

CrossTalk

CROSSROADS Language Studio's Newsletter March, 2017

MONEY

Over the centuries, people have assigned monetary value to all kinds of objects. Beads and shells were top currency in many pacific cultures, as were dolphin's teeth! This latter item has been used in

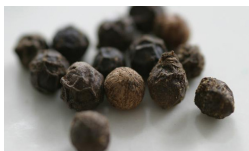


the Solomon Islands for hundreds of years. The teeth were replaced in more recent times with the island's modern dollar

currency. However, in 2008 the dollar was devalued. Then people started hoarding money creating a coin shortage. So, the Solomon Islanders reverted to using dolphin's teeth as currency: "The white man's money will end, but the dolphin teeth will always be there for us". This revived dolphin culls and, of course, led to international outrage from conservation groups. Dolphin's teeth? Not a good idea.

Salt has played an important role in the development of many ancient civilizations. In China 2200 BEC, salt was used to pay taxes. In the Ancient Roman era, soldiers were sometimes paid in salt (the words "soldier" and "salary" in English are derived from the Latin word, "salarium", an adjective referring to salt).

Salt is not the only edible that has been used as money. Peppercorns were extremely valuable in ancient Greece. And in the 5th century both the invading Visigoths and Huns demanded huge quantities of black pepper as payment in ransom from the city of Rome, or else! By the time the middle ages rolled around, peppercorns had become an accepted form of currency in Europe.



Another fascinating, ingestible kind of currency was the tea brick. Made in ancient China with tea leaves and stalks, a few herbs and some wood chips, along with ox blood and cow dung (for its binding effect), these bricks were still being used as currency in the 19th century, not only in China but also in Russia, Tibet, Siberia and Mongolia.



In medieval times, squirrel pelts were highly valued and in Russia and Finland they were used as currency with the animal's snouts and claws used as change!

Perhaps most intriguing is the Rai Stones from the island of Yap in Micronesia. These stones have been used as money since 500 AD. The Yapese people needed to travel to the nearby island of Palau to get limestone for these big circular discs. Shipping them back to Yap was no easy task as some were 3.5m across and weighed over 4 tonnes. Their value depended on their size and the amount of time and effort necessary to transport them. The journey was dangerous and if someone was injured or killed



along the way, the value of the stone went up! Some of these stones were so large that once they were placed on the island, they were not moved again; their location was not important, only their ownership. On one trip, a large stone fell overboard in transit and sank to the seabed. Everyone agreed that the stone must still be there, so they continued using it as genuine currency even though it could no longer be seen or touched!

Net News

NET LESSONS: Too busy to come to CROSSROADS?

.... Try our *lessons on the net!*

Go here for some more on the history of money:

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/ancient/history-money.html>

Some Thoughts for the Month



Joshua Says: I was watching a Ken Robinson video lecture the other day when he spoke about “education” starting with “learning” *not* “teaching”. Much of what he had to say made sense to me, although I don’t think everything he says about learning a second language is suited to our situation here in Japan. And yet, how profoundly and universally true is this statement, “*education starts with learning, not teaching*”. I’d very much like to find out what this might mean to you, our students.

Junko Says: Here’s another quote from Leonardo da Vinci: “A painter should begin every canvas with a wash of black because all things in nature are black except where exposed by light.” It is so true that without light you see nothing but darkness. Everybody understands this and yet, I wonder why it is so difficult to believe it. What do you think?



Matt Says: The F1 season starts this month on the 26th and so far it doesn’t look like the new regulations will alter the field very much. Mercedes still appear to have the fastest driver and car combination which most people hoped might change this year. Hopefully Australia delivers some unexpected excitement but I fear it may be another year of Mercedes dominance.

Nigel Says: I’ve noticed spring knocking on winter’s door; Prunus mume (plum blossoms) are in full bloom at the moment and it has reminded me of how pretty spring in Japan is. I’ll most likely visit the castle again to take in the different surroundings. Last time I went was at the end of the humid summer so it’ll be a nice change of scenery and temperature!



Danielle dit Trouver tous les mois un sujet à la fois digne d’intérêt mais qui tient dans un petit paragraphe est une chose plus compliquée qu’elle n’y paraît. Ce mois-ci, manquant d’inspiration, je me suis donc dit que j’allais tricher un peu et écrire un paragraphe parlant d’écrire ce paragraphe. Un peu comme un serpent qui se mord la queue... Mais il semblerait que cela ait marché puisque ce paragraphe se finit.

ACROSS

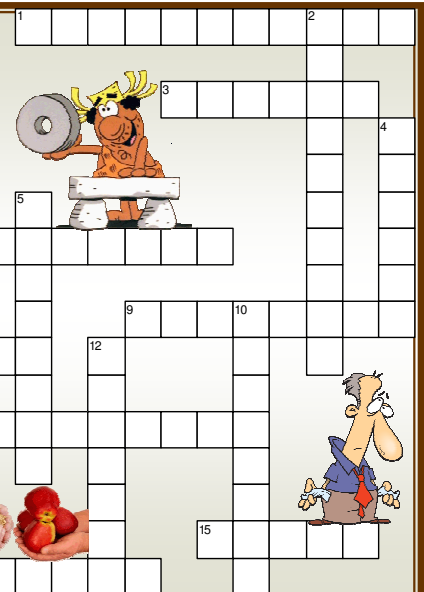
- 1 holding a high level of interest
- 3 noses
- 7 brought back, reestablish
- 9 a system of money
- 11 a small furry animal
- 13 possible to eat and drink
- 14 animal manure
- 15 the fur and hides of animals
- 16 formed or developed from

DOWN

- 2 provoking curiosity
- 4 close
- 5 lowered in value
- 6 secretly storing valuables
- 8 reduce the population by selected killing
- 10 gone back to a previous state
- 12 anger, disgust, revulsion



Play A Game!



(print version [here](#))



The Science Column with Sca3's Sakiko:



Will we ever be able to meet an aquatic monster, a Kappa?

When I was a child, I read a book named "After 100 Years". The story originated from an old folktale in which aquatic monsters, Kappas, told humans about an outbreak of heavy metal poisoning.

This story was set several decades ago; I think it was probably in the 1950's or 60's. A girl lived with her grandfather in a small village near a river. Her parents lived upstream near a mine where they worked. I guess that mining was the main industry of the village. There, everyone used river water to drink, cook with and wash clothes, dishes and so on in. The river was essential for supporting life.

However, not only humans, but also aquatic monsters, the Kappas, used the river. One day the girl saw some Kappas playing with a ball made of water. She was so surprised, she screamed. The Kappas noticed her and threw the ball to her. She got soaked and ran away. As she did, she heard the sound of the Kappas laughing. It was her first contact with Kappas.

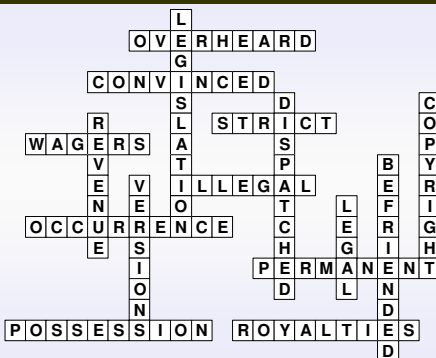
One night, there was a heavy storm. After the storm, the river's water turned muddy. Then a serious incident occurred. After the muddy water drained away, she saw a lot of dead fish floating in the river. At first glance, the river water looked clean and normal. The girl thought it was strange.

During a silent night, she heard a strange sound. Her grandfather heard it also. They heard it again the following night and again the night after that. She and her grandfather went out of their house and towards the sound. They found that it was the moans of the Kappas. She and her grandfather saw a crowd of Kappas going somewhere. Then one of the Kappas noticed the girl and said, "This river water is very harmful for us. We can't live here any more. But we will come back after 100 years. Please clean the water up".

After this incident people became concerned about the quality of the river water. Investigators came to the village and tested the contents of the water. Then the government prohibited people from using the river water. Later the residents found out that the water was polluted by heavy metal from the mine. This story ended with the girl thinking, "When the Kappas return, what will we play?"

Whenever I remember this story, I think about many things. What happened in the village after this incident? How did they change their life? Could they let go of their main industry? How could they live without the river water? There were many serious problems that were not written about in this story.

Anyway, I am waiting for the return of the Kappas. I would like to ask them about current water conditions. Our rivers have become much cleaner compared with several decades ago. I hope that they are now suitable for Kappas.



Last Month's puzzle Solution

ACROSS

- 2 hearing without the speaker's knowing
- 3 persuaded
- 7 severe, harsh
- 8 money used in gambling
- 11 not legal
- 13 happening
- 14 unchanging
- 15 ownership
- 16 payment to the holder of a copyright

DOWN

- 1 make or enact the law
- 4 sent towards a designated goal
- 5 exclusive rights
- 6 income (money) before deductions
- 9 became friends with
- 10 slightly different from the original
- 12 related to the law



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