



勝元主席語録

THE LITTLE RED
DAO OF AJATT

勝元主席語錄

THE LITTLE RED DAO OF AJATT

by Chairman Khatzumoto



2. Return of the LARD

全日全時人民自由出版

★ ★ ★ Contents ★ ★ ★

5. QUESTIONS FROM READERS 1

- FAQs: Immersion 2
- FAQs: Kanji 3
- FAQs: Sentences 4
- FAQs: Pacing 5
- FAQs: Method 1 6
- FAQs: Method 2 7
- FAQs: Living in Japan 8
- Help A Reader Out: Uncertainty 9
- Help A Reader Out: Immersion 10
- Help A Reader Out: Kanji 11
- Isn't Real Japanese Too Hard For Beginners? 12

- How Many Languages? 13
- Abandoning a Language After Bad Experiences 14
- On The Very Serious Subject Of How To Have Fun All The Time 15
- Git Up, Git Up, Git Down, JLPT is the Joke in Yo' Town: Why I Hate the JLPT and Why It's a Waste of Your Time and Money 16

6. READER STORIES 17

- Understanding the News: James' Success Story 1 18
- Understanding the News: James' Success Story 2 19
- I've finally figured out this AJATT thing: Drewskie's Success Story 1 20
- I've finally figured out this AJATT thing: Drewskie's Success Story 2 21
- From Frustration in Japan to Ownage in Japan: Victor's Success Story 22
- SRS and the Power and Value of Memory: AdShap's Success Story 23
- Motivation Brings Results Bring More Motivation Brings More Results: Kaba's Success Story 24
- Ownage in Taiwan: Ivan the Terrible's Success Story with Mandarin Chinese 1 25

- Ownage in Taiwan: Ivan the Terrible's Success Story with Mandarin Chinese 2 26
- More in a few months of AJATT than in 4 years of school French: Plum Ocean's Success Story 1 27
- More in a few months of AJATT than in 4 years of school French: Plum Ocean's Success Story 2 28
- More in a few months of AJATT than in 4 years of school French: Plum Ocean's Success Story 3 29

7. CHINESE PROJECT NOTES 30

- On Shopping Trips and Sentence Sources 31
- Went Monolingual 32
- How I Watch Movies, Or How To Make Your Own Radio Play That You'll Actually Understand 1 33
- How I Watch Movies, Or How To Make Your Own Radio Play That You'll Actually Understand 2 34
- Extinguishing the Despair of the Serial Beginner: There is no such thing as "Chinese" 35
- Audio Splicing: Splitting Audio for Aural Snacking 36
- How To Read Books That Are Too Hard For You 37
- Make Your Own Books: Printing Out Webpages 38
- Using Audio With SRS 39

- Victory Calendar 40
- Constant Improvement 41
- SRS Image Hack 42
- Learning Songs Using the SRS: My Current Method 43

8. LIFE IN JAPAN 44

- Top 10 Reasons Why Expats Who Live In Japan Don't Know Japanese 1 45
- Top 10 Reasons Why Expats Who Live In Japan Don't Know Japanese 2 46
- Top 10 Reasons Why Expats Who Live In Japan Don't Know Japanese: Conclusions 47
- The Gaijin 12-Step Program 1 48
- The Gaijin 12-Step Program 2 49
- Racism in Japan! 50
- Life In Japan: 1 Year On, Looking Back 51

5. Questions from Readers



FAQs: Immersion



- Q: Should I get some language tapes?
- A: Don't bother. Get things made by and for native speakers.
- Q: But that's too hard! I only understand like, one word!
- A: Perfect. Now go to your dictionary and learn a sentence with that one word.
- Q: Dude, that's too slow!
- A: I also recommend using beginner-oriented books. But always keep your audio real.

FAQs: Kanji



- Q: Hey, I don't know the kanji yet, but I have this question about sentences...
- A: STOP. Learn the kanji first. Kanji first. KANJI FIRST.
- Q: But I'll know all these kanji without knowing how to speak!
- A: Trust me, it beats being an illiterate speaker.
- Q: How will I learn pronunciations of kanji in Japanese?
- A: You learn kanji readings on a sentence-by-sentence basis.

FAQs: Sentences



- Q: So, should I translate sentences into English?
- A: No. Use a bilingual or monolingual dictionary.
- Q: So, should I memorize sentences?
- A: No. Practice *understanding* sentences and reading them out loud with your SRS.
- Q: Should I never read documents with furigana, then?
- A: No; it's great practice. Just make sure your SRS "question" section has no furigana.

FAQs: Pacing



- Q: How many kanji/sentences should I learn per day? Am I going too slow?
- A: No, no, no: Remember, any progress is better than no progress at all.
- Q: How will I learn to speak the language if I don't memorize phrases?
- A: It takes time, but you will -- naturally and quite effortlessly.
- Q: When will I be able to read novels and manga in Japanese without a dictionary?
- A: The more sentences you learn, the sooner.

FAQs: Method 1



- Q: Tell me now, seriously, how hard is it to learn Japanese?
- A: Don't ask how "hard" something is. Ask how you can "soften" it.
- Q: Why are you so against using English translations/ grammatical explanations?
- A: You don't actually understand a language until you are using it to learn itself.
- Q: Your methods are a little extreme, I can't do what you did.
- A: Language is extreme. It affects almost everything you do.

FAQs: Method 2



- Q: Maybe your method works for you, but it won't work for me! I'm too X.
- A: Whether or not you do it "my way", you can do it.
- Q: But it was easy for you because you had X.
- A: I wasn't born with some magic gene; I changed my entire life to learn this language.
- The point is not the path, the point is to (a) have fun AND (b) learn Japanese to fluency.

FAQs: Living in Japan



- Q: What's life like in Japan?
- A: Good.
- Q: Was it hard getting your visa to go there?
- A: Nope. Speak Japanese for all your visa dealings; it'll make life easier for you.
- Q: Are people in Japan racist?
- A: Culturally sensitive as a sleep-deprived elephant with a hangover but **not** racist.

Help A Reader Out: Uncertainty



- Q: I have some uncertainties with your method that I'd like you to clear up.
- A: Your time should be spent getting results, not thinking about it.
- Japanese is the goal. So just do *something*, try *something*.
- Q: How long on average should it take me to be semi-fluent?
- A: The more you show up, the faster you will win.
- You will be able to do stuff in Japanese **because** you did stuff in Japanese.

Help A Reader Out: Immersion



- Q: It can't be much fun watching something and not understanding most of the time.
- A: Your powers of inference are greater than you might assume.
- Q: I've heard that learning from anime and such is a bad way to learn Japanese.
- A: 90-95% of the vocab and structure in any genre is still "standard" modern Japanese.
- Q: Do you feel listening to Japanese while sleeping actually helps?
- A: I do. At the very least, it kept me doing Japanese all the time.

Help A Reader Out: Kanji



- Q: I don't see how learning kanji could be much help without knowing how to read them.
- A: Kanji is the foundation of Japanese. Kana are nothing but kanji mutant children.
- A: Kanji primarily have meaning. That's why one kanji can have multiple readings.
- Q: I don't think I could keep the general-use kanji in my long-term memory.
- A: You can. Use an SRS.

Isn't Real Japanese Too Hard For Beginners?



- Listening to and reading real Japanese does require attention, effort and some time.
- Which is exactly why you can't afford to put them off.
- You will understand at least one word. That's how you start. With one word.
- Take words you hear on TV and get short sentence examples of those words.
- You'll grow until you pick up phrases, then sentences and eventually the entire show.

How Many Languages?



- The maximum benefits of knowing a language only come with (native-level) fluency.
- Know it so well that you would be perfectly OK if it were the only language you knew.
- The moment you stop using a language, you start losing it.
- So, you can acquire several languages, but...
- ...neglect may weaken the ones not being focussed on, unless they have deep roots.

Abandoning a Language After Bad Experiences



- Wherever there is a language or a culture, jerks can be found in it now and then.
- Be sure to surround yourself with good people.
- Don't let individual richardheads taint a whole language and culture for you.
- If you still don't like it, then, yeah, drop the language.
- But be really sure you're sure, because it is a large investment of time and resources.

On The Very Serious Subject Of How To Have Fun All The Time



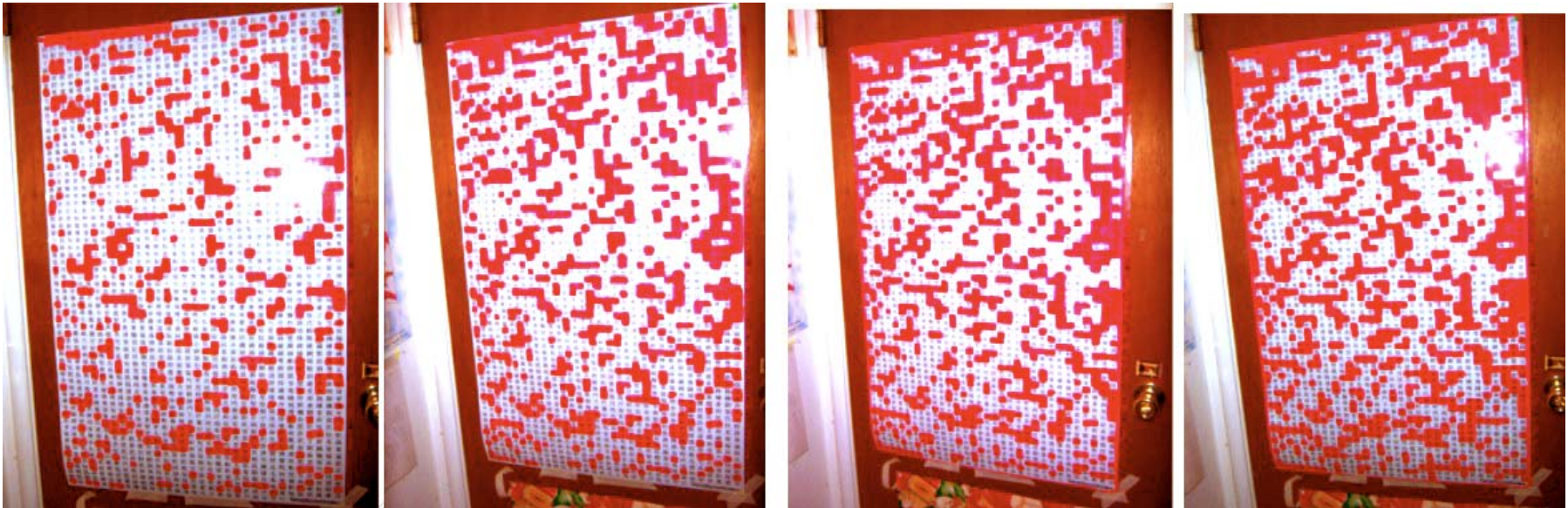
- If you're bored it's not your problem and it's not Japanese's problem --...
- ...it's the media's problem. The media has a responsibility to entertain *you*.
- Skim, sample, skip. You only **stay** when you find something you like.
- **Actively** move through media, changing what you watch as soon as it gets boring, ...
- ...but at the same time, **passively** wait for something to come out and grab you.

Git Up, Git Up, Git Down, JLPT is the Joke in Yo' Town: Why I Hate the JLPT and Why It's a Waste of Your Time and Money



- Language skill is self-evident; it doesn't need to be tested.
- Would you take the TOEFL/TOEIC to prove your English proficiency? Think about it.
- The JLPT matters far more to/among gaijin, than to/among actual Japanese people.
- Your daily interactions in Japanese = greatest preparation and proof of proficiency.
- If you really want to test your Japanese ability, turn on the television.

6. Reader Stories



Understanding the News: James' Success Story 1



- At first I understood close to nothing, maybe the odd word or two.
- However, the more I listened, the more I understood.
- Reading articles + listening to podcasts boosted my understanding astronomically.
- If there was a word/phrase I didn't understand I'd simply copy and paste into an SRS.
- As a result, I now have the confidence that I will understand it all the first time.

Understanding the News: James' Success Story 2



- I cannot emphasize enough the importance of knowing ALL the kanji in general use.
- They are the foundation of Japanese.
- Knowledge of ALL 2000 odd characters is essential as they ALL appear in news.
- Often headlines rely on Japanese people's knowledge of kanji to decipher the meaning.

I've finally figured out this AJATT thing: Drewskie's Success Story 1



- I'm an engineer. I've been trained to "figure out" and "understand".
- So when I started sentences, I was constantly struggling to "get it".
- I'm realizing that we learn better by seeing examples...
- ...and not attempting to understand them.
- The language learning power in our brain takes over uninhibited at that point.

I've finally figured out this AJATT thing: Drewskie's Success Story 2



- By taking the role of the observer, I'm experiencing some very interesting things.
- Everything has a feeling. It feels right or it feels wrong.
- I started to enjoy myself again on a more general level.
- It wasn't directed, and that's why I liked it.
- Japanese is now a self-sustaining reaction producing pure spiral energy.

From Frustration in Japan to Ownage in Japan: Victor's Success Story



- Before hitting on this method, the language seemed a bit too overwhelming.
- The power of combining the living form of the language with an SRS surprised me.
- Your mind adapts itself after seeing grammar repeatedly used in context.
- I am now able to read newspaper articles, books, and volume upon volume of manga.
- Now I can have heated debates about anything from politics to science to whaling.

SRS and the Power and Value of Memory: AdShap's Success Story



- The SRS is amazing for law school.
- I had my doubts at first, but after the first semester it gave me top scores.
- I never once had to work all night, cram, lose sleep, or over-stress.
- As long as I kept up with my SRS at a normal pace every day I was fine.
- Most people have forgotten what they learned while I have it fixed in my mind.

Motivation Brings Results Bring More Motivation Brings More Results: Kaba's Success Story



- I found success through any little thing I could find to motivate myself:
- 1. Bragging family and friends' ears off about my progress.
- 2. Recording and showing off progress on a calendar, kanji poster, etc.
- 3. Swapping emails with a native speaker (it does wonders for reading comprehension).
- Motivation leads to results, which lead to motivation, and it repeats over and over.

Ownage in Taiwan: Ivan the Terrible's Success Story with Mandarin Chinese 1



- The greatest problem I faced was that my mind rejected the words.
- The mind must learn to treat the language as a friend rather than an intruder.
- And the only way to make this happen is...wait for it...
- ...constant exposure to the target language.
- *You get used to it.*

Ownage in Taiwan: Ivan the Terrible's Success Story with Mandarin Chinese 2



- Learning a language to fluency simply cannot be a part-time project.
- You must be able to approach it with passion for long periods of time.
- And, in order to do that, you must enjoy studying it.
- When you have to use willpower to *avoid* studying your language,...
- ...you'll know you're on the right track.

More in a few months of AJATT than in 4 years of school
French: Plum Ocean's Success Story 1



- I couldn't hold a conversation in French until my fourth year (of French classes).
- It hasn't even been a year, and I can already hold a conversation in Japanese.
- When listening to French, it is still a blur. I can't repeat every word I hear,...
- ...yet in Japanese, I am able to.
- To me, it's been proven that your method is way more effective than structured classes.

More in a few months of AJATT than in 4 years of school

French: Plum Ocean's Success Story 2



- The more I was immersed into the language,...
- ...the more I was able to hear the things I've learned in dramas, movies and songs.
- I use the SRS to help train me to listen to music I know,...
- ...and to write down the lyrics while listening to it.
- The SRS makes it so I remember corrections and avoid mistakes in the future.

More in a few months of AJATT than in 4 years of school
French: Plum Ocean's Success Story 3



- Seeing my progress in Mandarin reminds me of the progress I had in Japanese.
- From the beginning I was able to listen to Mandarin, and repeat exactly what I heard.
- I've been able to sing along with songs sooner than when I was able to in Japanese.
- My friend told me that I am amazing at learning languages because I have this skill.
- I think I only have it because I was taught how to listen through your method.

7. Chinese Project Notes



On Shopping Trips and Sentence Sources



- Sentences/phrases can and do come from *anywhere* and everywhere.
- I was learning sentences from an order confirmation notice in Chinese, and...
- ...it struck me how much quicker I was at this now than the last time I tried.
- The power of an SRS isn't on that first day but weeks and months down the line...
- ...when your constant practice gives you an under-appreciated gift: familiarity.

Went Monolingual



- Today, I crossed the Rubicon and went fully monolingual in Chinese.
- It's really liberating.
- Learning a language through another language is so mentally burdensome.
- All this time is wasted reading ABOUT the language instead of actually USING it.
- I'm not in this game to analyze Chinese, but to become the best damn Chinese user ever.

How I Watch Movies, Or How To Make Your Own Radio Play That You'll Actually Understand 1



- 1. Get the Chinese version of a movie I've seen before in a language I already know.
- 2. Loop the movie several times. Just sitting back and enjoying.
- 3. Start pausing, listening closely, perhaps mimicking dialogue.
- 4. Start picking out sentences to enter into the SRS.
- 5. Get tired. Go back to step 2.

How I Watch Movies, Or How To Make Your Own Radio Play That You'll Actually Understand 2



- 6. Rip the audio of the DVD movie to mp3.
- It's like having a radio play where you already know what all is going on, and...
- ...you can just focus on dialogue mechanics rather than plot or setting.
- 7. Listen to the audio all day while doing other things...
- ...and maybe even at night while sleeping. Loop, loop, loop.

Extinguishing the Despair of the Serial Beginner: There is no such thing as "Chinese"



- Why am I going to succeed this time? Because there is no such thing as "Chinese".
- The "language" — the whole — will take care of itself.
- All I/you have to see is this character, this sentence, this moment. That's all.
- Quit worrying, quit thinking, quit hoping, quit wondering.
- Just do. Here. Today. Now. This one.

Audio Splicing: Splitting Audio for Aural Snacking



- You rip a DVD, you have a 90-minute mp3.
- If you never listen for 90 minutes straight, you only hear the beginning. It's boring.
- So I split the 90-minute mp3 file into chunks of ~3 minutes 30 seconds each.
- I then put these audio clips on random shuffle.
- It's like "aural snacking" on bite-size chunks of fun.

How To Read Books That Are Too Hard For You



- The books I wanted to read in Chinese had too many readings that I didn't know.
- This was discouraging, because I felt that I wasn't growing.
- Now when I hit a reading I don't know, I stick a tiny sticky label on the character.
- When I get home, I can go through and collect sentences containing those characters.
- It makes me realize that things aren't so bad at all.

Make Your Own Books: Printing Out Webpages



- Printing web pages = great way to give yourself free reading material.
- You can mark that thing up like there's no tomorrow.
- And when you pick sentences out of it for your SRS...
- ...you can just copy-and-paste and save yourself some typing. Yay!

Using Audio With SRS



- In dictation, you must understand what is said and know how to write it out correctly.
- "Chorusing" is really good, too -- listening to (native) speech and imitating it.
- In this SRS process, I am both chorusing and taking dictation at the same time:
- Question: [Audio of sentence] Play, say, write down what you hear.
- Answer: [Text of sentence] Compare what you wrote to the correct answer.

Victory Calendar



- It's a list of 18 months of days, dating from when I started Cantonese.
- Every day has a space for me to evaluate my SRSing, listening and reading.
- My task is merely to honestly evaluate and record.
- Whether or not I do Cantonese has nothing to do with how busy I actually am,...
- ...and far more to do with how organized I am that day, I've noticed.

Constant Improvement



- There *is* no "proven old method", at least as far as I'm concerned.
- There are just related iterations; you stay at one as long as it's the best choice.
- Once you find better choices, then you tweak or change things appropriately.
- Some of the inspiration comes in at the beginning,...
- ...and some comes during the perspiration.

SRS Image Hack



- As kids learn how to speak, they get sentences with visuals and sounds and emotion.
- These are the kind of things that are bound up strongly in memory.
- Associating a specific *image* with audio has improved my active recall of SRS items.
- Question: [Image] + [Audio]: Write down what you hear.
- Answer: [Text] + [Phonetic Reading]: Compare what you wrote to the correct answer.

Learning Songs Using the SRS: My Current Method



- Choose a song that you love, love, love and wish you could sing along to.
- Split the mp3 file into 10~30-second clips with ~5 seconds of backward overlap.
- Question: [One line or less of the lyrics] Read aloud or sing the line.
- Answer: [Corresponding audio clip] Check your "answer" against the actual song clip.
- If at any point in this process you get bored...stop.

8. Life in Japan



Top 10 Reasons Why Expats Who Live In Japan Don't Know Japanese 1



- 1. Bad Company They hang out with other foreigners, form their own communities.
- 2. Getting By You can get by in Japan without Japanese. As in "survive".
- 3. School Part of this is because a lot of the teachers are either 4 or 5:
- 4. Condescending Japanese People (they expect you to fail at learning Japanese) or
- 5. Well-Meaning, Do-Gooder Native Speakers (who'll try to school you. NG.)

Top 10 Reasons Why Expats Who Live In Japan Don't Know Japanese 2



- 6. Well It's Too Late *Now* Syndrome They tried. It didn't work. They give up.
- 7. Discouragement + Lack of Persistence Good old negative thinking.
- 8. Bad Learning Methods...Lots of Bad Learning Methods Buying stuff, not using it.
- 9. English-language forums about Japanese Talking ABOUT Japanese but not doing it.
- 10. Low-~~A~~ Expectations "A little bit a day". "10 minutes a day". "1-2 hours a day".

Top 10 Reasons Why Expats Who Live In Japan Don't Know Japanese: Conclusions



- Japanese is a human language -- a learned behavior.
- There is no magic to it.
- It is not carried by blood, it is carried by environment, behavior and lifestyle.
- Change your environment, behavior and lifestyle...
- ...and you will change with them.

The Gaijin 12-Step Program 1



- 0. Leave your politics at home. Seek first to understand.
- 1. "Gaijin". It's not a racial slur. It means "outside person".
- 2. Learn Japanese. And for crying-out-loud learn to read.
- 3. If you don't like it...uh, leave.
- 4. Pig...Policemen are problematic in every country in the world.
- 5. Leave the country just for a break. It'll clear your vision like nothing else.

The Gaijin 12-Step Program 2



- 6. Go make Japanese friends!
- 7. Ask Japanese people. If you have a problem *ask*.
- 8. "They don't accept me". Remember how Japanese people are treated in *your* country.
- 9. Tokyoites don't hate you. They're just far too busy and stressed out to smile.
- 10. For your own happiness, live at least 60 train minutes away from Tokyo.

Racism in Japan!



- Not really. In fact, not at all.
- We need to discern "racism" from misunderstanding from just being a jerk.
- If you must hate something, hate individuals.
- You'll never be prevented from living in nice places or making PILES of dough here.
- People need to shut the truck up and learn Japanese (*especially* reading and writing).

Life In Japan: 1 Year On, Looking Back



- A high level of kindness is normal in Japan. People are going to be good to you.
- The worst things I've experienced have been condescension and impolite curiosity.
- It surprises me how little knowledge of Japanese some people expect me to have.
- They keep looking for the thing I can't do; they keep looking for the ceiling.
- And then it starts to dawn on them that maybe, just maybe...I am a full human being.

You're the boss.



Copyright © 2010 by AllJapaneseAllTheTime.Com (AJATT)

All Rights Reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without the express, prior, written permission of the author is strictly prohibited.

Design & photos by Momoko. Photo on page 17 courtesy of Kaba.

