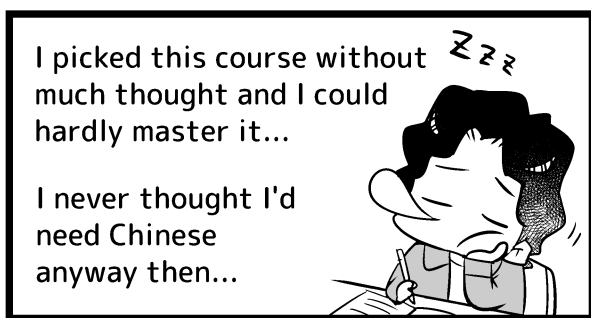
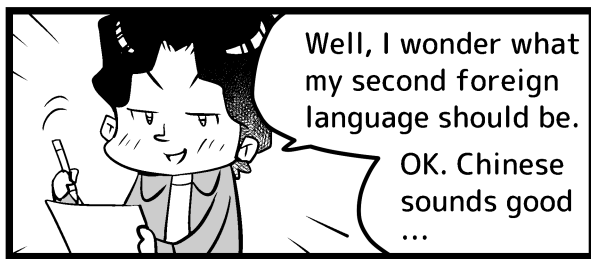
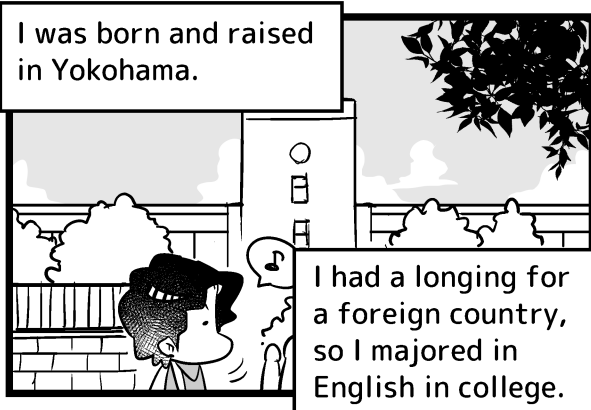
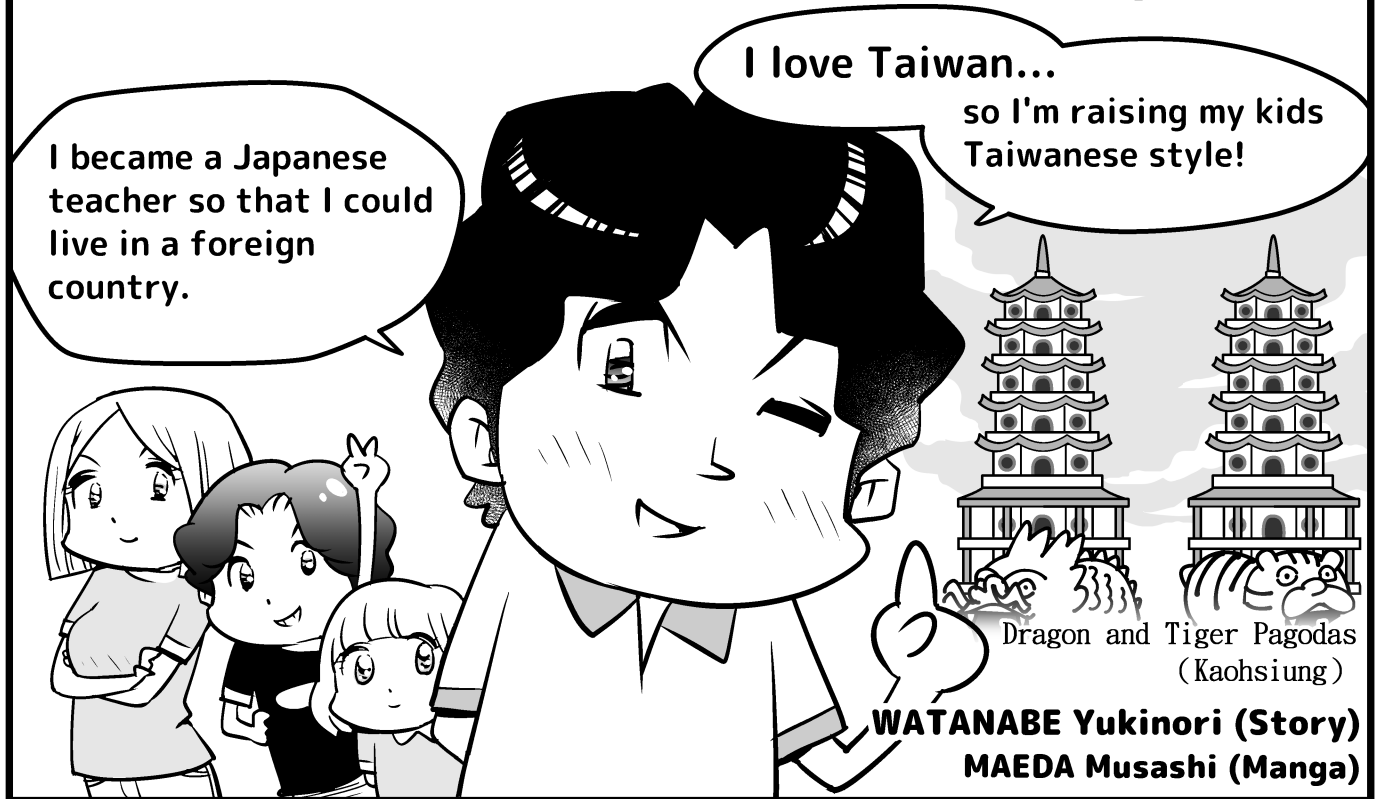


# Backpacker goes to Taiwan

YOSHIZAWA Daisuke (age 47)



But then one day it hit me...

If I became a Japanese teacher, I could work in a foreign country!

So I went back to Japan and enrolled in a Japanese language teacher training school and completed the official 420-hour course!

When it came time to look for a job as a Japanese language teacher...

Yeah!

If you want to gain experience, I recommend you go to Taiwan.

The employment counselor at my school told me that...

I came to Taiwan when I was 25 years old...

I got a job at a language school in Taipei(台北).

### Occupations for Japanese in Taiwan

Kaneto (2007) asks, "Why do Japanese tend to choose to become Japanese teachers in Taiwan?" She gathers information about the employment reality and policy on foreign workers at the time to answer this question. She also, points out the increasing trend of Japanese males with Taiwanese wives seeking a job. This is a very interesting paper.

I managed to do my daily work in Japanese and broken Chinese..

After about five years of experience, I was promoted to the head of a branch.

My salary went up, but I struggled as a middle manager.

I moved to a language school in Kaohsiung(高雄) when I was 30.

That's where I met my wife, Meili.

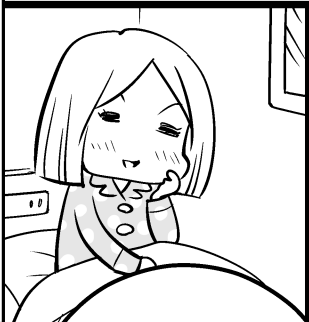
She was a colleague and teacher who had studied in Japan.

In about two years, I became an independent freelance Japanese teacher.

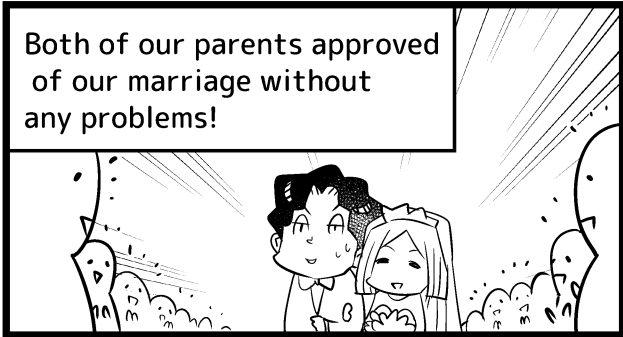
Just as my business was taking off, we decided to get married!



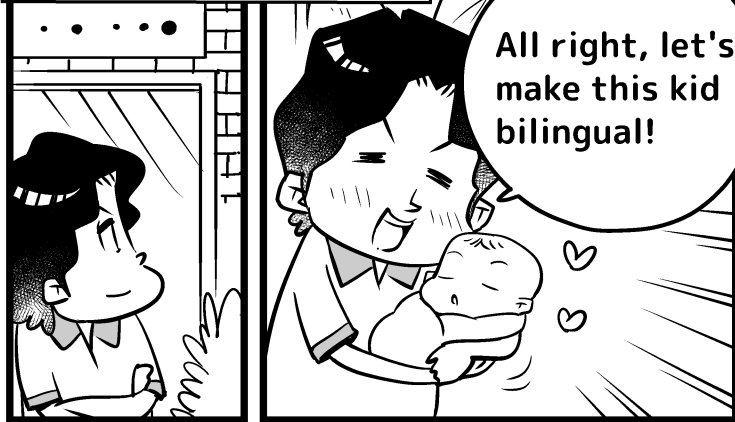
Then I went on to run my own school... Around that time, my first son, Takehiro (建宏), was born. We named him Jianhong (建宏) in Chinese. It is a popular name in Taiwan, and it uses the same Chinese characters as the Japanese name.



Both of our parents approved of our marriage without any problems!

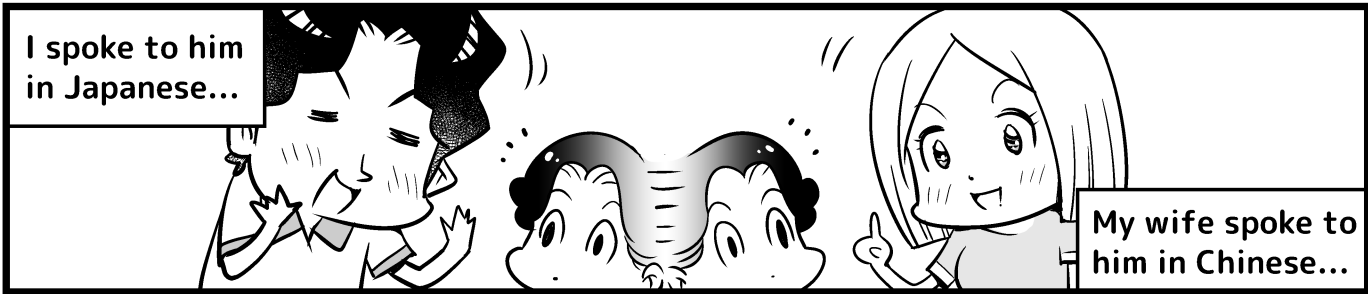


All right, let's make this kid bilingual!



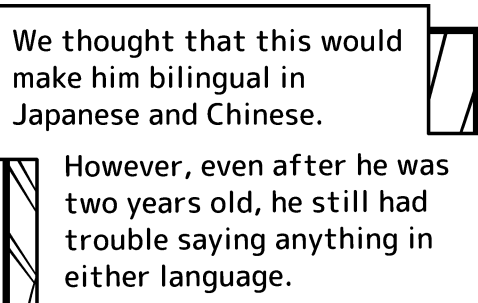
I spoke to him in Japanese...

My wife spoke to him in Chinese...

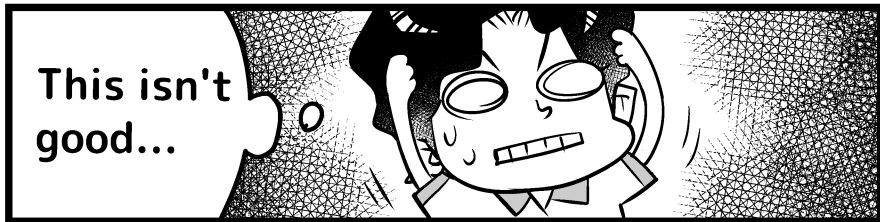


We thought that this would make him bilingual in Japanese and Chinese.

However, even after he was two years old, he still had trouble saying anything in either language.



This isn't good...

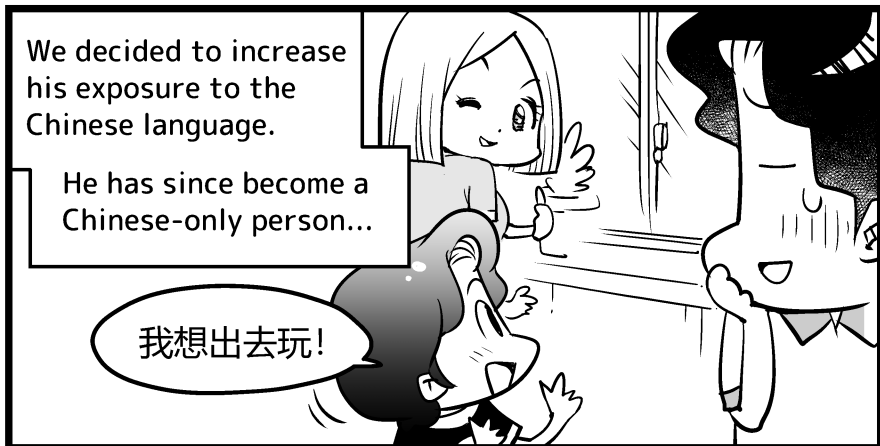


We decided to increase his exposure to the Chinese language.

He has since become a Chinese-only person...




我想出去玩!



**One parent, one language...**

A setup whereby each parent speaks a specific language to the child is widely shared among parents in Taiwan. Literature in bilingual education in the Japanese language predominantly focuses on Japanese/English bilingualism. Relatively little information is available on Japanese/Chinese bilingualism. Under this circumstance, the website of the Taipei Japanese Supplementary School (<https://www.tjss.org.tw/blank-26>) offers concise and accessible information about bilingualism in Taiwan.

If only I had tried a little harder to teach him Japanese...

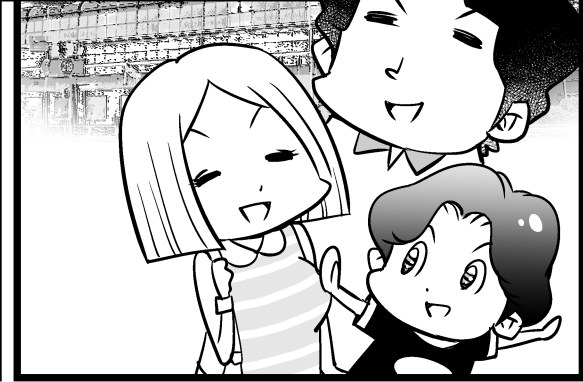
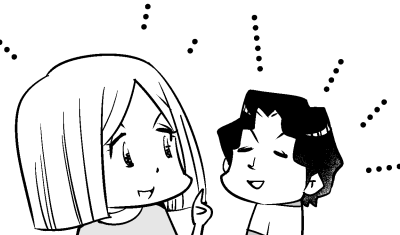


Maybe it's too much to ask our children to learn solid Japanese...



However, since he was about 4 years old, he has been going back to my parents' house in Japan for a month during summer vacation.

To begin with, my wife and I talk in a mixture of Japanese and Chinese...




Recently, I've been having him take a class at our Japanese school once a week. He seems to be happy that he is learning it better and faster than other kids.



**Fathers as sole Japanese resource in family**

- Fathers realize that they are the sole native Japanese resource in the family, making them responsible for teaching Japanese.

After thinking it over, we sent our children to Taiwanese schools for both kindergarten and elementary school. Japanese schools in Taiwan only have elementary and junior high schools, so it is difficult to continue on to a Chinese high school.



The only other choice is to send him to Japan for high school... but I like my life in Taiwan, so I don't want to go back to Japan. I think my kids will be living in Taiwan too...

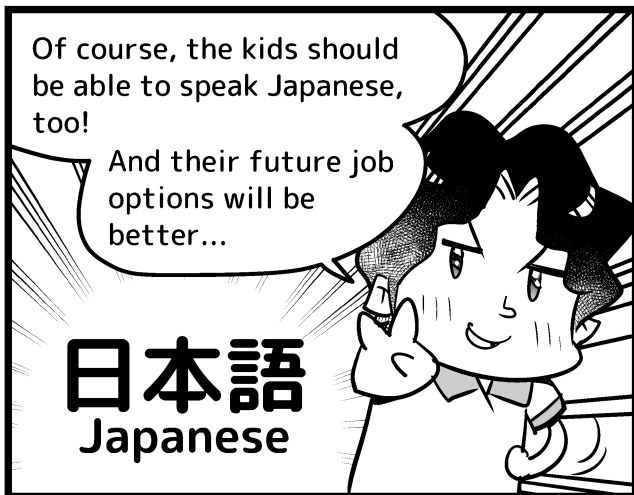


On top of that, it's hard to find a job in Japan in my profession..



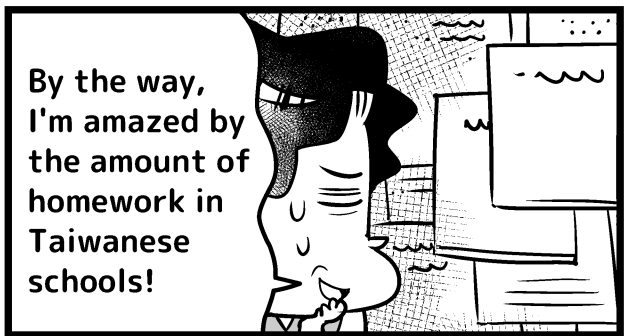
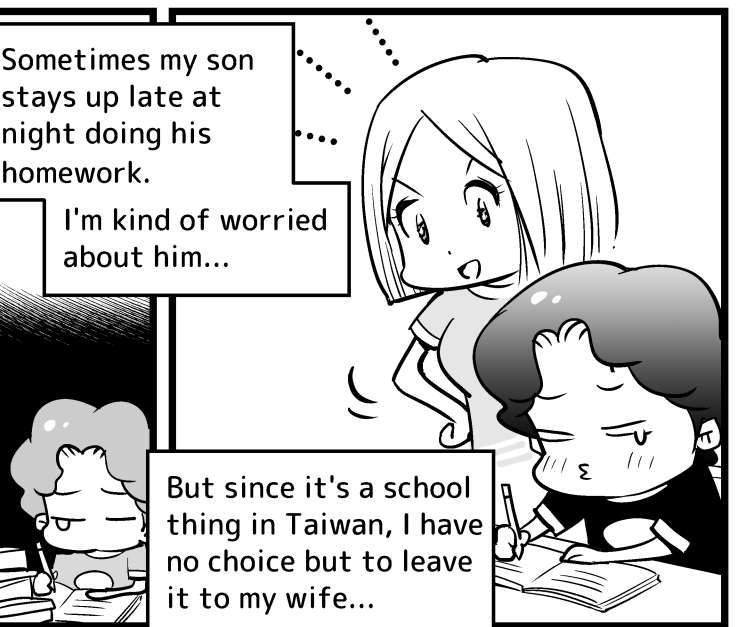
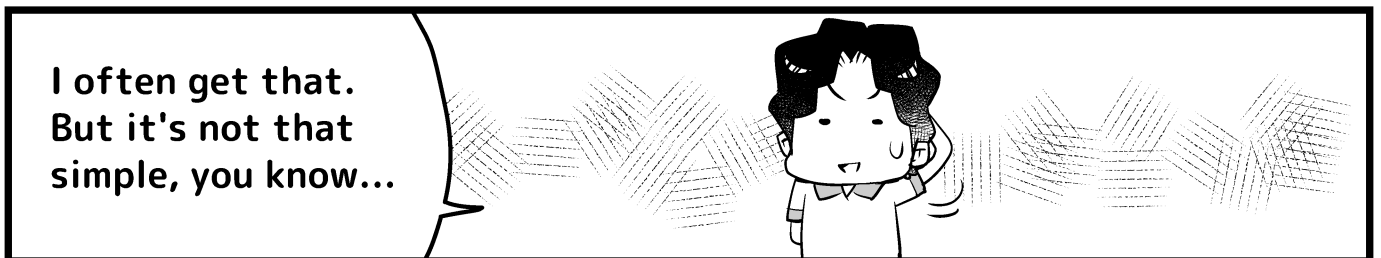
**The skills for earning money**

- As they gain experience working in Taiwan, their skills for earning money are optimized to function in this country. The more their skills are optimized to Taiwan, the more distance may be created from being functional in Japan because the skills valued in Taiwan and Japanese differ.



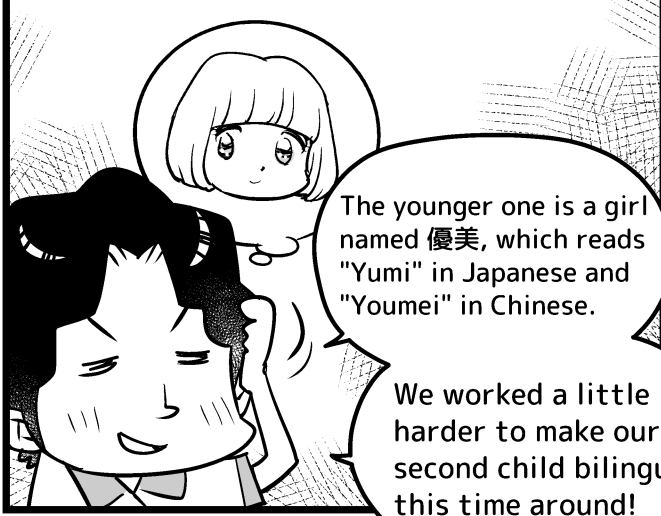
**Japanese as an investment**

Learning Japanese is considered important not only because it guarantees the continuity of ethnic identity across generations but also because it functions as an investment for the future. In fact, N1, the highest band of the Japanese language proficiency test (JLPT), is required to apply for certain jobs. It would increase the possibility of getting a better paid job.



**Parenting and Gender**

The shift of gender roles is an ongoing issue in Taiwan as well. Although fathers understand that the dual-income family is common in Taiwan, and they support their wives' being employed, relatively few wives do work full time.



The younger one is a girl named 優美, which reads "Yumi" in Japanese and "Youmei" in Chinese.

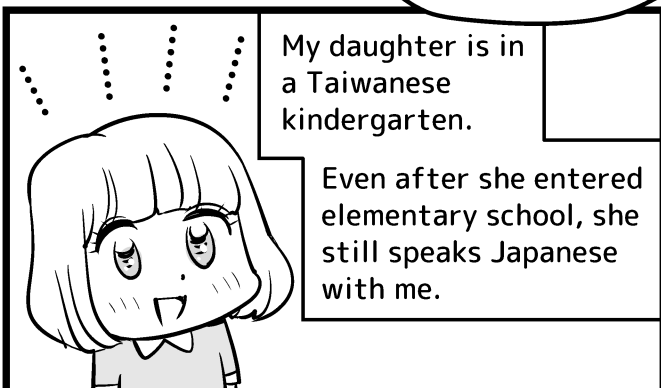
We worked a little harder to make our second child bilingual this time around!



My daughter talks to me in Japanese while my son does his home work.



She also learns how to read and write with Japanese Manga comic books.



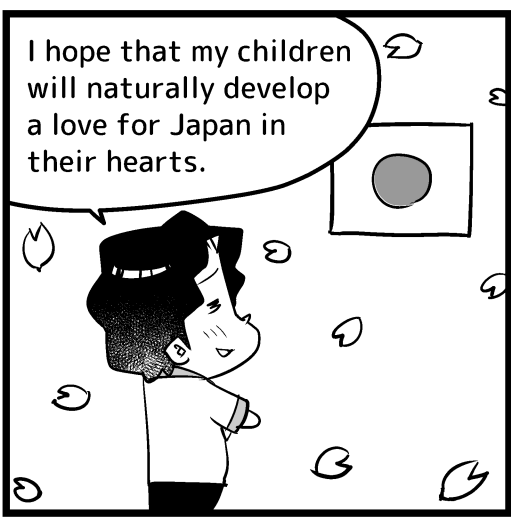
My daughter is in a Taiwanese kindergarten.

Even after she entered elementary school, she still speaks Japanese with me.



Anyway, I really hope that both of them can speak Japanese...

But I don't want to force my children to learn Japanese.



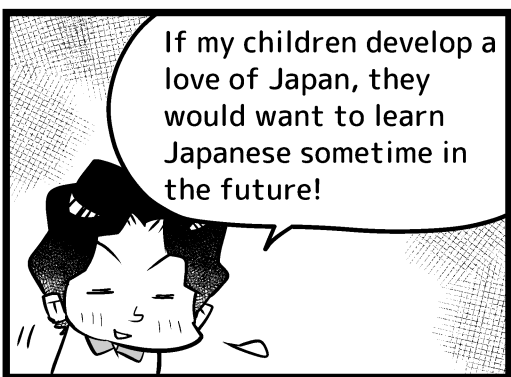
I hope that my children will naturally develop a love for Japan in their hearts.



Both of them are very much looking forward to going to Japan for the summer holidays.

Anyway, the good thing is..

This is something I am happy with as a father.



If my children develop a love of Japan, they would want to learn Japanese sometime in the future!