

# "Daily Word" Echoes

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(Essays submitted by listeners/readers on themes of "Daily Word" messages between January 14 and February 18, 1997. Corrected and edited by Clark Offner.)

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## January 14 Message (Subject #320)

*Hokkaido is the northernmost of the four main islands of Japan with an area about one-third that of Honshu. Rice, oats, barley, wheat and soybeans along with horses, sheep, cattle and pigs are raised there. It is also the home of many of the aboriginal inhabitants of these islands, the Ainu. Have you ever visited there? What thoughts or impressions do you have of Hokkaido and its history?*

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The name, Hokkaido, reminds me of Dr. William Smith Clark, an American scientist and educator. He came to Japan on the invitation of the Japanese government to be an agricultural developer of Hokkaido in 1876. He stayed in Japan as vice-principal of Sapporo Agricultural School and exerted a spiritual influence upon his students, including Kenzo Uchimura and Inazo Nitobe, both of whom became pious Christians and great proponents of Japanese culture. He left the famous word, "Boys, be ambitious!" when he returned to America following his service in Japan. No one who was educated in prewar days can forget these encouraging words.

Certainly, Hokkaido has developed remarkably in agriculture. Snow Brand butter and Sapporo beer have been well known since the time I was a child. Hok-

kaido must be of the highest rank in agriculture, but it seems to be backward in industrial fields. As a matter of fact, Hokkaido has only one electric power company while there are six in Honshu which is three times the size of Hokkaido. In that sense, Hokkaido may be said to have vast potential in regard to future industrial development.

(HARUJI FUKUMI, Minami, Nagoya)

My wife and I visited Hokkaido during our honeymoon. It was a beautiful summer in 1980. We wanted to decide when and where to go and where to stay by ourselves. If we rode on a sightseeing bus, we would have to follow their schedule, so I rented a car to go around there by ourselves. We enjoyed watching many kinds of wild animals and birds as long as we wanted, some of which could not be seen in Honshu. I was delighted to know both of us shared the same feeling toward wildlife.

One day in the evening, we got out of the car on a mountain pass to rest. There was a vast stretch of mountains and a big lake below. We spied a big female deer (*ezo-shika*) walking about 30 meters away from us. She didn't seem to pay any special attention to us and began to eat weeds. It was a very beautiful sight under a colorful sunset sky.

Suddenly, we noticed that the deer jumped and looked around carefully. At first, we could not figure out what had happened. When the deer began trotting, we saw a stone rolling near her. It had

been thrown from a group from a touring bus behind us. I automatically shouted "Stop!" At first, I thought a small child had thrown it and was not sure he heard me, so I walked toward the group to repeat it. Then, I realized I was mistaken. I could see a young man who appeared to be in his early twenties walk away from the group to look for another stone to throw. But I could not stop walking and said, "Please don't throw it." He turned around and stared at me with a stone in his right hand. I stood still and looked straight into his eyes. I regretted that I had shouted before knowing who threw the stone and was mentally prepared to have a stone thrown at me from a short distance. I felt it was a long period, but it probably lasted only a few seconds before he dropped the stone and went away without speaking. I could see the deer running far away. Then I got back to my wife who was worrying about me.

When we got back to our car, I was happy that we were as safe as the deer. It is said that human beings are the only creatures on earth that kill other creatures even when they are not needed for food. Although it may be fun for the human being, it is a matter of life or death for the wild animal. It was an unforgettable incident for us.

(TOSHIAKI MIYAKE, Tsuzuki, Yokohama)

I have gone to Hokkaido four times. I always go on trips expecting to see new things. I went to Hokkaido with that same expectation, but I was disappointed because everything, everywhere was modernized as if it were in competition with other places. Changes have made it more convenient and brighter, but I could not find anything that stimulated deep thought and I regret it.

Not only in Hokkaido but in other places also a similar situation is found. I cannot understand the significance of a historical spot or famous place. There is no atmosphere. Such places are fading

out rapidly in Japan.---I am afraid that our thinking has changed and true beauty is disappearing. I hope that this change is stopped and that we continue to appreciate Japanese culture.

(MICHIKO SANO, Minami, Nagoya)

Given the theme "Hokkaido", I could not help remembering my grandfather, his son, grandson and great grandson on my mother's side. My grandfather went to Hokkaido when he was young, but when my mother, his youngest daughter, was born, he was in Tokyo and his house was very close to ours. He was not very talkative, but sometimes at family gatherings, he told us about his younger days there, which were quite interesting and even thrilling. My mother loved Hokkaido very much. I remember her joyfully telling us about her memories of it. I was able to visit and spend a summer on the farm run by my uncle, grandfather's eldest son. After I married, I went on a sightseeing trip around the island with my husband. In 1995, I again visited the farm which had been thoroughly renovated. I do not want to publicize my grandfather's family and their activities, but please allow me to write something about them as I think their lives are closely related to the history of Hokkaido, especially in relation to the development of the dairy industry there.

My grandfather was born in 1859 in Fukui Prefecture, the son of a low-class samurai. In the Meiji Restoration, the samurai class lost their position and income and fell into destitution. He wanted to acquire a higher education and learned English. In those days, the Meiji government began to enact a plan to develop Hokkaido on an American model in order to secure the island from Russia and established the Sapporo Agricultural College. Fortunately, he was able to enter that school in 1876 and was given a scholarship.

The primary purpose of the school was to introduce an American method of agriculture to its students. Edwin Dan, called "an officially employed expert", was their teacher. The students were very diligent and many of them became famous. Most of them left Hokkaido, but my grandfather was one of the few that remained there. Edwin Dan made many exploratory trips around Hokkaido, seeking suitable places for raising cattle or sheep as well as horses to recommend to the government. My grandfather always followed his teacher as an assistant. Dan recommended Makomanai for cattle and sheep, Niikappu for horses and Nemuro for cows. History has proven his recommendations to be quite sound. In 1882, the foreign expert system was abolished and Dan left, but my grandfather continued exploring many places around the island with his followers and native Ainu. He worked in Hokkaido until he was summoned to Tokyo by the army to raise army horses. He tried hard to develop agriculture, especially dairy farming, in Hokkaido and wanted his eldest son to become a dairy farmer himself. In 1906, he let his son go to the United States to study dairy farming there. He worked on a dairy farm for almost ten years and also attended the Wisconsin Agricultural College. In 1918, he returned to Japan and started a farm as his father wanted.

In those days, Japanese agriculture was mainly concerned with rice cultivation and was still quite primitive. Little was known about a scientific, advanced form of agriculture, especially related to dairy farming. My uncle ran his farm many years and produced many prestigious bulls and cows. He realized that Holstein was the breed best-fitted for the dairy industry in Japan and tried hard to improve the breed by importing superior cows from the States. He realized that in order to raise good cattle, growing good grass for grazing was indispensable and in order to grow good

grass, improving the quality of soil was essential. He encouraged people to plow deep by using a tractor, to lime the soil and to construct underground drainage when necessary. All his life, he was thankful to the Americans for their kindness in teaching him dairying and an advanced method of agriculture. It may be that it was in response to such kindness and encouragement that he was motivated to dedicate his life to the development of agriculture in his homeland.

Time passed and conditions changed. Urbanization advanced in Hokkaido too. He came to realize that the city had come too close to his farm. His farm had functioned to produce good sires, but the advance of artificial insemination technology made it possible to import excellent frozen sperm from abroad and the job came to be monopolized by a government enterprise. He planned to move and construct a new farm, but he was too old. Fortunately, his son, who studied dairying in Wisconsin like his father, succeeded him and planned to make a thoroughly new type of dairy farm. My cousin and his son completed the project and the farm was moved in 1992. The sight of the new farm was completely different from the old one.

On the farm, there is a huge cowhouse, where a large number of cows are fed, with a milking center next to it. The cowhouse, where cows live and are fed, has a free stall system and cows are not allotted fixed stalls. When the time for milking comes, they are led to the entrance of the milking center which has an American-made super-parallel-type milking parlor system. Cows surge into the center, await their turn in a waiting place and go, one by one, into the milking parlor to be milked. The system, which makes the cows move, enables a few people to extract a great amount of milk. When the milking is finished, the cows are released at the same time and go back, one by one, through an exit to their

house like another surge. The data of the quantity and quality of milk produced by each cow is processed by a computer. By separating living and milking facilities, the farm can produce dairy products in quite a sanitary way. The cows are fed by a mixer-feeder, depending on the data taken by a dairy manager system. The disposal of excrement is quite an important problem for the farm. They apply a slurry system, using a Canadian-made slurry tank to dry the sludge and make use of it as fertilizer.

The farm looks just like a factory. I could not help missing the heart-warming, familiar pastoral atmosphere of the past. I understand that the dairy industry in this country is in a crucial situation. The import of dairy products from abroad has been liberalized. Since agriculture, including dairy farming, is very important for our lives, I sincerely hope that it will develop in a healthy way for our benefit.

(MICHIKO KAWAMURA, Meguro, Tokyo)

I have been to Hokkaido three times. In 1962, I went there with college mates by a night train with berths on the Tohoku Line and passed over the Tsugaru Straits on the Seikan-renraku-sen.

The second time, in 1991, I went by airplane to Chitose with my two daughters. We rented a car and visited mainly the central area of Hokkaido. One of my daughters, who had just received her drivers license, was very happy to drive on long, wide, straight roads with few cars. Now when I close my eyes, some beautiful sights come to mind: the flower fields of Furano, striped with white, purple or pink as far as I can see, a big green field with some cows or horses eating grass with big white silos with red roofs. Such scenery stimulates a different feeling than other parts of Japan. I was also very happy with my young daughters' ability to drive without hesitation in a strange area, using a map and

asking people for directions in order to reach the hotel where we had reserved a room before dark.

The third time was last June. My husband and I left for Hokkaido from the Port of Nagoya on the "KISO" with eight of our friends. It took about 37 hours to the Port of Tomakomai. On the way, we stopped at Sendai for three hours, where we disembarked and walked along the streets and into a park near the port. We never felt bored during our two nights on the ship. We watched movies, listened to live music, took baths and talked with the ship's captain or others. After a four-hour train ride to Kushiro, we rented a car and visited famous sightseeing spots. We also stopped at Nakashibetsu Elementary-Junior High School, where the daughter of a friend of mine is a teacher, and at some unpublicized, secret hot springs. We also climbed Mogo-to-yama and Sharidake. Finally, after strolling around the Kushiro marshland, we left from Kushiro Airport for Nagoya.

I wish to emphasize the typical landscape of Hokkaido which I saw and loved on my second trip: green fields and big silos. On the third trip, there were few silos to be seen, but there were many plastic bags rolled here and there in the fields. To me, it seemed strange and funny to see these black things or things with blue and white stripes rolling in wide fields, but I thought that it would be easier for farmers to keep the hay in such bags rather than carrying it to a silo or back into the field to feed their animals. This is just my observation and imagination, since I didn't have a chance to talk about it with farmers themselves, for which I'm sorry.

(YOSHIKO TOYOTA, Kanie, Aichi)

I have very little knowledge of Japan's northernmost island. I have only once been in Sapporo on business while on the editorial staff of a textbook publishing company.

When I was a small boy, I assumed that *konbu*, or tangles, was a special product of my native town of Osaka. I was told later, however, that *konbu* was a product of Hokkaido and sold in Osaka like many other products across the country. Osaka became the marketplace for various products from every part of the country during the Edo era when *konbu* came into the market along with many other products of Hokkaido. Thus, Hokkaido was a familiar name to me. In my mind, Hokkaido is associated with *konbu*.

For me, there is also an association between Hokkaido and Sapporo Agricultural School of the Meiji era. Especially, the fame of the president of the school, Dr. William Smith Clark, is long-lasting in that he founded the school which represented the dawn of the Meiji era. His words, "Boys be ambitious for the attainment of all that a man ought to be" will go down in history. Hokkaido is a great symbol of ambitions that everyone ought to know.

(SHOJI SUGIMOTO, Suginami, Tokyo)

I cannot write anything about Hokkaido without mentioning its indigenous inhabitants, the Ainu. When I studied in Germany some thirty years ago, an African classmate asked me about the Ainu. I could not answer because I hardly knew anything about them. I felt very ashamed of my ignorance.

Later, I met a German man in Nagoya who had studied Japanese history at the University of Vienna and wrote his doctoral dissertation on the Ainu rebellions in the 13th century. I read his thesis carefully and was shocked to learn about their history and the devastating incidents caused by the Japanese who invaded their territory in particular. I was amazed and indignant that nothing about the Ainu was taught in Japanese schools.

I began to read books historical books about the Ainu written by Japanese scholars and journalists and liter-

ary works authored by Ainu writers. The more I read about their history, the guiltier I felt as a descendant of the Japanese who tortured them. The more I learned about their character, the more I was impressed with their respect for nature. I realized that what Japanese did to the Ainu was similar to what white Americans did to Native Americans and how Australians treated the Aborigines.

In 1993, the "International Year of Indigenous Peoples", a big conference was planned and carried out by Ainu in Hokkaido. I asked my husband to give me the money to travel there instead, of buying me a ring commemorating our 25th wedding anniversary, and flew to Hokkaido, the homeland of Ainu culture.

The conference lasted four days and was attended by about fifty guests from indigenous peoples from more than ten countries. The program was wide-ranging: musical performances by indigenous people dressed in their fabulous costumes, the keynote speech by an Ainu leader about the torment experienced by his father's generation, reports by indigenous guests about environmental, educational and judicial problems they had been dealing with for many years.

All the participants from all over Japan and many foreign countries were supporters of indigenous peoples. They soon became friendly with each other. They sat in circles on the grass at recess, sharing food and discussing human rights, the environment and the preservation of traditional cultures. They learned anew about the awe and reverence indigenous peoples had for nature and the integrity and competence they manifested, enduring their hardships.

This planet is now globally polluted. We are at the edge of a crisis. It is time for all of us living in developed countries to learn from indigenous peoples who have wisdom and knowledge to live in harmony with their environment.

On the appeal of host members of this conference, the United Nations designated the next ten years as the "International Decade of Indigenous Peoples". I hope many people get to know about indigenous peoples during this period, become interested in their cultures and learn something about life from them.

A precious gift I received from this big event in Hokkaido was new friends: a Japanese woman who is a storyteller dedicating herself to collect folklore of the Ainu and three Ainu girls who were primary school pupils at that time and are now junior high students. I still keep in touch with them. (NAOMI KONDO, Handa)

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#### January 21 Message (Subject #321)

*Timepieces, such as clocks or watches, is the suggested theme for an essay. What thoughts or memories do you have about them?*

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Watches and clocks are indispensable in my life. I use an alarm clock so that I can get up early on my own. Although there is a clock in each of my classrooms at school, I need my own watch for the proper or efficient allotment of time for each English-teaching activity. I can make the best use of time at my disposal by using my watch.

This useful device, however, can also make me busy all the time. It was not until my watch was broken that I realized that. I had to live without my watch for some time. Of course, it was very inconvenient, since I was used to having my activities scheduled according to my watch, but I also felt a bit more relaxed. So I thought it was good to live without a watch once in a while. I couldn't do as

many things as I could when my watch was working, but I did concentrate on and fully enjoy each activity. This was especially true in regard to relationships with my children, students and friends. I already knew how precious time was, but I realized that it is also important to have plenty of time for such relationships.

These days, I am very busy in and outside of school, but I sometimes feel I should be time-free and available for those who need me.

(TOMOYASU KIMURA, Nishi, Nagoya)

I am embarrassed to confess that I have just come to know the word "time-piece" for the first time. I wondered for a long time why there was no word in English meaning *tokei*, which includes both "clock" and "watch".

Watches are rather inexpensive today. There are a lot of throwaway watches now. It is unbelievable that a ¥1000 watch works well for a relatively long time. In my boyhood, a watch was an article of value. I cannot forget my feeling of pleasure when I received a watch from my parents for the first time when I entered middle school.

Now I have just come home from an overseas trip to Spain. Though the time required for such a flight is much less today, over ten hours flying time is still inconvenient for us. But the greatest problem, above all, is the difference in time. It is troublesome to set a watch in the local time each time we change time zones. Sometimes it is rather difficult to know the time in Japan. On my way back in the airplane, many souvenirs were on sale, among which I found two kinds of interesting watches. One of them was a wristwatch which had two small watches set together side by side. One watch was expected to be set at the local time and the other may be set to show the time in Japan continually. I thought that watch would be quite con-

venient to use when traveling abroad, when we change time zones frequently.

Another kind of watch I found interesting in the airplane showed the number of seconds remaining until the end of this century. Of course, the number is an enormous figure which is decreasing little by little. Such a watch certainly arouses interest, but I wonder how practical it is in one's daily life.

Watches and clocks these days are very accurate. We hardly ever need to reset them. A Seiko watch which I bought about ten years ago, for example, needed to be reset only once in two or three years. Moreover, we can find timepieces everywhere we go. We can find a digital clock on a video deck, on a reading desk, in a car and so on. Therefore, I do not usually wear my wristwatch because it is not necessary except on a day when I have some special activities.

In our history, Emperor Tenji is said to have put a clock (called *rōkoku*, a kind of water clock) to practical use for the first time on June 10, 671, which date has been designated "Time Memorial Day" since 1920. It was an important step in the development of our civilization, but it was also the beginning of trials related to our lives being bound by time. As is the case with others, I have never experienced life without timepieces around me. Most days for me begin with the ringing of an alarm clock in the morning and most activities during the day are accompanied by the movement of a timepiece. I wish to live in a world without timepieces, which would be an earthly paradise for civilized human beings.

(MIKIHICO YOSHIMOTO, Gifu)

Nowadays, timepieces are superior to those in the past. In the old days, they were apt to stop, get out of order or damaged so we were always anxious about our wristwatches when we moved our arms roughly. Still now when I engage in physical exercise, I am careful

of my wristwatch and try not to swing my arm too forcefully but, contrary to my anxiety, it is never damaged. To my surprise, the clock at the front of a city bus never is damaged even if the bus goes on an extremely rough road and always keeps the correct time.

Furthermore, we can purchase timepieces very cheaply. Of course, some of them are high-priced, but they are not necessarily of better quality than cheaper ones. We now have many opportunities to get free timepieces as commercial gifts from newly-opened shops and are surprised to know that they are quite good and keep the correct time.

(HARUJI FUKUMI, Minami, Nagoya)

I remember two watches and one clock in my youthful days. My grandfather used a golden pocket watch. He promised that it would be given to my brother when he grew up. Our family had no doubt that the promise would be kept. The other watch was my grandmother's golden wrist watch. It was given to me before she died. I remember that at that time I did not want to keep it if she got better. She is more precious than her golden wrist watch. I wept in my room.

I cannot see or use these two watches now because they were lost during the Second World War. The fate of the clock was the same as the two watches. It was an old style one and I looked at the time on it every day. They all were lost on June 16, 1945. I do not have material mementos, but I do have them in my mind. The golden watches are shining brightly and the pendulum of the old clock is moving gently. All things disappear sooner or later, but they remain in my memory. Not only the watches and the clock, but all things are vividly in my mind and I give thanks to God.

(MICHICO SANO, Minami, Nagoya)

Now I have a favorite clock. It is a red alarm clock. The sounds that wake



me up are: chimes of Westminster Abbey, a minuet and two other tunes. It is as if I had bought a music box along with it. I hope it does not go out of order or get broken.  
(YASUKO IZUMI, Seto)

We rely upon clocks and watches to keep to our time schedule. I cannot imagine my daily life without them. I could not live like those men in the movie, "Easy Rider", who threw away their wristwatches and fled from city life. I am surrounded by many timepieces. Actually, I don't know how many of them I have now. Their appearances are not necessarily those of ordinary "clocks" or "watches". They are installed in electric parts of our VCR (video cassette recorder), camera, fax machine, microwave oven, rice-cooker, bread-making machine, bath-controller, etc. The installation of clocks in household appliances has made our lives very convenient.

I think we save time by using timers. For instance, I don't have to stay up late to see favorite old movies if I set the timer of my VCR. My wife doesn't have to get up early to cook rice if she doesn't forget to set the timer before going to bed. On the other hand, I occasionally feel that I am wasting my precious time to catch up on recorded VCR tapes. Several years ago, I decided to stop collecting tapes. When I see a pile of VCR tapes that I have never seen, I feel a kind of pressure. If I don't record on tapes, I am free from such pressure. I don't know how long it will take me to see all of my collection, but I may have to wait until my retirement. It's ridiculous that our time could be wasted by time-saving machines. I am now recording only as much as I can see soon.

There is an old saying, "Time is money". The same verbs in English can be used in connection with both time and money. We can save, spend or waste them. Everyone has 24 hours in a day. It is exactly the same for all of us. This

might be the point where time is totally different than money. Anyway, it's up to us how to spend it.

(TOSHIAKI MIYAKE, Tsuzuki, Yokohama)

When I first heard the word, "time-piece"; I couldn't make it out, nor did I associate it with a clock or watch. Soon after that, I came across that word in a book we started to read recently.

According to the book, until a breakthrough occurred as the result of an invention in the eighteenth century, cartographers and navigators were unable to fix longitude with any degree of precision. What was needed in those days was an instrument that would keep time with perfect accuracy during long sea journeys. The timepieces of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were crude devices which lost or gained as much as a quarter of an hour per day.

The talented English clockmaker, John Harrison, accomplished this feat. In 1761, his elegant Chronometer NO 4 left Britain on a ship bound for Jamaica and, two months later, the instrument was found to have lost just five seconds. Harrison surpassed the conditions set by the Board of Longitude. This outstanding invention made it possible for navigators to fix not only the correct latitude but the correct longitude of every island and coastline. I learned from this book that the development of technology owed much to painstaking effort by such individuals as Harrison.

(SHOJI DOMAE, Kasugai)

This essay, related to a memory about timepieces, is, at the same time, an introduction to one of my favorite "Daily Word" messages. You know the Roman numerals: I, II, III, IV, V : . . . But did you know that 4 on clocks was shown as IIII instead of IV? Several years ago, when I began to listen to "Daily Word", I learned that fact which has an interesting episode connected with it. Then I



checked not only the timepieces around me but also those in watch stores and I was very surprised that I could find no exception among them.

Because of my poor memory, I cannot relate the story exactly, but this is the general idea. Long, long ago, a king in Europe ordered a skilled clock maker to make a clock. The clock maker soon made a wonderful, perfect clock, but he knew the king's strange habit of wanting to find something wrong with everything so he purposely put the Roman numeral IIII in place of IV on the face of the clock. How amazing that the result of this historical incident has continued until the present time in such a far away place. (YOSHIKO TOYOTA, Kanie, Aichi)

Whenever I have an appointment to meet someone, I make it a rule to be on time. In order to arrive by the appointed time, I decide when to leave home with a twelve-minute margin. As the time draws near, I look up at the clock in the living room more often than usual.

In my ordinary life, I do not know how many times I look up at the clock—not only before and after breakfast, before and after lunch, before and after supper. I repeatedly look up at the clock. Why? Simply to verify that things are moving along as they should. Most of the time, these looks are done almost unconscious, though I am far from being a clock-watcher. Looking at the clock is so habitual as to easily slip my mind. This clearly shows how important a role the clock plays in our daily lives.

It is quite wonderful that the clock moves exactly the same way wherever one may live or in whatever culture. This is because human beings live on the earth, the one and only planet we are destined to live on. The fact that the original clock was a sundial indicates why the system of measuring time is the same all over the globe.

(SHOJI SUGIMOTO, Suginami, Tokyo)

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#### January 28 Message (Subject #322)

*At the end of the year, it is common for news services to choose outstanding events of that year. I am sure the order of important news stories had to be changed for many such organizations just as the year was ending because of the hostage crisis that occurred in Lima, Peru. Daily, for the past six weeks, reports from Lima have monopolized headlines and crowded out other news stories in Japanese newspapers. From your viewpoint at the present time, what is your assessment of that crisis and the way it has been handled? Why did the Japanese ambassador's residence become the site of the extraordinary event? What do you think of the manner in which President Fujimori, his government and the leaders of other nations responded to the rebels' demands? What can we learn from this experience? What are your impressions, evaluations or comments related to the hostage crisis in Peru?*

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Many people have been held hostage by guerrillas in the Japanese ambassador's official residence in Peru for more than fifty days. When the incident took place, the only thing I knew about that country was the name of its president, Fujimori. Since then, the media have reported not only the news but also many problems that Peruvian people are facing. However, I still feel it is happening far from here both geographically and culturally.

I was very interested in seeing that a Catholic priest played a very important role as a negotiator. He has been relied upon by both the government officials

and the dissidents. He seemed to be able to act in God's name in his black garb. I realized that even outlaws could be honest in front of a priest and believe in God. What they confessed must be considered professional secrets by the priest. Therefore, we will never know their stories.

At present, it seems impossible for President Fujimori to accept their demands. But in order to solve the crisis, it is very important to know what the guerrillas really want. So it all depends on the priest's skill as a negotiator.

I think problems caused by geographical distance can be overcome with modern telecommunication technologies. We are able to see what is going on there on television as it happens. But I think we will never understand the whole picture of the incident until we comprehend the religious and cultural backgrounds of those involved. I have never heard that a Japanese Shinto priest did a similar job when members of the Japanese Red Army hijacked a JAL plane more than twenty years ago.

(TOSHIAKI MIYAKE, Tsuzuki, Yokohama)

More than six weeks have passed since the hostage crisis began in Peru. I could not get this problem out of my head, together with the oil spill incident, even when I was traveling in Spain recently. I was worried about it because I could not obtain relevant information in newspapers or on television there.

The MRTA (Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement) have entrenched themselves in the official residence of the Japanese ambassador to Peru in Lima, holding the ambassador and his guests as hostages. Their main demand is to obtain the release of their fellows who are now in prison. It is impossible for the government to accede to their demand, but at the same time, needless to say, the hostages' safety must be the primary concern. This is the reason why negotia-

tions between the concerned parties have been delayed for so long. The only encouraging element for us is that the criminals do not intend to inflict injuries on the hostages at this time and that the ambassador's brave and composed attitude is easing the hostages' minds. It is said, furthermore, that there is no dangerous hostility between the criminals and the hostages.

But why on earth did the criminals choose the Japanese ambassador's residence as the site of their outrageous action? The main reason must have been that many prominent persons, domestic and foreign, had gathered together at the residence. (On that day, a birthday celebration for our Emperor was being held there.) But it is regrettable if, as is being widely discussed, the criminals thought that the Japanese government would easily accede to their demand and pay a ransom to them. Actually, diplomats of some countries have been freed in exchange for the release of the criminals' fellows in their land. It is quite regrettable that we cannot completely deny the rumor that some Japanese companies have already paid a ransom for the release of their employees.

Mr. Fujimori, the president of Peru, is of Japanese descent. We Japanese feel good will toward him and support his administration. The criminals might have thought that Mr. Fujimori could be easily manipulated because he had to consider the connection with our country.

The MRTA provoked a similar incident in 1980 in Colombia. The Dominican Republic Embassy was chosen as the site at that time. In that case, the criminals finally left the country for Havana with more than ten hostages and released the hostages there. Insofar as the Peruvian government has no intention of releasing imprisoned MRTA members, the previous example in Colombia is the only method left for the government to adopt. Negotiations with other countries to that end

must be carried on privately, in consideration of the fact that time is passing rapidly without remarkable movement on either side. I hope the Peruvian and Japanese government will cope prudently with the problem, putting concern for human life before everything else.

(MIKIHICO YOSHIMOTO, Gifu)

The MRTA is demanding the release of members of their group who have been caught and are in prison. I cannot understand what the government delegates in Peru think about the new situation. I think that it is better to talk with a peaceful heart than to assume a threatening posture because we must understand why the MRTA continues its actions. There is a Japanese proverb: *dorobô nimo ichibu no ri*, there is honor even among thieves.

(MICHICO SANO, Minami, Nagoya)

Since President Fujimori came to Japan, I've been interested in him. I have admired him as a political leader, for he became president of a country where Japanese is not spoken. Of course, he cannot speak Japanese but he resembles me and I'm sure he has part of the Japanese character so I expected him to be like a Japanese politician. Listening to him, however, I found him very different from our politicians and dignified as a world leader.

I pray that all the hostages will be released safely, but at the same time, I hope President Fujimori will be able to improve the prison conditions in Peru by accepting some of the requests made by the terrorists. I don't think that by doing so it means he is yielding to terrorism. Even the human rights of prisoners should be respected. I'm sure President Fujimori will be recognized as a first-class statesman, not only of Peru but of the world, if he succeeds in coping with the present crisis.

On the other hand, however, I was very disappointed with the foreign minister of Japan who went to Peru but did nothing. I don't know the details exactly, but if it is true, his remarks will add to the disgrace of Japanese politicians. According to the *Vox Populi Vox Dei* column in the *Asahi Shinbun*, Mr. Ikeda scolded a journalist who asked a question the foreign minister had least expected during a press conference held in Peru. How incompetent!

(TOMOYASU KIMURA, Nishi, Nagoya)

Why did the Japanese ambassador's residence become the site of this extraordinary event? I guess the rebels must have thought that the Japanese government was so weak that their purpose would be easily achieved. Regrettable to say, the competence of the Japanese government is less today compared to the old days. There are many bribery scandals among politicians. The situation in and around Japan must have impressed many people in the world to make them think that the Japanese government has deteriorated so much that no one will sympathize with it even if it is embarrassed regarding how to handle a major problem.

Japan is one of the participants in summit meetings of the most advanced countries, but I wonder if it is truly qualified. To take financial policy as an example, what other country has adopted such a low interest rate as Japan's for such a long time? Aren't the interest rates of other countries about ten times higher than Japan's? Due to such a thoughtless policy, Japanese people have suffered from reduced incomes whereas only banks become rich. The former finance minister, Takemura, was once internationally mocked as the most incapable finance minister in the world. How could he be given such a high post as minister of finance?

Returning to the main theme, such cruel acts of terrorism should never be permitted regardless of how incompetent the government concerned is. They should never be justified in any case. Prime Minister Hashimoto recently conferred with Peruvian President Fujimori concerning the hostage crisis. I think it would be admirable if the talks resulted in weakening the strength of terrorism.

(HARUJI FUKUMI, Minami, Nagoya)

A guerrilla group, MRTA, or Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement, succeeded in their surprise attack on the Japanese ambassador's residence and took many important people hostage, including Japanese Embassy officials and businessmen as well as foreign and domestic government officials. On December 17, 1996, the Japanese Embassy invited many Peruvian and foreign dignitaries to a big party to celebrate the coming birthday of the Japanese Emperor and the hostage-takers took the chance to launch a rebellion. The rebels had long been awaiting a chance to rise up and promote the cause of the poor. They had been secretly preparing for the occasion. On the other hand, the government had neglected to strictly watch anti-government activity. The stark contrast between these two forces gave rise to this incident with little hope for a settlement. Japan has committed itself to provide financial aid to Peru, but it is said the aid has often failed to reach the real target—the people who need it most. The rebels have severely criticized the way the aid has been handled. I hear we can hardly imagine how poverty-stricken needy people are. The guerrilla group, MRTA, has not a few supporters among the poorest peasants with reason. The rebels can no longer bear what they call the government's callous disregard for the misery of the poorest.

While talks between the Peruvian government and the rebels have reached

a deadlock, President Fujimori pledged to intensify efforts to negotiate a peaceful end to the crisis and won Japan's support for his refusal to consider the release of the guerrillas' imprisoned comrades in exchange for the 72 hostages. Since not a few Japanese are involved in the crisis, it stands to reason that we give the extraordinary emergency in Lima our attention. But the incident is related to domestic circumstances in Peru, so we have no alternative but to hope against hope for an early and peaceful settlement of the crisis.

(SHOJI SUGIMOTO, Suginami, Tokyo)

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#### February 4 Message (Subject #323)

*The noun, spelled s-h-o-e, denotes a covering for the foot and as a verb it means to furnish with shoes. Shoes are a kind of footwear. There are many different kinds of shoes. Some are used for particular activities or sports, including tennis shoes, basketball shoes and jogging shoes. Other kinds of footgear are used when it rains or snows, such as rubbers, boots or galoshes. High-heeled shoes are worn on certain occasions by fashionable ladies while sandals may be worn at other times. The traditional footwear of Japan includes geta, zôri and waraji. The suggested theme for an essay this week is: footwear. Do you ever wear geta, zôri or waraji these days? When are they usually worn and by whom? How many different kinds of footwear do you use and at what times? Do you prefer wearing sandals, shoes or slippers?*

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Nowadays, we seldom see the Japanese footwear called *geta* in a shop or on someone's feet, but we used to see it of-

ten forty years ago. At that time there were *geta* shops, which were different than shoe stores, but recently we only see shoe stores.

I have a precious memory related to *geta* from the Second World War. When our house was burned as the result of an air raid at midnight, my mother and two brothers and I ran away to another place. Father was not at home then. We had no time to put anything on our feet. When I and my younger brother walked back to see our house in the morning, a kind woman we did not know gave us two pairs of *geta* on the way. She said, "It is dangerous to walk barefooted. Wait a moment. I will give you *geta*. Even though they are old, they are better than nothing." They were valuable to us at that time, even though they were old.

I have never forgotten her kindness and I will remember it as long as I live. I am very grateful and I think that I must show kindness to others as she showed to me. This may be what God taught me through her good deed.

(MICHIKO SANO, Minami, Nagoya)

I usually wear leather shoes when attending meetings such as the Bible Class, cloth shoes for walking and jogging and sandals for going to the nearby postbox to mail letters. However, I sometimes wear soccer shoes and *takageta* (*geta* with high supports). Soccer shoes are worn, of course, when I play soccer and *takageta* when I participate in *ryôkasai* (the old-time high school dormitory song festival).

Since New Year's Day, I have participated in two big games of soccer. One was held in Saya Town, Aichi Prefecture on January 2nd and the other in Iwata City, Shizuoka Prefecture on January 26th. Almost twenty years have passed since I started to use the soccer shoes, but no damage has come to them except that the laces were once broken. I am

very happy that these old shoes have remained usable for such a long time.

*Ryôkasai* have been held all over the country during summer and fall every year since around 1960. In Nagoya, it has been held on the third Saturdays of August and about 600 old boys gather in a big hall of a hotel. *Geta*, including *takageta*, are usually prohibited in the hotel. However, in the case of *ryôkasai* they are permitted, except in the area near the front desk. *Ryôkasai* bring back fond memories to the old boys who once experienced enjoyable times at high schools under the old educational system. *Geta*, including *takageta*, are sure to fade away, even as the traditional measurement system will, in due course, while soccer shoes will continue to be popular, even more and more, in the future.

(HARUJI FUKUMI, Minami, Nagoya)

In regard to footwear, I usually wear Western style shoes, as is the case with everybody else today. I sometimes wore *geta* or *zôri* in the past but I have none of them in my cabinet now. I have often touched on my life in Hiroshima in this periodical previously. One of the things that surprised me when I began living in a rural district in Hiroshima, where I was evacuated during the war, was that most boys and girls were still wearing kimono and *zôri* in their daily lives, which was not the case in Tokyo those days. Children could make *zôri* for themselves out of straw, which we called *waraji*, or straw sandals. Soon I was also taught how to make them and I had no lack of footwear.

Another experience of using footwear other than shoes was in my student days in Kyoto. University students often wore *geta*, or wooden clogs, during their free time those days and I also did so. I often walked in *geta* on Sundays even on Shijô-dôri, the busy amusement quarters in Kyoto.

We do not wear shoes in our office during business hours because we have a room for water analysis there. We, the staff and visitors, put on slippers at the entrance. Owing to this practice, by the way, I have never suffered from *mizu-mushi*, or athlete's foot, since I began working at my present office. During my recess after lunch, I usually take a walk in sports shoes in the area around our office which is now used as a park. Now that I use a car to go to work, my shoes are not worn so much and last a long time. My wife often complains about my old shoes and urges me to buy new ones. In answer to her advice, I reply, "These shoes graciously accompanied me on my visit to Egypt and India. They stood beside the Pyramids and the Ganges. Never despise them."

To change the subject, Westerners are much different than us, I think, in their feelings about shoes. I hear that they feel it is unnatural to remove their shoes in public and some of them are mentally reluctant to do so. They feel uneasy and become nervous without shoes. We often see ladies wearing shoes even in bed in Western films. In the occupation years after the war, we often saw foreigners spread a carpet on the tatami of a Japanese house, which they rented, and wear their shoes in the house. By the way, a much more surprising fact was that they painted the *daikoku-bashira*, or central pillar of the house. Many Japanese accepted the situation, thinking that the foreigners' behavior was the result of a difference in culture. Nevertheless, it was very troublesome for people to repair the tatami or the pillar after they recovered their house.

We Japanese usually take off our shoes as soon as we enter a *genkan*, or entrance, and then step into the house. For us, taking off our shoes after coming home is the beginning of our relaxation at home. When we make a call at another person's house, taking off our shoes at

the *genkan* is a manifestation of our --- friendship, or lack of hostility, because we are in a defenseless state without shoes. (MIKIHICO YOSHIMOTO, Gifu)

I happened to wear *waraji* while climbing a mountain in my teens. They were so light and fit my feet so well that I found them quite comfortable, but I have never worn *waraji* again since then. Years later, I happened to wear a pair of very light shoes made of cloth and rubber when I suddenly recalled wearing a pair of *waraji*. I associate the soft touch and lightness of *waraji* with delightful memories of my school days.

When I was a boy, people around us used to wear *geta* or *zōri* in their daily lives. I wore them too, except when going to and from school. At the New Year, I used to get a brand-new pair of *geta*. The smell and smoothness of the wood pleased me and encouraged me to move ahead in the new year. The memory of the New Year's brand-new *geta* carries me back to those happy old days.

As social customs drastically changed following the end of World War II, *waraji* and *geta* disappeared before we knew it. They gave way to a variety of footwear, such as sneakers, sandals, etc. I would like to emphasize that *geta* should be judged on their own merits. We should be fair in our appraisal of them. It is very agreeable to wear *geta* on our bare feet, especially on sultry summer days. Finding fewer people are wearing *geta* on scorching summer days, I wonder what made them forget such excellent footwear. Formerly, doing away with traditional customs was considered to be modern. That way of ignoring tradition seems to be cause for the disappearance of *geta*.

(SHOJI SUGIMOTO, Suginami, Tokyo)

Now I have four kinds of footwear: low-heeled shoes to go to church or out on business, rain shoes, canvas shoes to

go for a walk and sandals to walk around my apartment house. In my own home, I have some pairs of slippers for visitors and others for my own use. This indicates that most Japanese, including me, wear Western style clothes and live in semi-Western style houses. When getting dressed up for special ceremonies or parties, some ladies wear *zôri* to accompany their kimono. In my childhood, almost all Japanese housewives wore *geta*, *ashida* (rain clogs with high supports), *zôri* made of leather and *setta* (high-supported clogs with toe covers used on snowy days). However, when it snowed heavily, the lumps of snow packed between the two supports of *setta* often hindered them from walking as they would. Sometimes, they fell down in the snow. In such cases, they should have worn a pair of rubber boots along with skirt pantaloons.

During World War II, shoes and boots could not be found in the stores, so we had to wear *geta* instead of leather shoes and rubber boots to go outside. This continued even after the war for a few years. It was a day in September 1945 when I went food-hunting to my friend's farm in the country area near Sendai that my clog was broken on the way back home. I had to get on the train of the Jôban Line barefoot. Fortunately, I found a seat. An old man sitting in the opposite seat gave me a pair of straw *zôri* that we cannot find these days. I was very happy, thanked him and offered to give him some of the beans I had, but we would not take them and got off the train before I did, one station this side of Sendai. I cannot forget his kindness, even now after more than fifty years. I think we used that kind of straw *zôri* to wear indoors for visitors at the school.

I have never worn *waraji*. This kind of footwear must have been worn in the 1800s until the very beginning of the 20th century. And the writer of Hymn #404, *Yamaji Koete*, Sugawo Nishimura,

must have worn *waraji* in 1903. How faithful he was! That is one of my favorite hymns.

I remember Dr. Hansen and Miss Lindsey had rubbers on the outside of their semi-high-heeled shoes when they walked outside even on fine days. They used to take them off when they entered the school building. Some Japanese called them "overshoes". I liked rubber high boots at that time. I called myself "A Pussy with Boots on" while some others called me "Miss Boots".

These are my memories related to footwear.

(KAZUKO TAGUCHI, Fukushima)

In my childhood, we often wore *warazôri*, or straw-woven sandals on casual occasions. *Wara-zôri* had some advantages over rubber shoes, especially in summer, because they were light and pleasant to wear and, above all, they did not induce hot and sultry feelings. However, they had one big defect. As you can easily imagine, they wore out soon and their straps were easily broken. So they could no longer be worn after a week or so. Anyway, they fulfilled their function as a substitute for shoes for a certain period after the war.

Over the New Year's holidays, each member of the family wore new *geta*, or wooden clogs. *Geta* for men were of plain wood and usually had black thongs while those for women were sometimes lacquered and sometimes plain and had beautifully colored thongs of silk or velvet. When I went out at night with *geta* on, the clatter they made echoed through the silent streets and I secretly enjoyed hearing that sound.

After the war, we faced a shortage of commodities of every kind. Footwear were no exception. Various kinds of footwear were improvised. *Zôri-geta* was one of them. This was an improvisation of my mother. When our *geta* were separated from their thongs, she



attached *wara-zôri*, or straw sandals, to the *geta* because *hanao*, or thongs, were very expensive for us to buy at that time. In this way, we put on specially recycled *geta*, which were nowhere else to be seen. I recall many things in my youthful days associated with memories of footwear. (SHOJI DOMAE, Kasugai)

It was a tiny bit of red paint on my mother's sneakers that became the only evidence to identify the truck driver who had driven away after hitting and killing her. An analysis of the paint proved that it was from the bottom of the truck. The license plate was stained with mud, so no one was able to see the number distinctly. Under supervision of the Aichi Police Department, many plainclothes men from both the local and prefectural police force kept looking for the truck. Wakou, a young priest, was the only person to have seen the truck clearly and was very helpful to the police, going downtown with them several times to look for the same type of truck, whether running on the street or parked in a parking area. Three weeks later, the culprit was arrested and we found out that he was the son of an elementary school principal. I asked the police to give me back her sneakers, but the exhausted lieutenant sympathetically shook his head, saying, "I'm sorry, but it's better for you not to have them."

Two months later, Wakou started to weave straw into a pair of *waraji* to wear. Actually, until my mother's accident, he was a little hesitant about whether or not to manage a small temple his mother is related to in this not-very-religious society, but my mother's death stimulated his decision to become the priest of that Zen temple and he began to prepare to undergo the strict training required in another large Rinzai Sect temple in Higashi Ward. He wanted to become a priest who could help many people who are in hopeless situations. At

the end of August of that year, around 5 o'clock in the morning, he left for his three-year training in traditional priestly garb and his handmade *waraji*, which is one of the rules for a trainee crossing the threshold of a Zen temple. My sister and I saw him off in front of his temple along with his parents. It was the beginning of his purely religious life which would be filled with ascetic training and various Buddhist observances and rules. "But it's also our own beginning, isn't it?" my sister said.

The way to attain salvation or enlightenment according to Zen doctrine is quite the opposite of Jôdô, in which anyone can be saved by the mercy of Amida-Nyôrai. Zen priests have to deepen their Buddhist nature by leading a Buddha-like life themselves from early morning to late at night to gain the spiritual enlightenment with which they can help those in need. Zen teaches that every person is considered to be a *hotoke* himself or herself, whose essential nature is darkened or covered with various evil human desires. To get rid of, control or overcome those desires is the purpose of Zen training represented by *zazen* or an ascetic life. I'm afraid putting this Zen theory into practice is impossible or unsuitable for common, weak people who have to live in this secular society.

On New Year's Eve of that year, four months after Wakou began his Zen training, I visited the Zen temple for the first time in order to toll the bell, *joya-no-kane*. It was an extremely cold night, so I left home wearing heavy socks and warm boots. I didn't expect to see Wakou there because I knew he was working in the kitchen rather than in the belfry. I only hoped the act of tolling the bell might console both my mother's soul and my own heart somewhat. After tolling the bell, I slowly walked down the steep steps of the belfry. Then I saw Wakou among several other priests in the cold darkness. How thin he had become! I

gaped. He wore only light cotton clothes called *samui*, and plain *geta*. His feet were bare on such a freezing night. Suddenly the biting cold made me feel as if the thongs of his *geta* were biting into his bare feet so as to break the flesh.

The cold bare foot was my heart and the bitter bite was an idea that had arisen out of the depth of my mind and distressed me repeatedly: "It was me that killed my mother." Only tolling the bell once did not have the hoped-for effect. I bit, bit, bit my heart, hoping it would be broken by the sharp teeth of repentance. It was impossible for me to be free from the thought that if my trouble had not happened just before her accident, she would not have died. She was very worried about me. She must have been thinking of me and not noticed the truck until too late while walking in the crosswalk. "No, I assure you the truck driver was 100% wrong." I recalled Wakou's words. "Whether or not she was thinking, she couldn't have avoided the truck at that time. It just sped through without stopping." But I could not accept that. I still continued to bite my heart until it became as bloody as her sneakers. (KIKUKO KUWAHARA, Nakagawa, Nagoya)

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#### February 13 Message (Subject#324)

*The suggested theme for an essay this week is: "Hospital". This word is derived from a Latin word meaning "guest" and is related to hospice, hospitable and hospitality. I'm sure you have had experiences of being either a guest in or a visitor to a hospital and you may write about personal experiences, memories or ideas related to hospitals. Some foreigners confuse the Japanese word for hospital (byôin) with that for beauty parlor (biyôin). That word gives rise to*

*quite different thoughts or memories and, if you prefer, you may write on that subject instead.*

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I go to a hospital once every four weeks. The purpose of my visit is to get my doctor's prescription for the preventative medication I have been on for the past nine years.

As a matter of fact, I had a heart condition nine years ago. (In technical terms, it was a light case of arrhythmia due to atrial fibrillation.) Since then, I have had to pay regular visits to the hospital. Actually, I see my doctor once every two or three months.

Fortunately, my doctor is so kind as to respond in detail to my questions relating to my troubles and I am very grateful to him for his correct prescriptions as well as his relevant advice. Thanks to the combined effort of those concerned at the hospital, that is to say, physicians, nurses and clerks, I have been able to keep well and I wish to thank everyone working at the hospital.

(SHOJI SUGIMOTO, Suginami, Tokyo)

According to a recent article in the *Asahi Shinbun*, hospitals have become places where aged people await their deaths. The reason for this depends on individual circumstances, but in some cases it is because of the physicians' attitude toward their practice. Most doctors in Japan still hesitate to state the facts clearly to their patients when they are suffering from an incurable disease. Elderly patients are thus convinced that they are receiving effective medical treatment in the hospital for a long time. At times, unnecessary operations give them great pain and deprive them of the important time to prepare for their last moments. It is usually the doctors that decide how to treat their terminally

ill patients. Most patients agree to their doctors' suggestions, hoping to be cured. Some may wish to be with their families at home as long as possible if their case is hopeless. I think that physicians should not just try to prolong the beating of a patient's heart. It is very important for doctors to consider the quality of life of their patients.

On the other hand, I recently saw on television that a lucky man survived serious brain damage due to his doctor's persistence in his treatment. On that program, I was shocked to see a similar patient in a hospital in the United States was considered to be brain dead and his organs were removed for transplantation. I think that the only thing we can do is choose a good doctor, but that may be impossible in an emergency.

By the way, there are some problems in hospitals that cannot be alleviated by doctors' decisions and efforts alone. Like it or not, we have to go there when it is necessary. Therefore, I would like to suggest some ways for hospital owners or executives to make their institutions more convenient, reliable and comfortable.

First, more effective appointment systems should be established. Several years ago, my daughter was allergic to something. Then my wife took her to the hospital twice a month for more than a year. Every time, they had to wait for three hours before seeing a doctor. Afterward they waited another hour for the prescribed medicine. It was a waste of time. It was not an urgent visit. It was the day the doctor had arranged to come. And it was not an undistinguished hospital. It happened at a state-owned children's hospital. We used to fear that our daughter might get a contagious disease while waiting in the hospital.

Secondly, patients' privacy should be protected more carefully. It is disheartening to see only a curtain hanging between a treatment room and a waiting

room. People in the waiting room can hear the conversations between a doctor and a patient. Satisfactory doctor-patient relations cannot be established under such circumstances.

Lastly, the atmosphere inside a hospital should be changed to a more comfortable one. I have been in some patients' rooms that seemed like a concentration camp. I think there are many good examples in lobbies and rooms of modern hotels. I sometimes get sick just being inside a hospital building. I always feel relieved when I leave and take a deep breath.

I am sure these suggestions would tend to improve the quality of life of many patients. I hope that there may be many hospitals I don't know about for which such suggestions are unnecessary. (TOSHIAKI MIYAKE, Tsuzuki, Yokohama)

I have had doubts for many years why the words "hospital" (*byôin*) and "hospitable" (*motonashi-no-yoi*) had no connection with each other in their meanings. Now, after my investigation for this essay, I understand the connection. Ordinary English dictionaries give simply *byôin* as a translation for "hospital", but the Oxford Dictionary includes such definitions as: "establishments of Knights Hospitallers, hospice, charitable institution" in addition to "institution for care of the sick". And the word "hospice" is derived, as Dr. Offner pointed out, from a Latin word, *hospes*, which means "guest". Thus, my question noted earlier was answered.

Dr. Offner touched upon two confusing words: *byôin* and *biyôin*, which reminded me of an anecdote. A husband returned home from work and found a note, written in *hiragana* by his daughter, a first grader, which read as follows: *Ma-ma wa atama ga okashiku natta node, byôin e ikimashita* ("Mommy went to the hospital because she lost her senses"). The husband was thrown into confusion

and began to look for the hospital. Then his wife came home and calmly said; "I have been to a beauty parlor as my hair was disheveled."

It seems that the meaning of "hospice" has also undergone a change. The Oxford Dictionary defines it as "travelers' house of rest kept by a religious order; home for the destitute or sick", but today the word means medical facilities which specialize in terminal care (medical treatment for "terminal patients", patients who are expected to die within 3-6 months.) By the way, the word "terminal" itself is shunned today by some people because it reminds them of death, as in the case of the above-mentioned "terminal care". There was a hotel near Nagoya Station named "Terminal Hotel", but recently, its name was changed to "Hotel Associa" because of the unhappy word-association.

Now, to return to the theme, "hospital" (*byôin*), thanks to my good health, I have had very little contact with hospitals. I have a *hibakusha-techô*, certificate of an atomic bomb victim, which I obtained several years ago. I was qualified to receive it because I entered the area within two kilometers of the center of the blast in Hiroshima within two weeks after the bombing. As I was quite healthy and felt nothing abnormal in my body, I had ignored the system for a long time, but my friends advised me to obtain the qualification before I get old. I accepted their advice and submitted an application. Having this certificate, I can undergo a physical examination twice a year, free of charge. This is the only occasion for me to go to a hospital for my own health.

With advancing years, many of my friends say they often go to hospitals. Whenever we get together for a class meeting or at other gatherings, a central topic of conversation is our health and sickness. When we were young, we used to talk about our aspirations for the fu-

ture. I think it is a sad tendency, but we must accept the hard realities of life which cannot be helped. We, the aged, should get along well with hospitals without being hostile to them.

(MIKHIKO YOSHIMOTO, Gifu)

I have a favorable impression about the hospitals with which I have some relation. I will not write about them, however, but about a memory I have related to the word "hospital".

One day I was visiting Meiji Mura with my friend. We got on a train to go to an elevated area and sat down on a seat next to two Americans. They had the same guidebook I had. When I opened it and saw the picture of a Military Hospital, I noticed that the explanation was only in Japanese. I asked them, "Can you read Japanese? Do you understand these pictures?" They replied, "Unfortunately, no". So I began to explain about the pictures in the book, from the beginning to the end. They listened and wrote.

Our train went and came back time and again, but we did not get off because then we could not get back on. I cannot forget that day and the picture of the Military Hospital continues to be in my mind and I can draw it in my memory.

(MICHIKO SANO, Minami, Nagoya)

*Byôin* and *biyôin* are the suggested themes. A place where women go for hair styling, manicuring, etc. is called a *biyôin* (beauty salon), which is unrelated to me, except that, if January 15, 1998 falls on an off-duty day for me (it is now too early to tell), then I must take my younger daughter, Sumako, to a beauty salon in the early morning, about 5 o'clock, because she will wear a *wafuku* (Japanese kimono)—*furisode* (long-sleeved kimono) to attend the Coming-of-Age-Day Ceremony sponsored by Owariasahi City.

An institution where the ill or injured may receive medical treatment is called a *byôin*, with which I am deeply

concerned. Thus far, I have been hospitalized four times. Right after I was employed by a trading company some decades ago, I had to be hospitalized because of a serious accident caused by the president's son who was driving a car without a driver's license. In that accident, the two bones in my right wrist were crushed between the car and the company's concrete wall. Beside that, what was worse, most of the capillary vessels in my right hand were damaged, resulting in my hand becoming deformed. A four-month hospitalization was required to recover instead of spending time at the office. Even so, a complete restoration of my hand was not possible so the shape of my right hand differs from that of my left one. Consequently, my hand has become tired and painful after writing for 20 minutes. For more than three-and-a-half decades, I have been afflicted with a damaged right arm which I am not able to use as I want. The company must not have known my inconvenience, including my inability to play my dear Jose Ramirez. Furthermore, the company's compensation was limited to the medical expense. It has forgotten this serious accident and I cannot help being upset with their irresponsibility.

Though I have been suffering with a severe backache for more than two decades, I am not considering having another operation to repair my spinal column (I have had three operations thus far, including an appendectomy) because doctors who examined me consider it difficult and I decided that enduring the pain is better than partial paralysis.

Another memory related to hospitals is related to this "Daily Word" telephone service (as written in a previous issue of the *Echoes*). During my parents' hospitalization (when I was assisting in the publication of this periodical), I was not sure about the hospital system, but most hospitals in Japan close too early and require lights to be turned off too early.

Despite the adjustment problems related to an overly-rigid time schedule and other heart-rending moments at the beginning, I came to the happy conclusion that the hospitals where my parents were hospitalized were fine. The care-givers were kind and supportive. The food was healthy and quite tasty for the price and, most important of all, everyday turned out to be fun, but I had no time to work on the "Daily Word" essays because I had to go back and forth between my office and the hospitals instead of returning to my home. Seeming to reflect a moment before responding to my question and being aware of my situation, the head nurse gave me permission to continue working after the "lights-off" time. Thus, I was able to work by my parents' bedsides at the hospitals while they were sleeping. For this reason, when I look at the compilation of "*Daily Word*" *Echoes*, Volume One, and the Recognition Plaque which Dr. Offner presented me for my assistance, they always remind me of the hospital and my parents. (Due to my neglect, Volume Two has not yet appeared. On a more positive note, I have given much thought, planning for further volumes, 2-10, in due time.)

(JAIME IWAI, Owariasahi)

I have never been to the hospital for the past three years. I'm very happy that I'm so healthy that a hospital is unnecessary for me these days.

I sometimes come across deplorable stories related to hospitals, such as injecting milk into a patient's veins, giving them medicine mingled with the Aids virus and receiving bribes. I'm afraid that the quality of doctors and nurses has degenerated these days.

There is a bonesetting hospital near my home which runs a gym for aerobic exercises as a side-business. The exercise hall has some large mirrors in it and is equipped with many kinds of machines to help one improve one's physical

strength. It is really splendid. I hear, however, the management is not so good, because of the severe competition, overdue loans from banks and poor managerial ability. Nevertheless, the business continues. Why? It is not good to make a wrong guess, but it is presumed that the hospital is using its surplus profit to support the poorly-financed gym. In general, hospitals are rich. Hospital buildings are generally splendid, even though all of them are not so. Some hospitals are criticized for their unethical abuse of the health insurance system. I hope the bonesetting hospital is not doing so, but if it is, it can be said that it is committing a crime because it is obviously spending the precious money paid by many honest workers.

I dare say that all hospitals should realize that their main purpose is to cure the sicknesses of suffering patients, not to try to make as much money as possible.

(HARUJI FUKUMI, Minami, Nagoya)

I have never been hospitalized during the fifty years of my life, but in the past two years I have had to go to the hospital frequently for others in my family.

First, my father had an operation for cancer. He stayed in the hospital for three months. What worried me most was how to keep him from becoming senile during his hospitalization. Most inpatients were senior citizens and stayed in bed all day long. Perhaps due to a shortage of nurses, the inpatients remained calm and slept with the help of medicine. Then, they gradually lost their perception of time and became senile. My father began to move both of his hands, as if practicing calligraphy, while sleeping on his back. An elderly woman in the next bed also moved her hands as if she were sewing. One woman in the same room said, "If he continues under these conditions, he will become senile. You

must talk to him as much as possible." I appreciated the fact that having conversations with an inpatient was very important to prevent senility. But the hospital now limits the visitation time from 2 to 8 o'clock. Therefore, the time to talk with patients is very limited. Ten years ago, the hospital in my town allowed a family member to stay near the patient's bed all day long, but now this is prohibited.

During the last stage of my father's illness, I went to the hospital every day and talked with him. He was happy to see me and smiled at me, but suddenly he became unconscious due to pneumonia and two weeks later he died. The doctor said something he ate might have entered his lungs and he could not remove it with his own strength. If better care had been given him, he might have lived longer. It is difficult to find the best hospital for our family. We live in a rural area. Modern hospitals with up-to-date medical equipment are far from our residence and difficult to visit every day. We preferred visiting the hospital in our town every day to having better medical treatment in an urban hospital far away.

My mother shows symptoms of senility. I go to the hospital because she sometimes suddenly gets irritated and I have to get medicine to keep her psychologically stable. But medicine by itself is not enough, so I take her to a day care center for senior citizens. Now, the ability to care for senior citizens is low for each family. We hope to have facilities that will care for senile women that utilize both medicine and psychological treatment.

A month ago, my younger son broke his arm while arm wrestling. He had an operation and stayed in the hospital for two weeks. Inpatients in the same room were old women and old men. One woman was wandering in the corridor, shouting, "Help me! Help me!" it was very difficult to keep him from getting depressed.

We brought a CD player, CDs and a radio.  
(YOSHIHISA KAWAHARA, Mihama, Aichi)

My mother had lived with us for a long time until she passed away at the age of 91 two years ago. For several years before her death, she had to receive treatment for her heart problem once a month at a hospital. Though she was not bedridden, she could neither walk nor take a car to the hospital because of her weak back and legs. In the house, she could barely walk, using a handrail, but outside she could walk just a little using a cane. We could not take her in a car for fear of twisting her fragile hip. What we could do was to take her to the hospital in a wheelchair. Fortunately, our house was close to the hospital and I did not want her to stay there for a long time for fear of getting an infection.

When the appointed day came, I hurried to the hospital by 7:45. Already many people were waiting in lines before the reception counter which opened at 8:30. Then, having received an examination number, I hurried to the medical office to wait there in her stead. The doctors came there to see patients at 9:00. Around that time, my husband came there with my mother in the wheelchair. Sometimes, we had to wait for a long time for her turn. When her examination was finished, my husband took her back home in the wheelchair while I paid the fee at the cashier's counter and received her medicine at the pharmacy counter. At both places, I had to wait for a long time and usually came back home nearly at noon. We felt it took us too much time, but we could not deny we were more or less fortunate. I suppose in most cases, people have to go to a hospital located further away from their home and go there more often when they feel sick. I sincerely hope that hospital procedures will become more efficient, though I do not deny that much effort has

been made to that end and, nowadays, using a computer system enables the job to be done more efficiently so that we may not wait as long as before.

Japan now enjoys the longest life expectancy in the world. Through education, the people have learned much about diseases and how important a balanced diet and hygienic practices are. Also, Japan now has medical, health insurance and medicare systems which provide excellent medical services to the people. When I was young, many people were so poor that they could not go to a doctor to have their illness treated. The fees of some famous doctors were so high that only rich people could afford them. It was quite unfair and depressing. How happy we are now, compared with them, to be able to enjoy such a privilege.

Today we should realize that, in the long run, the health insurance system has been so abused that the system is now being confronted with great difficulty. I would like to urge doctors not to give irrelevant treatment to patients who have no hope of recovery but to try to ease their pain even though such a procedure might not require much health insurance funds. They should also try not to prescribe too much medicine. I believe that doctors are generally ethical, but I sincerely hope that they will abide by the Hippocratic Oath, solemnly pledging themselves to the service of humanity. All Japanese should try hard to make our medical and health insurance systems healthier, as much as possible, for ourselves and for future generations.

(MICHIKO KAWAMURA, Meguro, Tokyo)

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#### February 18 Message (Subject#325)

*One meaning of "code" is a set of signals used to represent letters or num-*



bers in transmitting messages, but its primary meaning is a systematically arranged collection of laws or regulations. Many organizations have codes of one kind or another that its members are expected to follow. Schools have dress codes which indicate the kind of clothes students are permitted to wear. And some companies also have dress codes for their employees. The modern dress of young people especially has become very informal. But even some teachers, other respected professionals and elected representatives are dressing less formally than previously. What do you think about the trends of modern dress—of young people, middle-aged or older folks. How and why has it changed from previous times? Do you dress differently than you did ten years ago? Thoughts, memories, comments regarding present fashions related to dress is the suggested theme for an essay this week.

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The slovenly fashion of young people is often criticized today. Girls' loose socks are a typical example. They seem very untidy. It is very strange, I think, that so many girls follow the fashion all at once. Why are they so reluctant to be different than their friends? Recently I heard a funny story. A young man visited his grandmother's house after a long time, wearing his jeans with a big hole in the knee, of which he was very proud. The next day, he changed his clothes and went out for a while. When he returned, he cried "Hang it!" finding the jeans he had left. His grandmother had seen the hole in the jeans and had kindly put a patch on it in his absence.

As I give further thought about this tendency, however, I recognize my own weakness in blaming them too easily. In my high school days, we were proud of so-called *heii-habô*, which literally

means wearing a shapeless cap and shabby clothes. The students recognized no value of a new college cap and a new regulation uniform. They purposely tried to stain their cap and uniform. It was a sort of student dandyism.

Generally speaking, people's fashion in dressing has become less formal than previously. For example, elderly persons wear colored (even red) clothes for everyday wear today, but it is limited, after all, to leisure time. Office workers' dress remains as it was before. They wear plain and conservative clothes, usually men's three-piece suits. This tendency is remarkable, especially in the case of bank clerks or public employees. I have spent most of my life until now as a public official and my fashion in dress has not been an exception to the style mentioned above. I know well that public officials are spoken ill of, using the expression "*Dobu-nezumi* (a sewer rat)-style of Kasumigaseki".

Today, the style of dress is facing a reformation, one of which is the introduction of "casual Friday". Many organizations recently have adopted a dress code which allows their employees to dress in casual wear on Fridays. The Gifu area is one of the chief producers of casual wear. So the Prefecture and main companies of the area have promptly introduced the system. But, the employees of these organizations have met another problem together with freedom because "casual wear" does not necessarily mean a cheap, inferior dress. They worry about the choice of dress on Fridays because they think they are not fit to be seen in the same outfit every Friday. Sometimes I hear that they are obliged to order new casual wear, but I think they should not consider the code so seriously. They should be able to wear whatever they have on hand.

I began to recite Noh texts (*utai*) several years ago and usually put on a kimono at recitals. I use a kimono which my

wife's father used before his death for the same purpose. I think kimono are very reasonable because their fashions do not change for a long time though they are much more expensive than Western clothes. (MIKHIKO YOSHIMOTO, Gifu)

I feel that students' dress has recently changed a little and become more modern compared to ten years ago, but the school dress code has remained practical despite the changing fashions. Regarding our dress, fashions change year by year in relation to color and style. Young people are most sensitive to change, followed by middle-aged people. Older folks are not so interested. Recently, I see people who are not concerned about modern styles and some young people like the old fashion. I think that fashions repeat themselves.

Usually I have no concern about being up-to-date, but I did feel that a dress made ten years ago somehow did not seem suitable. I could not understand why until I visited and asked a dress-maker. She immediately told me that the dress had no shoulder pads. I was very pleased and told my friend who laughed at me. This shows my lack of sensitivity regarding fashions.

(MICHIKO SANO, Minami, Nagoya)

I often see small boys and girls walking along a street by twos and threes. Their dress is very informal. The knapsacks on their backs shows that they are elementary school pupils. It seems that they have no dress codes. Their dress is quite different from pupil to pupil.

Come to think of it, when I was an elementary school pupil, more than three score years ago, I always wore a uniform designated by the school. People took it for granted for pupils to wear uniforms. The contrast between pupils of former times and those of today surprises me very much.

--What has brought about such a stark contrast? A change in times has, of course. People underwent very drastic changes in their life style in the wake of the Second World War. Toward the end of that war, even ordinary people were forced to wear some kind of uniform. Then came the emancipation after the war. Wartime regimentation turned into a free, informal style. People were glad to doff the required uniforms. The emancipation marked the beginning of informality which has remained until today.

Informal fashions related to dress have gradually become established among the Japanese as peaceful times have continued. Some people say it does not matter whatever dress people wear, but I do not think so. People can hardly be free from being influenced by the kind of clothes they are wearing. The way people dress somehow affects their minds. That is to say, people are frail beings in that they cannot be free from the influence of the clothes they are wearing.

In his sense, I would like to recommend to young students to wear neat and tidy clothes when going to school instead of the loose-fitting clothes they are wearing. Needless to say, loose-fitting clothes are apt to encourage a loose attitude in general. At least, loose-fitting clothes are not compatible with the tense atmosphere required for concentrated studying.

I do not disdain the extremely loose and untidy fashion some young people follow on purpose. Youth often tend to do such things only because they want to stand out among their peers.

(SHOJI SUGIMOTO, Suginami, Tokyo)

I don't like to wear clothes that look odd. I remember the clothes worn by political leaders in the past who misled the people with unhappy results. For example, Adolf Hitler, the Nazi leader, always wore a military uniform which symbolized abominable imperialism.

Stalin,—the leader of the old Soviet Union, always wore his own military uniform. I've never seen him wearing a casual sack coat. In Japan, Hideki Tōjō, the prime minister at the beginning of the Pacific War, always wore a Japanese army uniform, or a prisoner's uniform afterwards. Thus, those political leaders who misled the people used to wear unusual uniforms.

What about after the war? I remember Yukio Mishima liked to wear his own military uniform. He was not a statesman, but a novelist and finally committed suicide. As to recent politicians, the former prime minister, Hata, wore an odd sack coat during the summer. It had sleeves that were half-length and was called *shō-ene*, energy-saving. The coat strongly recommended by him was completely opposed by most people and he himself resigned after a very short time.

Anyway, it can be said that oddly-dressed leaders were not worth respecting at any time. I hope that political leaders who want to wear odd clothes will not appear anymore.

(HARUJI FUKUMI, Minami, Nagoya)

When we shop for clothes to wear around the house or for sportswear, we consider the feeling, warmth or coolness, comfortableness, durableness and wearing qualities first. When we look for street clothes, or party clothes, we are keenly conscious of PTO, place, time and occasion. In both cases, fashion has become a very important factor these days. Fashion occupies our minds so much that, consciously or unconsciously, we try to satisfy our vanity by following the fashion so that we will not be despised by others and considered old-fashioned or shabby-looking.

Today, fashion has become a very important industry. A new fashion created someplace can travel all over the world in a single day by means of modern communication devices and be widely

accepted before long. I can understand the trend, but nevertheless, I wonder whether Japanese are the most vulnerable people in regard to fashion. This winter, a long, black overcoat high-heeled and thick-soled shoes and animal-patterned wear are widely worn by young women. High school girls all wear baggy, loose, thick white socks. TV programs show Japanese dress in the same way all over the country. Certainly, they are quite conscious of the trend and try to look as fashionable as possible, but I cannot deny they look quite monotonous and boring. Since we are Japanese, we should have uniqueness, different from others and each local area should have uniqueness likewise. When I traveled around Europe a few years ago, I was impressed that they were not so concerned with fashion as Japanese are. In the street, many people were wearing outdated clothes.

Japan used to be a silk-exporting country. Then it developed a fiber industry, textile industry and clothing industry. Today, by the development of other industries, the weight of such industries has run down, but still many people are engaged in those industries. Nowadays, we have strong pressure from the outside world to import more of their products. We understand the theory that production must be backed by consumption and that consumption must be created by demand. Fashion plays a very important role in creating demand in the field of clothing. To create a new fashion, great talent and sophisticated efforts are needed. To maintain those industries and to respond to the demand from outside, we are required to consume more and live affluently.

As an old woman, I remember that just after the end of the Second World War, many used clothes that were still usable were imported from the States and I was told that they discarded things following the principle that mass produc-

tion must be backed by mass consumption. I understood that the United States was a very rich country, and although I was not happy to hear that, I can never blame them for that. In the course of time, we came to follow the same way, consciously or unconsciously, and the present situation has become far worse than theirs. We can easily suppose that our housing condition, especially in urban districts, is so much worse than theirs that we have little room for storing and discard clothes quite easily, just because they have become old-fashioned.

It is very hard for us old people to understand the present trend. In days of old, Japanese were pantheistic and thought everything had a spirit in it. They treated things carefully and tried never to be punished by the spirit. Even rich people believed that thriftiness was a virtue and tried never to waste things. We should try never to discard clothes just because they have grown outdated. We should remember how many material and human resources are put into those clothes. In this world, many people do not have enough clothes. We should make efforts to help them. We should try to reform or to recycle clothes as much as possible and to reduce the amount of discarded clothes or trash to conserve the environment for the benefit of future generations.

(MICHIKO KAWAMURA, Meguro, Tokyo)

There is a saying in Germany: "One can think differently from others but one cannot dress differently from others." This is true. You can have thoughts or ideas totally different from what other people hold, but you cannot be so different from your contemporaries in regard to dress. If you walk down the street in the kind of garb samurai used to wear or in clothes Sherlock Holmes preferred, people might think you are going to a costume party.

In feudal society, there were strict dress codes in Japan. Only samurai were permitted to wear silk. Farmers, merchants and craftsmen were not allowed to wear it. During the war, when luxury was forbidden, people were forced to be humbly dressed. Women were compelled to wear *monpe* (a kind of trousers) remade from kimono. Dress codes became stricter when the ruling authority's control was stronger.

After World War II, Japan became democratic and improved its trade and industries. Western fashions were imported. People got out of obsolete dress codes and enjoyed wearing fashionable clothes. When miniskirts prevailed all over the world, even Japanese women wore them. And I mimicked the others. Miniskirts were unsuitable for me with my short bowlegs, but German girls with long, straight legs were attractive in them. I had no other choice but to wear miniskirts because all the girls around me wore them.

These days, however, people feel free to express themselves in any kind of apparel. They can don miniskirts, long dresses, tight suits, loose shirts, baggy pants, pantaloons and so on. I like this diversity and am happy about it because I usually wear kimono and sometimes a jacket and *monpe* reformed from kimono by myself. Such apparel is rather strange, but no one stares at me.

Young people who often want to distinguish themselves with their unique fashions become suddenly obedient to commonly recognized dress codes when they go to the Coming of Age ceremony and to companies to be recruited. They want to be considered ordinary and not differently dressed from their peers just at the entrance into adult society.

(NAOMI KONDO, Handa)

I am not qualified to write about the latest dress fashions, but traits of the younger generation occasionally surprise

me. As far as clothes are concerned, I am satisfied with simply wearing clean and comfortable ones. Because of my job as a research chemist, I don't have to wear a suit every day. I usually wear clothes similar to those I wore when I was a student. I think I am relatively conservative in regard to color and style. Once I become fond of some clothes, I wear them until they become worn out. I may be considered an enemy by the apparel industry.

It usually takes a long time for me to examine things before buying them. I like to see and compare new functions of gadgets. But it doesn't make sense to me that many people buy new clothes for skiing every winter. Also, why do many people buy a new bathing suit every summer? Is it because of fashion?

I am wondering why apparel manufacturers are able to announce popular styles and colors six months before the season. For me, they only promote what they want to sell. I can't believe that many people buy new clothes just to follow the fashion for makers' convenience.

Incidentally, I don't change clothes every day except for underwear. It is hard for me to understand the current trend to wash garments after having worn them only once. I hear many people wash their clothes that way these days.

Basically, I don't care much about other people's dress. People have a right to wear whatever they want. However, we should not forget that some young fellows commit crimes just to obtain fashionable jackets, sweaters or something. We must consider what makes them put so much emphasis on style.

(TOSHIKI MIYAKE, Tsuzuki, Yokohama)

The 15 writers of the 45 essays in this 56th issue of "Daily Word" Echoes reside in 11 different cities and towns. Some essays required very little correction; others required more, but all were interesting.(C.O.)

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### January 19, 1997 Meeting Theme:

#### *A Memorable Trip*

I was in Pleasant Hill, Tennessee from November 25th to December 9th to visit Ms. Landis who had been a Bible Class teacher in our Fukushima Church. As it was the first time for me to go abroad by myself, I felt uneasy at first, but it was really a safe and pleasant trip. After a flight of eleven-and-a-half hours, I arrived at the O'Hare Airport in Chicago from Narita. There, I had to transfer to another terminal to take an American Airlines plane. It was colder in Chicago than in Fukushima.

It was 2:30 in the afternoon, November 25th, local time when I arrived at Nashville Airport in Tennessee. I was very happy when I saw Ms. Landis who had come to meet me. She took me to her house, far away in the suburbs, in her car which could carry seven people. It was a very quiet place. There were no tall buildings. The car turned left onto a narrow road which a sign indicated was "Maple Drive". There were wide lawns on both sides of the road. I could see some scattered one-story houses. We entered one of them after getting out of the car. It was her house, which had many rooms, a basement and three entrances. Her big house looked like an apartment house. She said that she lets others stay in some rooms and leaves the keys when she is away. She had a guest room with a bed and shower where I stayed for two weeks except when we went to Kentucky. She had many things from Japan, such as *kokeshi* dolls, *kake-mono* of Japanese-style pictures and calligraphy in the parlor. She had very many books in her library den. Her neighbors on this Maple Drive are retired missionaries from Japan and India. The Lammers had taught at Tōhoku Gakuin

forty years ago and Mr. and Mrs. Vogle Schwartz were from Hiroshima Gakuin. In this rural Pleasant Hill (including Maple Drive), there is just one post office, one elementary school, one junior high school and only one church and only one God. There are no stores to buy daily necessities, so all residents have to go to supermarkets and banks in Nashville.

On November 28th, we left Pleasant Hill at 9:00 o'clock in the morning to go to Homestead, Kentucky to visit the Kroehlers who are missionaries in Aizu Takada in Fukushima Prefecture. They were also visiting in Kentucky to see their daughter, Margaret, and her family. They were there to spend Thanksgiving Day all together. Margaret lives there with her husband, Jeffery, and their son, Gilbert. Ms. Landis and I were invited to join this happy family reunion. Along the way there, we saw many rocks on both sides of the road which looked like artificial blocks. At noon, we stopped at a rest house and had a lunch of sandwiches and cranberry juice while sitting on chairs outside. At 3:00, we arrived at Margaret San's house. All of them welcomed us.

After Gilbert's daddy, Jeffery Pasquale, came back home, we had a big Thanksgiving dinner. At the table, Rev. Kroehler prayed, thanking God for the good harvest that year and for the delicious food before us. And as Thanksgiving Day last year fell on Mrs. Kroehler's seventieth birthday, we also celebrated it. Ms. Landis had baked a big, round cake for Evelyn Kroehler. She also had prepared seven candles, instead of seventy, to put on the cake. Little six-year-old Gilbert presented her a picture he had painted, saying, "Happy Birthday, Grandma!" He is a very cute boy. His mother is a beautiful lady and his daddy is a man of Italian lineage who resembles a Japanese. It was a big dinner—stuffed turkey, large slices of ham with bones in the center, cooked vegetables, many

kinds of cookies and ice cream. We sang a Thanksgiving hymn, *Warera tagayashitane o makedo*, which I suggested, and "Happy Birthday" to Mrs. Kroehler. We stayed at Margaret's house until November 30th.

I attended a Sunday morning service twice. On December 1st at Pleasant Hill Church, it was the beginning of the Advent season. There were Christmas decorations in the church. Before the service, the organist played the original Japanese hymn, *Mabune no naka ni ubugoe age*, which had been translated into English. We sang some more traditional Christmas hymns, including "Hark the Herald Angels Sing" and "Joy to the World, the Lord has Come".

I did not have my glasses with me and could not read the verses, so I sang them in Japanese loudly, which pleased the worshippers who were sitting around me. I understood the sermon preached by Rev. Schneider pretty well. I was very happy to be able to take part in the Communion Service on that Sunday. I was also very happy to meet many American Christians at the luncheon following the service. Four ladies, Abigail, Eloise, Frances and Margaret are especially good friends of Ms. Janell Landis. They often visited her home and I became close friends with them.

I had a chance to go to the playhouse, mini-theater, in Pleasant Hill to enjoy the drama, *Oliver Twist*, produced by residents of Pleasant Hill on December 9th, the day before I left. The English spoken in the drama was Old British English, so even Ms. Landis could not understand some of the words, but the performance was very well done and I enjoyed it very much.

I left Pleasant Hill on December 10. Ms. Landis came to Nashville to see me off at the airport. I am very grateful to Ms. Landis who made my trip so enjoyable. (KAZUKO TAGUCHI, Fukushima)