

早稲田法学部 THEME 16 秋

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- The 1991 Japan Festival
- The 1990s Japan Boom

WEEK 9 新発売!!! Japan's mass-media relaunch

Reading 1: THE 1991 JAPAN FESTIVAL, UK

IN 1991, THE UNITED KINGDOM celebrated Japanese culture and technology in a year long Festival with events throughout the country, at many levels of society, for the young, the old and the middle-aged. Hugely expensive, the Festival was nevertheless a resounding success in its primary aim: impressing upon the British public a sense of Japan that was positive, dynamic, beautiful, enjoyable and above all interesting.

There were some memorable exhibits. Perhaps the most exciting was the Sumo, the first wrestling tournament ever staged outside Japan took place at the Royal Albert Hall, with contestants from the elite Makunouchi league.

Just bringing the wrestlers over to London was an exercise in itself. The toilets – and the toilet seats – had to be enlarged on the aeroplane bringing them over. The stable cooks had to come as well, plus vast supplies of *chanko nabe*, and the trainers and physiotherapists.

For a few months, the wrestlers became one of the sights of London. On Westminster Bridge wearing toy policemen's hats and eating ice cream. Doing their special movements on the London pavements. Some appeared in TV commercials, others on chat shows (though they were hardly chatty).



There was a festival of Japanese film, a *matsuri* in Battersea Park, an archery display with horsemen and archers in Hyde Park, a Japan Exhibition at the British Museum, a Japan night on television, with every programme in Japanese including wide shows, the news, anime, *Godzilla*, *Tora-san* and 1970s detective films.

Some of the most successful activities took place at a local level, with lectures and demonstrations to women's societies on *origami* and *ikebana*, and calligraphy lessons in junior schools.

The Festival was set to take place every 10 years, and there was another Festival in 2001, but probably nothing could repeat the impact of the first big Festival of 1991. In the whole Festival, over the year there was only one discordant note when the Art Critic of the *Evening Standard*, Brian Sewell, refused to attend review any of the London events, because he felt that they were propaganda intended to pull the wool over Londoners' eyes as to the real nature of the Japanese.

Reading 2: The 1990s Japan Boom

THE 1991 JAPAN FESTIVAL SET OFF A BOOM in Japanese Studies in Britain and in Europe (where related events took place, mainly in France and Germany). The School of Oriental Studies, London University, since 1918 Europe's main centre for the study of East Asia, dealt with a flood of applications from young people wanting to learn Japanese or take degrees in some aspect of Japanese studies. Other universities offering Japanese studies, such as Oxbridge, York, and Durham experienced a similar increase in interest.



Hōki Kazuko of the Frank Chickens

THE FOCUS ON EDUCATION was deliberate. When the 1991 Festival was over, the planners proposed a ten-year programme leading up to the 2001 Festival, which included an arts education initiative intended to:

- help school pupils to gain a practical understanding of Japanese culture in preparation for the 2001 Japan Festival
- involve local communities in Japanese related projects
- provide a lasting and effective legacy following the Festival
- stimulate contact between Japanese and British students
- promote an environment for the interchange of ideas between Japanese

and British arts organisations

SUDDENLY, JAPAN WAS HOT. Young people wanted to go there. Young British men and women wanted to meet young Japanese women and men (and vice versa). Japanese restaurants gained new patrons and were reviewed in the newspapers (including the *Evening Standard*) and new restaurants opened up. Japanese designers displayed their clothes in London and Paris. Improbable Japanese entertainment such as the girl group *Shonen Knife* and the group *The Frank Chickens* (above), never much above average in Japan, experienced months of heady success and appreciation in the UK. Encouraged by their success and excited by their experience, young Japanese men and women began heading for London, to study, to live in squats, to work at anything that came up. In the 1990s, Japan began the Jet programme, by which many thousands of young Westerners from English-speaking countries came to Japanese schools and taught English.

OFFICIAL JAPAN WOKE UP to both sides of this development. The Japanese Embassy in London became the nerve centre of Japan promotion in Britain. Today the London Japanese embassy in London is well worth a visit: <http://www.uk.emb-japan.go.jp/>

Reading 3 Japanese Studies

Today the tag "Made in Japan" is found not only on industrial goods, but also manga, animated cartoons and video games, bringing about 20 million people around the world into contact with Japanese.

Only about 100,000 people studied Japanese as a foreign language in the 1970s, but the number grew sharply in the '80s, when Japan rose to economic prominence, as evidenced by books such as Harvard University Prof. Ezra Vogel's 1979 bestseller "Japan As No. 1." Those studying Japanese surpassed 1.5 million in 1993 and reached 2.36 million in 127 countries in 2003.

The country that has produced the most Japanese-language students is South Korea, where 890,000 people were studying the language as of 2003, followed by China with 390,000 and Australia with 380,000.