



勝元主席語録

THE LITTLE RED  
DAO OF AJATT

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## THE LITTLE RED DAO OF AJATT

by Chairman Khatzumoto



### 0. Mental Tools

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# ★ ★ ★ Contents ★ ★ ★

## 0.1 FOR THE START OF THE JOURNEY 1

- How to Accomplish Great Things: Small Victories, Winnable Games 2
- Comfort Zone, Growth Zone, Panic Zone and Situational Goals: Life Is Easier Than You Think 3
- Aim To Fail 4
- Cute Girls, Mathematics, Language 5
- The African Way of Learning...Just Do It 6
- 10,000 Hours: Building Listening Comprehension 7
- Desires and Decisions 8
- You can have do or be ANYthing, but you can't have do or be EVERYthing 9
- Showing Up 10
- Propaganda 11
- Classes Suck 12

- No Fun, No Good: You Must Enjoy Learning Japanese 13
- Language Is A Martial Art 14
- Language Is Acting 15
- Language Is Like A Video Game 16
- Stop Mystifying Japanese 17
- There Was A Time When... 18
- Other People's Perceptiveness (OPP): What It Takes To Be Great 19
- All In Moderation? 20

## 0.2 FOR DURING THE JOURNEY 21

- Are You A Three-Day Monk? 22
- Boiling Water 23
- Motivation for Cynical People 24
- The Eternal Sorrow of the Intermediate Learner: "Are We There Yet?" Syndrome 25
- Practice: Don't Beat Yourself Up 26

- I Meant To Do That 27
- Make the Process Fit the Person 28
- Inertia Can Be Your Friend 29
- How To Learn Japanese In 1 Second 30
- Just Do One: Lowering Your Standards and Using Patterns from Addictions to Achieve Success 31
- Strategies for Overcoming Burnout 32
- Calm Down and Hurry Up 33
- When Will I Get Good? 34
- When Will I Get Funny? 35
- Unrealistic Expectations That You Need To Stop Having 36
- Time Management: Too Much Japanese? 37
- Time Management 2 (mainly advice for high school/college students) 38
- Automated Discipline: How To Stay On Track All The Time 39
- Intermediate Goals, Mini-Dreams 40

- Little and Often 41
- Processes Not Results, Or: Everything I Ever Needed To Know About Life I Learned Washing Dishes 42
- Turn Yourself Into A Monster: What To Do When People Around You Are Not Encouraging Or Supportive 43
- How To Learn Multiple Languages Without Getting Confused: The Laddering Method 44
- How Do I Learn 500 Languages At Once? 45
- Language As An Investment 46
- Managing Greed: How To Deal With Your Language Lust 47

## 0.1 For the Start of the Journey



# How to Accomplish Great Things: Small Victories, Winnable Games



- Humans love short, tangible, winnable games.
- Using an SRS reduces Japanese to a game.
- Stop trying to finish.
- You CAN'T "finish" a task. You can START a task. It finishes itself.
- Just focus on doing and enjoying what you're doing right now.



# Comfort Zone, Growth Zone, Panic Zone and Situational Goals: Life Is Easier Than You Think



- What you think is your comfort zone is probably your growth zone.
- Rather than setting a goal to do the right thing, set a goal to be in the right place.
- Set a goal to show up. No more.
- Don't work to achieve something. Work to set up conditions.
- Let the environment do the work for you.

# Aim To Fail



- Massive failure is the key to success.
- No meaningful success seems to come without hearty doses of small, cheap failures.
- Failure needs to be celebrated. It needs to be sought actively.
- Find or build a mechanism that allows you to fail *a lot*.
- Plow ahead. Ignore your failures. Focus on your successes and build off them.

# Cute Girls, Mathematics, Language



- Never assume kids are magical until you spend 40k hours listening to Japanese.
- Put in your hours. And you will be rewarded. It's that simple.

# The African Way of Learning...Just Do It



- Language is easy. All languages.
- Don't think *about* it, don't analyze it. Just do it.

# 10,000 Hours: Building Listening Comprehension



- Listen to 10,000 hours of Japanese over the next 18 months.
- Spend every available waking and sleeping moment listening to Japanese.
- If the moment is available, give it to Japanese.
- You don't always have to actively listen to the audio. Just have it there.
- Even if you don't fully understand it, just keep playing it.

# Desires and Decisions



- Those who have the skills didn't just *desire* to be good, they decided to be good.
- Desire or decide — one is a wish, the other is a choice.
- Desire gets swept out of the way by everything else.
- Decision sweeps everything else out of its way.
- Do you just *desire* to be fluent in Japanese, or have you decided to be?

You can have do or be ANYthing, but you can't have do or  
be EVERYthing



- Everything in this life is acquired in exchange for something.
- In terms of learning Japanese, you exchange your English *time*.
- If you do fail, don't blame it on your ability.
- Live Japanese. Breathe Japanese. Drink it. Sleep it. Everywhere. Everything.

# Showing Up



- 100% of winning is showing up.
- Whether you are Japanese by birth or by choice, you have to show up.
- When you show up, it's hard *not* to succeed.
- Never never never judge yourself on your first try.
- Let go of your pride: you will suck at anything you are new at.



# Propaganda



- Can't speak a language = haven't spent enough time with it (yet).
- "Good at"  $\equiv$  "Used to"
- The way to get used to something is simply to do more of it.

# Classes Suck



- Boring. Ineffective. Costly.
- Punish the skills that help you in real life (circumlocution, winging it).
- Rob you of your time, freedom and initiative.
- Dadgummit, if you're gonna be paying, at least be entertained.

# No Fun, No Good: You Must Enjoy Learning Japanese



- Why make learning Japanese an exercise in masochism?
- Do and use things you (already) like.
- Exploit your weaknesses. Japanize your vices.
- Responsibility for amusing yourself rests solely with you. No one else.
- There is no such thing as something being “boring but effective”.

# Language Is A Martial Art



- Language is about physical skill and coordination.
- You don't have to think, you just have to *be*.
- You don't have to listen, you just have to *hear*.
- You don't have to read, you just have to *see*.
- Put your body into Japanese. Japanese will then put itself into your body.

# Language Is Acting



- Language is acting. Specifically, imitation – impressions.
- All that makes a language “native” to you are your beliefs about it.
- Believe you own Japanese.
- Believe you are Japanese.
- Believe you deserve to know Japanese. It is your birthright.

# Language Is Like A Video Game



- Language = a fighting game. Like *Soul Calibur* or *Mortal Kombat*.
- Don't pull the flowery moves you want to pull.
- Pull the cheap combos you need to pull.
- Don't be creative. Be effective.

# Stop Mystifying Japanese



- Stop whining about how Japanese is "so complex".
- Failure is not a sign of intrinsic difficulty.
- Difficulty is in the method, not the task.
- Cutting cheese is hard with a plastic spoon.

## There Was A Time When...



- When you begin something, you are a newborn baby.
- With daily nourishment, you will grow up.
- I used to suck, too. Harder than you do now.



# Other People's Perceptiveness (OPP): What It Takes To Be Great



- "Talent", if it even exists, has little or nothing to do with greatness.
- Everybody sucks at the start.
- Leave behind the "no pain no gain" mindset.
- Do whatever you need to do to make the process fun.
- Do tiny little  $i+1$  chunks so you can get a lot of cheap wins and feel great.

## All In Moderation?



- All in moderation, including moderation itself.
- We need to be moderate about moderation.
- Sometimes we need to be immoderate.
- Japanese kids live an immoderately Japanese life.
- And thus end up enjoying immoderately high Japanese skill.

## 0.2 For During the Journey



## Are You A Three-Day Monk?



- Stop stopping.
- Taking a break from Japanese will hurt your Japanese.
- Play Japanese every day.
- If you do stop, start again as soon as humanly possible. Time is of the essence.
- It's not intelligence or "talent", but CONSISTENCY that will win the day for you.

# Boiling Water



- Learning a language is like boiling water.
- When the water has boiled, you have reached fluency.
- Many people try to boil water...but then they keep turning off the fire.
- Turn on that fire, turn it on high, and keep it on high.
- Watch the fire. If it goes off, turn it right back on.

# Motivation for Cynical People



- At some level, results are always outside your full, direct control.
- But productive action never is.
- Do your work and see what happens.
- If you can't be motivated, don't be.
- Just be curious instead. Just keep sowing instead.

# The Eternal Sorrow of the Intermediate Learner: “Are We There Yet?” Syndrome



- Do Japanese because it's there.
- Do Japanese because it's what you would be doing anyway.
- You will only learn when having fun.
- Enjoy the ride. Enjoy the trip.
- Play.

## Practice: Don't Beat Yourself Up



- When you fall, don't lay there crying: just get up and get going.
- When you fall off the horse, make the best of it.
- Just do something, anything.
- As long as it's headed in Japanese, you're winning.
- Touch Japanese first thing in the morning and last thing at night.



# I Meant To Do That



- Life is a work in progress.
- Mistakes happen.
- Feel free to try different things.
- Don't listen to me. Don't follow my advice. Use it.
- Believe in yourself. Even to the point of arrogance.

# Make the Process Fit the Person



- No project plan survives contact with reality. It must either die or evolve.
- Don't even try to follow your original idea to the letter.
- Your good-looking plans may just suck, in part.
- No dogma. Be loyal to your success, not to your plans/methods.
- Become fluent in Japanese by any means necessary/effective.

# Inertia Can Be Your Friend



- Japanese is a habit.
- Forgetfulness is a bigger obstacle than "laziness" or lack of motivation.
- *Remember the dream.*

# How To Learn Japanese In 1 Second



- You don't have to spend ten years.
- You only have to spend this moment, right here, right now.
- All you have to do is know more today than you did yesterday.

# Just Do One: Lowering Your Standards and Using Patterns from Addictions to Achieve Success



- It doesn't have to be all or nothing.
- Don't try to arrive at your goal. Just take one step.
- Just do one. One song. One kanji. One book. Just open the book.

# Strategies for Overcoming Burnout



- Put the fun back into it.
- Do your kanji stories rhyme? Are they violent and funny?
- Are they full of potty humor and screaming and sassiness?
- Look forward. Look back. Keep a log. Get more stuff.
- Chill. Remember the dream.

## Calm Down and Hurry Up



- Calm down and accept being a noob.
- Hurry up and do whatever you can right now.
- Get your velocity vector pointing away from noobiness, toward ownage.
- You WILL get there. You WILL get fluent.
- IF you act now, IF you do just this one small thing...now.

## When Will I Get Good?



- How do you know if you're making progress?
- You don't. It's kind of like growing taller.
- Shut up and turn on the TV. Growing takes time.
- Focus on your "nutrition" – native media, etc.
- The growth will take care of itself.



## When Will I Get Funny?



- Focus on building your foundation first.
- You can't be deliberately funny before you can first get jokes.
- Be positive to the point of arrogance in your thoughts ("I am Japanese").
- Be short, simple and straightforward in your actions.
- Focus on the road — doing Japanese things here and now.

# Unrealistic Expectations That You Need To Stop Having



- No one is born knowing this stuff.
- Most people drastically overestimate what they can get done in 2 days...
- ...and drastically underestimate what they can get done in 2 years.
- Make your errorcount most people's lifetime trialcounts.
- You can't push your way through Japanese.
- You have to figure out a way of making Japanese pull you along.

## Time Management: Too Much Japanese?



- Don't punish a project that's going well for its success.
- Work ahead. Work on your own timetable and not the class'.
- The real purpose of time management is not to schedule your own oppression...
- ...it is to: get the crap you *have/need* to do out of the way...
- ...so you can focus on what you *want* to do.

## Time Management 2 (mainly advice for high school/college students)



- Use an SRS so that you don't need to cram. Use mindmaps heavily where they work.
- Make and maintain a single sheet of paper summarizing all class content.
- Exploit “state”. Work during/after class, when the material is fresh in your mind.
- Mine textbooks for exam questions → SRS.
- Schoolwork is a product, not a work of art. It just needs to get done.

# Automated Discipline: How To Stay On Track All The Time



- Discipline is remembering what you want.
- "Discipline" problems are memory problems in disguise.
- Use software (e.g. batch files) to implement automated discipline.

## Intermediate Goals, Mini-Dreams



- You want to “own” at your target language, you want to be native level.
- But you also want something to show for it right now.
- Within your overarching goal of overall fluency make little Baby Goals.
- Larger than the baby steps, but smaller than the Big Goal of Major Ownage.
- Example: “local fluency” – fluency in a specific domain, e.g. news, *Star Trek*, dramas.

# Little and Often



- The key with practice is to do it little and often.
- What is little? Lots of nice, small, manageable, winnable chunks.
- Why often? Human memory is designed to prioritize frequently occurring phenomena.
- What does “often” mean, really? Simply that:
- The time between chunks should be as small as possible.

# Processes Not Results, Or: Everything I Ever Needed To Know About Life I Learned Washing Dishes



- Our real concern should not be outcomes but processes.
- Not “no dirty dishes” but an ongoing, steady net reduction of dirty dishes.
- Stop trying to finish tasks: focus on starting them instead.
- Start enough times and the finishing will take care of itself.
- Projects don't die from too little attention but from *zero* attention.



# Turn Yourself Into A Monster: What To Do When People Around You Are Not Encouraging Or Supportive



- Turn into a monster that only gets stronger the more it is attacked.
- Funnel that rage into the productive accumulation of more Japanese knowledge.
- You're like a plant: People give you cowdung, you use it as fertilizer.
- You're like a plant: People give you sunshine, you photosynthesize.
- Let your Japanese skill do all the talking.

# How To Learn Multiple Languages Without Getting Confused: The Laddering Method



- Use languages as bases to learn other languages.
- Example: English → Japanese → Mandarin → Cantonese
- Avoid reusing the same "base language" twice.
- Laddering requires you to be pretty darn good at the base language...
- ...but also allows you to potentially go for two birds with one stone.

# How Do I Learn 500 Languages At Once?



- I am open to the possibility of learning several languages at the same time.
- But I am against the way most people go about it: frantically.
- Most people are just doing it for economics. And the economics don't add up.
- Economically, one native-level language is worth a dozen half-learned ones.
- For economic purposes, depth defeats breadth.

# Language As An Investment



- Learning a language is a massive upfront investment of time, materials and money.
- Learning a language is best thought of as a lifestyle.
- It is not a good investment on the timescales most people are thinking.
- Only joy in the process itself can make a language learnable.
- Play for the long haul. It'll be worth it. Languages don't go obsolete very quickly.

# Managing Greed: How To Deal With Your Language Lust



- Schedule languages in multi-year blocks. 2, 3, 5 years should work.
- Seems like a long time, but it isn't. Trust me. The time is going to pass anyway.
- If a language is really worth knowing, then it's worth knowing deeply.
- Diligence is not "hard work". It is deliberate neglect, highly directed laziness.
- Languages aren't trophies for collecting. They're much more powerful than that.

***Just do one.***  
***(It adds up, trust me.)***



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