

**◇ Interesting Foreign Loan Words ◇**

Every language borrows vocabulary from other languages called “foreign loan words”. Foreign loan words in Japanese are notable in that they are always written in katakana. For that reason, there are many who mistake all katakana words for English. However, Japanese is full of loan words from many languages, including Dutch and Portuguese. Let’s introduce a few!

Ikura (salmon roe) – at first glance it might seem like regular Japanese, but it’s actually Russian! This word came into Japan during the Meiji period. There was already an existing word for salmon roe in Japanese at the time; “ikura” was used to create a recognizable brand for Hokkaido ikura.

Baikingu (buffet) – While the word “buffet” is in common use in both English and Japanese, to English-speakers, “baikingu” (viking) generally only brings forth the image of Scandinavian warriors. Why did “baikingu” come to mean “buffet” in Japanese? Apparently, the movie “Viking” starring Kirk Douglas was quite popular in Japan. The movie had a fantastic smorgasbord scene with Vikings on their boat, eating and drinking as much as they could. Inspired by that scene, the Emperor Hotel created an all-you-can-eat program called the “Viking” meal.

Zubon (pants) – While the origin of this word is not known for certain, there is a theory that it originates from the French word “jupon”, meaning “petticoat”. Imagining mens’ pants suddenly transforming into petticoats can be an interesting diversion. On a related note, while in English “pants” is the clothing you wear outside, in Japanese “pantusu” are your underwear! Somehow, in Japanese underwear has become over wear and over wear has become underwear.

Manshon (apartment building) – This particular use of “manshon” in Japanese comes from the British use of the word “mansion”, meaning apartment building. In American English, however, a mansion is a much more luxurious building. There are sure to be more than a few foreigners who have been confused into believing their Japanese friends are incredibly wealthy.

Kachuusha (hair band) – this Russian word came into Japanese in a rather unusual way. In the Taisho period, Tolstoy’s novel “Resurrection” was made into a stageplay. “Katyusha’s Song” from the play as well as the character of Katyusha herself were quite popular at the time. The actor, while playing the role, was said to have worn a hairband. The image of Katyusha in the hairband stuck, and hairbands became known as “kachuusha”.

-Jennifer Ward

◇ The Most International City in the World ◇

What do you think of when you hear “the most international place in the world”? Of course, Niseko, which invites tourists from all of the world, is quite international, but of all the places I have been to I believe that the most international city was New York, in the United States.

I visited New York in the summer of 2011. I went on a fifteen day trip to America to enjoy my last summer as a university student. I spent around half of that time in New York, and while I was there I really felt that there was no city more international than New York City.

New York is a place where you can experience every culture of the world. While I was in New York, the food I ate the most was “sherbet”, a sort of Italian ice cream. The sherbet store I always visited in Italy, “Grom”, also had a branch in New York. (By the way, there is also a location in Tokyo. If you have the chance, I highly recommend visiting it!) There were also Japanese ramen shops, Mexican restaurants, and groceries with Greek cheese. You can easily and cheaply try

food from any country in the world.

In New York, you can also learn about world history and culture. Works of art that span across borders and ages are displayed at the famous Metropolitan Museum. When I visited the Metropolitan, the works of the famous British fashion designer Alexander McQueen were on display. This exhibition was opened in 2010 after McQueen's death, an exclusive exhibition of his work. (Since his death, his work hasn't been on exhibition anywhere in the world aside from New York.) I and many others came to New York to see this exhibition, some waiting as long as four hours to get in. Seeing the exhibition, I was really impressed by McQueen's sense of design and the production of his fabulous fashion shows. "This is what New York is all about!" I thought.

Alexander McQueen was a British man and a fairly patriotic individual, but the place that acknowledged his accomplishments in the fashion world, the place that opened an exhibition for his work was not in England, but in New York. New York is truly a place where people are recognized on the basis of their individual abilities and character and not on race or nationality.

New York is also a place where people from all over the world come to live and work. These people live there not as Koreans or as Japanese, but as New Yorkers. For the one week that I was there, I wasn't a Korean, I was the New Yorker Joohyun Kwon. I felt quite strongly that New York, where nationality becomes meaningless, is the most international city in the world. If you have some vacation time you can take advantage of, you could do much worse than enjoying a wonderful time being a New Yorker.

—Joohyun Kwon

◇ Reinhard Artberg Exhibition ◇

On February 17th, 2013, there was "Meet the Artist" event introducing the Austiran Artist Reinhard Artberg held at the Chomin Center. Artberg has homes in Austria, France and Italy, and comes to Japan around once every two years to visit his wife's family, so he is not unfamiliar with Japan. The event at the Chomin Center was casual and relaxed, the guests enjoying coffee and snacks while chatting with the artist. Even though Artberg cannot speak Japanese, conversation with local artists and other guests flowed naturally with the help of the CIRs' and his wife's interpretation.

The exhibition included a set of art objects called "Meeting" that could be freely manipulated by guests. Made locally and with local materials, they express the image of people coming together. As these objects became the subject of much conversation, they fulfilled their role literally as well as artistically. Artberg's paintings, lithographs, and objects will be displayed on the 2nd floor lobby of the Chomin Center until Sunday, March 3rd.

◇ Niseko CIRs International Culture Event #3: Fun with Chinese Medicine ◇

On February 16th, 2013, CIR Yiyang Ke's culture event "Fun with Chinese Medicine" was held at Asobook Library. She covered many areas in traditional Chinese medicine, including what sort of medicines are used as well as diagnostic methods. Drawing from her own experiences, she described what kind of medicines are actually being used in China today. As she explained, Chinese medicine is not only used to treat illness, but also a part of the food you eat every day. Aiming for daily overall health is the goal of Chinese medicine.

However, it's also important to realize that much of Chinese medicine has not been thoroughly researched. Chinese medicine has been passed down through tradition, but not assessed scientifically, so the efficacy of various medicines is not well known. Chinese medicine is often thought to be suitable for light illness such as a cold. According to Ke, it is best to use both Chinese medicine and western medicine, depending on the situation.

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