

# Japan Harvest Writer's Guidelines

*Japan Harvest* is the official publication of the Japan Evangelical Missionary Association (JEMA). It is published quarterly to promote primarily the cause of the evangelical church in Japan, and secondarily the ministry and activities of the association.

**Mission Statement:** To encourage, inspire, and equip the JEMA community.

*Japan Harvest* welcomes unsolicited contributions. We publish materials of interest to Christians in Japan, those involved in ministry with Japanese outside of Japan, and all who are praying for the Japanese. If you have material or want to write material that fits in this category, we would love to hear from you.

Our readership includes JEMA members (who receive the magazine as a member benefit), other missionaries in Japan, Christians around the world who are interested in Japan, and Japanese Christians. Some overseas Bible colleges and seminaries also receive *Japan Harvest*.

## Style/Tone

*Japan Harvest* seeks to provide encouragement, insight, news, education, and practical ministry help for all who want to reach Japanese with the gospel. Book reviews, conference reports, testimonies, interviews, and ministry resources are a sampling of the materials we publish.

Since *Japan Harvest* is aimed at a broad readership with varying interests and backgrounds, following are hints for writing articles for the magazine:

- As a rule, use language that would be typical for a general interest magazine or a daily newspaper. This will be less formal than academic or theological writing, but not as informal as email or speech.
- When you have a choice, use simple, everyday words instead of complex words that express essentially the same meaning (e.g. “yes” rather than “gave the affirmative”)
- Use active voice wherever possible, e.g. “we have noticed...” rather than the passive “it has been noticed that...”
- Break up long sentences into shorter and simpler sentences. (Watch for “ands” and “buts.”)
- Contractions are acceptable, and may be preferred in some instances to avoid being too formal, e.g. “isn’t” instead of “is not.”

If you are used to academic writing, wordiness can be a challenge. The following webpage gives some excellent hints for editing your own work and reducing excess words:

<http://leo.stcloudstate.edu/style/wordiness.html>

## Editing Policy

*Japan Harvest* reserves the right to edit contributions for length and clarity and not to publish every article we receive.

We do both copy editing and content editing on contributions as necessary.

**Copy editing** involves correcting the language of the text. It is checking for spelling, capitalization, punctuation, verb tenses and other grammatical errors. It includes checking sentence structure,

paragraph length, missed words, etc.

**Content editing** involves examining the text on a deeper level. It checks for factual errors, contradictions, and inconsistencies. It checks whether the lead paragraph and conclusion are strong, whether every section is logical, and whether the article is balanced.

Our goal is to make sure contributions will grab the attention of the reader. If significant changes are made, we aim to consult the writer for assurance that the writer's intention isn't changed. We want to help the writer communicate clearly, compellingly, and accurately. We will clear edited articles with writers before publication.

*Japan Harvest* edits according to either US English and Commonwealth English rules, depending upon the author's primary English background. For example, an Australian author would be edited to Commonwealth standards and a Japanese writer educated in the US would be edited to US standards. This unusual policy reflects our international readership and seeks to serve our contributors by editing their writing according to the standards of the form of English with which they are most accustomed. We have developed a style guide to assist us with this task. If the editors are unsure of an author's background, the author will be asked to verify whether they want their work edited according to US English or Commonwealth English standards.

## Feature articles

Each issue has a theme. *Japan Harvest* usually publishes several articles based on this theme. Feature articles should be between 550 and 1,500 words. Upcoming themes are:

Spring 2020: Behind the scenes

Summer 2020: Ministering through education

Autumn 2020: Strength in weakness

Winter 2021: Challenging issues

Spring 2021: Pastoral care

Summer 2021: Japanese mindset

Autumn 2021: Men, where are they?

Winter 2022: Rest

Spring 2022: Mobilisation

## Regular articles

**“Regulars” or columns** are often (but not necessarily) by the same author and appear in each issue. As of Spring 2019, our columns are: Focus on prayer, Modern tech, Member care, Language and culture, Good writing, Off the bookshelf, Church planting, Voice of Experience (by missionaries who have been in Japan more than 20 years), and New Voices (by missionaries who have been on the field for less than five years).

New Voices and Voice of Experience are both written by different missionaries each issue and have a word limit of 800 words.

If you are interested in making a contribution, we want to hear from you.

## General Articles

General articles (articles that aren't on the issue's theme) should be between 600 and 1,600 words. If a topic needs fuller treatment, the managing editor may discuss this with the author and decide to divide the topic into parts and allow a series to be published in successive issues, or posted on the JEMA website.

Topics we like to see:

- New initiatives in ministry
- Creative approaches to ministry
- Practical how-to articles on life in Japan, ministry tips, deputation ideas
- Encouraging stories of how God used your ministry to impact Japanese
- First-person stories of life and ministry in Japan, cultural adaptation, language learning
- Evangelism

We're always interested in seeing contributions from new writers and younger writers. Don't be shy.

## Deadlines

We strive to make *Japan Harvest* an excellent publication. Our volunteer staff members need sufficient lead time to produce a quality magazine. Following are our deadlines for each issue:

Spring issue                      January 10

Summer issue                      March 30

Autumn issue                      June 30

Winter issue                      August 30

A call for proposals is sent out via a JEMA email a month before these deadlines. Issues are usually published between three and four months after submission deadlines.

## Photos and Graphics

We encourage the submission of photos and graphics for consideration to accompany articles. To help us manage submissions, please observe the following guidelines:

1. Submit full resolution, original digital files.
2. Change the name of each file you submit to a unique title that will help us identify it (not the name your camera gives it: for example, change IMG\_1234.jpg to CPI\_main\_meeting.jpg).
3. Do not embed photos or graphics in a document. Email them as separate attachments.
4. When emailing photos, please include the name of the photographer and any comments, possible captions, etc., in the same email.
5. If you submit photos with recognisable faces, we need you to ask permission to use this photo, and therefore be able to agree to this statement:  
"I have verbal or written permission from those recognisable in the photo/s I've submitted to *Japan Harvest* to be used in the magazine (print and online)."

## Referencing

It is the author's responsibility to provide references for material that is quoted or referred to in the text. Japan Harvest uses the Chicago Manual of Style to standardize citations. See their website for specific guidance: [http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools\\_citationguide.html](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html)

Bible references are also required, including the version of scripture that the author has quoted from. E.g. "Jesus wept," (John 11:35 NIV).

## Payment

JEMA is cooperative membership association with a limited budget, run by volunteers. As such, we are unable to pay for submissions.

If your article is published, you will receive two free copies of the magazine in which your contribution is printed and the satisfaction of knowing that you are contributing to reaching the Japanese for Christ. We will also print your short bio with your article (except for "Off the Bookshelf").

Complimentary copies – which for JEMA members would be in addition to the regular copy they receive:

Guest editor - 5 complimentary copies.

Contributor - 2 complimentary copies.

Interviewee - 1 complimentary copy.

Those who have contributed to the magazine have the opportunity to pre-order additional copies at the rate of 300 yen each. Shipping costs are additional.

## Writer's rights

*Japan Harvest* requests first rights with multiple use permission (or first Asian rights with multiple use permission) and electronic rights (for potential posting on both the private and public areas of the JEMA website).

In some cases we will publish articles for which we only receive second rights and "JEMA only" electronic rights.

### Definitions:

**First rights with multiple use permission** — After the article is printed in *Japan Harvest*, the author may sell second rights to another publisher. If JEMA were to release the article again (in a book of ministry resources, for example), JEMA would not need to seek permission a second time.

**Second rights** — The article has been printed in another publication.

**Electronic rights** — Your article may be included in the public and private log in areas of the JEMA website and in the pdf version of the magazine posted behind the JEMA member login.

**"JEMA-only" electronic rights** means that your article may be included behind the JEMA member login on the JEMA website and in the pdf version of the magazine posted behind the JEMA member login, but not the public area.

## Editor's Writing Tips

Keep your writing succinct. After you've written the first draft, go back to see where you can cut unnecessary words and still make your meaning clear. Choose shorter sentences over longer sentences.

When you re-read your first draft, make sure everything you've written relates to the main idea of the article. Extraneous material should be removed. Avoid repetition of the same word several times in one paragraph if possible. This can make a passage easier to read. Try to rephrase or use a substitute. Be careful also to avoid semi-repetition, eg: *Sue was given the gifting of hospitality.*

"Show, don't tell" is a good policy to keep in mind. Try to use words that help the reader experience your story. This can be done by using dialogue or tapping into the five senses. For example, "*We started a new English class with a church member.*" Could become, "*One wet, cold day a church member came to me and asked, "Can we start a new English class for my friends?"*"

Choose active over passive voice. For example, instead of saying, "*The tracts were dropped in 5,000 letterboxes,*" try, "*We distributed 5,000 tracts.*"

Choose strong, interesting words over weak, common words. For example, "*walked*" could be "*trudged*" or "*stumbled*" or "*hurried.*" "*Saw*" could be "*noticed*" or "*observed*" or "*glimpsed.*"

There should be only one space after a period/full-stop (and no space at the end of a paragraph).

Minimize use of exclamation marks, boldface, and italics. This will result in greater impact when they are used.

People like to read "how-to" articles rather than "ought-to" ones. Keep your sermons for Sunday. Bear in mind that we want to encourage one another. Respect your audience by not telling them what to think on a subject. The best approach is to lay out the facts in the most logical and convincing manner and then leave the reader to make his own conclusions.

Ask someone to read over your article before you submit it. Ask them to give you constructive feedback about your work so that you can communicate your message to your audience clearly and attractively.

Submitting your work as a basic Microsoft Word or rtf (Rich Text Format) document saves the editors time. Please do not use excessive or inappropriate formatting. This includes underlining (use *italics* instead) and frequent use of capitalization (use *italics* or **boldface** if emphasis is needed). Don't use italics or boldface for whole sentences. Don't insert text boxes or images into the document. (These should be attached to an email separately.)

Reference direct quotes with numbered endnotes. Contact the editors for information on correct referencing. Scripture quotes require a complete reference, including the version of the Bible that you quoted from.

You can email your contribution to [wmarshall@jema.org](mailto:wmarshall@jema.org) attached as a Word document or an rtf (Rich Text Format) file. An editor will try to get back to you promptly.

Here is a checklist of things to look through before you submit your article:

- Have I read over my work at least twice, eliminating unnecessary words?
- Have I asked one other person to read my article over and comment on it before I submit it?
- Did I stick to one main point?
- Is my article under 1,500 words, or column under 800 words?
- Are there only single spaces after my periods/full stops?
- Have I used minimal formatting?

One helpful online site for grammar and style is  
<http://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~jlynch/Writing/index.html>.

A helpful page on tightening up a story is

<http://ezinearticles.com/?How-to-Write-Tight---Self-Editing-Tips-to-Make-Your-Manuscript-Ready-For-Publication&id=2410394> (You'll almost immediately run across the writer's term "POV." POV stands for "point of view.")