

JAPAN NOTES

NOTE 21 SUMMER 2008

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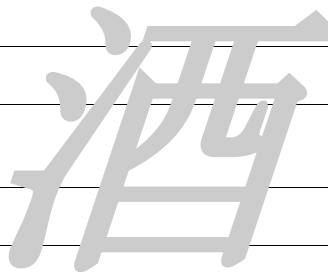
Sake at Seki

For the past three years the *sake* parties at *Seki* Japanese Restaurant in the loop we call “*Sake at Seki*“ have been a very popular JAS event, although Chef *Seki* wants to serve only a limited number of up to 30 people to ensure the best service.

Chef *Seki* serves several different brands of *sake* from different sake producing areas in Japan so that the guests can compare and enjoy subtle variation in taste and fragrance. He also prepares a variety of Japanese cuisine that goes with *sake*. The popularity of Japanese *sake* seems definitely on the rise in the U.S. or at least in St. Louis. *JAS BEER AND SAKE BOOTH* at the annual Japanese Festival at the Missouri Botanical Garden sold 54 liters of *sake* in 2004; 81 liters in 2005; 135 liters in 2006; and 162 liters in 2008. Also, it has been our observation that quite a number of women love *sake* more than beer.

SAKE AT SEKI 2008 FAVORITES SURVEY RESULTS

Brand (Dryness)	Score	Best	2nd Best	3rd Best
Nama-Hage (8)	13		3	2
Harushika (12)	10	2	2	1
Otoko-Yama (10)	9	3	1	1
Suisin (3)	7			
O'oyama (7)	3			
Mine-no-Hakubai (5)	3			
Bi-Sho'onen (2)	2			
Sawa-no-I (3)	1			



16 people who turned in the survey picked the 3 brands they liked most and *Nama Hage* got 13 points, followed by *Harushika* with 10 and *Otoko Yama* with 9.

5 people marked “Best” , “2nd Best “ and “3rd Best” and *Otoko Yama* got 3 points as “ Best “. This may show that *Otoko Yama* was the most popular brand. Sake, like wine, has various tastes and fragrances.

John Gauunter says there are 7 basic *sake* tasting parameters.

- Fragrance: fragrant to none
- Impact: explosive to quiet
- Sweet/Dry: dry to sweet
- Acidity: puckering to soft
- Presence: full to unassuming
- Earthiness: dark to delicate
- Tail: pervasive to quickly vanishing

Well, well, well. ...KANPAI anyway!



PRESENTATION ON KOI

Mr. Gilbert Chen is a familiar figure at the Annual Japanese Festival at the Missouri Botanical Festival. Mr. Chen displays and sells colorful Koi at the Festival every year.

In March this year Mr. Chen made a most interesting presentation at the Missouri Botanical Garden on the history and the keeping of Koi for the members of the Japan America Society of St. Louis and the St. Louis Water Gardening Society.

Mr. Chen has gracefully agreed to contribute the following article on Koi to Japan Notes.

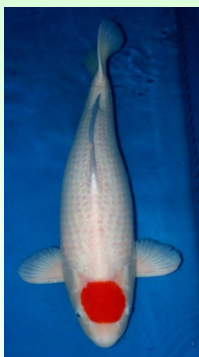


鯉-KOI

Today the English word Koi more specifically refers to a variety of colorful domesticated fish called Nishikigoi – brocaded carp – as opposed to ordinary carp that wild dark grey colored freshwater fish which people eat, particularly in Asian countries. In Japan people make sashimi called arai and stew of carp with miso (soybean paste). Both are special cuisine to the Japanese palate but they never eat Koi. To Japanese eating Koi would be just like eating your dog or cat.

Contrary to the popular belief that carp is imported from China to Japan a long time ago, today it is believed that carp is indigenous to Japan. Carp are not very good at jumping, even though small ones can jump as high as 2 meters. But, somehow or other, from the olden days in China and Japan it has been believed that they can swim against strong streams often jumping over waterfalls. This trait of carp is revered in China and Japan, and carp have become a symbol of valor and strength for boys. That is why parents of boys in Japan raise poles with wind streamers in the shape of carp-koinobori (carp flags) at the top, above the roof-line for people to see on the Boys Day-Children's Day these days- and wish that their boys will grow up to be courageous and strong like carp.

Even though there were colorful ornamental carp in the 4th century in China, it is widely believed today that Nishikigoi-brocaded carp-in Japan were first successfully bred by the farmers in Niigata Prefecture in the north-western region of the main island of Japan in the 19th century. In the olden days, the farmers used to keep wild black carp –Called Magoi as opposed to Nishikigoi-as



a source of food for the harsh winter, and some of the farmers happened to notice patches of colors other than black in their carp and thought they could make selected breed of colorful fish.

Nishiki is actually silk fabric woven with various colors and is used to make Kimono. That is why those elegant and beautiful fish-swimming jewels-are call Nishikigoi.

Koi have 6 major colors: white, black, red, yellow, blue and cream. While possible variations are limitless, the most popular combina-

tions of colors are three, namely Kohaku (white koi with red pattern), Taisho Sanshoku (white koi with red and black pattern) and Showa Sanshoku (black koi with red an white pattern). The Japanese breeders have many generations of knowledge and experience and are able to produce Koi with exquisite patterns that are worth hundreds of dollars, even thousands of dollars.

Magoi are hardy fish. They can survive in dirty water and can live longer than other kinds of fish out of water.

They usually live to be 20 years old and some of them up to 70 years old. Koi share that hardiness. They are cold-water fish, so in places it gets warm in the summer, it is advisable to keep them in water that has one meter or more of depth. However, where it gets very cold in the winter they should be kept in water that has at least 1.5 meters (4 ½ feet) deep.

Koi, because of their bright colors are an easy prey for predators such as herons, kingfishers, raccoons, cats, etc. So, the outdoor ponds for Koi should have areas too deep for herons to stand in and have overhangs high enough above the water that cats and other animals cannot reach the water. Or they should have string nets or wires above the water.

Koi eat all types of food. However the feed for Koi should be nutritionally well balanced. It should also float on the water so that they will come to the surface. Then we can check if they are healthy and free of parasites and ulcers. In the winter they also hibernate and eat very little. Do not feed them, particularly protein when the water temperature drops below 50 degrees Fahrenheit. When the water gets warmer in the spring, resume feeding first with oranges cut in half. The vitamin C will help Koi's healthy start after their in activity in the winter.



-Gilbert Chen-

**Shonen Relationships
~Confucius Reinterpreted~**

Anime is a great medium for exploring contemporary Japanese society. *Shōjō* anime is aimed at young women and deals with true-to-life subjects such as school, growing up, romance, family relationships, friendships, as well as science-fiction and magic to some extent. *Shōnen* anime, meant for young men, tends to focus on school, family, friends, fantasy, science-fiction, competition, and heroism. As I have spent a great deal of time focusing on the values and spiritual foundations apparent in *shōjō* anime for previous presentations, I decided to change my focus a bit. Last April, I delivered a presentation on how moral values, specifically Confucian morality and societal relationships, are clearly presented in *shōnen* anime at UMSL's annual *Japan on Campus* event.

Confucian values and teachings have been present in Japan since the Nara period (c. 710-784 AD) and still form the basis for many Japanese relationships and societal order. Of the many virtues Confucius taught, two of them, Li (*Rei*) and Ren (*Jin*), are central to understanding one's place in society and how to interact. Li means "ritual propriety" or "rites" while Ren means "benevolence" or "human heartedness." To maintain balance, or harmony in society, a person should know how to act toward others, what is reciprocally expected (*on*) and what is demanded (*giri*). An example of this would be if you somehow disrupted the peace with your

neighbor, you are supposed to fix it, acknowledge your fault, and not do it again. Your neighbor will consider the debt repaid and forget about it, as long as you do not do it again. Another example would be the custom of giving gifts and being thoughtful: you should never forget to send out new year's greetings, or your Japanese friends may think you have forgotten about them.

In addition to the values of Li and Ren, another key Confucian teaching is that of the five cardinal relationships. They are: ruler-ruled, husband-wife, parent-child, elder sibling-younger sibling, and friend-friend. With each vocation or relationship, a person should understand his or her *on* and *giri* based on their position to this person.

Within *Shōnen* anime such as *Naruto* and *Bleach*, the viewer can see strong connections to these Confucian teachings. The heroes of these stories fight hard for their families and friends. The heroes fight for justice and peace, for the good of society. Much of the time, the characters wish to be recognized for their accomplishments, and are often told that they must

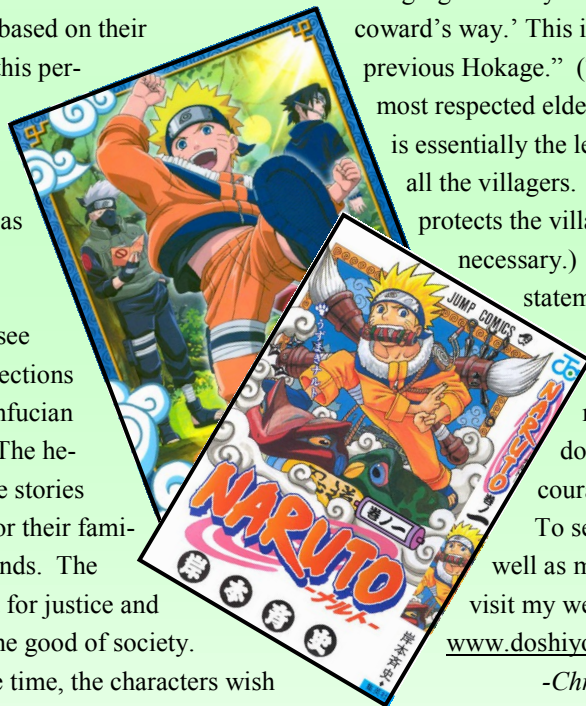
work hard and be excellent members of society to realize their dreams. A specific example of direct Confucian teaching is in *Naruto*.

Naruto is a pre-teen boy who was raised as an orphan in a "ninja village." The ninja of the village support themselves by doing missions for hire. They range from simple cat-sitting to defending against massive armies. On one particular mission, Naruto and his friends were tasked with defending a person who had lied about the scope of their mission. Yet, the team stayed on to help despite being lied to. When asked why they did this, the team leader, Kakashi, responded, "Not doing right when you know it is right is the coward's way." This is a teaching of the previous Hokage." (The Hokage is the most respected elder in the village, who is essentially the leader and "father" of all the villagers. He watches over and protects the village with his life, if necessary.) Compare Kakashi's statement with Analects 2:24: Confucius said "Faced with what is right, to leave it undone shows a lack of courage."

To see the presentation, as well as more information, visit my website at <http://www.doshiyo.com>

-Christopher "Kit" Born-

Mr. Born was a lecturer at UMSL's annual "Japan on Campus" 2008.



Annual Japanese Festival is just around the corner...

It will be held as usual at The Missouri Botanical Garden over the Labor Day Weekend. Please visit JAS Sake and Beer Booth for ice cold Japanese beer and delicate Japanese *sake*, JAS Young Mens' Booth for delicious *okonomiyaki* and *yakisoba* and JAS Women's Association's Souvenir Booth!

This year, *rakugo*, a traditional and hilariously funny Japanese story telling art will be featured at The Theater and the former Japanese sumo wrestlers from Hawaii will return for popular demonstrations.



Learning Japanese Language is Getting Popular The World Over

One of the most frequent enquiries to JAS is about learning Japanese Language.

Here in St. Louis, some people still want to study Japanese language for business purposes and most of those people are looking for crash courses to equip themselves with conversational skills in Japanese when they visit Japan on business. We are, however, more aware these days that a number of young people who are in junior and high schools here are interested in learning Japanese language and that the number is increasing.

The Japan Forum, at Tokyo based non-profit organization that aims at promoting mutual understanding among elementary and secondary school students by supporting foreign language education and education for intercultural understanding, informs in the July '08 issue of their news letter "International Cultural Forum Letters" on the following interesting finding, and we quote:

Reflecting the increasing interest in the Japanese pop culture, more and more young people worldwide are interested in Japan and Japanese language these days. They want to acquire the command of the language as a window to Japanese pop culture.

According to the survey conducted by The Japan Foundation, the number of people in the world studying the Japanese language was approximately 2,280,000 in 2006, a 26.4% increase from 2003. Of the number, about 1,700,000 (about 60%) are students in elementary and secondary schools.

The chart below shows the Top Ten Countries in the world as to the number of students studying Japanese in elementary and secondary schools in 2006.

Rank	Country	Number of Students	% in entire population studying Japanese
1	Korea	769,034	84.4
2	Australia	352,629	96.3
3	Indonesia	244,304	89.6
4	China	76,020	11.1
5	Taiwan	58,198	30.4
6	U.S.A.	58,181	49.3
7	Thailand	31,679	44.6
8	New Zealand	27,369	91.5
9	Canada	11,043	46.3
10	Malaysia	8,984	39.2

In the countries (Australia, New Zealand, Indonesia and Korea) where the percentage of students studying Japanese is the high, their government has the policy of promoting the teaching of Japanese language. The top 10 reasons why those students are studying Japanese are:

1. Interest in Japanese language itself
2. To acquire knowledge of Japanese culture
3. To acquire ability to communicate in Japanese
4. To prepare for higher education
5. To understand foreign culture
6. For job opportunity
7. To promote international friendship
8. To enter a Japanese university
9. For tourism in Japan
10. Because of parent's expectation

It is interesting to note that in the countries in Asia the main reasons are all job-oriented (point to high education and jobs) and in the counties in the west the main reasons for studying Japanese are mostly culture-oriented (point to understanding foreign culture).

