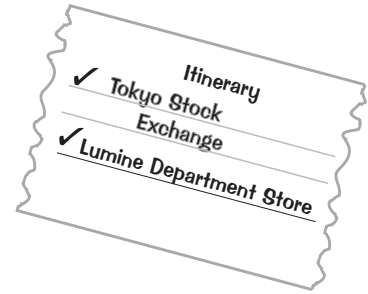


Weather - Sunny & pleasant
Tokyo - Tuesday



This was our last full day in Japan. The time here has passed so quickly, yet in many ways it feels as if we had compacted a year's worth of experiences into 15 days.

A group of us decided to go to the Tokyo Stock Exchange this morning. This meant taking the subway system again and making one transfer from the red line to the orange line — no problem!! The subway was not difficult at all. It's laid out the same way as the Metro in Washington, D.C.

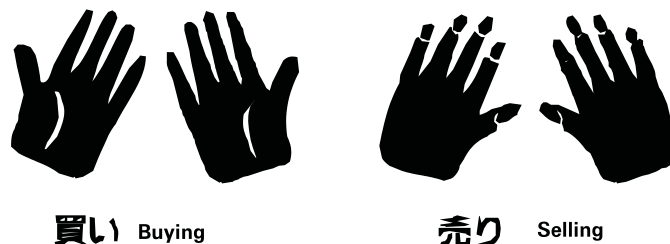
One very nice thing about Japan was that I could safely stop anyone on the street and ask directions. The people invariably were helpful and would usually walk with me until they were sure I would end up in the right place. This was how we made it to the stock exchange. People pointed us in the right direction and finally we were there.

A Visit to the Tokyo Stock Exchange

There were four guides at the stock exchange who spoke English and gave us a most informative and interesting tour. The Tokyo Stock Exchange is open Monday through Friday from 9:00 to 11:00 A.M. and from 1:00 to 3:00 P.M. Surprisingly, our guide said that since the Tokyo market responds to what happens in London and New York, there is not much action on Mondays when these other markets have not yet opened. I would have thought that Tokyo would lead the way since morning comes here before it does in much of the rest of the world.

The Visitor's Center was set up with video and animated high-tech presentations that explained all that was going on. It reminded me of the displays and exhibits one sees at Disney World and Epcot Center.

One thing that was particularly interesting was the use of hand signals when trading is done on the floor of the stock exchange. There was a display with an automated robot showing the various signals. The trading floor itself looked like pandemonium to the average observer. I could see activity everywhere with hundreds of people pushing, shoving, shouting, and constantly communicating via hand signals. When a big trade was made, we heard applause and whistles. To my ears, these were the same sounds I associate with a high school basketball game.



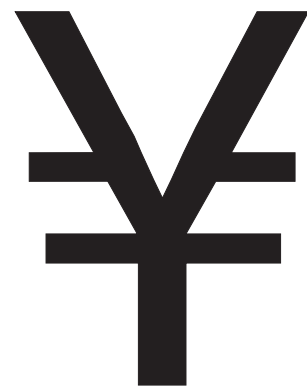
I noticed that the only women on the trading floor were clerks. No women were involved in the active trading on the floor. I asked our guide why this was the case. He said that there was no law prohibiting it, but that the activity on the trading floor gets too rough for women. The men, he claimed, often get bloody noses and torn clothing. Somehow, this explanation did not seem 100% accurate since women were physically on the trading floor already as clerks.

The 150 most active stocks are traded on the floor of the exchange, but the rest are traded via computer. We went to another part of the building to see this. While the men on the floor seemed quite young, perhaps in their twenties and thirties, the men doing the computerized trading were older, probably in their forties or fifties. Some were wearing slippers with their shoes placed neatly under their desks while others were wearing shoes. I noticed again that there were only men doing this work.

This evening a group of us ventured out for dinner — our last night in Japan. It was the evening before Sports Day, a national holiday in Japan, and the restaurants were very crowded. We tried several places, but they turned us away because there were no available tables. The custom of waiting for an empty table didn't seem to exist. If the restaurant was full, they just turned us away with no suggestion of waiting.

We finally found a Chinese restaurant on the 7th floor of Lumine Department Store, one of five restaurants located there. It seemed strange to me to have so many restaurants in department stores, but this is commonplace in Japan. Tables were available, but it was necessary to divide into two smaller groups. I enjoyed the conversation and the Chinese food, which was quite different from the Japanese food we had been eating for much of our trip. It was a nice evening.

We returned to the hotel early to face the challenge of fitting everything into two suitcases and finding something clean enough to wear on the plane tomorrow. As we were packing, all of us wandered up and down the hotel hallway dressed in *yukatas*. It was like a party in a college dorm, all low key but with lots of laughter and reminiscing. It was the perfect way to end our time together.





Student Activity Page

A Visit to the Tokyo Stock Exchange

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The 150 most active stocks are traded on the floor of the exchange but they trade the rest via a computer. The Nikkei Average is used to indicate whether the stock market in Japan is going up or down.

Stock markets are busy places! In New York, London and Tokyo, they are at the heart of the country's economy. With a global economy, stock markets around the world often affect the lives of average people who may live several thousand miles away. Because Tokyo is located in the Pacific Ocean not too far west of the International Date Line, Tokyo time is 14 hours ahead of New York. This means when it is Monday at 7:00 A.M. in New York it is 9:00 P.M. in Tokyo. With this time difference, how much do you think the two stock markets are related?

Check It Out!

The Dow Jones average indicates whether the New York Stock Market is going up or down. The Nikkei Average does this for the Tokyo Stock Exchange.

Choose a hypothesis: (Check one)

_____ When the Dow Jones Average goes up, the Nikkei Average usually goes up, too.

_____ When the Dow Jones Average goes up, the Nikkei Average usually goes down.

_____ The Dow Jones Average and the Nikkei Average are totally unrelated.

Now do some research to prove or disprove your hypothesis.

Which hypothesis is correct? How do you know?

Challenge Questions

Find out more about the Tokyo Stock Exchange. What are the most popular stocks? Has the Nikkei average gone up or down in the past week? the past month? the past year? What effect has this had on the Japanese economy?

Reproducible

Observations



All videos, instructions, printed materials, etc. at the Tokyo Stock Exchange are in Japanese and English. One can manage quite well in Japan with either of these languages, but you are in big trouble if you don't know one or the other.

The animated Disney-like figures at the Stock Exchange Visitor's Center look more Caucasian than Japanese.

Many models used in photos in ads on billboards or in magazines have round eyes rather than the slanted eyes characteristic of the Japanese.

Everyone shopping in downtown Tokyo is dressed up.

When using a hand signal to indicate the number three, the Japanese hold up the small finger and two middle fingers while holding down the index finger and thumb. An American generally holds down the little finger and thumb and holds up the three middle fingers.

The value of the American dollar as compared to the yen changes from day to day. It's hard to know from one day to the next how much things actually cost!

In the bathroom at the airport, there are printed directions in English and in Japanese explaining how to use the western-style toilet: 1) Lift cover; 2) Sit on seat; 3) Flush.

The label on the blow dryer for hands in the bathroom says "Air Towel."

In schools, there are yellow footprints beside the toilet (Japanese style) so that the children will know where to place their feet.

In one restaurant, one had to walk through the men's room to get to the women's room. Japanese women tend to wait until there are no men around. The women in our group walked right through.

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