

It is the celebration of an original American sport born in the Old West, where cowboys challenged each other in contests

where people had light hair like mine, were taller than me, and would take my appearance so for granted they wouldn't stare.

One of the most unusual aspects of the Kissimmee rodeo is that it is put on

The top rodeo stars can pick up \$15,000 or more in one rodeo and usually ride in more than 100 a year, Berlinsky says.

Members of the Parlin, Brown street, Rohde and Chapman RODEO/Page F7

It won't be easy to bow out of Japanese society

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CHIBA-SHI, Japan — Like most Americans in Japan, I spend much of my time feeling conspicuous and trying to fit into the society around me. Everywhere I go, people stare boldly at my blond hair, my big feet and my height. Drunken men unsure of how much Japanese I understand whisper to each other behind their hands, and shy children stare at me in terror and fascination.

He hastily pulled his hand away, as my furiously blushing face bounced up. At that moment, I realized how accustomed I'd become to Japan, and how confused I was going to be by this new exposure to American culture.

My neighbor's monstrous individual tea pot and cup surely couldn't be the same size as the tea pots I'd ordered in America, I thought. Suddenly, I felt like Alice in Wonderland after she's shrunk dangerously small and finds herself surrounded by gargantuan household items.

you speak politely that you don't think about it anymore," he said. When we visited an oriental sponsored by the base high school that afternoon, I found myself murmuring "Sumimasen" or "naai" (excuse me) to the Englishing people. I inadvertently They'd stop and look at me queer moment, and then pass on.

Sometimes, the attention can be fun. When little kids follow me around, giggling and shouting, "Konnihiwai" (Good afternoon?), I feel a little like a celebrity. At home, I have never been able to make people look so happy just by accidentally glancing in their direction.

For almost the first time since my arrival in Japan last fall, my neck sank immediately into the polite bow — just as my new acquaintance's hand rose up and into my face for the equally polite American handshake I'd worked so hard to forget.

Another friend who had lived in Japan when her children were small remembered her son's behavior when they returned to America for the first time. "Whenever anyone was introduced to him, Walter just bowed to them," she said, laughing. "I finally had to explain to him that people didn't really do that in America."

When we left the base and began train ride back to Chiba that evening, I realized the small car seemed just the right size, and the language dark-eyed, dark-haired people like me were speaking didn't sound so foreign like glibberish as it did when I first tried.

However, sometimes the stares aren't so positive, and I find myself struggling to fade into the black-haired, almond-eyed background. I worry about the way I hold my chopsticks, or the depth of my brows, and I feel terribly nervous when a waitress asks me for my order in a restaurant.

Suddenly I remembered my grandmother's reaction when I told her how people slurp while eating Japanese noodles, or drinking ceremonial tea. "Don't become too Japanese while

A co-worker told me he realized how Japanese he'd become when he caught himself bowing while talking on the telephone. "You just get so used to bowing when you say certain words, or when

Then I thought of the McDD waiting at the end of the train ride realized my only regret was that polite people in Japan didn't slurp the rest of their chocolate shakes.

When some friends invited me to the American Naval Base in Yokosuka a few weeks ago, I jumped at the chance. I looked forward to going someplace

Our dinner was served, and I felt my Japanese eyes register amazement at the size of the Cola can and glass set before me. It looked like it could serve several people. I could hardly believe my own memories of being able to gulp one down in one sitting at home.

Karen Cubie grew up in Kingsville, graduated from Silver Lake Regional High School.

Passengers should pay attention to those air-safety lectures

By Betsy Wade
NEW YORK TIMES NEWS SERVICE

Practical traveler

Travelmania

YOU know those cardboard sheets in airline-seat pockets — the ones with pictures of the life jacket and oxygen mask and diagrams of exit doors?

professionals always remind you that the drive to the airport is more hazardous than the flight, and figures for 1987 uphold this.

The fatality rate for passenger cars and taxis is 0.92 for each 100 million passenger miles; for scheduled airlines, it is 0.07 for each 100 million passenger miles.

This new-found interest followed a brief period I spent wobbling around in an evacuation slide-rat. Floating in the lagoon at Long Beach, Calif., and a half an hour virtually immobilized inside a fully inflated air-life vest.

One change in behavior resulting from my recent experience involves footwear. Even as a lark, getting into a 58-passenger rat — it can hold 78 people if it must — tells you why in an evacuation you would be required to take off your high-heeled shoes before you got in. Sharp heels, even cowboy boot heels, would immediately poke holes

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