

# AJET CONNECT



News & Events, Arts & Culture, Lifestyle, Community

11.2014

ALT  
LIFE  
AT  
60

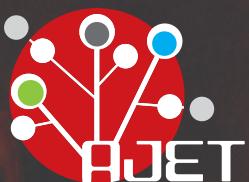
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FALL  
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The Japanese Lifestyle & Culture  
Magazine Written by the International  
Community in Japan

*Photo - Hannah Brown*

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Terry Patten  
Gabriela Romeu  
Denise Sawyer  
Anna Stiff  
Lourens van der Merwe  
Ellen Zhang

**COVER PHOTO**  
Hannah Brown

**ADDITIONAL PHOTOS**  
Alex Boake  
Hannah Brown  
John Burnett  
Josh Del Pino  
Orrin Heath  
Haruna Higuchi  
Tyson Janney  
Judith LaFaver  
Olivia Lee  
Taylor Maxey  
Larissa Milo-Dale  
Miki Nishioka  
stylenanda.com  
Joy Sung

## 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  
Vicki Clark

## COPYEDITING

Ola Weber

## CONTRIBUTORS

Steven Babkirk  
Dan Brooks  
Aubrey Brueckner,  
Kyle Cardine  
Stasia Cholewa  
Don Cortez  
Thomas Domingo  
Ellen Freeman  
Renata Janney  
Marie Johnson  
Sara Katsura  
Brittany Kennell  
Heng Kai Le  
Maia Lee  
J. Muzacz  
Wendy Ng

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*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 CHAIR

Sandy Cheng  
National AJET Chair  
4th-year Kobe ALT

### CLICK AROUND!

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

COMMENTS?

This month, you'll notice our team photos feature little bits of culture from Japan and our home countries around the world. November is the month of Japan's Culture Day, and culture is really what brought us all here in the first place. Experiencing Japan's culture, and sharing our own with those around us, is the best way to spread grassroots internationalization (which may be a term you've heard tossed around once or twice).

However, the longer we're here, the more we can grow accustomed to the environment we find ourselves in, and it can be easy to overlook the Japanese culture around us. Between the day-to-day of working, and forming friendships with other ex-pats, sometimes we miss out on the cool stuff this country has to offer.

This month, we invite you to read about some neat stuff happening around the country, and then get out and be a part of it. If you feel like you've seen it all, look for something new. Go off your usual path. Take a different way home. Talk to someone new and ask them what they're into. Try everything at least once. Cultural exchange is part of our job, and it's a good reason to be here. We take these things with us back home or wherever we go next.

And as always, if you have a great idea for a story, send it in to us here at Connect. See you next month!

# COVER SUBMISSIONS



*Send your photos for next month's cover to [connect.editor@ajet.net](mailto: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).*



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Shimane*



*Orrin Heath  
Kyoto*



*Olivia Lee  
Kumamoto*



*Judith LaFaver  
Osaka*



*Michelle Castro  
Shimane*

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# NEWS & EVENTS



ERIKA KLEIN

connect.news@ajet.net

This month, I avoided the recent large typhoon and Japan's encroaching cold weather by visiting Seoul for a week. With Japan's efforts to improve ties with Korea recently populating the news, it was fascinating to visit the Blue House (president's residence) and the DMZ and to observe Korean culture and attitudes towards foreign relations more directly. Take advantage of your time in Japan to travel and experience multiple cultural viewpoints!



LACEY LEE

connect.events@ajet.net

Hello dear readers! November is here. Luckily the season's last typhoon just missed my location, thankfully bringing cooler weather along with it. It's not only a great time to curl up with a book under several blankets and read, but also a great time to get outside and enjoy your surroundings. So get out there, attend some *momiji* viewings, and see some beloved Japanese illumination! And remember to drop me a line if you see anything spectacular.

## P.8 Events Calendar



## P.13 In the News



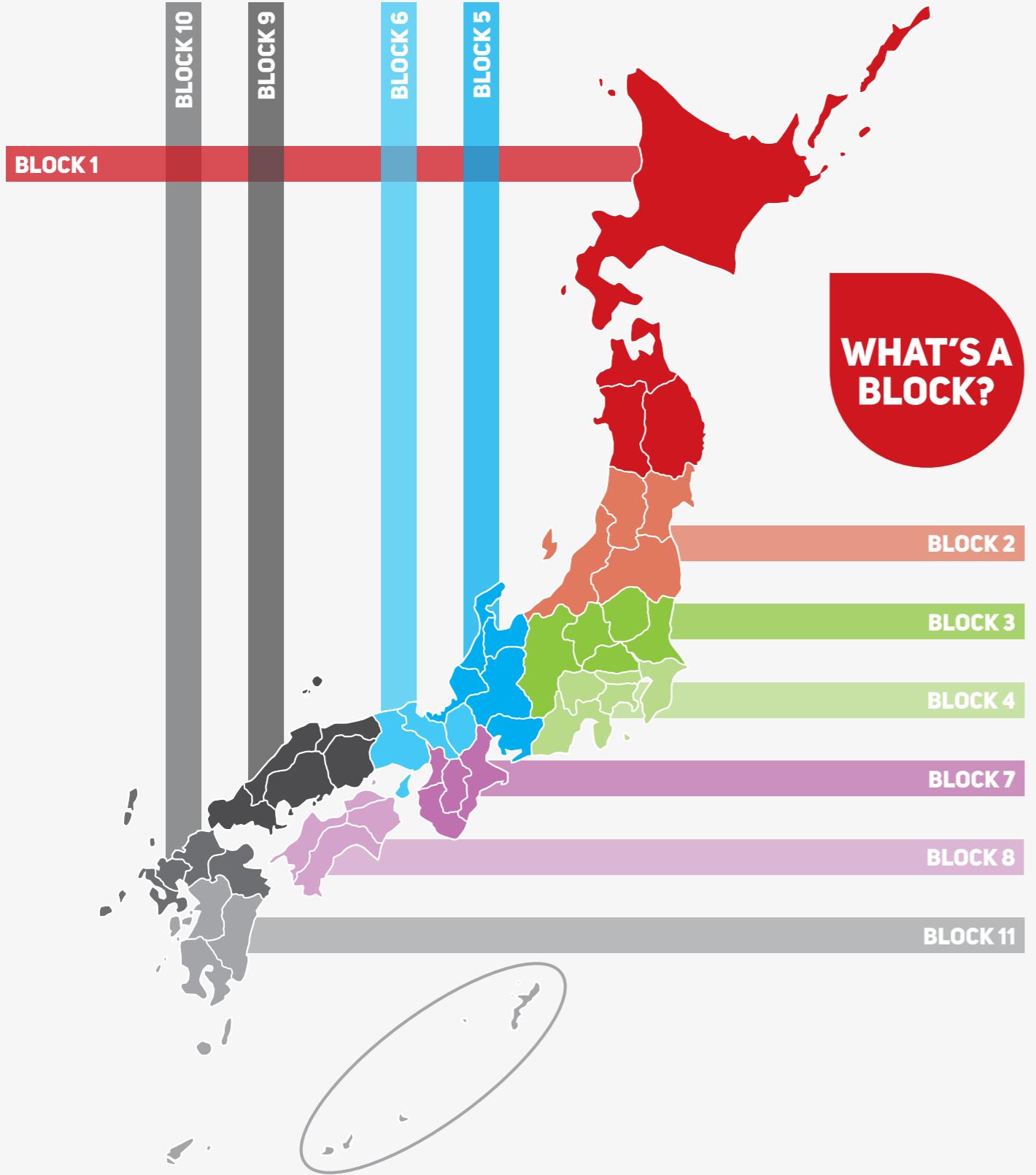
## P.15 Senkaku/Daiyou



## P.16 HAJET Snow Tour



# EVENTS CALENDAR NOVEMBER - DECEMBER



November's here and it's time for a few holidays and some sightseeing! There are many outdoor and indoor events to attend according to your preference. The autumn leaves are progressing and illumination events are beginning. Now's the time to step out into the season so don't hesitate! Then let us know about it once you're back at [connect.events@ajet.net](mailto:connect.events@ajet.net).

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



## WORLD OF 11 CATS - BABA NOBORU EXHIBITION

Hanamaki, Iwate  
9/6-11/24 - [Website](#)

## NEKO MAMIRE EXHIBITION

Yokote, Akita  
9/21-11/24 - [Website](#)

## ARTS TOWADA WINTER ILLUMINATION

Towada, Aomori  
12/4-25 - [Website](#)

## HIROSAKI ELECTRICAL FANTASY

Hirosaki, Aomori  
12/1-2/28 - [Website](#)

## 34TH SAPPORO WHITE ILLUMINATION

Sapporo, Sapporo  
Three locations: O'Dori -

11/21-12/25; Ekimae-Dori -  
11/21-2/11; Minami 1-Jo Dori -  
11/21-2/14 - [Website](#)

## GERMAN CHRISTMAS MARKET IN SAPPORO

Sapporo, Sapporo  
11/29-12/24 - [Website](#)

## OGA NAMAHAGE FESTIVAL

Oga, Akita  
12/31 - [Website](#)



## KASUGA SHRINE NINAME FESTIVAL

Tsuruoka, Yamagata  
11/23 - [Website](#)

## 2014 SENDAI PAGEANT OF STARLIGHT

Sendai, Miyagi  
12/12-31 - [Website](#)

## OSAKI SOBA FESTIVAL

Sado, Niigata  
11/24-25, 12/1-2 - [Website](#)

## SHIMADA CANDY FESTIVAL

Kurokawa-gun, Miyagi  
12/14 - [Website](#)

## ECHIGO MURAKAMI TRAILS OF SHIOBIKI DRIED SALMON

Murakami, Niigata  
12/1-20 - [Website](#)

## ICHINOTO BRIDGE CHRISTMAS LIGHT-UP

Kitakata, Fukushima  
11/22-23, 12/20-21  
[Website](#)

## HOROHADO NEW YEAR FESTIVAL

Yonezawa, Yamagata  
12/4 - [Website](#)



### ASHIKAGA FLORAL LIGHT GARDEN

Ashikaga, Tochigi  
10/25/2014-2/5/2015  
[Website](#)

### ILLUMINATION FESTIVAL

Maebashi, Gunma  
11/1/14-1/12/15 - [Website](#)

### TSUMAGO FEUDAL PROCESSION

Nagiso, Nagano  
11/23 - [Website](#)

### UNNOJUKU FUREAI FESTIVAL

Tomi, Nagano  
11/23 - [Website](#)

### NIKKO HIGHWAY MARATHON

Nikko, Tochigi  
11/29 - [Website](#) / [More Info](#)

### TOYAMA-GO SHIMOTSUKI FESTIVAL

Iida, Nagano  
12/1-23 - [Website](#)

### CHICHIBU YOMATSURI

Chichibu, Saitama  
12/2-3 - [Website](#) / [More Info](#)

### CULTURE FESTIVAL AT SUISOKUEN NO MORI

Niiza, Saitama  
mid-November - early December - [Website](#)

### ART AQUARIUM CASTLE

Nakagyo-ku, Kyoto  
10/24-12/14  
[Website](#) / [More Info](#)

### KOBE KITANO CHRISTMAS STREET

Kobe, Hyogo  
Early-late December (25th)  
[Website](#)

### TWINKLE JOYO

Joyo, Kyoto  
12/1-25 - [Website](#)

### KOBE LUMINAIRE 2014

Kobe, Hyogo  
12/4-15 - [Website](#)

### ARASHIYAMA HANATOURO

Arashiyama area, Kyoto  
12/8-17 - [Website](#)

### SHIMAI KOBO FLEA MARKET

Minami-ku, Kyoto  
12/21 - [Website](#)

### SHIMAI TENJIN FLEA MARKET

Kamigyo-ku, Kyoto  
12/25 - [Website](#)



### OKERAMAIRI FESTIVAL

Higashiyama-ku, Kyoto  
12/31 - [Website](#)

### WINE RESORT FESTA 2014

Hokuto, Yamanashi  
11/22-23 - [Website](#)

### WHISKY FESTIVAL 2014 TOKYO

Koutou-ku, Tokyo  
11/24 - [Website](#)

### SPAIN FESTIVAL 2014 (FIESTA DE ESPAÑA)

Shibuya-ku, Tokyo  
11/29-30 - [Website](#)

### ATTACK ON TITAN EXHIBITION

Taito-ku, Tokyo  
11/28/2014-1/25/15 - [Website](#)

### HITOTSUBASHI UNIVERSITY ORCHESTRA 62ND REGULAR CONCERT 2014

Toshima-ku, Tokyo  
12/5 - [Website](#)

### HELLO KITTY RUN

Akiruno, Tokyo  
12/7 - [Website](#)

### THE 94TH EMPEROR'S CUP FINAL 2014

Yokohama, Kanagawa  
12/13 - [Website](#)

### GISHI-SAI

Minato-ku, Tokyo  
12/14 - [Website](#)



### SETAGAYA BORO-ICHI MARKET

Setagaya, Tokyo  
12/15-16 - [Website](#)

### MUSEUM MYSTERY TOUR "MURDER OF THE BLUE"

Naruto, Tokushima  
10/4/14-3/1/2015 - [Website](#)

### AUTUMN LEAVES FESTIVAL AT MEIJI-NO-MORI MINO QUASI-NATIONAL PARK

MIInoh, Osaka  
11/1-30 - [Website](#) / [More Info](#)

### SHINNO SAI FESTIVAL OSAKA

Osaka, Osaka  
11/22-23 - [Website](#)



### YABUSAME FESTIVAL

Tado-machi, Mie  
11/23 - [Website](#)

### SHOKU-SAI (FOOD FESTIVAL) WAKAYAMA 2014

Wakayama, Wakayama  
11/24 - [Website](#)

### KASUGA WAKAMIYA ON-MATSURI

Kasugano-cho, Nara  
12/15-18 - [Website](#)

### CREEMA CRAFT PARTY! 2014

Suminoe-ku, Osaka  
12/20-21 - [Website](#)



### ETIQUETTE OF THE SAMURAI SCROLL EXHIBIT

Toyama, Toyama  
10/4-12/7 - [Website](#)

### GEISHA EXPERIENCE IN KANAZAWA

Kanazawa, Ishikawa  
6/14/14-3/28/15 - [Website](#)

### ONE PIECE MEMORIAL LOG EXTRA EDITION UTAGE IN LAGUNASIA

Gamagori, Aichi  
3/15/14-3/1/15 - [Website](#)

### TOYOHASHI KIRAKIRA ILLUMINATION

Toyohashi, Aichi  
11/16/2014-1/12/2015  
[Website](#)

### IKENOUE PURIFICATION CEREMONY FESTIVAL

Ikenoue, Gifu  
12/13 - [Website](#)

### DAIANZENJI TEMPLE NEW YEAR'S RINGING OF TEMPLE BELLS

Tanotani-machi, Fukui  
12/31 - [Website](#)

### 9TH KOCHI INTERNATIONAL TRIENNIAL EXHIBITION OF PRINTS

Ino, Kochi  
10/11-11/30 - [Website](#)

### MAPLE FESTIVAL IN UNEXPLORED IYA

Iya Valley, Tokushima  
mid-November - [Website](#)

### AGEBO HIGHWAY SUNFLOWER FESTIVAL 2014

Nankoku, Kochi  
11/22-12/7 - [Website](#)



### CASIO WORLD OPEN

Akigun Geiseimura, Kochi  
11/27-30 - [Website](#)

### SUSAKI X'MAS ILLUMINATION

Susaki, Kochi  
12/2/2014-1/3/2014  
[Website](#)

### KOCHI CASTLE WINTER FORTRESS MATSURI

Kochi, Kochi  
12/12-14 - [Website](#)



## MAWATTE MEGUTTE STAMP RALLY III 2014

Kurayoshi, Tottori  
5/1-12/31/2014 - [Website](#)

## HIDEYOSHI, KURODA KANBEI SEEING-WORLD OF UMAGADAKE CASTLE

Yukuhashi, Fukuoka  
1/10-12/14/14 - [Website](#)

## NAGASAKI ROMANTIC ILLUMINATION

Glover Garden and other various locations, Nagasaki  
10/10/2014-1/25/2015  
[Website](#)

## SAGA LIGHT FANTASY

Saga, Saga  
10/29/2014-1/12/2015 -  
[Website](#)



## NOBEOKA AYU YANA 2014

Nobeoka, Miyazaki  
10/1-12/7 - [Website](#)

## HIROSHIMA DREAMINATION (ILLUMINATION)

Hiroshima, Hiroshima  
11/17/2014-1/3/2015  
[Website](#)

## EBISU TAISAI FESTIVAL

Hiroshima, Hiroshima  
11/18-20 - [Website](#)

## AUTUMN LEAF ILLUMINATION AT SHUKKEIEN

Hiroshima, Hiroshima  
11/22-12/30 - [Website](#)

## MIYAJIMA CROSS COUNTRY

Miyajima, Hiroshima  
11/30 - [Website](#)

## FUKUOKA SUMO GRAND TOURNAMENT

Fukuoka, Fukuoka  
11/9-23 - [Website](#)

## PHILIPPE GENTY'S "FORGET ME NOT"

Kitakyushu, Fukuoka  
11/16 - [Website](#)

## FUKUOKA RAMEN SHOW 2014

Fukuoka Chuo-ku, Fukuoka  
11/19-27 - [Website](#)

## HAKATA LIGHT UP WALK 2014

Hakata-ku, Fukuoka  
11/20-24  
[Website](#) / [More Info](#)

## YOSHITAKA AMANO: THE WORLD BEYOND YOUR IMAGINATION

Chuo-ku, Kumamoto  
9/27-11/23 - [Website](#)

## DUNLOP PHOENIX TOURNAMENT 2014

Miyazaki, Miyazaki  
11/20-23 - [Website](#)

## SHINWA NO TAKACHIHO YOKAGURA MATSURI

Takachiho, Miyazaki  
11/22-23 - [Website](#)

## KAMIARI SAI (WELCOMING THE DEITIES OF ALL JAPAN)

Taisha-cho, Shimane  
12/1-8 - [Website](#)

## MOROTABUNE RITUAL IN MIHONOSEKI

Matsue, Shimane  
12/3 - [Website](#)

## OHITAKI FESTIVAL AT SAIJO-INARI TEMPLE

Okayama, Okayama  
12/13-14  
[Website](#) / [More Info](#)

## FUKUOKA SUMO GRAND TOURNAMENT

Fukuoka, Fukuoka  
11/9-23 - [Website](#)

## PHILIPPE GENTY'S "FORGET ME NOT"

Kitakyushu, Fukuoka  
11/16 - [Website](#)

## FUKUOKA RAMEN SHOW 2014

Fukuoka Chuo-ku, Fukuoka  
11/19-27 - [Website](#)

## HAKATA LIGHT UP WALK 2014

Hakata-ku, Fukuoka  
11/20-24  
[Website](#) / [More Info](#)

## LPGA TOUR CHAMPIONSHIP RICOH CUP

Miyazaki, Miyazaki  
11/27-30 - [Website](#)

## OKINAWA SAMBA CARNIVAL 2014

Okinawa, Okinawa  
11/29 - [Website](#)

## DISNEY ON CLASSICS 2014

Okinawa, Okinawa  
12/5-6 - [Website](#)

# IN THE NEWS

## SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER

### SEPTEMBER 11

Asahi Shimbun retracts flawed Fukushima report asserting that 650 workers fled the plant mid-disaster in defiance of orders; widely criticized for worsening the international view of the disaster ([Source](#))

### SEPTEMBER 19

PM Abe sends letter to Korean President Park proposing their first summit meeting, previously impeded by the two countries' tensions over issues including disputed islands and Japan's WWII treatment of Korean 'comfort women' ([Source](#))

### SEPTEMBER 20

Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) restaurant adds whale meat to the menu to "promote Japan's culinary culture." Additionally, Japan announces plans to resume whaling, in the face of the International Whaling Commission's September 18 resolution against Japan's "illegal" whaling ([Source](#))

### SEPTEMBER 29

North Korea invites Japanese officials to visit Pyongyang as the investigation into the Japanese abductees continues. However, relatives of abductees express a lack of support, doubting that the visit would secure new information or the abductees' return ([Source](#))

### OCTOBER 6

Hyogo passes Japan's first local law regulating the sale of "[i]dappo[i]" (loophole) drugs, narcotics that are chemically distinct from illegal drugs and which may have been responsible for DUI-related deaths ([Source](#))

### OCTOBER 7

Japan launches the weather satellite Himawari-8, intended to improve forecasts for natural disasters by taking higher-quality color images every 10 rather than 30 minutes ([Source](#))



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# THREE ISLANDS: A HISTORY OF THE SENKAKU/DIAOYU REGIONAL DISPUTE

GABRIELA ROMEU (OKINAWA)

The Sea of Japan and the East China Sea remain a hotbed of military activity due to territorial disputes between Japan and China. Both nations claim a small cluster of uninhabited islands, referred to as the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, which offer both rich fishing ground and potential oil and gas reserves (1). In the past, more pressing controversies, such as Japanese prime ministers' visits to Yasukuni Shrine and the Japanese history textbook controversy, obscured the territorial disputes, but recent events have sparked military maneuvers, heated rhetoric, and renewed protests from both sides. The history behind the island dispute is complicated, and supports both China and Japan's claims.

## DISPUTE TIMELINE

**1403**

The province of Taiwan allegedly administers the islands.

**1895**

After the First Sino-Japanese War, Qing Dynasty China cedes Taiwan to Meiji-era Japan. Japan shortly thereafter annexes the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands as part of Okinawa Prefecture. The Treaty of Shimonoseki is drafted and signed, but *only* mentions the cession of Taiwan, a portion of the Liaodong Peninsula and the Penghu Islands, and not the Senkaku/Diaoyu specifically. This gives the notion that the annexation of these islands was a move separate, yet coincidentally related to, the cession of Taiwan. (3).

**1951**

Following World War II and the Second Sino-Japanese War, the Treaty of San Francisco renounces all of Japan's treaty rights, which includes territorial rights derived from previous wars, starting with the Boxer Protocol of 1901. Due to continuing tensions following the 'end' of the Chinese Civil War less than a year prior, Mao Zedong brushes the matter aside and the Kuomintang leader, Chiang Kai-shek, remains silent in favor of the United States' support. Okinawa Prefecture and other islands associated with the Ryukyu Kingdom (including Senkaku/Diaoyu) are entrusted to the United States. China will later argue that the islands should have been returned at this time, despite not appearing in the Treaty of Shimonoseki (3).

**1969**

The United Nations identifies potential oil and natural gas reserves in the vicinity of the islands.

**1971**

The U.S. Senate passes the Okinawa revision treaty, returning the islands to Japanese control. China and Taiwan claim territorial rights, with the latter initiating dialogue directly with Japan despite Japan's agreement to a One-China policy.

## THE PRESENT

As a way of reestablishing sovereignty over the islands, China has sent military aircraft to patrol the sea and air around them, while encouraging fishing boats to congest the surrounding waters. This has caused the Japanese Self-Defense Forces to engage in nonlethal skirmishes in order to protect the islands. China also recently imposed an Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) that extends into the East China Sea and stated that all foreign aircraft, including those with no intention of entering China's airspace, require authorization to pass through. The Japanese airlines All Nippon Airways (ANA) and Japan Airlines (JAL) announced their refusal to submit flight plans for their flights through the affected areas. The United States also declared that it does not recognize the zone and will not answer authorization calls from China (4). However, in light of the recent events concerning the attack on Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17, there is comfort in knowing that the United States has offered to send Boeing V-22 Osprey aircrafts to mediate any international conflicts that may arise in the ADIZ, which extends over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands (5).

Although it seems easy to pick sides solely based on political preference, it's also important to understand that the debate over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands stems from generations of damaged cultural relations and the failure to repair such relations. It's not a fast or easy fix, but strong economic relationships hinder the prospects of all-out war.

**2012**

Right-wing Tokyo Governor Shintaro Ishihara proclaims that he will purchase the islands from their private Japanese owners. In order to protect the islands from Shintaro's assumed nationalistic agenda, the Japanese government quickly intervenes and purchases the three islands, thus nationalizing the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands and their surrounding waters as Japanese territory (2). The move causes massive public and diplomatic protests in China, claiming historical ownership of the islands.

*Gabriela Romeu is a second-year ALT in Ginoza-son, Okinawa. She is a self-described "beach bunny" who is working on her Miami tan in Japan. Follow her travel adventures on her blog and on Instagram here and here.*

(1) "Japan-China Relations: Current Situation of Senkaku Islands," Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, [source](#).

(2) "How the Uninhabited Islands Soured China-Japan Ties," BBC News, last modified October 1, 2014, [source](#).

(3) "Japan-China Relations: Current Situation of Senkaku Islands," Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, [source](#).

(4) John Kerry, "Statement on the East China Sea Defense Identification Zone," U.S. Department of State: Diplomacy in Action, last modified November 23, 2013, [source](#).

(5) "Okinawa Ospreys can be sent to islets claimed by China: U.S. general," Japan Times, last modified September 19, 2013, [source](#).

Photos - Brittany Kennell

# PHOTO FLASHBACK: THE HAJET SNOW TOUR

## THE 2015 HAJET SNOW TOUR

*Brittany Kennell, Hokkaido AJET Social Coordinator*

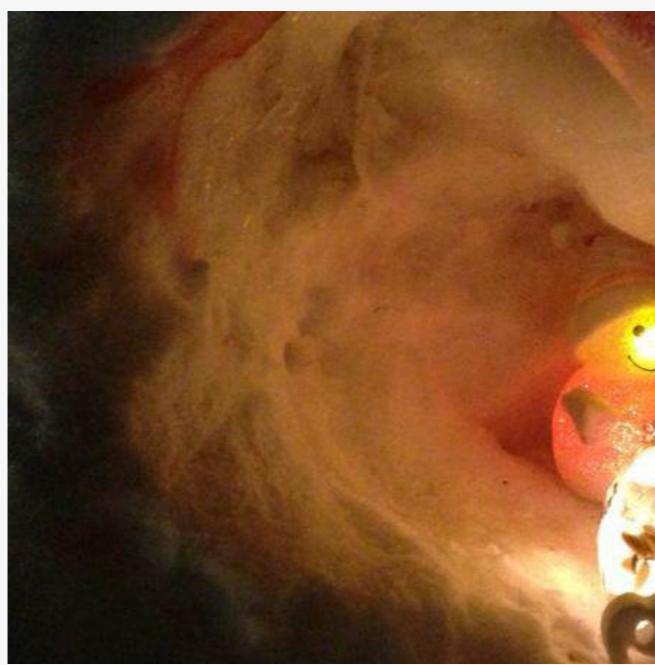
The Snow Tour is an annual event put on by the Hokkaido Association of JETs. Our goal is to encourage JETs from other prefectures to visit our piece of the island and see the best that it has to offer. And it *is* the best! This year's tour will coincide with the famous Sapporo Snow Festival. It will also include three days in Niseko, the world-class ski resort, and an optional tour of the picturesque port town of Otaru.

As part of the tour, we cover the basics: hotel, transportation, and some meals. Everything else is up to you, and we're here to help! Want to rent skis but aren't sure how to arrange it? Need to find vegetarian options during your stay? As Social Coordinator it will be my job to make your trip as rewarding as possible. I will also be working with other HAJET members to offer locals' tours of the area and provide great recommendations. And if you should happen to forget something, I promise to mail it back to you!

This is a wonderful opportunity to meet people from other prefectures and form bonds all across Japan. We JETs are a diverse, interesting bunch with several big things in common. Why not make the most of it? If this sounds like something you'd enjoy, please email me at [social.coordinator@hajet.org](mailto:social.coordinator@hajet.org). I can provide a full itinerary plan and also a detailed breakdown of the cost. This tour tends to fill up fast, so if you have interest please do act quickly. We look forward to seeing you up North!



A CHILL IS IN THE AIR...  
WINTER IS COMING!  
DO YOU HAVE PLANS YET?



The 2015 HAJET Snow Tour will run from Saturday, February 7th to Wednesday, February 11th. The cost will be 40,000 yen per person, to be paid in two installments. There are currently 25 spots available.

For more information about this event, check out our recap of last year's iteration in the [March 2014 issue](#).

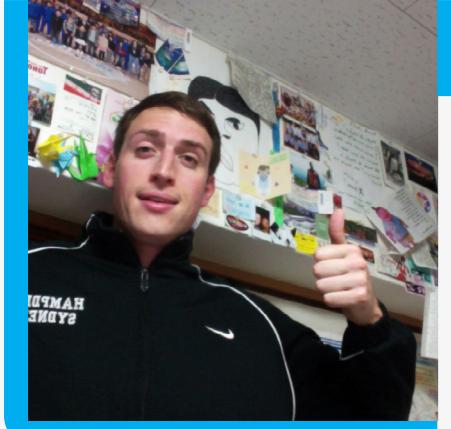
# THIS MONTH IN... ARTS & CULTURE



VERITY TOWNSEND

connect.culture@ajet.net

November is here and it's getting chilly- it's time to huddle under the kotatsu and eat some nabe. Try not to let the darker nights and colder days get you down. Remember the old Japanese proverb: 'One kind word can warm three winter months'- a good old chat with your co-workers, students or neighbours can bring some cheer into the cold winter!



COLIN O'NEILL

connect.entertainment@ajet.net

Welcome to the legendary WALL OF FAME! Looking for a way to commemorate your new cultural experiences while maintaining your connections back home? Start with devoting one section of your apartment to keeping memorabilia, and expand the area as your collection grows. Whether it's pictures, ticket stubs, notes, or personalized jerseys that say 'FALCON THRUST', pinning up your own 'wall of fame' can be a much-needed positive nostalgic trip as the cold winter months approach. Stay up homies!



ERICA GRAINGER

connect.fashion@ajet.net

How does one prepare for the mindboggling spectacle of Mercedes-Benz Tokyo Fashion Week? You can't! Patrick Finn and I were up close and personal, and lucky enough to rub shoulders with the incredibly stylish and elite! We felt like we were in a fashionable movie, 'Pret-a-Porter', anyone? Miuccia Prada believes "Fashion is instant language" and it was well communicated during fashion week. A truly hypnotic experience!



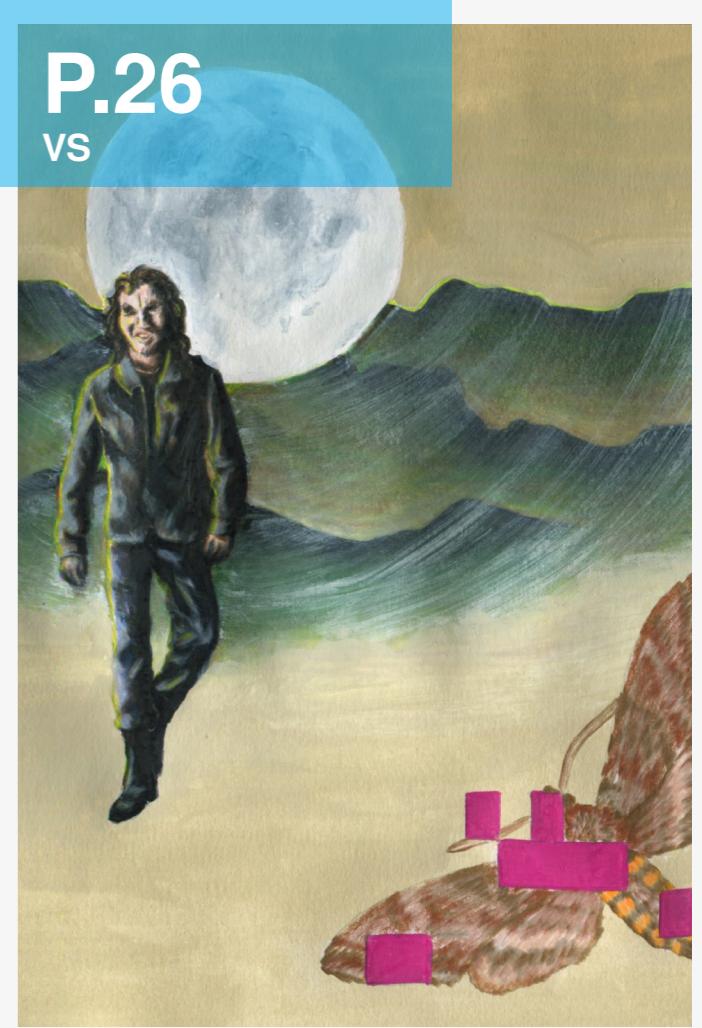
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Height of Fashion



P.21  
Autumn Fashion



P.24  
No Strings Attached



P.26  
VS

# THE HEIGHT OF FASHION

RENATA JANNEY (FUKUSHIMA)

**IF YOU'RE TALL IN JAPAN,** you'll be noticed. At 178cm, I get many stares from both students and strangers. I've had awkward photos, where I completely block the poor women behind me. In my first few months here, I found myself slouching because I thought I'd integrate better, but it made me feel unattractive. The one place which highlights my height the most is a clothing store.



Janney is as tall as a door!

Big and Tall stores seem ideal, however, often the shirts are wide and too short,

## RECOMMENDED STORES

Men and Women:

- [Isetan](#)
- [Aoki](#)
- [Cecile](#) Plus Sizes / Kids
- [Ito Yokado](#) Plus Sizes
- [Comme ca](#) Kids

Women:

- [Nissen](#) Tall Sizes
- [Rope](#)
- [LL Queen](#) Plus Sizes
- [Chayclub](#) Plus Sizes
- [Shimamura](#) Plus Sizes

button-downs pucker around my hips and chest, and skirts or pants are too tight around my hips. So, how does one find anything to wear? Try online!

### MODCLOTH

Since coming to Japan, I've bought most of my clothing online. My favorite online site is Modcloth, which has lots of cute clothes, especially for a casual workplace. They come in a variety of sizes, and they ship internationally. I mostly rely on my loving mother, who will pack my clothes and ship them with her care packages. You can also use a repacking service such as [PacMe](#) or [Madi's Remailing](#).

### UNIQLO

In honesty, the only Japanese brand I've used is UniQlo, which is wonderful. I lived in their Heat-Tec shirts last winter, and in their Airism shirts in July. The clothing measurements are easy and they're affordable. I like the base shirts because I can wear them with my various skirts.

### EMBRACE YOUR HEIGHT!

My best advice for being tall in Japan is, embrace it! There are heaps of advantages to being tall in Japan. For instance, seeing over crowds in Shinjuku Station! I also

Knitwear's Back!

Photos - [jp.stylenanda.com](http://jp.stylenanda.com)

# FALL INTO AUTUMN FASHION

STASIA CHOLEWA (TOKYO)

If you can find oden in a convenience store in your neighbourhood, it's high time to put your favourite high-waist shorts and cropped tops in the closet. This summer in Japan was rather moody, we had to survive the heat that seemed to emanate down from the sky, while experiencing 15-degree temperature drops the following day that might just have caused a wave of summer colds. Finally it's the season of our favourite over-sized sweaters, beanie hats, slouchy socks and heavy boots—hipster paradise! Add a mandatory seasonal pumpkin Starbucks coffee to it and you'll get the quintessence of Autumn Fashion.



Back to School

SHOP



Sleek Leather

SHOP

## SCHOOL GIRL STYLE

It's time to head back to school, literally and figuratively. Autumn collections invariably refer to the good old schoolgirl style and autumn of 2014 is no different! Don't forget about a mandatory checkered skirt and a collared shirt. There should be no problem completing your perfect high-school inspired look. We're in Japan after all.

## AUTUMN'S ESSENTIALS

What are this Autumn's essentials every fashionista should have in their wardrobe? It's true that trends come back, no doubt about it. However, this year we have a real fashion nostalgia trip for all you 90's kids! I bet you still have that red-checkered shirt you used to wear as a rebellious 14-year old. Where are those heavy black boots that bring back memories, of all those old Nirvana posters you used to have in your room? Still got those ripped jeans? It's time you gave them a second life, and sported that grunge look combined with effortless elegance and a rebellious tomboy's charm.

Shop for key pieces online by clicking [here](#)!

**AMERICAN COLLEGE  
STYLE**

American college style is back! Designs based on stripes, checkers and team emblems are totally in right now. And let's not forget about the absolute must-haves of this season: leather backpacks, straight cut coats, warm turtlenecks combined with short circle skirts and heavy boots. Time to rock that seemingly sloppy and mismatched, but oh so comfortable style!

**SHOP***A Stylish Stroll***SHOP***American College Style***BOOTS AND SHOES  
GALORE!**

As the days get colder, flip-flops and sandals have to be put aside. If you like to keep up with the newest fashion trends, you'll know that heavy boots with massive soles are a strong trend this autumn. Though bold, they will look great with both dresses and skinny jeans. Men's fashion inspired shoes are back! Moccasins, oxford shoes, Jodhpur boots. Be sure to have at least one pair of this dandy style goodness!

**SHOP***Try T-collared Shoes***ACCESSORISE,  
ACCESSORISE!**

A warm hat worn on cold days is no longer a chore, and yet another item that can't be missing from your wardrobe this season. Classic black hats and berets for a more elegant touch and beanie hats for those who prefer a more sporty style. Besides, you can never go wrong with a beanie hat. If you're a fan of large, voluminous bags, I've got bad news for you, you'd better leave it at home. Replace them with a simple clutch, which will give your grunge outfit a girly touch. If you always carry around a lot of items, like myself, pack them all into a simple backpack or an always-fashionable eco-bag.

**SHOP***Casual Tomboy Hat***SHOP***1960s Retro Glasses***FINALLY...**

Autumn 2014 abounds in designs we could describe as simple, but stylish, boyish and cute. Luckily this year, the biggest fashion houses got their inspirations from what took over catwalks a few years back. So, we won't need to break the bank to show off some cool coordinated outfits (thank you designers!). After all, staying warm and comfortable is what really matters when it comes to completing your ultimate autumn OOTD.

*Stasia Cholewa is a Polish fashionista, who currently teaches English in Japan. She loves funky restaurants, traveling, exploring Shitamachi Tokyo and documenting her wild adventures on her blog [here](#).*

# NO STRINGS ATTACHED

## THE WORLD OF BUNRAKU

KYLE CARDINE (HYOGO)

**I FIRST SAW BUNRAKU IN A** rather unexpected place—St. Louis, Missouri. While it seemed strange that this traditional Japanese theater form would be performed in Midwestern America, what I was treated to was not just a simple act of song and dance. The troupe started with the ceremonial *sanbasō*, where the three-person operated puppet spreads ‘seeds’ of good luck with a hand bell. This blessing is done to ensure a good performance with the puppet ultimately travelling through the audience to spread the good fortune amongst them as well. Although it has these ritualized aspects, bunraku is not stiff; many times the puppet would stop to fan itself as if it were tired, and

also made audience members stand up and dance with him. After this opening set, the troupe performed its own versions of some of the most famous bunraku plays. The group was led by my Japanese professor, who ran the very first American bunraku troupe, and who would introduce me to the world of Japanese puppetry.

Bunraku can be traced back more than 400 years. Even though other forms of puppetry existed prior to that, bunraku as it is presently known started in 17th century Osaka. Chikamatsu Monzaemon, Japan’s Shakespeare, is most often cited as the great playwright of the form. He is credited with more than 100 plays that popularized bunraku into what it is today.

His stories of love suicides, ancient warriors and long dead lords are the focus of many of the plays, although the subject can vary widely.

Bunraku, much like its cousin kabuki, is a very busy type of theater; three operators move the puppet to make it seem as human as possible. The main operator controls the head and right hand, with one assistant controlling the left hand and the other controlling the



University of Missouri Students Operating a Puppet

suspended by ropes from the ceiling) flies out over the audience into “heaven.”

Although the amount of bunraku troupes has declined since the end of World War II, bunraku has still found a way to survive in the modern day. In 2003, the art was designated by UNESCO as a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity, and it really is. As you watch a bunraku performance, the operators seem to slowly disappear and the *Tayu*’s voice appears to be coming right out of the characters’ mouths. The overall effect is as though puppets are performing themselves; exactly the way it should be.

*Kyle Cardine is a second-year ALT eating a copious amount of onions on Awaji Island, located in Hyogo Prefecture. Don't Google his name, because otherwise you're going to find his hat in the mountain that is JET blogs at [kinkairu.com](http://kinkairu.com) or come across his Twitter account at @kinkairu. But, hey, I'm sure he'll be happy if you follow him.*



Puppet at Imada Puppet Troupe



Imada Puppet Troupe's Theatre



Tayu & Shimisen Players, Iida  
Photos - Kyle Cardine

### SEE A PERFORMANCE

While the national theater in Osaka holds some of the most grand performances, it would be short sighted not to mention other places in Japan where bunraku thrives. Awaji Island, which is where I reside, was one of the first harbingers of the bunraku form. The Awaji Ningyo Joruri troupe located in Fukura at the southern tip of the island holds performances every month, with the subject of the plays always changing. Every performance ends with their trademark “sliding door” act, where doors with elaborate paintings and moving parts create an extensive hallway. The city of Iida, located in Nagano prefecture, also holds the “Iida Puppet Festa” every August and hosts puppet troupes from all over the country. However, not only bunraku is featured at the festival, with string puppets, Chinese acrobats and modern dance groups also lining the streets.

How can we connect the most popular post-apocalyptic epic with a fantasy novel about sex, love, and religion?

## BACKGROUND

On one hand, King spent his life modeling his writing after laureates like Richard Matheson and Ray Bradbury. On the other, Murakami stumbled upon philosophical fiction as a twenty-something, in the footsteps of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky. While King and his characters embody 'The Hemingway Defense', Murakami is a Kafkaphile with obsessiveness of Franz that would even make Eminem's character 'Stan' say, "Relax, bro." Stephen King utilizes fear and thrills to pace his stories, and Haruki Murakami uses sex to pique the reader's interest. So how the hell are these two novels related?



Eminem - "Stan"

## SUMMARY

*The Stand* (1978) is set in 1980's America. After someone accidentally contracts and spreads a man-made virus being developed as a potential military weapon, 99% of the population is killed. A series of characters approach rebuilding society and divide into two separate groups. 'The Free Zone' members struggle to recreate democracy while the other



group lives in fear of their sinister, totalitarian leader.

Originally written in Japanese, *1Q84* (2009) calls upon the Japanese word for '9', *kyuu*, to reference Orwell's classic novel, *1984*. Set in Tokyo, *1Q84* follows the separate lives of Tengo, a quiet teacher, and Aomame, a volatile criminal. After rewriting a student's story for a publication, Tengo unknowingly involves himself with a cult-like religious group called 'Sakigake'. Tengo and Aomame's paths intersect as Sakigake looks to eliminate those who threaten the preservation of their beliefs.

## CHARACTERS

Stephen King and Haruki Murakami favor character-based stories rather than focusing on overwhelming circumstances and intricate plotlines. *The Stand* and *1Q84* are first-person narratives that follow experiences

from the perspective of one character in the first chapter, and quickly shift focus onto a new character's point of view in the next.

Furthermore, these authors are deeply reflected in the characters they create. King bases his heroes on flawed personalities that mirror his own pain and suffering. A recovering drug addict and alcoholic, King is personified in the character Larry Underwood in *The Stand*—an acutely self-aware individual trying to bury dark, negative parts of himself.

Murakami's main characters are independent, yet, overtly passive men. In *1Q84*, Tengo is only comfortable in the confines of his simple life, and is utterly unprepared for the story's extraordinary predicament. Murakami must perceive this natural tendency in himself and tries extremely hard to avoid such a monotonous existence. An ultra-marathon enthusiast

who dedicates everyday to 6 hours of writing and 3 hours of exercise, Murakami is, quite literally, running away from Tengo's flawed traits that he sees in himself.

## RELIGION

The overarching theme of religion is the strongest connection shared by *The Stand* and *1Q84*. The books consider that the kind of destruction coming from parochial decision-making is a function of our instinctive desire to form polarizing groups. They discuss the juxtaposition of human nature and theology: the desires to feel in control of your own destiny while wanting explanations for things you don't understand.

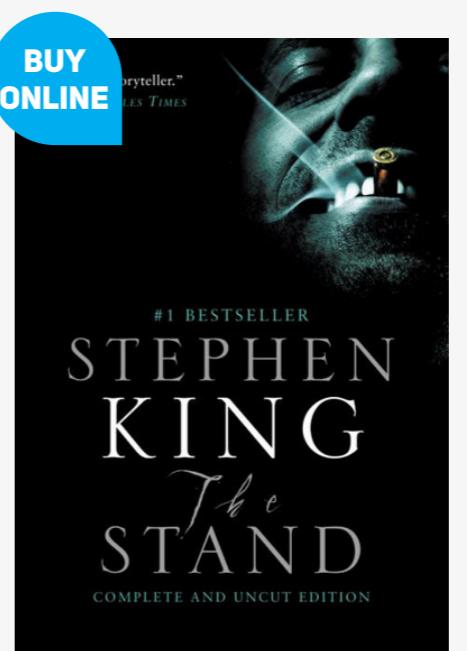
Considering the two-party democracy in America, many policies and representative stances are taken based on religious principle. *The Stand* is representative of this scenario, as all of the

characters must choose a religious side when they make their 'stand'.

Symbolic of the consensus-based society that values collective agreement in Japan, *1Q84* asks if religious belief clouds judgment and decision-making. While 'Ingsoc' is the omnipotent government force that controls information in '1984', the religious group Sakigake channels the same type of psychological manipulation using faith in *1Q84*.

## CONCLUSIONS

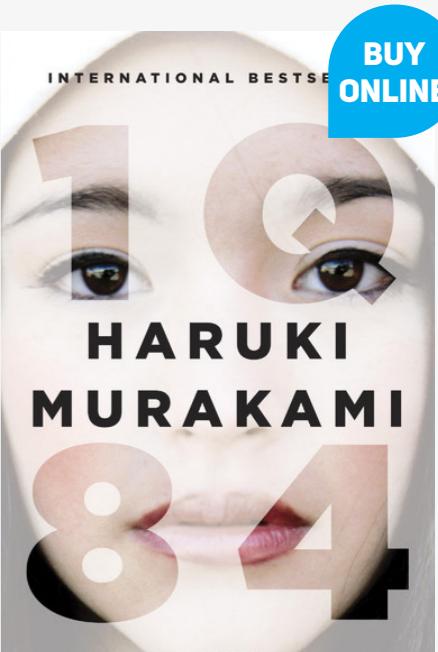
King and Murakami have the same philosophy on writing: the narrative material and characters are in control of the author. Stephen King's memoir, 'On Writing', helps us understand this approach. In *The Stand* and *1Q84*, character personalities, actions, and reactions play out without a predetermined blueprint.



A small, but concrete connection between King and Murakami is Chekhov's principle. King discussed

the importance of honoring 'Chekhov's principle' in his semi-autobiographical book *On Writing* as a way to avoid 'deus ex machina'. In *1Q84*, Murakami directly references Chekhov when Aomame, worried by the looming threat from Sakigake, buys a gun. Before her purchase, she is explicitly warned of Chekhov, being told that once the gun is introduced to her personal life's story, it must be used.

While this connection is agreed on as a motif to avoid, it's often argued that these novels themselves employ 'deus ex machina' and defy 'Chekhov's principle'. Many insist that after a combined 2,000 pages, *The Stand* and *1Q84* still end with too many unanswered questions. Certainly the expanded length of a self-proclaimed 'epic' isn't correlated to the increasing value of the story being told. Yet, as insightful and thought provoking narratives, *The Stand* and *1Q84* undeniably succeed as tales worthy of more praise than criticism and more reverence than contempt.



# THIS MONTH IN... LIFESTYLE



NICK POWERS-MAHER

connect.food@ajet.net

Pardon me, I just sneezed on another student because I get sick every autumn. I'm still grabbing all the fall foods I can find in the stores and hoping I don't end up stuck in bed as a result. I'm also daydreaming of all the pastries I should be baking. I can't manage a real American pumpkin pie, and I can't find pumpkin spices to save my life, but I wonder if I can make cookies out of Japanese sweet potatoes...and through all of this, I'm eagerly awaiting the greatest of feasts: American Thanksgiving!



TOM LEGGE

connect.travel@ajet.net

October and November are months with lots of long weekends which are a wonderful opportunity to experience the chronic shortage of Japanese hotels firsthand. Very frustrating, but who doesn't like a good challenge? I've also been looking at other frequent flyer programmes, status matches and mileage runs for 2015. 4 days in Tashkent anyone?!



SIMON GRIFFIN

connect.travel@ajet.net

November is a great month in Japan! The trees look beautiful, there are a couple of long weekends and Christmas is just peeking onto the horizon. This month I snapped up some cheap flights, and have four days in Hong Kong planned. There's nothing better than a mid-term break to unwind and recharge, and I'm currently spending most of my free time planning how to get the most out of my holiday.



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Ask Sempai



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Blogroll



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Greek Yogurt



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Exploring Harajuku



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How-To



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Travel Shorts



# ASK SEMPAI: HOW DO I TAKE CARE OF MY KITCHEN?

Put dish soap directly onto a sponge, then squeegee-squeegee until it foams up before you start scrubbing the dishes.

Nick Powers, Kagawa, 2nd year

Baking soda and acrylic dish-washing cloths (effortlessly cleans away grease built up, soap scum, and water mark without any extra detergent.) Baking soda works like a wonder when you need to clean a burnt pot.

Maia Lee

For a non-toxic grease-remover/all purpose cleaner...100 yen sake in a spray bottle.

Steven Babkirk

Always use disposable nets for the little nama-gomi sink trash can. Makes daily cleanup so much easier.

Aubrey Brueckner, Wakayama, 1st year CIR

Daiso scrub brushes changed my life! Minimize the amount of time you spend hunched over that low sink.

Thomas Domingo, Hokkaido

Photos - Alex Boake, Joy Sung, Miki Nishioka, & Nick Powers

# FOOD BLOGROLL OCTOBER 2014

COMMENTS?

## ALEX BOAKE ILLUSTRATION

Alex Boake, Miyazaki, 1st year



In case looking at photos of food wasn't enough, Alex does her own illustrations, too! Originally from Toronto, she's an illustrator and comic artist, and an inspirational food photographer. Her blog focuses on gluten-free, with some paleo pieces, but most importantly, she cooks up some delicious meat. If you need some iron, take a look at her recipe for [Roasted Rump Caps](#), and if you like her illustrations enough to wear them, you can. Purchase them from Scapegoated on [TeePublic](#).



## THE KITCHEN KLUTZ BLOG

Nick Powers, Kagawa, 2nd year



Shawn, an active member of VegJET and vegan himself, curates a hefty encyclopedia of vegan food porn around the country. Track his photos for "vegan treats and vegan seats" in Japan. Last month featured alternative diets heavily, but I just couldn't overlook Shawn's photography. Beware, though, you'll drool on your phone looking at the photos.



## @VEGANJAPAN

Shawn De Silva, former Ibaraki JET, 2006-2008



This month, I'd like to introduce my new blog, fresh off the press, in addition to two more food pornographers to make you swoon.

Have a blog or Instagram of your own? I'd like to feature you in the monthly Blogroll! Email me at [connect.food@ajet.net](mailto:connect.food@ajet.net).

# MASTER OF GREEK YOGURT

MARIE JOHNSON (NAGASAKI)

**WHEN I WALK INTO MY LOCAL**  
market I am bothered at times by how limited ingredients are. My local Japanese market seems to stock for one style of cooking: Japanese.

Don't get me wrong. I love Japanese food. I enjoy making fish, or the occasional curry and rice dish. But I also miss food items in the markets at home. I especially miss 'Greek' yogurt. The yogurt here is too thin. The fruit I put in it just sinks to the bottom, and good luck trying to eat it with a spoon.



Unfortunately, making yogurt isn't easy. You need live cultures, a lot of milk, time, and patience. It takes about 4 ounces of milk to make only one ounce of strained yogurt, plus four or five hours for preparation. After struggling with making the yogurt myself, I decided it might be more efficient to buy yogurt from the store, and then strain *that*.

Greek yogurt is yogurt that has had all the whey drained out of it. Whey is the liquid left over when milk curdles. Usually it's mixed in with the yogurt and you can't see



Here are some differences between regular and strained yogurts:

## TEXTURE

Greek yogurt is thicker due to a lack of whey.

## FLAVOR

The whey in yogurt contains sodium and sugar (lactose) so regular yogurt is saltier and sweeter than Greek yogurt.

## NUTRITIONAL

Both have probiotics that aid

digestion, and reduce risk of intestinal infections and colon cancer. Because Greek yogurt is condensed, it has more protein, fewer carbohydrates, less sodium, and about the same number of calories. It also has less calcium than unstrained yogurt. ([source](#))

When the yogurt is done, it should equal about half of what you put in, and it will come out of the strainer in a big clump. Pour in some milk and mix with a spatula or an eggbeater. Add some vanilla

flavoring, or if you want it sweet you can add honey or sugar. Greek yogurt is great for cooking, as an alternative to sour cream, or for adding moisture to pastries. Have fun making your Greek yogurt, and make sure to tell your friends and neighbors about this wonderful process.



## GREEK YOGURT RECIPE

1. Gather supplies: plain yogurt (42 ounces, or 1.5 quarts); very fine mesh, a strainer, coffee filter, or a paper towel; pasta strainer; a bowl or measuring cup to catch the liquid.
2. Make sure your strainer and bowl give plenty of room to drain, and that they will fit in your refrigerator.
3. Put the filter into the pasta strainer.
4. Place, do not pour, the yogurt in the filter.
5. Cover the top with plastic wrap and leave in the refrigerator for 1–8 hours, or overnight. 1 hour removes 20% whey; 3–4 hours drains half; 8 hours or more drains almost all, bringing the consistency, but not the taste, close to sour cream.
6. Now that the yogurt and whey have been separated, you're probably left with quite a bit of whey. Don't throw it out! The liquid left over can be stored.

You can use this as a substitute for buttermilk, to flavor pasta or rice, or as a substitute for milk. You can make lemonade with it, using this [recipe](#). You can also use it as a hair treatment. If your hair isn't very dirty, put it in for about 15 minutes and then rinse it out. Use it as a spray to add texture to fine, limp hair. Or just add a little white vinegar and use it as a conditioner.

# EXPLORING HARAJUKU

## A COUNTRY-.MOUSE IN TAKESHITA

DAN BROOKS (YAMAGATA)

### FOR THOSE OF US WHO LIVE

in decidedly more rural prefectures (not naming any names...Yamagata), “exploring” means camping at a far-off scenic location or driving for hours to find out if rumours of a bagel café in the next town are true. It’s an enjoyable, albeit slow process, perfectly in step with the atmosphere of life outside the big cities. In contrast, Tokyo and in particular Harajuku is filled with so much activity, so many nooks and crannies, so many buildings stacked together, that you have to go out of your way NOT to find things.

### GO FOR A WANDER; WHO KNOWS WHAT YOU’LL FIND!?

Most people know Harajuku as a centre of fashion, and Takeshita Street is positively packed with trendy clothes shops catering to particular styles, such as lolita, decora, and goth. Of course there are other places selling more questionable fashion choices, some coming with the trademark non-sequitur English prints, ‘I love Starshine’ or ‘Boogie/Make me crazy/Stupidly’. The last

All the Colours of the Rainbow  
Photos - Nick Powers & Dan Brooks

time I was there, I got so caught up in the quirky swing that I caved and purchased a pair of interestingly low-crotch shorts with black and yellow squares on the left leg and black and blue on the right. Maybe not the wisest 3,000 yen purchase ever, but I blended right in after that.

The wonderful weirdness of Harajuku extends well beyond Takeshita Street and into the backstreets and side alleys. In one short walk you can find an independent artsy café, a hair salon and a dermatologist all jostling for space. When my friends and I went to check it out, we happened upon a café called ‘Ra.agf: Rabbit and grow fat’, so called because unlike Japan’s many cat cafes, this place decided to buck the trend (obscure pun intended) by having rabbits be the stars of the show. To our surprise we found the place was so popular that you needed to book in advance, so we decided to wander around Harajuku a little more to kill time before our session. Wandering which lasted about ten seconds until we came across a fully authentic (looking) Moroccan bar/accessories shop offering reasonably priced mojitos you could enjoy in the sunshine-bathed patio.

T-shirt from Harajuku

Only in Harajuku would you have such a bafflingly wide variety of small businesses in the same area. If you ever get the opportunity, definitely go for a wander, who knows what you’ll find!?

*Dan Brooks is a Second Year CIR in Yamagata Prefecture. When he's not playing with rabbits in obscurely-themed cafés, you can find him neck-deep in Yamagata's amazing onsen, playing 'invisible curling' in supermarkets or getting tips of how to CIR from House of Cards. So laughter. Much shenanigans. Wow.*

Harajuku Station lies nestled at the heart of Tokyo, and can be easily reached in around 25 minutes from Tokyo Station on the JR Yamanote Line (Outer Loop) for 200 yen. Meiji-Jingumae Station is also within Harajuku, but requires changing lines if travelling from Tokyo Station.



Dan Finds a New Friend



Frogman...enough said!



A Harajuku Collage



### TRAVEL TIPS

For those new to Japan, especially those living in the more rural parts of Japan, here's some tips to remember when exploring the big cities.

- Plan ahead. Your time is precious, and cities have a great knack of swallowing it up. Avoid this by planning ahead, working out what you want to do, where, when and how to get there.
- Look for deals. Whether it's a cheap city travel card, two-for-one entry to the aquarium or a deal on breakfast at your hotel, do your research and you can find yourself with extra money for shopping.
- Don't be afraid to wander. Some of the best, smaller restaurants and shops may not be on the busiest streets, take a dive into a hidden alleyway and you can be pleasantly surprised at what you find.
- Ask people! Lost? Ask someone on the street. Need a recommendation of what to do next? Ask your waiter or your hotel staff. Japanese people are generally very keen to help, so make the most of their knowledge and be sure to get the most out of your time.

# HOW-TO: GET A CHINESE VISA

ELLEN ZHANG (HIROSHIMA)

*Ellen Zhang is a second-year ALT in Hiroshima Prefecture. She recently arranged a trip for a large group of JETs to visit China, the land of her ancestors. Unfortunately, the visa process is rather complicated, and Google turns up a lot of information. Make it a whole lot easier for yourself by following Ellen's succinct, yet detailed guide below. This guide is accurate as of October 2014.*

I do not work for the consulate or the embassy but I do have recent experience organizing Chinese visas for a large group of JETs working in Japan.

There are various types of visas but, for the sake of vacation purposes, let's talk about the one that really matters: **Type L for tourist purposes**. There are two options: single entry and double entry. Multiple entry visas are granted only for business.

If you are entering China and staying there for the duration of your visit, then you only need the Single Entry Visa. If you are entering and re-entering China during your visit (such as crossing into Hong Kong) then you will need a Double Entry Visa. Be advised that, if you are

applying for a Double Entry Visa, you will still need to provide all flight information and the dates of entry to and exit from China.

The duration of your total visit must not exceed 30 days. Also note that both Single and Double Entry visas are valid for only 3 months from the **issue date**. If you apply too early, your visa could expire before you arrive!

Below are the prices that embassies or consulates in Japan charge. If you use a travel agency, they will charge you an additional service fee.

## VISA PRICING

### Americans

- Single-Entry 15,000 yen
- Double-Entry 15,000 yen

### Non-Americans

- Single-Entry 3,000 yen
- Double-Entry 5,000 yen

Once you've decided which visa you need, it's time to put the application together. 祝你好運 (Zhù nǐ hǎoyùn, Good luck to you!)

## RESOURCES

- [IACE Travel](#)
- [Chinese Visas for Non-Japanese](#)



SEE A SAMPLE  
APPLICATION  
HERE

## REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

- Passport (valid for at least 6 months)
- Copy of the front page of your passport
- Copy\* of the **front and back** of your residence card
- Application
- Flight confirmation (must have name, time, date, and airports)
- Hotels\*\* confirmation (all hotels you're staying at)
- Passport photo (light background, whole head must be in the picture)

\*You will need to bring your residence card if going to a consulate or embassy.

\*\*If staying with friends, you will need to bring a signed invitation letter, copies of your host's residency cards, official stamp, and their contact information.

## WHAT YOU NEED TO DO

- Tell your schools when and where you will be going. Make sure *nenkyuu* is approved.
- Book flights. Chinese airlines are cheap, but unreliable; avoid short connections during Chinese New Year (February), as finding inter-city transport can be a disaster.
- Book accommodation. The application process specifically asks you to write down the name and address of every hotel you'll be staying at. If you are staying at a friend's house, they will have to send a signed invitation letter, copies of their residency cards, official stamp, and contact information to you. If you are unsure what to book, find hotels with free cancellation and then cancel after successfully obtaining your visa.
- Fill out your application. The application is about 4 pages long. Some things to have ready: your Board of Education's address and phone number (not your school), passport number and expiration dates, residency card number for the Local ID/Citizenship number slot and your address in English. **Please note that you must write N/A for every blank spot!**
- Find out where to get your visa. There are three options:
  1. Chinese embassy in Tokyo / Chinese consulate nearest your prefecture. Please use the [website](#) to locate your nearest. Be aware that their hours conflict with your working hours so you will probably have to take leave to visit in person. Collecting documents is a little simpler. You can either go back and pick up the visa or have it mailed to you.
  2. Travel Agency. This is a good option if you don't have the *nenkyuu* days or time to go to the consulate yourself. Most companies will let you mail them your passports documents and will mail the passport and visa back to your home. I suggest dropping off your passport and documents in person to the travel agency because they can examine your application and ask you to fix anything on the spot. The travel agencies in Hiroshima and Osaka both took about a week to get the visa plus a day to send it home.
  3. Friends. You can ask a friend or personal assistant to go to the consulate for you.

# TRAVEL SHORTS

What's your **Travel Short**? Everyone has them! The strange, the cute, the wild and the weird. They're the experiences that shape our adventures and remain with us long after the holiday is over. Here we've selected four great tales from the community for your reading pleasure. If you have a story that you think is worthy sharing, we're waiting to hear from you too! Look out for another set of stories coming soon!

## GUNS 'N NUNS

*Ellen Freeman – Miyazaki*

The man in the sweat-stained wife-beater slipped my camera strap over his head, never dropping the stare of the perfectly round barrel of his gun. This being Honduras; the murder capital of the world two years running; the gaggle of nuns walking behind us didn't flinch. They hurried on their way, like we had been, to the town square to see the Holy Week Sand Carpets; portraits of Jesus ascending to heaven constructed out of painstakingly-poured Pixy Stix colored sand for Easter Sunday. "No passports? No cash? Just an old film camera?" shrugged the policeman. "He must've been a photographer."

*Ellen Freeman is a second year ALT from Portland, Oregon, enjoying inaka life with her husband in Takachiho, Miyazaki. She posts a lot of pictures on Instagram as ellenlouisefreeman.*



## THE FEEL OF MELAKA

*Kai Le – Kumamoto*

Melaka, Malaysia seems to have fallen prey to globalization since the last time I visited: with chic fashion and specialty soap stores that wouldn't look out of place in Japan and bistros that cater to world travelers. However, I realized that beneath its tourism-embracing facade lies a people who just do their own thing. Butchers chopping meat in the middle of the night, a family who has been making bound shoes for 3 generations and stall holders who sell food from what appears to be their living room. I loved how this kaleidoscopic mix of local ways and foreign influences accentuated its charm.

*An ex-Kumamoto City JET, Heng Kai Le unlocked a personal achievement of travelling to 30 prefectures during his two-year stint, but proudly declares Kumamoto his favorite because 'home is where the heart is'.*



## THE SECRET SCHOOL

*Nate Berne – Okayama*

Siem Reap: the Beng Melea ruins astounded everyone, but our guide Vibol was a real creep. Riding home, he dismissed my questions, ogled my girlfriend and blamed the USA for allowing Pol Pot's genocide. I ignored him, but he shot me a sinister glare, asking "Want to see something?" and whipped the car down a side-road. "My leadership school," he explained, as we approached a dusty old building. "It's for countryside girls. There're no schools where they live." Inside, girls were at work learning English, typing on second-hand computers, and shying away instantly. "You guys looked like teacher," Vibol said softly. "I just thought you'd like it."

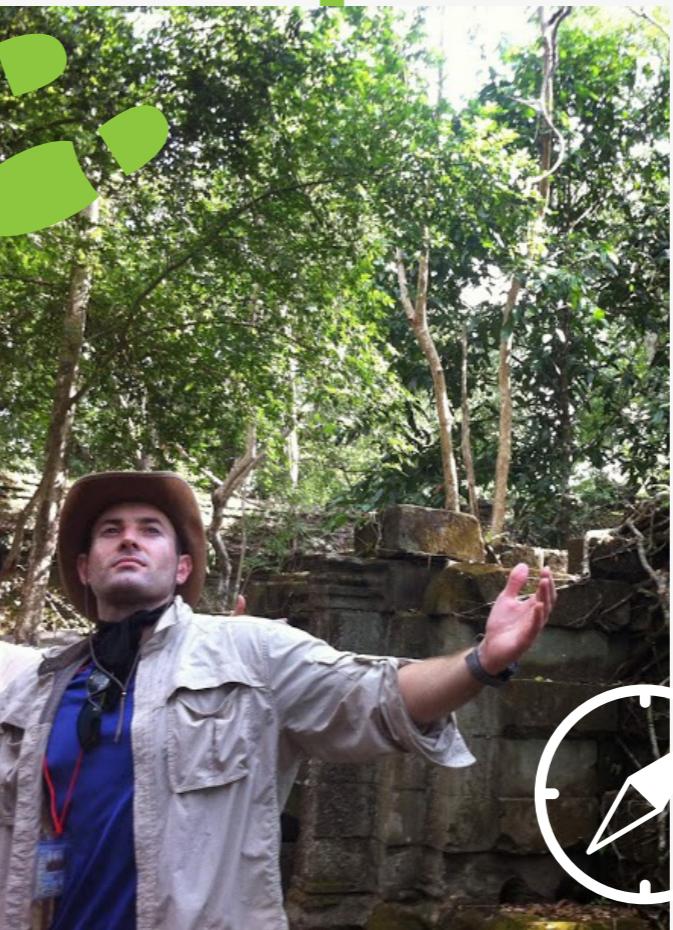
*Nate Berne needs to travel more. He's explored northwestern America, the parallel dimension of California, and S.E. Asia. He spelunks, eats snakes, and envies Paul Theroux like a pro.*



## SERENDIPITOUS RAIN ON NAOSHIMA

*Wendy Ng – Okinawa*

After an arduous journey, I cursed the 'tempest' which greeted me at Naoshima. Despite the ominous weather, the arts island's serendipity worked mysteriously when I bumped into Tomoko at Goou Shrine. A staff at the Cin.na.mon guesthouse, Tomoko had checked me in that fateful morning. Even though it was her 'day off', she graciously volunteered to be my guide. The most memorable part of my trip was not Monet's Water Lilies or Ando's architecture but how Tomoko braved the relentless rain to take pictures of me with Yayoi's Pumpkin. My fortuitous encounter with Tomoko made Naoshima even more mystical in the storm.



*Wendy is a second-year JET from the tropical island of Singapore. Suffering from 'Compulsive-Obsessive-Travel-Planning Disorder' (COTPD), she spends most of her money and time hoping to conquer all 47 of Japan's prefectures. Currently, she is the editor of the Okinawa JET's magazine, Ryukyu Star.*

# THIS MONTH IN... COMMUNITY



HIROSHI FUKUSHIMA

connect.sports@ajet.net

November, it means foliage watching , beginning of the marathon season and winter sports. I've spent October getting ready for a relay marathon and a full marathon and putting my running skills to the test by playing the fast game of playing flag football, the tag version of gridiron. It's been a busy but very eventful month and hope your November is very active and adventurous. The Grand Sumo festival is coming up, the J league to an end and it's mid-season in the Top League season. If you have stories to share or questions related to sports please let me know.



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!!



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Kick off



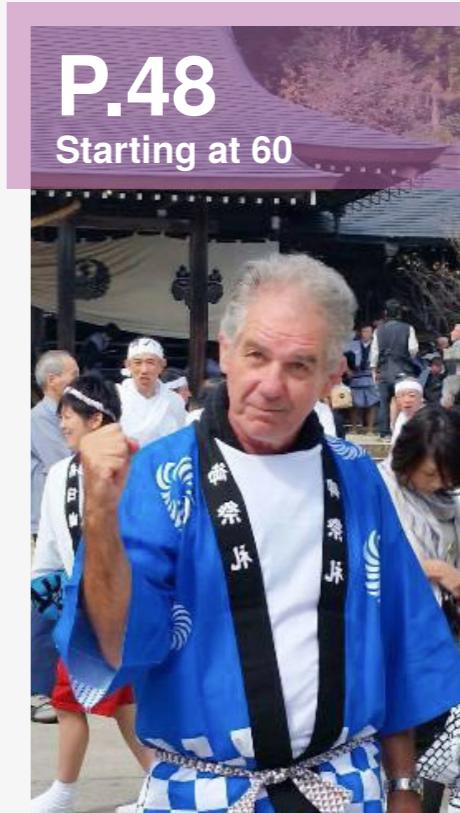
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Everyone's Earth



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Calling all Coaches



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Starting at 60



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Cricket Blast



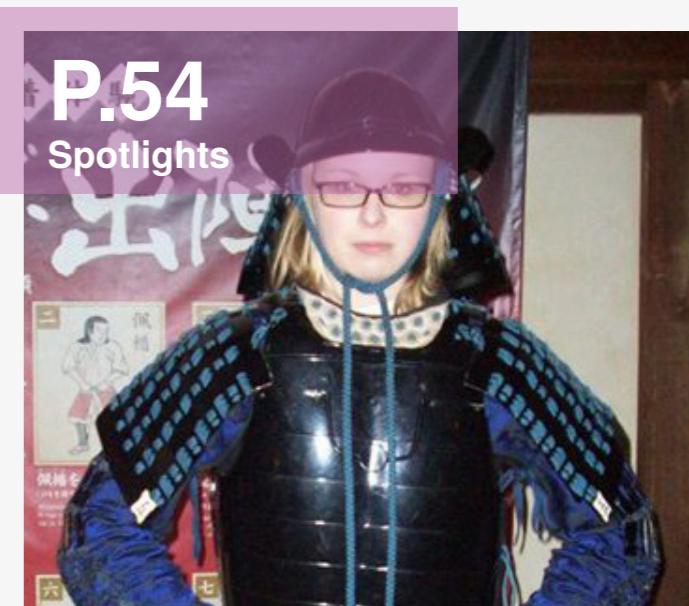
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Comics

AND MOUSE

AND NOOO

OH GOD  
OH GOD  
OH GOD



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Spotlights

# KICK OFF BUILDING BRIDGES

HIROSHI FUKUSHIMA (KUMAMOTO)

## BACK IN 2002, JAPAN AND

Korea co-hosted the World Cup and set off a football culture wave in Asia. Since then, the J league has evolved into a major league that has produced household names such as Shinji Kagawa, Keisuke Honda, Hidetoshi Nakata, Park Ji Sung, Ah Jung Hwan and Hong Myung Bo. Both Sung and Kagawa

To Assistant Language Teachers who would like to start a project and really bring internationalisation to a new level, this sporting exchange is one example. With the 2020 Olympics coming up it is an ideal time to practice Olympism.

have played for the legendary English club Manchester United. Football is now one of the most popular sports in the country with one of the highest participant numbers in the country, and this year we saw Japan join dozens of other countries on the world stage in the 2014 FIFA World Cup. Sports bring countries together outside of politics, as was the case between two junior high schools in Japan and Korea.

## KICK OFF

It all started when a junior high school teacher decided to contact his friend from Korea start an international football friendship exchange. This exchange started seven years ago between Sanwa Junior High School in Kumamoto and Nanchang Junior High School in Ulsan, South Korea, and has grown since then with four more schools from Kumamoto City participating. Although played on an abysmal clay pitch, it still brings a competitive Japanese style of play that involves swift passing and technical brilliance.

## THE FRIENDSHIP FLOURISHES

This year, the school was invited to go to South Korea to extend the friendship exchange. Sanwa's students played teams at Nanchang Junior High school, and the audience was ecstatic, with thousands of people watching the game. They also played against other junior high schools in neighbouring towns, such as Ulsan Hyundai. Ulsan Hyundai is a club side who represented South Korea at the annual Manchester United Premier Cup, which attracts the best under-15 club teams from

## FAST FACTS:

- With 3.5+ billion fans, soccer is the most popular sport on the planet.
- Soccer players run an average of six miles during every game.
- The 1950 World Cup final between Uruguay and Brazil at the Maracana Stadium recorded the highest number of spectators—99,854.
- The United States, Japan and Canada actually call soccer “soccer.”

around the world.

This exchange did not just involve football, but also a cultural adventure where the visitors from Japan were taught about elements of Korean culture beside kimchi and major electronic brands like Samsung. The visit involved city officials from Kumamoto City and Ulsan exchanging talks to foster international friendships. Korean students have also been invited to attend Sanwa Junior High school for home stay experiences to learn about Japanese culture. What started seven years ago as a football match has now become a long-lasting friendship between two schools and countries.

## FULL TIME AND PLANS FOR THE NEXT GAME

This exchange is a valuable experience for the students and teachers to learn about new cultures and bring a whole new element to internationalisation. You don't have to be an Olympian or be the world's best player



Getting Ready for the Kick Off



The Exchange - The Fun After the Game



Team Sanwa Going Global



Nanchang and Sanwa on the Big Stage

# BICYCLE FOR EVERYONE'S EARTH ALL-JAPAN BY BICYCLE WITH BEE

J. MUZACZ (KYOTO, 2010-2012)

**I LOVE CYCLING! IN FACT...IN**  
my second year on JET, I gave up the keys to my Kei-car in favor of a brand-new GIANT Great Journey touring bicycle. It was just a matter of commuting daily 12km up and around winding coastal roads along the Sea of Japan while dodging monkeys. So, when I was pondering post-JET plans and found the Bicycle for Everyone's Earth (BEE) website I was pretty stoked, to say the least.

Since 1997, almost annually, a few adventurous post-JETs have been cycling the length of Japan, and what started

out as an environmental awareness campaign with a few sponsors kind of just *kept going*. Always garnering media attention, the event has acquired international sponsors such as Patagonia, People Tree and Tengu Natural Foods which has allowed the BEE Ride has been able to continue its core mission of environmental stewardship and promoting green initiatives like clean energy, vegetarianism and sustainable living. Joining the BEE team on this ride thus brings with it responsibility that doubtlessly encourages riders to overcome the physical and mental challenges of the road ahead. That year cycling to my schools through summer

**WE INSPIRED AND WERE INSPIRED. WE PUSHED OUR LIMITS, ACHIEVED OUR GOALS AND MADE HEAPS OF FRIENDS ALONG THE WAY.**



*Yakushima Goal  
Photos - J. Muzacz*

heat, torrential rain, typhoon winds and snow and ice, was the perfect training.

I found the BEE Ride site surfing the web one night and emailed the 2010 team leader Brett (who is still hosting cycle trips in beautiful Kyushu). It was one of those moments where you sense serendipity is leading your life in an exciting new direction. Brett informed me that the BEE Ride had taken a year off in 2011 because of the Tohoku Earthquake and Tsunami. Not exactly a good time to assemble a team of oblivious foreigners and gallivant lightheartedly down the road, ignoring the tragedies at hand and the

somber rebuilding all around. So many lost and displaced, and so much yet to do.

But, it was just that notion of "What *can* we do?" that took us on a route down the northeastern coast for a week volunteering in some of the worst hit areas of the tsunami, a year and a half after the

**THAT YEAR CYCLING TO MY SCHOOLS THROUGH SUMMER HEAT, TORRENTIAL RAIN, TYphoon WINDS AND SNOW AND ICE, WAS THE PERFECT TRAINING.**

tragedy struck. Riding the barren seaside roads—from Kamaishi to Kesennuma and Shinomaki—through towns completely wiped out except for concrete slabs where houses once stood, is a surreal experience forever etched in my mind.

We stayed in Tono City with an organization called Tono Magokoro Network, doing great work rebuilding the spirit of the place by hosting tea-times and festivals for the locals. Singing karaoke and dining at cafés, we got to meet the true faces of resilience. We also came to understand the gravity of the situation there; countless

lives uprooted in an instant.

The rest of our ride south took on renewed significance after experiencing the hardships of people in Tohoku. We selected Japan For Sustainability as our NGO of choice, largely because we realized that a sustainable future is one Japan and the world as a whole ought to strive towards. When natural disasters point out our weaknesses as a civilization (Hurricane Katrina, Fukushima, etc.) it is up to us to join together to create a solution, come to terms with it, and to live that solution each and every day from then onward.

Sometimes it was hard for us to sleep without showering. Sometimes we got flat tires. Sometimes we had to pitch our tents in a parking lot. Sometimes big stinky trucks nearly ran us off the road. But, we would quickly remember our pursuit was not in vain. Every day we met kind people and had meaningful conversations, sharing our mission and stories from the ride, always being welcomed with smiles and good-humored hospitality. We inspired and were inspired. We pushed our limits, achieved our goals and made heaps of friends along the way.



*Mount Fuji in the Distance*



*Buddha Aoi*

So it is with every significant experience abroad: you are constantly confronted with challenges, and it is how you handle those challenges, by learning and adapting, that allows you to thrive. In the end, it really just depends on whether or not you ride your bike to get there.

*Jonathan "J" Muzacz worked for JET in northern Kyoto Prefecture in Kyotango from 2010-2012. During those two years he wrote and illustrated a tome about Japan entitled *Japan 365: A Drawing-A-Day Project*. Thereafter, he went on the BEE Ride, riding 3500km; the length of Japan. After working on Okinawa's Ishigaki Island, helping with traditional sugarcane harvests, he was inspired to write and illustrate a second book called *Life Is Sweet: The Story of a Sugarcane Field*. Both books have been published and are available online. He currently lives in Melbourne Australia.*

# CALLING ALL COACHES

LOURENS VAN DER MERWE (OKAYAMA)

**WHILE SITTING OUT TO HEAL**  
an injury, a South African dad found new legs as a tag rugby coach through a local sports initiative

In Japan, November is a time for sitting under kotatsu, eating oden and nabe, and stinking up heating your apartment with your kerosene heater. For South Africans below the equator though, this is the season to sleep under a lighter blanket and break out your *braai* (BBQ).

For my wife and I, newly transplanted to Okayama last year, the changing leaves, shorter days, and colder weather were a bit of a shock; we knew we were in for the coldest winter we'd ever experienced. While

the chill set in, our braaier conversations turned to rugby, and I knew right away what was missing ...

## "HELLO! DO YOU PLAY RUGBY?"

What you think about, you attract, right? As we were out grocery shopping last autumn, a gentleman dressed head to toe in Canterbury-branded clothing suddenly looked me up and down and asked: "Hello, do you play rugby?" As I gaped, he introduced himself as Dando, and asked the same question again.

It turned out Dando was a primary school teacher and a member of a local rugby club. While he was sad to learn that I no longer played due

## RUGBY IN JAPAN

### FAST FACTS:

- Rugby has been played for over a century in Japan.
- British sailors staged the first Japanese rugby game in 1874; a national women's team first formed in 1991.
- Japan's National Rugby Union team currently ranks 10th in the World.
- Japan is scheduled to host the 2019 Rugby World Cup.
- Japan has the 4th largest population of rugby union players, including 125,000 players in 3,631 clubs.

to a back injury, he asked me to volunteer at a tag-rugby tournament the following weekend. Apparently, second-grade SHS students in northern Okayama had been practicing rugby for the past two months in PE, and would soon play a regional tournament.

I soon found out that Mr. Dando was also involved with a local organization that promoted tag-rugby amongst school children. As part of a new initiative to introduce tag-rugby as an official club activity, he and a group of friends were hosting seminars and workshops for other interested teachers, and were even training new coaches and referees for the sport. With continued support, their plan was to make tag-rugby a full club activity in Okayama.

## TAG! YOU'RE - A COACH!!

Within a few days of attending my first tag-rugby tournament in Japan, a P.E. teacher from one of my



Rugby Field Set-up in Maniwa

senior high schools asked if I could help coach the 2nd grade P.E. rugby team. From there, we coordinated with administrators to rework my schedule, and I was soon teaching two P.E. classes per week.

Once on the field though, I instantly hit a wall: most of the students had no idea of the most basic elements of the sport, including game play, strategy, or even the basic rules ... and I had just 2 months to teach them what had taken me years to learn. Undeterred, we started with drills and basic handling, and went on to running skills,

## LEAGUE VS. TOUCH:

Originating from Rugby League rules, Touch Rugby (or simply "Touch"), is celebrated for requiring little equipment, allowing lower injury rates, and encouraging mixed-gender play. Often applied as a training exercise for full-contact sides, Touch remains accessible yet competitive throughout the world.

Visit the Federation of International Touch's [website](#) for more on the sport.

passing, and tackling, and sure enough, they took right to it.

Next came lessons on set pieces, including scrums, line outs, and restarts, and we broached the particular rules and strategy of each movement of the game. At once, the team showed an impressive learning curve, and I instantly felt even more welcome at school. While students suddenly started to greet me in the hallways, they also began to raise their hands more often during English class, and many even engaged me in conversations outside of the classroom. It was amazing!

## TEAM PLAYER

I know two students outside of class, and recently helped a 3rd-year prepare for a physical entrance exam for firefighting. As for the team, I'm proud to say we won every game (minus one, against an actual rugby club of all-Japan standing).

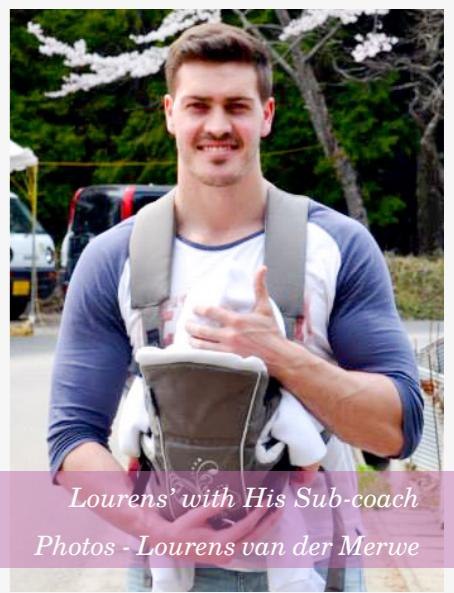
Now in my second Japanese autumn, as leaves change color, the air turns cold, and the days grow short, I'll coach rugby again this October. I'm forever grateful that the sport I love has helped reveal the full potential of ALT work, and

while we've also managed to further serve the community, I've also discovered a rich new strategy for adapting to life in Japan. What you think about, you attract ... and now, even the cold doesn't bother us so much!

*Lourens is a 2nd year JET in Okayama, where he lives with his wife and their new child. Lourens loves taking his family to the beach, and grills a wicked steak. Originally from Pretoria, South Africa, he studied environmental management and architecture, and hopes to someday work as an environmentalist within the construction or manufacturing sectors.*



Rugby Motto for the SHS Club



Lourens' with His Sub-coach  
Photos - Lourens van der Merwe

*Dodging Paparazzi in Niimi*

Photos - John Burnett, Haruna Higuchi, &amp; Terry Patten

# STARTING AT 60: MY LIFE AS A FIRST-YEAR DAISEMPAI

TERRY PATTEN (OKAYAMA)

**AT 60 YEARS OF AGE, TERRY**

Patten closed his bookstore in Canada, joined a sister city association, and took his TESOL to Japan to become an ALT and unofficial ambassador. The story, from the man himself:

**THE ALT ELDER**

As an ALT teaching in Niimi, I could not possibly be more of an anomaly. Though I'm actually more than a generation older than the next eldest foreigner in town, I work as both an ALT and Ambassador via an international Sister City Exchange program, and the journey itself could not have been more serendipitous.

Just over a year ago, after closing my bookstore in Sidney, British Columbia, I completed a TESOL program at the University of Victoria, and soon learned of a teaching position in Japan; a country whose art and culture I've always admired. After applying, I learned that the Sidney Sister Cities Association (SSCA) was not only sister city to Niimi, Japan (as well as Cairns, Australia and Anacortes, USA), but that the program was in need of both an "ambassador" to Niimi, and a new ALT. Thus thrust into this interesting

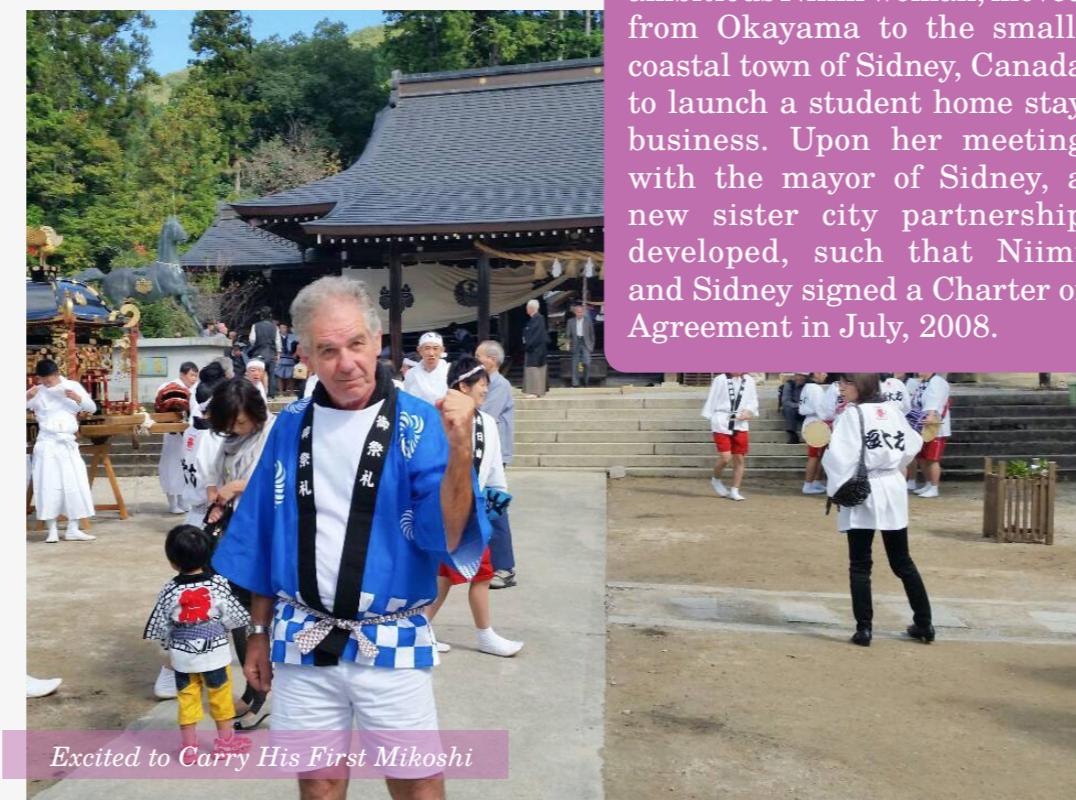
dual role of ALT/Ambassador, I was off to Niimi!!

**FROM ALT TO AMBASSADOR**

Once in Niimi, I learned that the bar for ALT performance was set awfully high. While younger ALTs are born into a world of computers and technology, my own skills remain a bit behind, so I was glad for the help of my youthful new colleagues. While the Japanese teachers at my two junior high schools showed instant support and respect for my age (though I'm quite sure I try their patience), the students themselves didn't quite know what to make of me at first.

to include volunteer work for the local International Exchange Association at Niimi College, while I've also joined local JETs at the annual Halloween Party for kindergarteners (great fun!).

Around town, I've given presentations on Canada for culture-exchange clubs, and was even invited to carry a mikoshi in the annual samurai parade. Online, I contribute a blog to the SSCA website, and I can even help bring the community to life with pictures and stories from around town.



One year later, I'm now receiving more than my fair share of high-fives and shouts of "Hey, Terry!!" in the halls, and I can at least bring a new perspective and a greater life experience to the lessons.

My role grew especially unique in my unofficial ambassadorial duties, as Canada possesses no umbrella National Sister Cities organization. As a result, Sidney "twins" with other cities on an ad hoc basis, and while the SSCA funds and tends the relationship, we enact a personal touch to further facilitate exchange. Accordingly, my role has grown

**FROM RASHOMON TO RASHOMON GATE**

Terry admits to having harbored a fascination for Japanese culture since age fifteen, when he first saw Akira Kurosawa's *Rashomon*, (to this day, his favorite film). He expects one day to be watching Kurosawa films without subtitles, and reading Murakami as written. By coincidence, his new home of Niimi actually has its own Rashomon Gate!

**JOINING A LEGACY**

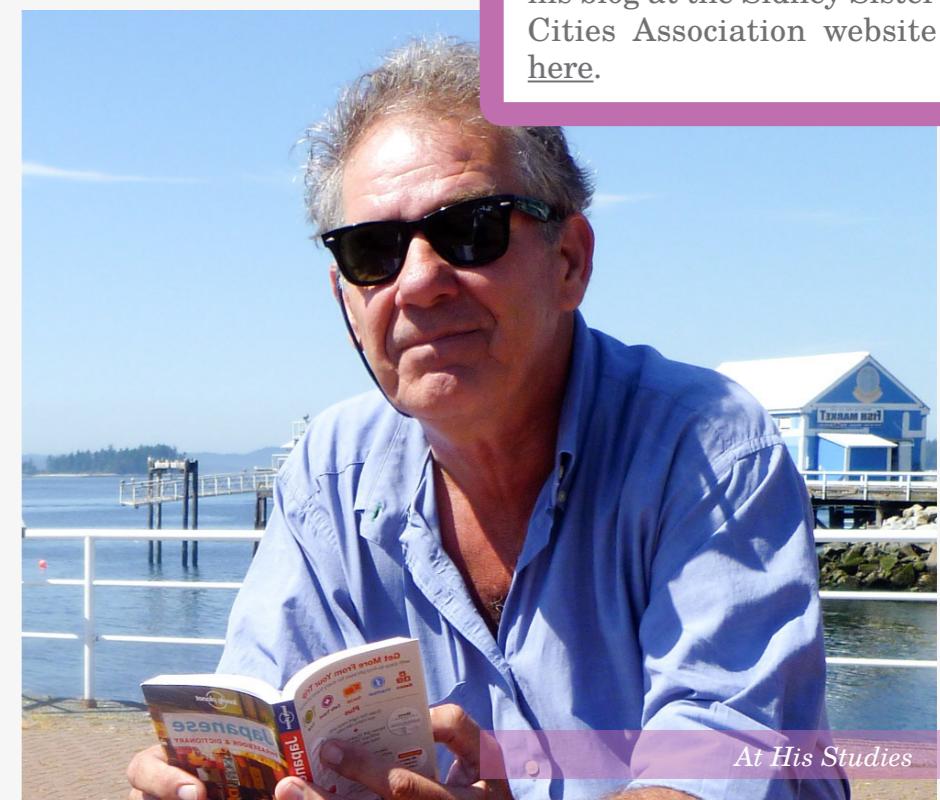
As I've witnessed our world becoming an increasingly smaller place in my lifetime, I've come to appreciate the need for thinking outside the box in our continued effort to promote cultural exchange. Consequently, in my new role, I've felt a greater responsibility to experience as much of Japanese culture as I can, and to share more with Sidney. I'm thrilled to blog about my amazing

**SIDNEY AND NIIMI**

Years ago, Nigumi, an ambitious Niimi woman, moved from Okayama to the small, coastal town of Sidney, Canada to launch a student home stay business. Upon her meeting with the mayor of Sidney, a new sister city partnership developed, such that Niimi and Sidney signed a Charter of Agreement in July, 2008.

experiences in places like Kurashiki-shi's Ohara Museum of Art, or to tell of the amazing performances at a live Kabuki show. Through sister city exchange, the experience only becomes richer for everyone involved.

In all my travels, I have never before visited a country where the people are so kind, gracious, and friendly, and I'm consistently intrigued by the lack of a western



theistic religious tradition. While I have felt my own life significantly enriched and enlightened by my adventure in Japan, I would imagine the experience to be all the more exciting for people in their 20's and 30's, and I encourage people of all ages to consider making the trip. While I regret that I did not have this chance at a younger age, I consider myself honored to have been given this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

*Terry Patten is beginning his second year as a JHS ALT, and as an unofficial cultural ambassador to Niimi, Okayama. He loves jazz bars, sails a boat like a pro, and always appreciates great Scotch.*

To read more about Terry's time in Japan, please visit his blog at the Sidney Sister Cities Association website [here](#).

# MISSION: CRICKET BLAST AN INTERVIEW WITH ALAN CURR

In a country where most fields are reserved for baseball, another ball game has been growing strong. A sport called cricket, familiar to many from countries from the Commonwealth. We sat down to interview the man behind growing the sport to make Japan the land of the rising bat through an organisation called Cricket Blast.

## CONNECT: WHAT IS CRICKET AND WHAT IS CRICKET BLAST?

Alan: OK, well, cricket in essence is a game between two teams of 11 players where one team tries to score more runs (points) than the other. A simplified explanation can be found [here](#). There are also three different formats of the game, lasting at least three hours, one day or five days respectively.

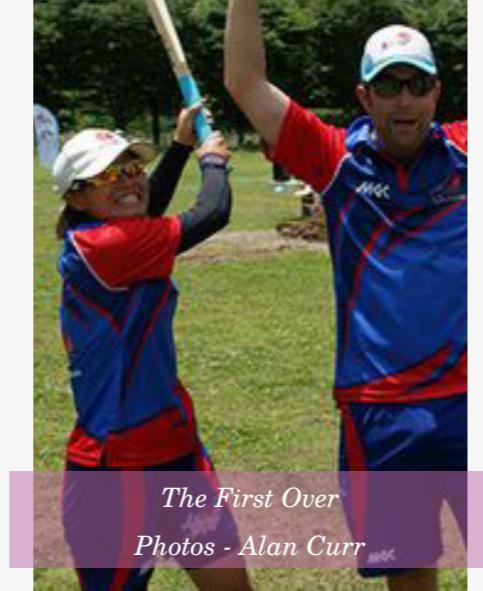
There is a widely held view that it is an incredibly confusing sport (perhaps best illustrated by [this deliberately complex explanation](#), but once you grasp the basics it is

quite easy to pick up. The key thing to remember is that it is better than baseball!

Cricket Blast is a version of the game that has been simplified even further. We only play six-per-side and the format is incredibly flexible, the shortest version being completed in around 45 minutes. We are also making it totally inclusive, so all 12 players will have a chance to bat, bowl and catch the ball in the field. There can be a lot of standing around in a game of cricket, so in Cricket Blast we have tried to get rid of that and make the format as fast and fun as possible.



How was that??!



The First Over  
Photos - Alan Curr

CHECK OUT  
THE FULL  
INTERVIEW  
HERE



Interested in reading more about Alan and Cricket Blast? Check out the full exclusive interview on AJET.net [here](#).



COMICS

HEARING 'LET IT GO' IN EVERY SCHOOL, SHOP AND STREET IN JAPAN



OKAY, SORRY, WE CAN SWITCH TO THE TECHNO REMIX, IT'S FINE!

## 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: @Marikascomics](#)

## Life After the B.O.E.

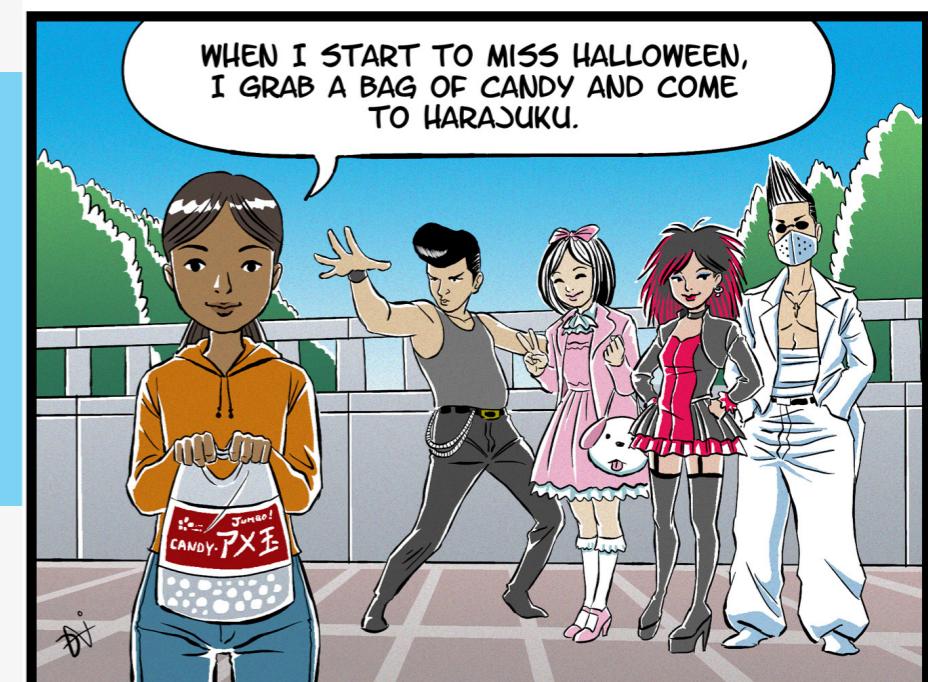
BY DAVID NAMISATO (AOMORI-KEN, CIR, 2002-04)

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+](#)



## COLD SEASON



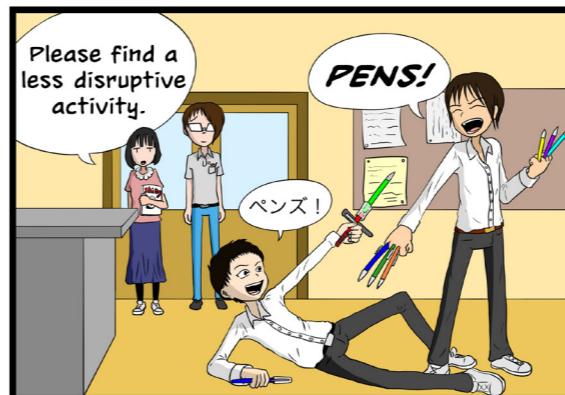
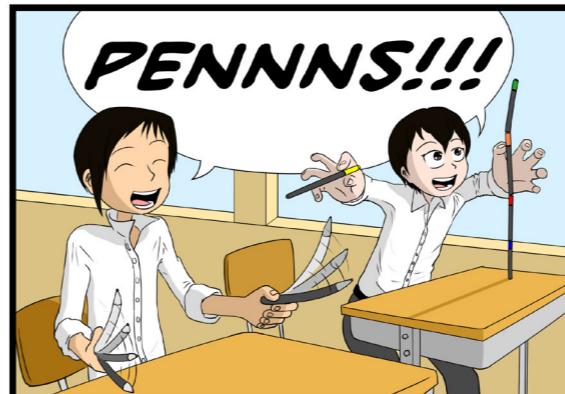
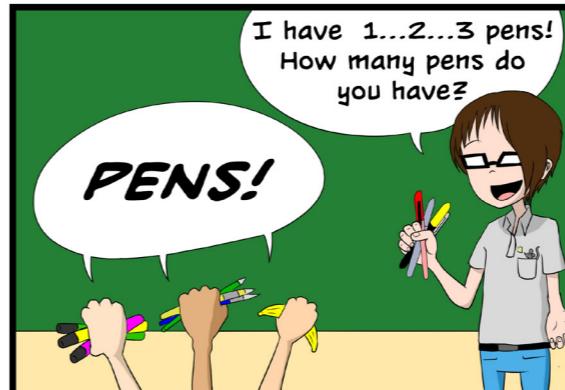
## LET'S SPEAK ENGLISH

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](http://marycagle.com) and [kiwiblitz.com](http://kiwiblitz.com)!

## NEMESIS

**JET PEEVES**  
by Chris Chong

## How many pens (do you have) =

**JET PEEVES**

Chris Chong is a 4th year ALT from the UK and teaches in Chiba Prefecture. He drew 'Chloe', an exclusive manga for London Comic Con's news site MCMBuzz in 2011. His English manga 'Courage' about bullying came in the top-ten short list for the UK National 'Manga Jiman' contest 2013 and was displayed in the Japanese Embassy. He wrote his undergraduate thesis on 'The Narrative Role of Music in Role-playing Games: Final Fantasy VII' and went on to study composition at the Royal College of Music, London. His music appears as [MajorC.co.uk](#) on the exploding ninja robot PC game 'Plain Sight' and also soon to appear on games for iOS. He now runs Nihongo Gamer, a website and YouTube channel dedicated to using video games to learn Japanese. His hobbies are programming, yo-yo'ing and scratch dj'ing.

Being a JET is easy, but making other people care about our experience is a challenge like no other. I once read a greetings card online that said, 'We hope our Christmas card alerted you to how much better our family is doing than yours.' It summed up all the things that we do wrong on Facebook, Instagram and other social networks. Jet Peeves is an attempt to share my experiences as an ALT by highlighting every facepalm moment in my daily life. Moments that you may recognise from your own, facepalm inaka life."

**COMICS**

Website  
[deviantART](#)  
Twitter: [@ChongComics](#)

**MUSIC**

Website  
Twitter: [@MajorC](#)

**GAMES**

Website  
YouTube  
Twitter: [@NihongoGamer](#)

# SPOTLIGHTS



ALBERT DAVID VALDERRAMA (IBARAKI)



DON CORTEZ (AICHI)

Albert David is a 5th-year American JET from Southern California. Over his five years, he has taught at four senior high schools in Shimotsuma, Ibaraki, and served as a Prefectural Advisor, giving support, information, and training wherever it's needed.

He is also co-founder and national co-representative of the Asian Pacific Islander Jet Community ([API AJET](#)), where he facilitates and directs bi-monthly meetings with the nine block leaders from all over Japan. This team plans networking events, produces a quarterly magazine to give voice to the API experience, and offers immediate support via discussion on social media for the Asian Pacific Islander ALT Community in Japan.

He was also a member of the team that started the U.N. University Global Seminar Workshops program for students in our prefecture. He served as a presenter and mentor to the students, and helped get the word out about the program. He's a positive influence to the Ibaraki community and he will be greatly missed next year!

Meet Don Cortez! Originally from Detroit, Michigan, he moved to Japan four and a half years ago to improve his Japanese, and deepen his understanding of Japanese culture. He's currently based in Nagoya, working in sourcing at a Japanese marketing company. When he's off duty, he loves to be creative and expresses himself through his unique sense of style and individuality.

He loves neon colours, bright clothing, and likes to mix and match, wearing Bohemian flowing pieces for casual affairs, and form fitting pieces for events and parties. His favourite accessories are a countless supply of shoes, and he detests the plaid trend that's popular in Fall/Winter. "It looks like a sea full of malnourished lumberjacks". He's also not a fan of the new lace over solids trend for women. "It reads thrift shop scavenger from the 1950s". His style icons are Pharrell Williams, Kanye West and Verbal from m-Flo, and he often visits H&M, Forever 21 and Zara.

He's also a singer and songwriter creating funk style R&B/pop music, which you can checkout at [www.soundcloud.com/doncortez](http://www.soundcloud.com/doncortez).



JASON SHON (KUMAMOTO)

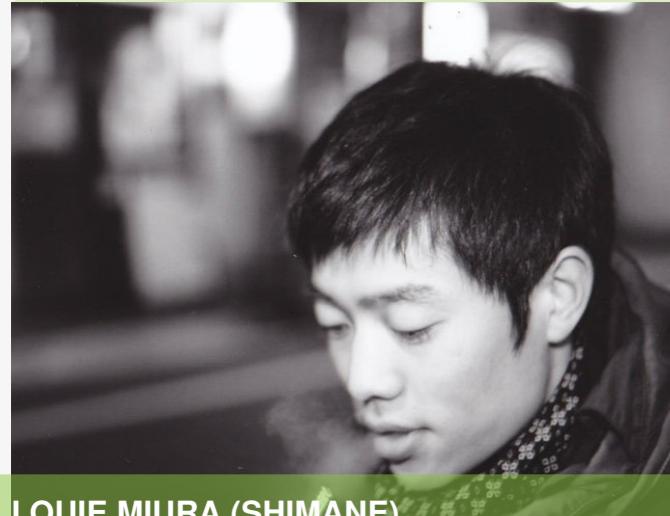
Between making pottery, playing soccer in the prefectural league, and volunteering on an organic farm through World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms (WWOOF), Jason Shon was a busy man on JET. He spent five years in Kumamoto: two as an ALT singing "Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes" with his students on the islands of Amakusa, and three as a CIR and Prefectural Advisor at the Kumamoto Prefectural Office. Having finished his time on the JET Programme in the summer of 2014, Jason will return to Japan this November, this time to volunteer as a Communication Coordinator on the Peace Boat's 86th Voyage through the southern hemisphere.



KAYLA POTTER (KOCHI)

Meet Kayla Potter, Block 8's favorite American *taishogoto* player! Originally from Ohio, and now a third-year ALT teaching in Aki city, Kochi, Kayla has been playing the *taishogoto* for two years. When she first arrived, Kayla expressed interest in immersing herself in the local community's culture and trying something new. Her Japanese teacher introduced her to a *taishogoto* instructor and Kayla's been playing in concerts across the prefecture ever since. Although her team members out-age her by an average of fifty years, the love of the beautiful, delicate instrument brings them together. It's amazing what a little music can do!

Just what is the *taishogoto*? Also called the Nagoya harp, the *taishogoto* is a stringed instrument similar to the *koto*, but featuring typewriter-like keys to change pitch. You can read more about it [here](#), or ask around your schools to see if there's any lessons going on near you!



LOUIE MIURA (SHIMANE)



MAC MCCREARY (IBARAKI)

Far removed from his home in Nagoya, Louie Miura has been living in Shimane Prefecture since graduating from the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies. While he was academically interested in Latin American culture/politics and the history of the Apartheid era in South Africa, Louie's true passion for international affairs is rooted in past experiences.

Louie, now 28, spent time growing up in Japan, America, and South Africa and has an impressive travel résumé that includes countries like Paraguay, Zimbabwe, and Botswana. It's comes as no surprise that this trilingual speaker of Japanese, English, and Spanish wanted to work in a positive cultural environment for foreign and domestic people, so he began PR work with 'Gungendo' – a community-based company that refurbishes houses, manufactures clothing, and manages café's to promote, preserve, and improve positive aspects of Japanese lifestyles.

Did we mention that Louie spends his free time fishing, cooking, and performing flamenco guitar at local venues? Legendary.



WHITNEY LITZ (HYOGO)

Mac McCreary is a 3rd-year American JET from Loveland, Colorado, teaching in Mito city, Ibaraki. Since arriving, he has had a JET career to be modeled.

Halfway into his first year on JET, he was nominated by his peers to be the IAJET president. He handled his time as president with ease and successfully organized a memorable winter trip to Hokkaido. During his second year, he was carefully selected along with one other ALT to be the first ALTs ever to be a part of the Ibaraki Debate Committee. Due to his avid interest in current events and ability to connect with the students, the debate committee knew he would be an asset and were excited to include him. With his, "Say Yes!" attitude, you will likely find this guy near you. Whether it be writing articles for a gazette, participating in badminton competitions, presenting to his community or tackling a new mountain... His excitement for Japan is contagious and positively influences those around him.

Did we mention that Louie spends his free time fishing, cooking, and performing flamenco guitar at local venues? Legendary.

Whitney is a former Hyogo JET of 3 years, who spent her time on JET writing a cookbook for the community. Whitney's cookbook, *A Taste of Home: From our Kitchens to the World*, was published on June 10 this year, though the idea had been in the works for two years. The book's theme is "nostalgic dishes from home," and flipping through the pages, it's as if you're at a potluck mingling with the authors themselves. For many people, food is a connection to home, or to past experiences. Living thousands of miles or kilometers away from home, cooking something from your childhood can make you feel like you're with family again.

Whitney was placed in inaka Japan, and she couldn't just pick up American foods at her local market. She learned not only to make her favorites from local ingredients, but she also became more aware of what she was putting into her body. As a result, she learned to appreciate the absence of preservatives in fresh Japanese produce.

You can find her book on her fundraising page [here](#).

#### 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)

# 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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.

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