

September 2010

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Host Clubs
Key Terms**



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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: publications@hyogo.ajet.net

http://hyogoajet.net/wiki/Hyogo_Times

We're also on Facebook!

MESSAGE FROM THE EDITORS

Hola mis amigos,

This summer something strange occurred. When I returned home to New York I felt out of place. Of course I missed and love my family. (Isn't my niece, Abigail Blu, so cute wearing my gifts from Japan?) But New York didn't feel like home to me anymore. I do not know if I should lament this or not.

Although living in a place for a year does not necessarily make it a home, Japan has become a kind of home for me. Whether you are like me, embarking on your second year or if you are going on to your 3rd, 4th, or 5th year I

Howdy do, Hyogo:

Well, it is September. I read somewhere that this is nicknamed "the long month," but I am not sure I agree. I only hope that somewhere within these thirty days, the summer's endless fever breaks, and we begin to wake up chilly. Because, come on, the predawn air should not be a suitable (or higher) temperature than a totally inert person can handle with so little clothing, right?

The 23rd brings the official start of autumn, and like all good Japanese things, the weather should snap right into line and start being cool and pleasant, and carry on that way

encourage you to think about family and home and how it has or has not changed while living in Japan. I guess it is the changing of the season that has inspired my introspectiveness.

So to you, my new family in Japan, I present this month's Hyogo Times and all its quirkiness. Enjoy and just as any family member would, we would love to hear from you.

Con amor,
Epi



until mid-December. Heh.

Either way, September brings a return to "real life" and a teacher's regular routine. Classes, you know, your job and all that. No more of this vacation-desk-sitting you've grown so used to. Get your head in the game! And get out for one of the long weekends. September may be a long month, but it's a lot shorter than August.

Ciao,
Lemmon

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Message from the PR

BY ANDREW BRASHER

Hey. For any people pretty new to Japan, hope classes are treating you well, hope Japan is treating you well, hope you are starting to get adjusted to your surroundings. Things have cooled down a bit and if lucky will remain that way for at least a few weeks or so, anyway... we just had our first PR meeting last week and I think even though we're still pretty green we might be able to do some stuff other than just the beer garden this year...! We were able to make a rough sketch of the next few months, ski trips, hikes in Kyoto, visits to Hiroshima, smaller scale stuff like just a lil' poker night near the beginning of October. We aren't the only ones that'll plan stuff though so there'll be Halloween events and the like for you to go to as well. Just be sure to keep checking the Hyogo AJET page on Facebook to stay in touch. Attached is a picture of Kirsten Dunst in Akihabara.



MAIGO IN HYOGO



Where in Hyogo is this? Stupefied? Guess the location!

Post your answers on the discussion board on the Hyogo Times Facebook Group page.

"Maigo in Hyogo" needs your photos! Send them to publications@hyogo.ajet.net, and type "Maigo in Hyogo" in the subject line.

Congrats to JJ Cappa for guessing last month's mystery object: the Tetsujin 28-go statue in Kobe.

J-Word Play

BY PAUL SCHUBLE

鈴木さんの好きなものは何でしょうか？

(すずきさんのすきなものはなんでしょうか?)

ANSWER AND EXPLANATION:

酢 (す, vinegar)

Our riddle asks "What does Suzuki-san like?" The trick is to think about Suzuki-san here. In Japanese, すき (suki) means to like something. Additionally, if you plop ~ずき onto the end of X, the resulting word means a fan or enthusiast of X. I do like me some X. So therefore すずき can mean a fan of す (vinegar).

Matsuri Season

in Himeji, Hyogo-ken

I love festivals!

There are many festivals that happen in and around Himeji, ranging from the dangerous to the historical. To really experience Japanese culture, attend a festival, mingle with the locals, and enjoy festival food!

Moon viewing festival

September 22nd – Himeji castle



This festival is held in front of the beautiful Himeji castle in the evening under the full moon. It is perfect to bring a mat and have a picnic dinner while watching performances on the stage. For ¥500 you receive a lacquer cup and can sample many types of Japanese sake. Once you have the cup, it is all you can drink!

Nada Kenka Matsuri

October 14th and 15th – Shirahamanomiya station (Sanyo station)

The Nada Kenka Matsuri or “fighting” festival is one of the most interesting and dangerous festivals in Himeji. The first day, beautiful portable shrines are carried, and then older, smaller shrines are smashed into each other. It can be dangerous since so many people are surrounding the shrines and they often topple over. The second day is held in the same area but up the hill where once again the portable shrines are carried and jostle with one another. It is one of many festivals held in autumn to wish for a good harvest.

Oshio Shishimai Matsuri

October 14th and 15th – Oshio station (Sanyo station)

This festival is a lion dance which is held at a shrine. It is amazing to watch as the lion dancers perform in this festival: one lion continues to move as the dancers inside change. Many dancers are involved, but you only see one lion, and the changeover is very smooth.



Aboshi Cho-chi Matsuri
October 21st – Aboshi station
(Sanyo station)

The “lantern smashing” festival involves portable shrines being carried up the main street. It is followed by a parade of lanterns which culminates in a crazy lantern smashing frenzy.



Himeji Tako Matsuri

January – 1st or 2nd Sunday – Himeji

This festival is held at the racecourse in Himeji. It is usually a very cold day but the sky is filled with beautiful kites in many sizes.



Himeji Yukata Matsuri

June 22nd and 23rd – Himeji

This festival is on the main street in Himeji. The street is lined with food and game stalls and everyone is wearing their yukata (summer kimono) or jimbe (top and pants). It is a great festival and also has some dancing and performances. Don't be worried about wearing a yukata, though it is a great way to feel a part of the festival.



This festival is held in the main street and Otemae Park. The festival has dancing, historical parades, food stalls and other performances. It runs for 3 nights, and this year it also had a sand castle version of Himeji castle.



Himeji Castle festival

August – usually the second Friday, Saturday and Sunday - Himeji

Some of these festivals' dates change yearly while others are set on the same date every year. Please check before going.

Getting there-
Most of the festivals are in Himeji or just a short ride away by the Sanyo line.

Costs -
I still find it amazing that you can see so many cultural events for free in Japan - all you need is your train fare and some change to spend at the many amazing festival food stalls! ●



SNAKKUS, MIZU SHOBAI, HOST CLUBS! OH, MY!

BY RAENA MINA

Being a foreigner in Japan, it is almost necessary to attempt the “cha-ren-gi” as part of our cultural education of Japan. I will open up the floodgates by suggesting that gaijin men can have a lot of fun in Japan. Perhaps more than the women, at least by comparison to what is available to us in the Western World in terms of “entertainment” of the nighttime persuasion.

Let's start with the “safe and low” rung of the ladder. I have been to my share of Japanese snacks, always accompanied by male friends, both Japanese and Western. With a cliché name, the standard snack is a small, windowless venue where women provide company to their male customers. Ordinarily I would have no interest in going, but when I was first invited by some male friends, we had just finished a nijikai, so I gave it a try without too much consideration.

If you ever experienced a Japanese snack, as I'm sure many of you have (whether with coworkers, friends, or *hitoride*), you can understand when I say it really is no big deal. Aside from all the staff being female, it is not much more different than “regular” bars. Even if you are conscious of the fact that all the other women work there and purposely, due to their job, pay special attention to their male customers; the set up is basically the same, with karaoke, people chilling together, drinking, and having a smoke.

For example, bartenders are there to “shoot the shit” with their customers, or share in a smoke or an occasional shot. I guess the extent and limit of the “attention” and “company” is really what differs. What I noticed aside from singing a song with you, lighting your ciggies,

and making sure your drink is never empty, they also take care of you if you get too plastered. What happens after the snack closes perhaps is another story. I'll leave you to ask your fellow males to share their after-snack stories.

To a gaijin girl, the “mamas” and female staff are usually fairly friendly. I have always had a good time considering the fact that snacks are aimed at men (whom they charge accordingly). It's a fun (pricey) way to hang out with your male counterparts, laugh at the other drunken men singing poppy love ballads, and have a few drinks. I give it a gaijin girl thumbs up. Keep in mind my experience lies in the local *ina-ka* snack, which are likely different from those found in the big cities. A snack is good clean fun for men. However during my “snack study” I found that snacks can be depressing and sad – if the men waste their hard-earned cash every night getting plastered until the morning, avoiding going home to their families.

I am no entertainment expert but in talking with some male friends, if the desire is to “level up” (in price, “service” and type of girls), one can frequent a lounge or delve deeper into the infamous “Mizu shobai” aka Japan's water trade: health

clubs, soaps and salons. I will also leave it to our male friends to explain that one, or go for a quick google search to satisfy (or disturb) your curiosity. On to another form of entertainment: Japanese Host Clubs. The stereotype is that a host club is a seedy place, where celebrity folk, nerdy loners, or unfaithful married men and other sex trade workers get paid for attention and sometimes sex by lonely rich girls or old desperate housewives. These stereotypes can make one feel intimidated or disgusted by the idea of going to a host club. Many girls I know, both Japanese and foreign, are uncomfortable and a little frightened by these *gyaru-otaku*, probably because aside from the common scene of girls getting *nampa'd* on the Dotombori bridge, what happens in the host club is unseen and therefore widely unknown. However, nowadays host clubs are becoming much more “acceptable” and “accessible”. Some may even be so bold to say “in fashion” thanks to the manga/anime *Ouran High School Host Club* and documentaries like *The Great Happiness Space: Tale of an Osaka Love Thief*. Host Clubs are piquing the curiosity of “normal status” girls – or so I believe.

As a gaijin girl in Japan, I thought it was my duty to explore this side of Japan's crazy

“nighttime entertainment,” take advantage of something not offered in the Western World and go to a venue that actually catered to women. With my gang of gaijin girls and Japanese friends, we went to pop our Host Club cherries together in the city of Osaka. What stops most people from a first time experience (aside from the crazy hairdos) is the rumored (albeit true) expensive costs. Host Club virgins usually get a better deal than if you become a continued client. Nomihodai plans can be as low as 1000 yen per hour, however you must pay for whatever your host partner also drinks (as low as 1000 yen or as high as 1 man [yen not human] for a bottle). After your first time, the price jacks up. We found a nomi and nomase hodai (we and they) can drink to our hearts content, pay beforehand and enjoy a care/stress free hour. At the start you have the option to choose a host partner and at the end, you can choose from the plethora of hosts, the lucky guy who will “say goodbye” to you in the elevator.

The verdict from gaijin and Japanese girls was that it was surprisingly comfortable and fun. (We were even contemplating extending the visit!) From the experience I can see how it can become addicting, time goes by fast and the company is

honestly good (I hate to repeat Tokyo Orientation when I say ESID). Nonetheless I recommend it to be tried at least once, definitely in a “Joseikai” or girls' party.

Advice: choose wisely and check the system before you go. Don't go for those hosts that pester you on the Dotombori Bridge so there are no surprise bills at the end. Our experience consisted of meeting a new group of hosts every 15 minutes, getting our shochu poured and our cigarettes lit, as well as some serious and light hearted conversation. Of course, some hosts are born with the gift of natural genkiness and some probably need more lessons in social interaction, however I think the wide range of guys is necessary to meet a wide range of clients and what they are looking for (whether a possible hook up or just someone to talk to for advice or company). Even though I have never been, I am confident in saying that Hostess Clubs (for men) are zen zen chigau. I'll open up the floor for a guy to share his experience of that.

Reasons why these forms of entertainment exist can be understood, or can even be criticized. Talk to me later if you like arguing. But before knocking em, try em. You know you want to. ●



Welcome Beer Garden

Photos by Len Krygsman



MOE ADVENTURES



My older brother, Derry, who is now a four year JET convinced my younger brother, Leonard, and I to sign up to the program after we both graduated last year. Derry lives in Ehime's countryside surrounded by rice fields. I live in Nishinomiya city, Hyogo, and Leonard practically lives on the beach in Okinawa. Who got the best deal here? It's hard to say, because as we all know, every situation is different! Here are some of my adventures from my past year in Japan.

Obon in Hiroshima.

A Japanese friend of mine invited me to his mothers family's home in Hiroshima for Obon weekend from August 13th-15th. Obon is a Japanese Buddhist custom to honor the departed. I was invited to a Japanese family reunion. To make it more interesting the family's home was located on one of the many islands in the

Seto Inland Sea. We took a ferry to an island (with a population of five hundred) called Momojima. Most Japanese people have never heard of the place. The island is quite primitive. I was surprised to see so many old ladies out working on the land growing all sorts of delicious looking food. However, most of the island's inhabitants take the twenty-five minute ferry to the main land to work everyday.

On the first morning we woke at about 6:30am for a morning walk. We had arrived late in the dark the previous night so it was amazing to take in my new surroundings. The house was in the middle of a bamboo forest on the side of a hill. About 200m from the house a beautiful view of the ocean and islands in the distance could be seen. As we wondered down the winding barren roads we came across three old ladies sitting on the side of the road

having a chat and a rest from their daily morning walk. My friend translated for me as we sparked a conversation. It turned out I was the first foreigner they had spoken to. This happened a lot while on the island. It's surprising how friendly locals are when they know you are a friend of a well known local. The women were 86, 87 and 90 years young. They had big smiles and were full of life. I asked how many people lived here when they were young girls and they said between one and two thousand people. Most of the young people left to live the dream in a big city. They asked me to please come back next year and we all took a photo together. When we got back to the house breakfast was served by the women: rice balls, sausages, awesome Japanese scrambled egg and miso soup and cold green tea.

My friend's grandmother had a very moving story that gave me goose bumps. During the war she often took shelter in a cave on the mainland. On the day of the bombing she had a doctor's appointment but cancelled it because of a headache that morning. When the call came that bombers were on the way she took cover in one of two caves at the last minute. Many people were shouting at her to join them in their different cave. She was holding her first born child when the bomb went off. Everyone in the other cave near them died but they survived. She had skipped the doctor's appointment which I thought was lucky but to choose the right cave as well was destiny.

No one in the room including me

would have been there enjoying Obon if she was killed that day. She is now 91. She said, "Let's not talk of those times. Let's enjoy Obon and everyone's company." It was very moving. Everyone in the family is full of life, very kind and are genuinely great people. With a background story like that it would be hard not to be an optimist for the rest of your days. On the morning of the 15th we went to my friend's grandfathers grave for the Buddhist ceremony which was short and sweet. Everyone individually poured water over the grave headstone, then put flowers and then sat and prayed for a moment while holding a set of beads. Little did I know that since May the family was very worried about me, the gaijin, coming to their home for Obon. I was welcomed with open arms and luckily I made no cultural mistakes this time. What a wicked weekend.

Meeting the Mr. Miyagi of Kayaking in Japan.

I was introduced to a 66 year old man in Kyoto one day while out kayaking. His nickname is Master. He was very interested in telling me how my skills needed brushing up if I wanted to be a world champion someday. After three hours of what felt like a kayak test on that river, he sat me down in his shop after drying off. He had a very deep conversation with me. Speaking only in Japanese looking into my eyes I would listen to my friend who was translating for us. It was like a scene out of a movie, never taking our eyes off each other. He told me in a deep Japanese voice with lots of facial expressions that I was floating through

life with no real drive it seemed. He said there is only one world champion and in his opinion I could be that person if I believed in myself. He said no one remembers second best.

He then had this photo of us taken together for his blog. Just before I left he sat down again and put his arm on the table. My interpreter was as baffled as I was. He gestured for an arm wrestle. I was coming down with N1H1 at the time but I could not say no. He put everything into it. The next thing I know I was beaten by a 66 year old! Pissed off, I asked him for the other arm. He pulled back his sleeve pointing to his left elbow saying Judo. His elbow was scared and messed up from a judo accident. I could picture him not tapping out of a fight being the crazy guy that he was. But he agreed anyway. I heard some strange grinding of bones in his arm and he beat me with that one too. In true "Mr. Miyagi" style he said, "You must train your mind and believe in yourself. Then you will have super power." What a day with a ninja kayaker.

Just Do It...

For the new JET's out there. Try to make the most of your time in Japan. I mean, it's easy to just chill out after school from 4:30 PM onwards but you might as well get out and see and do as much as you can while you're here right? Transportation costs are very high in Japan but

if you find some kind of club that travels together or just cool Japanese folks with cars that share the same passion as you, you'll be in for some cool experiences.

I was very lucky to find a cool whitewater kayaking community here in Japan. I've kayaked on about twenty different rivers in the heart of over ten prefectures. Keeping active keeps me sane. I'm always looking to do cool stuff to do. So please contact me at moekelleher@hotmail.com if you would like to go, mountain biking, paragliding, hiking, road biking etc.

Stayed tuned for more crazy Moe Adventures in the next Hyogo Times. In the meanwhile check out his blog! moekelleher.blogspot.com.●



Key Terms for the Refined ALT

BY RYAN PARKER
IDRAWGOODART.COM

As a lowly ALT, you have to play on the lowest rung of the jungle gym. Being at the bottom of your school's pecking order isn't always fun, but here are some key terms to ensure successful social etiquette while on the job.

Ohayou Gozaimasu (お早う御座います)

Translation: Good morning!

It's the first phrase you'll learn and the last one you'll forget. On any given morning, you'll give and receive around 20 ohayou gozaimasu greetings. Failing to OG a passing superior may result in a gypsy's curse on your firstborn. Even more interesting are the variety of pronunciations, which range from perfectly enunciated syllables all the way to barbaric grunts. Some days you'll swear your coworkers are cavemen when you hear Ohayou gozaimasu transform into a very guttural Uusshhh.

Sumimasen (済みません)

Translation: Excuse me, etc.

In its pure form, sumimasen means excuse me, but in everyday situations, it can effectively replace almost any word in the Japanese language. It's Japan's magic word, and can smooth over even the stickiest situations.



Isogashii (忙しい)

Translation: Busy

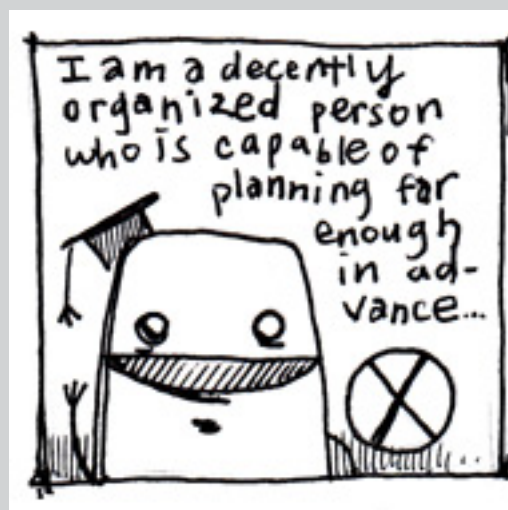
Whether or not you're actually busy, looking busy is of utmost importance. No doubt that Japanese teachers are hard workers, but when you work from 6:30AM to 8:30PM, you're bound to have some down time. Filling that time at your desk with shuffling papers, reorganizing your box of colored chalk, or clipping your toenails will secure your place as a valued team member. A successful work day is often judged by the illusion of work quantity, not by quality.



Isoide (急いで)

Translation: Hurry! / Hurriedly

This goes along with the previous term. If you want to fit in, make sure you hurry everywhere, whether you're on your way to tinkle or heading to class. Perhaps you think you're a decently well-organized person who is capable of planning far enough ahead so you don't have to gallop through the halls carrying all your materials to arrive in class just after the last bell chimes? Well, it doesn't matter. Waiting till the last possible second then bursting out of the room like a wild boar will let your students and coworkers know just how busy (and thus how good a worker) you really are.



Heeeeeeyy (へー)

Translation: Whoa, Is that so?, Huh..., Your ideas intrigue me.

(Note: pronounced in the manner of slowly letting the air out of a whoopie cushion.) Chances are, one of your senior teachers will try to chat you up, either in English or Japanese, and you'll be able to employ heeeeeeyy to remind your chat buddy that you're still engaged in the conversation...even though you're probably thinking about hot dogs. ●





BOOYAH

BY GORAN SELETKOVIC

Say “Booyah”.

If I could offer you only one tip for your remaining time as ALTs, “Booyah” would be it. The long term benefits of “Booyah” have been proven by a previous tall, dark and handsome prefectural representative, whereas the rest of my advice has no basis more reliable than the blatant plagiarism of my favourite self help lyrics. I will dispense this advice... now.

Enjoy the power and beauty of your 外人 card and your position as the token school foreigner. Oh never-mind, you may not understand the power and beauty of the 外人 card until its gone... but trust me, in a few years you’ll look back at photos of yourself and recall in a way you can’t grasp now, how much possibility lay before you in the land of the rising sun, and how fabulous your 外人 card really was. You do not have to conform like the locals.

Don’t worry about your students liking you. Or worry, but know that worrying is as effective as trying to read 漢字 by drinking green tea. The real troubles in your classrooms are apt

to be things that never crossed your worried mind. The kind that vomit on you on the last train home after some idle enkai.

Do one thing each day that scares you. Sing. Don’t be reckless with other peoples cultures. Don’t put up with those who are reckless with yours. Floss and introduce as many 日本人 to the idea as possible. Don’t waste your time on understanding Japanese bureaucracy. Sometimes you’re ahead, sometimes you’re behind. The day is long ... and in the end, it’s only if you’re not being active.

Remember compliments you received and try to get them in writing. If you succeed in doing this, you’ll have something to show your future employer. Keep your old certificates of appreciation. Participate in as many extra-curricular activities as you can. Stretch ... torrent “P90X yoga” to show you how. Don’t feel guilty if you don’t know what you want to do after JET, the most interesting people I know didn’t know in their 3rd year what they wanted to do after JET. Some of the most interesting 5th years I know still don’t.

Get plenty of calcium in Japan. Contrary to popular belief, dairy isn’t the only place to get it. Stock up on seaweed, soy bean and fish cakes, they’re not hard to come by in Japan. Be kind to your knees. You’ll miss them when they’re gone.

Maybe you’ll find a cute J-boy or girl. Maybe you won’t. Maybe you’ll have J-children. Maybe you won’t. Maybe you’ll drink your 校長 and entire English department under the table in your first year.

Maybe you’ll visit a unisex 温泉 on your final year. Whatever you do, don’t congratulate yourself too much. Or berate yourself either. Your choices are half chance. So are everybody else’s.

Enjoy your body. Use it every way you can. Take it for a walk over the Rokko mountains. Let it join a rock-climbing gym. Don’t be afraid of what other 外人 think of it. It’s the greatest instrument you’ll ever own.

Dance. Even if you have no where to do it but in your shoe box apartment. Read the directions, even if they’re in gibberish. Do not watch Japanese game shows they will only make you feel dumber for having watched them.

Get to know your J-colleagues. You never know when they’ll be transferred to another school. Be nice to your students, they’re the best link to your 外人 superpowers and the people most likely to continue to be susceptible to them in the future.

Understand that JETs come and go, but for a precious few who somehow manage stay. Work hard to bridge the gaps in geography and lifestyle, because the longer you receive awesome Facebook notifications from Hyogo AJET, the more you’ll need the people you knew when you were a JET.

Visit Hokkaido but leave before you develop frostbite. Visit Okinawa but leave before you catch your death of humidity. Travel. Accept certain inalienable truths. Currencies will fluctuate. Rules will be followed, no matter how silly they are. Asking for forgive-

ness is always a better option than asking for permission. And when you do, you’ll notice that your stress levels are falling and you’re having a positive effect. Respect your elders. This is very important in Japan. Period. Don’t expect anyone else to make Japan awesome for you. Maybe you have a cushy situation at school. Maybe you live in an excellent location. But you never know when you or your friends might be transferred to another part of the country. Don’t mess too much with your hair, even though it’s all the rave in Japan. Just shave it all off and be done with it, it will cost you less.

Be careful whose advise you buy, but be patient with those who supply it. Advise is a form of nostalgia ... dispensing it is a way of fishing the past from the ゴミ, wiping it off, painting over the ugly parts and recycling it for more than its worth by turning it into an island.

But trust me on the “Booyah”. ●



GETTING TO KNOW RANDOM JETS



THE BASICS

Name: Shellian Forrester

Please call me: Shellie

School and Location in Hyogo: Sanda Shounkan High School, Sanda

How we know you: Seen me at events

Birthday: July 23rd

Born and raised: Jamaica

Family: Twin sister

University and Degree: University of The West Indies-English Literature & Psychology

Other jobs that you have had: Customer Service Agent-Air Jamaica

Travels: All over South East Asia, Australia

Hobbies: Dancing!!! Listening to music, reading

Staying another year? No

FAVORITES

Food: Chicken

Sports: Football

Music: Dancehall, Soca..anything I can dance to!

Shop: Any and everywhere with hot cute fashion

TV Show: Two and Half Men

Movie: Runaway Bride

RANDOM TRIVIA

Most Proud Achievement: My travels

Motto to live by: One life to live...Do it BIG..Do it all!!!

I remember when... all I lived to do was party ;)

What are you drinking? Grape Juice

Who would you like to meet? Boris Kodjoe ;)

Why should we elect you President of the World? Because I would ban this thing called work.

If it was my last day on earth I would... go to the beach with all my friends, take lots of pics and dispense my awesome final advice on life;)

TEACHING:

My top tip for teaching: Smileeeeeee J and be energetic

When the class is TOO QUIET I... clap my hands and snap my fingers

Bribery for students.. YAY or NAY? YAYYYY

THE BASICS

Name: Chinyere Okoli

Please call me: Chi-Chi (of course my students don't call me that! they call me Okoli)

School and Location in Hyogo: Toyooka High School & Toyooka Sogo High School, The Taj!

How we know you: I stay in Kobe/ Osaka so maybe u know me from there! ;)

Birthday: April 5, 1986

Born and raised: Baltimore, MD "Charm City!"

Family: I have one older sister and 1 younger sister and the bestest mother ever!

University and Degree: Duke University, Civil Engineering/ Architectural Certificate

Other jobs that you have had: Construction Management Intern

Travels: I LOVE traveling and so far I have been to Nigeria, Bahamas, Costa Rica, England, Italy, Greece, Taiwan, South Korea, and Japan (of course! lol)

Hobbies: Capoeira!! Dancing, singing, learning languages, playing guitar/flute, collecting coins, horseback riding (when I get the chance), reading, etc.

Staying another year? Yup.

FAVORITES

Food: Japanese food? – Takoyaki!! Ichiban daisuki!! ;) , Other – Indian!!!

Sports: Track and Field, Volleyball, Duke Basketball lol

Music: All kinds. Right now im loving Colbie Caillat, Kris Allen, Flyleaf, and anything from Naruto! ^ _ ^

Shop: I love all stores where I can get a good deal! I especially love shopping in Osaka! Malaika is awesome!

TV Show: Martin Lawrence! – hands down the funniest show ever created

Movie: hmmm I like a lot of movies so ... but okay lets say Pride and Prejudice (the real one not the one with that girl... Keira Knightley)

RANDOM TRIVIA

Most Proud Achievement: Getting into my high school and getting into Duke ;)

Best life experience: Traveling in Europe with my sister

Motto to live by: You cannot discover new oceans unless you have the courage to lose sight of the shore.

I remember when... hip hop was good

What are you drinking? water lol ... oh do u mean alcoholic? well then Cassis Orenji

Who would you like to meet? President Obama

Why should we elect you President of the World? Because Im a G.

Best thing about Japan so far? my DC loves and my Students!!

If it was my last day on earth I would... spend it with family

Interesting Fact about me: i worked as a talent escort for the BET Awards a few times

TEACHING:

My top tip for teaching: Always be welcoming to the students and always make an effort to talk to them outside of class

When the class is TOO QUIET I... I dunno pray for class to end soon? ... call on people to answer questions?

Bribery for students.. YAY or NAY? Yay! when is bribery ever bad?? especially if it gets the job done! :p

Funniest Story involving a student: so i was fully prepared to cuss one of my bad students out in class one day as he was yet again playing around talking in the back of class while i was trying to give instructions... so i called him out. 2 seconds later he raises his hand and I (sigh) say Yes. He says "Okoli is beautiful!" everyone in the entire class started cracking up! :) ... I love that kid now... flattery will get u everywhere! ;p



ZOMBIE VILLAGE



I love zombies. I read zombie novels and aspire to write one of my own; I watch every zombie movie I can get my hands on. I develop contingency plans in the likely event of a zombie outbreak near my home. I relish in the good and suffer through the bad (which means I have read the Pulitzer-worthy *World War Z* and seen a dreadful Australian flick with zombie fish). Naturally, I have wanted to review a Japanese zombie film in this column for quite some time.

This month the film on the chopping block is *ゾンビ村 終わりにき逃亡* which translates roughly to *Zombie Village* or *Zombie Town*. I have not bothered to translate the subtitle but I assume it means “We Spent Our Entire Budget on a BMW.”

Zombie movies are not typically renowned for their plots and *ゾンビ村* is no exception. The film stars four twenty-something’s who travel to a small town in their budget-sucking BMW for some sort of exchange with a guy named Ichiro. If the movie was set in America, I would have guessed drugs. However, about three seconds after they arrive at their door-left-mysteriously-open lodge, Punk #1 tries to rape Doesn’t-Want-To-Be-There Girl, so I assume the deal involved human trafficking.

Disclaimer: *ゾンビ村* is so low budget (thanks to the BMW) that not only did it lack Eng-

lish subtitles but also Japanese ones. But who cares! This is a zombie movie. Ichiro is nowhere to be found; television, radio and cell phones stop functioning and the town is mysteriously deserted. After what feels like ages, zombies finally show up and eat everyone. The End.

The plot is par-for-the-course terrible but the undead in *ゾンビ村* are pathetic. They are even slower than typical “slow” zombies and therefore completely unconvincing threats (especially since there are only about a dozen). Furthermore, they are “intelligent” zombies, which are nails on a chalkboard for zombie enthusiasts. They can open car doors, push empty baby strollers and pistol whip the living. However, they are prone to getting punched in the face. Finally, there must not have been enough money in the budget to hire a makeup artist or even purchase makeup; the zombies look nothing like zombies. I blame the BMW.

To be fair, the setting is rather creepy (at least until the main characters and zombies show up). Miraculously, the deserted town and the cheap music work together to create an appropriate atmosphere for a Japanese horror film. Can an eerie village save *ゾンビ村* from its boring plot, amateur acting, lame zombies and non-existent special effects? Heck no! Unfortunately, every other aspect is lacking so significantly that it ruins whatever value the



Google

ゾンビ村

ゾンビ村
ゾンビ村2

Google Search

I'm Feeling Lucky

setting grants the film. In my opinion, the atmosphere actually works against any potential entertainment value the film might have had. Sometimes a movie can be enjoyed if it is “so bad it’s good,” but *ゾンビ村* is no *Snakes on a Plane*.

The scariest thing about this film is that when I typed *ゾンビ村* into Google, one search suggestion that came up was *ゾンビ村2*. The “original” literally made me feel sick to my stomach and not because of

gore; it was so bad I wanted to vomit. If this fabled sequel does in fact exist, I will lose my faith in humanity. Please avoid both films at all costs (unless you are obsessed with zombies like me).

Thanks for (not) watching!●

KIBOUKEN TSUKEMEN

BY ANDREW TAMASHIRO

Like the rest of Japan, I've been going through a bit of a tsukemen phase; the way the ramen is stripped down and semi-deconstructed creates a completely different experience that is a must for any noodle lover.

Like the your typical ramen bowl, tsukemen comes in many forms. It's very common to combine multiple soup bases, say tonkotsu/pork bone with shoyu/soy sauce, to create a more complex or unusual flavor. The spot I hit this past weekend, Kibouken (きぼう軒), offered a number spice levels for their specialty, spicy miso ramen/tsukemen. I opted for the recommended spice level for my 辛うま味噌ラーメン/kara uma miso ramen/ spicy miso ramen. It comes topped with goma/sesame seeds, moyashi/bean sprouts, sliced negi/green onion, spicy ground chicken, and a few slices of chashu/pork. The light brown soup contrasts wonderfully with the bright red sauce coating the chicken (likely where much of the spice comes from) and the bright green negi slices, and the aroma is heavenly.

It was a splendid bowl, though a bit on the heavy side overall, and a great example of spicy miso. Kibouken kept with tradition and paired

theirs with fairly thick noodles that were firm and full of chew. The soup is thick and chock full of spice-miso-sesame-onion notes from the get-go, and surprisingly drinkable for something feeling a hair shy of being overpowering.

My companion opted for the basic miso tsukemen, which was actually the dish that brought us here via ramen magazines. A large plate loaded with noodles, wakame seaweed, negi and pork slices was accompanied by a rather non-descript bowl of dipping soup. I've found that the soups that come with these kinds of dishes can be very deceiving, with deep, complex flavors contained in a broth so ordinary looking, one might dismiss it as beef broth. In a food society like Japan's, and especially within the ramen-subculture, presentation is often just as important as the flavor of the food. Kibouken completely disregards this notion with their tsukemen (though interestingly, the ramen is lovely to look at), opting for what seems to be a blunt, straightforward method of "eat it and see." Well, it was pretty, pretty, pretty good. This miso wasn't as spicy as my ramen, and the result was more emphasis on the ingredients, both within and without the soup. Dropping in a few pieces



of seaweed radically altered that mouthful, making the dish seem completely different than when consumed with a piece of pork. Where as ramen often sees the soup's flavor penetrate each topping, tsukemen offers the eater control over the whole process, how much you want to dip, for how long, and with what. Kibouken's is good, if nothing special, but it's a fine example nonetheless.

Grabbing noodles from a plate, dipping them into a soup, and slurping them out is not something I've ever done outside of Japanese food. Maybe I missed out during my time in Italy, but I've never grabbed a bit of tagliatelle and plunged them into a nice Bolognese just before consuming them. When living in Chinatown, I never had to desperately maneuver my chow fun into my black bean sauce (this would never work, as chow fun and Chinese chopsticks have always been the

worst combo in noodles). Yet in Japan, soumen, soba, even udon are served plain, chilled and with a dipping sauce. I've always found it to be a fascinating way of eating noodles, especially since I was brought up in the country of Campbell's, Chef Boy-ar-dee, and Kraft Mac n Cheese (all of which I still have a soft spot for).

In any case, if you haven't given tsukemen a shot, try it. It's different, and Japan has been going through a pretty big boom this year, meaning your options have grown exponentially in the last year.

Kibouken is written as きぼう軒 and is located at 兵庫県神戸市北区有野中町3丁目30-5, or Nakamachi San-cho-me 30-5, ---no, Kobe Kita-ku. kibou-ken.com/ ●





Kicchiri Kitchen

Sashimi Salad

BY TRAVIS LOVE

It's still disgustingly hot outside, and if your apartment gets as hot as mine does, the last thing you want to be doing right now is turning on the stove to cook your dinner. Summertime is the season for sashimi, provided you can get it home from the grocers fast enough. To that end, here's a recipe for Sashimi Salad. You may, of course, use whatever vegetables you have handy.

Summer Sashimi Salad

200 grams sashimi-grade tuna (まぐろ), whitefish (ハマチ), or other fish.
1/2 head lettuce
1/2 cup thinly sliced onion (about half of a small onion)
3-4 cucumbers
2 ripe tomatoes
1 Tbsp. soy sauce
1 Tbsp. mirin
2 Tbsp. oil

1. First, cut the lettuce into bite-sized segments, or however big you like your lettuce. Put this in your salad bowl.
2. Cut the ends off of the cucumbers, then slice them on a diagonal bias, about 1 cm thick.
3. Core the tomatoes, remove the seeds, and cut them into bite-

sized chunks.

4. Put the tomatoes, onion, and cucumber over the lettuce.
5. In a small bowl, mix the three liquids rapidly with a fork or chopsticks, adding a little more soy sauce if it isn't salty enough for you.
6. If your sashimi is not already sliced, slice it and add a layer of sashimi on top of your salad.
7. Drizzle the entire thing with the soy sauce dressing, and serve.

Serves 3-4

**** We recommend eating this entire salad the day it is prepared for food safety reasons. Hyogo Times is not culpable for food poisoning brought on by improper use of sashimi. ●**

English Sensei Spirit: Student Name-Card Decks

BY CHIP BOLES

Have you ever felt like

- A. You can never remember your students names? (esp. a problem for me in Japan with new foreign names)
 - B. Some students get called on all the time, while others never do?
- I'm super happy about something new I'm doing this year: decks of name cards for my students.

Each student is given a small card.

On Side 1, I ask them to write:

- Their names (in Japan, I ask them to write in Kanji and Romaji)
- Their year, class number, and student numbers

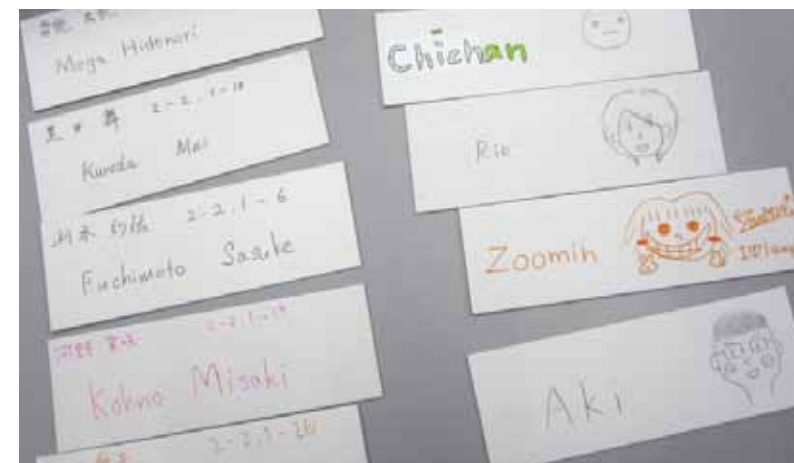
On Side 2, I ask them to

- Choose and write a "class name." This could be a nickname, something less formal, or even "Superman." Whatever they want to be called.
- Draw a little picture of their face/whatever.

I then take up the cards and keep the deck of them handy during all of their classes, and use them to call on students, putting called-upon ones to the back.

In less than a week of use, these cards have already helped me to match more names with faces, as well as to be sure I am calling on students evenly and fairly.

And since I always hated looking around the room at students trying to avoid eye contact so they weren't called on, this saves time as well as making class more pleasant for everyone. ●



This shows the two sides of the name-cards, both the "business side" (left) and the "funner" side (right).



If I don't make it through a deck in one class period, I've made "front" cards to help remind me which direction in the deck I am moving.

And of course whenever the "front" card comes back around, I know to re-shuffle the deck. This helps to keep the students unsure about who will be called on next.

The Upper Class Wannabes' Methods of Seduction (or Lack Thereof)

BY RIKA SAWATSKY

After receiving multiple comments about my hyper-nikushoku personality and thus giving up on the average soshoku Japanese man, a girlfriend set me up with what she deemed a more suitable match. He was 35 years old (the self-proclaimed ten-year delay in maturity among Japanese men necessitated this 12 year difference) and, to my satisfaction, was not shy at all.

I met him for the first time in glamorous Shinsaibashi. He sent me a message to listen for his car, and sure enough, I could hear the obnoxious sound of a sports. A few seconds later, a very ostentatious red Porsche rolled to a stop in front of me. Unnecessarily over-the-top, I thought, especially since our destination was around the corner. His blinged out watch and designer clothes were likewise excessive, but I forgave his blatant attempt at showing off because he could carry an amusing conversation from the get-go—refreshing and undeniably charming.

Unfortunately, it turned out that he was too forward, and the fact that he drew his confidence from a façade of wealth was quite possibly the greatest turnoff yet—the ultimate donbiki. He was ostensibly loaded in that he could hardly afford the image he portrayed. Everything went towards his car and a few articles of designer clothes, requiring him to repeat the same outfit several times and live in a disaster of an apartment. It would appear that he had heavily relied on this image to seduce women in the past because, at

35, he was absolutely terrible at trying to pick me up. He just did not know what he was doing. He said he had fallen in love at first sight and actually said “I love you” in English. I laughed in his face, so he changed tactics and told me to “be [his] woman”. He also took great offence to being called anta even though he constantly called me omae. To his utter annoyance, I refused to conform to this misogynistic tendency of Japanese relationships and fought back. It turned out to be more trouble than it was worth.

He didn't give up on me very easily, however. He called incessantly and drove all the way to Yashiro several times (leading my neighbor to think that I was dating a member of the Yakuza on account of his car). He certainly had enviable connections and knew where to take me for great entertainment, but there came a moment when I realized that I could never seriously date this man: It happened at a Ferrari/Porsche cruising party in Osaka. There were about 20 of these cars that met up downtown, and the men all resembled Mr. Porsche. They just wanted to look rich. While the men drooled over their cars, their girlfriends and I were sitting at the adjacent coffee shop looking thoroughly unimpressed. Most of the girls kept to themselves because their boyfriends forbade them to talk to each other, but one nice girl approached me. Apparently, I was not an unfamiliar face to some of them because I was up on Mr. Porsche's blog, where he purportedly bragged about dating a ha-fu. Later in the night, Mr. Porsche asked if I would like to get match-

ing rings with him, and it was then that I knew in my heart that it was over.

Returning to the cruising party, we eventually got into the cars and went rip-roaring through the streets of downtown Osaka like giant idiots. The men's conduct completely detracted from what could have been a really cool night of flying through the freeways. The drivers would accelerate so fast once the lights turned green, only to slam on the breaks a couple of seconds later because we were surrounded by normal traffic. We also got separated from each other on numerous occasions, resulting in embarrassing scenes of expensive cars stopping in the middle of traffic so that the drivers could stick their heads out the windows and yell at each other. This went on for two hours before we finally made it to the highway, which was also anticlimactic. Mr. Porsche took a wrong turn five minutes in, thereby ending our participation in the fancy Ferrari/Porsche tour.

To be fair, my friend was right in setting me up with Mr. Porsche because he was undeniably beyond nikushoku. I would say he stood in a category of his own, though, of The Upper Class Wannabe. He's entertaining, sure, but also fake, superficial, and high maintenance. The latest response I got from him after shutting him down again was, “Fine, I'll just hang out with someone else” followed by “I also renege my invitation to take you to the beach next month.” ●

Next month: Desperate [Japanese] Housewives