rock band, the Heartbreakers. He might be over 55 years old and I'm glad he is still active as a musician. By the way I guess you say keys by alphabet like A, B, C and so on in English. On the other hand we say them by I, Ro, Ha, Ni, Ho, He, To and so on. They are sort of the old style of A,I,U,E,O. And do you say Do, Re, Mi when you sing scales? It's the same as our way in Japanese. Anyway technical terms in English are really difficult for Japanese. I hear even interpreters have to check many such kinds of words before they began to work for the special conference.

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In the US the former presidents can receive a lot of profits such as retirement pay, some staff that work for them and security protection after they leave the position of presidents. Mr. Carter and Mr. Clinton are really active former presidents and both of them also wrote some books. Especially Mr. Carter is getting more support than he used to get when he was a president. On the other hand former presidents of the Republican Party, Mr. Ford, Mr. Bush and Mr. Reagan didn't appear in public so many times after their retirement. This is today's topic of VOA. Just before I've heard about the activity of Mr. Carter from a young American teacher. He said to me that he had had an experience of meeting him on the airplane when he had gone to Paris. At that time Carter was late for a boarding time so he walked around the plane and apologized to every passenger and shaking hands with them. It's one of the teacher's best memories of his travels and he became a huge fan of that former president. I can still read articles concerning Clinton in the newspaper sometimes. He seems to be still busy. Do you think Clinton will also be the first husband of the president of the USA? If he becomes, he will be busier again.

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Cat Power is a talented musician from the southern state of Georgia. She is also known as a singer who sometimes cancels the concert and has a little bit of a strong attitude like stabbing her hands in the air on the stage. Recently her new record was released which was made in Memphis in Tennessee.

I'd never heard about her but I could hear her songs through the VOA web site. I guess she is a black singer from her deep voice. I know Memphis because there is a big house of Elvis Presley where our Prime Minister visited just before. Why is it special place for musicians? Please let me know the reason.

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About flip-flops

2006,8,20



Recently flip-flops have become very popular in the US especially among young people. However there is an argument whether it's suitable only for casual places like a beach or not. What's more some foot doctors say flip-flops cause foot problems among teenagers and young adults.

Actually our traditional footwear are like flip-flops. We call them Zouri and of course we still wear Zouri when we wear Kimono. I'm not an expert and don't have knowledge about the history of Japanese dress but I think many common people had been wearing flip-flops made of straw for a long long time. I heard it's good for kids' feet to wear straw made flip-flops so some preschools recommended kids wear them. Why do doctors in the US say such a thing? I can't believe it. But I think wearing flip-flops at official places is not good: Actually they are casual footwear even if they are decorated with jewels.

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our footprints at the park

2006,8,19



Our footprints at the park

Today I visited a park named Ooba Castle Park near my house with my son and grandson to see the monument made of many tiles. Actually one of them is my family's tile on which we can see our footprints from about 15 years ago. When the city hall made this monument about fifteen

years ago, they looked for citizens who wanted to make footprints on the tiles. I don't remember exactly but probably I saw it just after the accomplishment of the construction of the park. After that I'd never seen it even though I can go there within 20 minutes by car from my house. I was really moved seeing it this afternoon because my sons' footprints were much smaller than what they are now. And my grandson was romping around it. Times have flown fast but I still remember the day when we took our footprints at the community center back our house.



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✚ Thanks for your compliment !

2006,8,18



Thanks for your compliment however I still can't speak English so well. I guess I've already spoken with over 150 native English speakers. Because regarding NOVA's lessons on TV, teachers are different every time. If you find me on line on Saturday morning, please call me. Sometimes I have something to do in a hurry so please take it easy. But almost every Saturday I use the computer early in the morning. The earlier, the better for me. From 7:00 to 9:30 is better for me.

✚ NGO

2006,8,17



The other day the 16th international AIDS conference was held in Toronto in Canada and the members of many NGOs in the world gathered there. Now there are around tens of thousands of NGOs all over the world. We can divide them into about three kinds of types, NGOs that serve the local community, operate in the developing countries and protect the environment. They don't have official powers but some of them always have effects on the politic policies. We call them the pressure groups and they are not neutral even if they are non-profit organizations. The famous NGOs are Amnesty International, Greenpeace and so on. In Japan "Law to Promote Specified Nonprofit Activities" was established about 8 years ago. Many people thought free and vivid activities of many citizens could change the old society in Japan. And after that so many nonprofit corporations were founded. I hear some of them are really irresponsible groups. I mean some illegal groups like gangs established such a kind of NPOs because we can make NPOs easily compared with the other cooperation. But we still expect many NGOs and NPOs to lead our society better.

✚ The big news

2006,8,16



Today's news in Time for Kids was about the cease-fire between Israel and Hizballah. I realized this article was very difficult for me. At first I didn't know the word "Hizballah" and I couldn't find it in my dictionary. After a little while I noticed it's a name of the army in Lebanon. Actually this is a web site magazine for kids. Americans kids are so smart, aren't they? I'm 100 percent sure more than 80 percent of Japanese adults don't know the word "Hizballah". I think ordinary Japanese people are not interested in the incidents in the Middle East. On the other hand the headline in today's Japanese newspapers was actually the news about Yasukuni Shrine and Prime Minister Koizumi. He visited there to pray for the souls of people who passed away during World War Two on the anniversary of the end of the war, yesterday, in spite of the strong anger of China and Korea. Is it big news in the US? My son living in the US said that it was big news only in China, Korea and Japan and nobody was concerned with that subject in the US. Regarding both VOA and Time for Kids they are useful for me for the reason of not only studying English but also

getting a worldwide viewpoint. What's more, it's interesting.

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from Time for Kids

2006,8,15



Today's issue is from the web site of Time for Kids. It's a web site for American kids as that title shows. But there were a lot of difficult words I didn't know. Oh my dear ! The summary is like this. The other day British police arrested terrorists a few days before the action that they had planned. After that, the check of airports became very strict. We can't bring any liquid like cosmetics, bottles of water, toothpaste and so on. Because the terrorists were planning to explode the liquid bomb. There are long lines in front of check in counters at airports all over the world. But it's necessary to assure the safety of travel on airplane.

I can't understand what terrorists are thinking. If they explode the airplane, they can't change anything. They would only be isolated from the world. I sometimes buy Sake as a souvenir at the duty free shops after checking in and take it into the plane. But I will not be able to do it in the future. I have to check what I can carry into the plane in my carry-on bag before going to NZ. Anyway they bothered many people in the world.

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Bobby's Way

2006,8,14



Today's Bobby's Way (the blog of the manager for the Chiba Lotte Marines baseball team, Bobby Valentine) was quite interesting for me. Actually he has been studying Japanese. He wrote something like this. "I enjoy being a guy in my middle age learning a new language. Yet at times I get frustrated because the retention is not what it was when I was much younger." And then he introduced one method of learning Japanese. It's a program created by the International Communication Institute. I thought this company was also one of his sponsors. Many foreigners must be reading his blog and they might buy this textbook and CD. I know many sponsors support his blog so he has to comment on their activities. I mean he sometimes wrote sort of ads. Actually when he commented about Shinsei Bank, I couldn't help clicking that bank's banner. (Now he appears in the commercials of Shinsei Bank.) And the other day I opened my account of

that bank because I learned we didn't need to pay a service charge when we pay money into the other accounts from Shisei Bank. I will be able to save a little bit of my money. I noticed that he wrote as follows in the end of the blog. " Though some people may think that everything I do is some type of paid sponsorship or advertisement the fact of the matter is that it simply is not true." I couldn't help laughing a lot when I read it. Anyway he is a little bit older than me and I can absolutely understand his feeling about studying new things. Let's study a new language and enjoy it!

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a Vocation Vacation

2006,8,13



Have you ever heard about a Vocation Vacation ? Actually it's the new way in which people spend a holiday working for their dream jobs. They can learn how to make beer and so on. They can also work with television producers. The most popular job so far is winemaking. According to the survey many people can't change their job for the reason of money and lack of the right education or experience.

Now we have a summer vacation in Japan. We call these holidays Obon holidays. Actually I don't have Obon holidays because I'm working as a civil servant. We have to open our offices every day except Saturday, Sunday and national holidays. But we can get 5 days off for summer holidays from July to September. I decided to take my holidays in the middle of September to visit NZ. Do you know the original meaning of Obon? Actually it's a sort of Buddhist festival and during Obon we welcome our dead ancestors to our home. We make some ornaments like a horse by using an eggplant and a cucumber for our ancestors' vehicles. The souls of our ancestors would come back home by riding on vegetable houses. Nowadays many people don't do such kind of function especially in big cities. To tell you the truth I've never done it but I'm sure in the countryside many people still do it. About a vocation vacation it sounds interesting. If I had a chance to take it, I would like to work as a dairy farmer in Hokkaido.

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a Segway

2006,8,12



Today's topic was about a Segway. It's a new transportation device like a big scooter. It runs on electricity and only one person can ride it on a sidewalk. It's good for the environment but still expensive so it's not common even in the US. Now they are being used at airports and in some places like Chicago and San Francisco they are also being offered for tourists.

Actually I've seen Segways twice. I saw them in the Expo in Aichi for the first time. At the American pavilion some American staff were riding them. I was a little bit interested in them. People on Segways looked comfortable. Then I saw them in Santa Barbara last June. Some tourists were running on the Segways in the town happily. I didn't see Segways in SF but that city seems to be the best place where people should use them because it's the city of steep slopes. It must be very helpful to go up many hills by riding Segways there.

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bio fuels

2006,8,11



As the price of oil has been rising, people began to be interested in bio fuel that was like ethanol made from grains like corn. There are some arguments between pro and con of using bio fuel. Some people say using bio fuel is not good because grains are basically foods and they should prepare them to offer to the people who suffer from famine. On the other hand the others say they should increase using such bio fuel because it's really good for the environment. I'm not an expert but I agree with the second opinion. Because we can't consume oil forever. It's not inexhaustible. It is inevitable that oil will run out someday. And protecting the environment is the most important matter that we should be concerned about now. Now we have a great technologies and knowledge about this area. We should improve clean energy. The idea of producing new clean energy from plant wastes seems to be wonderful.

By the way, my translation is correct, right?

As oil prices climb, so does interest in fuels made from agricultural products. (I think the subject is missed in this sentence. 石油の価格が高騰しているので、農産物から生産される燃料への関心が高まっている。)

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Regarding the contents of my e-mails please don't care about them. I sometimes write my dairy, a summary and my impression of an article of VOA special English, my questions concerning English and so on. The story of a robber was actually small talk that my staff told me during the lunch break. It was her terrible experience not mine. Sometimes I wrote an e-mail and a comment in English. Nobody corrected my wrong English so I also sent them to you. About answers to the Kiwi's questions I wrote them on his web site. Sorry I didn't let you know the situations of my English sentences.

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To be honest I wasn't interested in NZ until my ex teacher Nancy told me about NZ where she was from. She was really friendly and fixed very tasty sweets in NZ and let us eat them. She looked like a white person but I think she was a mixed race person between a white person and a native Maori. My image of NZ was only it was a dairy country in the Southern Hemisphere. It belongs to the British Commonwealth and the Queen Elizabeth. And probably people speak English. That's all but now I know about NZ a little bit more. Their Prime minister is a woman, Helen Clark and the Governor General is also a woman, Silvia Cartwright. Moreover both the Chairperson of Parliament and the senior judge are women. It means their important people are all women. And now NZ is famous for the location of many movies such as the Lord of the Ring, The Last Samurai and The Chronicles of Narnia. The famous people from NZ are Sir Hilary who climbed up Mt. Everest and movie star Russell Crowe who received the Academy Award. Anyway I decided to visit that country by myself in September. It was great fun for me home staying in Mt. Morris in the US so I'm going to home stay again at a Kiwi's home. The one thing of visiting NZ in September sounds good is it will be early spring there. Another good thing is the time difference between NZ and Japan is only 3 hours. I'm not so young and I know I won't be able to live longer than I've been living. I will do what I want to do from now on. (I would like to visit Mt. Morris again but it must be too hot in September. Imagining over 35 degree temperature make me be dizzy.)

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A terrible accident happened the other day. A 7-year old girl was killed in a pool in front of her mother. She was drawn into a drainpipe when she was swimming among many people in a public pool. The power of suction was very strong so rescuers couldn't pull her out from the pipe for a long time. She had already passed away when they found her in the pipe. Actually there was not a top over the pipe which should have been there. Before opening the pool civil servants working for the city hall checked the pool but they couldn't find any faults. Now we are checking many pools all around Japan and we found a lot of faults there. In my opinion her accident was sort of a man-made disaster. Her parents can't let go of her death and excuse people who were in charge of the pool.

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Today was really hot. I'm completely exhausted. I had been feeling dizzy at the office.

Today's topic was about pets that Americans feed. It's a question from a guy in Iran.

About sixty-three percent of American families keep pets like dogs and cats. Some of them have unusual animals for example snakes and hedgehogs as pets. They will spend more than thirty-eight thousand million dollars this year on their pets and many dogs have sweaters, toys and so on.

I think ordinary people in Iran are not so rich. The questioner must be very surprised and curious hearing this story. I remembered the Iranian movie of a poor 10 year-old boy and his younger sister. The story was like this. In Iran actually girls studied only in the morning at school and boys studied only in the afternoon. One day a boy lost his sister's old shoes by accident. She had only these shoes and parents weren't able to buy new shoes for her. They knew it so they didn't tell the truth to their parents and she went to school with her brother's big shoes. On the way home they changed their shoes and the boy went to school. She came home bare foot. Sometimes he was late for class and scolded by a teacher but he never told the truth. He heard that a big marathon would take place and the prize of the third winner would be sneakers. He decided to participate in that race and actually got the first prize after the clothing contest. Many adults praised him but he was really disappointed because he couldn't get sneakers. It's a really heart warming movie. I don't know the original title of that movie but its Japanese title was " Sneakers

and Golden fish ”

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Tips of success

2006,8,6



I met a Japanese middle-aged woman who can speak English very well. She advised me about her success. She said, “For the first thing you need to do is to concentrate your study. You have to focus on short-term goals. In order to stay motivated you are better off visiting English speaking countries sometimes. And the most important thing is to speak with many English native speakers without hesitation. The tip of success might be to be talkative like me.”

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YouTube

2006,8,5



Last year two young guys created the very popular web site YouTube where we can place our own vides and everybody can watch fifty million videos at any one time. Actually we can watch hundreds of videos of the conflict taking place in Israel and Lebanon. Now employees of YouTube are very busy to honor the copyright protection laws and remove violent or sexual videos from that web site.

To tell you the truth I’ ve never heard about YouTube until you showed that hilarious video. Today I checked the web site and saw one video. It’ s a kind of short drama without lines. One guy was walking along a street and suddenly one shoe fell in front of him from a tall building. A middle-aged woman standing on the edge of the rooftop dropped it. She looked like a person who was attempting to commit suicide. He hurried up to the rooftop and helped her. After that she made advances toward him. He ran away from her. She got angry and went to the same place, the edge of the rooftop again and dropped her shoe in front of another guy walking along the same street. I don’ t know what this movie means. Maybe a creator would like to explain foolishness of women.

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✚ The Feminine Mystique

2006,8,4



The title of “The Feminine Mystique” was translated to 新しい女性の創造 in Japanese. I feel it could sound more philosophical than 女の力. But I’m sure it sounds a little bit out of date now. I feel the days in the seventies are like yesterday. But lifestyles of women were quite different from now. At that time we couldn’t imagine that young girls would live in foreign countries by themselves, but now many Japanese girls are living in LA alone. On the other hand many young Japanese girls still want to be housewives now. Anyway I wish I had been born a little bit later. Regarding that hilarious gaijin song, that sounds wonderful, pretty good. I’m sorry I couldn’t catch them well. Only a few words I could get but I could understand perfectly their Japanese and subtitles written in English. Did you get it from a website for gaijin living in Japan?

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✚ Fulbright Exchange Program

2006,8,3



Fulbright Exchange Program

This famous program was established in 1945, just after World War Two to let many excellent young people understand foreign countries with each other. It launched many Nobel Prize winners and leaders in many departments. I had been thinking that scholarship program was being run by the very rich personal foundation, Fulbright’s property. But actually it was paid for by the US government and by foreign governments and private groups. That’s great. Fulbright is a name who proposed the legislation to create this program. I don’t know how many Japanese have ever received it. Over thousand Japanese might have studied in the US thanks to Fulbright.

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✚ the new drug for AIDS

2006,8,2



Today’s topic sounded really difficult for me to catch because there were a lot of proper nouns, drug company’s names and some kinds of medicines. Well, they spoke about a new effective pill for HIV that was produced recently by two drug companies in the US. Actually the patients had to

take several kinds of pills a day to treat AIDS but from now it becomes Ok for them to take only one pill a day. But it's not cheap. It costs more than one thousand dollars per month. The US will offer this pill to fifteen developing countries in Africa.

In Japan we haven't heard about news of AIDS recently but I know there are a lot of poor patients in the world. Especially there are a lot of kids' patients in Africa. I hope the new drug will cure them.

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If I'm lost in the mountains,...

2006,8,1



At first I should calm down and try to find where I am by looking over the landscape, a map, and use a magnetic compass. Then I have to check whether I have enough food and water. If I can know the place where I'm, I'm better off searching for a path. After finding the pretty wide path and in case it's not so close to the evening, I had better go down to the base. In case it's already in the late afternoon, I should stay one night there. Because the next morning I can go to the base and it's safer for me. When I can't find my direction or the path, the best way is to stay there silently eating food little by little and spread my cloths above trees or on the ground. Shouting for help and moving around won't do any good. I will only be lose my energy and get hungry and thirsty. A few days later the helicopter should be able to find me from the sky.

9/20,21

2006,9,30



9/20

Today was also fine. I overslept a little bit. This morning Sue went to a pre school to teach kids music and dance as a volunteer teacher. It was one of her pleasures. While I was eating breakfast, which Sue prepared for me, Roger came to their house.

He took me to the down town and gave me some orders like these. ① Ask somebody how to go to a post shop and get the information of charges to send a postcard and a small parcel to Japan. (They call a post office as a post shop because it's not an independent office but it belongs to a shop. It's actually at the corner of the bookshop.) ② Then go to the information center of Tauronga and get maps. ③ Come back to Roger's house by bus. I didn't know about the downtown at all but I'd done well. People whom I met there were very kind and friendly except

the bus driver. He only shrugged his shoulders when I asked him to let me know the bus stop where I would get out. I think he should have taught me that because I was the only passenger. After eating Fish and Chips, their typical lunch, we went to Kiwi 360 where we rode a helicopter. It was my first experience and I was excited again. We paid 400 NZ dollars per one person. I think it's quite cheap compared with Japan.

When a kiwi farmer welcomed us with Roger, the helicopter arrived at a farm. That guy showed us the really huge farm. We saw a lot of animals like sheep, cows and fed little babies of animals. They were so cute. He also explained the plants such as kiwis. He spoke so fast that I'm sorry I couldn't catch him well.

After dinner Sue and I spent some time folding Origami. She made origami pretty well because handcrafts is one of her hobbies. She is really dexterous.

9/21

After taking a walk with Sue and Abby near the beach I walked to Rogers house.

Today I was supposed to visit a famous sightseeing town, Rotorua. There are a lot of silent volcanoes and many Maori people live there. Sou said it would be cold that day especially in Rotorua. Fortunately it was fine, too.

Roz took Jyunko and me to Rotorua by car. It takes about one hour from their house. At first we went up the mountain by gondola and did luge from the top of the mountain. It was really a thrill for me, too.

After eating lunch we visited Agrodorme, the big farm where we enjoyed the sheep show. Then we visited Hells Gate where there were a lot of boiling pools and boiling mud pools. It's actually a huge volcanic area. One thing I regretted a little was we couldn't see a geyser. After That We went to Polynesian Spa. Taking a bath while seeing Lake Rotorua seemed like something I would see Japan. I really relaxed there.

But we didn't have a lot of time because we made a reservation for a dinner show. We ate the Maoris traditional food, Hang which they usually cook under the grand and enjoyed the show. It's wonderful. I was really satisfied with it.

It was after 10 o'clock when I arrived at home. Today was busy, too.



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✚ 9/19

2006,9,29



9/19

Today was really exciting, too. Roger, Jyunko, Kenzo and I drove to Waitomo Caves. On the way we stopped over at Otorohanga Kiwi House. We saw many kinds of rare birds but sadly we couldn't see kiwi because they were nocturnal birds. After eating lunch at the parking area we tried the big adventure, "black water rafting". The members of our group were 3 kiwis, 3 Japanese and a kiwi instructor. After putting on wet suits at a hut in a mountain, the instructor took us to a deep cave by car. We had to drop down to the bottom of the cave under 27 meters by a rope by turns. It was really scary. We rafted in the river in the cave by black tubes. When we turned off our headlight, we could see very beautiful glowworms at the ceiling of the cave. It's amazing!! It looked like brighten stars in the dark sky. The river was deep in some places and sometimes we had to crawl into the narrow halls. It was quite hard work. Kiwi guys helped me a lot. For the last we had to try rock climbing to the ground. Oh, my Gosh!! I've never done such dangerous things but I had to do it to come home. At first I tried it. The fellows under the cave cheered me up. Sometimes there is no rock where I could put my foot. "Right, right!!" They shouted from the bottom. I'd done it well. When we arrived outside, it was already dark. After this adventure, my fellows began to call me "Super Grandma".



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✚ 9/18

2006,9,28



9/18

After breakfast Sue and I took a walk with the white dog, Abby. About 9 a.m.

Roger picked me up and we drove to the suburb with Japanese young guys, Jyunko and Kenzo. In the morning we tried horse riding. We were enjoying it for one and half hours at the farm and beach. It was a little bit scary but a lot of fun and comfortable.

After horse riding we ate the famous Maketu Pies, which are produced in a small factory here, but they are supplied all over the north island. Then we went to a classical style restaurant and I ate a muffin with tea. It's really British style.

In the afternoon we did archery in a mountain. It required powerful muscles and I couldn't aim well. But it was quite fun and I enjoyed it. One time my arrow shot the mark that was quite far by luck. I was really satisfied about it.

In the evening Ken went to the school as a volunteer activity concerning a church. They had been taking care of a girl who didn't have a father and today he participated in an activity instead of her father.

And Roz took me to a hot pool that was a real hot spring like a swimming pool in Japan. Of course we entered the warm pool with swimming suits.

Jyunko and Kenzo

They are Japanese young guys whom I met in Taurang. Jyunko will stay in NZ for a working holiday for one year. Kenzo is a graduate student specializing in technology and was home staying

in NZ for one month.

The owner of the archery place

He is an energetic middle-aged guy and that area including the mountain, farms, accommodations and river belong to him. He runs them by himself. He has four grown up kids and one of them lives in England and the other son lives in Australia. Surprisingly he visited Japan in 1975. At that time many young guys from some countries joined in one big ship and they visited some countries including Japan. He was a member of that great event.



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✚ 9/17

2006,9,27



9/17

Roger came to Puhekohe and took me to Auckland. At first we visited two famous hills, One Tree Hill and Mt. Eden. The views from there were wonderful and I could see all around Auckland. And there were a lot of sheep and lamb even in the biggest city, Auckland. Lamb were so cute. Then we walked around Americas Cup Village and visited Auckland Museum. In the afternoon we ate lunch and drank a hot white chocolate at the famous shop on Pamell Rd. The previous U.S. president Clinton visited there and I sat down on the chair where his daughter Chelsea sat down. We drove to Taurang seeing a lot of sheep, caws and deer. Actually in NZ the population is only less than four million and there were 10 times as many sheep as humans. In NZ it's spring now so it's a season for the birth of lamb. They were really cute and looked peaceful but usually they are eaten before they become 3 months

old. That's cruel. They don't know what will happen with them soon. Lamb is very delicious and expensive and deer is also delicious. Recently deer farms are increasing more and more and the number of sheep is decreasing. Luckily we also saw many cherry blossoms. It's wonderful that I could see cherry blossoms twice in a year. On the way to Taurang we drove through Matamata which was the location of the movie "The Lord of the Rings". It takes about 2 and a half hours by car from Auckland to Taurang. Tonight I will stay at Sue and Ken's house. For dinner Sue asked me to cook rice. Oh, it was really difficult for me and I burned it a little bit. Because I always cook rice by using an electric rice cooker in Japan.



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✚ Who are they ?

2006,9,26



9/17

Roz and Roger

They had been living in Taiwan for one year and after that had been living in Japan for three years. About one and a half years ago they came back to NZ and founded a travel agency in Taurang. I happened to find their website and applied for this home stay plan. They met each other when they were students but he is twelve years older than her because he entered a college after working in many countries for over ten years. They have three kids, Annalise aged 5, Daniel aged 3 and Benjamin aged 1. They live in Taurang in the east coast in the North Island.

Sue and Ken

I home stayed at their home for 6 nights. They are a little bit older than me and have 2 sons,

Jonathan and Ollie. Oops, another member of the family is Abby, a 10 year old smart and cute golden retriever. Actually Sue is British. She came to NZ for a working holiday when she was young and met Ken. After coming back to England they continued to be in correspondence and got married. Her English seems to be really good Queen's English. It's true; her English was very easy for me to catch. Ken is working as a manager of a rest house near their house and She usually goes to work at 9 a.m. by car. Their first son, Jonathan is a student in Auckland and also is working for a TV station. Ollie is living with them and working as a sound engineer. They live within a ten minutes walk near Roger's house.

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✚ Dear Heather and John,

2006,9,25



Dear Heather and John,

I'm the Japanese woman whom you met on the plane the other day. Thanks so much for chatting with me at that time. I really enjoyed my days in NZ and came back to Japan safely. After I said good-bye to you, I was able to find a woman, Ruth living in Pukekohe easily. She took me to her house and we ate scones and some Japanese sweets with her mother and husband. They also showed me a rocky beach, Kaiaua. The sea was very calm because the sea is surrounded by Coromandel Peninsula. On the back way to their home we went to a super market and after that we cooked dinner, steaks, baked potatoes and salad. My first day in NZ started like this. Today I will send pictures that I took at the airport. Next time I will tell you my adventures in NZ soon. Have a good day.

Heather and John

I happened to sit down next to them on the plane to Auckland. They are an elderly couple living in Wellington and had been traveling in Europe for 5 weeks. Heather has a friend in Scotland so they visited there. Unfortunately they stayed in Shinagawa in Tokyo for only two days. They changed to a domestic airplane at the Auckland airport to go back home.

Ruth and Zane

Ruth is Roger's elder sister and Zane is her husband. They got married 2 years ago and have been living in a big house with a pool near her parents.

? (Sorry, I forgot her name.)

She is Roger's mother aged over 85 years old. She is very much alive for her age and good at making scones.

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✚ Dear everybody whom I met in NZ,

2006,9,24



Just now I've come home to Japan safely. Thank you very much for your kindness in New Zealand. I will send you some pictures as soon as possible. Take care and have a good day.

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✚ in NZ

2006,9,20



I'm now in NZ. I am called a super grandma here because I tried a lot of adventures like a horse ridding, archery, rock climbing except bungee jumping.

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✚ going to NZ

2006,9,15



Tonight I'm going to start for NZ. I don't take my laptop there so I will not be able to send you e-mails for a little while. But I will write my dailies in English almost every day in my note and send them to you after coming back to Japan. If you have free time, please click here.
<http://english-every-day.blogspot.com/> You might see my days in NZ here. Have a good day in Mt. Morris with your parents and say thanks for them instead of me.

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✚ ONION GO

2006,9,14



You sent me your reply on the ninth, didn't you? Actually it didn't come to me. I don't know why. But it's OK because I finally received it and could check my many mistakes in my English. The other day Monte showed me an amazing magic show by using You Tube. That magic was incredible! The duo changed their cloths many times in a twinkle. Very amazing! Thanks a lot to Monte. Actually I watched the same TV program in LA when I stayed there last June. I don't know the title of the program but it must be a very popular show in the U.S. (Can I use a period twice here? It was used as U.S. and the end of the sentence. And I recognized the sign "ONION GO" on the stage.) People who perform the shows look like amateurs and some pro TV personalities score them. They look really severe and their comments might sound funny. Sadly, I couldn't catch them perfectly. The black girl spoke so fast that I couldn't catch her perfectly. That's a shame. The girl shouted, "How did you do it? I think we should bow." And the other judge said, " Absolutely yes." Does it mean, " You can pass the audition."?

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✚ **I was shocked by his innocent.**

2006,9,13



Are you still alive in NYC? I haven't received the replay of my previous e-mail which I send you last week. Now I have a plan to stay in NZ for 8 days. I'm going to start from Japan the day after tomorrow. I can enjoy horse ridding, doing archery, sight seeing, exploring in the cave and so on. There seem to be a lot of hot springs there so probably I will take a bath with a swimming suit. And I'm also looking forward to eating delicious sweets. I hear NZ is a dairy country so dairy products like ice cream are very very yummy. But my main purpose to visit there is improving my English. Now I'm really hooked on studying English. Anyway please correct my English. I'm looking forward to your reply.

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✚ **Doing business Two Thousand Seven**

2006,9,12



Doing business Two Thousand Seven

According to the world bank report business reforms are extremely important to develop economies and recently African countries have tried to do them. Many countries also have been

trying to make procedures easy. For example, the Chinese government has established a system of credit record and Mexico has increased protections for investors. That also ranks Singapore, New Zealand, the U.S., Canada and Hong Kong as the easiest countries of doing business in the world.

In my opinion business reforms have pros and cons. For the former they make the economy active. On the other hand they make severe competitions among international companies.

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✚ Zozo Sisters

2006,9,11



I've never heard about Linda Ronstadt and Ann Savoy but they are very famous singers in the U.S. Recently they have released a new album. The new women duo is called Zozo Sisters in this album "Adieu False Heart". They say Linda became famous in the seventies. I think it means she must be over fifty years old now. But their singing voices sound like girls, really beautiful and spontaneous. I really enjoyed hearing the parts of their songs. I love them. Very wonderful.

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✚ Zorro

2006,9,10



Zorro, actually he reminds me of the cool French movie star, Alain Delon. And I also have a memory of Zorro on the TV drama. But I was too young at that time so my memory is really faint. I had been thinking that it was a story in Spain until I heard the VOA topic about Zoro. I finally realized it was a story in Ca. Yes, Ca had been a colony of Spain until about one hundred years ago. Actually there are a lot of names of towns in Spanish such as Santa Barbara. Anyway they have been making many movies about Zorro and they say a musical stage show is also set up in London. Zorro wearing a black gown and a mask is good at fencing and he always beats bad people. Just before leaving his



enemies, he always cuts their clothes with a Z by his sword. Far out!!

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The new strategy of Microsoft

2006.9.9



I'm sure this is big news for people who love video games because they will be able to make their own video games soon. The famous computer company, Microsoft is going to offer the free software named the XNA Game Studio Express which people can download on computers to create their original video games. And they will also be able to share their own games with the other fans. But they have to pay ninety-nine dollars a year and join a "creative club". Making many young people become interested in creating video games will be a great help for not only the video design industry but also the computer industry. That's the reason why Microsoft is planning to offer expensive software to many people for free. (By the way, when I want to say this Japanese sentence “ 彼らは、それを使うことが出来るようになるだろう。”, which is better to describe “They will be able to use it.” or “ They will be able to come to use it.” ?)

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Studying in the U.S.

2006.9.8



The new series began in the VOA education report in which they will introduce to us, not American people, but how to be international students in the U.S. Today they only gave us the introduction but from next week they will teach us many things such as how we can find a suitable school, what kind of test we should take, how much it costs and so on.

I'm looking forward to listening to the program because now I'm interested in studying in the U.S. after retirement. Actually I know it's too late and too difficult for me to study at a university or a graduate school. But I heard there are a lot of community colleges where foreigners can study cheaply in America. Anyway at first I have to get a lot of information and improve my English.

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Bluegrass Camp

2006,9,7



The Rocky Grass Bluegrass Festival has been held in Colorado since in 1973. People who love bluegrass music gather there every summer to learn how to play bluegrass music by many instruments with strings including the banjo, guitar, mandolin and so on.

I prefer bluegrass music more than noisy and fast music. That sounds expansive and clear. That reminds me of the good old days.

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Margaret Mead

2006,9,6



Today's topic is about Margaret Mead, the very famous American anthropologist. She was born in 1901 in Philadelphia and studied anthropology at Columbia Univ. in NY. After graduating she went to Samoa by herself to investigate the life of girls there and wrote a book about them. Many people read her book and it became one of the best-selling books of the time. Surprisingly at that time she was still 25 years old. She got married three times in her entire life, with an American, a New Zealander and a British man. She had been very active in her whole life, visiting many islands and working at the American Museum of Natural History, appearing on radio and television programs and so on. Moreover she shared her strong opinions about social issues. In 1978 she died of cancer at the age of 77 and people around the world, especially people in New Guinea, mourned her death.

I didn't study anthropology but of course I've known her name and her study, books about culture in the small islands in the Pacific Ocean, since I was a student. She must have been very aggressive. I've heard some scholars criticized her work. And still now they are discussing if her study was right or not. I think it means how great her achievement was.

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Uncle Sam

2006,9,5



Uncle Sam is a sort of symbol of the U.S. But when and who decided it is not sure. The following is one of the episodes why Uncle Sam came to be famous among many Americans. It happened

during the war between the U.S. and British troops, in 1812. One day a worker read the letters "U.S." written on a shipment of meat for American soldiers as "Uncle Sam" because the name of the meat supplier was actually Samuel Wilson. Many cartoonists painted many Uncle Sam's characters. The most famous one was an old man with white hair and a beard wearing a hat like the American flag. During World War One he was used on many posters by which they recruited soldiers. When World War Two happened, they also used him for the same aim. He became absolutely popular all over the country.

I'd never heard of him or I'd never seen his character. I think the worker might have been uneducated. He probably couldn't read letters well. But his misunderstanding was really witty. He made a really valuable mistake.

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Labor Day in the U.S.

2006,9,4



The first Monday in September is a national holiday, Labor Day in the U.S. In many other industrial countries the first of May is actually Labor Day according to the British social reformer Robert Owen. But in the U.S. NY Labor Leader Peter McGuire suggested to make the first Monday in September to be Labor Day. For many years American workers demonstrated to require good salaries and better working conditions on that day but recently it's actually the day for barbecue parties. They invite relatives and friends and hold the party outside missing the end of summer on that day.

Labor Day, that reminds me of the time I visited the U.S for a time just 2 years ago. We were supposed to drive to Santa Barbara from LA but the free way was absolutely crowded because of the three days weekend. So we returned to LA on the way there and changed our plan to go to the Getty Center, the great museum. But it was also so busy. By the way in Japan the first of May has become a sort of Labor Day. Actually it isn't a national holiday but many employees can get a day off on that day and attend the demonstrations. We call it May Day. As for me, as I'm a civil servant, I have to work on May Day.

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Too boring

2006,9,3



I came home now. My grandson got out of the hospital safely this morning. Now he is jumping and kicking, quite lively. He had a severe infection so had been in a small room for one week. He was isolated from the other kids. For the first three days his condition was completely bad but after that he became good. It must have been so boring for him. I stayed at the room with him for only one night. To be honest I was tired because I had to sleep on a quite small and uncomfortable bed. And now I'm not used to taking care of kids so I woke up many times to check on him. Anyway being in good health is best. One thing I'm very surprised about Nagoya is it's the fourth biggest city in Japan but it also has the great countryside. The station near my son's house is actually the one next to Nagoya station of the JR line. It takes only four minutes from Nagoya to the station but around it looks like countryside. There are not so many stores, tall buildings and houses. Anyway it's all right. It's totally a good place for kids to grow up.

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I'm going to Nagoya.

2006,9,2



From now I'm going to a hospital in Nagoya to visit my first grandson. Now he has recovered and he will go back to home tomorrow. A doctor assured he would come home next Sunday yesterday. But unfortunately last weekend he got infected with a bad virus, threw up and had the runs. In addition he had a high fever so he entered the hospital. My daughter in law has to take care of her baby at home and my son had been busy at work. The hospital required parents to give 24 hour care to a little kid. The mother of my daughter in law came to Nagoya from Shikoku and she has been helping my sons' family. I really appreciate her. (" my daughter in law's mother" is OK? What's the difference between two phrases?) I'm sorry I couldn't help. Anyway I will spend this night at the hospital with my grandson.

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What's a charter school?

2006,9,1



Now they have charter schools, which are different from traditional schools but operated by taxes, all over the states. Non-profit groups and profit-making companies run those schools. In many cases kids who can't get along in traditional schools tend to enter such schools and they

can teach kids more freely there than traditional schools. Now one fiftieth of kids are studying there but some experts oppose the system of charter school because they spend much money that should be used for traditional schools.

What's a charter school in the US? It's like a sort of free school in Japan? It's a school for kids who can't go to an ordinary school. They can't get up early in the morning or feel stomachache just before leaving home because of mental sickness. In Japan such kids are increasing and a group of parents and aid people are making free schools. And the local governments also aid for them. But actually they are not legal schools based on the Fundamental Law of Education. Even if kids studied there, they can't get any qualification. They are really halfway systems and we still have legal schools for disabled children. In my opinion the government should establish various kinds of schools as to the situation of many kids. If some free schools are good, they should admit them as legal schools instead of helping only money.

300 million people in America

2006,10,31



Recently the population of the U.S. became 3 hundred million. Actually the birth rate in the U.S. is not so low but it depends on many immigrants. The U.S. is originally a country of immigrants and the nation used to be from Europe. Now they are from Hispanic countries such as Mexico. The part of nation who can't speak English well is increasing as well. The rise of illegal immigrants from Latin America is also a big problem there. They say the glorious 3 hundred millionth person couldn't have been a baby born in a hospital in the state but an immigrant. Now the most popular names of newborn babies are Jacob and Emily. They were John and Mary in 1950. Anyway President Bush was glad to hear this big news and made a comment like this, "further proof that the American Dream remains as bright and hopeful as ever."

Now we say the population of Japan is getting less and less. The birth rate is really decreasing in Japan and it's the most serious problem. When I visited NZ, they said they had the same problem as in Japan. In Auckland, the biggest city, many immigrants from the islands in the Pacific Ocean have settled. I was also very surprised to see many Asians and Hispanics in LA. And I met some Asian Australians and Chinese Canadians who are Nova's teachers. In the advanced countries the populations are expected to decrease. We should welcome immigrants from the other countries, right? It's a really difficult decision for Japan because we have been proud of our homogeneous nation. Now I have no idea about this theme.

 **Halloween**

2006,10,30



The last day of October is Halloween. In the U.S. kids wearing costumes like princess, witches and pirates visit neighbors. They say “Trick or treat!” and get candy. Actually Halloween is from Celtic beliefs in ancient Britain in its origin. They welcomed the spirits of the dead on that day. Now Halloween is one of the most popular festivals in the U.S. and they spend almost five thousand million dollars to celebrate it this year.

These days celebrating Halloween is getting popular in Japan. We can see a lot of decorations like pumpkin lanterns at stores. I think originally it's similar to the Japanese Buddhism festival Obon, a kind of summer festival. Both of them are festivals for our dead ancestors. A lot of people will have parties tomorrow. Do they understand the meaning of Halloween? Enjoying parties wearing frightening costumes seems to be good but I want them to understand the original meaning. Only making a lot of noise without knowledge strikes me as a little bit stupid.

 **the video about American Presidents**

2006,10,29



I enjoyed the video very much. That's really fun. I could understand the history of the U.S. for a little more than 3 minutes if I could catch their songs well. They are singing that song very fast. It's too fast for me to catch them. Well, I'm going to answer the questions.

1. Who was the first president?

It's easy. I think almost every Japanese can answer this question even if we don't watch this video. Of course the first President of the U. S. was George Washington.

2. Who is the current president?

He is George Bush. But this video was made in 1999 and at that time the President was Bill Clinton. But they are singing “the Clintons, Bill and Hillary”. Is this a kind of irony?

3. Who was president in 1960?

I thought he was John Kennedy. But actually he was Eisenhower.

4. Why did Thomas Jefferson's wife get mad?

They sing Thomas Jefferson was so busy writting the Declaration of Independence that his wife was angry enough to get mad. Is it true? I googled Thomas Jefferson and his wife Maser but I couldn't get such information. It also might be a joke.

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Have you ever played dominoes?

2006,10,28



Benjamin looks so cute. I miss the kids. I always couldn't catch them because they don't speak clearly. Fortunately today I could understand what they were talking. It makes me happy. Anyway I'm going to answer the questions but I'm a little bit worried about writing my answers here. I don't want to disturb the other readers to write comments. Everybody, let's write comments here.

1.What kind of day has it been today?

Today was Sunday and you spent a very relaxed day.

2. What does 'hanging out' mean?

It means doing nothing special.

3. What did we see on the drive?

You saw two lambs, two rabbits and a rooster or a hen on the road.

4. What did Daniel do this afternoon?

He ate popcorn, saw a DVD, played dominoes and went to the very large DIY shop named Vanies Wear House (?) to play on the play ground. There is an indoor play ground and a cafeteria in that shop.

I have one question. Could you tell me how to play dominoes?

What kind of game is dominoes? I've never played it but heard about it. Do you use cards on which there are two kinds of numbers? And you put the cards by turns to match up the numbers ,right?

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bbq party in NZ

2006,10,27



1. What kind of bbq party is it?

It's a welcome party for Eriko and her baby Amane. And it's also a farewell party for Hiromi taking place in the park. And you could use the stove for free.

2. What are we eating tonight?

You are eating sausages, steaks, cheese, crackers and drinking juice, beer and wine.

3. How was Junko's surfing lesson?

She couldn't stand up on the board but probably she will be able to do it well soon.

4. What is Eriko's first impressions of N.Z.?

She said, "There are a lot of animals and people are very kind."

5. What is Hiromi's homestay dad doing?

I couldn't catch him well but I guess he is checking a fire of the stove.

I'm very surprised because it's still bright even in the evening. I know now you use daylight saving time. What time does it get dark in NZ, now?

1.What does 'given it a good go' and 'give it your best shot' mean?

It means, "Have a try." "Do your best." And "Try your hardest." I'm sorry I couldn't catch one more phrase.

2. What might happen in the next few minutes?

Probably she will catch a wave and stand up.

3. Why are there hardly any people on the beach?

Because it's Wednesday morning and it's still free spring time, right?

4. Why will Junko have five lessons?

Because she will take lessons at the community class.

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Pumpkins

2006,10,26



Pumpkins remind us of Halloween. In America many families make lanterns by pumpkins. But this year pumpkins had a poor crop and are expensive because there was a lot of rain and it was extremely hot during summer. Pumpkins look like vegetables but actually they belong to fruit.

They have a lot of vitamin A and they are very healthy. What's more they don't go bad while they are being kept in a cool place. People cook pies, breads and the other foods with them.

In Japan pumpkins are also popular. We usually boil them with sugar and soy sauce. Sometimes we deep-fry them. I believed pumpkins are vegetables. I'm sure almost every Japanese except experts think they are vegetables, too. But I know pumpkin is very similar to melon. We have a traditional custom that we eat it on the winter solstice day. They say it has scientific ground. We need a lot of vitamin A during winter not to catch a cold. Ancient people had knowledge about it. They must have gotten it by their experience.

P.S.

A railway accident happened tonight. They say a track overturned on the railroad crossing near Tsujido. The shovel car in the truck damaged the devices of the railway system so the trains in Tokaido line had been stopping until 9:30. Oh, my Gosh. Many people including me had to wait for the trains to start to move at stations for a long time.

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Beccy Cole's song

2006,10,25



① I watched the video and read the Australian singer, Beccy's homepage. It's written in much more difficult English than VOA's text. Especially I couldn't catch the words of her song at all. Anyway I'm going to answer your questions.

1. How long is this video?

It's three minutes and fifty eight seconds long.

2. What are Australian soldiers called?

They are called the Australian troops, right? But I think it's too easy answer for the question. I'm not sure but probably they are called Genes, right? I can't understand the meaning of "Jamm for Genes". Jamm is a name of a girl so I guess it means a singer who visits Iraq and entertains the soldiers. And boys name, Genes, mean soldiers, right?

3. What time of year did Beccy visit Iraq?

She visited there last Christmas and New Year.

4. How many Australian soldiers are in Iraq?

I don't know about it. There is no answer in her homepage. I couldn't catch her song at all. It's too difficult for me to understand the words. Can I find the answer there?

② I think the the sentences of the questions number 1 and number 2 are a little bit strange. There are no subjects. We should say, “ What do you have when you are learning to surf?” and “ Why do you have that kind of board?”, right? Anyway I’m going to try to answer the questions.

1. What do have when you are learning to surf?

We have a long board. A very big board.

2. Why do have that kind of board?

Because it’s easier to stand up on it and to control.

3. What does “catch a wave” mean?

It means to get a wave. To go along a wave. To be able to ride a wave.

4. What are some other usages of 'catch'?

They are “ catch a bus” and “catch a cold”.

5. What does 'Did you catch what I said?'

It means “ Did you understand what I said?”

I also think we should write, “ Guess how many years the instructor has been surfing?”.

He looks about 35 years old and he must have started surfing when he was a teenager. So I guess he has been surfing for 23 years.

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Nine Parts of Desire

2006,10,24



Now the play titled “Nine Parts of Desire” is being performed in a theater in Washington,D.C. The writer of this play who also acts nine different Iraqi women by herself is an Iraqi American woman named Heather Raffo. Her father is an Iraqi man and mother is an American woman. She visited her father’s country when she was little and in 1993 she visited there again. She was affected a lot from her visit and being concerned about the Iraqi people. She hopes her play will help many people to understand and be concerned about the humanity of the Iraqi people.

I’m sure being an Iraqi American must be very hard. But she is really active to help her father’s country. She must be a very strong and brave woman. It’s not their fault they are Iraqi people. I

hope they get peaceful days as soon as possible.

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The war between Tyosyu and Aizu

2006,10,23



Today I'm going to explain about Japanese history especially Aizu and Choshu. In the Edo period there were a lot of Han like present prefectures. Daimyo, also known as Tonosama, governed Han. Both Aizu and Choshu were some of the great Han. In the Meiji Restoration Choshu was the typical pro Emperor area and tried to overthrow the Tokugawa Shogun. On the other hand the Tonosama in Aizu was a relative of the Shogun and of course he was pro Shogun. They were fighting with each other in Aizu in the end of Edo period. The Choshu army completely beat Aizu and burned the Aizu castle. A very tragic incident happened at that time. 20 boys who were about only 16 years old were fighting against Choshu army for their Tonosama. From the top of Iimori hill they saw the burning castle and then they committed suicide by Hara-kiri. (The present Aizu castle was rebuilt after World War Two.) They say many people in Aizu still have grudges against people in Choshu. What prefecture do you think Choshu is now? The old capital of Choshu is also a beautiful town. It's Hagi where you visited last summer. After the Meiji Restoration politicians from Choshu, present Yamaguchi, have been becoming powerful. Many Prime Ministers were from Yamaguchi and Mr. Abe is also from Yamaguchi. I'm not sure but probably there has been no Prime Minister from Aizu. What do you think about this history?

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the tour in Aizu

2006,10,22



I've just come home from a tour in Aizu that is an old name of the present Fukushima with my coworkers. On Friday we drove to there from our office after work and slept in the parking lot at the foot of Mt. Aizu Bandai. Next morning we started climbing up the mountain from 6 o'clock. Unfortunately as it was cloudy and windy, we couldn't see the beautiful view from the top of the mountain. Finally the cloud lifted and then we could see the beautiful lakes and rural towns. Mt. Bandai is one of the one hundred great mountains in Japan. My boss has already climbed 86 mountains including Mt. Bandai and he recommended me to climb the one hundred great mountains. Actually it seems too late for me to climb them from now. Even if I climb 5 mountains a year, it takes 20 years. I don't think I would like to spend my free time only to climb mountains. After going down the mountain we visited Aizu castle, the old roadside town Ouchi Syuku and so on. I had a lot of fun but now I'm very tired. I'm going to drink locally brewed Sake, which is my souvenir from Aizu, and go to bed from now.



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+ Dear

2006,10,20



You must be very busy these days. I watched some videos on Fine's website. Regarding the wedding ceremony I've heard the music, which the Chinese guy played by Koryu but I can't recall the name. Would you mind telling me the name? I think that school is in the small mountain town in Tohoku because I found the heater in the classroom. It must be in a cold area. Anyway could you correct my English?

VOA Special English

2006,10,19



Today is the 47th anniversary of VOA Special English. It was broadcasted for the first time on the 19th of October in 1959. At that time the director of the Voice of America noticed many people all around the world wanted to master English when he traveled. After that they decided to start the program in which they read news one third slower than the ordinary VOA broadcasts. Moreover they used the limited common English words in the simple sentences. Though quite a few experts said that it would not succeed, it soon became one of the most popular programs on VOA. And it still is.

I love VOA Special English, too. It's easy to catch and the contents are also interesting and suitable length, about 5 or 6 minutes. Almost every morning I download the sound spectrum into my MP3 player as soon as I turn on my computer and print the document out. On the way to the station I listen to it and read it on the train. When I can catch it correctly, I feel really happy. After coming home I sum it up and write my comment about the topic. Now it's one of my everyday customs and pleasures. And I also really appreciate the computer and MP3 player. Because if there was no computer and MP3 player, I couldn't listen to it by radio every day.

World Food Day

2006,10,18



The sixteenth of October was World Food Day. Many countries are holding events for this special day. And the message of this year is "investing in agriculture for food security." They made this slogan because foreign aid for agriculture is decreasing recently and 8 hundred 50 million people around the world still don't get enough food. If they get more money, they could buy better seeds, equipment and chemical fertilizer. After that it will be possible for them to get more food and profits. Separately, the Nobel Peace Prize for 2006 was awarded to Bangladesh, Yunis who helped many poor people by lending money. He said that he wanted to use the Nobel award to establish an eye hospital and start a project to produce low cost food for the poor. I checked the website of Food and Agriculture Organization of U.N. in Japan. In Japan they are going to hold a music concert in Yokohama to observe World Food Day. Now we decided to take

economic sanctions against North Korea and they say in that country many people will starve to death soon. I hate the leader of that country but I think the ordinary North Korean people are not to blame. They are also victims of their stupid leader. I'm worried about them.

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Dummies Books

2006,10,17



Dummies Books

They are a series of books that show people how to do something in a funny way such as “World history for Dummies”. They are also written in simple language to let everybody understand easily. Besides they are translated into more than 39 languages including Chinese, Arabic, Russian German, Greek and Spanish. The first such book, “DOS for Dummies” was published in 1991 and after that more than 150 million Dummies books have been sold. (Can I write these sentences by the passive voice?) The best–selling Dummies books are those that provide information many people need like diseases, education and cooking.

I've never heard about Dummies books and never seen them. I checked that series' web site and found the links for the Chinese version, the German version and so on. Unfortunately there was no Japanese link. Probably they were not translated into Japanese. Why? I can't believe it because Japan is the most familiar country with America. Anyway we can buy them through the Amazon website. Actually I found “English grammar for Dummies” there. I'm a little bit interested in it. I would like to read it someday.

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how to study English

2006,10,16



Today I've read the book titled “English grammar of native English speakers”. It says that we need not memorize difficult English grammar but we should understand how they are thinking when they speak English. ① If you want to say a noun which you imagine only one thing, you can use “the”. ② If you mention a specific thing, you should add article “a” in front of a noun. When you state a vague thing, it's not necessary to add “a” or “the”. ③ Native English speakers don't say the passive voice except when there are special reasons such as avoiding sentences

which have long subjects. The rest is omitted. And I also read the other book, "English conversation with English thinking" last week. It said, "When you speak English, you should understand what native speakers' ideas are. For example, ① We don't like to say excuses but they really want to explain reasons. So we have to tell reasons when we apologize. ② We tend to say every thing vaguely. On the other hand they usually state clearly. So we have to say yes or no clearly at first and then I had better explain the reason in detail. What do you think about them? Those books are too difficult for me to understand immediately. Anyway I realized improving English must be so difficult.

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Possums

2006,10,15



1. What type of competition is it?

It's a competition for children who caught the biggest eels and possums. It looks a little bit cruel to hang animals like that. I'm really surprised to hear about possums because this afternoon my American friend sent me a picture of one. I had never heard about it and on the same day, today, I heard about possums from the American and Roger by a curious coincidence. The American said that it was cute.

2. Why are possums a pest?

Because they eat the native NZ trees and breed very fast.

3. What hadn't started yet?

The gun boots throwing competition hadn't started yet.

4. What was the competition for dads last year?

It was the cake baking competition.

5. What did I say about the piglet (baby pig)?

I couldn't get it well.

6. What was over the back?

There was the kiwi fruits farm.



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✚ Golfing is fun!!

2006,10,14



Today I played golf with three friends. Probably it was in the end of April when I played golf for the last time. To tell you the truth I wasn't willing to go to a golf course because recently I hadn't practiced playing golf in earnest. I thought my score must be very bad. As everybody who has played golf knows, it's really stressful to play golf with bad scores. Fortunately today I enjoyed a lot. In the morning it was not raining but the heavy fog laid all around the course but soon it cleared away. And sometimes I was able to hit balls quite well. It's really comfortable to hit a ball into the distance straightly. Besides, the golf course was in the mountains so we could also enjoy seeing beautiful autumn colors. Now I'm a little bit tired and feel a pain in my back and calves. Anyway I would like to play golf at least once a month.

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✚ I have to trust him.

2006,10,13



My son Takashi is still living in LA. He moved to a new apartment house at the end of July and now shares the room with a Spaniard who is an international student at UCLA, one year junior behind him but about 30 years old.

And he visited Europe to attend Ars Electronica and gave a performance of his work "Takashi's Seasons" there in August. I really wanted to watch it in Austria but I couldn't. After that he also

stayed in Australia to introduce his other work for the exhibition there in the end of September. Now he is working as a free-lance artist. He seems to be cooperating with his former schoolmates to share jobs. In Japan many young people tend to belong to companies just after graduating from universities. I'm an old-fashioned Japanese middle-aged woman so I'm a little bit worried about him. I'm not sure but I'm thinking it's better for him to be a salaried worker in Japan. Anyway now he is accustomed to the American society and has a lot of international friends. It's true that LA is the most suitable place for his job. He is still quite young and will do well in America. I have to trust him.

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State fairs

2006,10,12



This is the topic from VOA special English and my comment about it.
Autumn is a season of agricultural fairs in the U.S. They have some contests such as crops and animals that farmers produced. Besides many competitions like eating contests and cooking contests take place at the fairs. People who visit there also can examine home products and farm equipment. They can really enjoy them and eat many kinds of food. There is no reason why anyone who goes to the fairs should go home hungry.
Eating contests remind me of the Japanese guy, Kobayashi. He used to be a hero of eating competition programs on TV in Japan. But one day an elementary school kid who mimicked him passed away while eating a lot very fast. Then the TV station stopped the program. We became unable to see him on TV. But he has been very active in the U.S. Actually he has been the winner of the hot dog eating contest on the Independence day in America many times.

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all American

2006,10,11



I'm going to answer questions of your video.
What was the name of the waterfall?
It was Akanaba Falls.
What was the name of the town where we met?

It was Gotsu. Sorry, but I had never heard about that town.

What was your favorite part of the movie?

It was quite a difficult question for me to answer because every picture moved too fast. Anyway I enjoyed the video. It seemed to be produced by an American. Whether it's good or bad, the impression of that video is all American especially the music.

Have you been to Shimane?

No, I've never been there. Someday I would like to visit there. Maybe in winter. Mastue castle with snow seems to be quite wonderful.

If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go?

Now I really would like to visit NYC or London.

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North Korea

2006,10,10



Today's biggest news is of course North Korea conducted the underground nuclear test yesterday. How terrible it is! What a stupid country it is! I'm sure many people in the world think that and they are laughing at the folly. But Japan is too close to that country. We can't help thinking seriously. What should we do now? I only hope they will vanish by themselves.

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Who is to blame?

2006,10,9



The situation

A woman bought a hot coffee at a fast food restaurant and began to drive a car while drinking it. As the coffee was extremely hot, she spilled it and burned her thigh. Then she was upset and crashed the car. Now she is hospitalized. The clerk of the restaurant didn't warn her to be careful.

My opinion

I'm sure it's her fault because she shouldn't have driven a car while drinking a coffee.

We should concentrate our attention to driving when we drive a car. The clerk is not to blame because he couldn't imagine that the customer would drive a car with the coffee. Only selling

coffee is his duty. And moreover everybody including her must know the coffee is very hot.

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✚ my two grand sons

2006,10,8



I spent two days at my son's home in Nagoya.

My second grand son, Ryuto, who was born in June, is really a mild baby. It's easy to look after him because he seldom cries loudly. He sleeps enough and while he is awake, he smiles while looking around him and listening to a music box. Almost all the time he is in a good mood. Now he is over 8 kilograms, a pretty big baby for his age. One thing we have a problem with him is he hates a feeding bottle. Because he has been nursed on his mother's milk.

My first grandson, Taiga, now can speak pretty well and speaks all day long. He speaks postpositional particles correctly like "Mama ga ii." "Osoto ni ikitai." "Ocha wo nimitai." I think understanding postpositionals correctly is most difficult for foreigners who study Japanese. Of course Taiga doesn't understand Japanese grammar. He had been repeating one phrase again and again and mastered them vaguely. It's very interesting to study how little kids master language.

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✚ Mussels

2006,10,7



In NZ almost every man whom I met seemed to like mussels. Roger and Zane love them very much. On the other hand their wives, Roz and Ruth were scared of them. The edge of the shell is bright green and actually it looks a little bit grotesque. I saw them at supermarkets and a fresh fish market and ate them twice. To tell the truth, I don't want to eat it willingly but I don't hate it. It's not so bad, too.



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✚ Vegemite and Marmite

2006,10,6



Have you ever eaten vegemite or marmite? They are very similar but actually vegemite is a special food in Australia and marmite is produced in England. They look like chocolate paste but the taste is quite different from chocolate. They are salty and have a strange smell. In NZ they are quite popular and Sue, who is British, usually spreads it on toast for breakfast. She explained about them to me. “ Both of them are fermented and very healthy. But I prefer marmite to vegemite. Marmite is healthier than vegemite because marmite is made from vegetables. On the other hand vegemite is animal food.” I ate a bite hesitatingly. Not so bad. I would like to look for them at an international grocery store someday. Can you get them in the U.S.?



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✚ Hokey Pokey ice cream

2006,10,5



One of my staff visited NZ for her honeymoon about 5 years ago and she let me know about Hokey Pokey ice cream. She said that it was quite delicious so she ate it almost every day while she stayed there. It was actually the first time that I heard about that ice cream. I was really looking forward to eating it. I was quite excited when I ate it in NZ for the first time. It's vanilla ice cream with little balls made of caramel sauce. The balls are crisp. When we eat it, the sweetness from the ice cream and caramel sauce spreads into our mouth. Very wonderful. I recommend you to eat it someday. I'm not sure we can buy it in Japan or not.



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✚ English everyday

2006,10,4



I've finally recovered from my tiredness.. Now I have time to answer the questions on the video.

a sports pub

1. Where are we?

You are at a local sports pub.

2. What is special about this place?

There are uniforms of some sports teams displayed on the wall. Moreover there is a big TV screen and a billiard table or something like that.

3. What is Cous Cous?

It's a food's name and It's similar to rice.

4. Where is it from?

It's from the Middle East or the area near the Mediterranean like Morocco.

5. What is "Quiz Night"?

Every Tuesday night you hold competitions to solve quizzes at many pubs. Groups of four or six friends join the competitions.

6. What is a "Bar Tab"?

Usually the prize of the Quiz Night is a Bar Tab. It means the cost of food and drinks would be free next time.

Mission House

1. What kind of place were we at today?

You were at a historical museum and saw many old items.

2. What is a 'missionary'?

A missionary means a priest who goes to a foreign country to propagate Christianity.

3. What does 'settler' mean?

It means the first people who come to a strange land.

4. What is an oak tree?

It's a famous English tree. The settlers brought it to NZ from England.

5. Where was the oak tree?

It was in the garden near the historical museum.

You must have visited Mission House near Harbor Bridge. I found the same picture and the article in my guide book of NZ. Actually I visited the mission house in Hawaii in the summer in 2005. I also looked at many old daily necessities there. Surprisingly the settlers from New England wore long-sleeved jackets and boots in Hawaii. They didn't change their lifestyles. They must

have felt very hot.

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✚ personal information

2006,10,3



I finally finished my travel sketch in NZ. Can I show it in the community site in mixi ? There is a lot of personal information such as people's names and their pictures in it. I think probably it's OK because people who appear on my site have been already introduced in your video and on the other web sites. And kiwis didn't seem to be so nervous about such kind of details. They seemed really easygoing. But in Japan recently we are really nervous about personal information. So I'm a little bit worried about it.



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✚ 9/22,23.24

2006,10,2



9/22

Today is Friday. My stay in NZ is getting on the end. My host family sometimes has a day off on Friday. This morning Ken took me a walk with Abbey. He showed me the old house where he had been living during his boyhood days. Roger and I drove to Katikati that was the winner of "most beautiful small mural town" in NZ. There they painted wonderful pictures on walls of almost every shop. And we visited a small museum where they displayed a lot of old household goods from old tableware to dish washers made in fifties. I found an old automatic sorting machine of kiwi fruits. Some elderly people ran the museum and they explained their exhibit exactly. After eating lunch at Rogers home with two kids, Roz and I drove to Hamilton, the fourth biggest city in NZ. We met her mother, Jo at the park and then Jo took me to her house in Raglan where is in the west coast in NZ and famous for surfing. Hamilton is between Taurang and Raglan but much nearer to Raglan. Their house is on a cliff and we can look down the ocean from the wide windows. Wow, I was very surprised when I entered her house. All windows facing the sea are made of big glasses. Her husband, Tim was welcomed me. He is lucky because his office is

upstairs and he can work while seeing the ocean. We chatted a lot, about Japan, the reason why they decided to live in Raglan and so on. We ate dinner at a restaurant in the local hotel. Tonight I will sleep in a big room facing the Tasman Sea.

Jo and Tim

They are Roz' z parents living in Raglan. Jo is a housewife and Tim is a property consultant. She loved traveling and he used to be a yacht racer and now he is a great surfer. They had been staying in Ca and Hawaii for one month last August. The Next house to their house is an American couples second house and they visited the American friends.

9/23

I take a bath in a gorgeous bathroom facing the ocean. After Tim came back from surfing, they showed me some places near their house. I met many surfers at the beach and some special plants in NZ like manuka. After eating lunch we left their house to Hamilton. Jo's handmade banana cake was really delicious. They took me to Hamilton again and handed over me to Roz. Wow she was waiting for me with Jyunko and four kids. They were sometimes fighting and a little bit noisy. But it was still interesting for me because I was watching how kiwi kids meddled with each other. When I came home, Sue was doing housework and ken was fixing his car with his sons. Their first son Jonathan who was usually living in Auckland alone came home today. I helped Sue to mow the lawn by using a lawn mower. It was also my first experience in my entire life. After coming home Sue and Ken took me to a super market by car and bought Hokey Poky ice cream, very delicious and special ice cream in NZ, for me. She prepared roast chicken. It was delicious. I think their diet looked like British style. After dinner we drove to the suburb to see the Southern Cross. The four stars were shining among many stars in the dark sky. That's great. I finally saw the Southern Cross. I said to them good night and good-bye. I had to leave their house at 3:30 next morning to board the airplane at Auckland airport. "Its too early. Don't worry about me. I can get up by myself and come back. Please, only borrow me your alarm clock."

9/24

Today was supposed to be boring but thanks to a shuttle car driver it changed to be an interesting day. He came to Sue's house at 3:25 a.m. Ken and Sue got up and saw me off. Sue had been standing in front of the balcony until our car went back to the rode through the quite long their drive way. Thanks and good-bye, Ken and Sue!! The driver and I were always chatting for two and a half hours until the car arrived at the airport at 6:00 a.m. It was quite fun and we spent a good time. Good-bye, NZ and friendly kiwis. My days in NZ would be a great memory for

me.

The shuttle car driver

Now he is a student majoring environment and a driver is his part time job. But he used to be a tour guide in Queenstown and he quit that job recently because he wanted to change his job. He loves travel very much and almost every year he stays in foreign countries. Actually his most favorite and impressive country is Japan. He was home staying in Gunma in Japan as a ski racer for 2 months 22 years ago and it was his first experience living in a foreign country. Our conversation was as follows. “ I was grown up in a small village in South Island. The population was only 800. So I thought I had been in the other planet in Gunma. My great memory was on the 15th of January in 1984. Many young girls were wearing beautiful kimono on that day. The daughter of my host family also wore kimono. I still remember this Japanese, Kireine.” “ You mean Seijin no hi? We celebrate 20 years old young guys on that national holiday. “ “ Exactly. And I also still remember red funny dolls with only one eye open.” “ Do you mean Daruma Ich in Takasaki? “ “ Yes, I went the Daruma market wearing a short warm kimono. Hanten ? ” “ Yes, Hanten. Like a quilting jacket.” “ Yes, I still have that Hanten at home. It’s my treasure. I really want to visit Japan again but everything is very expensive in Japan. I can stay in China over one month for the same money that I should pay to stay in Japan for only one week.” According to his story he might be over 40 years old even though he looks so young.



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One week has passed since I came back to Japan. I've been busy for a week. I really miss N.Z. Today I finally ordered many pictures. I'm going to send you some pictures that I took at your home. And I've noticed I made mistake to explain about lamb. Probably I said to you like this, "We can buy sliced lamb in Japan. It's cheap." To tell the truth, we can eat lamb steak at famous restaurants but we can't buy lamb at ordinary supermarkets. Actually we can buy sliced mutton imported from Australia cheap.

Take care and enjoy wonderful spring in NZ.

P.S. I found website about Origami written in English. If you are interested in them, please click here. <http://www.japan-guide.com/e/e2100.html>
<http://www.sadako.com/fold/folding.html>

exercise

2006,11,30



Theses are sentences that don't have meanings. I only wrote them to learn how to use some words.

I've watched the ballet at the new national theater in Hattodai before. An act of it was wonderful. All of the audience was fascinated. Actually it was performed to celebrate the birth of that theater. In the ballet the costume was really nice and it was mesmerizing.

I saw a video on which a strange magician was juggling five balls in a long pipe. . I love movies that range from comedy to serious drama.

Recently some mothers killed their kids in Japan. One of them didn't give her son enough food for one year and the boy ended up dieing. She seems to be very cruel. But she said it was a kind of discipline. We should distinguish discipline from child abuse

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+ Corruption②

2006,11,29



Just now I read an article about corruption. They say corruption is a main cause of poverty. But I'm not sure why. I guess probably it means people spend money that should be paid as tax to

get private benefits. Tax should have been used for education. And ordinary people can't come to get a good education and good jobs. Finally they can't earn a lot of money and they end up being poor. So corruption makes society poor as a result. But in my opinion it's impossible to say corruption is a direct reason for becoming poor. So it's hard for me to understand their opinion. What do you think about the article?

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Mt.Fuji

2006,11,28



Wow, that's big news! Now I can see the beautiful Mt. Fuji from my yard almost every fine morning. It's one of my pleasures. Climbing Mt. Fuji in winter sounds like a little bit of hard work. With whom will you climb it? Is he or she an expert of climbing mountains? I've never climbed Mt. Fuji but I hear many people climb it in summer. Even in summer the weather changes easily and sometimes it becomes very cold in Mt. Fuji. Even though it looks very calm, don't be caught off guard. Anyway please don't forget to prepare thoroughly.

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Corruption①

2006,11,27



Recently two governors, in Fukushima and Wakayama, were arrested for corruption. Why did they do such crimes? I would like to say in provincial area construction companies are the main industry and they earn a lot of money from public enterprise such as building roads, bridges and so on. So owners of such companies really want to make connections with governors. And governors have huge power and nobody can oppose their decisions. What's more governors need a lot of money to win the next election. The construction companies give governors money to get good jobs and governors use such money for themselves. It's a really vicious circle.

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my grandsons

2006,11,26



My son's family has been staying at my home since the twenty third because he could get a day off on Friday. This morning they went back to Nagoya visiting Shizuoka prefecture to ride a steam train running in Shimada in Shizuoka on their way home. My grandsons are very cute but taking care of them is a little bit like hard work for me. Now my house is very messy because my first grandson, now 2 years old, touched everything in the room and scattered toys around the room. They drained my energy and now I feel a pain on my waist because I always cuddled my second grandson who is now five months old. Anyway I hope they will grow up healthy.

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How can I describe about arts?

2006,11,25



Are these Japanese translations correct?

It's done in kind of an abstract style.

それは、抽象的な様式で描かれている。

It's a cross between arts and comic sketches.

それは、芸術と漫画の中間の作品だね。

It's similar to some of Dali's work.

それは、ダリの作品のいくつかに似ている。

Whenever I see something like this, I always want to purchase them.

このような物を見た時は、私はいつもそれらを買いたくなる。

I find it quite interesting.

私は、それはとても面白いと思う。

An abstract painting doesn't really do anything for me.

抽象的な絵は、全く私を感動させない。

I can take it or leave it.

それはどうでもいい。

I'm really into stuff with bright colors because it livens up a room.

私は、本当に明るい色のものが好きだ、何故なら部屋を明るくするから。

I'm not particularly keen on surrealist paintings and drawings.

私は、特に超現実的な絵やデッサンが好きというわけではない。

I go for anything contemporary as long as it's not too silly.

それが、あまりにもばかげていない限り、私は現代風のものが好きだ。

Pop art just isn't my thing.

ポップアートは私の好みではない。

I can't imagine this on my wall; it's too dark.

私は、これを私の壁に掛けるなんて考えられない。暗過ぎるよ。

Comic sketches aren't really my idea of art.

私は、漫画の絵は全く芸術とは思わない。

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Reading news (G38)

2006,11,24



Actually reading news is very difficult for me. What's the meaning of these sentences? Although the exact number of casualties is not yet known the price has been high for both sides in what has been just one in a series of bloody conflicts in the area in recent times. 被害者の正確な数字はまだ分かっていないが、最近のその地域における血なまぐさい紛争がその内の一つであるが、両局面において対価は高かった。 My Japanese translation is correct, right? I don't have a confidence in my task.

Anyway I'm going to write some imaginary incidents as newspaper articles.

Last week the government announced plans to cut funding beginning next month. This week dramatic protests are taking place all over the country.

Last week the President was admitted to hospital. Fortunately this week an official for the White House has reported that the President has made a full recovery.

Fraud charges were brought against millionaire Charles Al Fayed last week but the judge acquitted him of fraud.

Last week a lot of refugees were seeking asylum. And this week they have been placed in detention by authorities until further notice.

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safety in transports

2006,11,23



After British police uncovered a plan to bomb airplanes, security controls began to be really strict, especially flights between U.S. and Europe. Flying should be safe. Terrorism can't be

allowed. Airline safety is not so sure. Liquids are banned from being carried into airplanes. The safest way to travel is going everywhere by a private jet. The war on terror seems to be one of the difficult policies in the U.S. Terrorists should be arrested and judged. Airline passengers need a lot of drinks because the air in airplanes is usually very dry.

Anyway it's really important to keep safety in facilities for travel. If trains, buses and subways became dangerous, everybody couldn't go to work and shopping. If the safety of airplane wasn't certain, nobody would go abroad and world trade would stop soon. In order to go far We cant help depending on cars. But honestly a car might be the most dangerous vehicle. Everybody can put a bomb on a road easily. Oh my gosh!!

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how to refuse

2006,11,22



Could you teach me the meanings of these sentences? I guessed at the Japanese translations. I'm not sure they are correct or not.

Well, I've got too much on my plate at the moment.

今のところ間に合ってます。× (I am too busy.)

There's just no way I can do it.

ちょっと、できないのです。

Actually, I'm in the middle of something right now.

今ちょうど、別のことをしています。

You're very kind. Thanks, but no thanks.

ご親切に、ありがとう。でも、結構よ。

Sorry, I don't have any change.

ゴメンね、今お金の持ち合わせが無いの。

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An endless task

2006,11,21



When I read English, sometimes I find phrases that seem to be a little bit strange. One of them is

this sentence,” For as long as I have you to help me, I can do it.” I think they should write, “As long as I have you help me, I can do it.” Could you explain about them to me?

(Both Have similar meanings, however the original sentence is a little bit more “flowery” and warm.)

And also, can you tell me the difference between the following phrases? “You better start working.” and “You had better start to work.” Now I know I shouldn’t mind details when I use English but I would like to solve my questions. Anyway studying language is an endless task.

(“You better” is short for “You had better” or another way of saying “You should”.

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a barbecue for a political party

2006,11,20



1. What kind of party is it?

It’s a barbecue for a political party.

2. Why was it strange for me to see the construction site?

Because before there were beautiful green trees and now they cut down trees.

3. What did Eriko do this weekend?

She went to a church, the memorial park and a downtown.

4. What did Eriko’s homestay mother say?

Sue said,” We have a good time together.”

5. What does ‘stuck for words’ mean?.

It means “nothing to say”.

I’m glad that all of them look fine.

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Food safety

2006,11,19



Now I don't remember exactly but about five or six years ago one of the most famous milk companies, Yukijirushi, caused a terrible incident, a food poisoning incident. Actually they didn't clean the pipes in the factory and supplied infected milk. Some people who drank the Yukijirushi milk passed away. Now they changed the brand name, from Yukijirushi to Megu milk, and we can buy it at many stores. But I still don't want to buy Megu milk. I can't forget that incident and trust the company. I think in general almost every food producer provides safe food in Japan. .

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Why is it so difficult for women to be promoted?

2006,11,18



What's the difficulty for women to promote as fast as men?

I have been working as a civil servant for about 30 years since I just graduated from the university. And now I'm a manager but actually there were much fewer women managers than men. To be a manager seems to be a little bit difficult for women compared with men. When we want to be civil servants, we have to pass the test. So there is no discrimination between men and women when we enter the office. We can get the same salary and the same position at that time. But after getting the job sometimes we have to work overtime. If she is a young and single, she can work for a long time until 10 o'clock. But if she is a wife, it's a little bit difficult for her to work until so late. Especially if she is a mother and has little kids, it's really difficult for her to do it. Now I would like to give one example. I have one woman staff who has a 2 year old kid and she always goes home at 4:45, about 30 minutes earlier than ordinary coworkers. Now we have some systems to help workers who are looking after kids. Now she uses such a rule and I think it's OK with her because it's her right to use it. On the other hand we can't ask her important jobs because I'm not sure she can finish the job by the deadline. So probably we can't recommend her to be promoted. I mean now we have established some good rules to improve the lives of women workers. But in fact it's still difficult for women to be promote as fast as men if they have to take care of their kids by themselves. As for me I had to raise two sons and I couldn't work overtime when I was young. Some of my coworkers are now in higher positions than me. They are men or single women and have been working harder than me. I think it's OK and I'm really satisfied with my present position. But in my opinion we should make the society where everybody doesn't work so long and enjoy our spare time.

✚ **Level 3**

2006,11,17



I'm very glad now because after taking a lesson of NOVA, a Japanese staff told me that two instructors recommended me to be level 3. Level 3 means you can speak English pretty well, a kind of high level as an ordinary Japanese. I know it's not an official level: it works only for NOVA. But actually level 3 is my goal when I started to have lessons at NOVA. I bought as many tickets as possible for 3 years at that time and decided to become level 3 in 3 years. About 2 years have passed since I bought tickets. It means I started to study English again after a long while about 2 years ago. During these 2 years I visited the U.S. including Hawaii four times and also stayed in NZ once. I took lessons constantly and sent e-mails written in English to Chris in earnest. My husband is surprised at my dedicated studying of English. Now studying English is one of my hobbies. It's really good for my brain. I don't regret spending quite a lot of money to study English and I'm satisfied with my effort.

✚ **JET program**

2006,11,16



Recently I sometimes found an article about the JET program. Actually this morning there was a pretty big article with a picture about it in the Yomiuri newspaper. It says as follows. 20 years have passed since the JET program was introduced in Japan. During these 20 years about forty six thousand young foreigners from fifty-five countries have been introducing their own cultures while living in Japan. Some of them are settling in Japan as a city councilor, an employee of the Sake brewery, a landlady of the Japanese style hotel and so on. Now they have become to be similar with us. And the picture was a little bit of a strange sight: Several tall guys are doing Sumo with Mawashi in a green field.

What do you think about this article? One of them is just you, right? I think this program was a good idea in many meanings. It gave really good opportunities for exchange between foreigners and Japanese especially in countryside.



A big earthquake happened in the ocean near Hokkaido and now we have a tsunami warning in a long coast including Fujisawa. That reminds me of the terrible tsunami in the Indian Ocean about two years ago. I hope this tsunami will not cause extensive damage. By the way, today was not so good of a day for me. Some troubles happen at work these days. I'm under a lot of stress now. When I came home, I felt I was really exhausted. But after writing my dairy in English I got rid of my stress. As I have to concentrate on thinking in English, I can forget a lot of happenings that I really want to forget. I noticed it's a kind of good point to study English. Regarding my English I still can't catch what the native English speakers are speaking when they talk in normal speed. Moreover I know my vocabulary is very poor. I couldn't catch anything at all except Kiefer Sutherland when I watched the preview of 24. I think I have to practice English harder if I say my English isn't terrible.

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Hi, Roger and Eriko! You are traveling in Rotorua, aren't you? It's been a few days since I answered the questions last time. Almost every day I come home after 9 o'clock so I don't have enough time to write my answers here.

1. What did I say the hot water was doing?

You said, "The hot water is shooting up into the sky."

2. What does Eriko think of Rotorua?

She thinks that Rotorua is very smelly.

3. How do people describe Rotorua?

It smells like a rotten egg.

4. What does 'rotten' mean?

It means being badly decayed and smelling bad.

5. What other places are we going to?

You are going to a farm sheep show, a gondola, a museum and so on.

6. How far is Rotorua from Tauranga?

It takes about 50 minutes from Tauranga.

Wow, fortunately you could see a wonderful geyser. We couldn't see it when we visited there. In Japan there are a lot of volcano regions like Hakone but actually that place was much larger than those in Japan.

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✚ Wakamaru ②

2006,11,13



I think robots will be very popular in near future in Japan. Because the population of young people is getting less and less. On the other hand old people are increasing and now a lot of old people have to live alone. Probably robots will take care of elderly people at day care centers and hospitals in about 10 or 20 years. We can't help depending on robots instead of human beings. I really want to be taken care of by a cute and kind robot if it becomes true.

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✚ TOEFL

2006,11,12



Today's topic is about TOEFL. Actually it's the test for non-native English people who want to enter universities and colleges in the U.S. To get admission to the college we have to get the minimum scores that it requires. Recently the test was changed to the TOEFL ibt, Internet Based Test, from the paper and pencil version of the TOEFL. They say the way to get high scores of this test is to use English as much as you can.

The TOEFL reminds me of my son. Actually he tried that test several times by using a computer. To be honest I didn't understand that test exactly while he tried it in earnest. I didn't know the difference between TOEIC and TOEFL. Fortunately he was able to get high scores after studying hard. I also didn't notice that he was studying hard. But recently I found a lot of textbooks about that test in his room. I glanced at them and realized that they were too difficult for me to answer correctly. Now I gave up getting high scores in such a difficult test. I only want to improve my terrible English a little bit more.

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In September they began to put Wakamaru robots on sale. It's one meter tall with a human being shape and it can do some housework. If I have Wakamaru, I would like to ask him to prepare breakfast instead of me, to clean my house and to keep an eye on my house while I'm away.

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Hi, Roger! You began to use You Tube, right? But unfortunately I can't download well. When I tried to do it, it takes over 10 minutes. I tried it three times, in the evening and in the morning. And I finally gave up doing it I'm not so good at using computer but of course I've downloaded You Tube several times. So I know how to do it. I don't know why?

Hi, Sue ! I miss you, Abby and your kitchen. You look very happy with the baby, Amane. You told me that you really love little kids. So you must be very glad with Amane. The big storm hit Tauranga this morning, right? Is your house OK? Actually the other day a tornado hit Hokkaido, the northern area in Japan, and nine people passed away. It's really rare that a tornado hit in Japan. I sometimes talk with Roger through Web Camera. Do you use a Web Camera? Anyway I would like to see you again. Say hello to Ken. Take care and have a good day.

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Gifts

Why do we give gifts to each other? I think we express our gratitude and friendly feelings by gifts. And moreover gifts help us communicate well with each other. Do we have a special custom about gifts in Japan? We usually give gifts with Noshi, long, thin red and white strip decoration for birthdays, weddings, births and entrance to new schools. I mean we give gifts to celebrate good events. We also have traditional customs to give gifts to bosses and relatives twice a year, in the

end of year and the middle of summer. We call them Oseibo and Ocyugen, year-end gift and midyear gift. If you go to department stores in December, you can find a lot of people who are searching gifts for year-end gifts. The best gift in my entire life was the bouquet from my daughter in law. When a postman sent it to my house on the morning of Mother's Day, I was really glad to receive it. What is the strangest gift that I've ever been gotten? They were rice cakes from a Chinese woman. When I visited my sister's friend's home in China, she gave us rice cakes covered with red papers as souvenirs. They were very heavy to bring to Japan. After coming back to Japan I ate them but the taste was a little bit different from Japanese rice cakes. Of course I appreciated her kindness but felt somewhat out of place with it.

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the Philippines

2006,11,8



How about your days? Recently I've been quite busy at work because we have to budget for next year. Sometimes I have to work overtime but usually we need not work overtime on Wednesday. We ban overtime work every Wednesday. How about your company?

My sister is a foster parent of a poor girl in the Philippines and she has been to the Philippines to meet her two or three times. That country reminds me of the wife of Marcos, Imelda. She had over three thousand pairs of shoes even though the ordinary people were in need. I heard she is in her seventies now and has a lot of lawsuits. A lot of people are still accusing her of something like being a swindler. The court cases are ongoing. That country is made up of about seven thousand islands and people speak a lot of languages but English is their official language. Now their President is the female, Arroyo. She looks very petite.

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about the Internet

2006,11,7



I think the Internet is one of the greatest and most convenient inventions. I can look up almost everything that I don't know through the Internet. I can also buy a lot of goods through the Internet. Even if I go to some bookshops, it's really often that I can't find the book that I really

want to buy but I can find it easily on the website. Actually I could buy some rare books through the Internet. We can get the goods that we purchase on the website in one week. That's amazing. I began to use Skype over two years ago. We can speak and see a person who is living in foreign countries for free through Skype. That's incredible. I can watch many videos and listen to music and English teaching materials on the Internet for free. I can't believe it. The Internet changed our lifestyles. If I would say one thing that is a harm of the Internet, sometimes crimes were caused by it. I mean there are some fraudulent websites sometimes and also some girls were deceived by bad guys whom they met through the Internet. How can we prevent these crimes? At first we should develop our ability to find out the truth.

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the American history in the twenties and thirties

2006,11,6



During the period between the end of World War One and the sudden Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii many social changes happened in the U.S. In October in 1929 the price of many stocks suddenly fell down and a lot of companies went bankrupt and a lot of people also lost their jobs. It was called The Great Depression. Social protest from black Americans and women also increased during this period. On the other hand it had been the golden ages for arts. Some famous authors like Ernest Hemingway wrote excellent novels and the great architects such as Frank Lloyd Wright built wonderful buildings. Americans also began to enjoy watching movies and listening to radio. Although politics all over the world were in very difficult conditions, America had been trying to avoid a war. But the Pearl Harbor sudden attack changed the American policies. America's modern history as a great superpower begins with its reaction to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

I studied the world history and Japanese history when I was young and sometimes I read historic articles in newspapers and magazines. All of them were written by Japanese. This article about the Pearl Harbor was written by American so it's really interesting to me. This VOA series, "What makes nation" will continue. I'm looking forward to reading the next story.

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about smoking

2006,11,5



Today's topic is about smoking. In big cities around the world it is becoming more difficult to smoke. Smoking doesn't only cause about 50 different illnesses but also makes people sick whom just breath in smoke from other people's cigarettes. We have an argument that smoke free laws should be established. Now cigarette companies can't be allowed to put advertisements anywhere.

At first I have to say I'm not interested in this topic because all of my family don't smoke. Of course I don't smoke and I've never wanted to smoke.

'Smoke free' means smoking is banned. Now in Japan we can't smoke in a lot of public places such as hospitals and government offices. It's been proved smoking is not healthy and I hate to get sick from other peoples cigarettes. But people also have the rights to smoke. So in my opinion people should smoke in only their own rooms or isolated rooms. I think many people begin to smoke when they are young. Curiosity seems to make them smoke. And if they come to be used to smoking, it might be really difficult to stop smoking. Smoking must be a kind of drug. In Japan many people had smoked in public until 10 years ago but recently it's really rare to see such people. As I'm not an expert about smoking, I checked websites if we have a law to stop people from smoking in certain places or not. I'm not sure but I couldn't find any laws on the Internet. I think we still don't have a law to ban smoking. But we have the Health Promotion Law in which it says," We should take measures to prevent secondhand smoking in some public places such as schools, hospitals and so on. In Japan men smoke more than women. I guess there are no big campaigns to encourage people to stop smoking. But we have many groups and specialists that help people to stop smoking. And we also find many anti smoking articles in newspapers and magazines.

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Guy Fawkes Day

2006,11,4



Hi, Roger! I'm glad to watch your video again.

1.What is special about this party?

You celebrate Guy Fawkes Day.

2. What is the reason for Guy Fawkes?

Guy Fawkes was a man who tried to blow up the government building in England.

You let off fireworks on the fifth of November every year. I've heard of this festival from an

English woman. I think you celebrate the arrest of him before his action.

3. What are the children doing tonight?

They are playing badminton.

4. What did Eriko do today?

She cooked muffins with Roz and went to a library and a play center.

5. What is happening on Monday?

Mothers will have a party to make necklaces of beads.

6. How many children does Debbie have?

She has four children.

By the way do you have a Halloween party on the last day of Octobe

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Culture Day

2006,11,3



Today is Culture Day. What do you think today means? According to the law that provides Japanese national holidays, we should love freedom and peace and improve the culture on this day. Actually the Japanese present construction was promulgated on this day in 1946. And the construction was enforced on the third of May in 1947, 6 months later. Today the Emperor awards the cultural medals to the greatest people who have been trying to develop culture in the Palace. Around this day Japanese Cultural Affairs Agency holds the Art Festival. Before World War Two this day was celebrated as Meiji Emperor's Birth Day. Now they say Culture Day was not related to his birthday. In fact this day has a high probability to be very fine. We can also enter some museums for free today.

Actually today was pretty fine and I'm enjoying the 3 day weekend.

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Solitaire

2006,11,2



Thank you for teaching me how to play Solitaire. I found Solitaire in my computer. I can understand your e-mail easily but to understand the rules was a little bit difficult for me. There

were a lot of words that I've never memorized. I looked up many words in my dictionary and finally mastered how to play it. Just now I played it. It strikes me as a good game to play alone. By the way do you have good days in Mt. Morris? The weather has been good? Now we can enjoy good autumn days here in Japan. The other day I climbed up a mountain and enjoyed the beautiful autumn colors there. Soon the colors of leaves will turn to yellow and red near my house. Take care not to work so hard. Say hello to Judy!!

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An assistant to the Prime Minister

2006,11,1



Fortunately today I had an opportunity to listen to a lecture of an assistant to the Prime Minister, Kyoko Nakayama. Now she is working for the resolution to the abduction case, the big terrible problem that North Korea kidnapped many Japanese. But before that she was an ambassador to Uzbekistan and Tadzhikistan they had belonged to the Soviet Union. But originally she was an officer working for the Ministry of Finance. When the five Japanese victims came from North Korea a few years ago, she went to that country and helped them. At that time she appeared on TV a lot of times. She must be over sixty years old but looked very active. And her voice was very gentle. Her personality was very soft but she must have a strong mind. She spent most of her time talking about her days in Central Asia. Those countries were very friendly with Japan and she tried to maintain some graves of Japanese prisoners who died there after World War Two. At the end of her lecture she added the story about the abduction cases for a little while. Though many listeners seemed to be interested in the terrible North Korean story, she didn't seem to speak about it a lot. Anyway I enjoyed her speech and thought I really want to visit Central Asia someday. Of course I can't help hoping the kidnap incident will be solved as soon as possible.

The night watch bell (My dictionary says like this...)

2006,12,31



Today is actually the last day of 2006. We call the last night of a year Jyoya and in many temples all over Japan we hit bells one hundred and eight times around midnight, from just before the new year day. We call it Jyoya no Kane. (Kane means a bell.) Why do we hit a bell one hundred and eight times? In Buddhism they say we have one hundred and eight worldly desires. We can remove our worldly desires of this year while hitting bells. I used to hit the bell at the temple in

front of my house with my sons when they were kids. Tonight I will only hear the sounds because I would like to relax in a warm bed. Hahaha... I hope 2007 will be also good year for everyone in the world.

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The three pieces of news

2006,12,30



Today I chatted with Monte through MSN messenger and he told me about three pieces of news. At first Judy and you are going to Hawaii on the 24th of January. He recommended me to go there with Chris to see Judy. But it's difficult for me because I will not be able to take a holiday at that time. For the second two Americans named Beth and Dennis who run the restaurant at White Pines Park will come to Japan. When will they come to Japan? If it's OK with them and I have time, I would like to invite them to my home. Monte told me it might be a good idea. What do you think about this plan? For the third you had an accident and had a few stitches by your apartment house. An old man hit you while you were on the bicycle. Take care not to have an accident. Riding on a bicycle sounds a little bit dangerous in Tokyo. Anyway it must be fine, because you came out of it all with just a cut. I would like to say," 不幸中の幸いだったね。"
" My English is suitable to say it, right?

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Homework

2006,12,29



- 1 After the privatization about 20 years ago we have several carriers such as NTT.
- 2 The competition between carriers seems to be really severe now in Japan.
- 3 Actually Japanese big carriers, NTT and AU have competitive relationships.
- 4 They say deregulations in many areas are important to improve industry.
- 5 We have to pay lesson fees when we take English lessons.
- 6 We hooked up an optical fiber to use the Internet.
- 7 I installed two kinds of software into my computer to use my new cell phone as a music player.
- 8 Tokyo Electric Company is still a monopoly in kanto area.
- 9 He placed a call to let me know the important matter after he came home.

10 There are pretty large houses in the suburbs compared to the middle of the city.

11 Now telecommunication is one of the biggest industries in Japan. Who would have thought of this 30 years ago?

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✚ the last business day of the year

2006,12,28



The last business day of the year

Today (the 28th) was the last day of my office in this year. After work we had a party in the dining room. I drank alcohol and got drunk a little. I came home feeling a little bit tipsy. Anyway my work in this year had finished and now I'm enjoying freedom. I think this year was pretty good year for me officially and privately.

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✚ about siblings

2006,12,27



As a mother I hope my two sons always get along with each other. They look nothing like each other and act nothing like each other. They were good friends and also good rivals. I know many Japanese siblings get into arguments with their parents' inheritances after parents' deaths like the famous Sumo brothers. Do you still remember the quarrel between Wakanohana and Takanohana? The most important thing as parents is to treat our children fairly even if their personalities and abilities are quite different if we don't want them fight with each other. Anyway we have a famous saying like this, "Siblings are the first strangers." 兄弟は他人の始まり

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✚ A very complex sentence

2006,12,26



I read a story of Henry Ford from VOA special English. It's very interesting and I found two new sentence structures. One of them is, "It was really machines that he loved." 彼が愛したのは、

機械そのものだった。My Japanese translation is correct, right? Can I say, “ It is really my two grandsons I love.”? The next one is very difficult. “It will be so low in price that no one making good money will be unable to own one. 金持ちでない人は、買うことが出来ないほど安い値段にはならないだろう。I know the easy sentences that are made by using so and that. For example, “ She is so smart that she will be able to pass the test easily.” and “ She is not so fool that she will be unable to pass the test.” But this sentences is so complex for me that I am unable to understand easily if I read only this sentence. Do you use this kind of complex phrase so often?

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About religion

2006,12,25



Today is Christmas. Originally Christmas is the birthday of Jesus Christ so it's a celebration of Christians. Today I would like to describe something about religion. They say religion isn't a suitable theme to talk about with foreign people because religion is kind of personal and also an important matter. Actually it's really rare and difficult that we chose our religion by ourselves. I mean if parents are Christians, their children tend to believe Christianity. Anyway there are the four great religions; Christianity, Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism. And each religion has many sects. One American asked me, “ Do you have many sects in Buddhism? Is it a reason why there are so many temples in Kyoto, right? ” “ Maybe but I'm not sure about Buddhism.” “ You are a Buddhist, aren't you?” “ Umm, probably.. Actually when my father passed away, we held his funeral in the Buddhist style but I'm not a Buddhist.” “ Huh... Do you go to temples? ” “ Yes, sometimes but I'd say I go there for sightseeing, not for prayer.” “ What? ” “ It's really difficult to explain about our religions. I think some strange religions like Oomu (now that name is different but I forget it.) are not proper religions. They are occultism.

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a new cell phone ②

2006,12,24



Now I've solved the many problems with my new cell phone. Last night I looked for a mixi site and found a community about the AU music player. I wrote my question: how can I hear music of MP 3 files on this cell phone? Soon an anonymous guy answered my question. “ You can use the

iTunes to change MP3 files to AAC files. It's easy. Open the iTunes software and right-click the right (右クリックする。 How can we say this description in English? right -click) on the name of the music. Then you can find a message: change the selection to an AAC file. You can use it and change easily." I tried it as soon as I read the kind note. I could do it well. Thank you very much. This afternoon I took both my old cell phone and new one to an AU shop near my house. A nice girl placed my data; many phone numbers and e-mail addresses into my new cell phone from the old one. It took only 5 minutes and she did it for free. Now I can listen to VOA on my cell phone. The technical improvement is unbelievable. I recommend you to buy an AU W 45 T. I don't regret having bought the new cell phone at all now.

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✚ **Merry Christmas!**

2006,12,23



I sent some e-mails written in English to My friends in America, England and NZ. Of course I wrote to Monte and Judy.

Merry Christmas!

I'm glad you are having a good Christmas in England. I met Neil at Tujido NOVA last Sunday. He was fine and told us about his dream trip ;on the way to England from Japan he would like to travel in many countries such as South Korea, China, Russia the Middle East and so on. I'm jealous of young people. He seemed to be very fine and gets along very well with Japanese students and his British friends and a Canadian girl friend. Please don't worry about him. Now it's Christmas season in Japan, too. And today (23rd)is the national holiday, the Emperor's birthday in Japan. Many Japanese are not Christians but we also enjoy Christmas; giving presents to kids, eating Christmas cakes and decorating Christmas trees. It's not so cold in the Shonan area, Fujisawa and Chigasaki even in the midwinter. Almost every day it would be about 10 degrees Celsius here. Last year I visited California where my son is working now and NZ. I home stayed for one week at an English woman's house. She got married with a Kiwi and has been living in NZ for over 20 years. But her life style was really English styled. I ate Marmite with bread for the first time at that time. After coming back to Japan I bought Marmite at an international grocery in Japan. Unfortunately my husband doesn't like it. Do you like it? I really would like to visit England some day, probably after retirement. Europe is a little bit far from Japan. Today I'm going to send some pictures with this e-mail. Some of them are our traditional foods and

decoration for New Year's Day. And please enjoy looking at the beautiful night view for Christmas in Yokohama. Take care and have a good Christmas and a New Year.

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my struggle with a new cell phone

2006,12,22



I began to tinker with my cell phone again as soon as I came home. I formatted it again at first. Oh,my.. I erased every address's data that the clerk turned from my old cell phone to the new one yesterday. I was really disappointed. I worked up again and downloaded two kinds of software to my computer from a CD while reading an instruction book. I tried to put music in the new software from a CD. I got it well. Then I connected my cell phone to the computer but I couldn't make it work. I got angry and tried twice. I noticed I had to turn off a guard check then I tried it again. I had got it. I could hear music through my cell phone well. I was glad but I didn't know how I could put music from MP3 files to the cell phone. The book explained that we could put music from only aac, wav and wma files. We can't put MP3 files into it. I got angry again. The clerk told a lie to me. It seemed to be trickery. Why don't they use an only one type of file? I began to look up them on the Internet and found the comment about it. An anonymous person wrote something like," How to put MP3 music into the cell phone: You can record music from a MP3 to a CD and then put it into a cell phone from a CD." I tried it again and I've finally well done. But it must take about 15 minutes to do it. It's really troublesome. Now I'm thinking to buy a new ipod again. Can you understand my pain?

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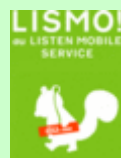
a new cell phone

2006,12,21



I watched your video. You showed us some new information equipments. Actually the other day I bought a new cell phone and I'd been grappling with it for two days. Please laugh at my struggle. I'm exhausted now. I bought a new AU cell phone today. To tell you the truth I wanted to buy a new MP3 player because my player seemed to be broken. I'm not sure but the switch must be wrong. I was supposed to buy an ipod but I saw an ad of Do Como on a train yesterday. It said,

“ An unbelievable cell phone including a MP3 player and a high quality digital camera” That sounded wonderful and I would like to get it. I asked a clerk at Yodobashi Camera,” Can I buy an AU cell phone that I can use as a MP3 player? ” “ Of course. I recommend to you this type. It’s easy to download a lot of music from PC.” Actually it wasn’t easy. I had to download some new soft wares and change files to a new type. It’s really confusing and I finally couldn’t do it well. I have to try it again tomorrow.



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✚ my advice

2006,12,20



Imagine I stayed at the B and B that my friend’s brother runs and she recommended me to visit. But it was not so good.

Last week I finally stayed at your brother’s B and B in Yamanashi. Yamanashi is a great area and I enjoyed a lot drinking delicious and fresh wines. Well, probably I visited there in the busiest season and your brother seemed to be very busy. Sorry but the B and B wasn’t quite as you had described it. I was quite surprised by the dirty cups and dishes on the table in the dinning room. They shouldn’t have put them in public. After breakfast I took a walk around the wonderful garden but I found many pieces of trash like old broken TVs in the bush. I spent two nights there and they didn’t make the bed for the second night. I had to sleep on the very messy bed. I couldn’t help being disappointed a lot. Don’t get me wrong. He must have been too busy at that time but please advise him not to forget cleaning his nice B and B.

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✚ talking about English teaching

2006,12,19



Someone said something like this, “An education is incomplete unless you can speak a foreign language.” We were discussing about this theme.

“ Everyone has to study English at junior high school and high school in Japan. I mean we had been studying English at least for 6 years. Of course I had to do it quite long ago but our teachers were only Japanese. I guess over 90 percent young Japanese who had studied at ordinary school couldn't speak English at that time. But I know some girls whom I met at the university who could speak English well. They graduated from mission schools and their English teachers were foreigners. It seems to prove studying English from native English teachers is very effective. Now native English teachers are teaching English at every school but they are not enough. Anyway now young students have opportunities to speak English with native teachers. If they are eager to master English and study hard, probably they will be abler to speak English easier than us, middle-aged people used to be. They are lucky. One thing I can't believe is why some young guys don't study English in earnest at NOVA. At least they wanted to master English and paid a lot of money but some of them don't seem to study hard. I would say it depends on people not education as to whether they can master English or not.”

“ I agree with you. I know some Tokyo university students who can speak English well. They only study English at ordinary school. From this point of view our education system is not wrong for some smart students.”

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Why

2006,12,18



Today my boss asked me to participate in a year-end party with city hall workers on Wednesday. So I will not be able to take an English lesson. I'm so sorry about it because it costs quite a lot and I can't cancel for free now. Why didn't he tell me earlier? I'm a little bit angry now.

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practice

2006,12,17



- 1 He carved a big log by a chain saw and made a wonderful statue of a bird.
- 2 It's one of my plans after retirement to learn how to make some kinds of crafts.
- 3 She devoted her entire life to takeing care of family.
- 4 Pandas inhabit only China.

- 5 It's a pleasure for me to talk with locals when I travel abroad.
- 6 They say an average income of Native Americans is still lower than the other nations.
- 7 She really resembles her mother in appearance but not in character.
- 8 I think it's not good for Native Americans to live only in reservations because they might lose chances to get along with the other people.
- 9 Saying synonymous words seems to be a good way to master English.
- 10 How many tribes are there of Native Americans?

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Talking about education

2006,12,16



Comparing educational systems (G17)

In America the duration of compulsory education is 12 years whereas it seems that in Japan to be 9 years, 6 years for elementary school and 3 years for junior high school.

You don't find French teachers in my country.

The literacy percentage of total population in Japan is much the same as in America.

Average class size at 13 years old in Japan is very different from America.

Talking about change

One thing that's changed a lot since my school days is English classes.

The approach to studying English is so different these days.

I would say that standards in English have risen because the native English speakers teach kids at school.

IT has changed education by its convenience.

Giving opinions

I think class sizes are too big, which means only one teacher can't control 35 kids.

It's important that more money is invested in libraries and books.

Not only does the government need to spend more on training teachers, but also teachers need to be paid more.

Recently we revised the Fundamental Law of Education. And many cases of bullying caused a lot

of teenage suicides. In my memory we also had bullying in our school days but we didn't commit suicide. Many people said we should have taught kids that bullying was really bad. In my opinion before anything we have to make kids understand the importance of life.

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Internet users

2006,12,15



This is the graph of Internet users from 1995 to 2000. It compares users in the U.S. to users outside the U.S. The users are increasing in both areas constantly. From 1995 to 1997 the users in the U.S. had been much greater than users outside but in 1999 users outside come to be a little larger than the U.S. And in 2000 users outside suddenly rocketed. Users in the U.S. are rising gradually through the years. I think they began to use the Internet in the special institutions like universities and laboratories. Especially Silicon Valley in Ca., right? In around 1997 it must have begun to spread into the ordinary society. Then people started to use it at the office and home quickly. Honestly I began to use the Internet in 1998 at the office and at home the next year. Now I depend on the Internet in my everyday life. I mean I study English through it and have bank accounts on the Internet. I always get information through the Internet, buy some goods and tickets and make reservations hotels. Now many old people can't use it but actually it's easy to use the Internet if we are used to using it. Probably I will continue to use the Internet until I die. So I'm sure Internet users will continue to increase constantly in the future.

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Percentage of women of working age in employment

2006,12,14



Now I'm looking at the graph of "Percentage of women of working age in employment". This graph shows the trend of women employees from a little before 1960 to 2000 in four countries, UK, USA, Italy and Japan. In Japan about 60 percent of adult women were working in 1960 and their rate has decreased until 1975 and then it is increasing steadily. Now the rate is almost the same as in 1960. The fact that many women were working in 1960 is probably the result of our economy developing very quickly at that time and we were still poor. Moreover that might be due to a lot of single women who lost their husbands and future husbands during the

war. We became richer the more Japanese women stopped working but the rate is increasing constantly from 1975 to the present. The increase could be an effect of women's high education. I think the rise of workingwomen could lead to the drop in the birthrate now in Japan. On the other hand in the other 3 countries the rates are increasing gradually from 1960. Now the highest rate country is USA: over 70 percent women are working as employees. I'm not exactly sure but it could be an effect of the women revolution.

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a graph of world population

2006,12,13



Now I'm looking at a graph of world population in the future. (G43)

Talking about trends

By 2010 the world population will reach 8 billion.

From 2000 to 2050 it will have increased steadily.

There has been a huge rise in the number of the population in Sub Saharan Africa.

There'll be a gradual increase in the world population.

Speculating about causes

The fact that the population is increasing is probably a result of the increase in the developing countries.

The drop in the birthrate is most likely due to the change of life style in the developed countries.

The increase in the number of older people could be an effect of the great advances in medical science.

Speculating about effects

I think the rise in the population of the developing countries is going to create the shortage of food in those countries.

The decrease in the birthrate in Japan will probably cause the decrease of population 20 years later.

The fall in the number of people of working age could lead to the decline of the economy.

✚ homework

2006,12,12



- 1 They carry many kinds of computers at the famous electric store in front of the station.
- 2 I found a defect with my new digital camera just after coming back home.
- 3 Can I exchange this camera for the new one here?
- 4 Who is that irritating boy? He is always running around here.
- 5 Young people tend to want new models of anything.
- 6 Do you understand the policy of the party?
- 7 I required refunding money to me when they sold me a rotten fruits.
- 8 I should ship these boxes to his house until next Saturday.
- 9 Can I get a store credit if I collect a lot of stamps?
- 10 In Japan almost every electrical fitting has a one-year warranty.

✚ Pygmy Slow Loris

2006,12,11



Please look at the attached file. This is a picture of my friend's pets. Their name is actually Pygmy Slow Loris. Have you ever heard about them? Please guess what kind of animals they are. They have big round eyes and their fur is brown. They are ten centimeters long and only five hundred grams in spite of being adults. Originally their habitat is in the mountains in India but now they live in their own cages separately. Their diet consists mainly of fruits and nuts. At first I thought they are sorts of squirrels. But it's not true. They are always hanging down from twigs. Judging from that, I would say they are sorts of monkeys. Yes, they belong to the monkey family and they cost over three hundred thousand yen each.



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✚ About organ transplant

2006,12,10



In Japan it's not allowed to have an organ transplant operation for children under 15 years old. The reason why children can't have operations is they can't give their opinions about offering their organs or not after their death. And many seriously ill children who need organ transplant operations usually go to the U.S. with their parents to undergo operations. It costs about one hundred billion yen, very expensive. Actually many people make donations for them. Today I listened to such kind of news on TV and the commentator said that it's time we should consider to change the rules. We have already advanced medical techniques and facilities to perform organ transplants. There is no way little kids can understand the importance of helping the other people after their death. In my opinion it depends on the parents' decision.

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✚ G36 Talking about the weather

2006,12,9



This year it wasn't cold in autumn compared with usual years. After December it will become colder and colder. Actually yesterday I wore my quilted coat for the first time this winter. Today it's pretty cold in my area. Around 7 am, when I got up, it was dull and looked very cold outside. When I went to a supermarket by car at 11:00 am, it was drizzling and chilly. Now it's 4:00pm and it's still spitting but fortunately the wind isn't so strong. The temperature seems to be under 10

degrees Celsius. The weather forecast says it will continue raining over the course of the night but it will become fair tomorrow. In Japan the weather moves from west to east so I guess the rain begins to dry up in Osaka. The worst day of weather I've experienced was the day in summer many years ago. When I was a university student, I belonged to a hiking club and we camped on a high mountain in Hokkaido. We pitched some tents on the high mountain but we had a storm so all of us gathered in one tent and stayed there for one night. It was raining cats and dogs and the wind was howling. The tent was shaking like crazy. We gripped the pole shaking with fear all through the night. The next morning the storm was over and the sky began to become bright. We couldn't find the other tents around us when we went out of our tent. They were blown all over.

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Toast!!

2006,12,8



Tonight I had a year-end party with my staff at a blowfish restaurant. I love blowfish Nabe. This was my speech at the party.

It's getting close to the end of this year. I think everybody here has your own special memories of this year. For example, Ms. F, you began to work after graduation from the university. This year must be your unforgettable year. And Mr. N. You went to Nagoya to cheer for the Cyunichi baseball team and was disappointed there. Mr.T. You studied hard and passed the examination of accounting. That's great. For me...I moved to this office last April and found it was a very busy office. But thanks to you I had great days. The two section leaders, Mr. H and Mr. A are really good leaders and you have been working in earnest under them. I appreciate all of you. Now we are tackling the new project. Please do it a little bit more and we will get the result. Actually I love blowfish and would like to eat it at least once a year. Thanks to the organizer, Ms.S, we can eat such a delicious food tonight. Let's eat and drink and have a good time chatting with each other. Cheers!

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G1 Talking about priorities in life

2006,12,7



G1

I prefer to work at a branch office because I need not work overtime.

Studying English is kind of an important part of my life.

I really need to master English in order to be able to travel abroad during retirement.

Without a hobby, I don't think life would be much fun.

I don't understand how some people can work so hard.

I can't imagine they are working until the middle of the night at the main office.

What's the point of your life if you can't enjoy your hobby?

I don't think I could spend my life living in such a small apartment in a noisy area.

Spending my time for only work just isn't that important in the long run.

Coworkers aren't nearly as meaningful as family.

A job just doesn't matter as much when compared to family. (Which is better "compared to " or "compared with"?)

It's much more important to get a high salary for him.

-△-

how to use "that"

2006,12,6



Now I have one question. The last time I wrote two sentences as follows and you didn't correct them. 1 These are sentences that don't have meanings. 2 I love movies that range from a comedy to a serious drama. In these sentences I used "that" as a relative pronoun. When we use "that" as a pronoun, it means singular. We can't say, "That are pens. That don't have meanings. That mean beautiful." for example. Can I use "that" as both singular forms and plural forms when we use it as a relative pronoun?

-△-

a difficult textbook

2006,12,5



I'm a little bit busy reading a new textbook. I became level 3 at NOVA so I have to use a new textbook that seems to be very difficult. I think if I don't prepare to take lessons, I will not be able

to understand lessons at all. It must be a waste of time and money.

-△-

the punishment

2006,12,4



My translation in Japanese is correct, right? (G47)

The defendant was tried and sentenced by the judge to serve one year in a juvenile correctional facility followed by two years' parole.

被告人は審理され、裁判官によって1年間少年院に入所し、続いて2年間の仮出所という刑の判決を受けた。

-△-

exercises 2

2006,12,3



- 1 We usually receive a bill at a table and pay money at a counter when we eat lunch at a restaurant in Japan.
- 2 I bought some small stuff at a 100-yen shop and they came to around one thousand yen.
- 3 They always deduct my income tax from my monthly salary.
- 4 Looking for discount foods at a super market is a pleasure of a lot of housewives.
- 5 I have to enter my password when I turn on my computer at the office.
- 6 The official report of Kanagawa was issued.
- 7 After paying money I packed some foods in the plastic bag at the supermarket.
- 8 Tough I was a little pressed for time, the gas station was very busy and I had to wait for 10 minutes.
- 9 In Japan when We use our credit cards, We usually pass the cards to clerks and they swipe the cards.
- 10 We have to show our identification cards when we draw over one hundred thousand yen from banks.

-△-



I'm going to make some sentences to practice how to use some words from some English materials.

- ① That famous actress appeals to the audience in the play.
- ② I always blend several curry powders when I cook curry rice.
- ③ I saw some young mothers chatting on the road after they saw their kids off to the kindergarten.
- ④ In Japan it's rare to be able to find decaf coffee.
- ⑤ I thought video games were a fad but they still fascinate many people including adults.
- ⑥ It's a kind of problem that teenagers are hanging out in front of convenience stores in the middle of the night.
- ⑦ In my opinion clothing for ladies very expensive. They are overpriced.
- ⑧ One of my friends popped up to my house the day before yesterday.
- ⑨ I'm writing this sentences while sipping a hot coffee.
- ⑩ Many high school girls are interested in trendy stuff.



Hi! Roger,

Your kids must be excited. I hope you will have a good time in Rotorua

1. What do I use the books for?

You use those books that are originally for native English speaking kids to check your students' pronunciations when you teach them English. Using those books is also good for your students when they practice English pronunciations.

2. Finish this... "Sam singstimes"

" Sam sings six times."

3. Who does Michelle live with?

She lives with her mother, father, sister and baby brother.

4. What were Annalise and Daniel doing?

They are packing up because you are going to Rotorua. and stay at a hotel there tomorrow.

