

KIRITAKA English Journal Vol.15

~Stay Independent, Stay as ONE TEAM~ November 22nd, 2022

What a miracle life we live! - Genius & Fluffy -



One day, I was driving with my wife and daughter to see my father in hospital. On the way to the hospital, I happened to tell a story about a dog to my daughter, who was 7 years old at that time. The dog was kept by one of my colleagues at that time, and the dog's name was "Justice". My daughter asked me what the meaning of the word "justice" was. Just after I replied that it means "正義" in Japanese, she said it was cool, and asked me what I would have named a dog in English if we had had a dog. All I came up with at the moment was the name of a very popular English-Japanese dictionary; "Genius". Of course, she was curious about the meaning of the word "genius". When I told her it means "天才", she seemed to like it and repeated it many times with a smile as if we immediately planned to get a dog.

It was a sheer accident that we came across a pet shop on the way to the hospital. My daughter asked if we could drop in on the shop. I said to her, "All you can do is just look at the dogs!" "I know!" as soon as she replied, she rushed into the shop, and pointed at something, and said, "Look over there! I've just found "Genius"!" In a small cage, a black tiny puppy was sitting on the floor. We all thought the name "Genius" would suit him! A sales clerk suggested to my daughter to hold the black puppy in her arms. That clerk was too professional, because she knew my daughter would not release the puppy easily. My wife and I managed to get her to release the puppy for a moment, but an elder gentleman and an elder lady came up to us, and they picked up "our Genius" and held him in their arms! My daughter claimed that we should decide to accept "Genius" as one of our family members right away! We had no time to decide it! And then, as soon as the elder lady put "Genius" back in the cage, my daughter ran toward him and held him tight in her arms. Finally, we could not stop ourselves from buying him! To tell the truth, we did not have any experience keeping a dog, much less know what breed (a species of a dog) "Genius" was, let alone know how big he would become. Furthermore, we could not help but give up going to see my father in hospital as we had our new family member "Genius" with us.

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One year after Genius joined us, we accepted another puppy as a younger brother of Genius, and we named him "Fluffy". At that time, I did not know neither the character in the "Minions" movies nor the one in the stories of "Harry Potter". Anyway, Genius & Fluffy became like brothers. We called them "Geni-Fula" as a "duo". However, our happy days with Geni-Fula suddenly ended. After just 6 years, Genius suddenly passed away because of a disease. We did not notice his disease at all. We all felt sorry for him, but we all thanked him for the happy days he had given us.

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Now, Fluffy is 16 years and 9 months old. If he were a human, he would be almost 100 years old. His hearing ability has gradually declined since last year, and his eyesight has also declined at the same pace. He is probably completely deaf and blind now. In spite of his disabilities, he can walk around freely in the living room as if he could see everything, and sniffs for food and recognizes each family member and happily waggles his tail at us. One of my daily routines is "犬吸い". Have you ever heard it? It is to bury your face in a dog's body and pretend to suck it. I make it a rule to do it every morning just before I leave home, and every night just after I get home. He has a lot of troubles, but he is so cheerful and energetic. He is never unhappy at all. He just tries to do his best. So, I always swear I will try to be like him. I do not know how much longer our happy days with Fluffy will continue, but I try to seize each moment I can spend with him!

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★T's Power Song★

Let me introduce a song about a dog. At first, it sounds sad, but

you may notice it is a song to thank a dog for giving you a lot of happiness. Whenever I hear this song, I cannot help thinking about Geni & Fula and I burst into tears. This song reminds you that you should not take it for granted that you live today. <https://youtu.be/FmWuqxKIABA>

I hope the KIRITAKA English Journal will be accepted by students and their parents, and become a regular issue. (Toru Hoshino)





Kiwi Corner



Hi, everyone! How are you coping with the cold weather recently? All of a sudden we seem to have gone from a wonderfully warm end of autumn to the dreaded cold of winter. In Japan, you often say things like “Autumn is the season for **reading**.” or “Autumn is the season for **sports**.” According to a recent survey of university students, however, the most popular saying is “**Autumn is the season of good appetite.**” (秋の食欲)

This isn't surprising, with the weather becoming colder and people needing to eat more to stay warm. Plus, there are many delicious fruits, vegetables, and other foods that come into season in autumn. In this month's article, I'd like to write about food, or in particular what is called “**comfort food**” in many places around the world.



What do you think “**comfort food**” is? A general definition of it is “food that provides a feeling of well-being, and is often associated with childhood or home cooking.” Looking at this definition, it could mean many different things for different people. When I imagine comfort food, I think of my mother's thick and hearty vegetable soup with freshly baked bread from the oven, followed by roast beef, and then a lovely apple dessert with ice cream to finish it off. Of course, eating all of this in front of a cozy fire while the cold wind and rain (typical of a New Zealand winter) crashes against the windows outside makes the scene perfect.

In this sense, you could say that it is just home cooked meals, but comfort food doesn't have to be made at home. For example, some people's comfort food could be a pumpkin spice latte from Starbucks (which was sold earlier this year – were you able to try it?), or a butter chicken curry from their local Indian restaurant. The important thing for comfort food is that just sitting down and eating it makes you feel at ease and relax a little.



What are your comfort foods? When I think of what could be a comfort food here in Japan, I think of eating at a *kotatsu*, so for me, it would definitely have to include eating mandarin oranges (みかん), or eating a hotpot (鍋料理) with friends. Anyway, please let me know what your comfort foods are. I'd be interested to hear what your thoughts and impressions are!

For this month's article, I'd like to introduce this song. It's quite an old song, but has been covered recently by a popular singer from Canada. It's all about keeping warm inside while the wintry weather rages outside. You can listen to it here: <https://youtu.be/Mk6ZzzWWJ1A>

(Liam Campbell)



Lauren's Newsletter



Staying Warm this Winter



From wearing jackets, scarves, and gloves, to drinking hot tea and coffee, people try all kinds of methods to stay warm during the autumn and winter months. As colder weather quickly approaches, some people may take out their kotatsu, while others decide to eat warm foods like ramen and shabu shabu. With the decrease in temperature, electric bills will rise as people begin to use their heaters. To help reduce energy usage this winter, Tokyo's governor has suggested a creative solution.

In order to cut energy bills and fight the cold, Governor Yuriko Koike has recommended that residents wear turtleneck sweaters. Other recommendations by the Japanese government such as turning off unnecessary lights and wearing multiple layers of clothing indoors have also been announced this month. The government has also asked for people to lower the temperature of their heaters starting from December 1st until the end of March. The governor and the officials attending the meetings that address these issues have already started wearing turtlenecks as role models of their new action plan.

One person who inspired the governor to create this sweater strategy is French President Emmanuel Macron. She stated that the French President was "taking a lead in wearing turtlenecks", and explained how keeping your neck warm causes a "thermal effect" that can be achieved by wearing a turtleneck or a scarf. For those in the workforce, the transition from the summer's dress code of "cool biz" to winter's "warm biz" has started to take effect as well. Now more people may be seen wearing turtlenecks in the workplace, maybe even at Kiritaka!



The French President Emmanuel Macron wearing a turtleneck.

Whether it is a fashion choice or to save energy, turtlenecks may become more popular as winter approaches. What do you think? Will you wear turtlenecks this winter?

Your Friendly Neighborhood ALT,

(Lauren Taylor)

I would like to share a song that helps me through the colder days of winter. This is a song by the ice queen herself. Please enjoy!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L0MK7qz13bUoSFlvxnbgk>