Nattou – fermented soy beans

Nattou in the styrofoam package it comes in

Recently I've been eating a traditional Japanese food called nattou nearly every day for lunch. Nattou is also known as "sticky beans. " Click the photo to see why! Normally people eat it on top of rice, but I often eat it right out of the package with chopsticks after sprinkling on the soy sauce that comes with it. Nattou is very nutritious and good for health.

When I first ate nattou shortly after coming to Japan, I didn't like it very much then, but I've grown fond of it over the years. It's an acquired taste. I often ate nattou on the road in the early days because it's the cheapest protein available.

Not all Japanese eat nattou. The people in the Kansai area (Kobe / Osaka / Kyoto) don't eat nattou as much as the Kanto (Tokyo and surrounding area) people do because they don't like the smell.

Did you know there is a major difference is health benefits between fermented and unfermented soy? Fermented soy like nattou and Miso are good for you, unfermented soy like tofu and soy protein power are not.

Second hitchhike adventure 2010

Hitomi (27) who took me back home

Princess the little Shih Tsu dog I am temporally taking care of was taken to be shampooed, and this set me free from caring for her to do other things. It's a beautiful sunny day in normally cloudy Niigata and so I just had to grab the opportunity to get out again, hitchhike and meet people.

The first driver was a man who appeared to be in his upper 60s, maybe lower 70s. He drove at least 10 kilometers out of his way to take me to a convenient location from where to continue my trip. I left him with an Activated Magazine.

Usually, older Japanese people who pick me up have traveled abroad, or have had something to do with foreigners, but the man said he has never been out of Japan. Later he said that his daughter lived in England for 6 months as an exchange student and was hosted by a British family. Ah ha! Japanese have a deep sense of obligation when helped by others, or even if any member of their family was helped, and this man's motivation was probably to return the favor. It doesn't matter to the Japanese if the foreigner in question had nothing to do with helping his daughter, any Caucasian-looking foreigner will do.

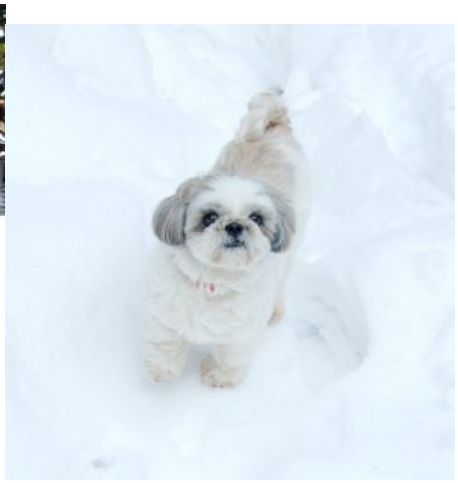
A single lady by the name of Hitomi took me back to the area where I left my bicycle not far from home. I gave her an Activated Magazine, one that had an article exposing Darwin's delusion. The Japanese, as you may know, are not very religious people. In spite of that, their culture reflects very much in many ways the teachings of Jesus such as being kind to strangers, helping those in need, etc. They hate falsehood. When I explain that Evolution is one of the falsehoods they have been fed since childhood, most of them receive it.

Snowy winter in Japan

The photos below shows bamboo trees bent over with the tops stuck in the snow! The snow causes the trees to bend over till the top of the tree touches the snow on the ground. Further snow buries the top branches tying the top of the tree to the ground, and it will stay like that until enough snow on the ground melts, even though the original snow that bent the tree in the first place melts first like it did shown in the photos.

Bamboo bowed over with snow

Princess in snow



Princess

This winter of 2010 has the most snow I've seen in the Niigata area of Japan since moving here in January 2002. A couple days ago it snowed again, and the trees were covered with snow, but it melts in the daytime. Only at night the temperature will drop before freezing. In spite of the snow, I consider the winters in Niigata to be pretty mild compared to that Siberian like city in America where I grew up – Chicago. And to think that a few newspapers in the United Kingdom ten years ago ran a story that snow would be a thing of the past by the year 2010. Ha!

WordPress power

I realized today it's been a little more than a year since I started to use WordPress blogging software. My first post was on January 7, 2009. I've grown used to it and think it's probably better overall and easier for me than the HTML / CSS hand coding coding method I used to use. Not that it's not good to learn HTML and CSS. Because I know these technologies, I can do things with WordPress that others cannot who do who do not know them.

WordPress blogs are easy for me to keep up with. Since my friend in Taiwan started to use WordPress for his Paradise Post blog, I can now keep up with him much better than when he used his former method of making web pages. What that was I do not know, but my Firefox browser didn't seem to like it. It would freeze up on his older web site – on my Linux PC with near state of the art technology, a CPU not even a year old, (AMD Phenom II) and 4 gigs of DDR 3 RAM!

I consider the Weaver II theme to be the best theme for WordPress ever! The free version is much more powerful and tweakable that most of the paid version's I've seen, and it even has a pro version to boot! So far I haven't seen the need to upgrade to the pro version.

PC security issues

I noticed the performance of a certain Windows XP PC was down again, even though I cleaned it from malware only a few months ago. I installed and ran Super Anti Spyware and it found over **1500 security issues**!! The browser was hijacked and a **fake anti-virus** program called Antivirus 2008 was installed. SuperAntiSpyware cleaned it up and its running fine again.

The particular user of that machine is a young adult who uses a peer to peer file sharing application known as Bearshare. I'm sure she affected her PC again as a result of poor Internet browsing habits. I certainly do not recommend file sharing networks and software such as Bearshare but recommend Bittorrent instead for downloading large files. My favorite Bittorrent client is Deluge. It's better security, and especially so in Linux, Mac, or a Windows PC when the user is logged in with limited privileges, and not as the Administrator.

Did you know that the German government has warned web users to find an alternative browser to Internet Explorer to protect security? I highly recommend Firefox. It's much better security, open source, and heavily supported by software developers from around the world, and not just by a single cooperation like Microsoft whose bottom line is always money. I believe they have often put the priority on user convenience, and to do that, they sacrificed the user's security. Not requiring the user to always log in with limited access (as in Mac / Unix / Linux) is one example of this.