



JET *Journeys*

MARCH 2006

President's Message

The Australia-Japan Year of Exchange (YOE) kicked off this year with a huge calendar full of events all throughout 2006. We saw many of you at the fantastic natsu matsuri at Darling Harbour; just keep in mind the even bigger and better Japan Festival will be held Saturday, 14 October, so be sure to mark your calendars now.

When you get a chance, look up the plethora of events at www.japan.org and click on the header for the Year of Exchange. There are so many events happening that you're sure to find something that interests you.

We're busy planning our events well in advance this year, with our upcoming Pre-departure Orientation, JETAA International Meeting, Christmas Party and other social events throughout the year. Many thanks again to the Committee for your hard work and hands-on approach to making all of our past as well as upcoming events a success!

JETAA is always looking for feedback or event ideas and volunteers – just pass me an email at: jetaasydney@yahoo.com.au.

Wishing you the best this year and we look forward to seeing you at some of our upcoming events!

Michael J Adams
JETAA Sydney President

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The Faces of 2006

Ms Cosmo Arai

Hi, there! My name is Cosmo. I came here from Tokyo five months ago.

I am originally from Saitama-ken and I spent some years in Hyogo-ken as well in my childhood.

When I was in Tokyo, I worked for the Japanese Parliament House Office as a public servant. After spending three years here, I will return to that office again.

This is actually my second time here in Sydney. My first time was almost 15 years ago as a backpacker. After travelling by myself around New Zealand for more than three months, I came here for a two-week bus trip along the eastern coast of Australia. Unfortunately I did not have much of an opportunity to converse with Australian people at that time, so I am quite happy to be able to foster many good relationships with Australians through JETAA this time! I am very excited to meet with JETAA members at every occasion.

This year is the Australian-Japan Year of Exchange, as you know, so I am looking forward to seeing you at many events for Year of Exchange (YOE)!

Yoroshiku onegai shimasu!!!

2006 Committee Members

Congratulations to this year's Committee Members: Michael Adams (President), Sam Ishizuka

(Secretary), Michelle Morita (Social Coordinator), Sharon Van Etten (Treasurer), David Boyd (Webmaster) and Yvonne Khoan Adams (Newsletter Editor).

Thank you and farewell to Chris Loch, 2005's Members Officer.

Due to the anticipated increase in activities this year, we have appointed two YOE Committee Members, Sacha and Tammie, to help with coordinating activities.

Sasha Anderson

Hi there everyone, I'm Sasha Anderson. I've just joined the JETAA Committee this year as a part-time Australia-Japan Year of Exchange member. The YOE is all very exciting for our two countries and I look forward to being involved in the organising and running of events throughout the year.

I returned from one year in Kanan Town (Osaka Prefecture) last July and am finding I think of Japan more and more as time goes on. It's a really great thing, JETAA, and all the associated organisations, groups, and interesting people that it brings together. I always look forward to the many regular events so that I can meet up with the fellow like-minded and adventurous people that we are!

See you all soon.

Tammie Lee

Hajimemashite! Tammie Lee to moushimasu.

Yoroshiku onegai shimasu.

I returned to Australia last year in September after a way too brief two-year stint in Nagasaki Prefecture in Kyushu. I taught senior high school students at a school without a uniform (e!!!??) and lived in Sasebo City – home to the Japanese Self Defense, American Navy and those beautiful islands you see in the opening scene of Last Samurai. Very, very natsukashii. Now that I'm back, I'm hanging onto my JET experiences in as many ways as I can – the latest of which is joining the JET Committee for the Year of Exchange. My hobbies are food ... and that's it really! Other than Taiko, which I'm learning with the Sydney taiko team, Taikoz.

I'm very excited about being part of the Committee this year and look forward to meeting more ex-JETers at our events. If anyone would like to contact me I can be found (occasionally) at the following email: ripvanwoody@yahoo.com.

I hope to share more with you all about taiko and food in Sydney in our upcoming editions.

Eat and be merry!



Michelle, Sharon, David, Yvonne, Michael, Tammie and Sasha.

(Photo: Nichigo Press.)

JETAA International Meeting

By Yvonne Adams

One of the accomplishments of 2005 is Sydney's successful bid to host the 2006 JETAA International Meeting.

As part of the bid, Sydney had to submit supporting documents to prove our worth against rival contender, Toronto, Canada for the right to host the meeting.

Fortunately, our beautiful city, weather, strong commitment of Committee Members and partnership with the Japanese Consulate General, CLAIR and Japan Foundation gave us the edge to win the bid.

Much thanks to Michelle, Sydney's Social Coordinator and Australia's Country Representative for driving the bid from the start.

The meeting is tentatively set for November. Stay tuned for future reports.

Natsu Matsuri

By Michelle Morita

To open the Australia-Japan Year of Exchange, the Japanese Goodwill Ambassador, Miss Kimura Yoshino, paid a visit to Darling Harbour to participate in the natsu matsuri.

JETAA were invited to participate with Miss Kimura to do a short interview and demonstrate some chopstick etiquette.

Mike, Sharon and I played the role of the ignorant "gaijin" extremely

well but I'm not sure our chopstick technique improved when taking advantage of the tako yaki and okonomiyaki stalls, after raiding the sake tent.

The afternoon was an entertaining way to open the YOE and we look forward to some more great events during 2006.



Rina Santana and Yvonne Adams.

Movie Night at Japan Foundation

By Michael Adams

On 6 February at the Japan Foundation, JETAA and Australia Japan Society members were invited to accompany Miss Kimura for a private screening of her film, "Semishigure". It was a rare opportunity for us to be in the presence of an actress, as well as take photos with her. We were all very excited to have had the opportunity to be with her during her brief visit to Sydney.

Her film, "Semishigure" is the story of Bunshiro Maki, a young samurai from Unasaka during the Edo Period. Despite poverty and many difficulties, he finally avenges his father's death and is reunited with his first love, Fuku (played by Miss Kimura).

To find out more about Miss Kimura, visit her website at: <http://www.kimura-yoshino.com/>.

JETAA welcomes any contributions from members for the newsletter. Email: jetaasydney@yahoo.com.au.

CLAIR Function – Westin Hotel

By Yvonne Adams



Alice Stapleton and Mr Miyajima.

Many thanks to CLAIR for inviting JETAA members to the cocktail function at the Westin Hotel on 9 March.

It gave members a chance to network with members of CLAIR and to introduce 2006 JETAA Committee Members.

A great night was had by all and it was lovely to see so many senpai's in attendance.



Peter Jacob and Kirsten Bruce.

2006 JET Interviews

By Sharon Van Etten

Interviews for this year's aspiring JETs were held around Australia during February. As former JETs, we have all been through (and passed!) the interview process, but it was a really interesting experience to see it from the other side, as one of the interviewers.

In Sydney, 88 interviews were held over three days at the Consulate-General of Japan. This year there were 77 potential ALTs, an increase on last year, but only 11 CIR applicants, down 50% from last year.

Under a new system brought in several years ago the three groups of three-person interview panels rotated members over the three days, so that the composition of each panel changed daily. This helped to ensure that no particular panel was stricter than any other, making the final ranking of candidates much easier, and the whole process fairer overall. At least one member of each panel was a former JET, and those of us who had been on the programme in the past seemed to be harsher on the applicants than the Japanese interviewers, probably because we know what they are really in for when they get there.

There were a couple of very *interesting* applicants. Surprisingly, many people described their motivation for going on JET as a way to "take a break" from their career and "travel around the world". Fair enough, I'm sure lots of people thought this and many of us

took the opportunity to travel while on the programme, but given that the bill for all this is being paid by Japanese tax payers, I'm sure none of us had the gall to actually say this in the interview!

Two applicants were involved in the circus, unfortunately they were a no-show. I was looking forward to seeing how they would use their experience in taming lions and teaching acrobatics (this was on their CVs!) in a rowdy *ichinensei* class, but unfortunately we'll never know...

Overall though, there were many excellent candidates who will be JETting off in July. I wish them a wonderful time on the programme and look forward to welcoming them back to JETAA in a few years' time.

Japanese Language Course

By Samantha Ishizuka

The Japan Foundation are now at the end of their second Japanese Language conversation course. I have been fortunate enough to participate on both courses so far and am so glad I did.

Before each class, we are given the topic for the following week in the form of a newspaper article, grammar exercises and general comprehension questions, so we have time to prepare for the class, if we wish to do so.

During the class, we break up into small groups of 4-5 and one of the assistant teachers comes and joins us. This gives us the opportunity to go through anything we didn't

understand but more importantly to discuss the topic in greater detail.

The topics vary greatly but all focus on some aspect of Japanese society, including marriage due to unexpected pregnancy, kids who don't want to leave the house, hotel rooms designed for children and Sumo. There is always something to have a laugh about and all four teachers and the assistant teachers are very enthusiastic and full of energy.

I really like the fact that we can prepare during the week before the class, learn new kanji and grammar in our own time and leave the class for conversation practice.

I have met a wide variety of people from ex-JETs, to people who have lived in Japan more than 20 years, to those currently studying Japanese at university.

The next course starts Tuesday, 9 May and goes every Tuesday night from 6.00pm until 7.30pm for eight weeks.

The cost of the course is \$120 and cheap at the price. I've already signed up for the next course! For more details, please contact the Course Coordinator (who's also JETAA Webmaster), David Boyd on jcourse@jpf.org.au or go to the Japan Foundation's website www.jpf.org.au and look under Language Learning.

International Music and Dance Festival

By Michelle Morita

The YOE has had quite a bit of exposure recently, and not just within Japanese circles –

did you see the entertaining TV commercial with the Japanese guy chopping the BBQ'd sausage with his samurai sword?

Another event which really contributed to raising the profile of the YOE was the fantastic concert at the Sydney Opera House. There was something to appeal to everyone and a good crowd of both Japanese and Aussies filled the concert hall to enjoy a Wind Band from Hawaii, accompanied by some Hula Dancers. It was an entertaining show and interesting to the hula for something different.

The second half was an amazing series of Dance numbers. The Kyoto Ladies University Creative Dance Team performed two wonderful contrasting sets; the first an abstract dance and the second a modern representation of Kyoto women. The costumes and choreography were stunning. The Sohran Kids, with members as young as three, gave a nice interlude of a Shoran, a traditional style Japanese dance. The final set was "Link to the World," representatives from Dancekool Studio performing various forms of Street Dance to music ranging from James Blunt's "You're Beautiful", to the Japanese National Anthem, to the Hip Hop you would associate with Street Dance. Their performance was spectacular, showing skill and filling the concert hall with energy.

The second concert in the International Music and Dance Festival will be held at the Sydney Opera House on 27 August.

2006 Calendar Events*

April	22 nd Yakniku Night
June	2 nd to 9 th Photo Exhibition at Customs House (part of YOE events)
July	24 th Pre-departure Orientation for JETs 16 th Yum Cha for departing JETs and their family (informal question/answer session) 30 th JETs depart for Japan
August	19 th Shabu Shabu Trivia Night
September	2006 Returnees Reception TBA Yukata Training
October	7 th Careers Night 14 th Japanese Festival 21 st to 22 nd Regional Conference in Canberra
November	Hanami Party TBA 23 rd to 26 th International Meeting 25 th Christmas Party
December	Emperor's Birthday
February	AGM

* Dates are subject to change.

Useful Contacts

JETAA

Website: www.sydneyjetaa.org
Email: jetaasydney@yahoo.com.com

Japanese Consulate

Contact name: Julio Santana
Phone: (02) 9231 3455
Website: www.japan.org.au
Address:

Level 33 and 34, Colonial Centre
52 Martin Place
Sydney, NSW 2000

CLAIR

Contact name: Sharon van Etten
Phone: (02) 9241 5033
Website: www.jlhc.org.au
Email: Sharon@jlhc.org.au

The Japan Foundation, Sydney

Contact name: David Boyd
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Chifley Plaza
2 Chifley Square
Sydney NSW 2000

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Just moved?



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