



しんかんせん EXPRESS

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Message from Carrie Fischer, JETAA Southern Alberta Vice-Chair

JETAA Southern Alberta needs your help! This fall we are losing our Event Coordinator and our Director of Communications. Please see below for their goodbye articles. Next spring our Chair and Treasurer are planning on retiring.

If you still want to see JETAA Southern Alberta events in the future **we need your help!**

Looking for some volunteer experience? Miss talking about Japan? Like travelling? Want to stay involved with the JET community? Free sushi? Volunteer for a position with JETAA Southern Alberta!

On average members of the JETAA Southern Alberta executive volunteer between 2-4 hours a month, depending on the position. Please take a look at Arc and Miho’s goodbye articles for a description of their positions and the work they do.

Interested? Want more details? Contact us at sajetaa@gmail.com ASAP!

Japan Exchange & Teaching Alumni Association Southern Alberta (www.sajetaa.org)





Saying Goodbye

Miho Trudeau



It's been a wonderful year working as the Coordinator of Social Events for JETAA Southern Alberta. I've met some great friends and really enjoyed participating in all the events over the year. I'll be taking a break from the JET scene though as I leave both JETAA and my current position as JET programme coordinator to take a maternity leave. Hopefully I'll be seeing many of you in a year or so, with a baby in tow!

As Coordinator of Social Events, I have had the opportunity to help plan out our many activities over the year. Although I probably only spend about 4 hours a month working in my position, I feel like I've gained a lot. It's been a great opportunity to meet other JETAA members and people in the Japanese community. I think this position is great for those of you busy people who are interested in trying a more active role in JETAA without feeling overwhelmed by a new commitment.

SAJETAA needs a director of communications

Sadly, I am stepping down as director of communication for JETAA Southern Alberta. However, the death of something is the birth of something new. Now open is an opportunity for somebody to hone and enhance their skills as a communication expert for JETAA Southern Alberta. The position entails about 3 to 4 hours work every month managing the technical aspects as well as organizing, posting and possibly writing content for our website. However, there is real flexibility in the position for someone to tailor it to a desired interest. It really is a great resume builder and a great opportunity to meet and work with other talented and interesting JET Alumni. If you are interested in filling this position feel free to contact sajetaa@gmail.com. I would be happy to provide more details if needed.

Thanks to the current executives and all the Alumni. I will see you around!

Kind Regards,
Arc (Ted) Photinopoulos
Director of Communication
JETAA Southern Alberta

Upcoming Events

Welcome Back Bowling

Friday, October 15, 2010

To welcome back some brand new JET alumni JETAA Southern Alberta is having a bowling night! Come out for some fun with your fellow JET alumni!

Watch your inboxes for more information or RSVP at sajetaa@gmail.com.





Event Report

Natsu Matsuri (Summer Festival) BBQ yields \$108.50 and Good Times!

August 15, 2010

By Ming Ko

Natsu Matsuri is the favourite event among the volunteer Executives and members at JETAA Southern Alberta since the first time it was organized last year! The festive BBQ follows the Japanese tradition of celebrating summer season embracing outdoor activities in the sun. The BBQ was also created to host a garage sale of Japanese items as a form to celebrate the 20th year anniversary of JET Programme in 2009. Back by popular demand, this year Natsu Matsuri was held on August 15, 2010 on a hot Sunday afternoon at Calgary's natural Edworthy Park.

Under the cool shade of site #5 at Edworthy Park, we set up a barbeque station and various garage sale items on two big tarps along the bike path. Burgers, hotdogs, chips, salads and juice were served. Many JET alumni members brought their families and friends out to enjoy a day of fun, barbeque, and great company. Some brought Frisbees, baseball, and even a small tent to make the fullest of a hot summer day. Vice Consul General Mr. Hiroki Sasahara and his family, the President of CJCA (Calgary Japanese Community Association) Tom Ueno and his wife, and a few JET alumni who we haven't met before, joined us for the first time.

All Japanese items for the garage sale were donated by JET alumni who want to share the Japanese culture with others or simply need to tidy up the souvenirs resulted from shopping sprees in Japan! Items ranging from children's toys, manga books, tea cups, to noren (Japanese style curtains) were sold to alumni and the general public jogging by. The garage sale served not only as a fundraiser but also a conversation topic - it managed to draw in much attention from the public asking what the JET Programme is and who we are. At the end of the day, the garage sale yielded \$108.50 in proceeds significantly increased from last year. All proceeds will go towards funding the operation of JETAA Southern Alberta and future events.

We want to thank all the volunteer Executives who helped set up, lug the boxes of garage sale items, took charge of bbq-ing delicious food, and cleaned up. We also want to thank all the participants who came out and gave supportive feedback on how we can make this event more successful in the future.



Photograph by Yuko Kurita



The Burakumin: Japan's Invisible Minority

By Greg Lowan

Often whispered about, but rarely openly discussed, the Burakumin have suffered centuries of oppression despite being ethnically identical to the rest of mainstream Japanese society. Many Burakumin are still treated as outcasts and continue to suffer economic and social oppression (Gottleib, 1998; Hah and Lapp, 1978; Shimahara, 1984). During my time in Japan I had the opportunity to meet several Burakumin. These encounters opened my eyes to their unique subculture within Japanese society and stimulated my curiosity to learn more.

Over the past five hundred years of Japanese history, the Burakumin have been known by many different names. However, their subjugation in various ways as an outcaste subculture has been consistent and continues to this day. *Burakumin* literally translates as “village people” (Shimahara, 1984), a reference to the remote locations of their small communities, and is the most commonly used contemporary term. Another term associated with the Burakumin during the Tokugawa feudal era that formally entrenched them as the lowest caste in Japanese society was “*eta*” which means “filthy or untouchable”. Members of the higher warrior, farmer, and merchant classes viewed them as unclean because of their traditional occupations associated with the handling of animals, meat, garbage, and dead bodies that violated Buddhist and Shinto taboos against death and killing. Burakumin

commonly worked as butchers, animal handlers, executioners, gravediggers, leather workers and also as traveling peddlers and entertainers (Gottleib, 1998; Hah and Lapp, 1978; Shimahara, 1984). Burakumin were actively oppressed socially and economically—restricted from pursuing other occupations and marrying outside of their caste.

The Meiji restoration of 1869 brought sweeping changes to Japanese society; Japan was opened to the world after centuries of seclusion during the Tokugawa era (Shimahara, 1984). The shackles of feudalism were officially thrown off in favour of Western-style forms of democratic government and education. This was good news for the Burakumin as official discrimination against them was somewhat softened; they were granted the new official designation *shinmin* which means “new commoners”. This new term signified the government’s intention to open up Japanese society, allowing them to pursue new occupations such as farming. While this was a seemingly positive change for the Burakumin, they still struggled to overcome entrenched societal prejudice against them left over from the Tokugawa period.

The twentieth century saw the Burakumin increasingly active in social and political activism (Gottleib, 1998; Hah and Lapp, 1978; Shimahara, 1984). Burakumin often aligned themselves with socialist and communist groups who were also campaigning for greater universal equality in Japanese society. Their activities were primarily peaceful, however there were occasions of violent conflict (Hah and Lapp, 1978). Despite persisting prejudice, Burakumin experienced considerable progress in the twentieth century in access to education, employment, and improved living conditions. Rates of



intermarriage with non-Burakumin also steadily increased (Gottlieb, 1998; Hah and Lapp, 1978; Shimahara, 1984).

Discrimination against Burakumin took on more subtle forms in the twentieth century. For example, companies and prospective in-laws commonly consulted publicly available family registers (genealogies) to investigate the history of their potential employee, son or daughter-in-law (Gottlieb, 1998; Hah and Lapp, 1978; Shimahara, 1984). If the designation “new commoner” were present anywhere in a family’s register, this would indicate that they were Burakumin.

Under increasing pressure from Burakumin activists, the Japanese government officially “closed” the family registry system (Shimahara, 1984). In 1976 they banned public inspection of historical registers and also instituted a law prohibiting employers from requesting applicants’ birthplace (since Burakumin villages are commonly known) on application forms. However, many Japanese corporations have publicly admitted to obtaining a list of Burakumin families widely available through illicit sources (Hah and Lapp, 1978). This same list is also available to “marriage investigators”, detectives hired by families to research the background of a potential son or daughter-in-law.

The current Burakumin population is difficult to accurately measure—reports vary from one to three million people living in approximately four to five thousand communities throughout Japan (Gottlieb, 1998; Hah and Lapp, 1978;

Shimahara, 1984). Correctly ascertaining the Burakumin population is difficult because many Burakumin are reluctant to self-identify due to fear of discrimination.

Shimara (1984) suggests that public displays of discriminatory language or attitudes towards Burakumin have declined. This does not mean, however, that private and covert discriminatory attitudes and practices have completely disappeared. Even in a highly educated modern society like Japan, old prejudices fade slowly; traditional superstitions and discriminatory attitudes sometimes still overwhelm publicly espoused values of equality. Upon reflection, one might notice similarities here in Canada.

References

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Bio: Greg Lowan was a JET in Kochi Prefecture from 2002-2003. He is currently a PhD candidate at the University of Calgary and teaches Aboriginal Education at Lakehead University in Thunder Bay, ON. Greg welcomes correspondence at gelowan@lakeheadu.ca.



When the World goes 3D, what we lose and what will we Gain?

By Arc Photinopoulos

It was only a matter of time, but Panasonic released the first consumer 3D Camcorder this summer. The 3MOS System SDT750 allows you to take your very own 3D movies further enhancing your memories by giving you one more visual dimension to work with. The process is simple, connect the 3D lens to the front of the camcorder, record your video, connect the unit to a 3D TV and viola that video of your friend getting a football to the groin looks life-like. Fabulous!

As a technology geek, indeed I am thrilled about this. For a mere \$1,400 USD (rather steep for technology that has been available since the 60's) one can make my memories as real as possible. However, what excites me more are the possibilities of this development. Let's take the concept a few steps further. In 10 years will we be able to record and playback smells of a home video? There is evidence that this could be a very real possibility with the development of an olfactory dimension to film (<http://spectrum.ieee.org/consumer-electronics/portable-devices/ntt-becomes-a-smellophone-compan>). We have chemical analysis of air particles in this day and age. At some point, could one find a way to simulate the touch of memory? It certainly would be neat to touch the football that is fated to cause my friend some discomfort.

However, there is a real danger by making our memories as real as

possible. Two of these come to mind. The first danger is a video no matter how real is still just a snap shot. Just because something provides a more accurate record does not mean it is definitive. If this technology were installed in the streets and used as evidence to convict criminals, would it show that the crime was committed in self-defence? For example, could it detect a year of bullying that manifests into a retaliatory murder. Would the technology accurately depict a crime of passion, a lesser degree crime in our judicial system? My intention is not to defend a criminal, but rather try to point out that maybe this kind of record lacks a historical context or understanding of a situation. Secondly, will a technology that allows us to loaf our natural senses affect us negatively? Would reliance on this kind of technology disrupt our ability to remember because we do not really have to use our memories anymore? Does relying less on our description to others and our cognitive attachment to our senses weaken us as a whole? Are we comfortable with fewer opportunities to use these attributes in society?

Technology makes our lives easier. Twenty years ago we did not have the internet and we now can transfer information to one another faster than ever. However, let us not forget that in the adjustment something is lost and something is gained. Our world has less face to face socialization now. We focus our communication in closed social media circles, isolating us from challenges to our thoughts and opinions from the real world that strengthen or weaken our conviction. I am not trying to say that our lifestyle is any better or worse than the previous generation. There just are two sides to every coin. Understanding what you have does not necessarily mean you understand what you do not have.





Recipe: Japanese Curry Rice

Sometimes a nice Japanese curry is exactly what you need to remind you of your days in Japan. This is a simple recipe that can be made using Japanese curry roux, which can be purchased in the Asian food section at Superstore.

This recipe makes four servings.

Ingredients:

- 1/2 lb pork or chicken cut into bite size pieces
- 1 onion, sliced into 1/2 inch thick pieces
- 2 potatoes
- 2 carrot
- 3.5 cups water
- 1/4 lb Japanese curry roux
- 4 cups steamed Japanese rice

Preparation:

Peel and cut potatoes and carrots into bite-size pieces.

Heat some vegetable oil in a deep pan and sauté the pork. Add onion, potatoes, and carrots and sauté together.

Pour water in the pan and bring to a boil. Turn down the heat to low.

Simmer the ingredients for 30-40 minutes or until vegetables are softened, skimming off any foam or impurities that rise to the surface.

Add curry roux and simmer for 10 minutes. Serve the curry over steamed rice.

Stay in Touch with JETAA Southern Alberta



Want to be the first to know when we're having an event? Join our Facebook group!

<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=2406291059>



Follow us on Twitter at @sajetaa.

Also, keep an eye out for our brand new JETAA Southern Alberta website!



Photo of the Season



Photograph by Carrie Fischer
Shrine on Ojika Island, Nagasaki

Useful Websites:

Consulate-General of Japan <http://www.calgary.ca.emb-japan.go.jp/>

JETAA International <http://www.jetalumni.org/158/>

JET Programme www.jetprogramme.org

CJCA <http://members.shaw.ca/cjcamain/>

Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs http://www.mofa.go.jp/j_info/visit/jet/

JETwit.com <http://jetwit.com/wordpress/>

JETAA Southern Alberta Contact Information

For all inquiries, information or submissions, please email: sajetaa@gmail.com

