



SAKURA

No. 122

July - August 2020



じんせい そうまとう こと
人生は 走馬灯の如し Life is a kaleidoscope



LOCKDOWN Diaries



World pandemic! Life practically came to a standstill. The unprecedented and unplanned, unnatural (??) course in the life of mankind grounded us into reality like no other event. We lost control over our lives so to say. The superfast lifestyle, thanks to the wonders of science driving us at a supersonic speed... came to an abrupt halt! Do we reminisce our simple, laid back, idyllic, happy life in the early fifties and sixties in the last millennium? But how much did we achieve in this vacuum of inactivity?

Our readers found a unique rejoinder to this challenge:

Enhance life: body and spirit!

SENSEI KAZUKO NIGAM SAID....



The Smartphone became my friend!

I have never used my smartphone so far in any other way than for mail and

WhatsApp. Due to the circumstances, I had plenty of time, so I watched Chinese documentary films and videos about the corona virus explained by many people on Google. When the "Amphan" struck Kolkata I used to watch the weather forecasts on my smartphone. I used to check the rainfall amount and wind speed, and when there was a power cut at 9 pm, I used the torch light of my smartphone and was not disheartened at all. I had seen various fun cooking shows in it. Today I was even able to take a class online!

[Pettanko Gyoza] is easy to make and strongly recommended

<https://youtu.be/iP13digzg18>

Oishii!



DEBI DAS SAN SAID....

Due to Covid-19, we were all stuck at home since March 25, 2020. When the first lockdown for 21 days was announced, I was a bit anxious: how can I manage my daily schedules?

But surprisingly, I spent the lockdown period in a very useful way with full energy and 'All Positivity'.

Considering the intensity of the Covid virus and the alerts made by the Government, 'Stay Home, Stay Safe', we stopped taking the services from all our support people, viz. maid, driver, paper vendor. I used to cook lunch & dinner for my family members, and breakfast too. Earlier I had an inhibition about cooking, but this time I had ample time, no hurry to go out and meet people, nobody coming to our house too, and as a result I enjoyed the cooking throughout this period.

Just before the announcement of lockdown, I filled up the form for JLPT N3 examination at Nigam Sensei's house on March 19, 2020. I started preparation too, practicing Kanji, memorizing vocabulary and so on. During the second lockdown I came to know, that JLPT has been cancelled by The Japan Foundation. For three/four days I was depressed to some extent.

The most important achievement during lockdown was to come closer to my daughter. We really spent some quality time with each other; it would glitter like a star throughout my life.

Apart from all the above, I saw lots of movies (post lunch) in You Tube, Hot Star, did small gardening in my balcony, stitched some small but very useful items.

The only thing I missed during lockdown was the weekly meeting with my mother. Though she stays nearby, I could still not take a chance to meet

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her as she is not only an octogenarian but very vulnerable too.

Now, I am eagerly waiting to go out to do all necessary work (banking, buying things for household etc.), to meet friends & so on.

LET'S HOPE for the BEST!!

Debi Das



MANEKI NEKO & ITS COLOUR CODE

At present, the production of beckoning cats made of ceramics is the largest in the pottery city of Tokoname City in Aichi Prefecture.

The front legs depict right and left hands. The raised right hand, invites "money" and the raised left hand invites "customer" or "guest".

These cats are of different colors. It is said that white cats which are found, commonly invite good luck, black is luck for averting misfortune or danger. red is for averting illness, pink luck for love, yellow is luck in making fortune (money), and silver is for longevity.

TOKYO OLYMPICS



Covid-19 outbreak turned the world topsy turvy. The unimaginable happened – the deferment of the Olympic Games. Again, it was once again, left to Japan to show their indomitable

spirit with stoicism and fervor. They rose from the ashes, many times, and history bears evidence. How can we forget 'IDATEN' the legendary marathon participant in the games – the first to represent Japan?

This is the lesson we all must learn –never cry over spilt milk, use your power to succeed in achieving future goals. The rewards will surely show up!

Watch "Idaten, The Epic Marathon to Tokyo" the Television Serial by NHK, a historic drama recounting the final victory of Japan to host the first Summer Olympic Games in Asia in 1964.



In view of the present circumstances, readers of our Newsletter "Sakura" are requested to refer to the website for details of the monthly programme.

すずめのひょうたん (SUZUME NO HYOUTAN)



昔話



むかしむかしある山おくにとてもまずしいおじいさんとおばあさんが住んでいました。おじいさんはたけかごをつくり、おばあさんは糸をつむいでくらししていました。

ある日、2人がいつものように仕事をしていると、やっと空をとべるようになった小さなすずめがつばさにけがをしたようで、落ちてきました。大きな鳥につかれたのかもしれない、とかんがえたおじいさんとおばあさんは、すずめの手当をすることにしました。おじいさんとおばあさんは弱ったすずめに米つぶをあたえ、ねずにまいにちかんびょうしました。

まずしい2人にとってだいじなおこめでしたが、弱っているときはこめつぶをたべるのが良いだろうとかんがえてあたえました。かんびょうのかいあって、すずめは日に日に元気になっていきました。

そんなある日、すずめの父と母がむかえにやってきたので、おじいさんとおばあさんはすずめをおくり出しました。自分の子どものようにせっけていたおじいさんとおばあさんは、すずめがいなくなってさびしくかんじていました。

それからしばらくたったある日、すずめの親子がおじいさんとおばあさんのところへあそびにきました。すずめがたねをおいていったので、2人はさっそくそのたねをはたけへうえてみることにしました。するとそのぼん、何やら音が聞こえるので外へ出てみると、のきたにつるしてあったひょうたんから音がしていました。おじいさんがひょうたんを手にとってみると、ひょうたんからこめつぶがたくさんふきだしてきました。

いくら食べてもひょうたんからおこめはでつづけ、おこめがなくなるということはありませんでした。おかげで2人は、前にもまして元気にはたらきつづけました。

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AN INTERVIEW WITH MASANORI KODA



Koda Masanori, has been learning Bengali language in Kolkata at the Jadavpur University since February 2019 and in Ramkrishna Mission, Golpark, since July 2019. I met him at our NKKS picnic this year. He is a very quiet person. I had a chat with him. He is very much impressed by the helpful behaviour of the people of Kolkata. He is from Nara prefecture. At present he is 27years old.

Excerpts from the interview:

Q::You came to India for?

A::I came to Kolkata to study Bengali. I study Bengali Language at the Jadavpur University and Ramkrishna Mission, Golpark

Q::When did you first come to India?

A::I first came to Kolkata at the end of May 2014. At that time, I was a college student, and went to study English in Brunei, Southeast Asia. I finished my study abroad in May and came to Kolkata on my return journey to Japan.

Q::Why have you decided to learn Bengali language?

A::In my workplace, we use various languages to help foreign people. We have talented people who are fluent in many languages like English and Spanish. Our main jobs are translating and interpreting. Moreover, we also have Japanese teachers. My uncle studied Bengali more than 20 years ago, and the fact that no one else has ever studied Bengali in my office has prompted me to learn Bengali. For the future, I would also like to translate and interpret in Bengali.

Q::What is your impression about India and Kolkata?

A::I am impressed about the fact that India is very large and has so many people. I went to Bodh Gaya and Varanasi in January. I think that religion is deep-rooted in India and its many charms cannot be experienced in Japan.

I have the impression that in Kolkata even strangers treat you gently. When using the bus or auto rickshaw, people around help you, so you can use public transport safely.

Q::What do you think about Indian culture

A::Since the culture of India is different from that

of Japan, I was often confused. In Japan, Buddhism and Shintoism have been in existence for a long time, but there are not many festivals related to Buddha or God or to seek blessings or show gratitude to them, as compared to India. There are many holidays related to religion and I think it is rooted in Indian life.

Q::Your Hobby

A::My hobby is watching sports. My favourite games are baseball, soccer, rugby, table tennis and many others. I have few opportunities to play now, but I want to try cricket at least one time.

Q::Your travelling experience in various countries.

A::Brunei was the first overseas country I went to when I was a college student. I have only stayed in Brunei and India abroad. It is an Islamic kingdom, a very small country. As it is a pro-Japanese country, my friends there treated me very kindly. Regarding places to visit, there is a huge mosque which is famous and Malay foods

Q::Any suggestion to Japanese language students?

A::At our workplace, we also run a Japanese language school. Before coming to India, I worked in an international students' dormitory in which students from various countries stayed. However, since the rule of the dormitory are Japanese one, the foreign students tend to feel that the rule is far different from own culture. . The rule demands avoiding selfish behaviour and require the occupants to show consideration for others. As a Japanese person, I am proud that the Japanese culture prioritizes others over one's own self, which is so wonderful! I would be happy if the students, while studying Japanese language could also get to know the Japanese way of thinking.

Q::Any memorable experience

A::I have been living in Kolkata for over a year. When I first came I couldn't speak Bengali, and I couldn't even use public transport such as buses, auto rickshaws, and cycle rickshaws. However, as I could gradually speak the language, I was able to go to places I did not know, and I enjoyed having a little conversation with the conductors of the bus and other passengers.

Q::At present the whole world is combating the pandemic Corona virus.

A::I am not able to live my normal routine due to the coronavirus, but please pay attention to the preventive measures. Moreover, I am also looking forward to speaking to people even if it is a mix of Bengali and Japanese languages.

Aloke Basu

**JAPANESE CROSSWORD
(July - August)**

1	2	3	4		
5					6
		7		8	
9	10		11		
	12	13		14	
15					

ACROSS

- 1) Obedient
- 5) Way of borrowing
- 7) Square
- 9) To go
- 11) Pond
- 12) Moon
- 14) To bloom
- 15) Epidemic

DOWN

- 1) Funny
- 2) Bird
- 3) Friend
- 4) Close/Intimate
- 6) Table
- 8) God
- 10) Shoe store
- 13) Mist

Mahashveta Basu Mukherjee

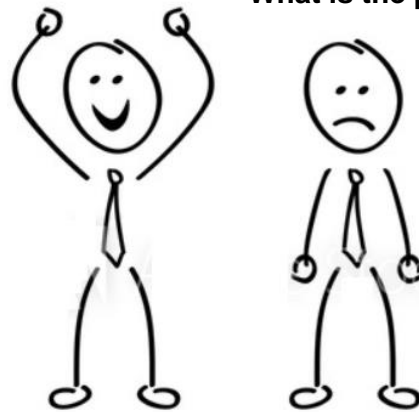
**Answers to
JAPANESE CROSSWORD
(May - June)**

1 せ	2 い	3 じ	が	4 く	
5 か	し	ま		6 さ	び
い		7 く	8 う	き	
9 し	10 し		11 え		12 な
	13 ま	る	き	14 は	し
15 こ	い		16 や	ね	

WORD JUMBLE – 66

Unscramble the following words, and join the circled letters to find out the answer:

What is the proverb?



Winner Loser

- 1. みずあま (Rain water)

	○		
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- 2. がたあけ (Dawn)

	○		
--	---	--	--

- 3. まいあい (Vague, ambiguous)

	○		
--	---	--	--

- 4. だすめき (Pick out, draw out)

○			
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Sontu Debnath

**ANSWERS TO
ANAGRAM – 65**

- 1. かがくしゃ
- 2. ちょうしょ
- 3. ふうとう
- 4. げんかん
- 5. はつおん

か	ち	よ	う	ふ	う	げ	つ
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(Beauties of Nature)

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