



SAN FRANCISCO JAPANESE AMERICAN CITIZENS LEAGUE

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Mr. Louis Mancini
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SUBJECT: Lingo Electronic Talking Translator

It has come to the attention of the San Francisco Chapter of the Japanese American Citizens League, the oldest and largest Asian American civil rights organization that one of products you are marketing, the Lingo® Electronic Talking Translator (sku #596668) displays the term "JAP" along with "ENG" on the screen when the owner wishes to have word or phrase translated.

The abbreviation for Japanese is "JPN" as "JAP" is an offensive or derogatory term. Attached are a few online references that we hope will provide adequate reason to discontinue carrying the product until the manufacturer changes the term.

We would appreciate it if you would provide us with contact information for the manufacturer so we can notify them that their use of "JAP" is offensive and request they change the term to "JPN" and if you will discontinue advertising this particular product during the interim.

Sincerely,

Hiroshi Shimizu
President

cc: Patty Wada NCWNP District
Larry Oda, National President

OXFORD ENGLISH DICTIONARY:

noun & adjective informal, offensive short for JAPANESE.

MERRIAM-WEBSTER DICTIONARY:

n. Offensive Slang.

Used as a disparaging term for a person of Japanese birth or descent.

DICTIONARY.COM UNABRIDGED (V 1.1)

noun Slang: Disparaging and Offensive.

WIKIPEDIA

The term Jap is used in English as an abbreviation of the word "Japanese." Today it is usually used as an ethnic slur, though English speaking countries differ in the degree they consider the term offensive. Most people of Japanese descent in these countries consider it offensive.

In Japanese dictionaries, the term Jap is only defined as a disparaging term used against the Japanese people; this is also the case in many English language dictionaries.[1] In the United States and Canada, the term is now considered derogatory; Webster's Dictionary notes it is "usually disparaging." [2] In the United Kingdom it is considered derogatory, and the Oxford dictionary defines it as offensive. [3] In the past the term was not considered primarily offensive, for example the Boondocks Road in Jefferson County, Texas was originally named "Jap Road" when it was built in 1905 to honor a popular local rice farmer from Japan. [4]

The three-letter and two-letter international country code (ISO 3166) for Japan, JPN and JP, are also commonly used for the abbreviation of Japan.

Wartime slur

Newspaper headlines announcing Japanese surrender in World War II

The first recorded use of Jap was in 1860 to refer to members of the Japanese embassy in the United States. It was later popularized during World War II to describe those of Japanese descent, and was then commonly used in newspaper headlines to refer to the Japanese and Imperial Japan.

"Jap" was a derogatory term during the war, more so than "Nip." [5] Some in the United States Marine Corps also tried to combine the word "Japs" with "Apes" to create a new description, "Japes", for the Japanese. However, this new word never became popular. [5] Veteran and author Paul Fussell explains the usefulness of the word during the war for creating effective propaganda by saying that "Japs" "was a brisk monosyllable handy for slogans like "Rap the Jap" or "Let's Blast the Jap Clean Off the Map." [5]

Actions of civil rights groups

In Texas, under pressure from civil rights groups, Jefferson County commissioners in 2004 decided to drop the name "Jap Road" from a 4.3-mile road near the city of Beaumont. The road was originally named Jap Road in 1905 in honor of a local Japanese rice farmer. [6][7] Also in adjacent Orange County, "Jap Lane" has also been targeted by civil rights groups. [8] The road was originally named for the contributions of Kichimatsu Kishi and the farming colony he founded.

References

1. <http://dictionary.goo.ne.jp/search.php?MT=%A5%B8%A5%E3%A5%C3%A5%D7&kind=jn&mode=1>
2. "Jap", Webster's
3. http://www.askoxford.com/concise_oed/jap?view=uk
4. http://www.tolerance.org/news/article_tol.jsp?id=1034
5. a b c Paul Fussell, Wartime: Understanding and Behavior in the Second World War, Oxford University Press, 1989, p. 117.
6. http://www.tolerance.org/news/article_tol.jsp?id=1034
7. http://www.adl.org/PresRele/Mise_00/4423_00.htm
8. <http://www.genocidewatch.org/JapRoadinTexas16July2004.htm>

Lingo® Electronic Talking Translator
Brookstone sku # 596668

Electronic translator says words and phrases out loud, so you know what to say and how to say it! It knows more than 280,000 words and 32,200 phrases in 14 different languages, displaying them on-screen and pronouncing them out loud for you to hear and repeat. Also performs metric/currency conversion and records voice memos. Features travel games, calendar, calculator and more. Includes a leather carry case and earbuds. Uses two AAA batteries (included).

QuickTime™ and a
TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.