

TEMAN BARU

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THE JAPAN FOUNDATION, KUALA LUMPUR



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Asian Literature Project “YOMU”

As a continuation to the Asian Literature Project “YOMU” which was organised earlier in 2022, two writers, Amir Muhammad and Nadia Khan were invited to Japan in December for “Landscape Exchange”, an online diary exchange project coorganised by BUNKITSU Bookstore Roponggi and The Japan Foundation. Both Amir and Nadia, together with two writers from Japan, Ao Ohmae and Kon Itoh have never met each other exchanged “landscapes” through a series of photos, text and music prior to their first meeting in Tokyo for a Talk Session. Their exchange was also shared weekly for 4 weeks through BUNKITSU’s Twitter and Instagram accounts, and then exhibited at BUNKITSU Bookstore Roponggi after the Talk Session. During their trip to Japan, they visited “Kyoto Literary Residency”, a programme dedicated to providing a place for writers and translators around the world to focus on their writing. Let’s read their sharings from their trip below!



Compared to the last time I was in Japan (2014, for the Tokyo International Book Fair, an event which no longer exists) the major change this time is that I can use Google Lens translation! Now, signs and things on packaging are no longer lost in a fog of confusion.

This made me think of translation. There have not been many translations of creative work, aside from those with a strong commercial imperative like manga, from Japanese to Malay. Things should travel the other way, too: Aside from some efforts by ITBM, how many Malaysian creative texts now exist in Japanese?

When Buku Fixi translated a Haruki Murakami novel in 2015, we were his first Malaysian publisher. And he is world-famous! For too long, we have accepted that reading English versions should be ‘the standard’. One does not need to be a flaming nationalist (in fact, it’s advisable to never be a flaming nationalist) to see how this will weaken our own language.

I didn’t buy many books in Japan, but one was a newer translation of the great (but not terribly funny) Osamu Dazai novel. I want to compare it with the version I already have to see how they differ.

I am more determined to seek good translators who understand meaning, context and style. Maybe we can publish the middle-grade novel in this photo? Get in touch with me if you’re interested. It may not pay all that much, it may not make you all that famous, it may not ... where was I? oh yes... it may not do all that, but do it for the sake of art, and you will be as immortal as this reading statue.



Reported by Amir Muhammad



As I am writing this, I am facing some serious post-Japan blues. I’ve been to Japan before and I fell in love with it. This time, it felt like I was down on one knee, proposing.

It might’ve been the autumn breeze, the Shinjuku lights, the Kamo River... or simply because this time, I made some wonderful new friends.

The visit to Shogakukan, one of the most established publishing houses in Japan, was delightful given that we grew up with Japanese pop cultures such as Doraemon and Detective Conan. Already, I was fantasizing about how it would be like to have my stories published as manga.

At the event in Bunkitsu, a fantastic bookshop in the very hip Roppongi area, I met Ao-san who introduced me to manzai and Kon-san who taught me the beauty of *tanka*. I also met up with Togari-san, who was teaching my novel Gantung as part of the syllabus for Malay Studies at the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies (TUFS).

At TUFS, the students continue to amaze and amuse me with their interest in the Malay language (they even have Malay names!) - we shared our wonder for each other’s countries through stories of food, places and interesting perceptions (apparently, one of the students wants to stay in Malaysia because most of our buildings have swimming pools; much to the amusement of Togari-san and I).

In Kyoto, I take it as a sign more than mere coincidence that the event was held at Kyoto Arts Centre - a building that was previously a private elementary school and instantly gave me Gantung vibes; it felt like my novel could’ve very much taken place there (although the setting of my novel was a private high school - but the characters’ emotional maturity may very well be elementary).

I found that there were too many similarities and enough differences between Malaysia and Japan for us to share such a unique, deep bond. Flying home, it also felt like I was moving away from home... On the plane ride, I was compelled to try my hand at *tanka*. And here it goes:

There is a yearning
After meaningful journeys
My soul returns home
My heart is left behind in
The land of the rising sun



Reported by Nadia Khan

JFKL Mini Series Episode 3 & 4: Kendo and Go

Reported by Connie Khong (JFKL)



The JFKL Mini-series kicked off to introduce Japanese arts and culture in Malaysia. In the previous 2 pilot episodes, we introduced Origami and Kendama.

In episode 3 of the Series, we took a closer look at Kendo. Kendo, loosely translated as “the way of the sword,” is a traditional Japanese martial art which descended from swordsmanship (kenjutsu) that uses bamboo swords (also known as shinai) and protective armour (bogu). Today, it is widely practiced in Japan and many other nations across the world, including Malaysia. During this episode, we had the opportunity to feature and share the journey of Christopher Wong and Aimi Sabri, two Kendo enthusiasts and senseis. We asked them about learning Kendo, and what they find most fascinating about it. They also talked about Kendo in Malaysia, and their own Kendo journey, including their experience training and participating in tournaments. For those who may be interested, we included details on how they could get more information on Kendo in Malaysia.

In episode 4, we spoke to Mr. Chow Chee Wen, the Vice President of the Malaysian Weiqi Association and Go Instructor. Go is an abstract strategy board game for two players, aimed at gaining more territory than the opponent. As a fellow Go enthusiast himself, he introduced us to Go, and how to play the game. He also walked us through the basic rules and outlined the game strategy. In the episode, he also shared about the benefits of learning and playing Go. Mr. Chow, then talked about Go in Malaysia, and shared with us his journey and experience in playing in different communities and even traveling abroad to participate in tournaments. Indeed, the simple game of Go took him to many places and allowed him to meet new people, make new friends. Now as an instructor at a local university, he currently teaches the younger generation to appreciate this wonderful strategy game.

The JFKL Mini-series was initiated to introduce Japanese Arts and Culture in Malaysia. You can now watch these episodes and the previous ones on our YouTube channel. For more info, visit <https://www.jfkl.org.my/events/jfkl-mini-series>

KAWAGUCHI Toshikazu in Malaysia

Reported by Connie Khong (JFKL)

George Town Literary Festival (GTLF) returned for its 12th edition from 24 to 27 November 2022 with the theme, Taming the Wild.

This year, the Japan Foundation, Kuala Lumpur (JFKL) supported GTLF by bringing over the well-known author, KAWAGUCHI Toshikazu, of the famed Before The Coffee Gets Cold series. Kawaguchi-sensei participated in 2 different sessions over a span of 4 days at the Penang festival before heading over to Books Kinokuniya Malaysia at Suria KLCC.

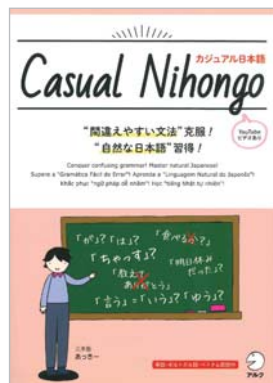
In a special one-on-one session at the festival, the writer spoke to Shazmin Shamsuddin about his internationally bestselling novel. Often described as heartwarming, wistful, mysterious and delightfully quirky, his work explores the age-old question: What would you do if you could travel back in time? Is there someone you would want to meet, maybe for one last time? And if you can't change anything, would you still travel back?

Back in Kuala Lumpur, he continued that conversation about his life and his work at a session in Kinokuniya. Fans of his book series also asked him interesting questions during the “Ask Kawaguchi Anything” session, including his favourite meal here in Malaysia. The session wrapped with a meet & greet and book signing. He also updated us on upcoming plans for the series; the fifth book will be out in March 2023.

Although it was his first visit to Malaysia, he was well-received by audiences and festival goers. We look forward to welcoming him back again soon.



What's New: LIBRARY



JLPT聴解N4ポイント & プラクティス

By TASHIRO Hitomo / Publisher: 3A Corporation 2021/ Library Call No.810.7925

Points & Practice (ポイント & プラクティス) is a new series of JLPT preparatory books to help you acquire the minimum skills to pass the JLPT test within a short period of time. This exercise book is focused on listening comprehension (聴解) of Level N4, consisting of three sections, "Questions Part", "Mock Tests", and "List Part." The Questions Part is made up of 12 Lessons, which are set up to help you immediately respond to questions, comprehend the task required and how to listen effectively. Other than listening on comprehension, books on reading comprehension (読解), vocabulary and Kanji (文字/語彙) for levels N3 to N5 are also available in the library.

カジュアル日本語 Casual Nihongo

By Kakki / Publisher: ALC 2020 / Library Call No.817.8T KAK

「教えてありがとう。」「これ食べるか?」「言う=ゆう?いう?」 Would I be wrong?!

The author of this book is a Japanese language instructor who not only teaches at school, but also runs a YouTube channel called "Sambon Juku" (三本塾) to teach Japanese to people around the world. "Conquer confusing grammar and master natural Japanese" is the goal of this book for casual Japanese study. This text illustrates how to use various expressions and grammar using manga to help learners visualize how to use them in typical conversations. You will be able to have fun while learning natural Japanese through realistic scenes! It is suitable for all levels but best for learners who have passed JLPT N5 and N4 and those who already have a grasp of basic Japanese.

Before Your Memory Fades

By KAWAGUCHI Toshikazu, Translated by Geoffrey Trousselot / Publisher: Picador, London 2022 / Library Call No.895.635 KAW

Kawaguchi's debut work as a novelist, "Before the Coffee Gets Cold" (コーヒーが冷めないうちに), is adapted from his stage play which won the 10th Sugunami Drama Festival Grand Prize. "Before the Coffee Gets Cold" has become an international bestseller, and adapted for the screen as "Café Funiculi Funicula" in 2018.

"Before Your Memory Fades" (思い出が消えないうちに), the third novel in the series, follows four new customers at Café Donna Donna on the hillside of Mt. Hakodate, Hokkaido, who undergo the extraordinary experience of traveling back in time in order to connect with someone important to them until their cup of coffee gets cold. They cannot change the present with this journey, but they choose it to relive the memories they had locked up inside. The heartwarming stories will catch the readers emotionally and invite them to ask themselves once again, "Who would you meet if you could travel back in time?" "Before the Coffee Gets Cold" (Series 1) and "Tales from the Café" (Series 2) are also available in the library.

Hello Sandwich Japan: A Travel Guide by Creative Ebony Bizys

By Ebony Bizys / Publisher: Hardie Grant Travel 2021 / Library Call No.915.20452 EBO

Do you have plans to travel Japan? This is a stunning and well-curated guidebook on Japan packed with the most useful local's insider tips for your vacation in Japan. Ebony Bizys has been living in Tokyo since 2010 and has uncovered the absolutely best places around Japan. This book features a curated selection of places to go from gardens, contemporary galleries, peaceful ryokan retreats, 'kawaii' gift shops and top-notch coffee spots, to unbeatable izakaya (Japanese style pubs), and so on.

Lots more new arrivals are available in the library!

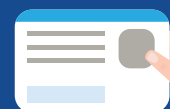
Get a JFKL Membership!

You can enjoy:

- borrowing library materials (up to 5 items for 2 weeks)
- watching DVDs & listening to CDs at the AV corner
- having discount tickets for selected JFKL events

RM10 (annual fee) and 1 photo (passport size) are required for new registration.

For the latest information, please visit our website, Facebook and Instagram page.



Japanese Language Workbook Project for Secondary School Students

Online Workshop for Effective Usage of the Workbook and Illustrations

Reported by Nur Diyana Abdul Rahman (JFKL)



During the latter half of 2021, JFKL with the cooperation of Ministry of Education Malaysia initiated a new project to develop a Japanese language workbook with illustrations to complement the official textbook for lower secondary school students by the ministry. Together with JFKL, fifteen Japanese language teachers under the ministry were involved in this effort as writers. Prior to the selection of these writers as editorial committee members and the development of this workbook, two online workshops were held on 23 September and 6 October 2021 focusing on good question patterns. Two physical editorial meetings were then held in November 2021 and January 2022 in Kuala Lumpur to kick-off the actual work to develop the exercises supplementing the chapters in the textbook.



Following the completion of all chapters, an online workshop was conducted on 10 November 2022 to introduce the workbook to teachers and to share some tips of its effective usage. Attended by 60 teachers, JFKL also shared the illustrations created for this workbook. Over the 2-hour workshop,

teachers were also able to share their thoughts on the exercises, approaches to students and issues they have been experiencing in the classroom. The workbook and illustrations are freely available for secondary school teachers only, giving them the freedom to utilise these resources in their classroom and school activities.

The 4th JFKL Saturday Half-day Workshop for Japanese Language Teachers, 2022

Reported by OSADA Kanako (JFKL)

The 4th JFKL Saturday Half-day Workshop for Japanese Language Teachers 2022 was conducted on 26 November on the theme "Let's Think About Transitive Verbs and Intransitive Verbs in Japanese Language".

Prior to the workshop, a survey of the registered participants revealed that most of them found it difficult to distinguish between transitive and intransitive verbs. In response to this the speaker for this workshop, Ms. OSADA Kanako, guided the participants on the different usage of both verbs, including how to teach them effectively to elementary level learners.

The workshop was attended by 43 local Japanese language teachers and you may read some of the feedbacks we received below.

Overall, the participants were satisfied with this workshop and had fruitful discussions amongst themselves as well. We would like to thank them all for their continuous support.

Our 5th workshop will be held on 11 February. For those who are interested, please stay tuned to our announcement on Facebook and Instagram.



Workshop flyer



Group photo

"I got to know when to use transitive verb versus intransitive verb."

"I realized that I had just been concentrating on understanding grammar and not thought about the 'usage situation' at all."

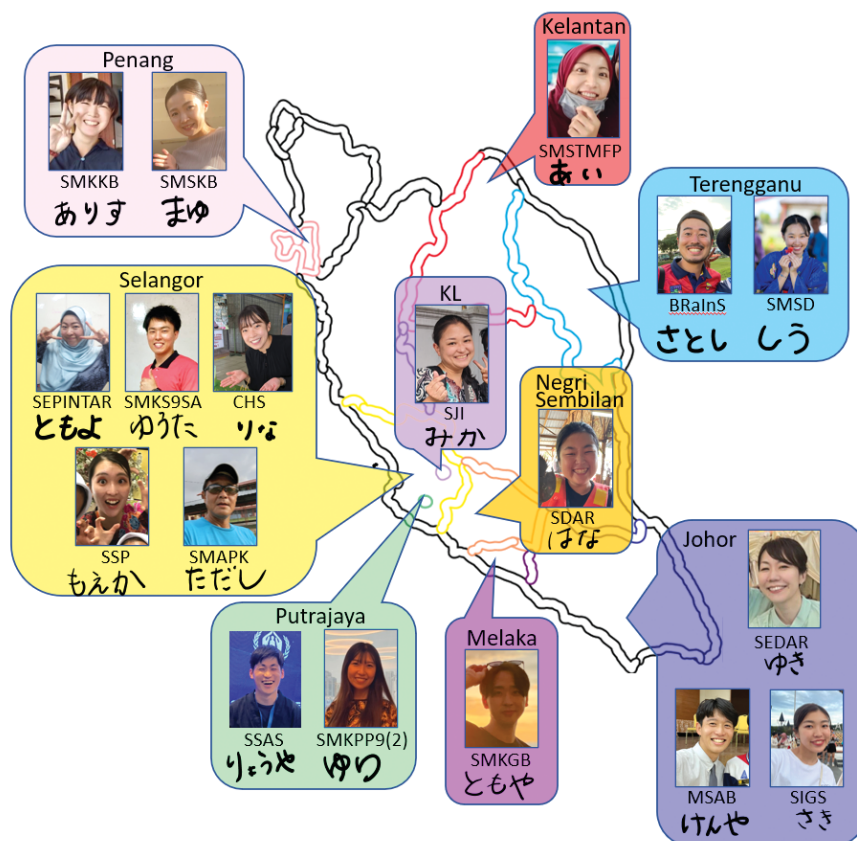
"I was able to understand and discover how to use 'ている' and 'てある'"

"It was a good opportunity to sort out the things that I didn't understand well and I learnt how to teach effectively."

8th Batch NIHONGO Partners: Final report

Reported by the JFKL NP Team

The first batch dispatched to Malaysia since the COVID-19 pandemic hit the world, the 8th Batch NIHONGO Partners (NP) has successfully completed their seven-month mission in this country. Their main aim was to assist local Japanese language teachers and students with language learning and cultural understanding at selected secondary schools. The NIHONGO Partners' team at JFKL is delighted to share a compilation of the NPs' reports on their school activities, filled with fond memories of their days with the teachers, students and stay in Malaysia. Hope you'll enjoy reading about their experiences!



NPs' school mapping with their autographs

-School life-

Assisting the local Japanese language teachers in Malaysian secondary schools was not an easy task, especially when most of the NPs did not have teaching credentials nor prior experience. Nonetheless, the NPs put forth their best effort to help students improve their Japanese language and their understanding of Japanese culture.



Class in session

1. Classroom Activities (by Wada A.)

As an NP at the school I was dispatched to, I often observed and checked how the students were doing in class, especially when it came to Japanese pronunciation and writing the Japanese alphabet – hiragana, katakana, and kanji. I helped as much as possible to come up with examples on how to use the new grammar in sentences.

Each NP had different ways to get involved in classes depending on their own personal approach. Some NPs used encouraging words like “*subarashii!*” and “*iidesune!*” to praise students, others sat with them and answered questions and communicated with them compassionately. As NPs, we found it rewarding when in due course students started speaking up more and asking questions.



Making zunda mochi

2. Cultural Introductions (by Yokosawa M.)

To expose students to Japanese culture, we introduced a wide range of Japanese food and traditional games in class and during extracurricular activities. We were careful to only use halal ingredients out of respect for the fact that the majority students in this country are Muslim. We were also mindful when it came to talking about religions other than Islam so as to not misinform them.

What left the greatest impression on me was when we made “*zunda mochi*” on one occasion. *Zunda mochi* is a traditional dish from Sendai in Miyagi prefecture. I was so delighted to be able to talk about my hometown with the students during this activity. Cultural activities such as these were able to elevate the motivation of Japanese language students, and others who were not taking the subject also developed an interest in both the language and culture.

8th Batch NIHONGO Partners: Final report

Reported by the JFKL NP Team

3. School Events (by Okutani K.)

There were many events in Malaysian schools that I, as a Japanese, had never experienced before.

One of them was the Teacher's Day celebration where the students expressed their gratitude to teachers. There are no such events in Japanese schools. Imagine, a day for students to show appreciation to teachers who have been taking care of them... What a nice culture.

I also experienced the Malaysian Independence Day celebration organized by school. As the name suggests, it is to celebrate Malaysia's independence from colonial occupation. During this celebration, the students and teachers enthusiastically waved Malaysian flags with pride. In Japan, it is a rare occurrence for people to wave the national flag while it seems like a natural thing to do in Malaysia. I did feel the Malaysians' love and patriotism for their country. I also had the chance to join a choir performance with students where we sang national-themed songs. It was a wonderful experience that I will never forget.



Malaysian Independence Day celebration

-Daily life-

Aside from carrying out tasks in schools, the NPs were also challenged in their daily lives navigating within a foreign country. It took time to assimilate with the Malaysian food, culture, and people, but during their stay NPs warmed up to the notable Malaysian hospitality.

1. Food (by Maeda Y.)

I found that Malaysian people really love food compared to Japanese and feasts were often held in various places. The teachers at the school are very close to one another that they often share food in the staff room, and that is a big difference from Japan. When the teachers were rushing between classes, there was always food available for them to stay energized before facing their active students. I also enjoyed it!

Whenever my plate was empty, some teachers would encourage me to get helpings. The more a guest eats, the happier they are. Sometimes I refilled as many as five times! Besides the feasts, many teachers gave me food and jokingly told me to eat and fatten up. It was through mealtimes such as this that I was able to use Malay. Thank you all for the delicious Malay food and the pleasant *makan* time.



BBQ during break time

2. Friendly and Kind Personality (by Tanahara M.)

People in Malaysia are very friendly. They smiled when passing each other, even strangers smiled when their eyes met yours. Some even tried to communicate with us using the basic Japanese they knew. Neighbors who we would meet for the first time already knew about us. They seemed to have heard about us from someone else which is common when welcoming new people to the neighborhood. In Japan, such things are rarer these days because of the very strict adherence to privacy.

Some neighbors were kind enough to share food and invite us to home parties. They were so caring to the point of helping us get rid of bugs at our place. Our impression was that they shared their joy by helping each other. It gave us a sense of security. We will miss the Malaysian atmosphere when we return to Japan.



With the drink stand staff who knows my drink preference

3. Flexibility (by Nishida S.)

Malaysian people are generous. But when it comes to time, it might surprise the Japanese people. On one occasion where I attended a wedding ceremony, the host said that you can come and leave anytime you want. If I were the host, I would not be able to deal with not knowing the time and the number of people coming. But the host welcomed and treated us well even though it was the first time we had met in person. We appreciated their hospitality and generosity! Thanks to them, we learnt about Malaysian wedding ceremonies and gained a lot of experience.



At a wedding ceremony



NPs leaving Malaysia

Our journey of seven months in Malaysia has ended. Even though we were supposed to assist the local teachers and students learn Japanese, we feel that we also learnt quite a lot from Malaysia such as the values of diversity, which Malaysia has an abundance of. After this journey, we hope to inspire Japanese people through what we have learnt. We hope NIHONGO Partners will keep having an active role in enhancing the relationship between Malaysia and Japan. Terima kasih banyak.

**All 18 members of 8th batch NP safely returned to Japan on October 28, 2022. We would like to express our sincere gratitude to the principals and CPs of the host schools and all those who have been involved. Thank you very much.*

EVENT LISTING

JANUARY 9 (Mon)	2022/2023 Malaysia Japanese Language Education Seminar(MJLES) Registration Open
JANUARY 14 (Sat)	NIHON MATSURI Japan Festival Happening at Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM), Kedah
FEBRUARY 11 (Sat)	The 5th JFKL Saturday Half-day Workshop for Japanese Language Teachers, 2022/2023 “Reading Comprehension in Elementary Level” with speaker Ms. TENGAN Celica (lecturer, JFKL)
FEBRUARY 18 (Sat)	The Weekend Japanese Film Show Stay tuned for details on our website, Facebook and Instagram accounts in February!
FEBRUARY 25 (Sat)	International Online Event for MINATO Users —Let's guide tourist spots in your own country in Japanese! —
FEBRUARY 26 (Sun)	Japanese Skit Contest 2022 Closing date for submission (entry period extended!)

Event listings will be updated from time to time. Stay tuned for updates on our website and official channels.

Cakap-Cakap Corner



KUGAI Kyoko
Assistant Head,
Cultural Affairs Department

The Japanese Film Festival in Malaysia, fondly called JFF, just celebrated its 18th anniversary this September-October and now we're rushing to pack and deliver gifts to our beloved audience members who watched more than 8 titles at the festival.

“Stamp Rally” is something very unique to Japan. Those who have traveled to Japan may have noticed that some local cities with tourist sites often organise this activity to get people to visit them by collecting stamps from each spot. It's very common in Japan and I never knew that even the term was a Japanese English word until we started doing the “Stamp Rally” for JFF!

The JFF Stamp Rally started in 2012 out of a genuine interest to know how many films regular patrons actually watched at the Festival. We have been blessed with an enthusiastic audience who spend their whole weekend and some weekday nights with us to catch many shows. We started to greet to each other every time they came back to the cinema hall and started thinking of a way to convey our gratitude. After running it for 8 years, it's always such a pleasant moment for us to see our loyal patrons proudly appear at the cinema in their JFF T-shirt, carrying the JFF tote bag from previous years.

We hope to continue this Stamp Rally as long as JFF continues (please let us know if any companies are interested in sponsoring the goodies! ;p) and look forward to seeing you at JFF 2023!

JFKL Holiday Notice:

JFKL Office Holiday

2 January – New Year Holiday
23 – 24 January – Chinese New Year
1 February – Federal Territory Holiday
6 February – Thaipusam

JFKL Library Holiday

24 January – Chinese New Year
1 February – Federal Territory Holiday



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JFKL membership is available upon application. Membership fee is RM10 per year.

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