



Japanese Language Center
 6011 152nd Ave. SE, Bellevue, WA 98006
 Phone: 425-891-2129 Fax: 1-612-241-9652
 Email: info@japanese-language.net
 Website: http://www.japanese-language.net/

JLC通信

Japanese Language Center (つうしん)
 Newsletter January 2006

* **文化 (ぶんか)** * Culture 成年 (いぬどし) Year of the DOG

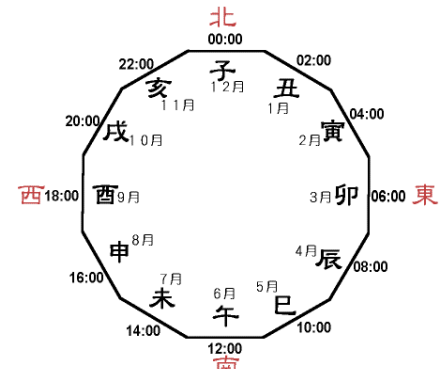
1910, 1922, 1934, 1946, 1958, 1970, 1982, 1994, 2006



Those born in the Year of the Dog are honest, faithful, loyal and responsible. They can be magnanimous and prosperous, yet guarded or defensive, and never relaxed despite outer calm. The Dog is trustworthy and generous and has a deep sense of justice. (There are always exceptions, of course).

There are twelve symbols of the Chinese zodiac based on the twelve years that Jupiter takes to circle the heavens; the ancient Chinese were able to indicate a season by the position of this mysterious star in the sky. After this system came to Japan, the Japanese used animal names to designate the twelve positions. They are rat, cow, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, sheep, monkey, rooster, dog, and boar.

This zodiac cycle was also used to tell the direction, the hour and the day as well as the year. As a matter of fact, instead of asking directly how old you are, people are likely to ask in what year of the zodiac you were born. Thus they are able to guess your age almost correctly. So I usually answer that my zodiac is "cat." How old am I?



* **習慣 (しゅうかん)** * Custom 七草 (ななくさ) Nanakusa



Nanakusa means the seven herbs of spring. This practice came to Japan from China, where there was a custom that on January 7 all family members eat rice porridge with seven herbs of spring for breakfast to drive evil spirit away and pray for health during the year.

It's also been around in Japan for a long time, since there is a mention of it in **Makura no soshi** written about a thousand years ago by a lady-in-waiting of the Japanese Empress. It is the first festival of **Go Sekku** or five seasonal festivals of the year. The seven herbs vary from region to region and also from era to era, but today they commonly consist of the leaves of **Seri** (Japanese parsley or dropwort) **Nazuna** (shepherd's purse), **Gogyou** (cottonweed), **Hakobera** (chickweed), **Hotoke-no-za** (henbit), **Suzuna** (Japanese turnip), **Suzushiro** (Japanese radish).

Eating these greens in the New Year was thought to replenish the body with energy from nature and to promote good health and longevity. It's a time-honored custom that's also very practical, since the herbs are a good remedy for indigestion from having had too much **Mochi** (rice cakes) over the holidays.

* **諺 (ことわざ)** * Proverb

「痘痕も笑窪」 (あばたもえくぼ) Abata mo ekubo.

Love is blind. Pimples look like dimples. If you become calm down, it's easy to find the truth, but when you are in love, your judgement often makes mistake.

❁ 歌舞伎 (かぶき) ❁ Kabuki 八百屋お七 (やおやおしち) Yaoya Oshichi

This is an old eccentric love story, and strong love is often eccentric. Oshichi was a 16 year-old girl, daughter of a vegetable store (Yaoya in Japanese) owner, living in the district of Hongô in Edo (the current Bunkyo-ku ward in Tokyo).

In 1681 Oshichi fell in love with a young priest whom she met at his temple while seeking shelter from a large fire. Hoping to see him again, she set fire in 1682 to her own home, causing a massive blaze that destroyed a huge section of Edo.

She was arrested, tried and condemned to be executed for arson. She was burnt alive to pay for her crime. Her grave is located in a temple in the district of Hakusan (Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo). Yaoya Oshichi became a legend and a leading character in several Kabuki plays.



❁ 日記 (にっき) ❁ Diary

1月14日 For Terrence

ふと外を見やると、いつの間に降ったのか一面が雪に覆われていました。いつになく寒いとは思っておりましたが、とうとう雪になってしまったんですね。そして、この思わぬ雪に、私の心はまたしてもかき乱されてしまいました。

雪の珍しいこの土地で、そういえばあの時も雪が降っておりました。私と彼の間に何があったのか、彼が私に何を言ったのか記憶はうつろで、思い出せません。私は、彼のなすままに任せながら、ただ窓の外に降る雪を見つめておりました。湿気を含んだ雪が風に飛ばされながら、木の幹や小杖の隅々まで、狂ったように白く塗り替えていました。「私は一体何をしているの？」叫ぶような自分自身の声で我が身に返りました。そしてまたしばらくの記憶の空白があり、気付いたときにはもう彼の姿はありませんでした。

外は沈黙の中で、雪だけがいつそう激しく降り続いておりました。「彼はもう行ってしまった」「あの人を帰してしまった」という後悔に、私は玄関のドアを突き放しはだしで外に飛び出しました。でも彼の姿はもうそこにはなく涙にゆがむ雪景色をぼんやりと眺めるだけでした。庭からドライブウェイに続く道に黒く彼の足跡が残っているのを見て私は再び泣きました。

会ってはいけないと知っていながら、私は彼に会ってしまった。会ってはいけないとわかっている、それでも会いたい。抑えがたい気持ちと冷え切った体を両腕で抱えるように、私は、彼が先ほどまでいた部屋に戻り、もうそこにいるはずもない彼の姿を探しました。どのくらいそこにたたずんでいたのでしょうか、窓ガラス越しに森に降り積もる雪を眺め続け、気付いたときにはもう薄暗くなっていました。

その時、風の中に車のエンジンの音を聞いたような気がして、外に出てみると、それは私の空耳だったとわかりました。そして、彼の足跡は、跡形もなく白一色に雪が覆ってしまっていました。私は堰を切ったようにこみ上げてくる涙をどうすることもできず、声を上げて泣きました。この先何が起ころうとも、終局は見えているのです。今はっきりと、全てが終わったことを、というよりも、始まる前に終わらせなければならなかったことを悟ったのです。12月1日のことでした。

私のこんな切ない気持ちが今日も雪を降らせたのかもしれませんが。そしてまたさらに降る雪があの日を思い出させるのです。私は、これからも、雪が降るたびに、涙するのでしょうか。雪が彼の足跡を消し去ったように、雪が私の心に降り積もって心の傷跡を覆ってくれることはないのでしょうか。(J)





* 自己紹介 (じこしょうかい) * Student of JLC

はじめまして。私の名前はキップです。I'm 45 years old and an attorney for a Japanese corporation. I spent the last 7 years in Tokyo and recently moved to Bellevue. I met Junko-san in Tokyo last summer and took intensive training there. The intensive training and field trip were excellent. She is a wonderful teacher who knows Japanese business custom very well. I often go to Tokyo and Kyoto on business, so I decided to take private lessons. I enjoy my lessons very much and it became my hobby.

* 短歌 (たんか) * Poem from *Midaregami* (Tangled Hair)

「やわ肌の熱き血潮にふれもせて 悲しからずや 道を説く君」

(yawahada no atsuki chishio ni furemosede kanashikarazuya michiwo toku kimi)

You have yet to touch
This soft flesh,
This throbbing blood –
Are you not lonely,
Expounder of the Way?



This is a poem written in 1901 by a twenty-two year old emerging poet of that time, **Yosano Akiko** (1878-1942). Akiko, in this **Tanka** poem, (31 syllables, arranged 5-7-5-7-7), compactly expressed her insuppressible love, sexuality and the liveliness of youth by using such imagery as "soft flesh" and "throbbing blood." **Midaregami** summarizes Akiko's passion toward love and poetry during her young days, and that is one of my favorite poetry books. I wish I could live with passion like her.

Yosano Akiko Akiko was born in Osaka, the daughter of the owner of the famous confectionary shop. Akiko felt that she was not loved by her parents and had a lonely childhood. She grew up to become a quiet but rebellious girl. When Akiko was sixteen, she read **Manyoshu**, a collection of ancient Japanese poetry from the 8th century. It had a great impact on her and she started to write Tanka poetry.

Through her literary activities, Akiko became acquainted with a poet, **Yosano Tekkan**. Akiko admired Tekkan and respected him as her mentor. Her respect for him started to change into love. He had a common law wife and a child at that time, but Akiko did not hesitate to show her love. Recollecting her passionate feelings for him, she later writes in her "My Conception of Chastity": "By an unexpected chance, I came to know a certain man and my sexual feelings underwent a violent change to a strange degree. I experienced the emotion of a real love that burned my body for the first time". Akiko left home to be with Tekkan and married him in 1902. **Midaregami** is her first collection of Tanka. It contains 399 poems, among which 385 are love poems expressing her feelings toward Tekkan.

Meiji Japan was modernizing and starting to accept Western culture, the majority of women still lived in the old way; they were confined by the conventions of the old feudal system. Women normally accepted arranged marriage, and after marriage, they were expected to play a wifely role: as the saying "*Onna sankai ni ie nashi*" (there is no home for women in the past, present nor future) teaches, women were supposed to submit to fathers, husbands and sons, and were always the possessions of others. Women's domestic and social roles were to produce children, particularly boys who would inherit the family name and also support the strong nation. Women were imprisoned by the idea of womanhood as defined by society.

The image of women that Akiko illustrated in her poems was revolutionary; it was far from the conventional picture of women. The women Akiko depicted were lively, free, sexual and assertive. They do not passively wait for men to find them. They are the agents of their love – they find love and pursue it. Akiko's seductive and sexual poems were sensational at the time, for they challenged patriarchal society and literary and cultural conventions. Akiko's works received severe criticism, yet also provided great inspiration to women of the time. (Simple Haiku)



★ **レストラン** ★ **Restaurant 銀座 Ginza**

Beautifully done restaurant, excellent table settings and plates. This is my favorite sushi joint! Naka-san always knows what I like and hooks me up! My favorite right now is the yummy White Express Roll - a spicy tuna roll topped with super white tuna, and avocado. The fish is always fresh and there's an extensive menu with non-sushi items. (A)

Lunch: Fri 11:30-2:00 Dinner: Sun-Thu 5:00-9:00 Fri & Sat 5:00-9:30

103 102nd Avenue SE, Bellevue, WA 98004 ☎ (425) 709-7072

🏠 **コーススケジュール** 🏠 **Course Schedule**

JLC announced the Course Schedule of 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>.

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Course	Day	Time		Term
		Start	End	
JPN 101	Mon	7:10	9:00	1/23
JPN 101	Sat	11:10	1:00	2/25
JPN 102	Mon	7:10	9:00	2/27
JPN 103/104	Wed	7:10	9:00	2/15
JPN 201/202	Sun	9:10	11:00	1/29
JPN 203/204	Sat	9:10	11:00	3/11
JPN 301/302	Fri	7:10	9:00	1/27
JPN 303/304	Sun	9:10	11:00	1/29
Teens 101	Fri	4:40	6:30	1/27
Teens 102	Sun	11:10	1:00	1/29
Teens 200	Wed	4:40	6:30	1/25
Teens 300	Mon	4:40	6:30	1/23

🌸 **お知らせ** 🌸 **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.



あいうえおかきくけこさしすせそたちつてとにぬのひろへろまみゆ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てとにぬのひろへろまみゆめもやゆりるれろわんあいうえおかきくけこ



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Japanese Language Center provides

Japanese Language Instruction

and Translation Services

Japanese Language Center 432006