

Kanji Camp

Japanese Language & Cultural Exploration

www.kanjicamp.info

tutoring@KanjiCamp.info

NEWS FLASH

Special Edition

Winter 2006

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Dear Students and Parents,

Within this News Flash you will find valuable information about program activities and upcoming events. Regards, the Tutoring Team

Kanji Camp's New Classroom

Thanks to you, Kanji Camp and IBLCI lessons outgrew the space in the study room at the local library. Now we have approximately 1000 sq. ft. to use via the main floor of the [REDACTED]. This offers plenty of room for our full Japanese studies library and media center. We also have a kitchen, serving coffee, tea and soda. And students are looking forward to upcoming cultural parties and cooking lessons.

The additional space offers room for more interactive cultural lessons. Already Kanji Club Tigers and Dragons have studied the Japanese artist Hokusai. Dragon member, Chris [REDACTED] recently blew us all away with his Hokusai contest submission. Chris first used the knowledge he learned about the famous wood block artist to create his own Hokusai style artwork. He first used the computer to compile clip art image for his design. Then he used a special carving rubber to carve his design and then add color. Chris earned the opportunity to choose something off our student award shelf. The artwork is on display in the classroom. Kevin [REDACTED] who had won in previous weeks for his Monster project, also deserves an honorable mention for his Hokusai style color pencil drawing. From the architectural designs captured in Hokusai, we've moved naturally to learning about shrines and temples. This week students are designing their own temple compounds first on paper. We will continue to study Japanese architecture through the coming weeks with additional projects.

Socks & Slippers: Classroom Etiquette & Protocol

It's probably an important idea for students to check their socks before they depart for Japanese class. A Japanese classroom, office and home all requires the removing of outside shoes upon entering to don clean inside slippers. Obviously, this social custom comes from the fact that Japan is a wet land of rice patties, which could create a rather muddy floor situation.

For those who are not storing their slippers in the shoe rack or are simply not fans of slippers, sock feet are acceptable, but no barefeet please. We do want to warn you the kitchen floor can be cool in winter. And its just a cultural FYI, it is not good form to wear your slippers to and from class...it rather defeats the sanitation and cleanliness purposes of removing outdoor shoes.

Just for clarification, the tile foyer is a legitimate place to step in the classroom and walk with shoes. The natural shoes-off "barrier" is the carpet. There are two chairs near the entrance allowing for comfortable shoe swapping, Mr. Roger's style. These chairs are also comfy waiting spots for students who arrive five minutes early or need to stay a few minutes late waiting for transportation. (Students are also welcome to sit on the comfy sofa in the "media area" or in the kitchen.) The proper shoe protocol in a "genkan" or Japanese entrance is to line your street shoes with their backs against the step, so not to trip folks entering and exiting.

Please note like many public and private schools today we have wrestled with the question of whether a locked or unlocked door is better security policy for the classroom. Considering both sides of the issue, presently the front door is normally unlocked to allow students to freely enter for their class time. Please do not ring the bell. (If the door gets accidentally locked, please simply knock.) The polite approach is to gently open the door so not to "take out" an unsuspecting student whose departing. So far no collisions... Then simply quietly say "Gomen kudasai" upon entering and —ojama shimasu while seated to don slippers. These social graces mean "excuse me please—I'm troubling you". After class "Saki ni sitresimasu" while putting on street shoes and "ojama simasita" upon departing the door is appropriate. This is the culturally respectful "sorry to be leaving ahead of you"—"thank you for letting me trouble you".

As many of you know most lessons start and end on the hour, so while we appreciate your punctuality. Please know that if there are special concerns you need to chat about for your student, email is still the best contact method for discussin issues, requesting recommendation letters or scheduling morning 3D or phone appointments. We'll also appreciate student's helping to ensure the outside porchlight get's flipped on to help welcome all students as the sun goes down. Instructors have found this polite custom a bit of a challenge in the seconds between classes, particularly on busy lesson days. Classroom hours can be found on our website.

Dragons Thanksgiving

Kanji Club Dragons will have a make-up lesson on Saturday December 9th, 10 a.m.-12 p.m.. to make up for Wednesday, Thanksgiving eve lesson.

Where do we park?

The questions on parking can easily be answered. Firstly, please respect the clearly marked street ordinances on parking and no parking. Beyond that, day students should park [REDACTED]

Evening and weekend students may also park in the small parking lot to the east of the storage garage.

Celebrating Anniversaries

Chris -kun was awarded a certificate celebrating having completed a year of studying with our program. Chris is the first to receive this award. Alexia-san may soon follow.

Dedicated students who reach their year anniversary receive a special certificate with the first school tenant on it--the Chu character, meaning loyalty. Students can earn 5 special character certificates in all.

Family Fieldtrip

This December we invite all Kanji Campers to join us on a Thursday for a field trip to view the Japanese art exhibit at the Art Museum. We've targeted Thursday December 14th. We'll appreciate hearing from any parents who wish to join us and who can help with carpooling/ transportation.

Christmas Lessons

Students with Monday lessons that will fall on December 25th will be rescheduled for Thursday, December 28, 2006. *Please inform us ASAP of your winter travel plans.*



LET'S GO!

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Kanji Camp
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TO:

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Parent Questions & Our Answers

Q: How is the new classroom working out?

A: Its wonderful to have a white board, more physical space and esthetically a more comfortable study environment. While its pleasant to be able to have hot tea or a cool beverage and a snack to help keep the brain sharp, we've been able to do more because we have more tools and resources at our disposal. To aid comprehension, we've begun listening exercises with CDs and will likely show segments of PG films. Your students have probably also brought home some cultural, craft assignments. Additionally, this month we will be welcoming special Japanese guests to help us learn Sumi-e, Kimono and Tea Ceremony, etc. So stay tuned . . .

Q: Are parents allowed in the classroom?

A: Parents should feel welcome in the classroom at all times. Having communicated our hospitality feelings, please refer to the Kanji Camp/IBLCI standard operating procedures regarding observing lessons. The parent/guardian must be someone officially listed on the student's transportation release. Many parents simply pop in and out during drop off and pick-up.

Q: What's the hardest thing about teaching Japanese to non-Japanese students?

A: Generally, the challenge is getting students to regularly practice Japanese disciplines and consider Japanese protocols during each class. For example, students don't becoming good bowers, if they never bow to classmates or instructors. Students who continue to speak English, when they truly have the skills and vocabulary to communicate completely in Japanese never move from beginner to the intermediate level. Often students don't realize that each time they do something a certain way, it creates a habit. And in our experience these habits do not automatically change once they reach a fluency level to earn a native instructor. In Japanese culture it is the teacher of the art form whose job it is to instruct the student on what is and isn't correct. While we obviously do not run things in an extreme manner, Kanji Camp wants all students to be successful with their Japanese studies based on real world applications. Our Japanese instructors have first hand knowledge of applications, so we strongly encourage students to take advantage of all consult. Kanji Camp curriculum and class protocols are written to teach Japanese social or cultural etiquette as well as language skills. Students who choose to comply with the simplicities of these disciplines are very successful in managing their relationships with Japanese instructors, friends or future bosses. Students who do not follow simple protocol requests or behavior change requests do not create successful relationships with the Japanese. The simple reason is that they are accidentally applying Americanized individualized thinking to the situation. We prefer students practice authentic Japanese.