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Beppu, Oita, Kyushu
Hey Baby, What's Your Sign?
Shorinji Kempo



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All JETs in Hyogo are encouraged to send in articles, musings, poetry, prose and any ideas to improve the Hyogo Times for the betterment of the Hyogo JET community.

Submit by the 15th of each month to:
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Visit us online!

Message from the Editor

Oh Hyogo,

Welcome to the Glorious Re-launch of Your Beloved Hyogo Times. Did you miss it? Apologies; it's been away going through a sort of transformation. I'm thrilled to be your new Hyogo Times editor, and to present our redesigned and redeveloped Hyogo Times. First I'd like to introduce our new Designer, Karen Cornish. I'm sure you'll find her layouts pleasing to the eye as you enjoy our content, new and familiar alike. I'd also like to re-introduce our Online Editor, Jonathan Shalfi, as his role has expanded greatly for 2011.

Ladies and Gentlemen, **Hyogo Times** is now online. It's going to take some more time to get the old content loaded up, as well as to finish tweaking the aesthetic odds and ends on the website. The main perks of this change are searchability as well as a level of interactivity not available in the PDFs. I encourage you to go leave comments on the stuff you read, submit guesses about Maigo in Hyogo, and check out the ever-changing calendar of events, equipped with some info and links to get you started enjoying your free time around here. The website will also be update continuously throughout the month, so check back and try to keep up with our dynamism.

We've got some new columns to debut (such as the Kobe Jazz Review) and some old favorites to remember (like Book Discoveries, Callin' All Politicos, Culture, English Sensei Spirit, I Heart T-Points, J-Word Play, Kicchiri Kitchen, Love and Relationships, MOE Adventures, Ramentary, and Travel Japan!). If you wish to contribute, whether on a regular basis or just for a one-shot feature, you know where to find me. Also if there is anything you would like to put up on the calendar, just let me know.

As we progress, I'd like to consider a creative writing section, as well as a classifieds section for the website, so you can hawk your old goods and score some sweet new swag. Points not awarded for alliteration.

February brings on the deep grey of midwinter, the start of the year of the rabbit (officially, at least, so your bunny-bearing greeting cards are not yet out of date, despite the ideas held by your co-workers), and of course, recontracting decision crunch time. Good luck, be well, and I hope you enjoy exploring the new HT as much as we enjoyed putting it together.

We sincerely wish that our heartily taste will bring many wonderful things to you and your special someone,

Lemmon



Message from the PR 🐼

Hello Hyogo,

Hey, everyone, hope you had a very rad time abroad (or at home, reading comics, like me) and are not lamenting getting back to work too much. At PR, we are also recovering from our break and trying to get back with our duties. There are a lot of good things in February. Right at the beginning, on the 5th, there is the Chinese New Year celebration in Kobe. On the 19th, there is the insanely foreigner-popular Naked Man Festival in Okayama. On the 26th, it seems there will be a Valentine's Day party taking place

across a few prefectures; very nice and wonderful. We will want to fit another Poker night in somewhere as well, so be sure to check on our Facebook group from time to time for details on that, and everything else mentioned here. I kind of hope to see you out there eventually, because I think I still don't know you.

Andrew Brasher



Maigo in Hyogo



Message from the Online Editor

Dear HT Reader,

あけましておめでとうございます！ Happy New Year and welcome to 2011. We have some big news to announce...the long-awaited Hyogo Times website is finally here! This is a big project for us, because it'll allow us to add features we couldn't have before, and will make reading the Hyogo Times as easy as ever. For example, finding specific articles is a breeze with category lists and a search bar, and you can send a link to a friend much more easily than forwarding a bulky PDF. Without further ado...www.hyogoajet.net/hyogotimes.

As of now, all articles from the current issue are online, as well as some from a few past issues. You can browse articles, search, and leave comments. The site's graphic design is a work in progress

however, and most of the other functions of the site are still under construction, so this is not its finished form. Still, it's usable in a basic way.

If you prefer the classic PDF form, there are prominent links on the site where you can download it. Of course, that part is not going away.

If you have any suggestions about the site, please send them to me at jonathan.shalfi@hyogo.ajet.net. I hope you enjoy this new format for the Hyogo Times, and that it makes it easier for you to enjoy all the great content our magazine is known for.

Jonathan Shalfi

Maigo in Hyogo

Where in Hyogo can these precocious primates be found?

**Hint, it's in Harima..*



Naturally in tune with Nature ♪

With the season changing, you may have noticed certain things on your commute to school or had them pointed out to you by your Japanese friends or coworkers. What I'm talking about is Nature – which is pretty hard to miss when you live in a country whose culture respects and celebrates nature with all four seasons. Some of you HS ALTs had the pleasure (or pain) of reading a selected few student essays on “Japanese Strong Points.” A recurring answer was Japanese four seasons (四季). For many of us, having four seasons is not a big deal. Besides the relentless questions “Can you use chopsticks?” and “Do you like rice?” I'm sure you've all had the conversation with a local who was surprised that you came from a country with four seasons too. But there is a reason the Japanese make this mistake, as the way they see seasons and nature is innately and completely different from that of most countries.

We are all aware by now of the pivotal floral time markers that indicate the beginning or end of a season: *momiji* in the fall, *sakura* in the spring and all those flowers in between – *suisen*, *ume*, *fuji*, *agisai*, *hasu*, *higanbana*. These of course are all reflected in Japanese culture and arts; sending someone a seasonal *etegami* (letter with a painted or drawn picture), the seasonal artistically beautiful *wagashi* (sweets) eaten during tea ceremony, the seasonal flowers used in *ikebana* and of course the seasonal food.

I'm not just talking about the festivals celebrated throughout the year like, *hanami*, *tsukimi*, or *hatsumode*. In Japan, you can't help but notice nature because you hear it, breathe it, see it and eat it. When many of you came to Japan, you heard the almost deafening sound of the cicadas. The Japanese have an insane ability to distinguish one cicada voice

from the other, and no doubt, the change marks the shift from one seasonal period to another. The sound of frogs at night lets you know it's truly summer. Seeing the praying mantis pose on the sidewalk indicates fall. My favorite scent from 金木犀, always wafting through the schools, reminds me that it's time for *aki matsuri*, when they celebrate the harvest of new rice. Going for a nightly stroll in the *inaka* to view the *hotaru* (fireflies) are examples of cultural events timed with nature that the Japanese participate in. I've heard more than once that a local could tell it was fall just by looking at the clouds in the sky. *Aki no sora* (the autumn sky) is also called *onnagokoro* (woman's heart), since the sky changes just as often. It's these proverbs, which are common knowledge to Japanese that reflect how well they know nature. I was having dinner with some Japanese girls,

and they were talking about how it takes a peach and a chestnut seed three years to fully produce fruit, while a persimmon takes five. I was surprised and impressed at their knowledge, only to be told that it's easy to remember because of Japanese *kotowaza* (proverbs) as well as folk tales.

Living in Japan has brought us *gaijin* to be more in tune with nature as well; just eating Japanese food is probably the number one way to learn and experience this. We know to buy fruits and vegetables in season, when they are cheapest, or when your fellow farmer coworkers and neighbors dump their plentiful harvest on your doorstep. We know when fish is best eaten

because it's when they are the largest, most fatty, and essentially the most delicious. *Sanma* (秋刀魚) in the fall, *sawara* (鯖) and *sayori* (細魚) in the spring, *fugu* (鰐) in the winter, *awabi* (鮑) and *ayu* (鮎) in the summer, even some of the kanji in their name reflect the best time to eat them. Sashimi garnish changes with the season, and even sushi respects nature with its strict plating presentation rules mirroring the shapes of mountains and rivers. Even if you are a conbini diner, you too are aware of seasonal change in when breads, drinks and chocolates come out with their flavors of the season. Living in Japan is enough to easily gain that much more knowledge of nature.

The reason why many of us fall in love with Japan is we see the beauty in their appreciation and respect for nature, and how important it is to Japanese culture.

Raena Mina



Hehe...

Life After the B.O.E.

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



About David Namisato

David Namisato is an illustrator in Toronto, Canada, and a former CIR (Ajigasawa-machi, Aomori-ken, 2002-04).

David's recent projects include children's picture book, *Fly Catcher Boy* written by Rebecca Kool and published by Gumboot Books, Gabe and Allie in *Race Through*

Time, a time travelling Canadian history comic appearing in *Kayak: Canada's History Magazine for Kids*, illustrating *Archie* characters for trading card company 5finity Productions, and of course the monthly *Life After the B.O.E.* comic.

www.lifeaftertheboe.com

Travel Japan!

Paul Schuble's I-word play

かがみ なか
鏡の中に
いる虫は何
でしょう？

Answer: が (moth)

"What insect is in the middle of (a) mirror?"

Well, the correct approach here is to recognize that question isn't asking what insect is in the middle of "a" mirror, but in the middle of "mirror." The Japanese word for mirror is 鏡 (かがみ). が means "moth."

Beppu

Beppu, Oita-ken, Kyushu

Beppu is located on the coast

of Beppu Bay. This is the place for onsens – natural water and steam comes out of the ground all over the city, and the water is full of natural minerals.

I visited two onsen while in Beppu and recommend a visit to both of them. The first was Suginoi Palace Onsen; I think it may be one of the most beautiful onsens I have ever been to. The washing areas were outside and so were most of the onsens. What made this onsen special were the endless pools that looked out over Beppu Bay with no fences to block the view.

I also experienced Dr Fish at Suginoi Palace onsen. I have always wanted to try this; you place your feet in a pool filled with little fish, and they nibble on your feet to remove any dead skin. It was definitely a weird experience, especially when you change to pools where some fish have sharper teeth or are quite large. Although it didn't seem to do anything to my feet, it was an interesting experience!

The other onsen I visited was Hyotan Onsen. The main reason I visited this onsen was because I wanted to experience a sand

bath. Sand baths are heated with onsen steam, but are dry. Here you can do a 'self serve' sand bath where you wear a yukata and bury yourself in the sand. After having a sand bath you then wash before entering the other onsen. There is a beautiful outdoor onsen and a waterfall onsen. Hyotan also has a reasonably priced restaurant where you can try *dagojiro*, the local specialty soup, and also many foods that have been cooked in the onsen.

One of the main sightseeing attractions in Beppu is the array of *jigoku*, or 'hells'. They are natural boiling pools which have special colours. They can be accessed from Beppu station by bus, and most are within walking distance of each other, with 2 'hells' being a 5 minute bus ride away.

Umi Jigoku "sea hell" features a pond of hot, blue water.

Oniishibozu Jigoku is named after the mud bubbles which look like the shaven heads of monks.

Shiraike Jigoku "white pond hell" features a pond of hot, milky, white water. There is also a weird and slightly creepy sex museum nearby!

Yama Jigoku "mountain hell" features small ponds of steaming hot water and a small zoo.



Kamado Jigoku "cooking pot hell" features several boiling ponds and a demon statue as a cook, as it was once used for cooking.

Oniyama Jigoku "monster mountain hell" has crocodiles that are bred and kept on the grounds.

These two 'hells' are a little further away from the other hells:

Chinoike Jigoku "blood pond hell" is a pond of hot, red water.

Tatsumaki Jigoku "spout hell" has a boiling hot geyser, which erupts every 25-30 minutes.

How to get there

I think taking a ferry to Kyushu is convenient, inexpensive and an interesting way to travel. There are various types of accommodation on the ferry ranging from tatami rooms shared with 20 people to private rooms. The trip takes 12 hours. If you book online you will get a 20% discount, however you may need some help as it is all in Japanese.

To get to the ferry at Kobe port you need to catch a train to Sannomiya, change to a local train and get off at Sumiyoshi station. Here you can catch a bus directly to the ferry.

However, finding the bus stop is a little difficult. When you exit the ticket gate, turn left and go down the ramp. A 7-Eleven should be on your left. There is a small side street and you should go down this street to end up on the street behind the 7-Eleven. Turn right on the main road and the bus stop is right there. Ferry (フェリー) is written in katakana. The bus takes about 20 minutes, but make sure you leave extra time in case of traffic. Here is the link to the ferry: www.ferry-sunflower.co.jp/ship/public/kobe_oita.html

Trains also run often from Oita to Kokura and then you can take a shinkansen. It is a lot more expensive than the ferry, but it only takes about four hours from Oita to Himeji.

Where to stay

There are many ryokans and small hotels conveniently located in Beppu and Oita. I chose to stay at the Toyoko Inn Oita Ekimae which was a five minute walk to the JR Oita station, and from there it costs ¥270 to get to JR Beppu station. A single room is only ¥4950, and if you have a members' card, you will receive discounts

for staying on Sundays or national holidays. Here is the link to the Toyoko Inn: www.toyoko-inn.com/e_hotel/00141/index.html

Places and costs

- * Private single room on the ferry from Kobe to Oita: about ¥14,000
- * Train from Oita to Himeji: about ¥15,000
- * Suginoi Onsen entry: ¥1,000 – ¥2,000, depending on the season and course. Take a bus from JR Beppu station.
- * Dr Fish: 15 minutes ¥1,000
- * Hyotan Onsen: entry ¥700, ¥200 yukata rental for the sand bath, ¥100 bath towel rental. Take a bus from JR Beppu station
- * 'Hells' multi-ticket pack ¥2,000 for tickets to all 8 'Hells'

Lauren McRae





“The Land of Lousy Choices”

Japan’s arch nemesis, North Korea, was very busy in 2010. Two major engagements with South Korea produced numerous deaths and raised regional and world tensions to levels not seen in many years. Japan has a long and complicated history with both Koreas that affects everyone living here, so it is worthwhile to examine the “North Korea problem” closer.

Who leads North Korea?

Strangely enough, a dead man. The person effectively in charge of the DPRK (Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, North Korea’s official name) is Kim Jong Il. His father, Kim Il Sung, was the first leader of North Korea when it was formed at the end of WWII. Under a home-brewed ideology and pseudo-religion known as “Juche,” the North has inculcated total obedience to the state in every citizen. Kim Il Sung was worshiped as a literal god on Earth with supernatural powers

ascribed to him and his offspring. When he died in 1994 the post of President was changed to “Eternal President” making North Korea the only country in the world ruled by a dead man.

It is widely suspected that in 2008 Kim Jong Il suffered a stroke which left him temporarily incapacitated and the future leadership of the DPRK in doubt. Since then great efforts have been made to prepare one of Kim’s sons, Kim Jong Un, as the heir-apparent.

Does North Korea have nuclear weapons?

Yes. Long suspected of secretly developing a nuclear weapons program, the DPRK conducted actual weapons tests in 2006 and 2009. They are presently believed to be in possession of a handful of nuclear bombs. To make matters worse, the U.S. was caught off guard when in

late November of 2010 an American nuclear expert was invited to tour a North Korean nuclear facility and reported seeing an ultra-modern facility with thousands of centrifuges capable of producing weapons grade nuclear material. The DPRK is now believed to have a two track nuclear weapons program which makes it a double threat.

Would North Korea really start a war?

Actually, both Koreas are still technically in a state of war. The Korean War (1950-53) ceased with an armistice but no formal peace treaty was signed, thus the war is in a state of suspension and not conclusion. The fighting from 1950-53 resulted in strategic failure for the North, but its propaganda pledges that reunification under Pyongyang will occur some day.

The North maintains a large standing army but is ill-equipped to emerge victorious in any kind of a conventional war with joint South Korean and U.S. forces. Instead, the DPRK has used military provocation – often in the form of quick, violent strikes – to put pressure on the South Korean and U.S. side to deliver much needed resources that the North needs to maintain itself.

If the war were restarted, how would Japan be affected?

Japan, as the former colonial occupier of both North and South Korea, is the subject of particularly harsh propaganda by the DPRK. The North accuses Japan of conspiring with the U.S. to weaken and overthrow the North Korean government. North Korea has test fired long range rockets over Japan and in the event of a resumption of hostilities U.S. military bases in Japan and/or Japanese civilian or defense installations could be targeted.

What are the “Six Party Talks”?

In an effort to break the cycle of escalation, de-escalation, escalation, a working group consisting of representatives from six nations – North Korea, South Korea, Japan, America, Russia,

and China – was formed to negotiate over the various issues involving North Korea. South Korea, the United States, and Japan typically take a tough stance against the North, while Russia and China (in particular) nominally support it.

Can the North Korea problem be “solved”?

A former U.S. expert on North Korea aptly dubbed the country “the land of lousy choices”. Appeasing North Korea has only succeeded in temporarily subduing their aggression, while taking a hard line often leads to violent flare ups. The U.S. side is confident in its ability to win militarily but is very hesitant to risk the kind of catastrophic damage that a collapsing North Korea could deal out upon the South.

The key to moving North Korea is China. The wartime ally of the DPRK is its main economic partner and one of the only countries in the world it can count as a friend. China for its part has competing interests at play. A rapidly growing economic and world power, China wishes to be seen as a global player and a force of stabilization. It is in China’s interest to keep North Korean aggression contained lest

it reflect badly on their image. On the other hand, China is also eager to see a reduction in U.S. stature and influence in East Asia (their backyard), and playing North Korea against America is a useful tactic.

Even under the scenario of a “soft landing” in North Korea, where the regime peacefully breaks up and the two countries are reunited, many problems would remain or be magnified. The top priority would be feeding and housing a country of over 20 million that has been racked by famine, crippling poverty and political corruption for well over a generation. Reintegrating a people who have been cut off from the world into modern society would be an unparalleled social undertaking. To say that the economic burden to South Korea and potential donor nations like Japan of such a transition would be high is a titanic understatement.

Whether the outcome is peace or war, the issue of North Korea will loom over all of East Asia well into the 21st century.

Colin Fukai



Shorinji Kempo: Too Japanese to export?

Roots

About 65 years ago, a soldier coming home from the war returned to a Japan very different from the place he'd left in 1931. He had been in China during its occupation and had seen the Soviet invasion of Manchuria before making it home. He had witnessed the very worst of human nature.

Martial arts are normally connected to more auspicious beginnings. Great students finding their own paths and becoming great masters. For So Doshin, it was rather different.

Shorinji Kempo, surrounded by the usual martial kanji and with ties to Zen Buddhism, would appear at first to be one of the traditional arts of Japan. In fact, it was formed after the Second World War by a man who was tired of seeing his neighbours living without hope, being walked on by anyone willing to throw their weight around.

After seeing what his beloved Japan had been reduced to, he thought that he could help the people of his town by sharing with them the same religious teachings that he had learnt whilst in China. But people weren't willing to listen. The strife of postwar Japan left very little room in people's

hearts to listen to sermons. So instead he gave them something else. A way to develop the strength and self-belief he wanted to see in his countrymen once again.

For many years, he had studied Chinese Kempo as part of Taoist teaching. The art was not just about beating opponents, but rather aligning and strengthening body and mind. He began to teach people how to stand up for themselves. He wouldn't create another street gang. He would create people who cared, and cared enough to act.

The tale of the fighting monk soon spread. His followers were going into the streets in support of local police, and often used force to get the gangs out of their town. Soon others came seeking similar help and training. This was the beginning of the martial art that is now known as Shorinji Kempo.

The art has come a long way since then. From a man creating a religious practice to help his town, Shorinji Kempo is now an international martial art, with around 1.5 million practitioners in about 30 countries. I first heard this story in England from a police officer who taught Shorinji Kempo in his spare time. He took it up because of its roots; it's what got me hooked too.

Shorinji... what?

Many martial arts, and indeed arts in general, have made their way out of Japan and across the world. Arts like karate and ninjitsu became more than just trends: they were cultural phenomena. An older teacher of mine once told me that when he was teaching in the 1970s, he would have a line of people waiting outside his dojo. As soon as one person in the dojo collapsed from training, the next person would take their place. Normally a film would spark the sudden interest. It still happens to this day. Films like *The Matrix* and *Ong Bak* launch different martial arts to into the spotlight.

Shorinji Kempo has never had this kind of advertising (despite Sonny Chiba's best efforts), and so it sits in relative obscurity. For many of the English people I speak to, I may as well say that I study flower arranging. At least it would stop the Jackie Chan impressions that follow my subsequent explanation.

Since coming to live in this country, I have been lucky enough to continue my training in a Japanese Dojo (or Doin, in my case). The Japanese reaction to this has been a wonderful education in the Japanese culture. People here know what Shorinji

Kempo is; the confusion comes from when I say that I do it.

The art today still furthers So Doshin's original goals. The techniques are always defensive in nature. They are not designed to kill, and for the most part, not to cause permanent damage. Even the gradings are completed with both a physical and philosophical exam. This is not an art designed for the battlefield. It even comes with a book that you are supposed to sit down and read that covers the thinking behind what you are doing. It has a creed that must be committed to memory and repeated during class. There is little wonder why so many non-Japanese are wary of it. In the book *Angry White Pyjamas*, Robert Twigger is trying to decide which martial art to do. Shorinji Kempo is quickly crossed off. "It's a cult".

Arts and cults

Sadly this is a very commonly held view, and personally I'm not sure if I can disagree with it. Certainly, I am not a cultist, nor am I religious in any way, western or eastern. But to observe Shorinji Kempo is very different from being part of it. Even in England, where the Zen Buddhism tied to the art is marginalised as a side note, I have seen people leave the dojo

because they felt it conflicted with their own religious beliefs. As soon as we see people bringing their palms together in greetings, the ordered lines of matching uniforms, even the picture of So Doshin himself on most Dojo walls, it's pretty hard to fight off the notion that this is the kind of thing your parents warned you about. The icing on the cake is that before the art was exported world wide, the practitioners would wear the manji on their uniforms. Yep, the photos of the trainees were of them wearing the swastika. You couldn't create a more threatening environment to put off us westerners.

I wonder if the main cause for this is the way many Japanese see religion differently. Once, round a Japanese family dinner table, I talked about religion in England. There, we are expected to openly define ourselves in terms of religious beliefs. Every few years, the government does a census. We fill in our names, our job details and our religion.

This notion shocked the people I was talking to. "They can ask you that?" The mother asked me.

"Yes. How would you answer?". She paused before saying "I don't know, I don't have a religion."

The separation of philosophy from religion is one I am happy to have. When this line blurs I can become very uncomfortable, and I don't think I'm alone in liking a clear line between the two. Too many conversations have transgressed from one topic to the other and sooner or later it starts to cause friction.

So when this line is not present, it can cause real issues. Shorinji Kempo is a clear case of an unclear case. Here we have a figurehead preaching philosophy. His disciples learn these rules verbatim and repeat them together. They stand under a symbol in matching uniforms, and promotion is dependant on demonstrating the correct understanding of the philosophy presented. It just rings so many alarm bells in our minds.

少林寺拳法





At the Hombu in Tadotsu, Kagawa (Shikoku),
when Rob visited with his dojo from England.

...continued from overleaf

It sits in such strong contrast to many other martial arts that have become loved by people around the world. Normally ones that involve competitions and quick “no-nonsense” techniques. The word “self defence” is used so often it’s become a cliché. Though many of us like the idea of becoming the wise old master able to perform 5 minute long, centimeter correct katas, ultimately most of us want to be able to kick ass and maybe win a few trophies in the process.

Many arts have more that just this at their heart. Just take a look at the beginnings of kendo or judo. These are two examples of some great thinkers wanting to change people for the better. Kendo was never meant to be used as practical self-defence art. In gradings (and competitions) it doesn’t matter if you can merely hit your opponent, but whether you can apply the correct form when under the greatest of pressure.

And so Shorinji Kempo has had a relatively low level of success in other countries. Despite the

removal of many parts of the religious and philosophical sides of the art, it remains a “gyo” or discipline, rather than a sport. Essays are still required for grading, part of every lesson is reserved for discussing philosophy and the notion of “winning” is still held as one of the worst attitudes to have in the dojo. For a recent essay my title was “What is true strength?”. Boxercise this isn’t.

It makes it different to many other arts, and I hope that this never changes. It would be easy to gut the art and leave it as a cut-and-paste form with no sharp edges and a friendly face. The philosophy could be removed, the grading done through competitions and anything that couldn’t be quickly applied to real situations dropped immediately from the curriculum. It would be like a person running for government: clean, inoffensive and a friend to everyone.

But it isn’t. In stead it’s complex, thought provoking, and above all, unique. I was given a technique 4 months in to my training that

I am still learning. I wasn’t given it because it was quick and useful, I was given it because it wasn’t. It was something that couldn’t be learnt in a day or even a week. It would take many conversations with different people, constantly admitting to my teacher that I still didn’t get it even when my friends had. It took many evenings sat with a book understanding the theory behind it and many more hours with understanding kenshi letting me throw them around a room to help me learn. There is so much to learn that I will never finish. There is no handshake at the end waiting for me, no reward, no medals. Just other people doing the same. Day in and day out working and failing together.

So Doshin created something that anyone can join, but he won’t change it just because we find it a little strange.

Rob Miller

Rob has been practicing Shorinji Kempo since 2005. He recently tested in Himeji Budokan for his nidan shokenshi (second degree black belt) rank.

Kobe Jazz Review

It has come to my attention, after a year or so of hanging around Kobe’s jazz clubs on the weekend, that I hardly ever see other foreigners who aren’t performing. This is a disappointment. I’ve mentioned my jazz excursions to other ALTs, and they’ve complained that there’s a dearth of information on Kobe’s jazz clubs in English, which is true. With that in mind, I’m starting a new series of articles here at HT, spotlighting jazz clubs and events. I’ll also answer any questions you may have about visiting Kobe to see a live show.

This information comes with a warning that the bar owners requested me to share. Please, please do not go to jazz bars to get drunk, especially if you’re the kind of drunk who makes an ass of himself when under the influence. It’s not worth it, and it damages the experience for the people who go to enjoy the music. Moreover, it damages our status as foreigners. All that “grassroots internationalization” stuff they touted at Tokyo Orientation still applies. Enjoy jazz responsibly.

Basin Street

The owner of Basin Street, Mr. Tatsuhiko Kawasaki, once said during a concert that he didn’t really like the song after which he named his bar. “It’s too

downbeat,” he said. “I wanted to name the bar after ‘Satin Doll,’ but there’s already a Satin Doll in Kobe.” He may be dissatisfied with the name, but he’s very satisfied with his job. He gets to own the bar, play guitar and drums, and hang out with jazz musicians all the time. If this is what a mid-life crisis gets you, sign me up.

Basin Street was founded just over two years ago, when Kawasaki quit his job in sales and decided to make a jazz bar where quality was job one. I’ve asked other patrons why they come to Basin Street, and the answer is always the same. “Basin Street’s musicians are just better,” said one young woman. “No matter when I come, even if I don’t know any of the performers, I know I’ll have a good time.” Quite honestly, I agree. Kawasaki recruits some of the best musicians around to fill his schedule, like the 84 year old pianist who lived in New York, the twenty-something NYU grad with two albums under her belt, or the star of Bossa Nova night, who both sings in Portuguese and plays guitar. It’s a showcase of talent, and it’s inspiring. As one version of the song says, “Basin Street is the street / Where the proud and elite folks meet.”

That inspiration comes at a cost, though. The normal music charge for a night at Basin Street is ¥1500 plus mandatory ¥300 bar nut fee.

The bar is small, with room for maybe 10 patrons at the counter and 16 at tables around the room. It’s a cozy, familiar kind of place, but it’s anything from quiet. At Basin Street, the focus is on the music. The bar is well-stocked with whiskies and other alcohols, but is limited to your standard Japanese bar repertoire – no martinis, but lots of simple drinks. The food menu, as far as I know, consists of one curry that claims to be organic. There are also bar nuts.

Music: 5/5

Drinks: 4/5

Price: \$\$\$

(¥3000 – 5000 per person,
cover and two drinks.)

Staff: The one bartender speaks some English, and the owner is conversational.

For a guided visit, please consult the Kobe Jazz Group Calendar. For schedule information, check out the website.

Travis Love

Food / Jazz correspondent

Kobe Jazz Review was started in January 2011 after Travis Love decided more ALTs needed to experience Kobe’s jazz scene. Travis invites your comments, questions and suggestions either on the website or via Facebook.



Rametary

Waka waka Wakayama

Hyogo has a ton of great food

to offer, from fantastic Awaji onions to some truly succulent beef, but it doesn't have a specific style of ramen as its own. Sapporo is king of miso, Fukuoka runs the tonkotsu game, and Kyoto boasts a thick, chicken based brew as the local choice. Shops all over Japan have variations on your typical *shoyu* or *shio* broths, with noodles varying in thickness, straightness, chewiness, color, and flavor.

An easy way to change up the flavor of ramen is to combine soups (often seen in Japanese as スープ). Wakayama-ken, our neighbor to the south east, is famous for their *shoyu-tonkotsu* broth. As I can be known to ramble on and on about my favorite *tonkotsu* broth to the exclusion of all others, I figured this would be a good way to make at least slight inroads into a flavor that despite limited exposure, I don't care for.

One thing I noticed right off the bat upon arriving in Wakayama was that ramen is referred to as Chinese, or *chuka*, *soba* (中華そば). This is, of course, a nod to the fact that ramen as a dish comes from China. Our

first stop in Wakayama was *Chuka Soba Ideshouten* (中華そば井出商店), a very old and well-known shop (apparently it was founded in Showa 28, which is 1953 to us). It's a no-nonsense place, with two kinds of ramen and two sizes, customers who eat and leave quickly, and a tight, cramped seating area that fits maybe 20 folks. Service is quick and the ramen comes out in about five minutes. Also present is another Wakayama custom: pre-wrapped sushi and raw egg for your (very inexpensive) consumption.

Despite the feeling of confidence that permeated the staff, the looks of satisfied customers, and the line out the door, I just didn't get it. The ramen is nothing special, in fact lacking in any kind of specific impact on every level. The noodles are average, the meat is average, the toppings are average, even the soup, which is the backbone of any bowl, drew almost no reaction of any kind. Well, maybe

confusion. The ramen here is cheap, and the décor interesting and retro, but I wouldn't go back.

Surely this couldn't be an accurate representation of one of the more famous ramen styles in Kansai. Questions posed to a Wakayama native friend led us to another shop, *Marui* (丸井). Walking into *Marui* was light years from *Ideshouten*; this shop was much newer, much cleaner, and the staff was much nicer. It was suggested that we try the *negi* ramen, so naturally we did. I also saw a spicy miso style that was yelling out to me.

Of all the ramen we ate in Wakayama, the spicy miso was the best. It's not a condemnation of their ramen scene, but if you hang your hat on *shoyu tonkotsu*, it's a bit unfortunate that the best bowl of four isn't of that persuasion.

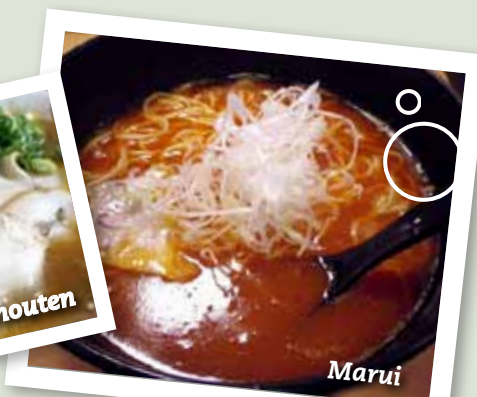
Andrew Jamashiro



Ideshouten



Ideshouten



Marui

Book discoveries

The Elegance of the Hedgehog

Translated from French

to English, *The Elegance of the Hedgehog* is a powerful novel that brings two very extraordinary characters to life. Renee Michel is a concierge at an upper-class Parisian apartment complex. She constantly has to conceal her intelligence from the other tenants in her building for fear they may not appreciate her insights and philosophies – especially if they are coming from one of their apartment employees. Paloma Josse is the young (but not innocent) twelve year old daughter of a very wealthy Parisian family living in Renee's building. She struggles daily with the pointlessness of life and the bothersome relationships within her family. Both women

are best described as closet intellectuals

– hiding their knowledge from the world, their families, and strangers. Their lives are full of personal longing, literature, and heavy thoughts – the hustle and bustle of their building tosses them from meditative state to ferocious frustrations in a heartbeat.

“...a Parisian world that could very well be our own.”

The book is written with alternating chapters between the two characters. It is not until an older, cultured, Japanese businessman moves in that our Renee and Paloma begin to discover that they have more in common than they realize. Mr. Kakuro Ozu's patience and insight offers the women a chance to see each other for the first time, discovering that sometimes, anyone can have a secret that's better shared than kept locked inside.

With Ozu's presence in the building, the tenants begin to adjust to the new stir of events. He begins to break down Renee's solitary demeanor as the two begin to form an unusual friendship.

Paloma is also taken with Kakuro, his serenity and calmness – he gives her things to look forward to, which is ultimately what she needs.

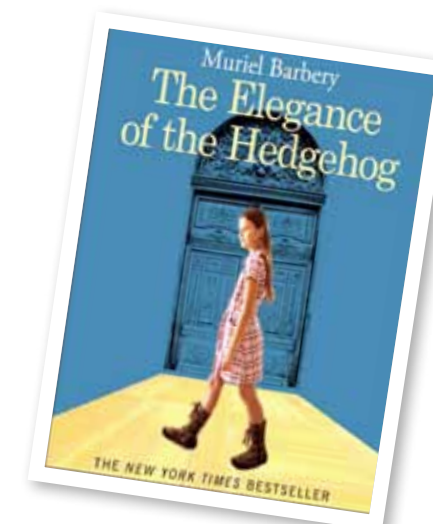
The novel was first published in France in 2006 with a print run of 4,000 books, but became a publishing phenomenon and sold over a million copies the following year. It was first printed in English in September 2008 to acclaimed reviews.

It has now been translated into several languages and published in a number of countries.

If you're worried the weather is going to keep you inside too long and you want something to help keep you warm, I recommend reading this book. From time to time we need to remind ourselves that we are not alone in our questions or thoughts, and sometimes we could use a bit more elegance in our lives.

With questions about the meaning of life, suicide, and class, Barbery presents us with a Parisian world that could very well be our own.

Caitlin Orr



Izena Triathlon

It all started when I got a phone call in June from my younger brother Len, who lives in Okinawa. He said he was signing up for a big triathlon in Okinawa, and if I didn't sign up too he'd call me a loser for the rest of my life. So I agreed. My older brother, on the other hand, declined, saying he didn't have a good bike. What a loser!

The triathlon was held on one of Japan's most beautiful islands, Izenajima. So I figured it was maybe the best place to swim 2km, bike 66km and run 20km all in one go, and for the first time.

Izena Island is located an hour ferry ride north of mainland Okinawa. Len got seasick on the way over as the ferry ploughed through strong wind and rain, with three meter swells pounding it and drenching the deck in water. It was funny seeing Len getting sick, as he surfs almost every day.

550 competitors eventually arrived on the 15 sq-kilometer island which has a population of just over 1,500 people. By the time everyone arrived, the island was in party mode. People lined the streets to support us during race day, and all of the people on the island were super friendly. The island was rich with unique and stunning scenery. Izena is the poorest of the Okinawina Islands, I was told, and it was one of the only islands not ravaged by American and Japanese military forces during World War II. The houses looked old and basic, but the small side streets separating them were

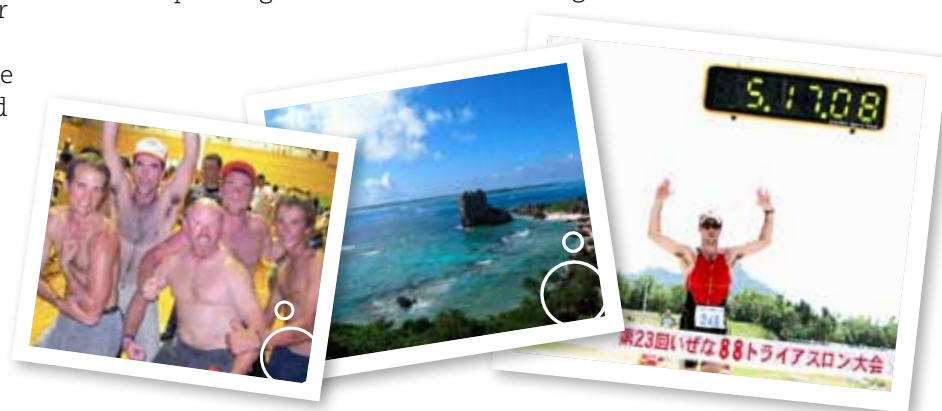
beautifully lined with coral walls. I saw an old woman in her eighties out on her hands and knees farming. Where else would you see that? It really got me thinking about people's lifestyles and what society expects of you at that age back home. It didn't make a difference on Izena Island, though.

The triathlon started at 7:30am on Sunday the 24th of October under beautiful blue skies in a comfy 25 degrees. Five hours and 17 minutes later, I crossed the finish line, sunburnt and in 35 degree heat. The swim

and bike section were very pleasant and enjoyable, but the run was very hot, hilly, and difficult. The overall experience was amazing, and it's something I want to do again. The feelings of achievement certainly outweigh the physical feelings of pain after doing an event like this. As one of my friends said to me, pain is weakness leaving the body! I took little comfort in those words as I walked like John Wayne in the week that followed the event.

The next challenge will be the Miyakojima triathlon on April 24th, which looks even more beautiful than Izenajima. It's a great excuse to go all the way down there. My brother Len said his heart rate was 190 just signing the entry forms yesterday!

Maurice Kelleher



Dating Game is to give the students a fun, real-world context in which to practice the target grammar, in this case “X is as ~ as Y,” many times in rapid succession, until they are able to do it naturally and fluidly. This game has the added bonus of provoking non-stop giggling, because it asks the students to search among their classmates for a spouse.

Students write three opinion sentences using the target grammar. In this case I asked the students to make value judgments about school and free time, American food and Japanese food, and love and money.

Then I explain to them what “speed-dating” is. Some students have probably heard of Omai (Japanese arranged marriages), but few have probably heard of speed-dating. Once I explain

that, I tell them *we're going to have a speed dating party in class today!* (cue round one of squealing).

The girls stay seated while the boys move their chairs around to the front of the girls' desks. I give them one minute per "date." Make sure you keep it fast-paced, or their attention wanders. After one minute, I tell the boys to stand and move to the next empty chair (make sure the boys are clear on which direction to move: when we did this in my class there were mix-ups).

Students who share the same opinion on a point put an “O” in that boy or girl’s column. Students who disagree put an “X.” Explain to them beforehand that students who have matching values (all “O”) are compatible and can get married! (cue round two of squealing).

If your class has an uneven number of girls and boys, you can either give someone a one-minute break, or double them up. For example, if there were two girls to one boy, the conversation would go like this:

G1 I think love is as important as money. How about you?

B I think love is not as important as money. How about you?

G2 I think money is not as important as love.

Miriam Truppin-Brown

Arranged Marriage! (お見合い)

Name: (

Omaia Speed Dating!!



Name: _____

(1) I think _____ school / free time (important)
How about you?

(2) I think American food / Japanese food (good)
How about you?

(3) I think _____ love / money (important)
How about you?



I will marry
結婚する

RoboGeisha

There are many ways to study geisha. Middle-aged American women have *Memoirs of a Geisha* and Oprah. Tourists can dress like geisha in Kyoto for an in-their-shoes experience. The rich and connected can attend legitimate geisha performances. Academics turn to scholarship and classical literature on the topic. Me? I learned everything I need to know about geisha from a film released in 2009 by director Iguchi Noboru (who also makes porn). His film taught me the four tenets of geisha:

- 1: Geisha is Japanese girl.
- 2: Geisha is beautiful.
- 3: Geisha is wild.
- 4: Geisha is robot.

The film is a B-movie called **RoboGeisha** and it is indeed an educational one. In addition to their devotion to traditional arts, such as the playing *shamisen* and pouring beverages for rich businessmen, I learned that geisha are master robo-martial artists as well. Their techniques include, but are not limited to:

geisha missile, geisha hari-kari, geisha chainsaw, geisha transform, bust machine gun, acid breast milk and fried shrimp attack. “GO TO HELL!” is their battle cry of choice. Furthermore, Robot Castle is their mortal enemy.

Unfortunately, these are all things I learned would be in **RoboGeisha** without actually seeing the film. In three minutes and change, the trailer (readily available on YouTube) gives a pretty thorough synopsis of everything viewers will experience watching the movie. **RoboGeisha**, by nature of its awesome title alone, warranted a viewing and possibly even a reviewing. However, I was worried that the film would not live up to its trailer, as it evoked a bit of déjà vu from my college days.

Young Me once discovered a compilation of “classic” moments from a film entitled *Shark Attack 3: Megalodon* that was making its way around the internet. The video showcased the hilariously lame dialogue

(which put “I have had it with these motherf***ing snakes on this motherf***ing plane!” to shame) and budget special effects (that seemed to have been limited to superimposing actors onto Shark Week footage). The concurrent rise of Netflix gave me the opportunity to see the actual movie at essentially no cost, as my friends all believed *Shark Attack 3: Megalodon* would surpass those legendary three minutes of hilarity when viewed in full. This could not have been further from the truth. Essentially, we spent ninety minutes of our lives waiting for the scenes featured in the video (see *Snakes on a Plane* for further viewing of this same phenomenon). The **RoboGeisha** trailer evoked similar feelings: a burning desire for more insanity and concern that there was nothing more to see.

First things first: **RoboGeisha** is a bad movie. That is not a secret. Surely the people who worked on the film are in on the joke; you need look no further than the

trailer to figure out that even those involved think **RoboGeisha** is ridiculous. Fortunately, B-movies are often entertaining for that very reason, however. Lousy special effects, cheesy dialogue and absurd plots create box office flops that turn into cult classics. Therefore, the purpose of this review is not to sing praises nor drag the film through the mud. Instead, I intend to pass verdict on whether **RoboGeisha** is bad enough to be good.

RoboGeisha is both bad and good at being bad. For example, the first half of the film is not bad enough to be enjoyable. Despite the strong efforts of bust machine gun, geisha chainsaw and acid breast milk, the film (at first) suffers from a lack of campy dialogue and violence extreme enough to be humorous. The gunplay is so lousy it becomes boring; when one hundred shots are fired from a geisha breast only 6 bullets actually connect (and the carnage is not very extravagant). Furthermore, the geisha chainsaw

does not even chop off a single head! These scenes are nothing new for those that have seen the trailer. In addition, the “evil” plan that is supposedly driving the plot is exposed, yet the characters take themselves so seriously that viewers cannot laugh with them or at them. For a while, **RoboGeisha** acts like a B-movie with A-list aspirations (and starts to fall flat as a result).

RoboGeisha starts slow, but luckily the second act redeems the first. In my opinion, the turning point in the film is a scene in which three characters simultaneously fake heart attacks in order to get the jump on one of the villains **and it works!** Around the same time, we learn that the evil steel company that makes the robotic geisha is not only housed in a giant steel castle, but **a giant steel castle robot!** The castle sprouts limbs and goes on a building punching spree, hitting them so hard that the people inside are not merely crushed; instead they are **instantly liquefied into**



miniature tidal waves of blood! **RoboGeisha** turned out to have some surprises in store not featured in the trailer. They were glorious and made the film worth viewing.

There are many things about **RoboGeisha** that could have been done worse in an effort to make the film better. However, I will never forget the heart attack sneak attack or the sky scraper blood explosions. Thank you, **RoboGeisha**.

Thanks for watching!

JJ Cappa

*Note: Although **RoboGeisha** has been picked up for distribution in the US, the version found in your local video store will most likely not be subtitled.*



In Defense of the Japanese Man

My articles have created a rather

disparaging image of Japanese men, and somewhat unfairly I think. After all, most of my friends in Yashiro are middle-aged men, and they're not all that bad. I kind of like how many of them enjoy drinking, crack filthy jokes, and are generally easier to get along with than many women. The local men had been gathering every night at a nearby shrine to drunkenly prepare the *mikoshi* for the fall festival, so I decided to crack a few beers myself and hear them out.

Chivalry is dead in Japan. More accurately, these men claim it was never alive in the first place. They use the anachronistic excuse of *bushido* for their "gentlemen-first" behavior and mock the younger generations for abandoning this precept. It may appear that the younger *soushokukei* men are allowing their partners to pass through the doors first, but in reality, they're just following them around like pet dogs. Fair enough, women don't necessarily need to come first, but shouldn't they at least share household chores with their wives? The women I interviewed for my last article work just as many hours as their husbands and yet clean the house, make lunch and dinner, and take care of their kids single-handedly. Again, the men claimed that that's just the way things are in Japan. It's *bushido*.

In terms of fidelity, they condemn emotional affairs but declare prostitutes a mulligan. "I earned the money, so I can do whatever

I want with it" seemed to be the unanimous explanation. So long as their families can live comfortably, they have every right to visit brothels. In fact, they claim that they need prostitutes after having their first child because the wife diverts all her attention to the kid. Men use the steak analogy in Japan too, by the way. "You may love eating steak, but after having steak every day of your life, you sometimes want something fresher – like a *kappa-maki*." When I suggested that their wives should then be allowed the same attitude, they vehemently disagreed. Was this not a double standard? "From a foreigner's perspective, perhaps yes, but this is *bushido*" – a very convenient excuse.

I then asked why it seems that so many men do cheat on their wives. Aside from wanting the occasional *kappa-maki*, they believe that some marriages fall apart because there is no such thing as family or spousal counseling in Japan. Going to see a therapist suggests mental instability, and "household" matters are strictly that – they remain in the house. The other problem may be that the father is rarely home because of work. Although most of the Yashiro men work locally, they know of people who commute one or two hours to work every day, work overtime, and return very late. In the end, such fathers become strangers to their families. I questioned why the fathers remain

in such unhappy marriages or even start families to begin with. According to them, the ability to have and support a family in the countryside is a Japanese man's duty and matter of pride. Actually having a relationship with the family is secondary. This is where the Japanese man feels the burden of *bushido*.

So, I pushed them further, thinking there had to be something that would dispel the unfavourable image they were creating for themselves. I asked why many of them do not speak kindly about their wives when they work so hard at home and remain faithful to them. Apparently, that question had an obvious answer: Japanese people don't like to brag, and speaking positively about one's wife is tantamount to bragging.

However, as we downed our beers in front of the half-completed *mikoshi*, the men began to speak fondly of their families. One guy would rather have stayed home to sleep next to his two year old, and another wished to spend time talking with his wife after dinner. They do love their families. They're just scared of sounding like they're bragging. (That comes after retirement, when they "no longer have anything to brag about.") And, they plan on telling their wives on their deathbeds for the first time that they had always loved them.

Rika Sawatsky 



Hey Baby, What's Your Sign?

Or don't you know anymore?

There's been a lot of talk, this month, about the changes made to the circle of zodiac signs, the addition of a new sign, and displacement of birthdays into different astrological zones.

I've been following astrology for about half my life now, learning a bit here and there from my best friend's grandmother, books, and of course, the internet. I might even go so far as to call myself an amateur astrologer. "I'm Scorpio," I may answer with confidence.

"Yes, but what are you *really*?" asks one of my friends.

"Oh it's still the same for her," another puts in, "It only affects people born after this year, or something."

Hold up. This "holy shift!" moment we're having is nothing new. It is true that when an astrologer tells you the sun is currently "in Aquarius," it's actually visibly couched in the constellation of Capricorn. The zodiac signs have slipped from their constellations by a great deal, and have slowly been doing so for thousands of years.

Astrology is based on an optical illusion, which is why we're able to say the sun is "in" any sector of the sky, when we know it

doesn't actually move around the earth any more than the planets or constellations do. The movement of planets and stars from our vantage point is regular and predictable, as is the *precession of the equinoxes*, which is the phenomenon that accounts for the shifting of the signs relative to their named constellations (think of it as Earth wobbling on its axis; this is also the reason we have a new "North Star" every couple thousand years).

But it's all just a matter of names. Think of it this way: the planets are all "named after" gods and goddesses (Venus, Mars, Jupiter, etc.), but to the very ancients (Babylonians), the planets were the gods. The seat of the gods was the sky (heaven), and the movement of those gods was of great importance in divining their will and ire. Hence, the birth of astrology.

In Western astrology, by similar fashion, the twelve evenly divided sectors of the sky are *named after* constellations which were once correspondent to them as physically viewed from the Earth. But the signs are actually divided according to season. Sidereal astrology

is a whole different branch which uses the actual constellations, but that's not the type you've been reading in your newspapers since you were twelve.

The twelve signs of the zodiac are based on the solar calendar. The first of them, Aries, begins on the vernal equinox (first day of spring), around the 21st of March. Summer solstice kicks off with the sign of the crab, while autumnal equinox begins the weighing scales, and the winter solstice is the first day of the sign of the sea-goat. This is, naturally, why the signs do not have fixed start and end dates, and if your birthday falls close to the cusp, you have to check a chart to find your "true sign."

The twelve sectors of the sky appear to be traversed by the various planets, plus the sun and moon. We have retrograde motion when a planet appears to be moving backwards through the signs, instead of progressing in a forward fashion like the good old sun and moon do.

The sun is a major player in astrology, but many other elements come into play. The planets function as symbolic characters, with the sun representing your ego, and



...continued from overleaf

the moon your emotional side. If someone asks about your sign, what they're really saying is, in what invisibly demarcated sector of the sky was the sun at the time you were born? An astrologer, though, will pay just as much attention to your moon sign and rising sign (what sign was on the horizon at the moment you were born).

Elements and Modes

There are four "elements" in astrology (fire, earth, air, and water) and three "modes" (cardinal, fixed, and mutable). The personalities of the signs are derived in no small part from the combinations (3 x 4 being 12) of these elements. Generally, fire is passionate and physical, earth steady and pragmatic, air intellectual and hard to pin down, and water emotional and nurturing. Cardinal means good leadership, while fixed means obdurate (or determined), and mutable is flexible, literally 'changeable.' Each sign has a planetary ruler, and each planet has a sort of personality (which corresponds more or less to the god after which it is named).

Daily astrology predictions and columns use the movements of the heavenly bodies to make connections based on the angles struck by planets wandering around the circle. The overall concept is that the planets and their aspects do not cause anything to occur, rather they are said to *reflect* the way things are going at that time. Similarly, astrologers hold that being born at a certain time doesn't *make* you have a certain personality, but rather it seeks to describe it.

If you'd like to find out more, the web has a lot of great resources. **Astrodienst** (www.astro.com) will cast your full chart for free (it's the interpreting of it that costs you the money), so you can see exactly what your natal chart looks like. This site also has a lot of interesting articles explaining further aspects of astrology, and the basics in much greater detail.

Jonathan Cainer (www.cainer.com) is an astrologer in the UK, whose website I've been visiting for 13 years. He manages to be very encouraging without feeling patronizing, and I have always enjoyed his work.

A newer addition to my list of sites is **SoulGarden** (www.soulgarden.tv) where Christopher Witecki delivers the daily predictions like a weather report.

All of them will tell you the same thing: that if you were a Virgo last month, you're still a Virgo. If your sister has a baby tomorrow, that baby is an Aquarius. There are, in tropical astrology, twelve signs, and they're just like you remember. Be reassured; it may be the dawning of the Age of Aquarius, but that doesn't mean it's the end of the world as we know it. We'll have to wait til 2012 for that business.

Emily Lemmon



Sign	Symbol	Element	Mode	Ruling Planet	Approximate Dates	Special Date
Aries	Ram	Fire	Cardinal	Mars	Mar 21 – Apr 19	Vernal Equinox
Taurus	Bull	Earth	Fixed	Venus	Apr 20 – May 20	
Gemini	Twins	Air	Mutable	Mercury	May 21 – Jun 20	
Cancer	Crab	Water	Cardinal	Moon	Jun 21 – Jul 22	Summer Solstice
Leo	Lion	Fire	Fixed	Sun	Jul 23 – Aug 22	
Virgo	Maiden	Earth	Mutable	Mercury	Aug 23 – Sep 22	
Libra	Scales	Air	Cardinal	Venus	Sep 23 – Oct 22	Autumnal Equinox
Scorpio	Scorpion	Water	Fixed	Pluto (formerly Mars)	Oct 23 – Nov 21	
Sagittarius	The archer	Fire	Mutable	Jupiter	Nov 22 – Dec 21	
Capricorn	Sea goat	Earth	Cardinal	Saturn	Dec 22 – Jan 19	Winter Solstice
Aquarius	Water bearer	Air	Fixed	Uranus (formerly Saturn)	Jan 20 – Feb 18	
Pisces	Fish	Water	Mutable	Neptune (formerly Jupiter)	Feb 19 – Mar 20	



Getting to Know Random JETs

Andrew Jiro Poplawski

Please call me: Andrew.

School and Location in Hyogo:
Toyooka Kita Chugakko: 北中!

How we know you:
Through JET?

Birthday:
April 29.

Born and raised:
Seattle, WA, USA.

Family:
Father – David, Mother – Karyn,
Sister – Alisa, Brother – Alex.
Half Japanese, Italian and Polish!

University and Degree:
Seattle University – major
in International Business with
a Japanese minor.

Other jobs that you have had:
Rockport – Shoes salesman,
Starbucks – Barista. Japanese
Tutor through the learning center
of Seattle University.

Travels:

Italy, France and Monaco –
2005 for the Italy Cup soccer
tournament, Hong Kong 2009,
Taiwan 2010.

Hobbies:
Sports, food, and traveling.

Staying another year?:
Have not decided yet – there are
new opportunities every day.

Favorites

Food: Pizza and ramen

Sports: Rock climbing,
soccer, baseball, softball,
football, golf...

Music: Jpop and all US music
except country.

Shop: 100 Yen shop for the kids!

TV Show: Batsu Game.

Movie: Ratatouille.

Random Trivia

Most Proud Achievement:
Climbing Mt. Fuji starting
in complete darkness at 2am
with one of my best friends
from home.

Best life experience: College.

Motto to live by:
Love life, be happy, smile 😊

I remember when...:

I first started Japanese, who
would have thought I would
be in the situation I am now!

What are you drinking? Coffee.

Who would you like to meet?
My ancestors from a long
time ago so I can know more
about my family's history.

Why should we elect you President
of the World? You shouldn't.

Best thing about Japan so far?
Coming back to finish what
I couldn't finish before – and
the kids!

If it was my last day on earth
I would...: eat a lot of food.

Interesting Fact about me:
Member of Alpha Kappa
Psi-Gamma Omega!

Teaching

My top tip for teaching:
Don't be shy!

When the class is TOO QUIET I...:
still don't know what to do!

Bribery for students – YAY or NAY?
Nay

Funniest Story involving a student:
I asked a boy if he had a girlfriend
and he replied "no" so I walked
him around to girls and told
them he wanted a girlfriend
and everyone ran away from him!

Caitlin Orr

Please call me:

Rainbow Crystal Star Heart Rose.

School and Location in Hyogo:
Yamasaki Nishi Junior High
School, Yamasaki, Shiso.

How we know you: Book Reviewer
for The Hyogo Times.

Birthday: January 17.

Born and raised:
By wolves in Fullerton, CA.

Family: Parents, younger twin
sisters (one just moved into town
to work at a juku school. We're
neighbors!).

University and Degree: Mount
Holyoke College; Religion and
philosophy.

Other jobs that you have had:
independent book store
employee, independent movie
theater worker, jazz bar hostess,
tutor, Leonardo DaVinci camp
counselor, and more.

Travels: anywhere I can as
often as I can.

Hobbies: naming inanimate
objects, decorating, making
brooches, going on quests, finding
vintage goodies...

Staying another year? I'm hoping
third year is the charm.

Favorites

Food: anything Thai, sushi, pizza.

Sports: soccer, rugby.

Music: women with instruments
and painful, depressing lyrics.

Shop: antique stores,
anthropologie.

TV Show: Six Feet Under, Weeds.

Movie: Hercules, Penelope,
The Princess Bride.

Random Trivia

Most Proud Achievement:
Winning an "ants-in-your-pants"
dance contest when I was 5.

Best life experience:
selling "Think Peace" shirts
to protest the Iraq War.

Motto to live by: It is what it is.

I remember when...:
I owned those jelly sandals.

What are you drinking?
Whiskey and pina coladas.

Who would you like to meet?
Che Guevara.

Why should we elect you President
of the World? I'd decorate the
street corners and provide
homebrewed beer.

Best thing about Japan so far?
The hair accessories.

Interesting Fact about me:
I LOVE tattoos.



If it was my
last day on earth I would...:
take my family out to a fancy
restaurant and order every bottle
of wine, dressed up like a fairy.

Teaching

My top tip for teaching: your kids can
only be as enthusiastic as you are.

When the class is TOO QUIET I...:
dance and do Michael Jackson
impersonations.

Bribery for students – YAY or NAY?
I started off giving stickers, but
I've become egalitarian and have
settled for a round of applause for
the winners and high-fives.

Funniest Story involving a student:
So many, so many. My elementary
kids had just learned the planets
from someone, and for my
English ball game, two of them
introduced their new words, only
with a very thick Japanese accent.
So, all I heard was "Be-nus" and
"Arth" which sound very different
to me than "Venus" and "Earth"
and I felt I was in some sex-ed
class gone wrong.

Homemade Chicken Soup, Japan Style

It's the dead of winter here in Hyogo, and you all know what that means: **influenza!** Teaching is one of the absolute worst professions to be in come flu season, as teachers are surrounded by sniffing, coughing, plague-bearing students. I usually interact with between 140 and 200 students a day, and with the added strain of capering back and forth like a dancing monkey for their edutainment, my immune system can always use a boost. So aside from eating a sack of *mikans* every day, what's a health-conscious ALT to do?

Whether you're sick or planning on staying well this winter, the old folk-remedy of chicken soup is a good, tasty way to get heaps of vitamins and nutrition this winter. This being Hyogo Times, though, we're going to do this properly, and that means making it the right way. So take a Saturday morning off and make some soup with me. This is the old-fashioned way, and while I was hoping to get a full chicken, I couldn't find one, so I made do with just the bones, which are available at your supermarket. Just ask someone for "tori no gara" and you'll be on your way.

Ingredients :

- 1 chicken back / neck (がら)
- 1 pack of 5-8 chicken drumsticks (手羽元 / てばもと)
- 1 chicken breast, (ムネ肉), sliced into 3 cm chunks.
- 2 onions, peeled and chopped into 3 cm chunks
- 1 carrot, peeled and chopped into 3 cm chunks
- 1 stalk celery, leafy top separated, lower stalk cut into chunks
- 1 clove garlic, whole
- * Cold water
- * Parsley, Turmeric, Salt and Pepper to taste

Step One

Wash the chicken back and neck and drumsticks thoroughly, and put everything in your largest pot. We recommend using a pot that holds at least 3.5 liters of liquid.

Step Two

Fill the pot most of the way with cold water, enough to cover the chicken completely.

Step Three

Set the pot on the stove over low heat. You **DO NOT WANT** the contents of the pot to boil, so keep a close eye and reduce the heat as necessary. Your target is the simmer, which means small bubbles, slow cooking, and lots of flavor. Also, you need to give more time for the fat and impurities in the chicken to float to the surface.

Step Four

Using a ladle that can be obtained from your nearest 100 Yen shop, periodically skim off floating impurities and bubbles of oil. Be sure to top the pot off with cold water when you finish, and add the water slowly.

Step Five

After simmering for about 30 minutes, gently add the celery top, garlic, carrots, and onions. Add also about 1 tsp of parsley, maybe 1/2 tsp of salt and 2-3 shakes of turmeric.

Step Six

Continue to simmer, skimming fat off periodically and adding enough cold water to cover the ingredients, for three to four more hours.

Step Seven

When you're finished, remove the solids. You may run things through a strainer if you like. Take whatever meat you can from the chicken and set it aside. You may add the vegetables back in, or start with fresh ones, as most of them have probably contributed all their flavor to the broth.

Step Eight

Put the broth back on the stove. Add the chicken breast and any meat you pulled from the bones. If you add other fresh vegetables, like the lower half of the celery stalk, be sure to cut them into smaller, maybe 1 cm chunks. You may, during this phase, add pasta, dumplings, or whatever, as per your personal cooking preferences.

Step Nine

Simmer this for 15-20 minutes or until all vegetables are cooked. If you add pasta, we recommend boiling it in another pot, but if you want to boil it in the soup so that the nice chicken flavor gets all through the noodle, well, that's fine too.

Step Ten

You've just made something delicious. Taste it. Season it with fine salt and white pepper. Add some crackers. Whatever.



Serves: 4-6.
Approx. time: 4 hours, 30 minutes of irregular attention.

Cheater's Version: Skip steps 1 – 7 and use cubes of chicken or vegetable bullion, one cube per 300 ml of water. I assure you, nothing tastes as good as making it the long way.

Travis Love
Food / Jazz correspondent

Travis Love is the Hyogo Times Food / Jazz contributor. He lives in Aioi, and would love to hear from you in the comments below or via Facebook. He has never released a country music record.

Hyogo Times Event Calendar

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
30	31	01 Ongoing Stuff Skiing in Hyogo Takarazuka (February's show is Flower Troupe. 愛のプレリユード)	02	03 Setsubun Shunsetsu: Spring Festival 2011 in Kobe's Chinatown. 10:30-20:30	04 Shunsetsu: Spring Festival 2011 in Kobe's Chinatown. 10:30-20:30	05 Yukigassen (snowball fight) Tournament: Ojiro, Kami-cho, Tajima. 12:00 Shunsetsu: Spring Festival 2011 in Kobe's Chinatown. 10:30-20:30
06 Yukigassen (snowball fight) Tournament: Ojiro, Kami-cho, Tajima. 12:00 Shunsetsu: Spring Festival 2011 in Kobe's Chinatown. 10:30-20:30	07	08	09	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18 Poker Night Polo Dog, Sannomiya. 18:00-22:00	19 Okayama Naked Man Festival 18:00-23:59
20 Takarazuka Dream Forum Takarazuka Grand Theatre	21	22	23	24	25	26 Block 6 and 7 Valentine's Party. Osaka. 19:00-23:00
27 Toyooka Crab Festival Tsuiyama-ko Kojima Ganpeki.	28	01	02 Banshu Textile Exhibition Nishiwaki Royal Hotel, Grand Hall (991 Nishiwaki, Nishiwaki City) 10:00-17:00	03 Banshu Textile Exhibition Nishiwaki Royal Hotel, Grand Hall (991 Nishiwaki, Nishiwaki City) 10:00-17:00	04	05

For more indepth details about all the events, please visit our website: www.hyogoajet.net