



Japanese-Language Education Overseas

More people than ever are studying Japanese

The Japan Foundation is helping people around the world learn Japanese with less effort. The number of people studying Japanese abroad is growing by the year, having crossed the 2.3 million mark in 2003. Seeking to enhance this increasing interest, the Foundation provides a full range of support by extending assistance to overseas Japanese language schools and students, sending educational experts abroad, administering proficiency tests, and developing and supplying teaching materials.



Japanese Teaching Organizations and Number of Learners Expand Significantly

Just published, the 2003 Survey of Educational Institutions Teaching Japanese Abroad serves two purposes: to provide an accurate picture of the state of Japanese-language education around the world and better enable the formulation of future policies in the field of Japanese-language teaching. Survey results are available at our Web site.

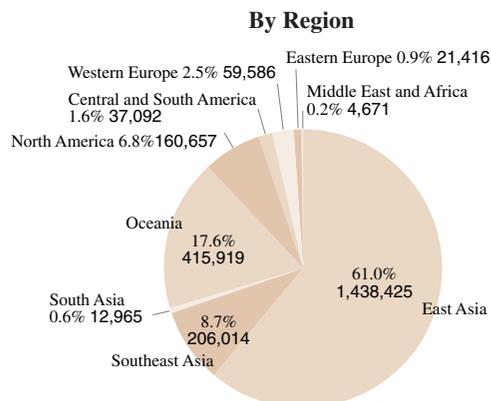
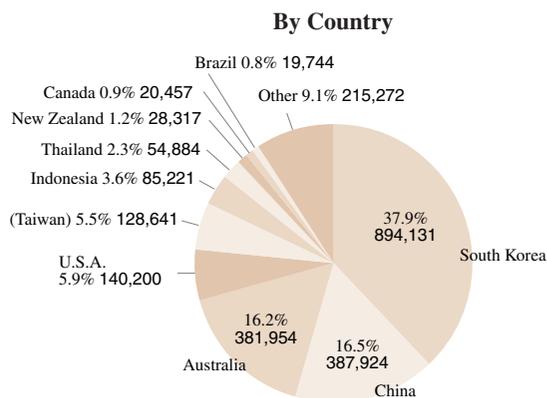
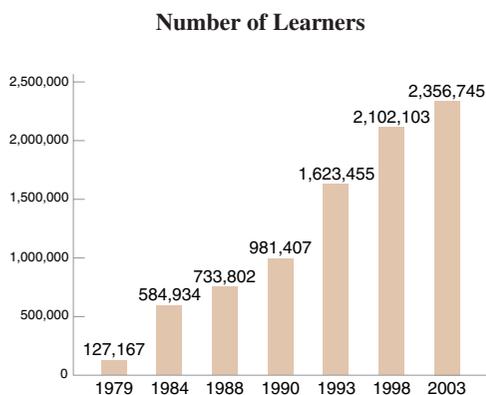
Conducted from July 2003 through March 2004, this survey involved sending out questionnaires to educational institutions in different countries where Japanese is taught, and then meticulously tabulating and analyzing the roughly 20,000 items of data collected. Such a survey on a worldwide scale was without parallel, and it has provided a wealth of valuable data and insights.

According to this latest survey, about 2.3 million people are learning Japanese at schools and other institutions in 120 countries and 7 regions abroad—a roughly 12% increase over the last survey in 1998. This figure represents the number of people formally enrolled in Japanese language programs; hence the actual number, it is fair to assume, must be even larger when factoring in individuals who are taking Japanese language courses via television, radio, or the Internet, or studying with a private tutor. The overall trend remains the same as in the last survey: Students at the primary and secondary

levels account for over 60% of the total number of learners.

The countries making up the top 10 remain unaltered from the last survey, but their order has changed: China has overtaken Australia thanks to an impressive 58 % increase in the number of learners. Among different regions, Southeast Asia has experienced a particularly dramatic rise in number of learners, switching places with North America as a result.

Detailed information on the status of Japanese-language education in each country, its educational system, and foreign language instruction is available on our Web site.



— For more detailed information, visit at: www.jpf.go.jp/e/japanese/overseas/survey.html

Japanese Education Efforts are Received Enthusiastically in Australia

Report from a Japanese-Language Specialist

In the state of Western Australia, Japanese is taught at the primary, secondary, and college levels, and four of its five universities have a Japanese program.

In areas where no teachers are available, correspondence courses are offered using specially developed instructional materials; students can converse with an instructor and ask questions at least once a week by videophone. Roughly 450 individuals are learning Japanese this way.



Japanese teaching materials under production in a studio

Our role in the region includes arranging school visits at the request of teachers, and helping organize events designed to promote the Japanese language. In partnership with some highly motivated teachers, for example, we have set up a contest committee to organize *hiragana* and *katakana* contests, and we help arrange screenings of Japanese movies at international film festivals.

One can only be heartened by the growing numbers of up-and-coming teachers taking Japanese at university and studying in Japan. This new generation is brimming with enthusiasm to learn the latest instructional techniques and hone their Japanese skills through the Japan Foundation's teacher training programs.

(Kazuko Nagai, Department of Education and Training, Western Australia, Australia)

Japanese Comes a Big Step Closer to Joining the Secondary Curriculum in Vietnam

Report from a Japanese-Language Junior Specialist

Vietnam is considering adding Japanese to the list of foreign languages taught at the secondary level. Starting in December 2003, the language has been offered on a trial basis. Even at this initial stage, teachers are required to use a government-approved curriculum and textbooks. A team of local individuals and I are currently working full speed on developing textbooks in preparation for the official debut.

Japanese language education at the secondary level in Vietnam is still at the trial-and-error stage, and much work remains to be done, not least of all training local teachers. Although the project involves large numbers of individuals, I am the only person actually teaching in the classroom. It is both a rewarding experience and one that entails heavy responsibility, as I am only too aware as I face a class full of students eager

for their weekly Japanese lesson. What can we do for these students? What paths can we make available to them? These are the questions that my Vietnamese colleagues and I are seeking to answer.

(Chisato Ofune, Chu Van An Lower Secondary School, Hanoi, Vietnam)



In the classroom

Japanese-Language Proficiency Test Gains Wider Recognition as Candidates Exceed 300,000

The Japanese-Language Proficiency Test is designed to measure and certify the Japanese-language proficiency of non-native speakers of Japanese. It has been administered since 1984 in partnership with local examining bodies in various locations abroad.

The test comes in four levels, each requiring approximate hours of study indicated: Level 1 (900 hours), Level 2 (600 hours), Level 3 (300 hours), and Level 4 (150 hours). Candidates are tested at the level closest to individual degree of proficiency. At all levels, the test consists of three parts: writing and vocabulary, listening comprehension, and reading comprehension and grammar.

In 2004, its 21st year, the Japanese-Language Proficiency Test was administered worldwide on the same day, December 5. Outside Japan, it was given in 99 cities in 39 countries and regions, and the total number of candidates crossed the 300,000 mark for the first time — another striking indicator of the growing popularity of Japanese-language study.

2004 Japanese-Language Proficiency Test: Number of candidates in Japan and abroad

| In Japan | Applicants | Number taking test |
|--------------|----------------|--------------------|
| Level 1 | 37,538 | 33,429 |
| Level 2 | 17,438 | 15,434 |
| Level 3 | 8,092 | 7,361 |
| Level 4 | 3,101 | 2,732 |
| Subtotal | 66,169 | 58,956 |
| Abroad | | |
| Level 1 | 72,690 | 61,782 |
| Level 2 | 89,605 | 75,819 |
| Level 3 | 80,046 | 65,916 |
| Level 4 | 46,913 | 39,725 |
| Subtotal | 289,254 | 243,242 |
| Total | 355,423 | 302,198 |

By region

| | Number taking test | Cities where given |
|------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Asia | 228,279 | 52 |
| Oceania | 1,347 | 9 |
| The Americas | 7,853 | 20 |
| Europe | 5,277 | 16 |
| Middle East and Africa | 486 | 2 |
| Japan | 58,956 | 18 |
| Total | 302,198 | 117 |



Japanese-language education seminar



Japanese-Language Proficiency Test overseas

Web-based “Sushi Test” for Students of Japanese and *Minna no Kyozaï* Site for Their Teachers

The Sushi Test, designed for young people abroad who are at the beginning level of Japanese, made its debut in March 2004.

Learners can take the test as many times as they want for free by accessing the site on the Internet and completing the user registration form. The test, which has a time limit of 30 minutes, consists of 30 questions in three parts. The user selects the right answer while looking at pictures and listening to phrases, and is awarded a piece of sushi at the end in accordance with the final mark.

The site also includes a page called *Minna no Hiroba* (the Forum), where users can try writing e-mail in Japanese. In addition, there is a *Minna-de-Test* function, which Japanese teachers can use to assign specific problems to their students and keep track of their scores. In 2004 over 34,000 new users registered for the site, which attracted an average of approximately 17,000 visits a month. The site is also available in English, Chinese, Korean, Thai, Indonesian, and Portuguese.

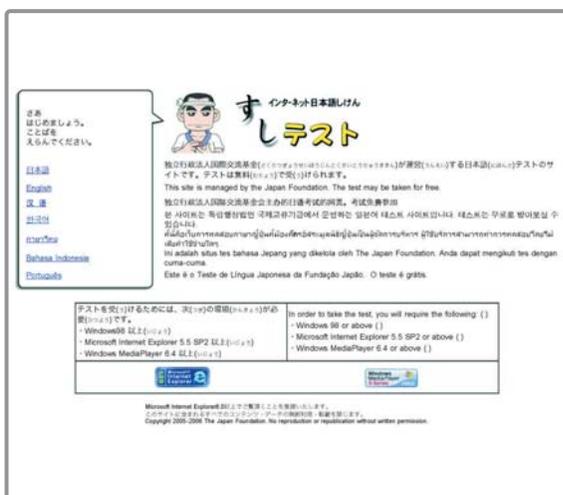
The *Minna no Kyozaï* site offers an assortment of free instructional components for

the use of Japanese-language teachers worldwide; it also serves as a forum where users can share information. Since coming on line in 2002, it has steadily enhanced its selection of materials and range of features.

Currently posted on the site are 293 teaching aids for beginner’s Japanese, 515 photos, and 7,084 illustrations, all designed as components for teaching materials. Also available is information forwarded by users, along with a broad range of information pertaining to Japanese-language education.

The library of illustrations was greatly expanded during 2004, and an English version of the site was launched in an effort to attract more overseas teachers to it. As of March 2005, there were 21,000 registered users in about 130 countries and regions, and the site received 1.7 million hits a year.

In addition, about 40 site workshops per year are held at the Japanese-Language Institute in Urawa and at other locations. Based on actual site use, these workshops examine how specific materials have been used to develop teaching materials in different parts of the world.



The Sushi Test
<http://momiji.jp.fg.jp/sushi/>



Minna no Kyozaï site
<http://momiji.jp.fg.jp/kyozai/English/index.php>

Activities at Two Japanese-Language Institutes in Japan

The Japan Foundation Japanese-Language Institute, Urawa offers master's and doctoral programs designed to train individuals who will guide the course of Japanese-language education in different countries abroad. It also conducts programs for Japanese-language teachers who have already completed training courses at the Institute and wish to acquire an even higher level of proficiency in the language. Moreover, the Institute conducts training programs abroad for Japanese-language teachers in countries (such as Australia) that have an especially large number of Japanese learners.

Also available are training programs in instructional techniques for JET trainees posted throughout Japan, who are interested in becoming Japanese teachers upon returning home, and Japanese-language programs for JET trainees in Saitama Prefecture, who wish to enhance their conversational skills.

Recognizing the difficulty of producing Japanese teaching materials overseas, the Japanese-Language Institute develops Japanese-language textbooks, dictionaries, and audiovisual materials, and supplies them to

schools and institutions abroad where Japanese is taught.

In addition, the Institute arranges stays in Japan for specialists in Japanese-language education who need to conduct research in this country in order to develop instructional materials and techniques. The Institute also supports the publication of Japanese teaching materials abroad as well, and donates Japanese teaching materials to schools and institutions abroad that lack these resources.

The Japan Foundation Japanese-Language Institute, Kansai offers long-term intensive programs for individuals who need to acquire knowledge of Japan and Japanese society as they pursue specialized research or careers abroad. The Institute provides research support in specific fields of specialization, and develops instructional techniques and teaching materials for use in them. Furthermore, it arranges travel to Japan for university-level learners from regions where Japanese language education is growing, and it organizes programs in Japan for Korean high school students who are learning Japanese.



The Japan Foundation Japanese-Language Institute, Urawa



The Japan Foundation Japanese-Language Institute, Kansai