

From the Japan Reports archives

The *Japan Reports*' editor has recently been looking back over past issues.

Japan Reports was first published in Sydney in 1967 and it was originally a monthly publication and largely covered serious political and economic issues, diplomatic policy and societal trends. Engineering projects and technology also featured strongly. Later there was a growing focus on cultural topics and Japan-related events in New South Wales.

Below are just a few of the gems that came to light.

Volume 2 Number 11 March 1969 devoted a double spread to the story '*Kamikaze*' Taxis have gone. It is hard for a modern visitor to Japan to imagine that Japanese taxi drivers with their immaculate cars and automated passenger doors ever had an image problem, but in the early sixties daredevil driving to maximise turnover and money earned was such a problem that the issue was taken up in the Diet (Japan's Parliament). By early 1969, the industry was better regulated with much better wages for drivers.

The first time a Japan Foundation exhibition came to Australia in 1974 it was front-page news. But not when they moved their office from Canberra to Sydney in 1988. The top news was *Switch to Five-Day Workweek* (Vol.22, No.4 June 1988). Private and public financial institutions announced they would work a 5-day week from February 1989 and this was seen to influence wider society.

The Japanese Language Speech Contest has been around almost as long as *Japan Reports*. At the fourth annual contest in 1973, the second prize winner in the Open division looked weighed down by her prize of a portable TV set!

Our first half-colour issue Vol.43 No.1 January 1998 was for the Nagano Winter Olympics—black and white would not have done the mascots justice! The Sydney Olympics were also covered in issue Vol.35 No.4 Spring 2000. A Ninja Comedy show by *rakugo* performers, the first ever, was held as part of the celebrations in Sydney.



From the Editor

The Editor invites comments and suggestions about *Japan Reports*.

Contact the Editor at cginfo@tokyonet.com.au or via mail at The Editor, Japan Reports
GPO Box 4125
SYDNEY NSW 2001

The Japan Foundation, Sydney

The Japan Foundation Sydney is part of a network of 23 offices in 21 different countries. In Australia, the first JF office was opened in Canberra in 1978 and moved to Sydney in 1988. The Foundation is dedicated to promoting cultural and intellectual exchange.

Sydneyers are lucky to have easy access to the Foundation's many activities with the office located centrally at Chifley Plaza in Sydney's CBD. The **Japan Foundation Gallery** is the site of many interesting exhibitions and demonstrations. The **Library** next door has more than 19,000 print and audio-visual items and is a great place to visit to look for information on Japan.

But for those further afield, don't feel neglected! The Japan Foundation Sydney often arranges touring exhibitions and performances, and Library items can be accessed through inter-library loans or by postal loans for paid-up JF members.

Language courses are on offer throughout the year, including the J-Basic Online course for teachers. Of course the library has resources for people wanting to study Japanese and online resources for those interested in the Japanese Language Proficiency Test are also available.

The Japan Foundation has many **teacher resources** available and runs fun and challenging contests that students can enter – great for teachers to motivate their students.

With so much on offer, including grants and scholarships, it's best to visit their website to learn more—

www.jpf.org.au

and even better, while you're there sign up to their monthly email newsletter to keep up to date.

Contests and resources for students and teachers

The Japan Foundation Sydney can provide a range of resources to teachers, and in conjunction with other organisations it runs contests aimed at encouraging students to use their Japanese language in interesting and challenging contexts.

Resources

The Japan Foundation is always looking to develop new resources to offer teachers.

Interactive Whiteboard Resources—resources developed by the Japan Foundation are currently being updated for use in classrooms on interactive whiteboards. These will be available for free from the JF Sydney website in early 2011.

www.jpf.org.au/resources/

Vivid Japan—sets of Japanese language and cultural realia can be borrowed by schools, institutions or private language schools (return postage to be covered by the borrower).

www.jpf.org.au/jpfresources/vividjapan.html

Contests

Video Matsuri Contest—This is a great way to allow students to express their creativity and show off their Japanese. Visit the website to watch the 2010 winning entries. There are some impressive efforts!

www.video-matsuri.jpf-sydney.net

Art Speaks Japanese Comes Alive!—A web gallery is also available for this contest which requires students create their own artwork and include some Japanese language.

www.artalive.jpf-sydney.net

Japanese Language Speech Contests—2011 will be the contest's 42nd year and there is no doubt that expressing yourself in a foreign language in front of others is still as challenging as it ever was.

www.speechcontest.jpf-sydney.net

The Japan Foundation Sydney is presenting **Japan: Kingdom of Characters** from 8 April to 28 May.

For lovers of *manga* and *anime* this free exhibition will be something they'll no doubt want to visit again and again, because running in conjunction with the exhibition every



respond to the worldwide interest in Japanese pop-culture and looks to examine the impact of characters on Japanese society. What exactly are "characters"? Why do they appear and become sub-cultures? What kind of social reality do they reflect?

The lecture series will explore

JAPAN: Kingdom of Characters

Wednesday evening will be free public events—*anime* screenings and lectures.

Life-sized figures including Hello Kitty, Neon Genesis Evangelion and Mobile Suit Gundam together with panels, film and character-related products will give an insight into Japan's character phenomenon.

The exhibition was designed by the Japan Foundation to



the background and popularity of *anime/manga* and characters in Japan and overseas. While details of the full schedule are still to be confirmed, speakers already include **Michael Hill** aka **Doctor Comics** and **Dr Craig Norris** (University of Tasmania).

More details are available from the Japan Foundation website: www.jpf.org.au

8 April to 28 May

The Japan Foundation Gallery

Level 1 Chifley Plaza, Sydney

11am to 4pm Monday to Friday & selected Saturdays, until 8.30pm on Wednesdays