

SAKAI Japanese Knives: The Sharpest in the World!

KEIZO ISHIBASHI / ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, JLGC (REPRESENTATIVE, SAKAI CITY)



As Japan's largest port during the Medieval Period, Sakai had been at the center of Japan's commercial activity, and as such was recognized as the birthplace of much of Japanese culture. In fact, quite a bit of history concerning the root of Japanese culture is still visible there.

The quality and nutritional value of Japanese cuisine is well known throughout the world, however, did you know that SAKAI Japanese knives are used by the majority of professional chefs in Japan to prepare such cuisine?

The secret of SAKAI Japanese knives is in the selection of high quality steel and a special heat treatment followed by a rapid cooling process called quenching. The quenching process begins after the steel has been heated anywhere from 1382 to 1562 degrees Fahrenheit which improves the hardness of the steel. Determining the right heating temperature depends on the materials used by the individual craftsman a process which is kept strictly confidential. Then the knives will be heated once again to a range between 356 - 392 degrees Fahrenheit and cooled a second time naturally. The result produces a tough, strong and stable steel knife!

SAKAI Japanese knives are handmade and not mass produced. Therefore the cutlery is difficult to market abroad. Now, however, Sakai has begun to campaign actively to promote distributing its brand product conveying its exclusive quality and tradition.

The City of Sakai held several events to promote their Japanese knives this past November at the Culinary Institute of America in California and the Japan Society in New York City. Chef/Partner and

USHG (Union Square Hospitality Group) Chief of Culinary Development, Michel Romano, displayed thirty Japanese knives from his personal collection at these events and spoke extensively about his affection for the knives. Also, certified artisans living in Sakai attended these events and demonstrated the art of handling and maintaining the Japanese knives.



Sakai's ability to market and promote their knives has been an ongoing challenge. The New York International Gift Fair was held from January 30 to February 3, 2011 at the Jacob Javits Convention Center in New York City. The City of Sakai sponsored an exhibit booth where SAKAI knives were artistically showcased. Sakai City's Kaneshige Cutlery Co., displayed traditional Japanese kitchen knives as well as beautiful paper knives. The masters of cutlery from the company showed the correct manner to sharpen Japanese knives and engraved them by hand with Kanji characters.

As the love for Japanese cuisine spreads worldwide, SAKAI Japanese knives exemplifying the highest standards and quality craftsmanship will become the popular brand for chefs worldwide. For further information, please visit the website of the Sakai City Industrial Promotion Center. Upcoming events will be displayed at the top of the page, or you can contact me at (ishibashi@jlgc.org).

Sakai City Industrial Promotion Center:
<http://www.sakai-ipc.jp/en/>



Multiculturalism in Canada / Diversity Versus Assimilation: an Especially Tricky Debate in Quebec

MATTHEW GILLAM / SENIOR RESEARCHER, JLGC

Immigrants are the lifeblood of Canada, and have been throughout its history. In 2006, almost 20 percent of the population of roughly 32.5 million was born outside of the country. This is the highest percentage since 1931, when 22.2 percent of Canadians were foreign-born. These numbers, however, do not tell the whole story. In the years before 1961, roughly 90 percent of all immigrants, on average, came from Europe, whereas since 2001 that number has dropped to around 16 percent, with over 58 percent of immigrants now coming from Asia, and roughly another 22 percent coming from Africa, the Caribbean, Central and South America, and Oceania.

It seems to be inescapable, though, that with immigration comes controversy. This has become apparent to me in the course of my research on immigration issues in Canada, where the tension between older, established groups and newcomers is laid on top of the centuries-old friction between the French-descended Quebecois and the English-descended Canadians. While all provinces of Canada have officially embraced multiculturalism as government and social policy to a greater or lesser degree, Quebec is perhaps having a more difficult time developing a consensus on what “multiculturalism” and “diversity” mean and how to reconcile these with a longstanding policy of assimilation as its declining francophone population struggles to maintain its political and cultural vitality.

The federal government's multicultural policy was announced in 1971 and was enshrined in the nation's Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1982. In 1988 Canada passed the Multiculturalism Act, the first of its kind in the world, to preserve and promote the plethora of cultural heritages in Canada and ensure that federal law and government policies respect the right of all Canadians to enjoy the rights of citizenship without regard to their cultural background.

Every province and territory has some kind of support for multicultural groups and activities, usually within the context of helping to promote immigration to their regions. The nature of these efforts and how they are carried out differ in each province and territory, and are conducted in conjunction with similar programs at the municipal level in many places.

Within this context, however, Quebec has in many ways had the most contentious relationship with its immigrants. They were widely blamed by the Quebecois for the failure of the 1995 referendum on independence, and the news is periodically dominated by stories such as the community that passed a bylaw in 2007 prohibiting the covering of faces and the stoning of women - clearly aimed at Muslims - or the latest debate surrounding the refusal of security guards at the Quebec National Assembly to allow Sikhs into the chamber who had been invited to speak but were wearing kirpans (ceremonial knives with religious significance to them). Both of these cases have occurred in the context of the ongoing debate over “reasonable accommodation” of minorities and just exactly what this phrase means. It seems that in Quebec, with its francophone population already deeply anxious about their plight within the overwhelmingly anglophone continent of North America, the government's emphasis remains on having minorities and newcomers adopt the French language and local customs in order to strengthen the otherwise declining economic and demographic position of the francophone Quebecois. Accommodations to newcomers that may be difficult enough for the more established, generally Northern European-derived population in the rest of Canada become even more difficult for these long-embattled residents of Quebec.

On top of this, especially in the kirpan debate, is the fact of greatly heightened concerns over security, well known to anyone who has tried to

board an airplane in recent years, and a general unease about where the loyalty and sympathies lie of people with ties to other countries, especially countries with radical ethnic or religious movements.

For Quebec, however, as for the rest of Canada, the future ultimately depends on attracting immigrants to bring new life and new activity into an area with declining birthrates and an aging population. The question is how to accommodate and support both groups to everyone's mutual long-term advantage.

Japan Local Government Center has been actively working to provide insight into programs and policies across the United States and Canada that attempt to support recent immigrants and facilitate their adaptation to a new life here in North America, so that local governments in Japan will be able to learn from efforts here as they also search for ways to reach out to and support their own foreign residents. Over the last few years we have been involved in research into medical interpreter services for non-English-speaking hospital patients, programs to provide information to residents on municipal government and services, and language training programs for newcomers, among other topics. Just last year, members of our staff conducted research across Canada on the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) program, as well as provincial and nonprofit efforts associated with this to assist their immigrant communities in learning English and French and adapting to life in their new home.

Japan has a deep interest in how best to serve and support its own growing population of foreign residents, and looks to Canada as a leader in this effort for ideas and inspiration, as well as for a greater understanding of the issues that arise as people move between countries and cultures seeking a better life.

JETAADC- Reaching Out to DC Socially, Professionally, and Culturally

MAURICE MALONEY / PRESIDENT, JET ALUMNI ASSOCIATION, WASHINGTON D.C.



JETAADC Career Development Event

Since 1990, the Japan Exchange and Teaching Program Alumni Association, Washington, D.C. (JETAADC) has been helping returning JETs connect to the Japanese Community and other professional organizations in the greater Washington, DC area. Through outreach and active members, JETAADC has grown to become a vibrant addition to the Washington, DC community.

As a social organization, JETAADC organizes a number of events incorporating a wide variety of interests to engage and reach out to the most members possible. 2010 events included monthly Networking Events, a Bonenkai, a trip to the National Zoo, a Washington Nationals game, and a JET idol style karaoke event presented at the New Year's Festival of the Japan Commerce Association of Washington.

In addition to social events, JETAADC engages its members professionally. In November, JETAADC hosted a two-day career development event, which included a resume writing session and a networking event. The networking event attracted over 70 professionals, both JETs and non-Jets, from fields as diverse as law, finance, non-profit management, and public relations. As part of this initiative, JETAADC redesigned and updated its Returner's Handbook, a 50-page document which includes a number of helpful career

advice articles, and information on Japanese businesses and activities in the DC area.

JETAADC's reaches out to the greater community by offering monthly volunteer opportunities for its members. 2010-11 was a great year for

JETAADC volunteer work, having raised almost \$3000 for local organizations. Events included the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure, the Fannie Mae Walk for the Homeless, DC Community Improvement Day, and active participation in Karma Kitchen, an experimental restaurant experience where there are no prices on the food.

JETAADC has also worked with the Embassy of Japan to develop a school visit program, the "JET Ambassadors Program." In addition to bringing Japanese culture to area schools, the program serves as a way of engaging JETs after they have returned from Japan. Test visits suggest this is a program that Washington area schools are ready to embrace.

Part of JETAADC's mission is cultural outreach as well. During the Cherry Blossom Festival in April, many JETAADC members staffed the Children's Tent, teaching hundreds of children katakana and Japanese games. In December of 2010, JETAADC partnered with the Smithsonian Institution to screen two Japan-related films, *Linda Linda Linda* and *The Harimaya Bridge*, the latter of which was written and directed by former JET Aaron Woolfolk. Working with the

Smithsonian, JETAADC invited Mr. Woolfolk to Washington to participate in a Q&A about his experiences in Japan both during JET and his time making the film. The event attracted about 350 audience members and local media and generated much discussion around the JET Program.

With so much happening over the course of 2010, keeping track of everything is a difficult task, however, JETAADC increased its online visibility in 2010 by launching a new website and utilizing web 2.0 tools, including Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn. Visit us at <http://www.dc.jetalumni.org/>.

From a small group of JET Program returners in 1990, JETAADC has made great strides to grow and integrate itself into the greater Washington, DC community. In doing so, JETAADC has strengthened the bonds between Japan and America at a grassroots level. 2010-2011 has been a very busy time for JETAADC, and the board and members are eager to carry that momentum into the following year.



JETAADC Film Event Poster 2010



Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure

Let's meet JETWit!

STEVEN HOROWITZ / CREATOR OF JETWIT.COM, BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR JETAA NY

My name is Steven Horowitz (Aichi-ken, Kariya-shi, 1992-94) and I'm the creator of JETWit.com, the leading source of news, information and job listings for JETs and JET alumni.

I created the site--which is an acronym for "JET Writers Interpreters & Translators"--in an effort to draw on the strength of the JET alumni community in order to provide a greater "return on investment" for Japan, particularly at the local government level.

(Note: The valuable role of JETWit was recently recognized in a "Letter of Support" written by the Consulate General of Japan in NY, which can be viewed at <http://jetwit.com/wordpress/2011/02/10/letter-of-support-for-jetwit-from-the-consulate-general-of-japan-in-new-york/>)

I previously served for 6 years as the Newsletter Editor for the New York chapter of the JET Alumni Association, and I've always been very focused on promoting the accomplishments of JETs and JET alumni and also finding creative ways to enable alumni to connect with the JET alumni community of over 50,000 worldwide and over 25,000 in the U.S. I've also always been interested in finding ways to foster cross-chapter collaboration and reach JET alumni everywhere, regardless of their location.

JETWit.com has enabled me (with the help of numerous JET alumni) to create a central information source and the quickest and easiest way to disseminate information and job listings



Ambassador Fujisaki, my daughter Helen and I

to the JETAA chapters and JET alumni community. As a result, when we learned there was discussion in the Japanese government about possible budget cuts to JET and JETAA, I was able to post articles and information on the JETWit.com site to keep everyone informed, generate feedback and discussion and rally alums and others to show their support for JET and JETAA.

I've also used the JETWit.com website as a platform for demonstrating the value of the JET Program, for helping numerous JETs find work opportunities and to generate responses from the JET alumni community for the "JET-Sister City List Project" and the "JET-Tourist Tally Project." In particular, I make significant use of social media tools such as Facebook and LinkedIn to increase the ability for JET alumni to connect and participate in strengthening the alumni community as well as with cultural outreach.

Getting JETs and JET alumni to contribute to JETWit.com in various ways is also been a wonderful experience. In addition to making the site more interesting to readers, I've made JETWit a place where job-hunting JET alums can "work" and gain experience and exposure which in turn is helpful for their careers. The "WITLife" posts by freelance interpreter, translator and writer Stacy Smith (CIR Kumamoto-ken, 2000-03) are a great example.

The JETWit.com website grew out of an email list I created while I was the JETAANY Newsletter Editor in order to recruit talented writers and gather translators together in order to



share work opportunities.

The JETWit mascot--named A.J.--was created by another JET alumnus, Zi Mei (Saitama-ken, 2005-07) who is a professional web and graphic designer. And to set up the JETWit.com website, I received a lot of help from JETAANY Webmaster and Web Guru Lee-Sean Huang (Oita-ken, Nakatsu-shi, 2003-06).



In addition to my work on JETWit.com, I also serve as a member of the Board of Directors for JETAA NY as well as the chapter's Professional Outreach & Development Chair. Professionally, I'm a former bankruptcy attorney who now works as a creative communications consultant and publishes an original cartoon series about bankruptcy called "Bankruptcy Bill" (<http://bankruptcybill.us>).

For more information about JETWit, go to <http://jetwit.com>