

# BACCALAURÉAT GÉNÉRAL

**SESSION 2011**

**ANGLAIS**

**LANGUE VIVANTE 1**

**Série L**

Durée de l'épreuve 3 heures – Coefficient : 4

*L'usage de la calculatrice et du dictionnaire n'est pas autorisé.*

Dès que ce sujet vous est remis, assurez-vous qu'il est complet.  
Ce sujet comporte 3 pages numérotées de 1/3 à 3/3.

Compréhension et expression	14 points
Traduction	06 points

Akira, I was delighted to learn, had returned to Shanghai not just for a visit, but for the foreseeable future, with plans to resume at his old school in the North Szechwan Road at the start of the summer term. I cannot remember if the two of us celebrated his return in any special way. I have the impression we simply picked up our friendship where we had left off the previous autumn with minimum fuss. I was quite curious to hear about Akira's experiences in Japan, but he persuaded me it would be childish—somehow beneath us—to discuss such matters, and so we made a show of continuing with our old routines as if nothing had ever interrupted them. I guessed of course that all had not gone well for him in Japan, but did not begin to suspect the half of it until that warm spring day he tore the sleeve of his kimono.

When we played outside, Akira usually dressed much as I did—in shirt, shorts and, on the hotter days, sun hat. But on that particular morning we were playing on the mound at the back of our garden, he was wearing a kimono—not anything special, just one of the garments he often wore around his house. We had been running up and down the mound enacting some drama when he suddenly stopped near the summit and sat down with a frown. I thought he had injured himself but, when I came up to him, saw he was examining a tear on the sleeve of the kimono. He was doing so with the utmost concern and I believe I said to him something like:

“What’s wrong? Your maid or someone will sew that in no time,”

He did not respond—he seemed for the moment to have forgotten my presence entirely—and I realised he was sinking into a deep gloom before my eyes. He went on examining the tear for a few more seconds, then letting down his arm, stared blankly at the earth in front of him as though a great tragedy had just occurred.

“This is third time,” he muttered quietly. “Third time same week I do bad thing.”

Then as I continued to gaze at him somewhat baffled, he said: “Third bad thing. Now mother and father, they make me go back Japan.”

I could not, of course, see how a small tear in an old kimono could bring such consequences, but I was for the moment sufficiently alarmed by this prospect to crouch down beside him and urgently demand an explanation for his words. But I could get little more out of my friend that morning—he grew increasingly sulky and closed—and I seem to remember our parting not on the best of terms. Over the following weeks, however, I gradually discovered what had lain behind his odd behaviour.

From his very first day in Japan, Akira had been thoroughly miserable. Although he never admitted this explicitly, I surmised that he had been mercilessly ostracised for his “foreignness”; his manners, his attitudes, his speech, a hundred other things had marked him out as different, and he had been taunted not just by his fellow pupils, but by his teachers and even—he hinted at this more than once—by his relatives in whose house he was staying. In the end, so profound was his unhappiness, his parents had been obliged to bring him home in the middle of a school term.

The thought that he might have to return again to Japan was one that haunted my friend. The fact was his parents missed Japan badly and often talked of the family returning there. With his older sister, Etsuko, not at all averse to living in Japan, Akira realised he was alone in wishing the family to remain in Shanghai; that it was only his strong opposition to the idea that prevented his parents packing their things and sailing for Nagasaki, and he was not at all sure how much longer his preferences could expect to take precedence over those of his sister and parents. Things were very much in the balance, and any displeasure he incurred—any misdemeanour, any falling off of his schoolwork—could tip the scales against him. Hence his supposition that a small tear in a kimono sleeve might easily produce the gravest of consequences.

As it turned out, the torn kimono did not incur his parents’ wrath nearly to the extent feared, and certainly nothing momentous came of the matter. But throughout those months following his return, there would come along one little mishap after another to plunge my friend back into his pit of worry and despondency.

Kazuo Ishiguro, *When We Were Orphans*, 2000.

**NOTE IMPORTANTE AUX CANDIDATS :**

Les candidats traiteront tous les exercices **sur la copie** qui leur sera fournie et veilleront à :

- respecter **l'ordre des questions** et reporter **la numérotation** sur la copie (numéro de l'exercice et, le cas échéant, la lettre repère ; ex. : 1a, 1b, etc.)
- composer des phrases complètes à chaque fois qu'il leur est demandé de rédiger. Le **nombre de mots** indiqué constitue une exigence minimale. En l'absence d'indication, les candidats répondront brièvement (moins de 20 mots) à la question posée.
- faire précéder les citations éventuellement demandées du **numéro de ligne** dans le texte.

**COMPREHENSION**

1. Qualify this type of narrative. Justify your answer with one quote.

2. What two places and cultures are evoked in this passage?

3. What was the narrator's reaction upon Akira's return?

4. Focus on Akira to answer the following questions.

A/ Where does Akira's family come from?

B/ When did he leave Shanghai? Justify with a quote from the text.

C/ When did he return? Why did he return? Justify with quotes from the text.

D/ How are Akira and the narrator connected?

5. «That warm spring day he tore the sleeve of his kimono» (line 9-10):

A/ Describe the incident in your own words. How did the narrator react?

B/ What does the kimono represent for the narrator and for Akira?

C/To Akira, the incident was «as though a great tragedy had just occurred» (l. 23). Explain why.

6. What did the narrator gradually discover regarding Akira's previous stay in Japan? To what extent does it help him understand how Akira reacted to the kimono incident?

7. Pick out three elements showing that Akira and his family do not share the same view of Japan.

8. Show how feelings of guilt, fear and friendship are present in the text.

**TRADUCTION**

Translate into French from line 27: «I could not, of course» to line 31: «not on the best of terms».

**EXPRESSION**

Choose one of the following subjects. (300 words)

1. Should parents impose their own wishes on their children? Why or why not?

**OR**

2. Akira is now back in Japan. Imagine the letter he writes to the narrator.