Classes Rolling, and Spring Drawing Near!

BY DR. YUKI JOHNSON

A mild winter - along with the semester - is nearly halfway through, and as you know, the end of the term will all too quickly be upon us. It seems the seasons roll by faster every year.

The spring term started with a two-day workshop (January 24th and 25th) marking the 17th and 18th such workshop since I joined the Center in 2009. During the workshops, CLE faculty all gave PowerPoint presentations to demonstrate aspects of each other’s culture, focusing this time on “High Culture.” Everyone presented concepts and material that could be incorporated in language classes as a way of strengthening language education in combination with cultural studies. We learned a lot about the cultures represented by our Center, and the progress we’ve made together as a unified organization over the last four years truly became evident in this workshop. In fact, these workshops concluded the summary introduction of the pedagogy course I was teaching in an MA/Ph.D. program at previous institutions. Graduates of that program are now all teaching at various institutions and producing students with a high level of proficiency.

In this newsletter, a summary of each of the PowerPoint presentations given by those attending the workshop is included. Please read and learn something of the fascinating cultures represented in CLE.

Sincere thanks to everyone who helped to carry out so many positive changes. The Center is more organized and unified than ever, with full-time faculty placing great value on their work. The effort will continue with valuable input from all.
1. Congratulations to the CLE Study Abroad Scholarship awardees! Good luck with your study abroad during Spring, 2013!

The Center for Language Education began offering funds to students for studying abroad after at least one year (two semesters) of language courses at CLE. The scholarship is $1,000 per student and is awarded based primarily on strong recommendations by our language instructors. The scholarship program started in the spring term, 2013. This award will continue to be given in the summer Study Abroad program as well. We hope many students will take advantage of the opportunity to see a different part of the world.

The awardees for Spring 2013 are Ms. Emily Combs (Arabic) and Ms. Jenna Pan (Chinese). The following essays were provided by the awardees as part of their Study Abroad experience.

Ms. Emily Combs: Alexandria, Egypt for the Arabic Language

For the next five months (insha’allah) I will explore Alexandria, Egypt to cultivate my Arabic language skills on the IFSA-Butler program at the University of Alexandria. Through this opportunity my understanding of Arabic will continue to grow into an interaction of formal Arabic (fusha or MSA), colloquial Egyptian (ameya), and modern Arabic poetry and, to a limited extent, literature through a tutorial-style class. However, those many ways only contain Arabic in the classroom. I am especially looking forward to using Egyptian Arabic in its cultural context with every minute I spend speaking to local Egyptians. As Egypt is still grappling with the Revolution of 2011, I could not ask for a more interesting time to truly learn the language: when the Egyptians are themselves using it to make their voices heard.

In the long term, I am learning Arabic to work with Middle Eastern refugees. After volunteering with some of Baltimore’s refugees and studying their stories in the academic sphere, I am compelled to work with refugees while they are in transition and a state of instability. In this way, my professional aspiration enwraps my discovered passion and curiosity for the Arabic language itself. Thanks to the Center for Language Education and their Arabic courses my goals will become a reality as I learn from and explore Egypt, allowing me to build the foundation for my desired career and life-trajectory through what is sure to be an incredible experience.

Ms. Jenna Pan: Beijing for the Chinese Language

I am extremely grateful to have received the CLE Study Abroad Scholarship. Currently, I am a junior at Johns Hopkins University double majoring in East Asian Studies and International Studies, and I have been studying Chinese for approximately two and a half years. I was first inspired to take up Chinese language studies in college by my Chinese cultural heritage—and how little I knew about it. As a second-generation Chinese-American born in the United States, some would say that my family has been distinctly “Americanized” or “whitewashed”. As such, Chinese is a language that I have heard all my life, but have never understood.

That is why I am so excited to have received this scholarship; it is an amazing chance for me to push forward in my language studies and move toward true fluency in Chinese. This spring, I will be studying abroad in Beijing, attending the Associated Colleges in China’s Intensive Language and Culture Program at Minzu University, as I continue to pursue language fluency. The program is sponsored by Hamilton College and is a full immersion program; for four months from January to April, I will be in a completely Chinese-speaking environment. It is an extraordinary opportunity to really live and breathe the Chinese language. In the future, I aspire to pursue a career somewhere in the realm of Sino-American relations where my Chinese language skills will be vital, and so my experience abroad in China is a vital step to reaching my ambitions. The CLE Study Abroad Scholarship has been central to helping me to achieve some of the most important goals I have, both personal and professional.
2. Getting involved in J-GAP: Vertical and Horizontal Articulation in Japanese Language Education

Japanese Global Articulation Project (J-GAP) (http://j-gap.wikispaces.com/) is a project within the Japanese Language Education Global Network funded by the Japan Foundation. The goal of this project is to obtain articulation in Japanese language education world-wide. The US team was established in 2011 for the communication among Japanese language educators centering around the University of Virginia and the Mid-Atlantic area.

As Director of CLE, I’ve become an active participant in this project and have been attending workshops and conferences since 2011 as a representative of one of the Maryland Universities that offers Japanese. One of the things I started for the articulation project is to connect with educators at other institutions, such as the University of Maryland (horizontal articulation) as well as high school teachers in Maryland (vertical articulation). We are hoping to expand this circle to much wider areas and learn from each other in regard to Japanese language teaching. Among the successful connections made last year was with high school teachers and students from across Maryland.

a. High School Teachers, Students and Parents Visit to 1st Year Japanese at JHU

In November 2012, Ms. Yukie Moorman and Mr. Shota Kinjo made a trip to JHU with their students taking Japanese at Whitman High School in Bethesda, MD.

Many high school students are eager to continue to study the language that they studied for a few years in high school. In November, students from Whitman High came to learn how Japanese is taught at a college level. It is often the case that those who take a language in high school are placed in the 1st year level even after taking the language for 2 or 3 years in high school. They learned that instruction at the college level is quite different from that in high school. For example, Japanese college instruction includes an in-depth treatment of grammar and culture much more thoroughly as an academic subject. Students came to realize why they sometimes have to start from the beginning level.

After class, high school students and our 1st year Japanese students engaged in an active Q&A hour and exchanged energetic conversation.

b. A Visit to High School Japanese Class

On January 8th 2013, I visited Whitman High School to demonstrate college level Japanese language instruction to those who taking the AP Japanese class. I also observed Level 2 Japanese in the afternoon, and had an eye-opening experience about high school students and their learning environment. It was crystal clear that instruction at high school and college levels do not have to be same, and that learner’s needs and age groups create a host of distinct requirements that should be accommodated differently. When high school students come to college, they will often have to re-learn various matters from the beginning to build a thorough foundation in the language.

Learning from this J-GAP project and actual visits to/from high school, I am planning to apply the concept to the community of language teaching in and around Baltimore.
3. Planning of a LCTL Symposium to Create a Better Articulation of Language Teaching Starting from Baltimore Region.

As you probably know, Hopkins participates in the Academic Cooperative Program in which students are permitted to attend classes at each other's institution and transfer credits. In the Baltimore area, this includes: Towson University, Loyola University, UMBC, Goucher College, and Johns Hopkins University. I often see students from this collection of schools in courses taught by the CLE, and I am sure that our students also take courses at other institutions as well.

Considering that our students can take advantage of this co-op program, it would be a good idea to make a connection between language educators among the co-op universities and form something of a Language Consortium.

We are planning a one-day LCTL Symposium with invitation to all LCTL educators from the universities that participate in the Academic Cooperative Program. A tentative date is Saturday, May 11th. I am hoping that many language educators at other institutions will participate. Updates will be forthcoming soon.

I am looking forward to exciting times ahead, and I hope you can join the CLE team in the spirit of professionalism and collegiality that binds our academic unit at JHU. As our ties grow closer and programs grow stronger, I can see everyone flourishing as CLE finds its place squarely on the world map among the best places for language education!

Studying a new language can be overwhelming. There are the vocabulary words, the grammar rules, and perhaps even a new writing system to tackle. At Hopkins, with the help of the Japanese Language Program, I discovered that a better understanding of the association between language and culture makes for a less intimidating and more engaging learning experience. Although the intensive Japanese language courses are goal-oriented with regard to proficiency benchmarks, they still provide a comprehensive snapshot of cultural context. For example, in reciting a business dialogue students practice speaking skills and simultaneously learn about the unique Japanese social formalities within a business setting. This type of cultural context exposure sparked my interest in Japanese politics. During the fall semester the CLE sponsored my independent study project exploring politics. The timing could not have been more perfect, as a general election was underway in Japan.

I am very appreciative of the CLE’s support these past four years and, in particular, its consistent inclusion of culture in language courses.

JHU Writing Class Holiday Dinner

BY CHRISTY WADDAIL

ESL students in the fall term Academic and Professional Writing class enjoyed a splendid evening of food, fun and fellowship on December 4, 2012 as they gathered for an end-of-semester “pot-luck” dinner. Hosted by teacher, Christy Waddail, the dinner was a way to celebrate the hard work of students throughout the previous 13 weeks and to share in some pre-holiday festivities. For students visiting the United States, it was a chance to see a different part of Baltimore and to experience a bit of life in the “suburbs.” All in all, it was a delightful evening filled with stimulating conversation, contagious laughter, and of course delicious food and drink!

Zachary Athing, Public Health Studies ‘13

Culture and Language

BY ZACHARY ATTHING

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Christy Waddail and her Academic and Professional Writing Class in December.

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On Cultural Understanding in Language Learning BY PAUL SHIN

“こんにちは。ラーメンをください。” I was amazed at myself when I was speaking to a waiter, something I could not do a few months ago. Soon we became friends and started to talk about Japanese food and culture, only to realize that I was immersed into a society which once was very foreign to me.

During my high school years, I went on a school trip to Tsukuba, a science city in Japan and visited the National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology where I was guided by Nobel Laureate. However, we could not talk much since he did not speak much English and I had no knowledge of Japanese at that time. This was the moment when I most wanted to learn Japanese in my life. However, there was no Japanese class available in my high school. Since then, I always wanted to learn Japanese. To this day, I still wish I knew Japanese so that I could have interacted more with him.

I am a US Army ROTC Cadet studying East Asian Studies at Johns Hopkins. Some foreign languages, such as Korean, Japanese, Chinese, Arabic, and Russian, are crucial for the national security and international affairs, and ROTC encourages Cadets to study these vital languages by offering incentives through Cultural and Language Incentive Program. This year, I am taking two foreign languages, Korean II and Japanese I, and plan on mastering them by continuing on to level III. I am also thinking about studying Chinese next year.

When one studies a foreign language, many people say that passion is the most important element in learning a foreign language. However, passion alone, I discovered, is not enough. You need cultural understanding to have full grasp of a language. For example, ‘you take medicine’ in English, ‘eat medicine’ in Korean, and ‘drink medicine’ in Japanese. The Center for Language Education at Johns Hopkins has excellent instructors. Ms. Kang, a Korean instructor, efficiently points out the formula used in Korean grammar and continuously repeats and reviews what students often miss. Ms. Nakao, a Japanese instructor, offers easy ways to memorize grammar through conversation. Dr. Yuki Johnson’s technique of having daily homework and practices is very effective in retaining the material learned in class. At the beginning of each class, she shows a short video about the cultural aspects of Japan and often introduces objects used exclusively in Japan.

As a Korean descendant, I often felt ashamed of losing touch with my heritage. My 80 year old grandmother, who speaks four languages, is my role model. She speaks Korean as a native speaker, Japanese from attending school during colonial times, English from immigrating to America, and Spanish from working with Hispanics in California. I am often amazed at her ability to adapt herself to a continuously changing environment and needs even to this day. Thanks to the Center for Language Education, I can finally attain the skills I have been craving for a long time: aiming for fluency in Korean and learning Japanese. When I practice Japanese with my grandmother, she is delighted to speak the language she thought that she would never use again.

As Culture Chair for the Korean Students Association and Co-Social Chair for the Inter-Asian Council, I am currently active in school organizations with various cultural backgrounds and speaking different languages. By providing resources and support for students to study foreign languages, the Center for Language Education at Johns Hopkins helps students to overcome cultural differences and interconnects students from diverse groups. I believe that the language education program at Johns Hopkins is an excellent way to gain a practical skill which will surely help students not only on campus but also in the future.
In upper level language classes, students read short stories, watch movies, discuss current issues, and make presentations. As a student centered, theme-based approach is essential for language classes, it is very important to pick right topics for students to explore and investigate in using the target language. In Fourth Year Japanese class at Hopkins, I set “life and death” as a large framework for the semester, and have students explore issues related to “life and death” in Japanese culture, represented in the people’s belief, values, and traditions.

One of the topics that I have successfully used in eliciting discussion among students in this class is surprisingly “religions.” Religion is generally considered to be a sensitive topic to deal with when teaching students with various backgrounds. However, when studying about “religions” in Japan, students seem to find them as a fascinating part of their traditions, different from a religion generally known as a faith and a belief in a particular god.

However, their journey to discover the “religions” in Japan does not come easily. As the course progresses, they need to self-reflect their own belief in presentation, and compare/contrast with their tradition in a term paper. Through daily discussion, they exchange and share their questions, wonder, amazement, and thoughts. Slowly, they seem to learn and come to accept the Japanese way of practicing their “religions,” and understand what Japanese people value in their “life and death.”

In upper level language classes, students’ involvement and motivation is a key factor to their learning. I find that the success depends on the choice of the topics and how the topic themes are integrated into the course. In this class, the “life and death” theme is shared as the common denominator among the students, and through the window of “life and death,” students are lead to investigate Japanese culture. This is an example that even a sensitive topic such as “religions” can be discussion friendly beyond conflict triggering, when it is explored from different angles.
Marriage for the Arabs is both an individual as well as a family matter. And moreover, it is a religious mandate to serve God's purpose of procreation.

While young men and women generally choose their future spouses, marriage in the Arab societies remains a social and even an economic contract between two families. Different members of families; mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, and even aunts and uncles, might have an input in the suitability and compatibility of young couples to make a successful marriage.

In traditional Arab culture, early marriage is promoted and encouraged. Many Arabs believe that there should be an age gap between the couples, where the man should be older than the woman by up to five years.

Nowadays, however, it is rare to find a young Arab girl who accepts to marry a much older man without much pressure from the family.

In general, Arab culture encourages marriage within the extended families. They believe that the advantage of that lies not only in lowering marriage expenditure and retaining of the family wealth and property within the clan, but also seen as a means to strengthening kinship and solidarity by preventing the separation of the bride from her extended family.

According to Arab tradition and the Islamic law, the bridegroom must pay to the bride an agreed upon dowry. The dowry belongs to the bride to outfit her for the wedding night, and to serve as security blanket in case things go wrong in the early stages of the marriage. The high dowry in some Arab countries has forced many young men to delay their marriage.

Arabic Calligraphy

Arabic Calligraphy, also known as Arabic-Islamic Calligraphy, is the artistic practice of elegant and elaborate handwriting, and by extension, of bookmaking and design in the lands sharing a common Arabic-Islamic cultural heritage.

This art form was conceived in the womb of Arabic script whose cursive nature and the many dots born by many of its letters, along with the diacritical marks representing the short vowels above or below the letters are all features that made Arabic uniquely suitable for making Arabic-Islamic Calligraphy one of the highest forms of elegant and sophisticated art of the letters that man has ever known.

Arabic calligraphy was initially used to represent God and His Words as revealed in the Arabic Holy Qur'an. Suspicion of other figurative art as idolatrous led to calligraphy and abstract depictions becoming a major form of artistic expressions in Islamic cultures, especially in religious contexts. In medieval times, when Arabic was the *lengua franca* of the cultured and civilized world, calligraphers were highly appreciated and much in demand to copy and ornament handwritten calligraphic copies of the Qur'an.

To further ornament their artistic calligraphic works, calligraphers elaborated abstract Arabesques motifs on the margins or the background of their work. Thus Arabesque became another associate art form auxiliary to calligraphy, where geometric and floral designs accompanied the calligraphic scripts.

With the passage of time, calligraphy along with its associative Arabesques became the art par excellence to decorate the ceilings and walls of mosques, palaces and other public buildings, both inside and outside. Today one hardly can find a house in the Arab-Muslim world that does not have its walls decorated with framed pieces of Arabic Calligraphy.

For the believers, creating or contemplating Arabic calligraphic art is a spiritual experience, connecting the seen to the unseen and the physical world to the metaphysical world.
Hebrew, the native language of modern Israelis, is remarkable in that it was created in the late 19th and early 20th centuries out of the remnants of the ancient Hebrew language that was used millennia earlier in the biblical land of Israel. The language of those ancient “Hebrews” and their bible had been, for all practical intents, dead for nearly two thousand years, during which it served exclusively in Jewish prayer and religious study of scripture. Only with the revival of Jews’ national awareness – itself a response to the so-called “Jewish problem” of a persecuted stateless, homeless people – did the question arise: What language shall the nation speak in its modern incarnation? The answer was far from obvious, as traditionalists had over the centuries come to view Hebrew as a holy language that must not be soiled by everyday pedestrian use, while Jews of the enlightenment doubted that the ancient, “primitive” language could adapt to the modern, secular world of science, technology and daily affairs.

This revival and reincarnation of Hebrew as a modern language is, to a great extent, a testimony to the single-handed tenacity and scholarship of Eliezer Ben Yehuda, an eccentric Russian-born linguist who lived and worked in Jerusalem from the early 1880s until his death in 1922. The Hebrew language, very modular and systematically structured, proved ripe for expansion into modern content-areas that could not have been imagined in its biblical days. Classical Semitic roots that formed ancient words in some conjugation-patterns but not in others could often be associated with modern meanings, for which new words were crafted by placing those roots into one of the many conjugation-patterns not previously occupied. Thus “MACH'SHEV,” the Hebrew word for computer, is derived from the ancient root related to thought and calculation, CH-SH-V. In other cases, new three- or four-letter roots were fashioned out of foreign words like “telephone” and placed into existing conjugation-patterns to form new words.

The emergence of modern Hebrew was one aspect of the Jewish national revival and its attendant struggle to define a proper identity for the Jewish people in the modern world. This explains the controversy over choosing to revive Hebrew, rather than adapting one of the thriving languages spoken at the time by diaspora Jews or adopting one of the Western languages associated with enlightened high culture, such as German, French or even English. The choice to revive the ancient Hebrew aligns nicely with the decision, in the early 1900s, to favor locating a future Jewish state in the area known as Palestine over Uganda, which was recommended by the latter’s British colonial rulers at the time. (Zionism would have been a certifiable colonialist transplantation project had the British suggestion of Uganda been adopted, but the struggle with the Palestinians would have been avoided.)

The territorial and linguistic aspects of the quest for Jews’ modern national identity are mirrored in the cultural and societal fault-lines that, to this day, cut across Israeli society and Jewish life in the diaspora alike. These fault-lines reflect tensions between the particularistic, “exceptional” historic and religious identity of the Jewish people on the one hand and, on the other hand, the universalist-humanist ideals championed by great biblical prophets and adopted by cosmopolitan post-enlightenment Jews everywhere. They echo loud and clear in the music of Israel’s lively pop-scene, can be savored in the country’s evolving cuisine, and are visible in Israel’s finest architecture.

Finally, they are evident in the contrast between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem – the former just barely concealing them under a cheerful veneer of easy-going, western-secular cosmopolitanism, and the latter playing them off one another in a fraught coexistence, like an elaborate mosaic.

“For additional reading about the subject of this article, see Wikipedia entry titled ‘Revival of the Hebrew Language,’ including the links and references at the end of that entry.”
Chinese Zodiac is represented by 12 symbolic animals: rat, ox, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, sheep, monkey, rooster, dog, and pig. Probably from the Easter Han Dynasty, ancient Chinese people started to use these 12 animals to denominate years. The 12 symbolic animals have played a very important role in Chinese culture.

People interested in the Chinese Zodiac often ask a question: how the twelve animals were selected, and how the sequence was formed? Actually there are many legends explaining the beginning of the Chinese zodiac, among which the story about the “big race of animals” is the most popular one. According to this legend, the 12 animals were put in order based on the time they reached the finish line, and an interesting episode was the rat won the first place by evilly pushing the cat into the river, which explained why the rat and the cat have been deadly animals for centuries.

“In Many Chinese believe that people born in a particular year may take on the characteristics of the animal associated with that year.”

In Chinese culture, since each year has an animal as its symbol, a person born in a certain year will have one of the twelve animals as his/her symbolic animal, which is called a person’s “Sheng Xiao”. In casual communications Chinese people often ask about a person’s “Sheng Xiao” in order to find out his/her probable age according to the sequence of the zodiac animals. There is also a superstition about the relationship between a person’s animal symbol and his/her personality. Many Chinese believe that people born in a particular year may take on the characteristics of the animal associated with that year. For example, people born in the years of rat tend to be charming, quick-tempered and overly critical, while people under the tiger sign may be more sensitive, emotional, benevolent, and stubborn. In addition, based on personalities reflected in the animal symbols, ancient Chinese people believed that some lovers born under certain animal signs could be compatible or incompatible. Evidence of this superstition can be found in many ancient Chinese novels. However, very few people still believe in it when looking for their Mr. / Ms. Right in the modern society.

There are various traditions and customs associated with the Chinese zodiac. During Chinese New Year, people greet each other with lucky phrases created with the name of the year’s animal sign. For example, this year is the Year of Snake. Chinese people would send their new year wishes with the phrases like “She Nian Da Ji (Have a prosperous year of Snake)”, “Mei Li Ru She (Wish you have the charm of the snake)”, etc. They would also decorate houses with beautiful ornaments shaped like snakes. Another interesting tradition is called “the Year of Fate”. A person’s “Year of Fate” refers to the year carrying the same animal sign as the person’s symbolic animal, or “Sheng Xiao”. It is commonly believed that during one’s year of fate, one should be very careful and attentive to avoid mishaps. People facing the year of fate like to wear red undergarments because the color red is considered as a powerful color that can help them get rid of bad luck and protect them to cross the year smoothly.
Tofu, a Taste of Chinese Culture  BY AIGUO CHEN

Tofu is one of the most popular foods in China. It originated in Central China more than 2,000 years ago and was called "Doufu" (pronounced "dòufu"). Doufu was introduced into Japan about 700 AD, where its name changed to “Tofu”. Today it is the Japanese name “Tofu” that is better known in America.

Tofu is made by putting curdling agents or coagulants into soy source and then pressing it into soft blocks. It comes in various forms: 豆腐 (made of soy), 奶豆腐 (made of milk), 血豆腐 (made of animal blood); 豆腐干 (dried Tofu), 豆腐脑 (yogurt like Tofu), 嫩豆腐 (tender Tofu), 老豆腐 (hard Tofu), 毛豆腐 (hairy Tofu); 咸豆腐 (salty Tofu) and 臭豆腐 (stinky Tofu).

Even though Tofu is common throughout China, 奶豆腐 (milk Tofu) is more popular in the Northwest, because of the lack of soy bean production in that region; 毛豆腐 (hairy Tofu) is more common in the South, where the climate favors it.

The making of Tofu is an art, especially 毛豆腐 (hairy tofu): it has to be under the right conditions such as the right temperature, the right humidity and the right timing. Because its hair grows, people believe that it has a life of its own. A master Tofu maker understands it all. He or she sees in it a person rather than an object: perhaps a beautiful lady, whose hair grows day by day.

There are many colloquial expressions in Chinese associated with Tofu. For example, when somebody is innocent, one will say that he or she is as clean as “Tofu and Scallion Salad,” or “小葱拌豆腐, 一清二白”in Chinese.

To describe a person who has a sharp tongue but a soft heart, one will say that he or she is “刀子嘴, 豆腐心”, a knife like mouth with a Tofu heart.

Tofu, a Taste of Chinese Culture

Snapshot of Korean Culture: Jeong that Koreans Feel  BY CHOONWON KANG

Jeong ([정] [情]) is a feeling developed over time toward a person, a place, or a thing. It can mean love, friendship, affection, compassion, passion, attachment, giving, sharing, longing, and sacrifice. Jeong covers such varied emotions that it is one of the most difficult Korean words to translate into another language. As a result, Jeong in one context can mean something else or even exactly opposite in another context.

Jeong is a popular theme for songs, movies, dramas, and books. The Korean documentary film of 2009 titled ‘Old Partner’ describes a close relationship between a man and an animal. It’s about a 30-year old partnership between an eighty-year-old man and a forty-year-old ox. This old farmer has worked with the ox so long that he is willing to be a chief mourner and give a burial at death, which is due equal for a human being. Go to http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c3qFI59wGHY for a brief account.

We can approach Jeong by comparison: emotional vs. intellectual, heart vs. brain, traditional Korean house vs. high-rise modern apartment, furniture made of wood vs. shiny mother-of-pearl, a dipper made of a-

(Continued on page 11)
plant vs. plastic one, treating others vs. going Dutch. The first one in each pair is closer to Jeong by giving priority to nature and tradition over artificial and convenience. Koreans are especially honored and willing to treat others rather than splitting the bill. Going Dutch is considered to be selfish and calculating. This is where Jeong works as a trigger for Koreans fighting to pay the bill at a restaurant. However, there's a drawback that may mean chaos rather than order. In a playground children stand in line, waiting for their turn for a slide, when a child cuts the line in the middle and goes down the slide. Jeong here has a tendency to accommodate this situation by relaxing the rule and tolerating this undisciplined child. At the same time Jeong can play a powerful role to make the nation united in cheering for a national team against that of another country.

There are many Jeong-related words based on quantity, depth, maturity, distance, as in plentiful and lacking, friendly and hateful, superficial and deep, aloof and close. As forms of address, some family terms are used toward strangers: male shopkeepers are addressed as uncle and female as aunt. This shows the feeling of closeness extended toward others of non-blood relation.

When agriculture was the main industry in Korea, there was a short time span to seed and harvest. So they had to cooperate at the community level by sharing labor. In such a village-oriented society, a personal event like a birthday party or business opening was turned into a village-wide occasion and the villagers shared the special food together. On modern weddings and funerals, sharing still continues among neighbors and acquaintances in helping each other by giving money. Jeong is also a driving force to raise funds at the national and international events. When the country was in financial crisis in 1998, citizens chipped in anything gold for donation or exchange to get her out of low gold reserve. Koreans are ready and willing to help flood or hurricane victims nationally or internationally.

Vegetarianism in China

BY LU LI

China is a major center of Buddhism and the founding state of Taoism, two nature-oriented philosophies that promote vegetarianism and low-impact living.

In China, although full vegetarianism is a fairly rare practice, vegetarianism has been around since at least the 7th century and has been practiced by devout Buddhists. In recent years, it has seen a new resurgence in the cities as the emerging middle class in China pay attention to issues of health and diet. In 2010, Prime Minister Wen Jiabao, proposed a nationwide campaign of "one day of vegetarianism every week", mainly as part of a broader environmental platform.

In Taiwan, 1.7 million people, or 10% of the population of Taiwan, follow a vegetarian diet at least some of the time. There are more than 6,000 vegetarian eating establishments in Taiwan. Food labeling laws for vegetarian food are the world's strictest, because around 2 million Taiwanese use vegetarian food. A popular movement of "one day vegetarian every week" has been advocated on a national level, and on a local level, even government bodies are involved, such as the Taipei City Board of Education.

Chinese recipes for meat replacements have been passed down for centuries since the earliest days of vegetarian monks. Today, mock meats have evolved so that the flavor satisfies everyone. Choosing mock meat is kind to animals and its production process is usually less harmful to the environment. Mock meat is healthier for you because it's cholesterol-free.
Japan’s unique traditional aesthetics stem from its diverse cultural traditions. The aesthetic concept of wabi-sabi, for example, came from the amalgamation of Zen Buddhism and Japan’s native Shinto. Wabi refers to roughness, imperfection, living in sync with nature, and sabi connotes impermanence, and wisdom of age. This concept was the leading philosophical and aesthetic perspective for much of Japan’s traditional art forms.

However, with the end of the Tokugawa Period in the late nineteenth century came an end of the country’s cultural isolation, and with the growing influence of western cultures, Japan faced a split between traditional values and new western aesthetics. During the post-World War period, Japan was on the fast track to economic and political changes. Concerned that certain cultural traditions may be lost in the continuing quest for modernity and westernization, the Japanese government’s Agency for Cultural Affairs instituted the Cultural Properties Protection Act in 1950. This Act designated important cultural assets as kokubō or “National Treasures.”

A national treasure could be a type of fine art, a building, or other type of monument. But perhaps most interesting and unique, intangible cultural properties can be instituted as a treasure, and those determined by the government to possess or embody outstanding skill in traditional craft (e.g. pottery) or performing arts (e.g. Kabuki theater) are given the title “Bearers of Important Intangible Cultural Assets.” Popularly called ningen kokubō or “Living National Treasure,” their purpose is to protect the intangible cultural property that the government has deemed an important national asset, and they bear the responsibility to preserve the art form and skills. Presently a total of 114 individuals are declared “Living National Treasure.”

For Further Reading:

Tamasaburo Bando: Kabuki Actor. The most celebrated Kabuki actor specializing in female roles. Designated as a Living National Treasure in 2012.