

Japan in Arabia

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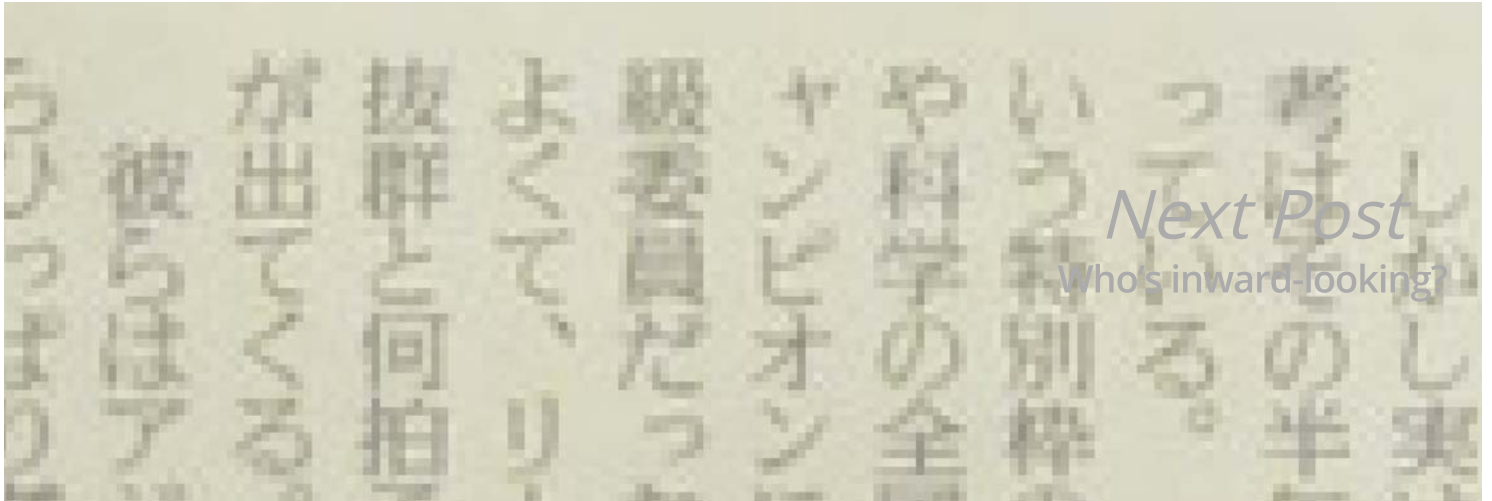
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During my recent lecture about “[Teaching language, teaching culture](#)” at the [Fujairah Women’s College](#), I spoke about English language teaching materials in Japan and the ways in which they constructed English-speaking culture as White culture, drawing on “[A passion for English: desire and the language market.](#)” After the lecture, a group of students, dressed in the traditional black abaya and sheila, came up to me and asked me about my personal experience of visiting Japan and shared their enthusiasm for Japanese culture. They were huge fans of Japanese pop culture, much more knowledgeable than I in that area, and were dreaming of going to Japan to visit or to further their education.



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I’ve blogged about [the popularity of Asian pop culture in the United Arab Emirates](#) before and so this enthusiasm for all things Japanese didn’t come as a surprise. The size of the manga sections in bookstores in Dubai, too, is testimony to the fact that young people here look increasingly East for inspiration. [This TV show by Dubai One channel](#) provides a great overview of Japanophilia in the UAE. Take 25 minutes to virtually visit Dubai and its Japan lovers! You’ll be taken to a sushi bar with an Arab manager and wait staff from the Philippines dressed in Japanese cheerleading uniforms; you’ll meet young Emirati manga artists and the members of the Japan Club at Zayed University. Listen to their international English voices, with Arabic subtitles, as they discuss what Japanese culture means to them and why they consider Japanese cultural forms perfect for expressing modern Arab identities. Language and culture on the move at its best!

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