



Japanese Language Center
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J L C 通信

Japanese Language Center (つうしん)
Newsletter December 2005

＊文化 (ぶんか) ＊ Culture クリスマス Christmas

メリークリスマス

Christmas was introduced in Japan by the Christian missionaries, and for many years the only people who celebrated it were those who had turned to the Christian faith. But now many western customs in observing Christmas have been adopted by the Japanese. Christmas is basically overshadowed by New Year's celebrations, sort of the opposite of America. Most Japanese are fairly ignorant about Christmas, just as most North Americans are fairly ignorant about the Japanese New Year holiday. But there is a certain kind of Christmas in Japan. Also, December 25th is not a Japanese national holiday. The main celebration revolves around Christmas Eve and not Christmas day. Christmas is mostly a commercial event in Japan.



At the end of November merchandising heralds the onslaught of the season. Santas show up in some advertising and Christmas carols in English can be heard in stores. Also advertisements appear for special Christmas Eve and Christmas day hotel & restaurant dinners and shows, generally with a strong romance theme. The big corporations do the main decorating. They light their buildings and the trees, though I've seen few if any on private homes. Santa does not yet appear in person, only as an advertising foil. And the airwaves are not clogged with TV specials.

In Japan it is common to give Christmas presents. Within the family parents give presents to their children, but the children do not give presents to the parents. The reasoning behind this is that only Santa brings presents, so once the children no longer believe in Santa the presents are no longer given.

It is estimated that less than 1% of Japan's population is Christian with the majority of Japanese being tolerant of all faiths: Buddhism, Christianity, Shinto, etc. In spite of this, the Japanese are great lovers of festivals and celebrations, including Christmas. Japanese people tend to find things of interest from abroad and transform them into something that is uniquely Japanese.



Japanese people celebrate Christmas Eve by eating Christmas cake. It's a blessing to the Japanese bakery industry, because this is not a home project. One buys it. People place candles on it like a birthday cake and sing a song "Silent Night" instead of "Happy Birthday" before eat. And the Japanese are generally slack jawed when told that America knows no Christmas cake and it's a Japanese custom.

Stores all over carry versions of this Christmas cake and drop the price of it drastically on December 25th in order to sell everything out before Christmas. There also used to be sarcasm that Christmas is compared with a woman's age, which young girls are referred to as "Christmas cakes". Any cake left after Christmas is seen to be very old or out of date. Women over 25 years old used to be said "unsold Christmas cake." Woman is marriageable until their 25th birthday and requiring heavy discounts to get married after their 25th birthdays (I'm on heavy discounts too). However, nowadays, the average age for marriage has changed, getting older and older, and it is falling into history.



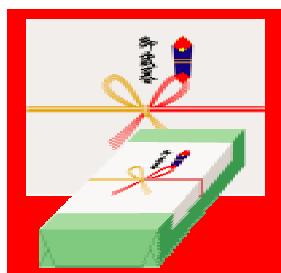
Also, Christmas Eve has become a night for young lovers to go out and spend a romantic time together at fancy restaurants or hotels. It is almost impossible to make reservations for a restaurant or hotel at the last minute on this day. Christmas Eve has been hyped as a time for romantic miracles by the TV media. Because of this, extending a girl an invitation to be together on Christmas Eve has very deep, romantic implications. For single women in Japan it is really crucial to have someone to spend Christmas Eve with. The whole evening must be very special, gorgeous and romantic.

Beethoven's Ninth Symphony (the **Daiku**) is traditionally performed in many places at Christmas time in conjunction with the New Year.

The Christmas season comes during the month of **Bonenkai** (the year-end parties). Therefore, Christmas parties tend to be mixed up with **Bonenkai**. Company groups, hobby groups, sports groups, etc. often book a section of a restaurant to have drinking parties. This phenomena leads to streets, subways, and trains full of people in varied states of intoxication during this season.



* 習慣 (しゅうかん) * Custom 御歳暮 (おせいぼ) Oseibo



Besides exchanging Christmas gifts, there is a custom of sending **Oseibo** (the end of the year gift) from business to business in Japan. Christmas presents are exchanged between people with romantic commitments as well as close friends. More obligatory year-end presents are given during this season as well to people who have done you a favor during the year, however, in contrast to Christmas presents, they are given between companies, to bosses, to teachers, and family friends.

Department stores are filled with displays for **Oseibo** gift-packages. They are generally things which are perishable or which wear out quickly for which the price can readily be checked because of the system of **On** and **Giri** (obligation and reciprocity). Sometimes it's beer, fruit, hams, coffee, and so on. **Oseibo** are specifically given to pay back favors received during the year.

📅 コーススケジュール 📅 Course Schedule

JLC announced the Course Schedule of Winter/Spring 2006 and the registration has already begun. Weekday courses and Weekend courses are available. A Group course consists of 110 minutes lessons and 8 sessions. Lesson Fees for a group course are \$220.

Private Lessons are also available. Lesson Fees for Private lessons are \$280 (110 minutes lessons and 4 sessions). Our schedule for private lessons is getting tight quickly. So please sign up early before it becomes booked up.

Registration & Lesson fees are due 72 hours prior the first lesson. The schedule may change without notice, so please visit the website for the updated schedule, <http://www.japanese-language.net/schedule.htm>.

Course	Day	Time		Term
		Start	End	
JPN 101	Mon	7:10	9:00	1/16
JPN 101	Sat	11:10	1:00	1/21
JPN 102	Wed	7:10	9:00	1/4
JPN 103/104	Wed	7:10	9:00	2/15
JPN 201/202	Fri	7:10	9:00	1/20
JPN 203/204	Sat	9:10	11:00	1/14
JPN 301/302	Sun	9:10	11:00	1/15
JPN 303/304	Sun	1:10	3:00	1/15
Teens 101	Fri	4:40	6:30	1/13
Teens 102	Sun	11:10	1:00	1/29
Teens 200	Wed	4:40	6:30	1/11
Teens 300	Mon	4:40	6:30	1/9

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* **宗教 (しゅうきょう)** * Religion **キリスト教 Christianity**

Christianity was introduced into Japan in the middle of the 16th century. The religion was generally tolerated until the beginning of the 17th century, but the Tokugawa shogunate (1603-1867) eventually proscribed it and persecuted its adherents. When relations with the west were restored in the middle of the 19th century, Christianity was reintroduced and has continued to exist in Japan with varying fortunes.



At present Christianity in Japan is characterized by unobtrusive activity, with emphasis still placed on education as a means of spreading the gospel message. In recent years there has become a growing ecumenical spirit between the Protestant and the Catholic churches although contacts at the grass-roots level are still tenuous. Discussions have been held between Christian and Buddhist scholars to reach a better mutual understanding and appreciation of the two religions. In 1990 Christian numbered some 1,075,000 or less than 1% of the population. There were 436,000 Catholics with some 800 parishes in 16 dioceses, while Protestants numbered 639,000 with nearly 7,000 churches.



Christianity is respected in Japan but hardly known at all. However, many Japanese are interested in American Christmas customs and Japanese churches take advantage of this to meet new Japanese and introduce them Jesus and their church. Christmas is a wonderful missionary opportunity in Japan, and they draw an extra 300-400 people to church.

* **自己紹介 (じこしょうかい)** * Student of JLC

Hello, my name is Sean. I am 16 years old and taking Teens 300 course (private lessons). I took SAT II Japanese recently and the score was 790. My goal is to make a perfect score (800) for SAT II Japanese and French. I hope more high school students join the Teens 300. I am studying the script of Ghibli's movies and trying to memorize whole script.



How is "Teens Japanese Course" different than "Japanese Courses"?

To begin with, the textbook is different. We use "JAPANESE FOR BUSY PEOPLE" for Japanese 101-304 and "JAPANESE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE" for Teens Japanese 101-304. In the both courses, students learn the same grammar and sentence structure but the topics and vocabularies are different. Teens Japanese Course focuses on the daily life of average children and teenagers.

Is it okay for teens to take "Japanese for Adult" instead of "Teens Japanese"?

Yes, teenagers are welcome though the textbook for Japanese 101-304, "JAPANESE FOR BUSY PEOPLE" is essentially designed for adults. The instructor adds the realistic topics and vocabularies for young people and actually several teenagers have taken these courses and did great job.



* **クイズ** * Quiz The answer is on the last page.

The following photos are regarding major religions (Buddhism and Shinto) in Japan. What are they? Are they relating to Buddhism or Shinto?



1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



6.

★ **レストラン** ★ **Restaurant I LOVE SUSHI Grill & Sake Bar**

"I LOVE SUSHI" is one of my favorite restaurants. They recently opened Grill & Sake Bar on Lake Bellevue (where Duke's used to be at). Now there are three locations. I usually eat at the I LOVE SUSHI in Bellevue, and recently had my birthday dinner there. They served me Tempura of Green Tea Ice cream with a candle. I would like to check out the I LOVE SUSHI of the new location. I am a minor still and can't drink Sake though. (F)



Lunch: Mon-Fri 11:30-2:00

Dinner: Mon-Thu & Sun 5:00-10:00 Fri & Sat 5:00-10:30

23 Lake Bellevue, Bellevue, WA 98005 ☎ (425) 455-9090

❁ **Caution Computer Virus** ❁

NAME: Japanese Xmas **ORIGIN:** Japan
ALIAS: Christmas in Japan, Japanese Christmas, Xmas in Japan
SIZE: 600 **TYPE:** NONCOM



★ **諺 (ことわざ)** ★ **Proverb Minoru hodo atama o tareru inaho kana.**

「実るほど頭をたれる稲穂かな」(みのるほど あたまを たれる いなほかな)

As rice plants grow, they make a polite bow. The more fruitful an ear of rice, the lower it droops. Greater and wiser person is more modest. Person with prominent work and ability is unexceptionally modest and respectful. How about you?

❁ **おしらせ** ❁ **Remarks**

- Lesson fees for Group Lessons are \$220, however an early registration with payment by check/cash before your present course ends can get \$7 discount.
- Please bring your friends to JLC. Any referrals signing up for a class results in a 20% discount of your next block of lessons.
- Free materials are available. Please check the Course Descriptions page of our website, http://www.japanese-language.net/course_descriptions.htm. If you can't find any sub material what you need, please request it your instructor. We are more than happy to help you. We may create a new free material for you.
- JLC supports a Japanese Language conversation group in the community and JLC's instructor Junko is the organizer of **Bellevue-Factoria Japanese Language Meetup**. The regular monthly meet up session is on the second Tuesday at the Bellevue region Library. Our monthly Field Trip is on the fourth Tuesday. Please visit the website, <http://japanese.meetup.com/17> for more information.



Answer of the quiz:

1. Household Shinto altar 2. Family Buddhist altar 3. Buddhist priest 4. Shinto priest 5. Shrine maiden 6. Buddhist nun

あいうえおかきくけこさしすせそたちつとせにぬのひふへろまめもやゆりるれろわんあいうえおかきくけこさしすせそたちつとせにぬのひふへろまめもやゆりるれろわんあいうえおかきくけ



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Japanese Language Instruction

and Translation Services