In adversity, people need to help one another. We need be more considerate and resourceful. Japan was able to show these qualities in the wake of a most horrific tragedy. I have never been more proud, happy, and truly thankful to be Japanese.

I have taught young American students about Japan, not just the language and products of its culture, but some of the priceless qualities that have been shared by people and handed down through generations in a long, rich history.

Japan still matters. There is so much to learn from Japan. This is the message I would like to give to my students by exercising the qualities that I admire, respect, and cherish. I am forever thankful to be in a position to share Japan with today's youth.

**Why Japan Matters**

By Patricia Burleson

There are many reasons that Japan still matters, most of them well founded in economic statistics and geopolitical analyses. For this commentary, I decided to bypass those and focus instead on my personal experiences and those of local high school students. Students quoted here were participants in one of eleven annual study tours I have led in Japan.

I think that Japan matters because there are many lessons about life that can best be learned from the Japanese. Students say:

- Signs in the US tell citizens what not to do and threaten punishment if rules are broken. Signs in Japan encourage good behavior.
- I learned that it is possible to appreciate religions other than my own.
- I admire the strong moral base that prevents Japanese from stealing or defacing public property.
- The kindness I experienced from the Japanese has inspired me to be patient and compassionate to foreign tourists.
- I think the world needs to learn from the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. After visiting the Hiroshima Peace Museum, students say:
  - The meaning of the museum was to educate, not to blame.
  - I felt a universal compassion that I had not known before.
  - I learned that humility is the key to ending war and violence.
  - I now believe that the most pressing problem in our world is nuclear weapons. I have decided to regularly donate to "iCAN" and do all I can to ensure that something like that never happens again.
- I think Japan matters because there we find a shared sense of responsibility. Students say:
  - It was interesting talking to one of the young teachers and realizing his hopes and aspirations were similar to mine in terms of world peace and helping others.

PATRICIA BURLESON works with K-12 students and teachers and for eleven years has led a Freeman Foundation-funded Japanese Studies course and study tour to Japan for high school students.

**Ganbare, Japan!**

By Masumi Reade

**Editor's Note**: Masumi Reade informed us that the 2011 theme of The Woodlands High School Japanese Club annual Haiku contest was “Ganbare, Japan!” Although Ganbare is difficult to translate, its English meaning is a combination of perseverance and hard effort. Mrs. Reade was moved enough by her students to create her own Haiku about Japan’s great disaster, which follows.

**昨日まで ありし人生 語る写真**

Life that existed until yesterday
today the photos will tell its story

**気仙沼 燃える画面に 独り泣く**

Kesen'numa in flames
continues to burn in the screen
makes me cry

**生きていた 大の救助に へり五人**

A helicopter with five workers
coming down to rescue a surviving dog in the ocean

**列長し 動かぬ辛抱 見て涙**

Long, quiet lines
not moving and testing your patience
makes me cry to watch

**避難所に 跪き頷く 陛下かな**

Emperor and Empress
visiting the victim's shelters
getting down on their knees

**雪の道 珈琲一杯の 温かさ**

Snowy road home
— a cup of warm coffee
supplied by a kind heart

**老人の 笑顔肩揉み 小学生**

Elementary school children
going around the shelter to give shoulder massage to the elders
Award of a big smile

**救われし 老女の笑顔 背に揺れる**

Faint smile on the face of the old lady
just rescued (after ten days)
on the back of the soldier

**MASUMI READE** is the 2011 Elgin Heinz winner in the Japanese Language category. She teaches at The Woodlands High School in The Woodlands, Texas.

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**Education About Asia**

Scheduled Thematic Feature Sections

**WINTER 2011 (16:3)**

Winter 2011 (16:3) Food, Culture, and Asia
Part II, Focus on Japanese Democracy

**SPRING 2012 (17:1)**

Asian Visual and Performing Arts, Part I
(Deadline for initial submission of manuscripts: November 10, 2011.)

**FALL 2012 (17:2)**

Afghanistan: Multidisciplinary Perspectives
(Deadline for initial receipt of manuscripts: April 10, 2012.)

**WINTER 2012 (17:3)**

US, Asia, and the World: 1914–2012
(Deadline for initial receipt of manuscripts: July 10, 2012.)

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