

CrossTalk

January CROSSROADS Language Studio's Newsletter 2005

ANCIENT NEW YEARS



The celebration of the New Year is the oldest of all holidays. It was first **observed** in 4000 years ago. In the years around 2000 BC, the Babylonian New Year began with the first New Moon (actually the first visible **crescent**) after the Vernal Equinox (first day of spring).

The beginning of spring is a logical time to start the New Year. After all, it is the season of rebirth, of planting new crops, and of blossoming. January 1, on the other hand, has no astronomical or agricultural significance. It is purely **arbitrary**.

The Babylonian New Year celebration lasted for eleven days. Each day had its own particular **mode** of celebration, but it is safe to say that modern New Year's Eve festivities **pale in comparison**.

Other traditions of the season include the making of New Year's resolutions. That tradition also **dates back** to the early Babylonians. Popular modern resolutions might include the promise to lose weight or **quit** smoking. The early Babylonian's most popular resolution was to return **borrowed** farm equipment.

Traditionally, it was thought that one could affect the luck they would have throughout the coming year by what they did or ate on the first day of the year. For that reason, it has become common for folks to celebrate the first few minutes of a brand new year in the company of family and friends. Parties often last into the middle of the night after the **ringing in** of a new year. It was once believed that the first visitor on New Year's Day would bring either good luck or bad luck the rest of the year. It was particularly lucky if that visitor happened to be a tall dark-haired man.



Story by Adam

Glossary

(These words are in **color** in the story)

observed 祝われた **crescent** 新月 **arbitrary** 任意裁量による **mode** 様式
pale in comparison (当時の祭事と) 比較すると活気に乏しい **dates back** ...時代
にさかのぼる **quit** 止める **borrowed** 借りた **ringing in** 年明け

A Word From Us



Joshua Says: Well, it's the New Year again. But, what an eventual year we had in 2004! First, of course was the biggest event of the year, our move to Okaido and the beginning of so many new learning programs and other ideas for our school. The parties and events we held in the new building were great, especially the X'mas party and the Benefit Concert that preceded it – take a look at the photos on page 3. So, what's in store for this year? Plenty! So, keep an eye on the Notice Board.....

Junko Says: This month we will add Yoga and Guitar/Song Writing classes to Cooking and Aroma Therapy in the new “Petite Cosmopolitan” program at Crossroads. And, as it is “resolution time” just now, it's the perfect time for many people to start something new. These programs are very interesting, so spread the word!



Adam Says: Now is the time of the year for New Year's Resolutions! Just think, everyone gets a fresh start from nothing. We can wipe away all the failures of the past and look ahead to a new beginning and a fresh start! So what was your New Year's resolution this year?

Greg Says: Happy New Year everyone! I hope all of you are planning to stick to all the resolutions, if any, you have made for 2005. Mine don't usually last more than a few days. Back in Australia it was beautiful weather (40 degrees) and now since coming back to Japan it has been so cold. But I really don't have anything to complain about when I take into consideration what the people in S. Asia have endured during the tsunamis.



Natacha Says: Lately, I have been noticing that many people in Japan are not shy about throwing their garbage on the ground. In Canada, this would be seen as a very disrespectful thing to do and someone would probably ask them to “pick it up”. Respecting nature is respecting all life!

Steven Says: “A Big Thanks” to all of you who supported the Niigata/Nihama Benefit concert on the 18 of last month, and a special thanks to those of you who purchased the C.D. The “Song for Yuta” C.D. is still available at Crossroads' front desk for anyone who would still like to have a copy. Magnolia and I will be happy to sign your copy, if you would like it “personalized”!



Magnolia Says: Welcome to all of the new students who have joined the “Yoga in English” classes. To live long and prosper is the hope of everyone, regardless of nationality or race. Therefore, here is the first of my monthly inspirational quotes: Always begin at the beginning: This means beginning with who you are right now, how you are right now, and where you are right now.

Natasha Says: Pozdravlyayu s novym godom! (happy new year!) In this season I always miss merry parties in Russian. On Jan.1st families get together around a New Year tree (like an X'mas tree) and exchange presents. After this, we visit many friends' houses and have big parties...endless toasts, many songs, dances...all night long!! Compared to this, Japanese New Year parties are like...funerals! Generally speaking, Russian people are optimists and always think of how to ENJOY their lives before all else.



Yuka Says: How were your Holidays? I had a chance to see some of my friends from my school days. Despite the long absence, we had a wonderful time. They brought me happy memories of my younger days. Happy New Year to you all, and may all your dreams for 2005 come true!

A Word From You

Elijah Says: At the Christmas Party, I played some songs with Magnolia, Steve and my own band members. It was an improvised session. We had an exciting time. Although I don't communicate in English at that well, I can still play with foreign musicians. Music is a fantastic communication tool!!



Izumi Says: Last August my Swiss friend came to Japan with her boyfriend. They traveled around Japan by JR and they also came to my house. All of my family were really excited! We went to Uchiko, Ozu, Dogo and other places. They enjoyed Japanese culture – especially Japanese gardens. But they were surprised at how narrow Japanese houses are. Normally, in Switzerland, people have large gardens. Now they are planning to travel from Arasuka to Argentina! Please wish them Good Luck!

Easy English Lesson

COMPARISON OF ADJECTIVES

AS + ADJECTIVE + AS

To compare people, places, events or things, when there is **no difference**, use **AS + MUCH + AS**:

- * Peter and John are both 24 y/o. Peter is **as old as** John.
- * Moscow is **as cold as** St. Petersburg in winter.

COMPARATIVE + THAN

To compare the difference between two people, things or events:

- * A car is **more expensive than** a bicycle.
- * The ocean is **bigger than** a lake.

Net News

NET LESSONS:

Are you too busy to come to CROSSROADS to study? Try our *lessons on the internet!* It's CROSSROADS in your home or office! You get CROSSROADS' great teachers, teaching programs, even classmates, *all on-line!* Call for details.

NET SITE OF THE MONTH: Here are some fantastic winter images of auroras from Yellowknife, Canada. These amazing photos are definitely worth seeing! Have a look at:

<http://www.blue-moon.ca/2004jan.html>

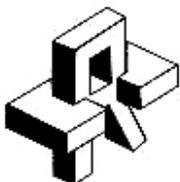
Don't forget to take a look at the **NET NOTEBOOK** in our Open-house lounge. You'll find games, news and English study sites.

Notice Board

Here are some shots of the Niigata/Nibama benefit Concert for those who missed it.....



..... and, some from our X'mas party after the concert...



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