

■ Which はし? (橋? 端?)

Another とんち 話 (witty story) involving 一休さん relates how he outwitted the Shogun. The Shogun invited young 一休さん to dinner, knowing that he would have to cross a bridge to come to him. The crafty Shogun had a sign put up saying はしをわたらない



で to make it difficult for 一休さん. But はし means 'side' as well as 'bridge', so 一休さん crossed the bridge in the middle, and explained to the Shogun that he had not crossed on the sides!

■ だじゃれ(駄洒落) Puns

The Japanese love plays on words and the Japanese language, with its many homonyms such as はし, provides rich material for puns. The increase in foreign loan words, 外来語, has provided further possibilities. Japanese children enjoy puns and enjoy making their own だじゃれ, but 'cool' teenagers may find them corny (さむ~い), and refer to them as おやじギャグ (old man's gag)! Try out your Japanese sense of humour with these! (English translations below)

1.	うまはうまい!	2.	いるかはいるか?
3.	かえるがかえる	4.	あのくもはスパイだー
5.	カナダのさかなだ	6.	うしをカウ
7.	ねずみでございマウス	8.	オランダ人のともダッチ
9.	いなかにはだれもいなかった	10.	チョコをちょこっと食べる

1. Horse is delicious!
2. Is there a dolphin?
3. The frog goes home
4. That spider is a spy
5. This is a Canadian fish
6. Keep a cow
7. This is a mouse (honorific form)
8. A Dutch friend
9. There was no one in the countryside
10. Eat a little bit of chocolate

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