



Blowing bubbles at Himeji Castle, Japan (2009)

JAPAN IN THE BUBBLE ERA

March 4, 2015

Greg O’Keefe: So “**cultural fit**” is more about the balance of applied book knowledge as well as the personality of the person that fits into the community; so what kind of personalities fit in. This is all going to be used for- for example Human Resources could easily use information like this in the future. Uh, international hiring practices are going up in forei- uh Japanese companies. So companies like Rakuten, or Sony, or uh, SoftBank, they’re looking at international um, employees at the moment. So creating some sort of patterns for hiring practices is really kind of- is one goal, and the other goal is to just to help newbies who are coming here. They’re in their second or third year, and they **want to** know “Will I last? Cou- If I wanted to work here is this a possible thing for me to do?” And maybe there are some signs they should look for If they don’t fit into the community **or not**.

José Cruz: There doesn’t seem to be as much of as an- of an inflow of people coming into Japan to find work as I remember from the early and mid-nineties though. I remember through the early mid nineties-

Greg: Oh absolutely. Yeah I totally agree.

José: This was uh- well, I don’t want to **

Greg: Well we had the bubble in America, too.

José: Right right. (So) And and and when I came, we hadn’t realized yet that the bubble had

burst in Japan. (That’s right) It took about two years before we figured out, “Oh holy cow! Everything’s just going down the drain (Right) And people were just still (Right) coming and coming and companies were just hiring and hiring (Right right right) Um, uh do you think people actually...

Greg: Well the reason for that- Do you know what the reason for that was? (What?) The reason for that was that all those companies that were cutting people, a lot of people going back to learn English were retraining. And they actually rode that. When the economy gets bad more people study.

José: You mean Japanese?

Greg: Yeah they, that’s what the whole wave was back in the uh mid to late nineties.

José: Yeah but there was always...

Greg: They thought the economy would get better but it never did.

José: No it never did, well it was getting better (Yeah yeah) but it’s like um everybody wanted to study English back in 1992.

Greg: Yeah I think that’s what it was though’ I think that’s - Do you know what it was? There was the “**global-ka**” push back in the late 80s. I don’t know but, if you know about the **global-ka**.

José: Sure the global push, but...

Greg: The the the *global-ka* was what they called it, right? And people were really focused on globalism and there was also like in the late nineties was "*I-bunka*", right? Which was like other other countries, uh other cultures. But uh the "*global-ka*". Like uh actually if you look at some old uh notes of people who were graduating in the early nineties, is they would say "I want to be an internationalist".

José: Yeah I was getting that all the time (Um) in my classes, (Uh) "I want to be an (Yeah) international man". But I think another thing was the actual...

Greg: Like James Bond.

José: Yeah, well, with the necktie and everything else. But yeah it was in their dreams, and it's not a bad dream. But I think another that was just pushing it was just the amount of money velocity. The money velociPy- the money

velocity that was pushing money around. People just had money to literally throw into the sky. (That's right yeah) And and women were you know, just had all kinds of time on their hands and their husbands were bringing home six-month bonuses, (Oh) you know three month bonuses twice a year. And **they're** "may as well study English" And and the funny thing was, I wasn't getting much of that business, but most of my other, white blond-haired blue-eyed friends were. But I wasn't getting much of that business, but but it was all over the place. And what it did was it made it possible for me to get more work because these people were doing their work privately. (Uh-huh) Right?

Word count	Time	Words/Min.
717	x3:07xx	230.05

Pointers:

cultural fit: Greg and José were just discussing Greg's research into intercultural communication, (0:00)

want to: pronounced, "**WANNA**" (0:40)

or not: Greg says this very quickly (0:51)

global-ka: Japanese for "**globalization**" (1:51)

they're: José meant to say "they're **going**" (2:49)

Discussion:

What do you know about the Japanese bubble?

What would be most difficult for you working overseas?

Does your country have any special workplace traditions?

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