

Tell everyone I said "konnichiwaaaaa" ... Love, Anne



Date: Friday, 19 September 1997 ... Hey! I'm trying to kill ants as they crawl across this computer & desk. Why must they be so persistent? There is nothing up here for them! I just got back from watching Mike do his thing at Satosho Jr. Hi. It was their field day today-Mike is a champ! I'll let him elaborate if he feels the need. I tried to remain as inconspicuous as possible, although the women there weren't trying to do the same w/ their stares. O-well. Curious, I suppose. One old lady (and trust me, the word "old" is appropriate in this case) came over to me, after bowing at each other for an eternity, she said, "something-something (in Japanese) Sensei?" Ok, so my interpreting skills are not so good, but I figured her to be asking if I was some how associated w/ the only other white person milling about. So I answered, "Hai". And there were a few others that said konnichiwa to me.

...Dang! I just went on a mission to exterminate all ants, to no avail ... The latest news from me: I got a job! The way in which I got this job is worth mentioning. I had arranged to meet Kumiko of the Lotus international center Wednesday evening at the Okayama International Center. Mike and I rode the train there together and separate before we even left the station-he was off getting money to support my dead-ass. (insert smiley face here). As I walked to the meeting place, a cute little woman said, "Anne?" "Yes, I'm Anne. Kumiko?" What followed was/is still unbelievable. She said, " You ride bicycle?" I said yes. She walks me over to a bike and says, "This is for you, we go to bookstore now. You pick out teaching material." Ok, so I'm thinking, what about an interview? She knows nothing about me, and I know nothing about her or the position. But I roll with it and follow her through Okayama. Okayama is a big city without any rules regarding where or how to ride a bike. Everyone rides on the sidewalk, no set direction, or flow for that matter. I haven't ridden a bike in a while, and to make matters worse, the bike I was on was child size, the back tire was low, and my big feet kept getting caught on the sidewalk. It was a challenge!] I almost wiped out several times. As I'm riding I'm thinking; hmm, what if she's part of some kind of Mafia, maybe she's taking me to her leader, perhaps I just sold myself to white slavery or something. Thank god we did end up at a bookstore. And I did pick out teaching material that she purchased for me. Then we rode all the way back to the International center. At this point I'm still not sure what has or is going to happen. She hands me a sheet of paper that says it's parttime, \$20/hour, sometimes private, sometimes group & each lesson lasts an hour. Great! I guess that's it. Oh yeah, then she gave me an envelope w/ a letter already printed up: Dear Ms. Anne, thank you blah blah and 1,000 yen. Wow. I always thought interviewing was rather easy for me, but goodness! Now they're paying me!! I don't start for awhile and I need to negotiate train fare--but other than that, I'm pretty excited. When I walked in, Mike was there and had been stressing--so that's when we (he) came up with "if we're ever lost/separated" plan. So that's really it for new news from me.

A few more items to discuss: Bruce and Barb-- THANK YOU!! The announcement is wonderful! Looks like a lot of time went into that, thank you so much! Congratulations on the new towing vehicle Bruce and the cruise job--watch out for those "passengers", I've watched enough love boat to know that a "night cap" is more than a drink! ha, Mom--where's the gossip?

Dad--looking for updates, you know.

Paul--you're still a wienie. You and Jen S. are on the same list, and it's not a Christmas list.

Love,

Anne

Date: Saturday, 20 September 1997

Hey Everyone,

Last night I had my welcome party (enkai) at a local seafood restaurant and I thought I would just share some of the details with you. It started in the afternoon after the sports day activities that everyone has spent the last two weeks preparing for so I think that the party had another purpose besides welcoming me to the school. I think it acts as an incentive for the teachers to work their best at sports day because from what I have observed and heard nobody is really interested in doing it.

We all arrived around 5:30 and were escorted to a private room (complete with a stage and karaoke machine) above the restaurant. We were served a lot of food that I wouldn't normally be able to afford such as crab, shrimp, sashimi, and other delicacies. I hardly was able to enjoy any of it because I had to go around the room and serve a drink to everyone and have a toast with them. This was good because most of the teachers don't take the time to talk to me at school and by the time I had gotten around to them they had already loosened up a bit and were ready to try talking to me. I was surprised to find that most of them were either able to speak or understand a little English so I was able to hold some kind of conversation with most of them. A little later I was informed that I would be participating in "traditional Japanese culture" activities. My first was to do a Japanese dance with one of the math teachers. This involved taking off my shirt and shouting at the top of my lungs while we did this little strut up on the stage. I am sure it was all pretty entertaining as I had to share my farmers tan that I have been working on all summer!

Then came the karaoke. I performed a stellar rendition of Yesterday by the Beatles. I would have chose something else but that was all they had in English. A few other teachers got up there and did a couple of songs but the vice principal was the main performer of the evening. I think he really enjoys getting up there and singing for everyone and he should because he had the only good singing voice out of everyone.

After karaoke I had to do kendo with the Japanese culture teacher using vacuum attachments. I don't think she was all that excited about doing it but the vice principal put the pressure on her to do it. I did my best to imitate her movements but am far from a master.

The party ended at 8:30 sharp and we were hustled out of the room and into the parking lot. I was informed that we had reached the end of phase 1 of the enkai and that some of the teachers were heading off for phase 2 at the karaoke bar next door. I asked if it would be alright if I brought Anne along and they all got really excited about meeting her so I left to go get her ready.

We arrived at the bar and the party was in full swing. I got up on stage and introduced Anne to everyone and we were then serenaded by the vice principal with a Japanese wedding song. This ended up being first of many love the songs that we would be served up by various teachers.

I got up and sang a song that pleased everyone but I can't recall what the name of it was. Whatever it was everyone liked my voice so much that I was requested to sing a few more. We tried to get Anne up there to sing Madonna's hit song "Like a Virgin" but she flaked out before the first chorus. I picked up from there and finished the song for her. I don't think that I was very convincing but was entertaining nonetheless. Anne and I finished up the evening with a duet singing "Daydream Believer" by the Monkees and then hit the road.

I understand there is sometimes a phase three at these functions but I wasn't prepared to hang around and find out what these people are like when they are all just completely obliterated. These enkaies are supposed to happen three times a year so I am looking forward to the next one which I think happens about midway through the year. Maybe that is another incentive for the teachers to keep going.

Hope you are all doing well.

Mike

Date: Monday, 22 September 1997

ohayo gozai masu (*good morning*), or konnichi wa' (*good afternoon*) Not sure if you'll be getting this in the morning or afternoon? It's monday morning for me right now, and it's your sunday evening--but I'm hoping this will be transmitted by the time you get in to work! I don't know what's wrong with me--all I want to do is sleep! I always knew I was a sleeper--maybe it's because I don't have much to do what a shame, living the life of leisure! I told Mike that not working has made the wrinkles between my eyes smaller & my nails are those of a woman that hasn't worked a day in her life! I took my first Japanese bath here last night. Not sure what motivated me, but it was nice. The tub is very short, but deep. It's kind of like bathing in a bucket! I will really enjoy it when it gets cold! Which, I'm hoping doesn't happen until after I leave, as I don't even have a coat to wear! It's definitely cooling off, have to use more blankets at night. I keep thinking of all the things I want to bring back in January: down comforter, picture frames, candles/holders, books, videos, taco bell it will be a challenge figuring out what is most important! ...

I had a nightmare about Big Eddie this morning. I really miss him. I don't know what I'm going to do w/ him since we might be staying here longer than I thought? I know you guys don't want any more cats, but maybe you could think about him, and how sweet he is he doesn't cry so much anymore according to Joel, and isn't eating like such a pig I may have to give him up for adoption. Well, in any case, it will all be ok. I told Joel that I would talk to him when I got back about how he's feeling about the responsibility.

hey! You just called! Totally made my day! So, the above part of this letter can be ignored I'm starving. Not really, but I am certainly planning what I'm going to eat. I'll talk to you later, or I'll write more later. W/B (stands for write back) !!

I love you!

Anne

The definition of an Enkai:

An enkai is basically a Japanese drinking party, just slightly better organized than that definition would imply. Enkaies usually revolve around some sort of business, community organization or group. They basically boil down to an office party which is held for certain events (and not in the office).

Enkaies are usually held at restaurants or izakayas, and many cater specifically to these events. The food provided obviously depends on the quality of the establishment, but it is usually some pretty good stuff. The constants at these shindigs are bottomless supplies of beer, sake and edamame.

Following the enkai there is usually a "second enkai" (nijikai) and even a "third enkai" (sanjikai) but it is really just group bar hopping. Have fun stumbling home, and lord help you if you have to ride a bike. Excerpt from: <http://everything2.com/title/Enkai>



The happy Bride and Groom leaving their wedding reception in Estes Park, Colorado on December 27, 1997. Their next stop ... Japan.

Date: Wednesday 7 January 1998 ... I'm freeeeezzing my butt off

Well, we made it. It was a long flight and several long train rides home, but we did it. Traveling with Mike makes it so much better, I gotta remember to keep him around! ha.

So, have things settled around your place yet? Not dust or more wrinkles--the action? Whew, what a brilliant time I had.

THANK YOU S0000 MUCH FOR EVERYTHING! !

It's raining and cold. Last night when we got home around 11:00 pm, we were lucky to have nice weather, around 50 degrees and no rain. Thank god. We shipped our two big bags, they should be here around noon or so. I'm anxious to get my suitcase cuz it has the comforter and I know I'll be needing a nap soon. Or just some place to go to warm up. We slept almost the whole night through. Amazing. That will really help the jet lag situation. I'm actually feeling pretty good. Hungry as a hippo though.

Well, I guess I'll say areevidartchi for now.

I love you all,
Anne Harvey

Date: Thursday 8 January 1998

Hi Mom: How are you? I am fine. My fingers are so cold they are numb, so this letter will be brief. Very brief.

Things are great. Getting settled in. Received our baggage yesterday afternoon. Poor little Japanese man grunted as he tried to lift Mike's suitcase. Then drooled. I helped him get it up the stairs. Sure hope didn't break his back. Mike says they wouldn't have hired him if he couldn't do it. I say Poo-Poo. He was very small and the suitcase outweighed him by about 60 pounds. Slept like a queen with my down comforter. Here's a complaint--I was almost too warm' I'll be heading back that way soon to warm up my hands. This place isn't so bad--temperature wise. Well, the kitchen and bath area is butt-freezing cold. So that's why I won't be writing for much longer--the computer is in the kitchen.

If you ever feel like sending a care package, I thought of a couple items: -Mike and Anne thank you notes

-Celestial Seasons Chamomile w/ Honey and Vanilla tea

That's all.

Well, I've got to go warm up.

Thanks again for EVERYTHING Mom. I love you!
Anna Maria

Dearest Mom, Almost April, 1998

I miss you. I think about you guys all the time & wish good experiences & great opportunities didn't require me to be so far from my family. Who would have ever known this would be my life? I certainly never had any intention of living in Japan. And here I am. You have heard my complaints, & a few praises. I believe I have come to some kind of understanding as to why I'm here & why we plan to stay. It has taken some getting used to, that's for sure.

At present I'm waiting for something. Not really sure what, but I believe my boss Mitsuko is planning on telling me how the schedule will be changing as of April 1. But she seems pretty busy-- in her house & I

little more settled? Or are you ready to just call it quits & start having more fun? Mike & I have been doing some internet research on Belize. I hate to say it, but now we're seriously considering making that our home for awhile. I think living (or traveling) in foreign places opens your eyes to the endless possibilities. I guess right now neither of us are ready to "settle down", so to speak. I actually pray that I won't be ready for quite some time because there are so many things I want to do & at this point, it seems more feasible doing them without kids. So, tell Dad to start checking out Belize. He can buy some land for \$6,000.00 & build a small place out of cement, 8 feet off the ground (both in case of a hurricane) for a mere \$100. per sq. foot. (I think?!)

I can hear her running around. Bring what, I don't know My hopes are that she's fixing me some tea & a snack. That's what her mom usually does. Isn't that sweet? Too bad I just wrote about it as if it's something I expect. I don't, really. It is nice though.

She's coming. Well... I guess that's not the plan. She just ran off to class. So now I wait. The waiting comes with the job, sometimes people don't show up, or the classes are scheduled weird. It can be frustrating thinking of the millions of other things I'd rather be doing (like getting your birthday box put together). But it's also nice to have time to read, write, & reflect. Right now I'm reflecting on the effects beans have on my body. Tragic!!

How's your job coming? Feeling a

We could buy an island together & have a bed & breakfast. It's a growing country supported mainly by U.S. tourists. (And fruit, of course) Anyway, we've got the travelin' bug for the time being.

I hope everything is going great for you guys! I really wish I could be there for your birthday. I will be thinking of you & sending extra (if that's possible) love your way!

Please take care & make sure Dad's exercising & not eating (too much) beef. I'm STILL not smoking!

I Love You!

Anne

♪♪ I'm feeling baloooo without chewww ♪♪

Not all correspondence was via e-mail; occasionally we would get snail mail from Japan. This letter was sent just a few months before Anne and Mike returned to Colorado. I think it is obvious that homesickness was setting in.



Above: Time for a Beer

Below: Dinner at the Onishi's

