

In this new section titled “Technical Intern Life,” we will feature various aspects of life in Japan as experienced by technical intern trainees just like all of you, who work and live each day to the fullest in this foreign country.

Outstanding Entries from Past Japanese Essay Contests

As the first feature of this new section, we introduce a past entry from a Japanese Essay Contest, which is currently calling for entries for the 23rd year. The essay, needless to say, was written in Japanese, and is presented below word for word as originally written by the applicant (*furigana* reading aid appended by the editing staff). It is accompanied for the first time by a translation, so you can enjoy the content of the essay in your native language even if you are still a bit weak at reading in Japanese.

[2010 First-Highest Prize]

“Life Is Like a Cup of Tea” by Zhang Pengpeng

It is said that tea was introduced to Japan from China, but I came to enjoy drinking tea after coming to Japan.

Japanese people customarily drink tea with their meals. They take a sip at a time, savoring each one. In fact, they seem to enjoy their tea so much that they almost appear to be entranced in a dream. As the saying goes, “*Go ni ireba go ni shitagae*” (Japanese saying, meaning ‘when in Rome, do as the Romans do’). Before I knew it, tea came to be a part of our meals at our dorm for technical intern trainees. In the beginning, however, I was simply following the Japanese custom of drinking tea and did not necessarily enjoy it.

During my first year in Japan, I suffered from hardships at work, the language barrier, and homesickness. Once, I wanted to quit my technical intern training so much that I had a talk with my Japanese superior.

At that time, he poured me some tea and said to me, “Life is actually the same as this cup of tea. If the hot water is regarded as everyday life, we are all like tea leaves in the hot water. Look hard and think about how tea becomes delicious. By doing so, you’ll probably be able to emerge from the distress you presently feel.”

I stared into the cup of tea and pondered what my superior had said. When making a cup of tea, tea leaves

この新コーナー（技能実習Life）では、皆さんと同じように異国の地・日本で仕事をしながら毎日を頑張っている技能実習生の様子をお知らせしていきます。

日本語作文コンクール 過去の名作公開！

コーナーの初回は、現在第23回の作品を募集中の「外国人技能実習生・研修生日本語作文コンクール」の過去の作品のご紹介です。作文はもちろん日本語で書かれていて、技能実習生が書いた通りの日本語で掲載し（振り仮名は編集部）、対訳を付けて公開するのはこれが初めてです。日本語を読むのが難しければ母国語だけでもいいので、是非読んでみてください。

[2010年最優秀賞]

「人生はお茶みたいだ」張 朋朋

お茶は中国から日本に伝来したようですが私がお茶を飲むのが好きになったのは日本に来てからのことです。

日本では食事をする時、習慣的にお茶を飲みます。一口吸っておいしそうに飲みます。その様子は楽しそうであっという間に陶酔しているようにも見えます。郷に入れば郷に従えで私達実習生の寮の食卓にもいつしかお茶が用意されるようになりました。でも私は何となく日本の習慣を真似をして飲んでいるだけで本当にお茶を飲むのが好きになったわけではありませんでした。

来日して1年間、仕事上の苦勞、言葉の障害、望郷の思いが私を苦しめました。一度、どうしても辞めたくなり、日本の上司に話しました。

その時、上司は私にお茶をついでこう言いました。「実は人生はこのお茶と同じだよ。毎日の生活をお湯にみだれば、私達はそこに入っているお茶の葉みたいなものだよ。じっとよく見てどうしてお茶がおいしくなるのか考えてごらん。そうすれば今の悩みから出てこれると思うよ」

私はお茶を見つめて彼の言ったことを考えてみました。お茶

begin swirling in the hot water. They keep fluttering and do not settle down. However, after absorbing enough water, they slowly settle and give off a fragrant aroma. I began to see that in the state I was in, I was like the tea leaves swirling in the water. I thought that I was probably distraught over transient hardships and loneliness.

When I calmly thought back over the past year, I realized that there were also many things I had gained. I had become familiar with the advanced machines at my company, and I'd gradually come to understand the concept of the 5Ss through everyday work. I had also learned the "ho-ren-so" (report, contact and report) way of working. I have not yet mastered the Japanese language as well as I could wish, but I can now enjoy friendly exchanges with my colleagues at work. I thought anew, "That's it. Each of these achievements is my personal asset. I shall use the remaining time I have to take advantage of this good environment and acquire better knowledge of the Japanese language and advanced technologies."

After taking a slow sip of tea holding the cup with both hands, the tea might taste bitter at first, as though it were the taste of distress, failure or unhappiness. However, a faint and subtle sweetness comes out as you savor it. I think it is the taste of happiness, success and hope. Even while swirling around like the tea leaves, I believe that doing one's best in the present is the key to brewing a fragrant cup of tea.

In this way, I came to enjoy drinking tea every day. I especially like watching the tea leaves dancing in the water. It is like seeing my everyday self.

My Japanese superior poured me a cup of life. Thanks to him, I passed the Japanese Language Proficiency Test Level N1 last December. Sir, thank you very much. I will be returning to my country in about six months, but I will do the best I can until the very end.

を入れ始めると、お茶の葉はお湯の中でぐるぐると舞います。揺れてなかなか安定しません。しかし、水分を十分吸ってからゆっくりと沈殿してよい薫りを漂わせます。今の私はこの舞っているお茶の葉と同じじゃないかと思いました。一時の苦勞と寂しさで動揺したようです。

心を静めてよく考えると、この1年で収穫したものも多くあることに気が付きました。会社の先進機械にも慣れましたし、『5S』の理念も日常の仕事を通じて段々理解できてきました。

『報・連・相』の考え方もよく分かるようになりました。日本語もまだ思うように習熟していませんが、会社の同僚とも仲良く交流できるようになりました。「そうだ。この一つ一つのことが私の財産ではないか、これから残りの期間、このいい環境を使ってもっと日本語と先進技術を身につけよう」と思い直しました。

両手でお茶を持ってゆっくり一口啜って初めは苦くてまるで苦痛、失敗、不遇の味のようなのですが、じっくり味わううちに淡く微かな甘味が出てきます。それは幸福、成功、希望の味のように思います。今をぐるぐる舞いながらも一生懸命頑張ってこそいい薫りのするお茶になるのだと思います。

こうして、私は毎日、お茶を飲むのが好きになりました。そしてお茶の葉が舞う姿を見るのが特に好きになりました。まるで毎日の自分の姿を見ているようです。

日本の上司は私に人生のお茶を注いでくれたと思います。おかげで昨年12月日本語能力試験1級に合格しました。ありがとうございます。帰国まであと半年ほどになりましたが、最後まで一生懸命頑張りたいと思います。