

Researchers Say Don't Envy Japanese For Past

Trains run on time in Japan, as do ultrafast subways. Streets are clean. The nation is a world leader in electronics and automotive technology. Per-capita income is among the highest in the world.

But there's another side of the coin: The Japanese are frustrated with their stalled standard of living, characterized by tiny, ravenously expensive apartments; long, crushing commutes; and tedious days at the office, reports Reader's Digest.

Many Japanese typically work six days. The work day may stretch from 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. or later. Schooling after hours is a virtual institution for white-collar workers. With the long commute, it is not unheard of for them to get home near midnight.

During rush hours, trains fill to 250 percent capacity, often giving riders the sense they are suspended in the crush, with their feet off the ground. Riders complain they are

physically and psychologically molested by the daily experience, and they arrive at work exhausted.

With almost 33 million passenger cars in Japan, traffic is nearly impacted. Many who commute by car leave home at 5 a.m. and can be seen parked on the street, snoozing or eating a brown-bag breakfast before offices open.

A weekend jaunt from Tokyo to the seashore—about 60 miles away—can take up to six hours. Expressway tolls are exorbitant: A drive from Tokyo to Osaka, roughly equal to the distance from Chicago to Cincinnati, costs \$79.

For many, conditions are discouraging. Take the Miyakawas, a professional couple who live in a middle-class section of western Tokyo.

Their 450-square-foot apartment, a 75-minute commute from central Tokyo, consists of dinette kitchen, bedroom, study and bath.



AWARD FOR MERIT— James Brown will receive the special "Awards of Merit" for his "outstanding contributions over a long period of time to the musical entertainment of the American public" on the 19th annual "American Music Awards" special, airing on ABC-TV, Monday, January 27, 8-11 p.m. (ET & PT). Previous recipients of the award have been Bing Crosby, Berry Gordy Jr., Irving Berlin, Johnny Cash, Ella Fitzgerald, Perry Como, Benny Goodman, Chuck Berry, Stevie Wonder, Kenny Rogers, Michael Jackson, Loretta Lynn, Paul McCartney, Elvis Presley, The Beach Boys, Willie Nelson, Neil Diamond and Merle Haggard.

Hip Wizardry Gears For Center Stage, Jan. 29

Join this one-man odyssey in search of "hip" when "The Wizard of Hip (or When in Doubt Slam Dunk)" comes to NCSU's Stewart Theatre as part of the Center Stage season on Wednesday, Jan. 29, at 8 p.m.

Chronicling the young African-American male's coming of age, and the ensuing, sometimes all-consuming quest for hipness, "The Wizard of Hip" is a blizzard of free association, rap and blizzard of consciousness.

Writer/star Thomas W. Jones, II, co-founder and co-artistic director of Jomandi Theater in Atlanta, combines a multitude of styles and sensibilities in this piece: Eddie Murphy's humor, Richard Pryor's sense of the absurd, Amiri Baraka's cadence, Robin Williams' obliqueness, and Damon Wayans' takes on street life. They all come together to create a play that works both as a surface comedy and as astute social

commentary.

In its most sublime moments, "Wizard" comes off as a jazzy prose poem. Afro Jo, Jones' character, graphically examines the purported components of hip—having pro basketball as a religion, finding salvation through sex, for example—but at a breathless pace so that only later do you realize he's been saying a lot about respect, tolerance and compassion along the way.

Discover one man's definition of "hip" in "The Wizard of Hip." For tickets, call the Stewart Theatre box office. General admission is \$14, with discounts available to Create-Your-Own-Series subscribers, NCSU faculty, staff and students, groups and senior citizens.

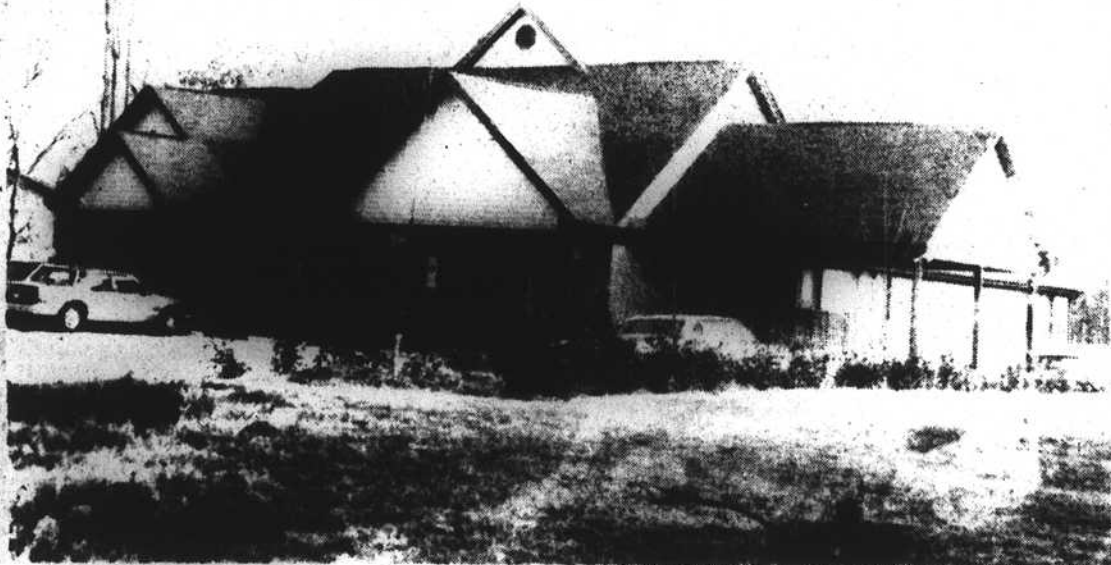
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