ASIAN ODYSSEY

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A Series of TESOL INTERACTIVE STORIES

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1. THE START OF THE JOURNEY

It is the start of the rainy season in Japan. Four university students are at a bar. Is it an expensive bar? Is it crowded?

The name of one of the students is Yuichi. How old is he? Is he good-looking? Is he intelligent? Is he hard-working? Is he cool? Yuichi studies engineering. Is it interesting? Is it difficult? Is his university expensive?


Gen and Yuichi and two other friends are at a table. Yuichi is in the corner. Gen is next to him. There are two people on the other side of the table. One of them is a guy and the other one is a young woman. They are students too. They are a couple. The name of the guy is Kazu. Is he a university student? Is he hungry?

There is a lot of food on the table. Is it hot? Is it Japanese food? What is it? There is some beer on the table too. Is it cold? Is it Yebisu?


The four friends want to travel during the summer vacation. They want to go to Australia. They want to travel by land and water through Asia to Australia.

Yuichi wants to travel through the Philippines. Is the Philippines dangerous? Gen wants to go via Korea. Is Korea safe? Yoshimi and Kazu want to go straight to China. How much is a boat ticket from Osaka to Shianghai? How long is the voyage? How far is it? Is it dangerous?

At the end of the first semester the four friends leave. Yoshimi and Kazu take a boat. Is it very big? Is it fast? Is the sea calm?


Gen catches a boat. It goes to Pusan. Is the sea rough? He talks to an American woman on the boat. Is she friendly? Is she an English teacher? Is she attractive? Is she blond?
2. THE BOAT TRIP

It is dawn. The ferry from Shimonoseki arrives in Pusan. Is Pusan in Korea? How is the sea? How is the weather? How many passengers are there on the boat? Where are they from? How many crew are there? Where are they from? Is the captain from Korea? How many people are there in his family? Who are they?

How big is the boat? The boat docks and the people get off. Are there any cheap hotels close to the harbour? How many people are there in Pusan? Is Pusan the capital of Korea? What is the capital of Korea?

Meanwhile another young Japanese guy is on a boat to Okinawa. Are there any clouds in the sky? Is there any wind? How is the sea? The young guy is on the deck. Is he lonely? Is he excited? How many people are there in his family? Where are they now? The guy opens his bag. Is there any food in his bag? Is it a backpack? What colour is it?

Another guy on the deck starts to play a musical instrument. Is it an Okinawan instrument? What is it? Are there any westerners on the boat? Are there any US marines? How many US marines are there in Okinawa? Are they all in Naha?

Another boat is on the way to Shianghai. Is it full? How many passengers are there on board? How many crew are there? Is there a bar? Is there a dining room? Is there a tennis court? A Japanese couple are on the boat. How many people are there in the guy’s family and who are they and where are they now? How many people are there in the woman’s family and who they and what are their names and where are they now?


Back in Korea there is a Japanese guy at a cheap hotel. He checks in and he puts his bag in his room then he goes to a restaurant. Is it cheap? Is the food good? He eats a bowl of rice and vegetables and kimchi. Is it hot? How much is it? Is the waiter a man or a woman? Is the waiter friendly? How many customers are there in the restaurant? How many tables are there? Is the kimchi free?

The guy sees a westerner. He knows her from the boat. She has a hotel room too. They talk. How many people are there in her family and who are they and how old are they and where are they now? The Japanese guy and the American woman drink some beer. Is it good? Is it strong? Later on they go to a temple together. Is it old? Next they go to a market. Is it cheap? The American woman buys a souvenir. What is it?
3. OKINAWA, KOREA AND CHINA

It is late in the evening in Naha. A boat from Osaka arrives. A young Japanese guy gets off and looks for a hotel. Does he find a cheap one? Is he tired? Does he go straight to bed?


In Okinawa, Yuichi gets a good night’s sleep. The next morning he walks around Naha. What does he see? Does he go to the beach? That night he goes to a concert. Does he talk to anybody? Does he have a good time? What does he eat? The next day he catches a boat to Taiwan. How long does it take to get from Okinawa to Taiwan by ferry? Is it a good trip?

Back in China, Kazu and Yoshimi see the sights of Shanghai then they take a train to Beijing. How long does it take to get from Shanghai to Beijing by train? Is the train full? Is there food on the train? Does anybody check their tickets?

Beijing is really big and there is a lot to see. How many days do they spend in Beijing? Do they see the Great Wall of China? What else do they see?

Over in Korea, Gen arrives in Seoul. He spends a day in Seoul and he goes to the museum. What does he see there? Does he enjoy it? The American woman goes back to Japan. Gen takes a boat to China. He arrives in Beijing three days later. Does he meet Yoshimi and Kazu on the first day?
4. CHINA AND TAIWAN.

It is a fine day in Beijing. Three Japanese tourists are walking around the Forbidden City. What are they wearing? Are they carrying anything? Two of them are a couple. The other one is a single guy. He notices a good-looking Asian woman. She is Korean. Does he speak any Korean? What is she doing in Beijing? What part of Korea is she from? Is she a student? Is she friendly? Is she travelling alone? Does the Japanese guy have any Korean relatives?

Over to the east a boat is sailing from Okinawa to Taiwan. What's the relationship between Taiwan and mainland China? A Japanese guy is sitting on the deck. What is he doing? There are half a dozen people on deck? Where are they from and what are they doing? What are they wearing? Why are they going to Taiwan?

Eventually the boat arrives in Taiwan and the Japanese guy takes a bus to Taipei. Does he talk to anybody on the bus? Does he have a guide book? Where does he stay? The guy sees the sights of Taipei then he catches a plane to Hong Kong. Why does he fly to Hong Kong? When he gets on the plane, there is somebody in his seat. Who is it? Why is that person in his seat? What happens?

The guy sits down and reads a magazine. A beautiful young woman sits down next to him. Is he still reading the magazine when she sits down? Does he stop reading when she sits down? Where is she from and what is she doing on this plane?

Back in China the three friends, Gen and Kazu and Yoshimi take a train to south China. The train passes through the countryside. There are farmers in the fields. What are they doing? At night the three friends sleep. Gen wakes up. Somebody is touching his bag. What is he doing? What does Gen do? Do Kazu and Yoshimi wake up?

Outside it is dark and a Chinese family are sitting in a small house. There are seven of them. What are they doing?

Eventually the three friends arrive in Hong Kong. They meet their friend, Yuichi. They meet him at a backpackers' hostel. He gets there first. What is he doing when they arrive? Does he look different? What is he wearing? Do the others look different? What are they wearing?
5. Vietnam, China and The Philippines

It is morning in Hong Kong. Four travellers are eating breakfast at Maxim’s restaurant. What are they eating? What are they drinking?

Yuichi is going to go to the Philippines. He’s going to fly to Manila. How long is it going to take? Gen is going to go down to Vietnam. Is he going to travel by train or by bus?

How long is it going to take to get from Hong Kong to the Vietnam border? Is he going to go through Guilin?

Yoshimi and Kazu are going to travel out to Kunming. Are they going to take the train? How long is it going to take? How long are they going to stay in Kunming? Next they’re going to travel through Laos. Is Laos dangerous? Are they going to take a bus?

While they are in Hong Kong the four friends visit some islands. They also go to Victoria peak. On the cable car to Victoria Peak, Kazu talks to a biologist. He is American He is going to go to Cambodia. He is going to work there. He is going to work for the UN. He is going to study the forest. When is he going to leave Hong Kong? How is he going to get to Cambodia? When is he going to arrive there? How long is he going to stay there? Is he going to earn a lot of money? Is he going to write a book? Is he going to learn to speak Khmer? Is he going to go back to the US one day? Where does he come from originally? What is he doing in Hong Kong?

A few days later the four friends separate. One goes east. One goes south. The other two go west. Who goes where?

Gen crosses the border to Vietnam and travels to Hanoi. He checks into a hotel. A Dutch guy is staying there. He is a male nurse. He is on vacation. He works in Africa. He works for the UN. Which country does he work in? How long is he going to stay in Hanoi? Where is he going to go next? Is he going to go back to Africa? Is he going to continue working for the UN? When is he going to leave Vietnam? When is he next going to go to Holland? The guy is not married. Is he going to get married one day?

Gen and the Dutch guy go out for dinner together. They eat spring rolls and chicken soup with rice noodles. They talk about Africa. Is Gen going to go to Africa one day? The two of them meet an old Vietnamese man. He tells them about the Vietnam War.

Meanwhile in the Philippines, Yuichi is seeing the sights of Manila and in China Kazu and Yoshimi are seeing the sights of Kunming. How long is Yuichi going to stay in Manila? How long are Kazu and Yoshimi going to stay in Kunming?
6. China, Vietnam, Cambodia and The Philippines

It’s a hot afternoon in Manila. A young Japanese student is sitting on the beach. Has he ever been to Manila before? How long has he been there? There is a homeless woman on the beach. Yuichi watches here. What is she doing? How long has she been homeless? How much English does she speak?

Meanwhile in Kunming, Yoshimi and Kazu are sitting in an old teahouse. They are playing Chinese chess. Have they ever played Chinese chess before? How long have they been in Kunming?

Down in Vietnam, Gen is on a train to Saigon. Has he ever been to Saigon before? He is sitting next to an Australian guy. How long has the Australian guy been in Vietnam? Where has he come from? How long is he going to stay? What part of Australia does he come from? Gen and the Aussie are talking. What are they talking about?

In Saigon, someone steals Gen’s bag. Has anyone ever stolen anything from him before? Luckily he does not lose his passport and his travellers’ checks. He goes to the market and he buys some new clothes. He buys a Vietnamese style farmer’s hat. Has he ever worn a hat like that before? He goes to the police to report the theft. Has he ever reported anything to the police before? The Vietnamese policeman does not speak English or Japanese. Has he ever met a Japanese guy before?

Back in the Philippines, Yuichi is on a boat. Has he ever been on a boat before? He is going to the southern part of the Philippines. Has he ever been there before? On the boat he meets a German guy. Has he ever met a German guy before? How long has the German guy been in the Philippines? What does he do? Where does he come from? The German guy is going to meet some friends in Mindanao. They are from France. Has Yuichi ever met anybody from France before? The German guy’s friends have a yacht. Has Yuichi ever been on a yacht before? Has he ever studied French?

Over in China, Yoshimi and Kazu are crossing the border to Laos. Have they ever been to Laos before? In Laos they stop for lunch. They eat rice noodles. have they eaten rice noodles before? A woman is selling roasted grasshoppers. Has Kazu ever eaten roasted grasshopper before? Has Yoshimi?

Yoshimi and Kazu visit the Plain of Jars then they take a Mekhong River boat. The Mekhong goes from Tibet to China to Laos and Thailand to Cambodia to Vietnam. Yoshimi and Kazu take the boat to Cambodia. Have they ever taken a riverboat before?

On the boat the food is bad. Yoshimi is sick. In Phnom Penh they stay at the Capitol Hotel. They meet Gen by chance. How long has he been in Cambodia?

Meanwhile in the Philippines, Yuichi arrives in Mindanao. He meets a Muslim. Has he ever met a Muslim before?
It is a sunny day in Mindanao. The weather is very hot. Would you go to Mindanao? A Japanese student on vacation goes to an internet café. How many people are there in the café? What are they doing? The Japanese guy checks his email. Does he use yahoo or hotmail? There is a message from Gen. He is in Phnom Penh. There is a message from Yoshimi and Kazu too. They are in Phnom Penh with Gen.

Yuichi is travelling with a German guy. He meets the German guy’s friends. They are French. They have a yacht. They invite Yuichi to sail with them. Would you go with them? The French people are going to go to Vietnam but Yuichi wants to go to Indonesia. Would you change your plan?

One of the French guy’s names is Pierre. He says Indonesia is dangerous. He says there are pirates. Yuichi decides to give up on Indonesia. Would you?

Meanwhile in Phnom Penh, Gen and Yoshimi and Kazu go to a market. There are sarongs, statues of Buddha, scarves, rings, necklaces, bracelets, hammocks and many other things. What would you buy? Gen buys a sarong. Would you buy a sarong? Gen wears his sarong in the street. Would you wear a sarong in the street? Yoshimi buys a silk top. Do you like silk? Would you wear a silk top?

The three friends have lunch at a roadside stall. Would you eat at a roadside stall? They eat noodles. Kazu drinks coconut milk from a green coconut. He uses a straw. Kazu tries it. Yoshimi doesn’t try it. Would you try it?

Kazu and Yoshimi decide to go to Angkor Wat. Gen decides to go to Bangkok. Would you go to Bangkok or Angkor Wat? In Angkor Wat Yoshimi and Kazu see some monkeys. Yoshimi wants to feed the monkeys. Would you feed the monkeys?

Meanwhile on the French yacht Yuichi is sailing from Mindanao to Vietnam. A pirate ship attacks. The pirates kidnap everybody. Would you be scared? They take the French people and the German guy and Yuichi to an island. The pirates don’t speak English. Would you try to learn their language? Would you try to escape?

Over in Cambodia, Yoshimi is sick. Would you go to the doctor? Yoshimi doesn’t want to go to the doctor. She has diarrhoea. She stays in her room. Kazu goes for a walk. Would you go for a walk or stay with her? Kazu meets a beautiful Cambodian woman. Would you talk to her?

The woman is a widow. She sells coco-cola. She has two children. Would you marry a Cambodian? Would you marry a widow? Would you work in Cambodia? Would you live in Cambodia?
8. THE ESCAPE

Yuichi and his German friend and his French friends are prisoners. Two pirates are guarding them. The pirates drink a lot of rice wine. They get drunk. They pass out. The prisoners escape. Would you escape? They go to the other side of the island. What would you do? They find a boat. Is it bigger than their yacht? The prisoners leave the island in a boat. Would you leave the island or stay on it?

Meanwhile in Cambodia, Yoshimi is feeling better. She goes for a walk. She meets a handsome American guy. He studies the forest in Cambodia. She knows him from Hong Kong. She talks to him. Would you talk to him? She likes him? How does he compare to her boyfriend?

Meanwhile Kazu is talking to a beautiful Cambodian woman. He likes her. How does she compare to his girlfriend, Yoshimi?

Over in Thailand, Gen sees the sights of Bangkok. How does Bangkok compare to Phnom Penh? How does Thailand compare to Japan? How do Thai people compare to Japanese people?

Somewhere in the South China Sea four French people, a German guy and a Japanese guy are on a boat. They said to Brunei. How does Brunei compare to Japan? The six sailors tell the story of the pirates. They meet the Sultan of Brunei. They ride horses. They eat mutton and they eat seafood. They wear turbans and they wear sarongs. Would you eat mutton? Would you wear a turban? Would you wear a sarong?

Yuichi still has his passport and his travellers’ cheques. He leaves his friends and he flies to Jakarta. How does Indonesia compare to Brunei? How does Indonesia compare to Japan?

Meanwhile Yoshimi and Kazu go to Bangkok. They meet Gen and the three of them go to Koh Samui. Koh Samui is an island. How does Koh Samui compare to Bangkok? Gen meets a Swiss woman on the beach. She speaks good German and she speaks good French but she only speaks a little English. Gen becomes friends with the Swiss woman. He likes her. She likes him. He gets sick. He gets diarrhoea. She looks after him. Later he gets better and he checks his email. He has a message from the American woman in Japan. How does the American woman in Japan compare to the Swiss woman in Thailand? Yoshimi checks her email. She has a message from the American guy in Cambodia. Kazu checks his email. He has no message from the Cambodian woman. She does not use email. She is too poor. How does email compare to writing letters?

Gen and Yoshimi and Kazu finally leave Koh Samui. The Swiss woman comes with them. They travel through Malaysia and they check their email in Penang. They get a message from Yuichi. He is in Bali. How does Bali compare to Java? How does Indonesia compare to Malaysia? Yuichi decides to travel east to Lombok and Komodo then meet the others in Bali ten days later. They travel through Singapore and Sumatra and Java. When they get to Bali, they cannot find Yuichi. They get an email message. He has flown to Darwin. He has gone to Australia.
9. AUSTRALIA

It’s midday in Australia and it is extremely hot. A young Japanese student is working on a mango farm. He is picking mangoes. How much does he earn per hour? How many mangoes can he pick in one hour? Is it a hard job? What is the hardest job he has ever had?

A plane lands in Darwin. Is Darwin the hottest city in Australia? Is it the most humid city in Australia? What is the largest city in Australia? Three Japanese students and a Swiss woman are on the plane. They’re travelling south. Who is the oldest? Who is the youngest? Who is the most fun? Who is the most easy-going?

The four friends check into a backpacker hostel in Darwin. Is it the dirtiest hostel in Darwin? Is it the cheapest? Is it the most interesting? How much is a bed for the night?

The four friends meet the fifth member of their group. His name is Yuichi. He has run out of money and he is working at a mango farm. They all have a big drinking party. Who can drink the most? Who can drink the least? Who talks the most? Who talks the least? Does the Swiss woman feel left out? Has she been to Australia before? Is she trying to learn Japanese?

The next morning the five friends have hangovers. Who has the worst hangover? Who has the biggest head-ache? Who has the worst stomach-ache?

The five friends buy a used car. It is an old camper van. The friends travel south. They have had many adventures. Who has had the most dangerous experience? Who has had the most exciting experience? Who has spent the most money? Who has learned the most? Who has met the most people? Who has met the most girls?

In Australia not many people speak Japanese. Everybody has to speak English. Of the five friends, who can speak the most English? Who speaks the least English?

The travellers stop in Katherine. They visit a crocodile farm. How big are the crocodiles? They swim in the river. They see kangaroos and wallabies and birds. Have they ever seen kangaroos before? They meet an aborigine. Is aboriginal culture the oldest culture in the world? The aborigine plays the didgeridoo. Have the friends ever heard a didgeridoo before?

That night the travellers go to a party in the campground. There are lots of other tourists there. They see aborigines dance and play didgeridoos. There are four of them. Their names are Wally, Ernie, Ben and Mick. Which one is the best didge player? Which one is the tallest? Which one is the oldest? Which one is the youngest? Which one is the best-looking?

The next day the five travellers get up early. They drive to the Three Ways then they turn east. They travel for two days. They see a herd of wild horses on the road. There are about two hundred of them.

Finally they reach the east coast. Is Australia the largest country in the world? Is it the oldest? Is it the most peaceful? Is it the safest? Is it one of the most dangerous? Is it the most racist? Is it the most stable? Is it the coldest? Is it the wettest? Is it the hottest? Is it the driest?
10. BACK IN JAPAN

It is the start of the second semester at a Japanese university. Four friends are having lunch at the cafetaria. Is eating at the cafetaria expensive? Is it healthy? They have just come back from their summer holidays. Is travelling educational? They have travelled from Japan through Asia to Australia. Yoshimi and Kazu are not together any more, but they are still friends. What is the story? Is breaking up hard? How does working over the summer holidays compare to travelling over the summer holidays? How does travelling in Australia compare to travelling in other Asian countries?

Yuichi is going to write a story about his escape from the pirates in the Philippines. Is travelling in the Philippines always dangerous? Is writing a good way to make a living? Is being able to express yourself in words important?

Gen is having a relationship with a Swiss woman. She is back in Switzerland and he is back in Japan. It is a long distance relationship. Is having a long distance relationship hard? Would you have a long distance relationship or break up, if you were in his situation? Is having a relationship with a foreigner hard? Is marrying a foreigner a good idea? Is living overseas hard to get used to? Gen writes to the Swiss woman once a week and he calls her once a week too. Is making an international phone call expensive? How often does he email her? How does keeping in touch by email compare to keeping in touch by letter or by phone?

Yoshimi and Kazu and Yuichi and Gen are planning their next trip. They are thinking of going to Europe. They’re thinking of taking the Trans-Siberian to Moscow. Is travelling by train fun? What’s it like travelling in the CIS? How does travelling in Europe compare to travelling in Asia? Is travelling alone the same for a man as it is for a woman? The four friends all want to improve their English. What are the advantages of being able to speak English? What are the disadvantages of being mono-lingual? What are the advantages of being able to speak another language?
