

ESL Summer Intensive NEWSLETTER

Johns Hopkins University
Language Teaching Center
www.jhu.edu/ltc/esl

Two Wednesdays Remaining for Lunch & Conversations

On the last two Wednesdays, July 9th and 16th, students from the English as a Second Language program came out to the weekly "Lunch & Conversations" event in Krieger 506. They brought their lunches and practiced speaking English in a casual setting with Valeria Costadoni and Sarah Addison, two JHU undergraduate students.

Students from France, Germany, Italy and Taiwan gathered around the table in the LTC's conference room for the first session on the 9th and talked about their classes, school, the military and politics, to name a few of the topics discussed.

Only one student, Natsuki Arai from Tokyo, Japan, showed up on the 16th. Still, he enjoyed learning new phrases, chatting about the similarities and differences between the Japanese and American education systems, transportation, the upcoming Olympic Games in August, and baseball.

There are only two more opportunities on July 23th and July 30th from 12:00-1:00 pm to join Valeria and Sarah for "Lunch & Conversations" and we hope to see you there!

Orioles Baseball!

There still are tickets left for the Baltimore Orioles baseball game against the Los Angeles Angels on Saturday July 26th at 6:00 pm, but they are going quickly!

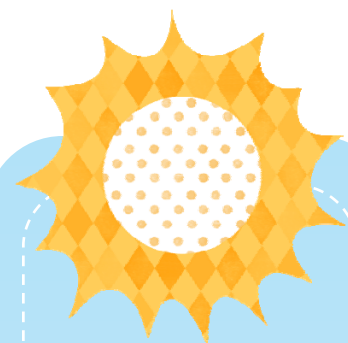


See an exciting match-up between the east coast and the west coast at Orioles Park at Camden Yards, one of the nicest stadiums in Major League Baseball.

Stop by Krieger 511 between 10:00 am and 4:30 pm Monday-Friday to purchase tickets for \$13 each, so you can take yourself out to the ball game!



Natsuki, Sarah, and Valeria at July 16th's lunch conversation

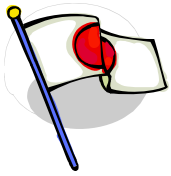


Important Dates

- July 18 Friday Night Films on the Upper Quad: "Stardust" Live Music at 7:30 PM, Movie starts at sunset
- July 18 Harbor Sails 5:00 pm
- July 18-20 Artscape
- July 23 Lunch & Conversations with Two JHU Students noon-1:00, Krieger 506
- July 25 Friday Night Films on the Upper Quad: "Some Like it Hot"
- July 25 Harbor Sails 5:00 pm
- July 26 Orioles Baseball Game 6:00 pm
- July 27 Beach Party (Pre-College Only)
- July 29 Group Pictures on the stairs outside Krieger Hall 10:15 am
- July 30 Lunch & Conversations with Two JHU Students noon-1:00, Krieger 506
- Aug. 1 ESL Certificate Ceremony In the Sherwood Room at Levering Hall 11:00 am-1:00 pm
- Aug. 2 Summer Housing Check Out

Submitted by YOU ...

“Wa”nderful Japan by Kunihiro Matsushita



What do the following words remind a person of: sashimi, sushi, teriyaki, Sony, Nintendo, and Toyota? Right! They all originated in Japan. In addition to these terms, Japan has a lot of historical temples, shrines, and castles, and also beautiful sceneries with the four seasonal

changes. Recently, Japan is famous for world-leading animations like Akira, Dragon Ball, or Pokemon. Although short-term visitors from overseas are generally satisfied with their experiences in Japan, long-stay foreigners do not necessarily admire Japan, probably due to some intercultural misunderstandings. Here, for foreigners to be able to enjoy their time in Japan, I would like to introduce some Japanese values, focusing on the concept of “Wa.”

“Wa” is the sound for the kanji, 和. This kanji means peaceful, amiable, or harmonious. Interestingly, this kanji also means Japan. As expressed in the paired meanings of this kanji, the concept of “Wa” is fundamental in relationships among Japanese people. Japanese people basically esteem harmony in a group, including communities, companies, classes, or teams and dislike someone who does not behave like other people. Perhaps, this proverb expresses this Japanese value well, “A higher pile than others will be driven.” In past times, people who broke the “Wa” of a group were driven into a situation, where they received only 2 basic of 10 community services, funerals or fire fighting. Although the situation is not the same nowadays, the commitment to “Wa” is still alive in the society.

To keep the harmony of the group, Japanese people are generally reserved. Most Japanese dislike expressing their emotions or opinions and hence may give evasive answers to questions, particularly in the case of refusal to a request or an invitation. When one gets the following answers from a Japanese person, “I will consider it positively” or “I will take the appropriate steps”, one should consider the possibility that the situation won’t be changed. Japanese people do so because they are afraid that other people may get hurt by the direct refusal. This may make sometimes foreigners annoyed. There is a record that Admiral Perry, who persuaded the Japanese government to quit their isolation policy in 1853, became irritated because of the vague answers of Japanese officers.

Reciprocally, Japanese people are not used to receive a direct expression of opinion or emotion from others. Therefore, it would be better for foreigners if they could soften their tone of opinion or emotion when they want to oppose or refuse. Japanese people use the expression “wrapping words by a wafer” to describe this maneuver. Maybe, for Americans, the expression, “sugar-coating words”, is more understandable. Although it will take certain time to master this “sugar-coating”, it will work for a long-term resident to

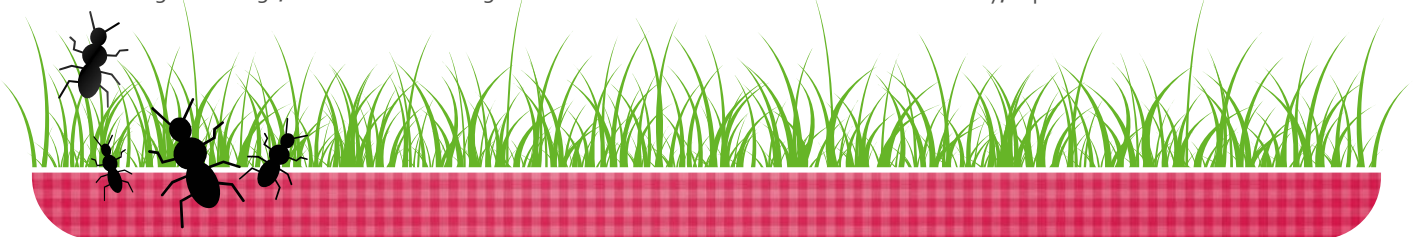
be accepted smoothly in Japanese communities.

Politeness is the other important concept supporting “Wa”. As expressed in a proverb, “There should be courtesy even among friends,” most Japanese people put importance on courtesy, particularly to older people. Japanese people start to demonstrate their respect via language adjustments to an older person in a junior high school. A junior high school student generally speaks to a year older student with an honorific language. This situation is accelerated in a business scene. Office workers are firstly trained in manners to respect their elders. For example, they learn where the oldest or highest titled person should sit in restaurants and cars or stand in an elevator. Additionally, a younger or lower titled person should give his/her business card below the older or higher title person’s business card. Those politenesses or courtesies seem to play an important role in keeping the “Wa” of the group.

Consistent with their reserved and polite characteristic, Japanese people like to follow rules. This morality of Japanese people may be associated with the fame of Japan as one of the safest countries in the world. In rural areas, there are people who do not lock their doors even at night, since they trust members of their communities. Moreover, neighbors could enter to someone’s house directly without ringing a bell. This reflects how Japanese people commonly follow moral codes and also how Japanese people are tolerant to other people, when they once recognize other people as a member of the community.

What do you think of Japan, now? A strict, confined, boring, or formal country? It might be partially true. However, imagine a population of 120 million living in a country half the size of the state of Texas. Moreover, most of Japanese people are not pious believers in a certain religion. In this situation, this “Wa” concept has been a kind of moral code and an important factor for keeping Japanese social structure. As shown in the successes of Sony, Nintendo or Toyota, this “Wa” concept has been proved to function well in certain situations.

In conclusion, “Wa” is an important concept to understand Japanese values. If you could make the best use of this concept, you will be able to adapt to Japanese cultures more easily. Once a foreigner is recognized as a member of some group in Japan, he/she will see their kindness and feel comfortable. I hope you enjoy the stay in this “Wa”nderful country, Japan.



My Addiction by Jae Y. Ahn



Eight O'Clock, French Roast, and Dunkin'... All of these are my lover's nicknames. I fell in love with coffee and I am still loving it. Whenever I see any "COFFEE" sign, I smile at it as if I were a kid in front of a Christmas tree. Even though my everyday average coffee

intake is just two-thirds of a Starbucks' tall size, I need to have some every day, definitely.

These days, I enforce a tea time with my two kids as often as I can. Sitting quietly between two high chairs, I smell the beautiful brownish liquid and sip it with a most decent manner. Then I ask some questions that I think very appropriate for tea time.

"Sons, what do you think about global warming? And what's your opinion about the national election? Who do you want to have for the next American president?" A usual response from my younger one is an empty stare, but my first always has some answers. "I want to have more gold fish! Gold fish! More!"

I know this caffeine addiction is not good for my health. Sometimes I feel all of my organs are being dyed brown one by one. However, for a stay-at-home mom, sipping this magic makes me breathe, and feel the breeze of an adult life.

American Culture in Baltimore by Rachel Moran

The number 11 bus. A free bus ride back to Hopkins. Kind passengers giving us change. Loyola. Walking miles in nearly 100 degree temperatures. Roland Park & Guilford. Miss Shirley's noisy, bustling restaurant. Caesar salad. Eggs Benedict. Spicy crab soup. Splitting a check with few arguments and figuring out an appropriate tip. A traffic accident. Have you experienced these things in America? Do you know what they all are?

Well our American Culture class certainly does. We have been having a blast (a great time, the opposite of boring!) trying to understand the basic values, beliefs and assumptions of this culture and how culture affects everything around us in Baltimore, in the news, and in the language.

We have read articles about cross-cultural mistakes, stereotypes, culture shock, cultural distance, and opinions on Baltimore, aka Charm City, The City That Reads or The Greatest City in the World. Believe! And, we have expressed our own observations about American life, made while living here, some of us just for 3 weeks and others 2-10 years! Yet, many things remain a



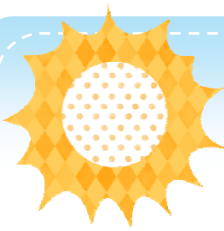
mystery. For instance, do Americans really like soccer?

The first week of classes fittingly began with the July 4th holiday. AC students are now experts on what Independence Day means; why Baltimore is important to that history; and how our beginnings as a country have molded our cultural personality. We watched a bit of the HBO series "John Adams" and have worked our way towards becoming more flexible and adaptable to this culture by watching the film "The Accidental Tourist," which has at its heart the city of Baltimore and many areas surrounding Hopkins.

Still to come, students will be leading panel presentations on topics that they care about: food, sports & music, explaining, comparing and contrasting aspects of these topics from this and their own cultures. Also, we will be making more forays out into greater Baltimore, the Hunt Valley Mall, the Loch Raven Reservoir and the BMA, to name a few. Last, but perhaps most important, we will be focusing on the American Presidential election, one which affects us all, regardless of culture.

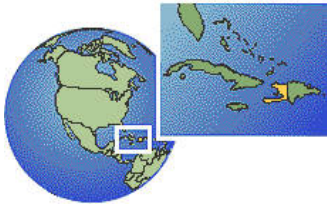
Please, if you need any culture questions answered, don't be shy! Just talk to an American Culture student.





Reminders: When signing up for activities, let us know if you are coming to the ESL Certificate Ceremony and what dish you can bring to share. Also, keep your stories and pictures coming for the next publication! Please send them to esl@jhu.edu.

Adjusting to Life in America By Yves Michel Jean-Ramses Rouchon.



Moving abroad is a tremendous stress for everyone. We feel pressured because not only our steps will take us away from what we cherish the most but also we will embrace new habits that fright us in advance. We cannot help asking questions, and we don't always obtain the responses that would pl-

cate us. My approach into the American life and my battle for my faultless adaptation to the new culture are a perfect illustration of this challenge.

At a first view, the most important factor to be considered is the geography and the climate of the country that I left. I lived for 40 years in Haiti that is a Caribbean island. All the year long, inhabitants enjoy the everlasting summer. With mountains everywhere and white sandy beaches, music brings a languorous rhythm and pace to this tropical life. The distances between each point are short. As I had a lot of friends, that allowed me to socialize. Enjoying a week-end with them time to time at the seaside was my favorite hobby.

Moreover, in my country, my status deserved consideration. In fact, I was well-known all over the country. I was also recognized for my integrity and my firm character. "What a great leader," people used to declare! I was not only a physician, an Obstetrician-Gynecologist with a specialty in laparoscopic training in USA, but I experienced also the privilege to be the Medical Director of the one of the most famous hospitals of the country: "Hopital Bienfaisance de Pignon.". My responsibilities were huge. I reached the highest level in my career and I enjoyed it. I provoked enthusiasm and fervor during the seminars I attended because, as an excellent spokesman, I electrified the audience. I met respect and esteem often in my conversations with people. Surprisingly, one year ago, I left all this success to live with my wife in USA.



My clash to adapt myself to American life went harder and harder due to many aspects. As an immigrant, in the early days of my arrival, I caught a cold because I went outside incorrectly dressed. Furthermore, even cooked with love and care by my wife, her dishes didn't taste as good as the "Creole" and French cuisines I was used to. My limitations in English didn't help me to fix my problems either. I couldn't practice Medicine, particularly, surgery. I missed these excitements in the operating room. I longed for any friend to visit during that awful time! Any good French jokes to laugh about! I was close to a depression, I now recognize.

As stated, I believe that I went through the different stages of adjustment. First, I got thrilled by the idea to start a new life in a different country... America. Insidiously, I developed some symptoms that, later, I identified as a culture shock. Because of my strength and my tenacity, I was able to

triumph. In spite of that, I can't help presenting what they call "Mental Isolation". Fortunately, it has relatively been for a short period. Now, after six months, I feel accepted in this American society and I'm looking forward for a full expansion of my personality and of my potential.

Nevertheless, I felt many times that I was close to failure in my adaptation and consequently, to return to Haiti. Where did I take the strength and the courage to survive and to keep going? On this part, I have to thank my wife. My gratefulness to her is incommensurate. Her understanding, her love, her support have been abundant in this harsh period. In addition, my willingness that didn't show any hole or cracks helped me to move forward with confidence. At the end, with my faith in God, I found the energy to believe and to find the fortitude that permitted me to succeed.

This scheme consisted in a kind of filtration. In fact, I embraced as mine all the positive aspects of the American culture. I put away the negative ones. I stayed alert, showing an open-mind to everything. I welcomed any helpful advice and did my best to prevent all kinds of major mistakes that would have embarrassed my wife or me. I scrutinized people's attitudes for the best, and I reflected that positively in my language and behavior. While I was showing myself as a good learner, I preserved also my personality. So far, that's working.

Definitely, I miss Haiti and what I left there. However, the new perspectives in the United States of America are simply radiant. Beside that, my wife is like an interminable source of tenderness and love. Furthermore, God blessed us: we'll be three in the family very soon. Since the beginning of humankind, life, in all its characteristics, has always been considered as a combination of two different and extreme poles. It's our duty to execute the best choice and to act consequently on adjusting us. This is the price of happiness.



Language Teaching Center
English as a Second Language
3400 N. Charles Street
Krieger Hall 510
Baltimore, MD 21218

Phone: 410-516-5431
Fax: 410-516-8008
Website: www.ltc.jhu.edu/esl

Decipher the Message



The answer to last week's puzzle was: PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT.

