

AJET

CONNECT

News & Events, Arts & Culture, Lifestyle, Community

12.2014

PUBLISHED!
JET
AUTHOR
INTERVIEWS

P.32

JAPANESE
RESPONSES
TO
ARTICLE 9

P.14

TOKYO
FASHION
WEEK

P.23



The Japanese Lifestyle & Culture
Magazine Written by the International
Community in Japan

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Letter from Steven	4
Letter from Xan	4
Cover Submissions	5

NEWS & EVENTS

Events Calendar	8
In the News	13
Japanese Reflections on Article 9	14

We talked to the Japanese community about recent controversial changes to Japan's constitution.



Photo Flashback

Every year, members of Fukushima AJET slide down a snow-covered mountain for charity...in their underwear.



ARTS & CULTURE

Fashion Week	22
illmatic VS The Rhyme Animal	26

This month, VS looks at two highly influential hip-hop albums: Nas's *illmatic* and Zebra's *The Rhyme Animal*.



The Chirimen Kaido	29
Published!	32

Have you ever wanted to publish a story? We interviewed 4 past and current JETs who did just that!



#GamerGate	36
------------	----

LIFESTYLE

Simple Holiday Dinner	40
------------------------------	-----------

Homestyle holiday feasting is not impossible in Japan! With some prep and these recipes, you too can enjoy a Christmas dinner.



O, Christmas Cake, O, Christmas Cake.	43
--	-----------

Honey for Your Health	44
------------------------------	-----------

With winter comes cold and flu season. Keep yourself healthy and happy with these tasty natural methods.



Winter is Coming!	45
--------------------------	-----------

Christmas Travel	46
-------------------------	-----------

Hotel Booking 101

Traveling is fun. Booking hotels is... not as much fun. Take the headache out and book like a pro with this guide.



COMMUNITY

Officially INSANE	52
--------------------------	-----------

It's Snowtime	54
----------------------	-----------

Japan is a great country for winter sports. But before you start out, you'll need to research and prepare!



Comics	57
---------------	-----------

Spotlights	61
-------------------	-----------

Contributing to Connect	62
--------------------------------	-----------

HEAD EDITOR

Steven Thompson

GRAPHIC DESIGN & LAYOUT

Patrick Finn

SECTION EDITORS

Nathan Berne
Hiroshi Fukushima
Erica Grainger
Simon Griffin
Erika Klein
Lacey Lee
Tom Legge
Colin O'Neill
Nick Powers-Maher
Verity Townsend

ASSISTANT DESIGNERS

Sterling Diesel
Hannah Killoh

CORPORATE ADVERTISING

Patrick Loyer

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Michelle Castro

COPYEDITING

Ola Weber

CONTRIBUTORS

Hilary Armstrong
Mary Cagle
Christopher Chong
Trevor Dare
Mike DeLue
Jonathan Edwards
Lauren Frederick
Fumiyasu Hamaoka
Kai Le Heng
Marika Jackson
Adele Jackson-Gibson
Wesley Julian
Yuko Kawanami
Felicity Kerkham
Kaede Kondo
Kendra McDuffie
Yurie Mori
David Namisato
Hiroki Noguchi
Pia Peterson
Brittany Rock
Oumi Tsujimoto
Kaori Uehigashi

Darien Williams

COVER PHOTO

Matthew McDonough

ADDITIONAL PHOTOS

Agence France-Presse
BeerandSticks
December Store
Dale Brown
Hannah Brown
Catrina Caira
Erika Ehren
Patrick Finn
Erin Gosselin
Famous Games HQ
Charles Harries
Japan Fashion Week Organization
Erika Klein
Shelby Lake
Mercedes Benz Fashion Week
Tokyo
Salvador Ochoa
Nick Powers
Andy Seward
Verity Townsend
Lucy Wass

This magazine contains original photos used with permission, as well royalty-free stock images downloaded under a general license from Shutterstock.com. All included photos are property of the author unless otherwise specified. If you are the owner of an image featured in this publication believed to be used without permission, please contact the Head of Graphic Design and Layout, Patrick Finn, at patrick.finn@ajet.net.

This edition, and all past editions of AJET Connect, can be found online [here](#). Read Connect online and follow us on [ISSUU](#).



LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Steven Thompson
Head Editor
4th-year Fukushima ALT



LETTER FROM THE AJET VICE-CHAIR

Xan Wetherall
National AJET Vice-Chair
5th-year Fukushima ALT



CLICK AROUND!

Send us your thoughts on any article in Connect by clicking the comment bar on the page!



COMMENTS

DID YOU KNOW that Connect often hosts stories and extended features online? Our monthly issues are jam-packed with interesting stuff, but sometimes they're too jam-packed. In order to keep Connect from breaking 100 pages each month, we often stretch out into the infinite boundaries of the internet and publish on AJET.net. There you can find extended interviews, additional photos, and special online-only features published between our regular monthly releases. By following us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#), or just checking out AJET's homepage now and again, you won't miss a thing.

This month, our extended features include longer interviews with our 4 authors from "Published!" They all had great insights about the process and a ton to say about their work. If you're an aspiring author, or just interested in the people behind the pens, you should definitely [check it out](#).

Speaking of AJET's website, the new redesign is almost finished, which means a new space for Connect online. Trust me when I say there's some huge improvements all around, and we hope you'll enjoy spending time there as much as you do reading the issues. See you there!

Welcome to another fun, fabulous, and action-packed episode of Connect magazine! Xan here, to talk about what exciting stuff AJET has been up to—huh?

"Who are you? You're not the Chair!"

Sure, but I'm something just as good! The VICE-CHAIR!...Hey! Where are you going? Get back here and read the rest of my Vice-Chair letter-thing!

This past month, National AJET's been putting a ton of irons on the fire! We've been finishing up surveys and reports to present to CLAIR later this month (here's looking at you, recent PA counseling changes!), revving up the return of the charity fund, [Race To The Top](#), and finally, getting ready to launch our brand-new website! That's right! No longer shall AJET.net be completely disorganized and unbrowsable! Welcome to the future, baby! We're talking clean lines and clearly marked links, dongles, applications and easily-readable calendars, oh my! Keen to check it out? Stop by AJET.net on December 15th for the big unveiling! In the meantime, keep your eyes stuck to the Facebook National AJET page and Block groups, big things are always coming your way!

Looks like my time here is up. Well, it was fun for one month! Merry Christmas, happy holidays, and AJET VICE-CHAIR, AWAY!

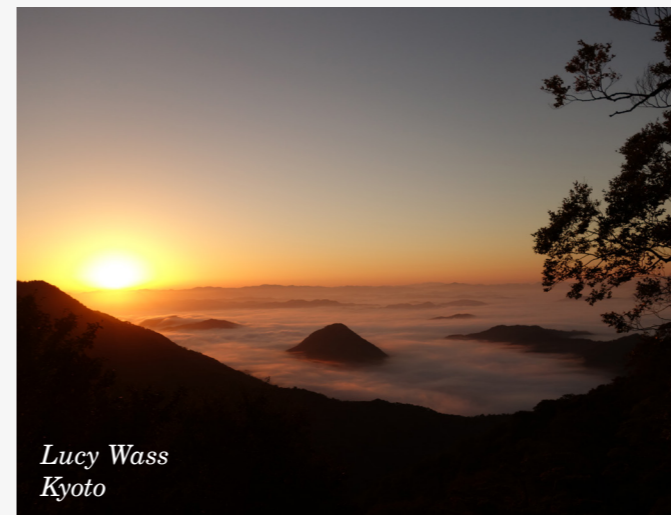
Click the logo below to return to the Table of Contents (PDF only)



COVER SUBMISSIONS



Send your photos for next month's cover to connect.editor@ajet.net. Photos must be submitted by the 25th of the month and include your name, prefecture, and title (if applicable). Photos must belong to you, and be of high resolution (1280x720, -300dpi, or higher).



Lucy Wass
Kyoto



Shelby Lake
Saga



Orrin Heath
Kyoto



Catrina Caira
Hokkaido



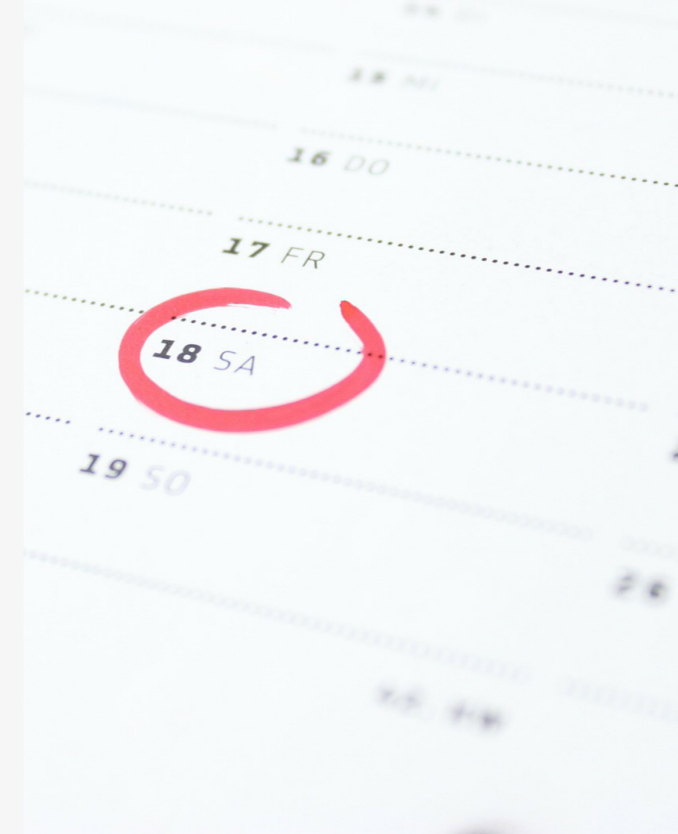
Catrina Caira
Hokkaido



Michelle Castro
Shimane

NEWS & EVENTS

P.8 Events Calendar



P.13 In the News



ERIKA KLEIN

connect.news@ajet.net

It's finally gotten cold! ...Way too cold, in my opinion, though to be fair we Southern Californians tend to feel that way about most weather. Visiting shrines on New Years and participating in mochitsuki are worthwhile experiences, but traveling somewhere warmer over the holidays also has its benefits. However you choose to spend your vacation, be sure to stay warm, enjoy, and eat all of the holiday goodies (which, hopefully, aren't overly affected by Japan's recent butter shortage). Until next year!

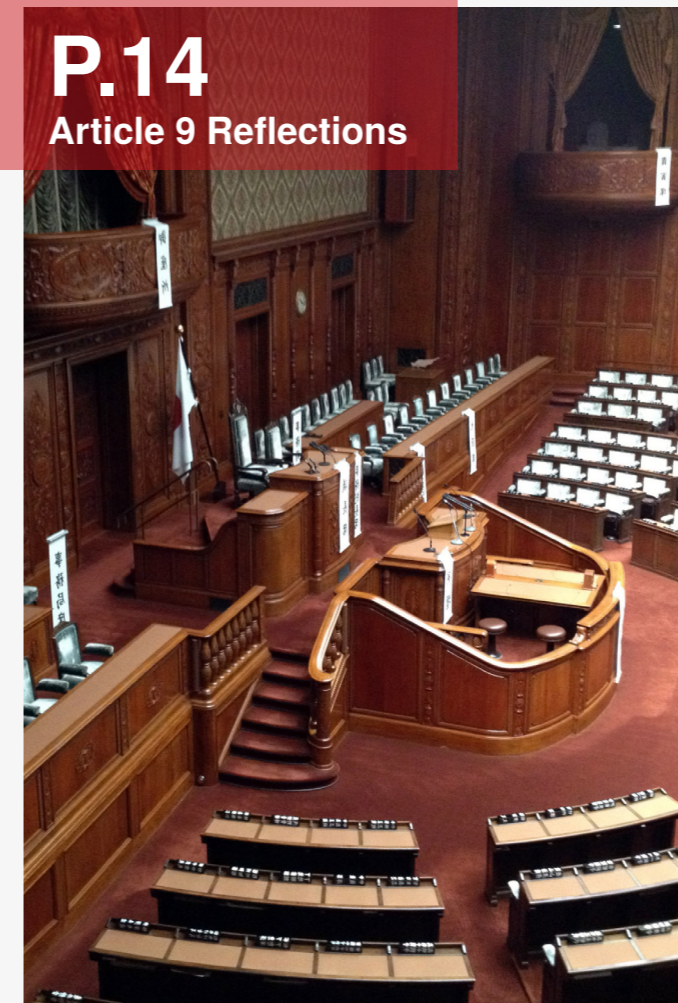


LACEY LEE

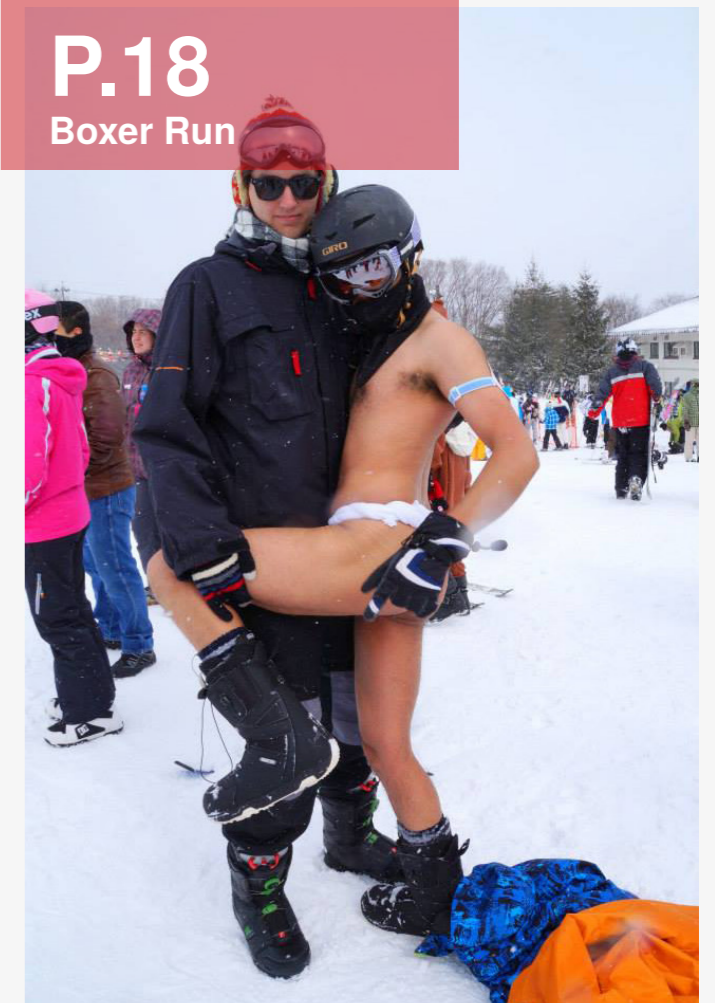
connect.events@ajet.net

Hello again all! I hope you're enjoying what those of us in Kumamoto would call the very recent weather change, truly shifting us into a winter frame of mind with its coolness. I know I've dragged out the kotatsu as well as a taste from the homeland, a certain little tree to sit in the corner of my abode. I also might have strung up some illumination of my own... Have you done the same?

P.14 Article 9 Reflections



P.18 Boxer Run



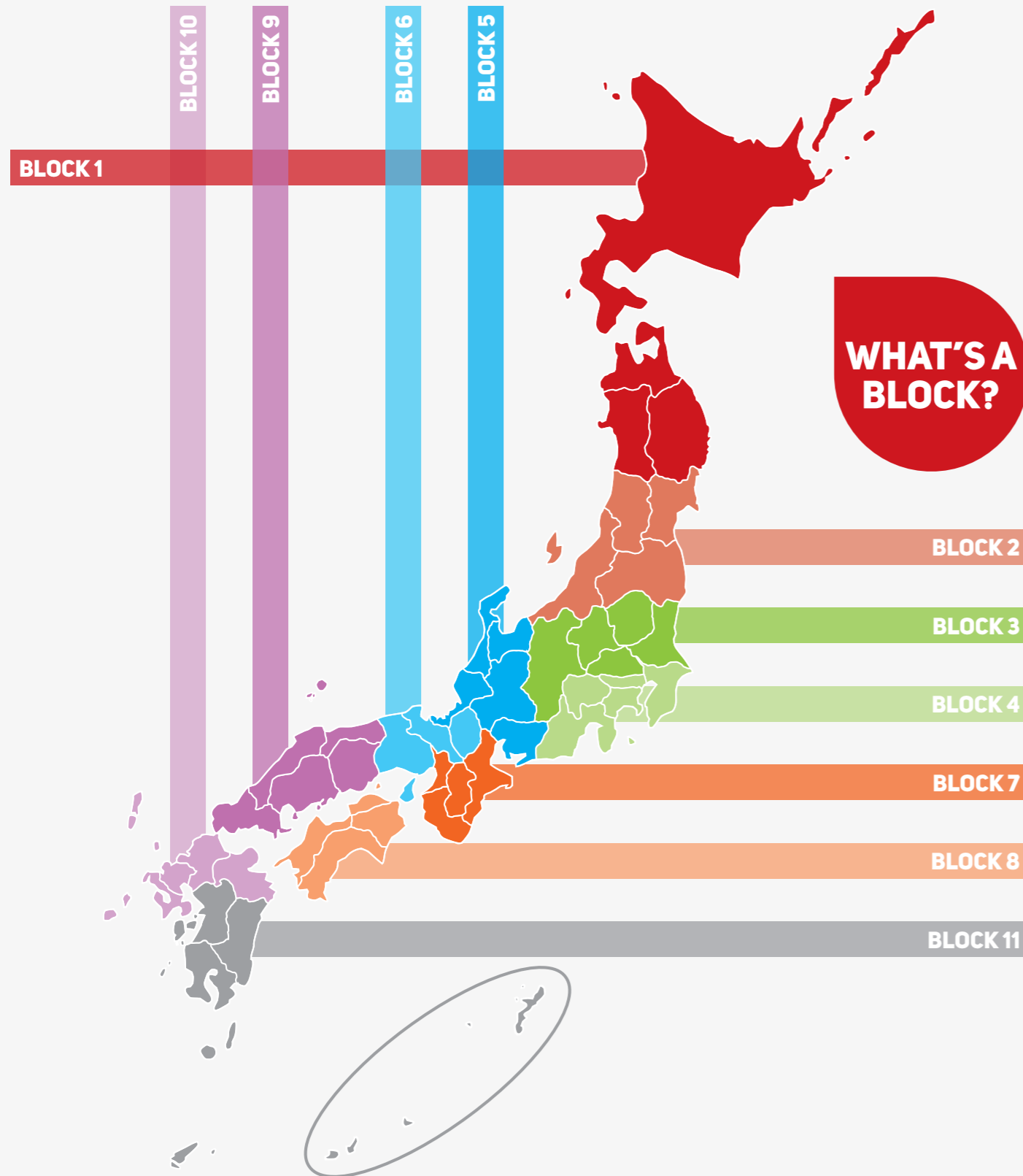
EVENTS CALENDAR

NOVEMBER - DECEMBER

We've only started gearing up and the best of winter is still yet to come. Perhaps the chilly weather has motivated you to move indoors, or perhaps go out and attend illumination shows or traditional winter festivals. If you haven't, there's no need to rush; you'll have plenty of chances this December and January, so brave the chill and set out to find something new to do!

Got an event of your own you'd like added to the calendar? Send us an email, or visit the [AJET website](#).

Photo - Shelby Lake



TSUGARU RAMEN WAY 10TH ANNIVERSARY "THE MEMORIAL FEST" 2014

Goshogawara, Aomori
9/6/2014-3/29/2015 - [Website](#)

KOIWAI WINTER ILLUMINATION 2014

Iwate, Iwate
10/1/2014-1/12/2015
[Website](#)

JUMBO CHRISTMAS TREE AT SAPPORO FACTORY

Chuo-ku, Sapporo
11/1-12/25 - [Website](#)

DONTO-SAI

Sendai, Miyagi
1/4 - [Website](#)

CASTLE-TOWN SHIBATA NATIONAL ZONI SOUP COMPETITION

Shibata, Niigata
1/12 - [Website](#)

SON-IN-LAW THROWING AND FACE PAINTING WITH ASHES

Tokamachi, Niigata
1/15 - [Website](#)

TOBU ZOO WINTER ILLUMINATION

Minamisaitama, Saitama
11/1/14-2/15/15 - [Website](#)

NEW YEAR FESTIVAL

Togakushi Shrine, Nagano
1/1-3 - [Website](#)

MATSUMOTO CASTLE GATE OPENING AND EVENTS

MOTSUJI ENNEN (HIRAIZUMI TOWN)

Hiraizumi, Iwate
1/20 - [Website](#)

LAKE SHIKOTSU ICE FESTIVAL

1/30-2/22
Chitose, Sapporo - [Website](#)

HIROSAKI CASTLE SNOW LANTERN FESTIVAL

Hirosaki, Aomori
early February - [Website](#)



NIIGATA SHOKU NO JIN: A CELEBRATION

Various locations, Niigata
12/1/14-1/31/15 - [Website](#)

2014 NIIGATA LIGHTS PROJECT

Chuo-ku, Niigata
12/5/14-1/12/15 - [Website](#)

ANNUAL PINE FESTIVAL

Tsuruoka, Yamagata
12/31-1/1 - [Website](#)



Matsumoto, Nagano
1/3 - [Website](#)

NOZAWA FIRE FESTIVAL

Baba-no-hara, Nagano
1/15 - [Website](#)

10TH ALL-JAPAN HOT POT CONTEST

Wako, Saitama
1/26 - [Website](#)

SOUND ILLUMINATION AT TSUMAGOI 2014-2015

Kakegawa, Shizuoka
11/14-3/31/15 - [Website](#)

MAGICAL ILLUMINATION 2014 AT TOSHIMAEN

Nerima-ku, Tokyo
11/14-4/5/15 - [Website](#)

SOUND PLANETARIUM 2014

Chuo-ku, Tokyo
11/7-12/25 - [Website](#)

NAKAMEGURO BLUE CAVE 2014

Meguro-ku, Tokyo
11/20-12/25 - [Website](#)



TOYAMA GLASS STUDIO

Toyama, Toyama
4/14-3/31/15 - [Website](#)

WAJIMA RICE TERRACE ILLUMINATION

Wajima, Ishikawa
10/18/14-3/15/15 - [Website](#)

KOBE ILLUMINAGE IN KOBE MUNICIPAL FRUIT & FLOWER PARK 2014-15

Kobe, Hyogo
11/14-2/1/15 - [Website](#)

ARIMA HOT SPRING IRIZOME SHIKI

Kobe, Hyogo
1/2 - [Website](#)

JELLYFISH KALEIDOSCOPE TUNNEL

11/22/14-1/12/15
Sumida Ward, Tokyo
[Website](#) / [More Info](#)

ODAIBA RAINBOW FIREWORKS 2014

Odaiba, Tokyo
12/6, 13, 20, 27 - [Website](#)

CHRISTMAS CASINO & JAZZ NIGHT AT OGASAWARA-HAKUSHAKU-TEI

Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo
12/23 - [Website](#)

KAWAKAMI KINEN ORCHESTRA 1311 CONCERT

Yokohama, Kanagawa
12/28 - [Website](#)

JAPAN ARCHITECTS 1945-2010

Kanazawa, Ishikawa
11/14-3/15/2015 - [Website](#)

TWINKLE NIGHT IN IMIZU

Imizu, Toyama
12/1/14-1/31/15 - [Website](#)

WHITE ILLUMINATION TOYAMA

Toyama, Toyama
12/1/14-2/15/15 - [Website](#)

IOX-AROSA NEW YEAR'S COUNTDOWN

Nanto, Toyama
12/31 - [Website](#)

KEMARI-HAJIME

Shimogamo Shrine, Kyoto
1/4 - [Website](#)

HATSU-EBISU

Ebisu Shrine, Kyoto
1/8-9 - [Website](#)

NAGAHAMA DWARF PLUM TREE EXHIBITION

Nagahama, Shiga
1/10-3/13 - [Website](#)



FURUSATO MATSURI (FESTIVAL) TOKYO 2015

Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo
1/9-18 - [Website](#)

SETAGAYA BORO-ICHI MARKET

Setagaya, Tokyo
1/15-16 - [Website](#)

NARCISSUS FESTIVAL

Echizen, Fukui
early January - [Website](#)

ECHIZEN MANZAI

Echizen, Fukui
1/1 - [Website](#)

GOURMET RUN AICHI MORIKORO PARK 2015

Nagakute, Aichi
1/11 - [Website](#)
Must sign up by December 21st.

SANTERA MAIRI (THREE TEMPLES PILGRIMAGE)

Hida, Gifu
1/15 - [Website](#)



THE GREAT HANSHIN-AWAJI EARTHQUAKE 1/17 KIBOU NO AKARI

Kobe, Hyogo
1/17 - [Website](#)



A SYMPHONY OF LIGHT AND WINTER FLOWERS WINTER ILLUMINATION 2014

Kuwana, Mie
10/25/14-3/31/15 - [Website](#)

CONTEMPORARY SWORD ART EXHIBITIONS

Chuo-ku, Osaka
11/1-12/23 - [Website](#)

GURANARIE 2014 IN GRAND TOIT

Masuda, Shimane
11/22-12/26 - [Website](#)

ILLUMINATIONS FESTA 2014

Kochi, Kochi
11/28/14-1/13/15 - [Website](#)

5TH GERMAN HALL CHRISTMAS MARKET

Naruto, Tokushima
12/13-14 - [Website](#)



UMEDA SKATE RINK "TSURUN TSURUN"

Kita-ku, Osaka
11/14/14-2/15/15 - [Website](#)

FESTIVAL OF THE LIGHTS IN OSAKA 2014

Kita-ku, Osaka - [Website](#)
Osaka Hikari Renaissance 2014
12/1-12/30/14
Mido-suji Illumination 2014
12/1/14-1/28/15

SHIRARAHAMA ILLUMINATION "WHITE SAND PROMENADE"

Shirarahama, Wakayama
12/1/14-1/31/15 - [Website](#)

TAKAGAI TERRACED STONEMASONRY ILLUMINATION

Yoshinogawa, Tokushima
12/14-15 - [Website](#)

CORAL ILLUMINATION

Otsuki, Kochi
12/23 - [Website](#)

61ST JAPANESE TRADITIONAL CRAFTS EXHIBIT

Takamatsu, Kagawa
1/2-18/15 - [Website](#)

AMUSEMENT PARK UNDER THE STARS 2014

Fukuyama, Hiroshima
11/8/14-1/12/2015 - [Website](#)

WINTER FLOWER ILLUMINATION IN TOTTORI HANAKAIRO

Saihaku, Tottori
11/21/14-1/31/15 - [Website](#)

SENNIN BURO BATH

Hongu, Wakayama
12/1/14-2/28/2015 - [Website](#)

RAMEN EXPO 2014 AT BAMPAKUKOEN

Suita, Osaka
12/11-14, 12/19-21, 12/22-25
[Website](#)

OSAKA CASTLE 3D MAPPING SUPER ILLUMINATION 2014

Chuo-ku, Osaka
12/13/14-3/1/15 - [Website](#)

UZUE-MATSURI

Itakiso Shrine, Wakayama
1/15 - [Website](#)



18TH KOKUBUNJI WINTER FESTIVAL

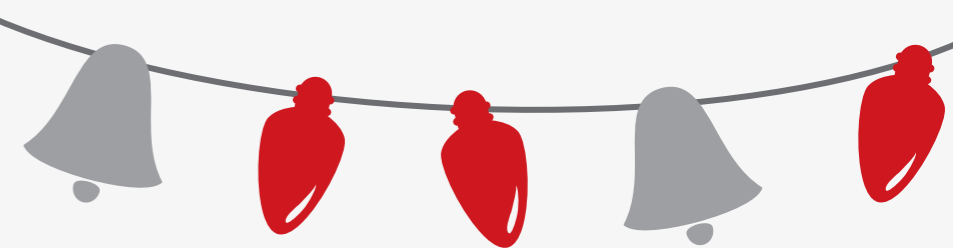
Kokubunji, Kagawa
1/18 - [Website](#)

EVANGELION EXHIBITION

Ube, Yamaguchi
11/29/14-1/12/15 - [Website](#)

SANTA CLAUS ROAD

Ube, Yamaguchi
11/29/14-1/9/15 - [Website](#)



IN THE NEWS

OCTOBER - NOVEMBER

Photo - Shelby Lake

HIROSHIMA KAGURA PUBLIC PERFORMANCE

Chuo-ku, Hiroshima
12/3, 10, 17, 24 - [Website](#)

HATSUHARUSAI (EARLY SPRING FESTIVAL)

Kita-ku, Okayama
1/1-3 - [Website](#)

NIPPO RIAS BUNGO DONBURI WAY 2014

Saiki, Tsukumi, and Usuki, Oita
9/6/14-1/12/15 - [Website](#)

HIKARI NO OKOKU (KINGDOM OF LIGHT)

Sasebo, Nagasaki
10/31/14-4/13/15 - [Website](#)

KOKURA ILLUMINATION 2014

Kitakyushu, Fukuoka
11/7/14-1/12/15 - [Website](#)

STARLIGHT SHANGRI-LA - WORLD ILLUMINATION- AT SPACE WORLD

Kitakyushu, Fukuoka
11/8/14-4/5/15 - [Website](#)



MID-INTERMOUNTAIN OUTING STAMP RALLY 2014

Nishiusuki, Miyazaki
10/1/14-2/28/15 - [Website](#)

KITCHO-SAN AND BANNAI SHINTO RITUALS

Izumo, Shimane
1/3 - [Website](#)

GRAND FESTIVAL OF TAKURA-USHIGAMI-SHA SHRINE

Yoshinaga, Okayama
1/5 - [Website](#)

ULTRAMAN GENESIS EXHIBITION

Kitakyushu, Fukuoka
11/22/14-1/12/2015 - [Website](#)

SHIMABARA WINTER NIGHT FANTASIA 2014

Shimabara, Nagasaki
12/1/14-1/10/15 - [Website](#)

BEPPU CHRISTMAS HANABI FANTASIA

Beppu, Oita
12/23-24 - [Website](#)

TOKA EBISU FESTIVAL

Hakata-ku, Fukuoka
1/8-11 - [Website](#)

15TH ANNUAL STARDUST FANTASIA

Kanucha Resort, Okinawa
11/1/14-2/28/15 - [Website](#)

LIGHT PAGEANT IN KUMAMOTO

Chuo-ku, Kumamoto
11/19/14-2/15/15 - [Website](#)

AMAKUSA ROMANTIC FANTASY

Amakusa, Kumamoto
11/29/14-1/17/15 - [Website](#)

MATSUE "DAN DAN" FOOD FESTIVAL

Matsue, Shimane
1/6-3/18 - [Website](#)



NOMOZAKI NARCISSUS FESTIVAL

Nomozaki, Nagasaki
1/11-2/2 - [Website](#)

ITOMAN PEACEFUL ILLUMINATION

Itoman, Okinawa
12/13-1/3 - [Website](#)

CHRISTMAS FANTASY 14

Okinawa, Okinawa
12/23-28 - [Website](#)

AOSHIMA MIDWINTER FLOWER SHOW 2014

Aoshima, Miyazaki
1/1-13 - [Website](#)

HAMANAGE TOURNAMENT

Kagoshima, Kagoshima
1/13 - [Website](#)

OCTOBER 20

Trade Minister Yuko Obuchi and Justice Minister Midori Matsushima, two of the five women PM Abe recently appointed to his cabinet, resign due to campaign scandals. Besides weakening Abe's goal of empowering women in Japan, their resignations (along with another scandal by new Trade Minister Yoichi Miyazawa on October 24) reflect the string of political scandals leading to Abe's resignation during his previous term as prime minister ([Source](#))

OCTOBER 28

Sarafutsu village stops constructing a monument for coerced Korean wartime workers due to pressure from conservatives trying to distance Japan from its war crimes. ([Source](#))(<http://nyti.ms/1uTfcj6>) The incident reflects the same revisionist sentiment present in the Japanese government's October 16 request for a revision of a UN report on "comfort women" ([Source](#))

NOVEMBER 7

Japan's inability to prevent hundreds of Chinese fishing boats from poaching Japanese coral reveals Japanese Coast Guard's limitations ([Source](#))

NOVEMBER 10

PM Abe and Chinese President Xi Jinping hold first meeting during Abe's second term at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum, with the goal of furthering cooperation between Japan and China ([Source](#))

NOVEMBER 10

Reduced milk production has resulted in a domestic butter shortage, limiting butter sales and leading to international imports that are made costly by the weak yen ([Source](#))



JAPANESE REFLECTIONS ON ARTICLE 9

ERIKA KLEIN (HYOGO)

We interviewed nine members of the Japanese community to ask their thoughts about recent changes made to Japan's constitution, specifically Article 9, which outlines Japan's "right to self-defense" and limits Japan's military activities. Two respondents preferred to stay anonymous, but did give consent to have their opinions published here.

1. What is your opinion on Article 9 (日本国憲法第9条, also known as the Peace Clause)? What do you think of Prime Minister Abe's reinterpretation of it, announced in July, to broaden Japanese military powers allowing engagement in collective self-defense?

"I think Abe's decision is reasonable. These days China and Korea resist Japan. In this serious situation, Japan should have a decision to keep the peace."

Hiroki Noguchi, 19, Fukuoka

"It's doubtful that we'll be able to keep peace with the present regulation. However, Abe's reinterpretation seems impossible to me. I think we should not reinterpret but instead revise Article 9."

Oumi Tsujimoto, 20s, Aichi

"I'm against the reinterpretation of Article 9 because it allows us to establish a groundwork for getting involved in a war. Only when we suffer heavy damage should Japanese military powers be used."

Anonymous Male, 30s, Hyogo

"I am proud of Article 9 because Japan is the only developed country that officially rejects having a military. However, many Japanese people fear the rise of China and Korea, so they easily support the government's recent reinterpretation. I'm really worried about this tendency."

Fumiyasu Hamaoka, 25, Kanagawa

"Abe made a twisted interpretation of Article 9. He claims the reinterpretation allows for "collective self defense," but it really means that we can use military power outside of Japan, so it contradicts Article 9 and the Constitution."

Anonymous Female, 60s, Hyogo

"I'm afraid some countries would attack Japan because of Japan's new military power."

Kaori Uehigashi, 30s, Hyogo

2. What do you think about the US troops stationed in Japan? Are they important for protecting Japan?

"US troops should stay in Japan. I know there is some trouble between the troops and Japanese people who live near the US military bases, but it's also true that in a sense, Japan has peace because of them."

Oumi Tsujimoto

"I'd say that I'm against the US troops because they're concentrated in Okinawa Prefecture, and it seems that many residents in Okinawa are negatively affected by the troops' presence. However, China's military power threatens Japan nowadays, so US troops play an important role as a deterrent against China."

Anonymous Female

"I am not happy with the US troops stationed in Japan, but thanks to their presence, some people—including Japanese—can make a living."

Anonymous Male

"Thanks to the US troops, Japan didn't have to spend time and money on the military after WWII, and could focus on technology. Economic power is one of the best ways to protect Japan. So, the presence of US troops is more effective for our national defense than people think."

Fumiyasu Hamaoka

"I want to say that the US military should leave Japan. However, its existence actually has important roles, like maintaining a good relationship between Japan and the US, and acting as a deterrent against North Korea."

Kaede Kondo, 20s, Hyogo



3. Should the Japanese military be more powerful? Should it have a larger role (globally and/or domestically)?

"It doesn't need to be powerful. Japan should spend money on diplomacy and promoting good relationships with other countries, or on helping Fukushima, instead."

Yurie Mori, 20s, Aichi



"I'm for Abe-chan."
Hiroki Noguchi

"Japan is no longer just a small nation, so it has to contribute to world peace. However, I think the current military is powerful enough to do so, because Japan joins peacekeeping operations."
Oumi Tsujimoto

"The Japanese military should focus on keeping peace both domestically and globally. It shouldn't fight except for in limited situations such as an attack from other countries. It should protect people in emergency situations like natural disasters, and work in developing countries suffering from conflicts. I think Japan is an important country because it spreads peace to the world."

Kaede Kondo



"Japan promised renunciation of war. We don't need a larger military."
Kaori Uehigashi

4. How should Japan best solve regional issues, such as the disputed Senkaku Islands or North Korea's nuclear program? How should Japan best approach world disputes? (Diplomacy/alliances, military tactics, economic tactics such as sanctions, etc.)

"Peaceful diplomacy."

Kaori Uehigashi

"Regarding North Korea's nuclear problem, I think Japan should impose economic sanctions on North Korea, and encourage other countries to do so as well."

Oumi Tsujimoto

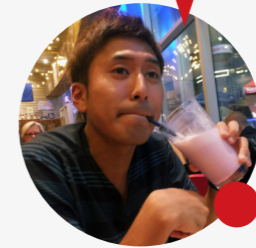


"Japan is losing its global presence because of the rise of China and Korea, and the Japanese government is trying to find a new way to increase its power by strengthening the military. However, having a powerful military is not the only way to present our country. Rather, the government should invest in human resources that succeed overseas, and lead comprehensive economic alliances between countries."

Fumiyasu Hamaoka

"I think we need the help of an independent third party like the International Court of Justice. The countries concerned can never resolve the problems themselves because they only insist on their own interests."

Yuko Kawanami, 20s, Hyogo

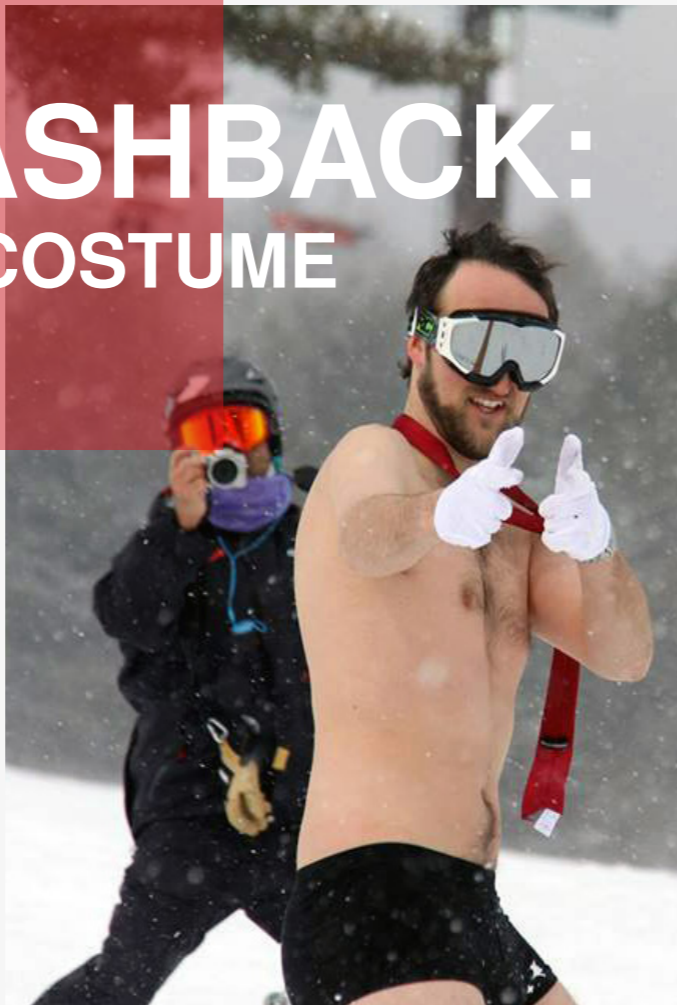


"The only way to solve these issues is to hold dialogues concerning the problem. The representatives have to talk and disclose their real intentions."

Anonymous Male

Thanks to Jen Ohara and Octavio Seijas for helping collect interviews. Thanks as well to Yuko Kawanami, who conducted and translated the two anonymous interviews.
Photos - Erika Klein

PHOTO FLASHBACK: FUJET'S CHARITY COSTUME AND BOXER RUN



THE 2014 RUN

Felicity Kerkham (Fukushima)

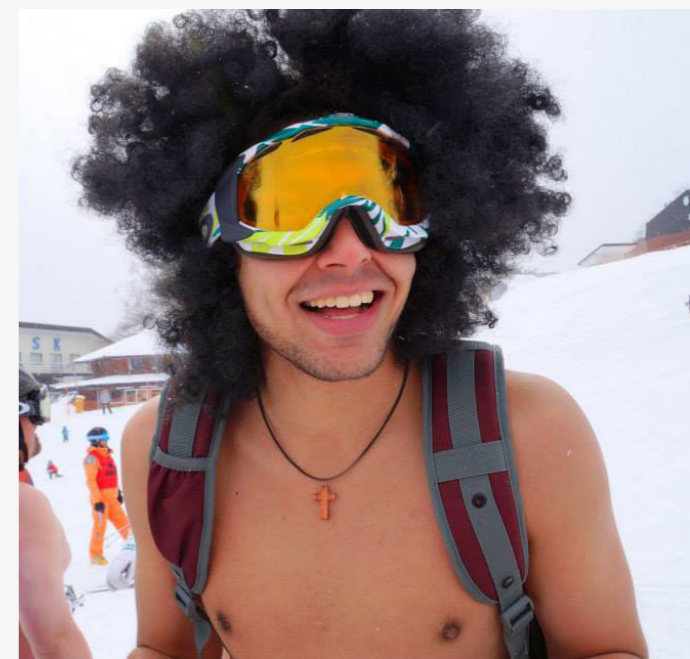
A yearly Fukushima AJET event, this fun day of skiing/boarding involves wearing either a) weird clothes or b) very few clothes at all. It's a blast, and also an opportunity to do some good and raise money for charity.

On March 8th last year, a large group of FuJETs and their friends overran Inawashiro Ski Resort for fun and charity. Oddly dressed foreigners converged on the central dining hall, grabbed their passes and hit the slopes (or hung around at the lodge, playing games and raising money). Vikings, skeletons, LINE characters, and the movie theatre "No More Eiga Dorobou" characters all hit the slopes and provided entertainment for the hapless Japanese people also there for the day.

Later in the day, some crazy FuJETs stripped down to their boxers and went for a nippy run down the slopes in the name of charity (also insanity, probably). After a long photo shoot, most of them put their clothes back on.

Why, you ask? Because we like to perpetuate the image that Fukushima is invincible and willing to do anything to raise money for charity. This year, the money raised went to help the Philippines in the wake of Typhoon Yolanda. 50,000 yen was collected by enthusiastic chariteers (donors were rewarded with cute mini postcards!), and E4F (Eyes for Fukushima) also made 30,000 yen in "I (akabeko) Fukushima" t-shirt sales.

Fukushima AJET is planning the 2015 event now, which will take place in March. If you'd like to get involved for some chilly fun, send an email to fujetcouncil@gmail.com.



THIS MONTH IN... ARTS & CULTURE



VERITY TOWNSEND

connect.culture@ajet.net

This month I have been making the most of my resident tax by going to see some wonderful free performances in my town's concert hall. Also, I'm starting to get into the Christmas spirit as all the cheesy Christmas muzak and glittery displays in every department store have been having the desired effect (I'm no Scrooge). Consequently, I'm feeling inspired to make some kind of hybrid Japanese/English Christmas cake, so watch this space!



COLIN O'NEILL

connect.entertainment@ajet.net

Have you been lying in bed, shivering, and praying for two CONNECT editors to appear in one picture? You're welcome. Winter will find Travel Editor Tom Legge and I on the slopes after a long, 8-month wait. With a November that was filled with *nabe* parties, *kagura* shows, and *sumo* tournaments, I'm ready to close out 2014 with friends and celebrate the holidays with my family as they visit me in Japan for the first time. Enjoy the season, homies!



ERICA GRAINGER

connect.fashion@ajet.net

Brrr! A cold chilly winter approaches us, time to hibernate under our kotatsu! My friend and I visited Niigata recently and tried many local delicacies, including a sake tasting and brewery tour, fresh seafood and a sizzling hot onsen. We stayed fashionably warm in cashmere and lambs-wool sweaters and sipped champagne herbal tea on Sado Island, pure luxury! In Harry Winston's immortal words, "People will stare, make it worth their while." My thoughts exactly, Harry!

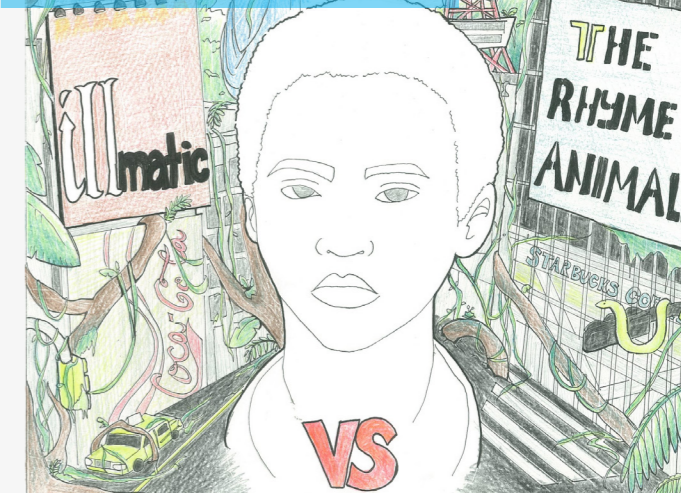
P.22

Tokyo Fashion Week



P.26

VS



P.29

The Chirimen Kaido



P.32

Published!



P.36

#GamerGate



GamerGate

Photos - Erica Grainger, Patrick Finn, Salvador Ochoa Agence France-Presse, Japan Fashion Week Organization, & Mercedes Benz Fashion Week Tokyo

FASHION WEEK

2015 S/S MERCEDES BENZ

FASHION WEEK TOKYO GUIDE

ERICA GRAINGER (FUKUSHIMA), PATRICK FINN (TOYAMA)

What's in vogue, Tokyo? We were lucky enough to attend the Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week Tokyo (MBFWT). Here is our exclusive coverage of the Spring/Summer collection from MBFWT!

MONDAY 13TH OCTOBER

'HANA MORI' - 3PM

A variety of long flowing gowns, pantsuits, tailored dresses, feminine lace dresses, and fitted skirts in an array of bold, bright and breezy colours, with Mori's trademark butterflies and gentle soft sophistication.

THEME

Classic with a modern twist.



An exciting opening show!

Erica

'ONITSUKA TIGER X ANDREA POMPILIO' - 9PM

A hybrid of designs, combining modern, punk, futuristic, sportswear and street-urban, with unique accessories; wigs, hats, fascinators, jewellery and backpacks.

THEME

Experimental, innovative and abstract.



Exotic tribal music featuring elephants and wild animals created an untamed jungle-like atmosphere.

Erica

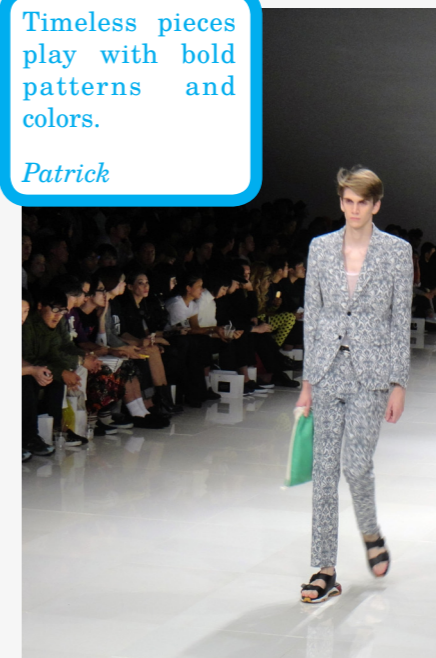
Introduce your boyfriend to Mr. Gentleman!

Erica



Timeless pieces play with bold patterns and colors.

Patrick



SATURDAY 18TH OCTOBER

'MR. GENTLEMAN' - 2PM

A clean-cut, elegant European aesthetic that was fresh and crisp. The playful use of colour and sleek, sharp tailoring gave it a Calvin Klein feel. Simple, yet stylish and sophisticated.

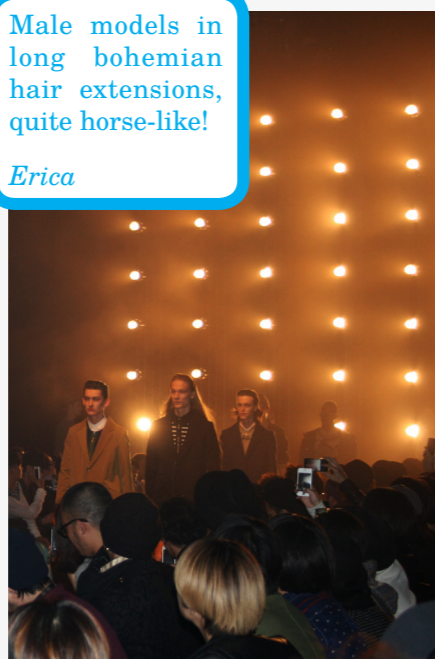
THEME

Charming, suave and classic elegance!



Male models in long bohemian hair extensions, quite horse-like!

Erica



FRIDAY 17TH OCTOBER

'DISCOVERED' - 8:30PM

Using a classic, narrow runway style, the clothes were elegant, neutral colours were popular and formulaic with patterned shorts and shirts.

THEME

Modern and minimalistic.

'TOGA VIRILIS' - 6PM

An unusual runaway, which used stationary platforms for the models to display the clothes. Effectively, an interactive experience between the models, audience and press.

THEME

Structured, eclectic and colourful.



The models were wax-like statues in an exhibition museum.

Erica



Modern day hipster meets the American west.

Patrick

'PHIRE WIRE' – 8PM

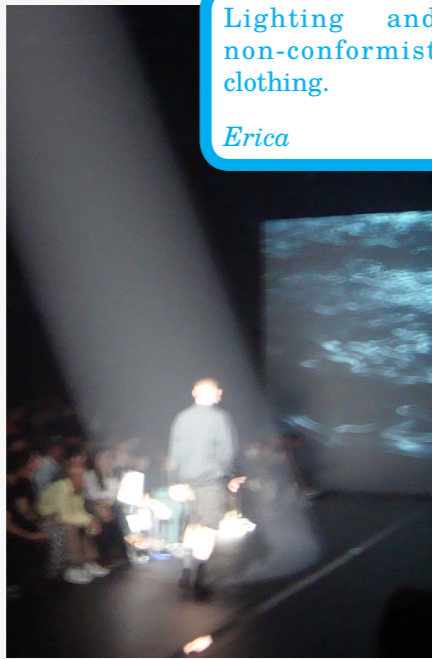
A mini runway featuring a projected backdrop of dark mysterious water. Models had a spotlight, which looked magnificently dramatic and theatrical. The collection was contemporary and predominantly black, grey and drab colours.

THEME

Rather dark, edgy and mysterious!

Lighting and non-conformist clothing.

Erica



Casual urban wear with a dark twist.

Patrick

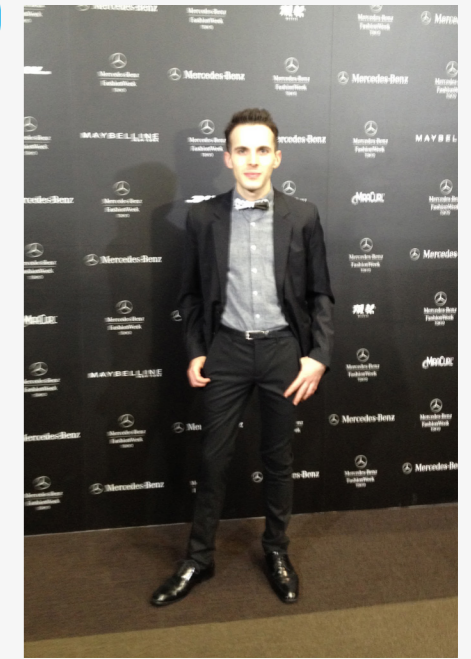


'VERSUS TOKYO' – 12:45+

Tokyo Fashion Week after-party! Music, fashion and an open bar supplying endless drinks and sweet potato ice cream! We settled for coconut juice and gin and tonics, while mingling with the crowd and male models—oooh la la!

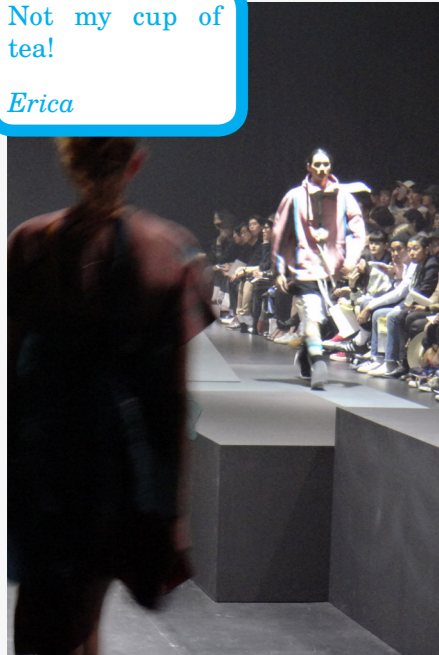
FIND MORE PHOTOS AND VIDEOS FROM MBFWT [HERE!](#)

Erica and Patrick before the party!



Not my cup of tea!

Erica



Too sporty for my blood.

Patrick



'FACETASM' – 10PM

The collection was sports meets urban-casual, with loose, unfitted clothing. The runway had unusual shapes placed in the centre, but disappointingly they weren't used.

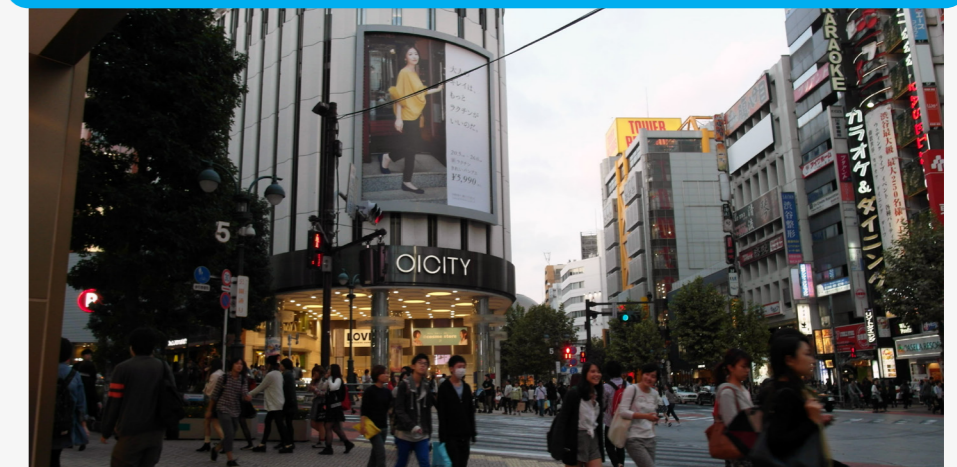
THEME

Street-funk, punk and grunge.



SUNDAY 19TH OCTOBER

A casual and relaxing day exploring Harajuku and Shibuya, and catching the local Tokyo fashion scene with Salvador.



'C.M.' – 12AM

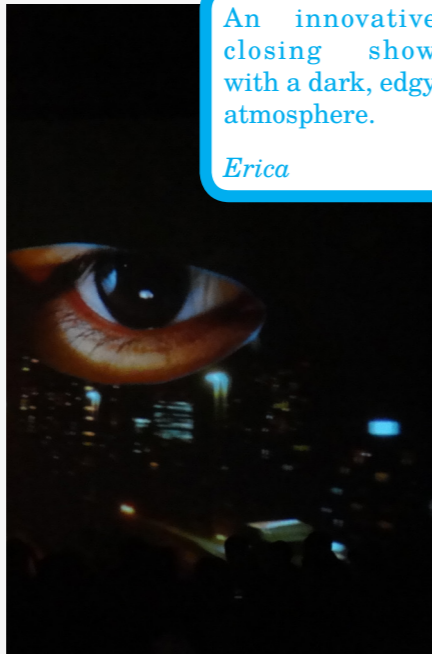
A fusion of music, fashion and film, which had no runway! Everyone was enjoying drinks while watching a projected film, with superimposed images of a model wearing a green screen mask sporting street-style clothing.

THEME

Postmodern, experimental and non-conformist.

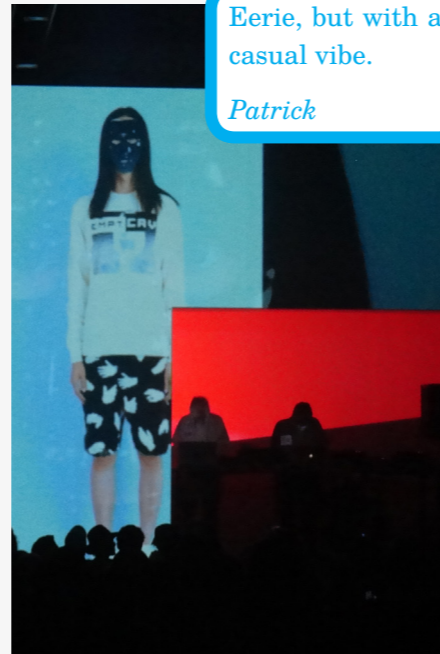
An innovative closing show with a dark, edgy atmosphere.

Erica



Eerie, but with a casual vibe.

Patrick



MEMORABLE QUOTES

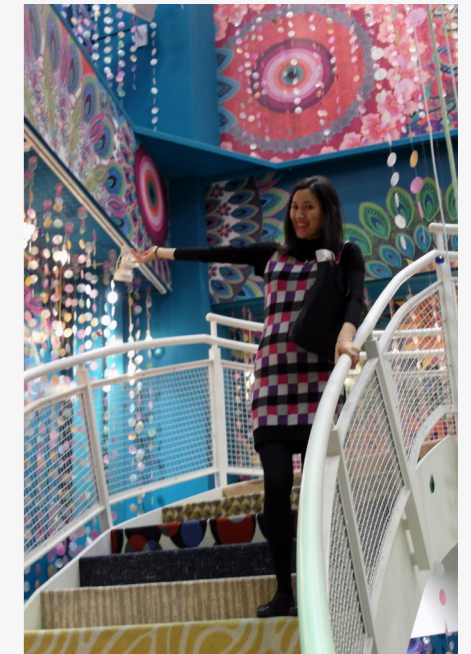
Erica: "We're eating 'Shoe cream'?"

Patrick: "Chicken legs for days!"

Salvador: "I NEED a yellow Dick Tracy hat!"

"You remind me of a young Kate Moss."

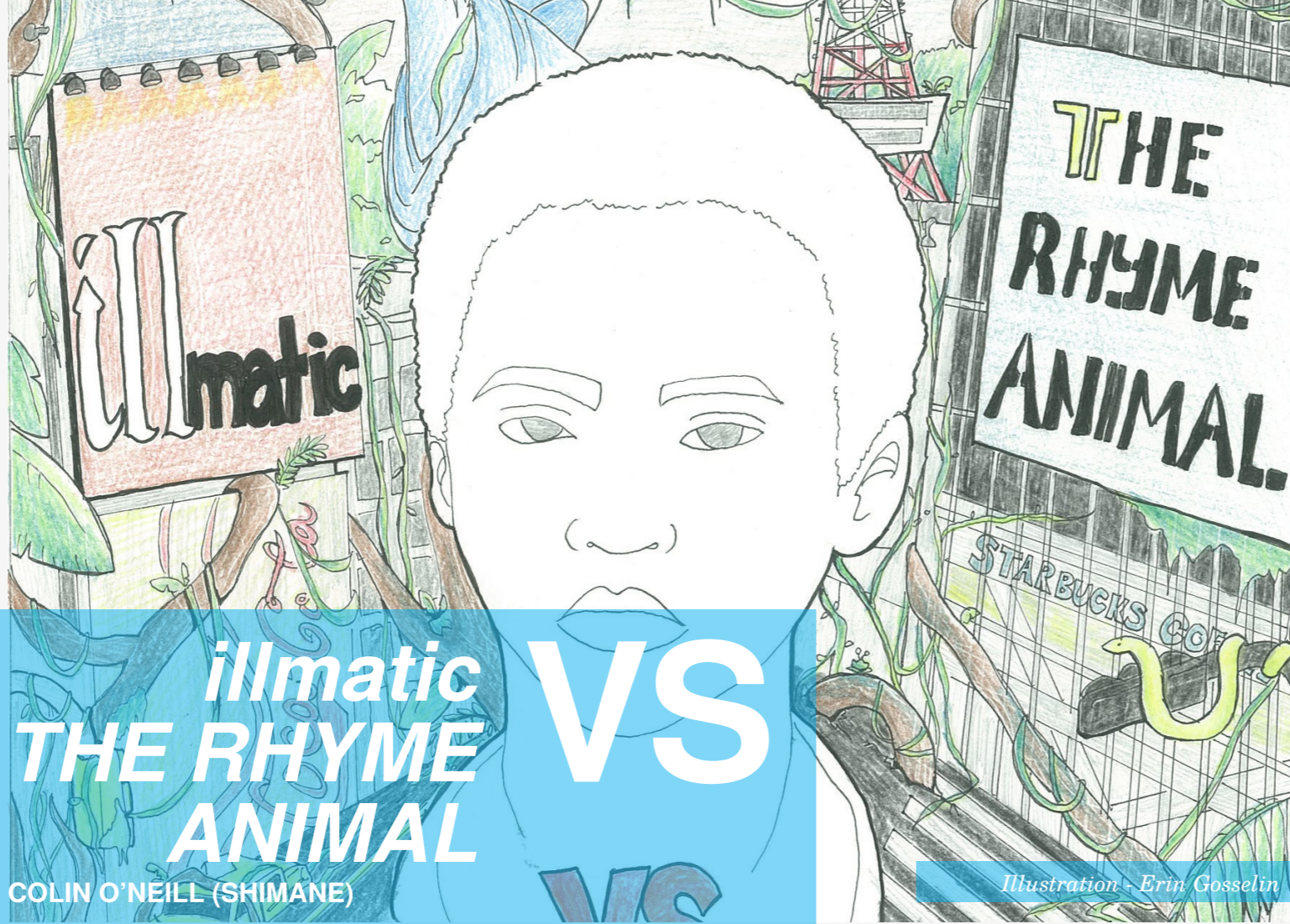
"Are you French?"



REPRESENTING TWO distinctly different worlds, *illmatic* and *The Rhyme Animal* set up a VS of America/Japan, New York/Tokyo, poverty/wealth, and discriminated/disenfranchised. How do we connect the best hip-hop album of all time to a Japanese rap record from some dude named Zeebra? Let's start with the broadest connections between these two LPs to search for further correlation.

HIP-HOP HISTORY

'Rap' and 'hip-hop' are not interchangeable concepts. The easiest way to understand the difference is that rap is the oral musical art form within a culture called hip-hop. Afrika Bambaataa drove the global spread of hip-hop as a multi-component based culture: the visual (graffiti or 'tagging'), the physical (breakdancing or 'b-boying'), the aural (using turntables or 'DJing'), and the spoken component known as 'rapping'. Rap can be considered hip-hop when the foundational aspects of the artist or song pay homage to the culture within the production, lyrics,



illmatic VS *THE RHYME ANIMAL*
COLIN O'NEILL (SHIMANE)

Illustration - Erin Gosselin

and lifestyle. Following this definition, *illmatic* and *The Rhyme Animal* are both, undeniably, hip-hop albums.

NAS AND AMERICA

After World War II, the G.I. Bill unintentionally set the stage for a racial divide between the white

middle-class and minorities in America. Low-income housing, or 'projects', became epicenters for African-American communities, rather than temporary geographic locales. Within this type of predominantly black community in the South Bronx in New York, hip-hop culture was born. As hip-hop spread throughout America in the early 80s, those areas of New York that were once chastised and politically underrepresented where now socially validated and celebrated.

When the early 90s saw rap emerge as a best selling genre, hip-hop from New York (i.e. *De La Soul* and *A Tribe Called Quest*) was classified as 'alternative'. The predominantly marketed sub-genre was often misogynistic,

violent, and illicit—West Coast 'gangsta rap'. Even though it was beneficial for hip-hop to extend beyond the borders of New York, the birthplace of the culture was no longer the headquarters of success and innovation.

Nasir "Nas" Jones emerged when hip-hop was mainly defined and globally expanded through the popularity of gangsta rap. At 19 years old, Nas revitalized the importance of hip-hop culture within rap music. Having lived through the crack epidemic of the 1980s in the projects of Queensbridge, Nas combined his understanding of the criminal world with a breadth of vocabulary and unorthodox delivery in storytelling. His fresh voice on boom-bap production impressed youth and old school fans alike,

validating New York as the cornerstone of throwback and contemporary hip-hop.

ZEEBRA AND JAPAN

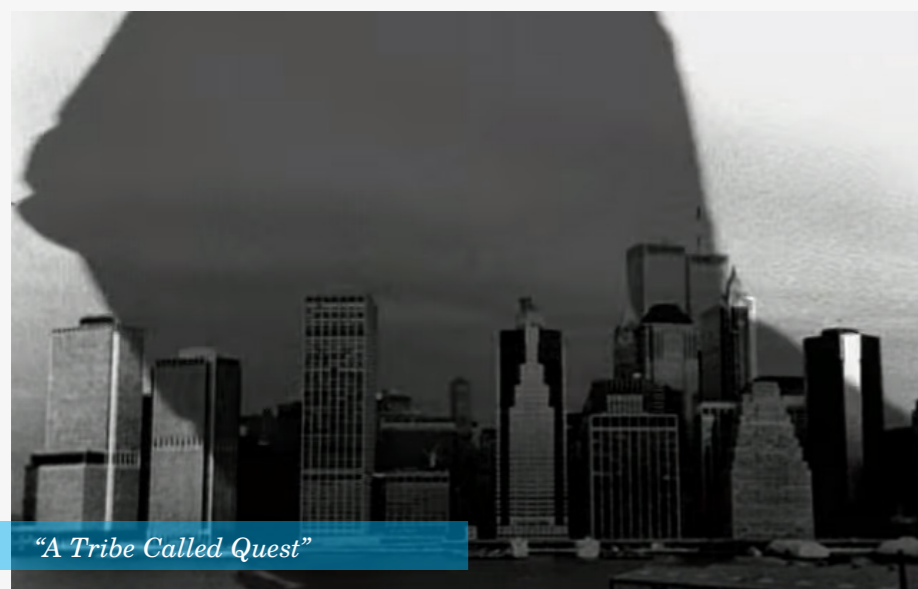
In contemporary hip-hop, ties between America and Japan are innumerable: Jay-Z's shoutout at *Comme des Garçons* and Kanye West's collaborations in fashion, art, and music just scratch the surface. But during the global spread of hip-hop in the 80s, Japan was slow to embrace the culture.

While the film *Wild Style* provided Japan with a blueprint for the physical and visual elements of hip-hop, the inherent differences between English and Japanese presented a linguistic roadblock for rapping. English has a fixed number of letters (26), but thousands of pronunciation variations. Japanese has thousands of written characters, but only about 100 pronunciation possibilities. Eventually, MCs

When rap started gaining momentum in Japan, it was commercialized toward pop sensibilities. As Japanese people found rap more accessible, the underground culture criticized the absence of foundational hip-hop elements. During this crucial time, Hideyoki Yokoi, AKA Zeebra, surfaced. Zeebra broke new ground in Japan by insisting that authenticity through social commentary and activism was a vital part of hip-hop's cultural identity. Subsequently, Zeebra created *Beats to the Rhyme* (Japan's first hip-hop TV program), became the first hip-hop artist with a single on Japan's Oricon Charts, and headlined Japan's first ever sold-out hip-hop tour.

ILLMATIC VS THE RHYME ANIMAL

In their first year of high school, both Nas and Zeebra dropped out to focus on realizing their artistic vision. As they began



"A Tribe Called Quest"



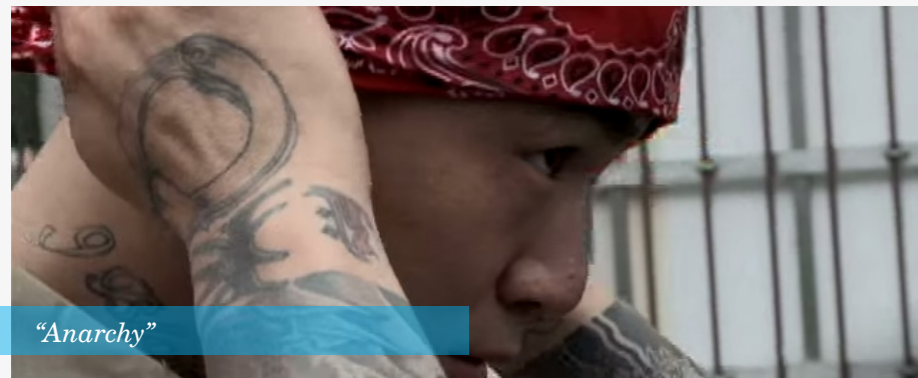
"Wild Style"

modified Japanese verbs and incorporated English into lyrics to allow a wider range of rhyme scheme possibilities.

constructing their debut albums, their professional paths began crossing. On the way to creating *The*

Rhyme Animal (1998), Zebra collaborated with DJ Premier on “Untouchable”. One of the most prolific hip-hop producers, DJ Premier worked with artists interested in advancing the entire culture of hip-hop, rather than only rap. Guess who was one of the producers on *illmatic*?

The contents of both albums are similarly influenced. In Nas’s “NY State of Mind” and Zebra’s “Center of Tokyo”



(東京の中央 *Tokyo no Chuo*), there’s both perspective and criticism about the culture of the cities. On “NY State of Mind”, Nas spotlights an armed character among New York’s projects. Nas highlights the philosophy of someone held down in the negativity of poverty, drawn to the lucrative potential in crime. On “Center of Tokyo”, Zebra boasts that while Tokyo is big and dreamlike, things are more diluted in places injected with too many people. He argues that the inflated population of Tokyo can confuse people into thinking they are culturally and ideologically diverse.

“Life’s A Bitch” and “Key to the Future” (未来への鍵 *Mirai e no Kagi*) are cautionary tales about latching on too heavily

to ideas. With the lyrics “life’s a bitch, and then you die... that’s why we get high, ‘cuz you never know when you’re gonna go”, Nas explains that when people feel trapped in the projects, they often remain there because they can’t envision success in another environment. In “Key to the Future”, Zebra surmises that the key to remedying these feelings is to connect everyone’s different dreams. While positively

reflecting on how Japan has done this through hip-hop, he cautions that with new ways of life come negative aspects of movements, like crime, that can infiltrate the psyche.

IMPACT

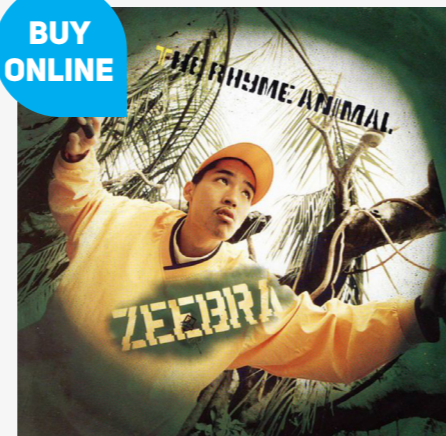
illmatic reminded artists that the longevity of a culture can extend far beyond any trending music genre. Without *illmatic*, there is no



Kanye West, who redefined hip-hop despite a middle-class background that would have depleted his credibility in the 90s. Without *illmatic*, there would be no Nasir Jones Hip-Hop Fellowship at Harvard University.

The Rhyme Animal was equally important to hip-hop in Japan. Zebra had to heavily consider how to express his controversial lyrics that called for action to avoid a nationalistic boycott of hip-hop culture. Without *The Rhyme Animal*, there is no Kohh or Anarchy, because this type of music would have been viewed as disruptive of Japan’s *wa* (和, harmony). Without Zebra, there is no Shing02 and the ‘LuvSic’ series with Nujabes. Also, there wouldn’t be this.

In hip-hop culture, soul and authenticity need to come from a real place. The point of hip-hop is to honor authentic experiences by creating art that expresses the celebration/frustration, pain/elation, pessimism/optimism felt by a generation, regardless of where they fall on a map. Nas and Zebra connect Japan to America through hip-hop.



THE CHIRIMEN KAIDO

A FASCINATING JOURNEY INTO THE WORLD OF CHIRIMEN SILK

KENDRA MCDUFFIE (KYOTO)

THE CHIRIMEN KAIDO IS AN old road in Yosano town in northern Kyoto Prefecture on the Tango peninsula. It is known for fabric production and preserved Meiji period buildings, such as the Kawashima sake brewery, the Bito house, and the Sugimoto house. Behind the Sugimoto house is the Nishiyama Chirimen factory, the only surviving Meiji period crêpe factory in Tango.

This historic road is called the Chirimen Kaido because it was once the center of the booming Chirimen silk crêpe industry. Many of the preserved buildings along this road were built with the money that came to the area with the success of silk crêpe in Japanese markets. While production today has

diminished greatly, Chirimen silk is still Tango’s largest export. The area boasts a production rate of 60% of Japan’s total silk exports.

The Tango district itself has a 1,200 year history of fabric production, but Tango Chirimen is only dates back 250 years. Chirimen weaving technology was brought to the Mineyama and Yoza areas by a group of local men who visited Nishijin Kyoto to study silk weaving in 1722. The Kyotango peninsula is one of the most humid areas of Japan and as such it proved to be an ideal climate for silk production. The ruling lords of the Mineyama and Miyazu areas endorsed these new silk techniques and helped to establish Chirimen silk as the local industry. The peak

of silk production was during the Meiji era and lasted until the 1960’s.

There is no centralized Chirimen production center. Scattered among the historical buildings and the surrounding area of Tango are hundreds of silk reeling and weaving factories. The people of Tango traditionally made silk inside their own houses. Often the first floor was for living in and the second floor was where silk worms were raised. Now silk production is carried out in small privately owned warehouses rather than at home.

Chirimen is a unique silk fabric. Undyed, it is a brilliant warm white color. It has a finely rippled texture called



Chirimen with a Mountainous View & Secluded Home Pattern

shibo, which softens the luster of the silk and gives it a willowy depth. Unlike the lumpier, roughly woven silk from India or Japanese tsumugi silks—which are made by spinning together shorter broken silk threads harvested from cocoons that have allowed the silkworm to fully mature and chew its way out—Chirimen is woven from threads made by unbroken silk strands. Unfortunately that means that the harvesting process sacrifices the worm inside the silk cocoons, but it makes for a much finer woven fabric. It takes about 3000 cocoons to make one kimono. Because it is a strong, highly breathable fabric that is fantastically responsive to dying, it was used almost solely for making expensive formal kimono such as furisode.

However, the population of Yosano town is steadily dropping, due in part to the nationwide tendency of

Japan's youth to move into the large cities and shy away from Japan's traditional occupations. Many highly skilled kimono dyers, embroiders and designers are lost to old age. Since its decline began after the 1960's, Chirimen silk has been used to make purses, toys, hair ties, western clothing, table runners and seat covers on Japanese trains in an effort to remain a relevant product in today's economy. The Tango area reports a high production rate of silk but, as the demand for kimono declines, how much longer there will be a market and a workforce with the skills to produce this luxury fabric is uncertain.

REFERENCES

1. *A Journey to Yosano Modern: Yosano Town Sightseeing Brochure, 3rd edition, Yosano Town, Commerce, Industry, and Tourism Division, May 2013.*
2. *Japan's Kimono Promotion Association Corporation*

Compilation Volume 1, 2012 Kimono no Kihon: Kimono no bunka kentei koushiki kouhon, Hearst Fujingaho Co., Ltd. Tokyo, Japan.

3. *Ushida, Ikue, 2009, Kimono no Chishiki, Miyabire School, Kyoto, Japan.*

Kendra McDuffie is a second-year JET in Kyoto Prefecture living right next to the historic Chirimen Kaido. She double majored in Art History and Japanese Studies at Hunter College in New York City. She worked with kimono for two years in New York and now she studies kimono kitsuke with the Miyabire school in Yosano. In her spare time she likes to paint, hike, and throw her husband around in the local judo dojo. You can follow her [here](#).

CHIRIMEN KAIDO EVENT INFO ON THE NEXT PAGE!



Small "Shibo" Chirimen with Signature Wave Pattern



Floral Kimono Fabric

EXCITING EVENTS AROUND THE CHIRIMEN KAIDO

Throughout October, there are kimono flea markets and events all around the Chirimen Kaido. The Chirimen Kaido Kimono festival on October 12th evokes the atmosphere of the Meiji period and the glory of the Chirimen Kaido's highest point of production. There are open-air food stalls, vintage kimono for sale, and the Marugoto museum exhibits artifacts from the Meiji period. There is a Chirimen kimono fashion show every year and a kimono parade down the famous street.

In Amanohashidate, one of the three most beautiful views in Japan, there is an even larger Chirimen Kimono festival in mid-October which attracts 700 to 1,000 participants every year. All attendees come dressed in traditional wear, as there is a kimono parade and fashion show. There is also matcha tea service, lotteries to win Chirimen kimono, obi and local goods, a stamp rally, and traditional arts performances such as the shamisen and traditional area dances.



Kimono Flower Detail



"Kimono Queen Contest" Winners & Local Mascots



Show at the Chirimen Kaido Kimono Festival
Photos - Kendra McDuffie & Verity Townsend



Kimono "Royalty"

PUBLISHED!

INTERVIEWS WITH JET AUTHORS

STEVEN THOMPSON (FUKUSHIMA)

People come from all over the world to teach English in Japan, and most are only here for a short time before moving on. We talked to four JETs involved in the world of professional writing. There was tons to ask, and they had plenty to say! We talked about their backgrounds, process, and inspirations behind their work! The full interviews (4,000 words in total!) can be read [here](#).

DAVID NAMISATO, AUTHOR OF LIFE AFTER THE BOE



BUY ONLINE

Life After the B.O.E.
The Book

David Namisato

FULL INTERVIEW

Where and when were you a JET? What was your experience like?

I was a CIR in Ajigasawamachi, Aomori-ken. It was an interesting experience since the town used its CIRs to develop and teach English language courses for its elementary schools, and it wasn't an assistant position either; I was the English teacher at half of the town's schools.

Life After the BOE has become something of a JET Program staple. How did it all get started? When did you decide to start sharing it?

I had been doing comics for the JETAA Toronto Newsletter for a few months when the then brand new editor, Gloria Ma, suggested that I give the comic a name and identity, and that's how the 'Comic' at the end of the newsletter became 'Life After the B.O.E.'

I can't remember when I decided to start posting things on the web—I think it was 2008—I figured it would be good to share the comic with JETs and ex-JETs

everywhere.

How did you go from an online comic, to publishing, to selling your book in the Japanese Canadian Culture Center?

Initially, I had no intention of putting a book together, but in the summer of 2011, fellow former JET, Lynn Miyauchi who works at the Consulate General of Japan in Seattle, mentioned that she would like to have a book to give to friends for Christmas, so I figured I'd try to put something together by the fall.

BE PREPARED TO SPEND A LOT OF TIME AND MONEY PROMOTING YOUR BOOK—FINISHING THE BOOK AND GETTING IT PUBLISHED IS PROBABLY MORE A HALF-WAY POINT THAN THE FINISH LINE.

During the book's launch party in February 2012, James Heron, Executive Director of the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre offered to put me in contact

with the people managing the gift shop.

Anything you'd do differently? Any advice for people looking to publish their work?

I'd probably have done a much louder cover, but that may have to do more with who I am now...As for advice? Be prepared to spend a lot of time and money promoting your book—finishing the book and getting it published is probably more a half-way point than the finish line.

Who are your comic artist inspirations?

There are dozens, but my top four are Takehiko Inoue (Slam Dunk, Vagabond), Masami Kurumada (Saint Seiya), Fujiko Fujio (Doraemon), and Hayao Miyazaki (his storyboards for his Ghibli movies)

What's your process for drawing like? What tools do you use? What's on your desk? Do you listen to any music or background noise while you work?

I usually doodle something quickly on to a piece of paper, scan it and then I finish things off in Photoshop or Clip Studio. I use a Wacom Cintiq 12WX so that I can draw right on the screen. I occasionally listen to stand-up comedy while I work, but most of the time I prefer silence.

What's next for you? What are you working on now?

I'm working on a few things, but nothing I can really talk about now. I'll be posting things on [Twitter](#), [Tumblr](#), and [Facebook](#) in the new year once things are ready.

LAUREN FREDERICK, AKA L.E. FRED, AUTHOR OF LUCID



BUY ONLINE



FULL INTERVIEW

You're a first-year JET. How are you finding the JET life so far? What do you like best about it?

Yep, let my newbie aura shine brightly! So far, so good. I'm surprisingly enjoying my inaka placement more than I thought, which is a good thing. The best part of being on JET and in Japan is having the opportunity to be a part of a Japanese community. I recently joined the local taiko group, and we had a BBQ this past weekend. Feeling like I belong in a place much different than my hometown is a very special and exciting thing!

How was the publishing experience? What would you

change if you could start over again?

The publishing experience is a lot more involved than I originally thought. I mean, I already wrote my novel, so the hard work was done, right? Wrong. Querying for agents and publishing houses was a really daunting, stressful process that diminished my ego to a tiny speck. Thankfully, I got on with a small publishing company who all but held my hand through the actual publishing process. It still took a good 6 months from signing my contract to the actual publication, but having someone show me each step was a huge help. The one thing I would change about publishing is to just have more patience. I'm glad things worked out the way they did this time, but, for the next time, I may hold off on signing that contract and have a look at the other options.

Your book released June 24th, right as you were preparing to move to Japan and start JET. How crazy did that get for you?

Things got really crazy! Publishing so close to JET was, not really a mistake, but something I would not want to relive[[good callout]]. One thing an author has to do before and after publishing is market, promote, and spread the word about your book. Add that to packing, applying for visas, and making doctors' appointments, and you have a pretty stressful situation. It was all doable, and clearly it didn't kill me, but I would not recommend doing it to anyone. One accomplishment at a time, folks!

What's your 'writing area' like? Do you listen to music or have any rituals for writing?

My writing area scares neat-freaks. Most of my apartment is clean, but my work space/kotatsu is a mess. I am one of those writers who thrives in chaos, I'm afraid. There are notebooks with hastily scribbled timelines, character sketches, and thousands of pens scattered about. I do enjoy listening to music, but it has to be something that won't tempt me to have a karaoke session and forget about writing. Also, the hot tea has to be constantly flowing or the words simply won't come!

PUBLISHING SO CLOSE TO JET WAS, NOT REALLY A MISTAKE, BUT SOMETHING I WOULD NOT WANT TO RELIVE.

Any last advice for aspiring authors looking to publish?

Keep your chin up! Publishing is the hardest part of writing, and it will test you in ways you didn't know you could be tested! Just remember why you wrote in the first place, and if the passion is there, it will all work out :) Can't wait to read what you have to offer. The world needs your story!

LARS MARTINSON, AUTHOR OF TONO HARU



BUY ONLINE



FULL INTERVIEW

Tell us about when you first started working on Tonoharu. How did the idea come about?

Prior to JET I had lived in Thailand and Norway for a year apiece. As JET participants well know, it's really hard to convey what it's like to live abroad is to people back home. It's sort of like trying to describe a dream to someone. It's fascinating to the dreamer because they experienced it firsthand, but it's usually not all that interesting to hear about.

Since my first trip abroad I always I wanted to draw a comic about it. My hope was that I could better relate the experience in words and pictures than I could with just words alone. I put it off for years because I felt that my art wasn't good enough to do it justice, but around 2003 I felt I finally felt ready to tackle it. This coincided with my first stint on JET, and so

Tonoharu was born.

Some have accused Tonoharu as being pessimistic. Do you feel it reflects a negative image of Japan?

That certainly wasn't my intention. I love Japan; I've spent half of my adult life here and at this point consider it a second home. I would hope that the hundreds of meticulous crosshatched illustrations depicting rural Japan contained within Tonoharu suggest my affection for the place.

That said, I have heard from more than a few people that they find the tone of the book to be bleak. This leads me to believe that in my attempts distill down and dramatize the JET experience, I too strongly emphasized its negative aspects. If I had to do it over again I would probably try to strike a better balance.

Japanese in the book is presented without translation. What made you decide to go with full Japanese writing over romanized or translated text? Are you worried people will miss parts of the story?

Originally I planned to include translations throughout. But as I finished the first book and looked over my use of Japanese, I realized that most of it was incidental. There was only one brief section in the book that I felt understanding the Japanese provided useful exposition, and even there it wasn't strictly necessary. Since the book is trying to convey what it's like to move to a place where you can't understand what people around you are

saying, I ultimately decided that leaving the Japanese untranslated was the way to go.

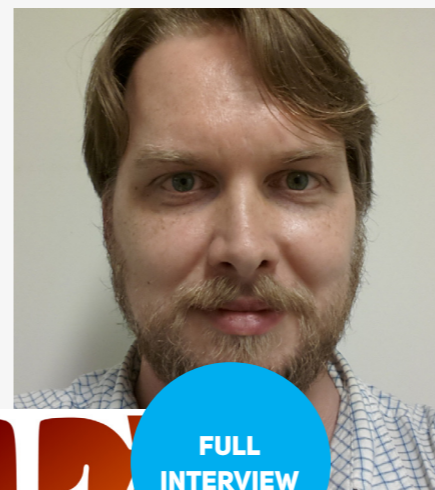
Are there any interesting background details or funny signs that you'd like to point out for people who may not have noticed them?

One of my favorite background details is a sign advertising a kindergarten that includes the text "Think Gentle Guts". This is a sign I'd pass everyday on my way to school. If you read the Japanese next to it makes sense, but without that context is sounds like a Dadaist poem or something.

How's Part Three coming along? Are you still on track?

I continue to chip away at the third and final book. I anticipate to release it in the second half of 2016. That probably sounds like a ways off, but since I've been working on Tonoharu for more than a decade, it feels great that the end is finally in sight.

JOSH SHELTON, AUTHOR AND CREATOR OF FICTIONARCADE.COM



FULL INTERVIEW

Where and when were you on JET? What was your experience like?

I was an ALT in Ibaraki Prefecture from 2000 to 2003. The experience was life-changing. Quite literally so. If I hadn't gone on JET, I wouldn't have my current career as a translator. I also wouldn't have met my wife. And that means I wouldn't have my three wonderful kids.

How did the idea for Fiction Arcade come around? What inspired you to 'bring back the short story'?

I've always loved the short story as a literary form, but you just can't make any money as a short story writer. People don't read magazines like they used to, which means magazines can't afford to buy as much fiction. And for the fiction the magazines do buy, they don't pay much.

But people are becoming increasingly comfortable with reading online. More importantly, people are becoming increasingly comfortable with purchasing electronic versions of books instead of paper copies. So, if people will buy novels in electronic form, why wouldn't they also buy shorter fiction?

There are a lot of great online fiction websites already out there, but they either give away their stories for free or are geared towards selling novel-length fiction. There just isn't much that is tailored to selling short fiction. So I had the idea to fill that niche with Fiction Arcade.

How did you get the word out? How did you attract writers?

Since we didn't have an established reader base to offer authors, we hit upon the idea of monthly contests. Between May and December we're awarding a total of \$9,000 to our top-selling authors.

The idea is to encourage authors to upload their stories and then spread the word amongst their readers and social networks. Thus, even if sales are slow initially, even a modest number of sales can win an author one of the monthly prizes. And the more authors tell people about the site, the heavier the traffic and sales become.

What advice would you give to aspiring authors looking to submit to Fiction Arcade?

Find at least one person who a) likes to read and b) can provide you with constructive, brutally honest feedback.

Also, don't assume that all you have to do is write a great story. If people don't know about it, how can it sell? Don't be shy about letting people on Facebook, Twitter and anywhere else know that you have stories for sale. Even online giants like Amazon don't have the resources to trumpet every new author's book. It's up to the authors themselves to be their own loudest spokesperson.

READ THE FULL INTERVIEWS HERE!

GamerGate

JONATHAN EDWARDS (SHIMANE 2009-2014)

UNLESS YOU'VE BEEN LIVING under the proverbial rock, you've at least heard about the #GamerGate controversy. The online fracas is the conflict between men within a niche group of video and computer game players, self-labeled as "gamers", and women, fellow gamers, who are arguing over the sexist environment potentially inherent within the community. This debate has been going on for years within the gaming community. Recently, a very vocal minority of men escalated to using harassment, threats, and fear tactics against their opposition, resulting in media attention from all across the spectrum...or, most of the spectrum. One large part of the gaming industry has remained rather quiet: Japan.

The Japanese gaming market emerged after American companies nearly tanked the industry into oblivion in the early 1980s. Japanese companies not only salvaged video games, they went on to become new leaders of the industry and defined gaming worldwide for well over a decade. The western market was rebuilt on Japanese standards and ideas before eventually

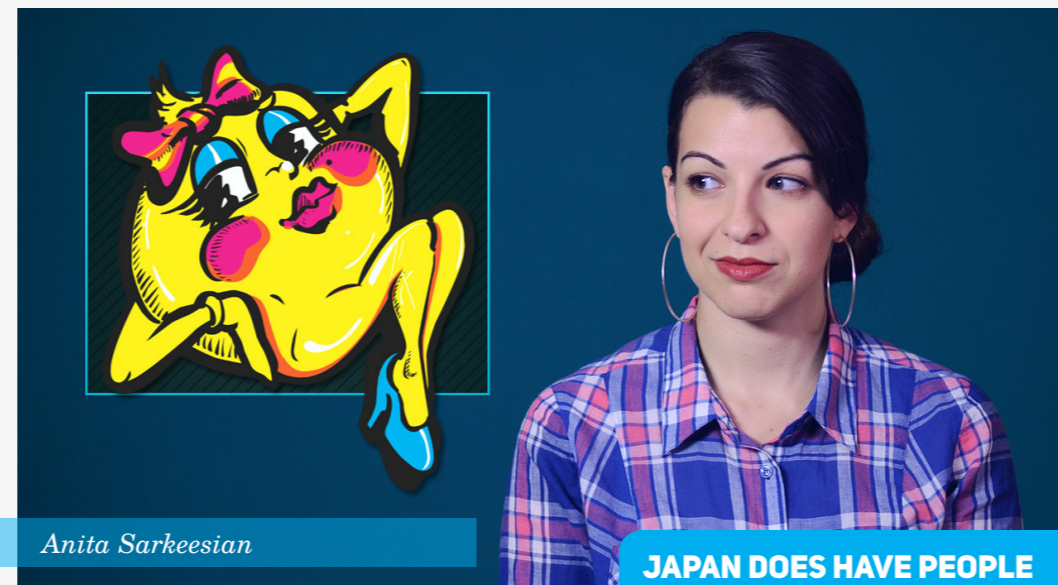
recovering. Because of this crucial involvement, any talk within the gaming subculture should inevitably include the Japanese gaming industry.



Pauline in Distress

WILL JAPANESE GAMERS ACCEPT THE CHANGES TO COME, OR LOBBY THE ISSUE WITHIN THE SUBCULTURE, RESULTING IN AN EASTERN ADAPTATION OF #GAMERGATE?

The elements for Japan to become involved are certainly there. The damsel in distress MacGuffin was pioneered by Nintendo, enshrined in their *Super Mario Brothers* franchise, and became a defining part of video games. Additionally, female characters often fall victim to the same sexualized designs that are common within the comic industries. Certain game developers are even notorious for putting a meticulous level of effort into their characters' breast physics. Japan is also heavily responsible for the dating sim genre of games where



Anita Sarkeesian

of this stems from Japan's own gender issues, which, just as in the west, manifest across all pop culture media. There's plenty to discuss, but no one in Japan seems to be talking. Why?

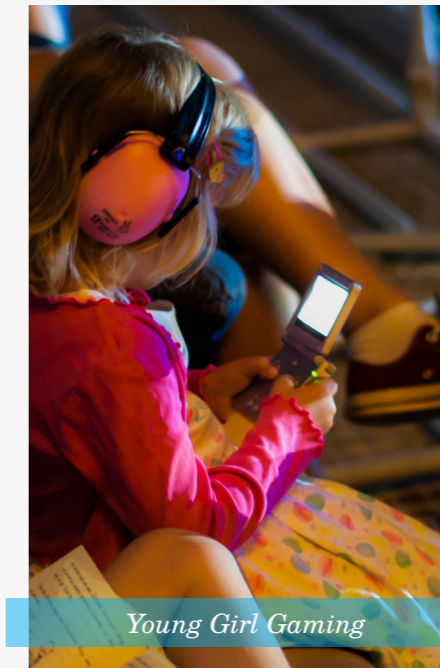
For starters, someone in Japan has to feel **the need** to take a stand. In western pop culture, the "Bechdel Test" and "Women in Refrigerators Syndrome" were born when people were upset with the status quo in media. Recently, figures like Felicia Day and Anita Sarkeesian have spoken up in an attempt to bring some overdue balance to the video game industry. Japan **does** have people with strong convictions, but they have yet to strongly influence pop culture.

The next thing to consider as to why Japan isn't wrapped up in #GamerGate is that protesters are only half of the equation. Ideally, activists want a healthy debate to bring about desired changes.

JAPAN DOES HAVE PEOPLE WITH STRONG CONVICTIONS, BUT THEY HAVE YET TO STRONGLY INFLUENCE POP CULTURE.

players need only follow the correct steps to woo digital characters, often with pornographic reward. Much

In the gamer community, however, advocates are harassed, threatened, and through #GamerGate, made accusations against female game developers of sleeping with journalists for reviews. The debate garnered



Young Girl Gaming

mainstream attention as the disparaging tactics of detractors escalated and surpassed the original issue. Perhaps this defensive reaction is rooted in the history of video game culture in western countries.

However, the issue of women in video games is different because protestors are no longer ignorant to the subject matter. As time passes, more and more people are seeing how this new issue differs from previous problems. The tide is turning, but the shrinking minority of outraged males has invoked desperate, often illegal, measures in support of their opinion.

There's a possibility Japan's gamers might not feel this desperation. Japan has a

status as a Mecca among geeks whose hobbies and interests are recognized as being for more than just children. With a mature variety of fare, Japanese society has been more accepting of adults pursuing these pastimes. With less incentive to turn fighting gaming industries into a contrived political cause, Japan's hobbyists have never had to be overly defensive about their passion.

While Japanese gamers may not be as reactionary as their western counterparts on the surface, the infrastructure for hacktivist fear mongering is present. In fact, the message board that orchestrated #GamerGate to begin with, 4Chan, is based on Japan's 2chan, whose anonymous users are equally virulent when rallied. As the debate over women and video games continues to grow, the Japanese industry will inevitably become more involved; the West is too large a market to ignore. The question is: will Japanese gamers accept the changes to come, or lobby the issue within the subculture, resulting in an Eastern adaptation of #GamerGate?

Jonathan is a biker, retro-gamer, and devoted Godzilla fan. After 5 years of JET in Shimane, he now works for the Nagano Comprehensive Education Center. Follow his shenanigans on Twitter @PocketGojira.

THIS MONTH IN... LIFESTYLE



NICK POWERS-MAHER

connect.food@ajet.net

We've passed through the Season of Food, and into The Holiday Season, which is really just another season of food and food comas. As with every year, I plan on spending the holidays in North Carolina with my family and cats, and the hordes of jaw-dropping restaurants in my homestate. I sent my parents a list of all the foods and restaurants I want to experience anew or revisit while I'm home, and I spend every day thinking about every one of them.



TOM LEGGE

connect.travel@ajet.net

This month I booked some very cheap flights to Istanbul for Golden Week with Korean Air, who are having a sale at the moment. By checking local airports, I was able to fly out of Okayama and save about \$150 in airport transfer fees too. So this month's message is, find out about your smaller, local airports. You'll be amazed where you can get to with just a brief stopover!



SIMON GRIFFIN

connect.travel@ajet.net

And so it begins! Cold mornings, frozen pipes and lots and lots of snow. December is a time when many of us either go travelling or make the yearly pilgrimage home. This year I opted for the latter, and will back in sunny ol' England with my family for Christmas and New Year's. Whatever you're up to, have a safe one, eat lots, drink more and of course be merry!

P.40

Holiday Dinner



P.43

Christmas Cake



P.44

Healthy Honey



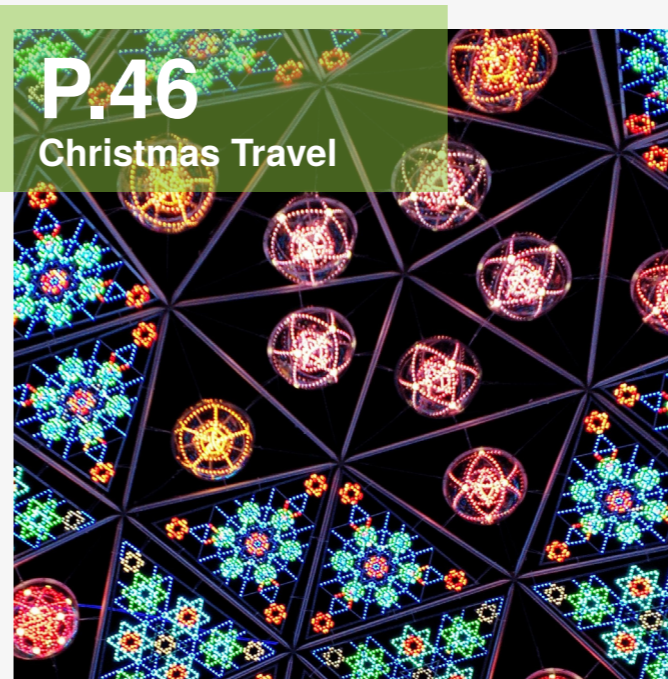
P.45

Winter is Coming!



P.46

Christmas Travel



P.48

Hotel Booking 101



SIMPLE HOLIDAY DINNER

...IN A TINY KITCHEN!

BRITTANY ROCK (TOCHIGI)

BEFORE YOU START!

I love to cook, especially making meals for the holidays, so when I arrived at my apartment in Japan I was a bit disheartened to see that my kitchen consisted of one burner, minimal counter space, and a tiny microwave/oven. Additionally, many of my new friends in Japan were vegetarian. However, I was determined to make it work. Here are some tips for making a great, simple Semi-Vegetarian Holiday Feast!

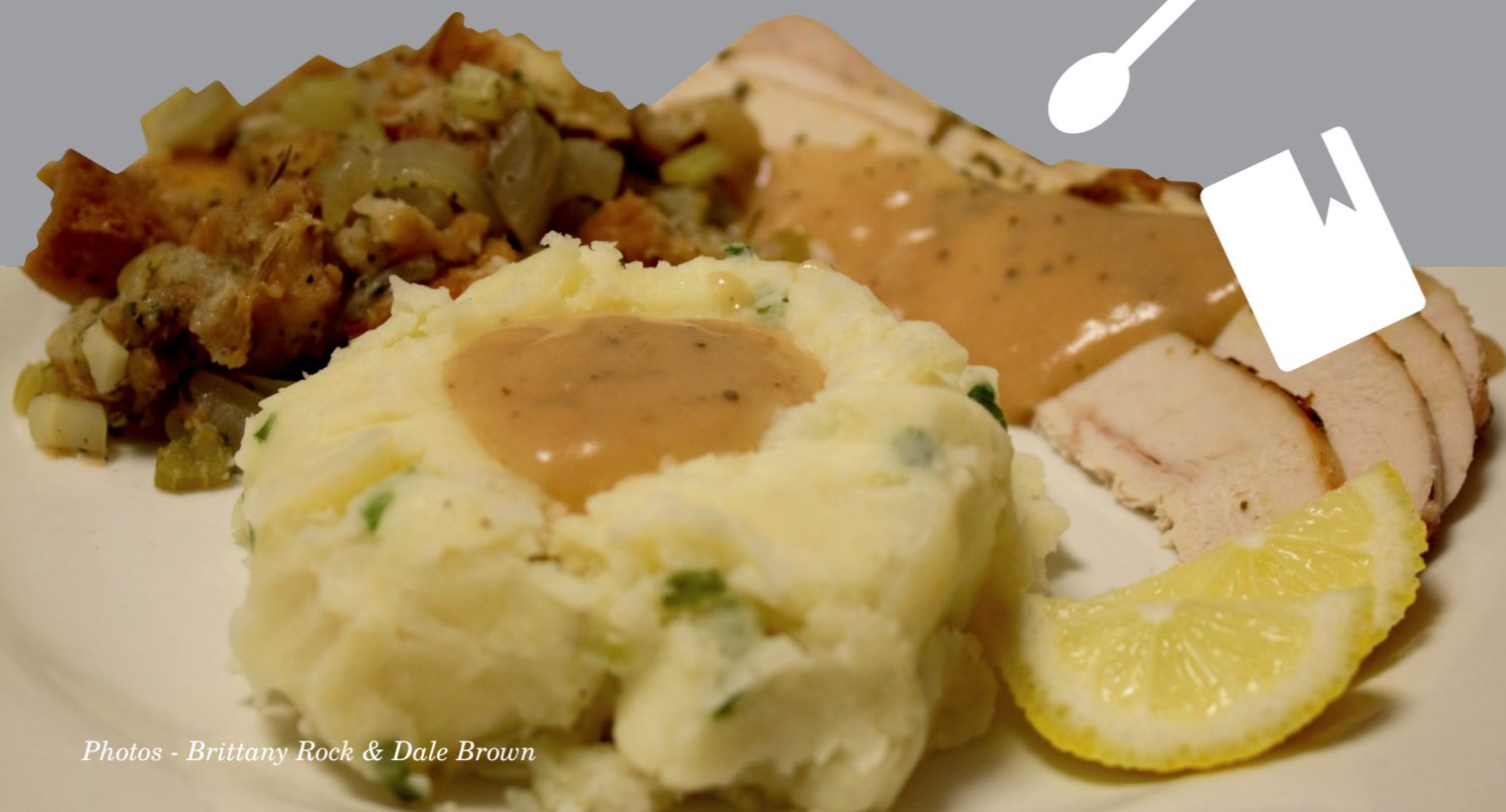
TURKEY

- 1kg turkey meat
- 100g butter, softened
- zest of 1 lemon
- parsley, sage, rosemary, thyme to taste

If your turkey is frozen, be sure to defrost a few days ahead of time!

1. Mix the lemon zest and seasoning with butter.
2. The butter should be green from the seasonings.

3. Spread the butter on the turkey. If turkey came with the skin on, put the butter mixture underneath the skin.
4. Place the turkey on a meat rack and a pan under it to catch the juices. The rack is important because it keeps the turkey from getting soggy.
5. Cook at 160 degrees C for about 20 min per 0.45kg of meat until the inside temperature is 70 degrees C. My 1kg of turkey breast took about 90 minutes.



Photos - Brittany Rock & Dale Brown

PRE-DINNER PREPARATION

Check the size of your oven and figure out what will fit. I have a 27x20x28 cm microwave/oven combo.

Pre-order your meat with [The Meat Guy](#) or similar service: I bought the 1kg turkey breast (frozen) since nothing larger will fit in my oven. He also offers canned cranberry sauce!

VEGETABLE BROTH

- 1 LARGE PEELED CARROT
- 1 WHOLE LARGE ONION, SKIN ON
- 1 LARGE CELERY STALK



1. Fill a pot with water.
2. Add the vegetables. Be sure to keep the skin on the onion, to give the broth color!
3. Boil the vegetables for about 2 hours.
4. When finished, remove the vegetables from the broth.

VEGETARIAN GRAVY

- 20 GRAMS FLOUR
- 20 GRAMS BUTTER
- 100 ML VEGETABLE STOCK
- SALT, PEPPER, GARLIC SALT



1. Melt butter in a pan.
2. When the butter is fully melted, whisk in the flour.
3. Cook the butter and flour until it turns light brown.
4. Add the vegetable stock. Stir until well-blended.
5. Add seasoning to taste!

BONUS RECIPE

Fall Vegetable Soup – after making the broth, chop up the cooked vegetables, add more water, some broth, cubes of pumpkin, salt, ground sage, and a bay leaf and simmer for about 30 minutes. Remove the bay leaf and blend.

HOMEMADE STOVE-TOP STUFFING

- 1 PACKAGE OF PRE-SLICED BREAD
- OLIVE OIL
- 100 GRAMS BUTTER
- 2 CELERY STALKS
- 1 ONION, CHOPPED
- 1 CLOVE OF GARLIC
- 800 ML OF VEGETABLE BROTH
- SALT, PEPPER, SAGE, ROSEMARY, THYME, PARSLEY



1. To make the croutons, chop the bread into cubes, and toss with olive oil, salt and pepper.
2. Place the seasoned cubes in the toaster for 2-3

- minutes until golden.
3. Flip the cubes and toast again until crisp.
4. In a pot, add 100g of butter, a minced garlic clove, onion and celery.
5. Cook until the vegetables are soft, stirring occasionally so nothing burns.
6. Add the croutons and seasoning.
7. Ladle in the vegetable broth until the bread sticks together but is not too soft.
8. Serve!

NO-BAKE NUTELLA PIE

- 110 GRAMS BUTTER
- 15 DRY COOKIES
- 1/3 OF A JAR OF NUTELLA
- 200 GRAMS HEAVY CREAM
- 1 BRICK (200G) OF CREAM CHEESE



THE CRUST

1. Crush those cookies into dust! When the cookie crumbs are the texture of sand, dump them into a pie plate.
2. Melt the butter and mix into cookie crumbs. The crumbs should stick together. Add melted butter until they stick.
3. Pack the cookie crumbs tightly into the pan.
4. Now you have two choices. You can: pack the cookie crumbs super tightly and chill in the fridge for an hour for a

no-bake crust, or bake the pie crust in the oven at 190 degrees C for 7 minutes.

THE FILLING

5. Fill a bowl with plenty of ice cubes and a bit of water. Lay a second bowl inside to chill for a minute or so.
6. Pour the carton of cream into the bowl and beat until stiff peaks form. Put aside.
7. In a new bowl, mix the room-temperature cream cheese with the Nutella until you can no longer

see any white bits.

8. Slowly fold in the whipped cream.
9. Pour the combined mixture into your pie crust!
10. Freeze your pie for a couple hours to let it set up. Take it out about 30 min before serving.



Chikanobu Woodblock Print of Meiji Era Ball

O, CHRISTMAS CAKE, O, CHRISTMAS CAKE

VERITY TOWNSEND (HYOGO)

THE ROOTS OF THE RATHER commercialised way Christmas is currently celebrated in Japan can be found in the Meiji era (1868 – 1912) enthusiasm for all things Western. With the fall of the Tokugawa shogunate, Japan came out of a long period of isolation from the rest of the world and started becoming more Western. Christmas decorations, presents and parties appeared among the port cities that were open to foreigners and in Westernised areas of Tokyo. Exclusive balls were held at venues such as the Imperial Hotel and the Rokumeikan, Western formal wear and cuisine an essential part of these events for the rich¹.

However, Christmas didn't become popular among the

general public until after the Occupation at the end of World War II. This is also where we come to Japanese Christmas cake, a confection that cake makers, such as Fujiya, started promoting in the 1950s².

Unlike the rich, spiced fruit and nut cakes that are often associated with Christmas in the United States and England, Japanese Christmas cakes are light, spongy, and topped with whipped cream and strawberries. They're eaten on Christmas Eve, and shops try to sell all of their cakes by the end of that day.

Recently, the cake makers and supermarkets that you can preorder from have become more and more

creative. As well as the standard strawberry, you can also buy matcha Mont Blanc Christmas cakes, or cakes in which each slice is a different type! There are also special types for children, which have a toy in the middle.

So why not try a Japanese Christmas cake this year? Share it with your friends or better half, or eat the whole thing as a Christmas present to yourself!

REFERENCES

1. *Hastings, S. A. (2011), A Dinner Party is not a Revolution. In: Bardsley, J., and Miller, L., eds., Manners and Mischief: Gender, Power and Etiquette in Japan. University of California Press. pp95-113.*
2. *The History of Fujiya*

DID YOU KNOW?

Fortunately now rather passé, there is a Japanese expression, 'leftover Christmas cake,' which refers to an unmarried woman aged over 25 who is seen as past marriageable age- therefore the cake that no one wants to buy after Christmas Eve.



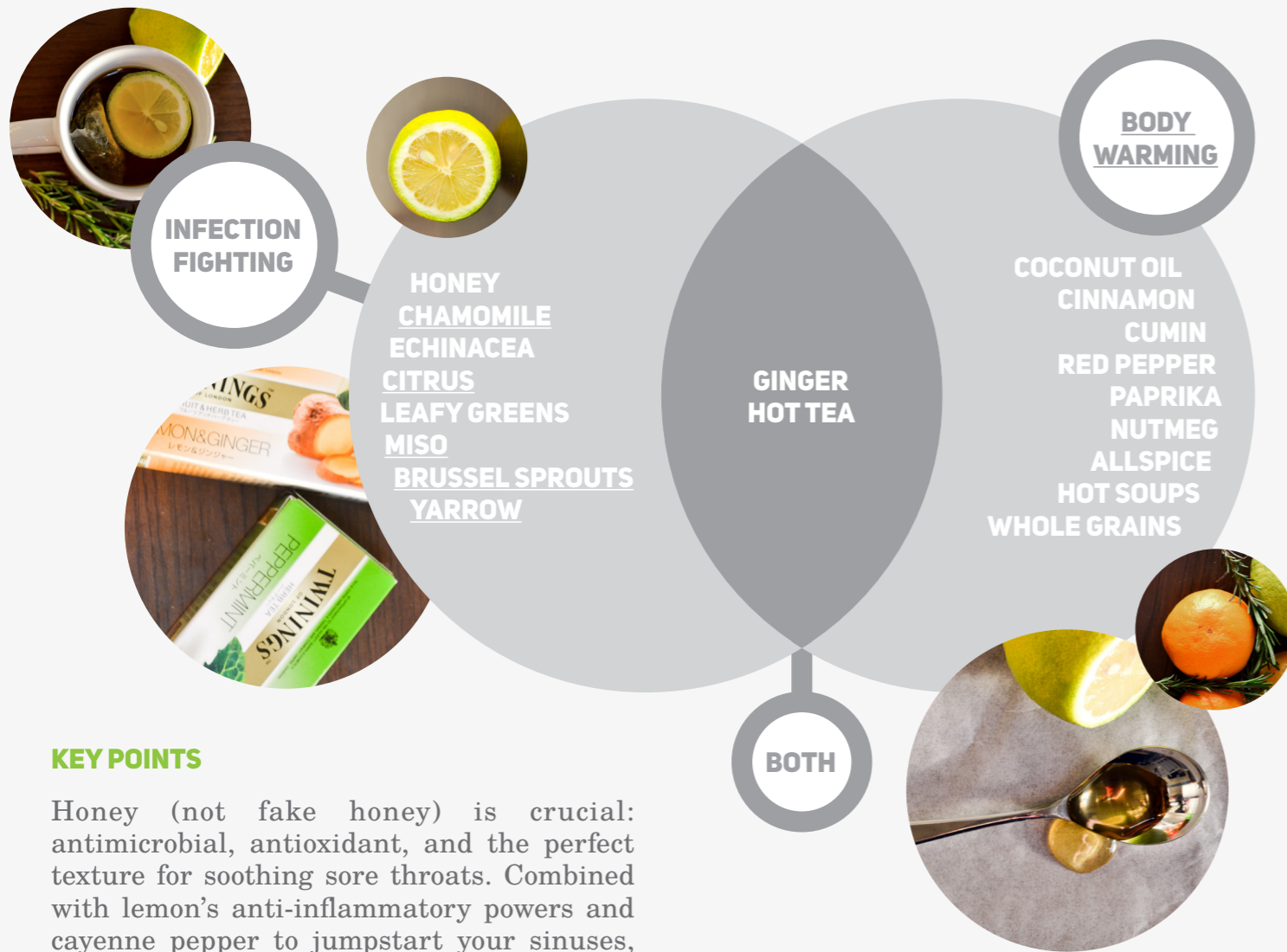
Photos - Nick Powers

Japanese Christmas Cake

HONEY FOR YOUR HEALTH

HILARY ARMSTRONG (KAGAWA)

With winter comes colds. As you feel the sniffles coming on, you could run out and buy every Nyquil lookalike under the sun, cross your fingers, and hope for the best. Or you can test out some preventative measures, and save yourself some sick leave.



KEY POINTS

Honey (not fake honey) is crucial: antimicrobial, antioxidant, and the perfect texture for soothing sore throats. Combined with lemon's anti-inflammatory powers and cayenne pepper to jumpstart your sinuses, it's the perfect triple threat. Mix these three things in a glass jar, keep the jar in your fridge, and use it by the tablespoon in hot tea.

Echinacea tea is best, because it stimulates the body's immune system and reduces cold symptoms. Alternatively, you can order echinacea extract from Tengu and put it in any other tea.

There are zillions of variations on this theme, with different herbs, spices, and citrus fruit tailored to help with everything from acne to ulcers, but by and large, this potion will keep you going strong as the temperatures drop and germs fill stuffy classrooms.

COMMENTS

WINTER IS COMING! ONE JET'S PLANS FOR THE COMING WINTER

PIA PETERSON (YAMAGATA)

MARK TWAIN QUIPPED THAT everyone complains about the weather, but no one ever does anything about it. In Japan, where the hot and cold both run into extremes, this rings ever true. For me, only one side has any appeal. I love the heat, I hate the cold. But even though the beaches of Bali or Thailand sound appealing, maybe this year you want to try sticking out the winter closer to home. Traveling in-country is likely cheaper and you can work on your Japanese with a whole new host of conbini store clerks in a different town. Japan really embraces the shifting seasons. There must

be something to this winter thing. This year, I aim to meet the challenge, and enjoy this awful season come frozen hell or freezing high water.

In between a Tsutaya and a thrift store in my town of Yamagata, there is a minimalist camping store called December. Inside, there are posters of people in all kinds of weather, artful displays of camping stoves and pots, and waterproof cloth backpacks that they make in a small sewing room attached to the store. The owners are young, and as good of role models for enjoying winter as I could hope for. She organizes snowshoeing trips in the winter and canoeing trips in the fall. He holds the austere position of president of Japan's national

'bum sledding' organization (not the real name. It's technically 'freestyle mini-luge'). The bizarre handled sled looks something like a child's rocking horse with no legs, and is a fast and dangerous business on snow. I've signed up for the first suicide mission of the season, in early January.

I URGE YOU TO GET OUT THERE AND TRY IT BECAUSE, YOU JUST NEVER KNOW!

Coming from someone who's not terribly athletic, I urge you to get out there and try it because, you just never know! You could be a late bloomer. I'm the biggest winter skeptic in a twelve-block radius, and you know what? The snow on Mount Zao looks mighty beautiful today. Bring it on! This is the winter of an adventure of a lifetime. I'm ready! What have you got to lose?

THOSE TREES ARE IN THE PROCESS OF BECOMING THE FAMOUS YAMAGATA SNOW MONSTERS...AND YET HE LAUGHS!



Photos - The December Store

Pia Peterson is new in Japan, wide-eyed, and addicted to red bean mochi. When not thoroughly enjoying winter, she prefers the old standby of drinking espresso and planning trips on her orange couch, located in Yamagata City.

Snow and sand, a surreal combination of serenity at Tottori Sand Dunes, Tottori.
Photos - Kai Le Heng, Patrick Finn, & Simon Griffin

CHRISTMAS TRAVEL

SOME TIPS FOR HOLIDAY TRIPS

I believe it was Confucius who once said 'It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas,' and his words are ringing increasingly true with each passing day here in Japan. Although the Japanese maybe don't always quite celebrate the season as we do back home, (I've had to correct more than one child that Christmas is not a celebration of Santa's Birthday) it is still an important time for many and a great chance to travel. This month we've gathered up some ideas, tips and recommendations to help even the scrooges out there plan out an enjoyable holiday season.

ONSEN

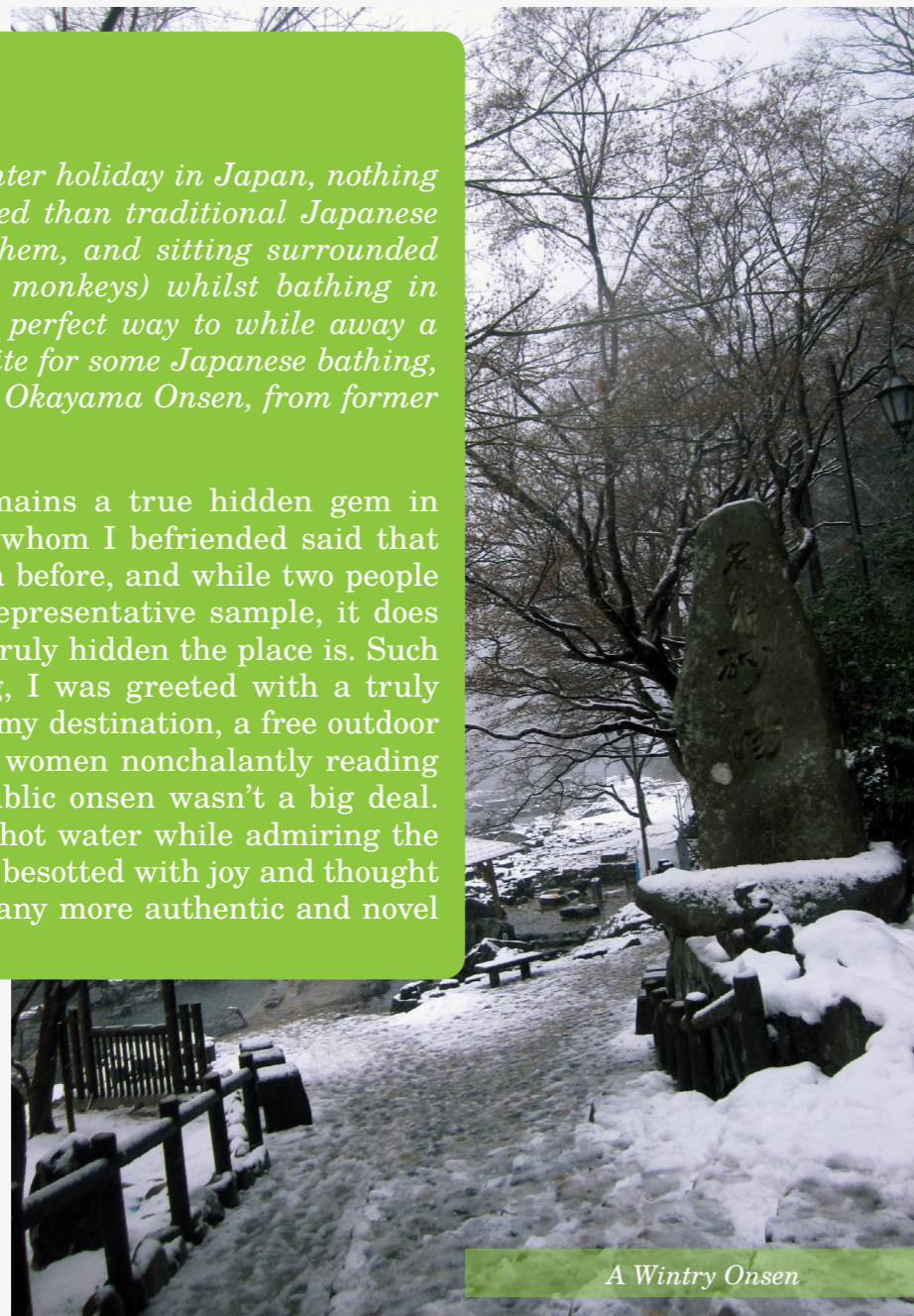
Kai Le Heng (Kumamoto 2011-2013)

For those seeking a relaxing winter holiday in Japan, nothing comes more highly recommended than traditional Japanese onsen. The country is full of them, and sitting surrounded by snow (and, in some cases, monkeys) whilst bathing in luxuriously warm water is the perfect way to while away a cold winter. To whet your appetite for some Japanese bathing, here's a recommendation for an Okayama Onsen, from former Kumamoto JET, Kai Le.

Okayama's Yubara Onsen remains a true hidden gem in Japan. Two Okayama natives whom I befriended said that they have never been to Yubara before, and while two people hardly seems indicative of a representative sample, it does suggest how inconvenient and truly hidden the place is. Such inconvenience notwithstanding, I was greeted with a truly gorgeous sight when I reached my destination, a free outdoor onsen with Japanese men and women nonchalantly reading their books, as if sharing a public onsen wasn't a big deal. Soaking up the warmth of the hot water while admiring the snow fall right before me, I was besotted with joy and thought onsen experiences couldn't get any more authentic and novel than this. Bucket-list worthy.



Yubara Onsen



A Wintry Onsen

URBAN WINTER

Patrick Finn (Toyama)

Tokyo and other big cities provide a plethora of activities and special events limited to the winter. Usually a few weeks before Christmas, many places will have illuminations or put on shows in shopping centers. Roppongi Hills always has some, along with a Christmas market (more information [here](#) in Japanese).

If you're a music fan, many artists do Christmas lives and Countdown Shows for the New Year. These will either be on each respective day, or a few before. Tickets go on sale as early as October. You can register your favorite artists at websites such as e+, Ticket Pia, or Lawson Ticket to get e-mail notifications of when sales start.

Finally, shopping! Almost every store imaginable will have great discounts after New Year, but many are limited to only a few days. There are also *fukubukuro*, or 'lucky bags,' at many stores, that offer their products in a mysterious bag for a greatly reduced price. It can be hit or miss, but if you're open to re-sale, a profit can be turned!

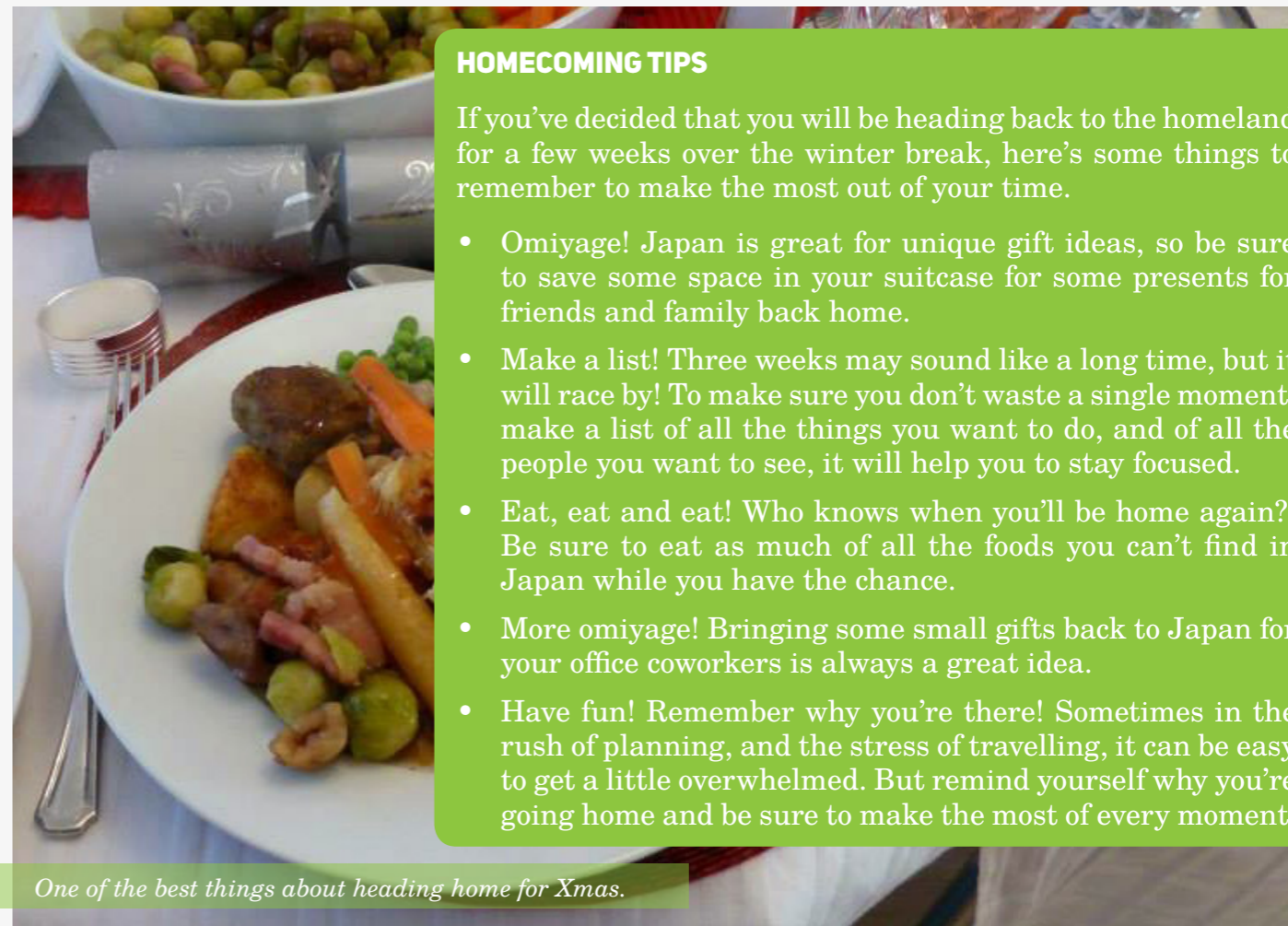


A path of lights.

HOMECOMING TIPS

If you've decided that you will be heading back to the homeland for a few weeks over the winter break, here's some things to remember to make the most out of your time.

- Omiyage! Japan is great for unique gift ideas, so be sure to save some space in your suitcase for some presents for friends and family back home.
- Make a list! Three weeks may sound like a long time, but it will race by! To make sure you don't waste a single moment, make a list of all the things you want to do, and of all the people you want to see, it will help you to stay focused.
- Eat, eat and eat! Who knows when you'll be home again?! Be sure to eat as much of all the foods you can't find in Japan while you have the chance.
- More omiyage! Bringing some small gifts back to Japan for your office coworkers is always a great idea.
- Have fun! Remember why you're there! Sometimes in the rush of planning, and the stress of travelling, it can be easy to get a little overwhelmed. But remind yourself why you're going home and be sure to make the most of every moment.



One of the best things about heading home for Xmas.

HOTEL BOOKING 101

TOM LEGGE (HIROSHIMA)

WITH SUCH A WEALTH OF sites plying their wares in all corners of the Internet, booking a hotel can be a daunting and frustrating task for even the most seasoned traveller. It sometimes seems as if choosing the hotel itself is only half the battle. Knowing how to book it will save you time, money and countless headaches. Here's a guide that should get you on the right track.

HOTEL'S OWN WEBSITE

This may seem like an obvious inclusion, but the vast majority of people these days do not actually book on the hotel's website, but rather through a third-party (see below). It is, however, always worth looking at the hotel site to see what packages and deals they have once you have decided on a hotel. Whilst it may not always be cheaper, it can bring certain benefits. Larger chains have reward schemes and experience suggests that showing loyalty by booking directly puts you towards the front of the queue for room upgrades and preferential treatment should something go awry. Booking directly will often yield the option to pay on arrival, useful for those in Japan with limited payment options.

META-SEARCH WEBSITES

e.g. Kayak, Trivago, Tripadvisor

For the vast majority of people, meta-search is a great starting point. These sites compare prices and availability for most regular third-party sites and give a very full picture of the market. Tripadvisor combines that with its excellent review platform to give you a comprehensive search basis. However, advertised prices are ultimately not always available once you get through to the seller's site and room descriptions are sometimes less than a brilliant match. Hotels' own website prices rarely track effectively so it is wise to check there too before deciding.

INDIVIDUAL BOOKING AGENTS

e.g. jalan.net, hotels.com, booking.com, Rakuten Travel

Why use an individual agent when you could use a meta-search? There are two main reasons. The first is that none of the meta-search websites covers every individual booking agent (though Tripadvisor probably has best coverage for Japan).

The second is about loyalty. You will likely find that loyalty to one particular site more than covers the few

yen difference between sites' rates because of the loyalty programme in place. I use Hotels.com as their Welcome Rewards programme offers a free night of average nightly value for every 10 nights stayed (a 9% rebate). I combine this with clicking through a cashback provider (in my case www.quidco.com) to give a further 8-12% rebate a few weeks after the stay. **This is a 17-21% on every hotel room booked.** With booking hotels, loyalty really does make a difference.

SECRET HOTELS

e.g. lastminute.com, Hotwire, Priceline

Secret Hotels? Have you gone mad? Perhaps...Half marketing gimmick, half genuine opportunity, secret hotels are popping up on hotel sites more and more frequently. The basic premise is that you book a hotel based on a rough geographical location, a set of amenities, a star value and a price. You only find out what hotel you are staying in once you have pressed send on the payment button. The sites will tell you that this allows them to offer rates that the hotels "don't want the public to see" but I'm sceptical.

However, it is possible to find

really good deals booking this way and the hotels are not half as secret as you might think. A bit of clever detective work on Tripadvisor (quite fun!) or a look at the various sites and forums set up to "reveal" these secrets can tell you exactly where you will be staying, or at least a best guess, before you press the magic button.

Finally, a word specifically about Priceline. Priceline operates slightly differently (though the hotels themselves are still secret). With this site you actually get to name the price you want to bid and it is accepted or rejected on the spot. This is one site where genuine bargains can be had if you bid carefully and there are thousand of people online discussing bidding strategies and, once again, revealing the names of the secret hotels. Some background reading required for this one but it could be worth it. I recently booked a room for \$80 that was \$240+ everywhere else, including the hotel's own site.

Good luck in all your future hotel booking endeavours. If you have any questions or comments, you can contact Tom at connect.travel@ajet.net.

SAVE MONEY ON SOMETHING TRADITIONAL AND RELAXING...

...OR GET A GREAT DEAL ON AN URBAN EXPERIENCE!



THIS MONTH IN... COMMUNITY

P.52 Officially INSANE



P.54 It's Snowtime



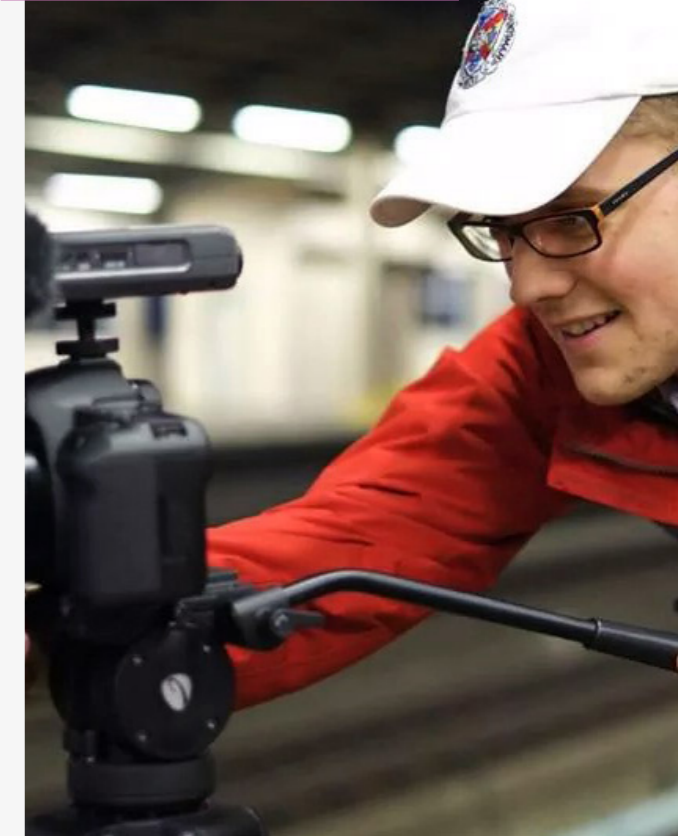
HIROSHI FUKUSHIMA connect.sports@ajet.net

Winter wouldn't be the same without some powder snow to go down the slopes of Japan. This month we will start a series of articles to help people get started, whether you're a beginner or experienced. Marathon season has kicked off so it's time to get out of the *kotatsu*! Whether it be running a few half marathons, *ekidens* or training for your first full marathon. I had the privilege of running with a Hakone Ekiden runner and a former Asian Women's Cross Country champion in the Kumamoto Relay Marathon. If you have a story, let me know.

P.57 Comics



P.61 Spotlights



NATHAN BERNE connect.volunteer@ajet.net

Too cold to go jogging? No way! But I wouldn't mind some *amazake* after I set down this massive *mikoshi*. That's the price of culture, though; discipline and resolve will see you through the worst of it, but the rewards are amazing. Japan astounds me with its dedication to communal effort, and the physical element takes on a whole new form when you're training in winter weather. Even indoors though, you can throw down with a martial arts club or learn a new craft, so go and donate your time, and get back to us with your story!!

OFFICIALLY INSANE

ADELE JACKSON-GIBSON (KUMAMOTO 2013-2014)

This is a blog post from person who been through INSANITY. You can read the full text of the original—which has tons more great information—and follow Adele [here](#).

Looks may be deceiving, but I'm telling you, I can't believe how strong my knee has gotten since ACL reconstruction. Seriously, I just came back from the gym

blah blah blah...Let the infomercial do the talking.

4. It has a good sense of humor.

I know this isn't the most convincing reason but this seriously kept me going through it for 2 months. Many of the athletes featured in this video series are ridiculous, from Tanya the Perfectionist to Jeff the BBoy. Some, it seems, don't like each other. One nearly gets kicked in the face. And no matter how serious Shaun T tries to be, he always manages to slip into a shimmy or flare those dance-hands mid-workout.

NOW ON TO KNEES.

1. Take into account pre-existing knee conditions and be aware of them

Never push your knees too far and moderate the moves if need be. You can find YouTube videos online of modified workouts if you don't know how. You don't want to harm your knees more.

2. If you feel any sharp pain, or your knees wobble or crack more than usual STOP and REST for a bit

Quality reps are more important than quantity, so make sure that you protect your knees by ALWAYS using

proper form. This is hard to do when you are tired and that's okay. Realize that and pause for a second.

3. Shoes and Surface

They make a huge difference. Make sure you have good arch support in your shoes especially if you are flat footed. Flat feet can lead to ACL injuries and other knee and shin problems (speaking from experience). This is because flat feet put the knees and shins at a more vulnerable angle when running, jumping, or pivoting. Your knees point slightly inward relative to your ankle. So as Shaun T says it is important to keep your knees out and over (not beyond) your toes, hips pointing outward.

It also helps to do Insanity on ground that gives a little bit. I was fortunate to do it on tatami mats which tend to have a tiny bit of bounce.

4. Stretch, Roll, Ice and Supplement

Many knee problems come from muscle knots and inflexibility (focus being on hips and IT bands though other muscles are included) so make sure you complete the Insanity warm-up and do some extra stretching if needed. Foam rolling afterward will also help work out any tightness or knots. Icing will help prevent any swelling that might happen although I never had this issue. It was more of a precautionary measure that served its purpose. Lastly, I took glucosamine supplements to promote joint health.

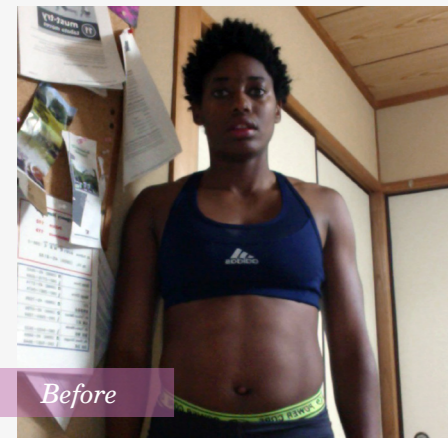
WHY DON'T THE RESULTS SHOW LIKE ON TV?

First, I was in already decent shape to begin with, which only means that the extra chub that I might want to lose is going to be that much harder to work off. This probably means dieting. Which I didn't do ... Maybe if I followed the very clear

and laid-out dieting plan that Shaun T prepared you might see TV results. I probably should have stuffed my face with quinoa instead of Coco Puffs, but my resolve isn't that strong yet. I'm getting there.

Second, for people who don't see many results with Insanity either don't do the work or don't realize that the "beach body" just won't appear in 2 months. Fitness is a long process and I happen to think that Insanity is a great building block.

Adele was an assistant language teacher for one year in the small town of Ashikita in the land famous for basashi (horse meat), Kumamoto Prefecture. She has a passion for soccer, having played in Ozu with a semi-professional team and continuing to play back in America. You can follow her on her blog [here](#).



Before



After

I AM NOW OFFICIALLY INSANE!

If you couldn't tell the left is "before" and the right is "after" and you might be asking yourself, "What's the difference? The love handles are still there!" (All the more to love you with my dear). You might be thinking that "Insanity" is a bunch of crock and there's no point in sweating it out for 2 months just to get seemingly minimal results. WRONG. Let me give you 4 reasons why I'm officially an Insanity advocate:

1. You will become a ton stronger and extremely fit.

and since my knee surgery I couldn't believe how much weight I could single-leg press.

2. It's all about you!

This is the best part about Insanity. NO JUDGEMENT. As fast-paced as Insanity can be, it's really about patience. You don't have to go at the same pace as Shaun T; all you have to do is do your best. However, if you are not wiped after the workout you are doing it wrong. Use that as a gauge and you will get better.

3. You don't need any equipment!

Just you and the DVD



Weight Lifting, No Big Deal

IT'S SNOWTIME

PART 1: STARTING OUT

MIKE DELUE (HOKKAIDO)



Slackcountry!

JAPAN IS A WINTER wonderland at your doorstep and the options are overwhelming. Whether you've been earning your turns and hard carving for years, or you've never done this before and don't know what "earning your turns" or "carving" mean, over the next few issues, we'll help you get the most out of what Japan has on offer this winter. Strap in kids, it's snowtime.

BEFORE COMMITTING TO BUYING SOMETHING, YOU SHOULD RENT A KIT.

STARTING OUT

If you're new to the game, you're going to need a pair of skis or a snowboard. As to which you should start with as a beginner, much contention remains. The tentative peace reached between skiers and snowboarders after the senseless carnage of the Battle of Park City is at times strained, but we attempt to maintain the armistice in a cordial manner. To be honest, you should probably do whichever you're more excited

about. If you don't have a preference doing whichever your friends do might be your best bet. This gives you friends to ride with who can point you toward improving your technique, buying gear, and advancing faster. You can always try the other one later. There is somewhat of a consensus that skiing is easier to pick up but harder to master, while the opposite is true of snowboarding, but don't let that fool you. Either way you're going to be sore after Day One.

Still not sure? Flip a coin. Moving on!

Before committing to buying something, you should **rent** a kit. Larger ski hills and some hotels near ski resorts will rent you a full set of gear, usually reasonably maintained, and make sure you get something in your size for the day.

NEW VS. USED

Once you're sure that you're the right kind of crazy (and know your proper sizes), check out a **local recycle shop**. New gear is nice, and if you're an avid skier or boarder you probably know what you like and what you want, but when you're just starting

out it won't make much of a difference. As long as it's in decent shape, a cheap used board or skis will be just fine to cut your teeth on.

Big sports shops like Xebio and Sports Authority carry the latest gear and can be found all over the country. Here all of the keenest boarders and skiers can succumb to a little retail therapy but there's only so many setups one wants kicking around their apartment and you can find some brilliant deals at the local Hard-Off if you keep your eyes peeled as the big

kids bail on one or two-year-old kit. One man's trash, hey?

SIZING

Size your skis or snowboard by height. They should be roughly chin to nose-height, with beginners usually doing better with shorter gear. Added length will give you that float in powder but if it's your first time the shorter length will make it easier to handle on the runs. Skiers also need poles but snowboarders generally don't. To size a pole hold it upside down and set the handle on the ground. With your hand

holding the pole under the basket your elbow should be at a 90 degree angle. Find 'em? Good. Get them in an obnoxious color.

Online shopping is a good alternative for those unable to find boots or planks in your size. Try Rakuten or Amazon for the same gear available in stores in larger sizes, but be aware that, much like shoes, the fit of snowboard and ski boots varies from one manufacturer to the next. Both ski and snowboard boots should be extremely snug,

but average snowboard boots have much more flex than ski boots and will be more comfortable to walk in.

Next, make sure your boots fit into your bindings. This is a pretty simple process for snowboards: some toe and heel overhang is OK, but too much and you should adjust. Ask a friend (or YouTube) for help. For skis, it's best to get them set up by a professional as a poorly setup ski binding can come loose too easily or not come free in a fall leaving you to torque your knees so



My other hobby, terrifying lift-riders as I come up to greet them.

FOR SKIS, IT'S BEST TO GET THEM SET UP BY A PROFESSIONAL AS A POORLY SETUP SKI BINDING CAN COME LOOSE TOO EASILY OR NOT COME FREE IN A FALL...

bad it'll look like you've been attacked by some sort of mountainous snow shark.

CLOTHES

The geeky gear I mentioned before will be dictated by your ability, weight, riding style, and lots of other factors, but your clothing is your chance to go hog-wild. Want to be the guy in the orange gorilla suit? Go for it. Blackout ninja more your style? Have at it! You

won't be alone in your wild gear. In addition, it's good to be recognizable on the slopes. You need a jacket and pants that are **waterproof** and definitely windproof with a few layers underneath. Warm days and traversing make vents in jackets amazing as you sweat, but when that frigid wind kicks up you'll be praising the Underarmor or Uniqlo HeatTech gods. Any clothing that meets these criteria will get you by, but the ski/snowboard-specific stuff knows just what you need and might be worth the investment eventually. If you'll be eating pow all day or battling mountaintop winds, a balaclava also comes in

handy. Warm and dry means comfortable, and that my friends is the name of the game. To that end chemical warmers (*kairo* in Japanese) are handy, gloves and goggles are crucial, and a helmet is smart. You're smart aren't you? Good. Wear a helmet. Start practicing.

STAYED TUNED FOR NEXT MONTH, WHERE WE WILL CONTINUE WITH ADVICE ON BEST PLACES TO GO TO HAVE A SNOW BLAST OF A TIME!



Rejecting Gravity



Personalize Your Kit

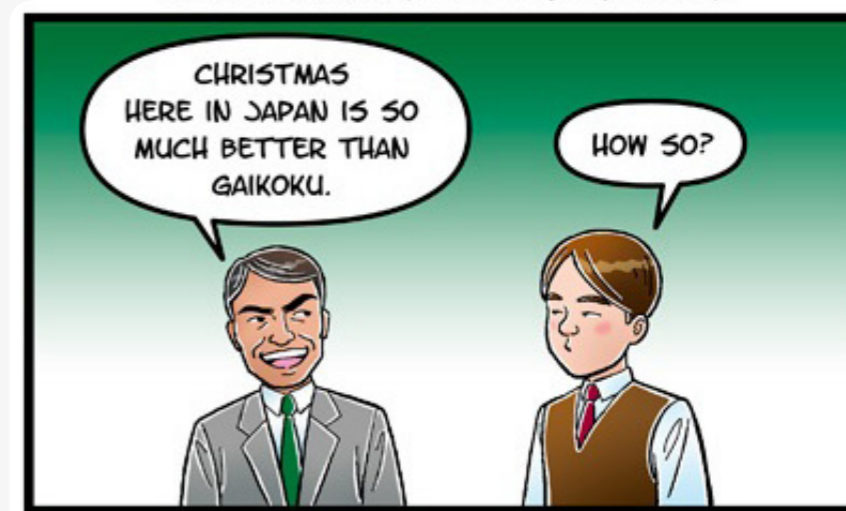


Snowshoeing extreme walking!

Mike DeLue is a third-year ALT based in Higashikagura-cho, Hokkaido, home to Japan's best ski resorts. Mike earned his first few turns in Honshu while occasionally attending classes at KGU between drunken Osaka shenanigans. After returning stateside and subsequently being beaten into submission by the icy slopes of Pennsylvania (USA) and a pair of alpine snowboarders with no fear and no sense of self-preservation, he has temporarily retreated to the powdery goodness that is Hokkaido. There he seeks to conquer the Daisetsuzan year round by foot, snowshoe, snowboard and motorcycle.

COMMENTS

COMICS



LIFE AFTER THE B.O.E. by David Namisato

David Namisato was a CIR in Ajigasawa Town, in Aomori Prefecture from 2002 to 2004.

David lives in Toronto, Canada and temps at the University of Toronto in various administrative, marketing, and web positions by day, and works as a comic book artist by night and on weekends.

David posts his latest works/projects/doodles on the following social networks:

[Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Tumblr](#) | [Google+](#)

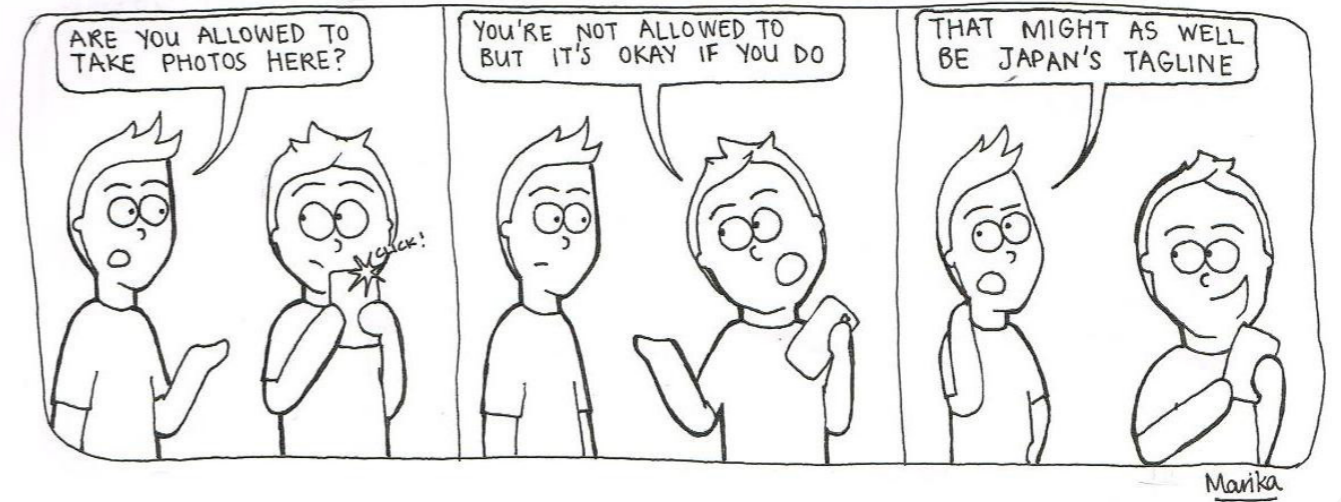
RANDOM ENCOUNTERS



TV ENGLISH

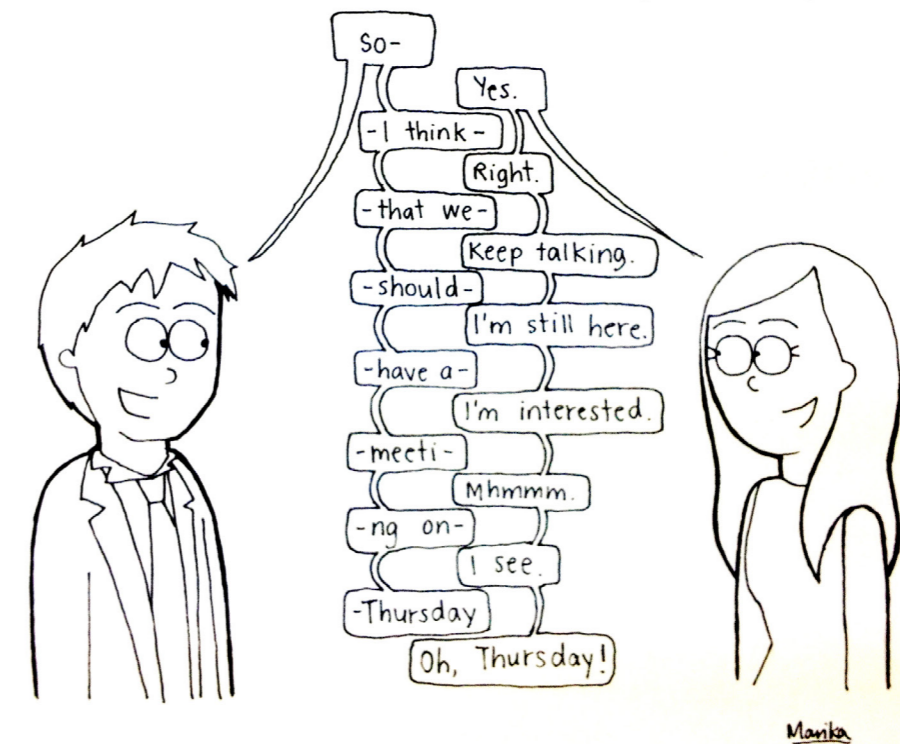


JAPAN LIFE



Aizuchi: [Japanese] frequent interjections during a conversation to show that the listener has not fallen asleep is paying attention

If 'aizuchi' were used in Western culture:



LET'S SPEAK ENGLISH by Mary Cagle

Mary Cagle is an ALT in Miyagi prefecture. When she's not teaching elementary school kids, she's probably drawing comics! Besides Let's Speak English, she also draws a weekly action adventure comic called Kiwi Blitz. You can read both for free at marycagle.com and kiwiblitz.com!

MARIKA'S COMICS

Marika participated in JET from August 2013 - 2014 in Akita Prefecture. Her comic hobby started there and now she is back in New Zealand, working at an International English school in Japanese student services. She enjoys drawing comics in her free time.

[Website](#) | [Twitter](#)

SPOTLIGHTS

SPOTLIGHT NOMINATION?

Know someone in the community doing something neat or noteworthy? Nominate them for next month's Spotlight at [connect.editor@ajet.net!](mailto:connect.editor@ajet.net)

COMMENTS

COMMENTS



TREVOR DARE (TOKYO)



WESLEY JULIAN (MIYAGI 2008-2010)

Meet Trevor Dare! He's originally from the UK and now lives in Tokyo, running 'Miss Tourism World East Asia' including Japan.

Miss Tourism World Japan works in partnership with Japan Tourism and seeks to promote Japanese culture, fashion and beauty and attract more visitors to Japan. It's part of a wider organisation called, Miss Tourism, which is an international pageant that aims to promote the tourism and culture of its contestants and their countries.

Miss Tourism owns Miss Great Britain which has run annually since 1945 and expanded to 60 countries in 2000. Japan became involved this year. The next upcoming show will be televised and held in Venezuela on December 10th 2014. Japan will be represented by Tomomi Kondo, a Presenter and a Prefecture Gold Medal Gymnast. Good luck Tomomi!

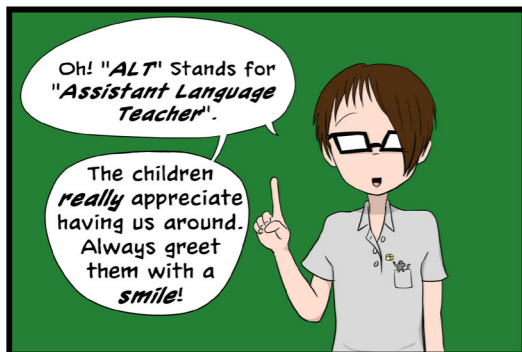
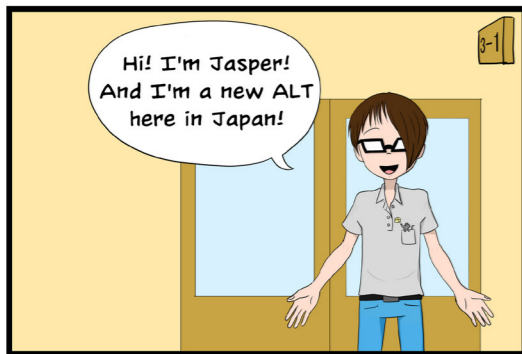
Trevor now organises and runs beauty pageants shows in Korea, Japan, Hong Kong and Macau. You can contact him at japan@misstourism.biz or on [Facebook](#).

Wesley moved to Osato, Miyagi Prefecture in 2008 where he worked as an ALT for two years. After forming strong personal and professional relationships in the Tohoku region, Wesley returned to America to attend graduate school and work as the Media Relations Coordinator at the Consulate General of Japan in Chicago.

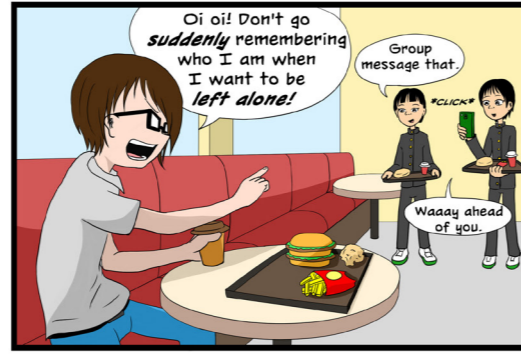
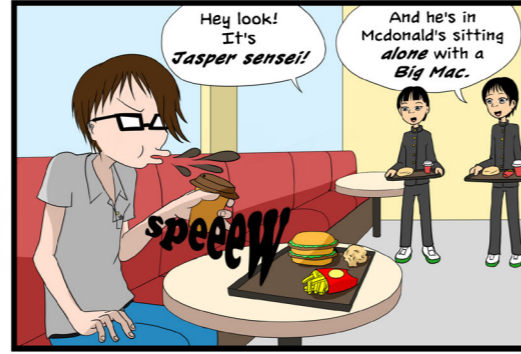
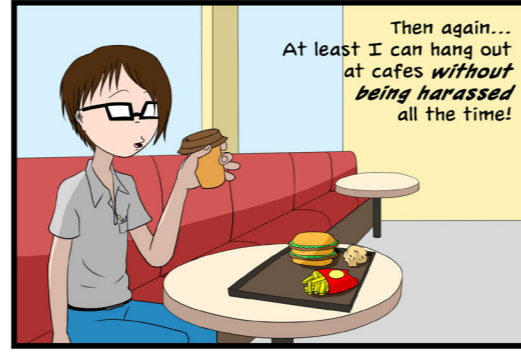
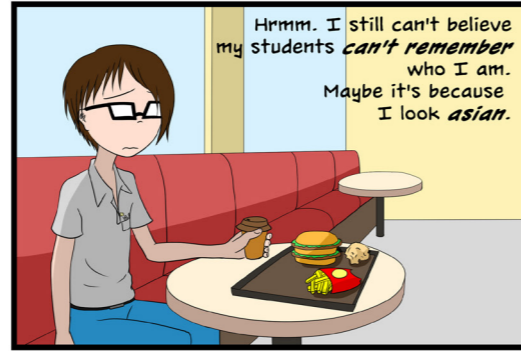
Then, on March 11th, 2011, the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami struck Tohoku. Considering Miyagi a second home, Wesley returned to Japan to volunteer in the aftermath of the disaster. After his time in Tohoku, Wesley raised money through the crowd-source funding website "Kickstarter" to make a documentary about the disaster and how the international community responded. Wesley's directed, edited, and produced "Tohoku Tomo" (Friends of Tohoku), which premiered in March of 2014.

Currently serving as the Executive Director of "Tohoku Tomo & The 113 Project", Wesley is screening his film in select locations over the next year. For more information about Wesley and his film, visit [Tohoku Tomo](#) and read the full interview with Wesley in the January issue of CONNECT Magazine!

Hello! How are you?



Alt Spotting



JET PEEVES by Chris Chong

Being a JET is easy, but making other people care about our experience is a challenge like no other. JET Peeves is an attempt to share my experiences as an ALT by highlighting every facepalm moment in my daily life.

[Website](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Tumblr](#) | [YouTube](#)

CONTRIBUTING TO CONNECT

Connect is a magazine for the community in Japan, by the community in Japan. Everyone is welcome to write, no matter your experience or style! If you have an idea you want to see in these pages, reach out to our Head Editor, or any of our awesome section editors. We'll work with you to make it the best it can be and share it with our audience of thousands. Not every article needs to be an essay! We feature interviews, infographics, top-ten lists, recipes, photo spreads, travelogues, and more.

Contact Head Editor Steven Thompson at connect.editor@ajet.net with your submissions, comments, and questions.

ARTICLES

Write about something you're doing. Write about something you love. Tell us a story.

SPOTLIGHT

Tell us about someone in your community who's doing something neat and noteworthy. Cooks, collectors, calligraphers—we want to hear about the inspiring people around you.

COMMENTS

Let us know what you think. Click the comment button at the end of any article, or interact with us on Facebook, Twitter, and issuu.com.

PHOTOS

All of Connect's photos are provided by the community, from the cover to the articles and everything in between. If you're an aspiring photographer and want your work published, send it to us at connect.editor@ajet.net.

HAIKU

Each month Connect will feature haiku from our readers. Haiku are simple, clean, and can be about anything you like! If you're an aspiring wordsmith with the soul of Basho, send all of your haiku along with your name and prefecture to contest@ajet.net.

COMICS

You asked for it, and now Connect features comics. Whether you're a desk doodler or a published artist, we want to see your panels and strips about life in Japan.



CONNECT WITH US

Interested in contributing to Connect? Want to stay up-to-date on interview opportunities, photo requests, and Connect announcements? Sign up to be a contributor at the [Connect Contributors Circle](#) online to receive updates from us, pitch your ideas, and discuss with the Connect staff and community.

You can also Like us on [Facebook](#), follow us on [Twitter](#), and interact with the magazine via CLIP at [ISSUU](#).