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hyogo times

Inside

Himeji Riiiide

Yukigassen 2011

The Sushi Experience





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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](mailto:publications@hyogo.ajet.net)

Visit us online!

## Message from the Editor

### Hello there Hyogo,

If you are anything like me, you have lately been quite grateful that, as randomly as that placement process unfolds, it landed you out here in Hyogo-ken!

The strangest thing, for me, about the trifecta of awful unfolding out on the east coast has been how little it has really affected our way of life over on this side of the island. We had graduation that morning, and after a handful of teachers called their relatives, (at the risk of having been insensitive, I admit) we all went right on to the post-graduation dinner party.

Nonetheless, events like this tend to divide people into two camps: those who need, and those in a position to give. By now, you've already manned up for Japan, donated toiletries and blankets, and spent the requisite time reassuring your loved ones back home that while the situation is serious, it's also contained to a specific locality that is not your own.

It's never too late, and there are many ways to help out with disaster relief. Those who are creatively inclined will want to check out Write for Tohoku, and the musical project TerraNoble. All those eligible for blood donation are encouraged to open their hearts (but over a period of time –there's a note on the website about how a huge swell in donations in response to the earthquake is great and all, but they'll need more later, as blood does expire after a time). You can find information about eligibility and where and when to donate online.



You can also donate money to the Japan Red Cross, as well as other recipients and groups. Check the Tohoku page of this issue for a list of links. You'll also find information there about donating materials like towels and blankets, and on volunteering your own time and efforts for Tohoku.

There are also resources for protecting yourself. Preparing an emergency kit with evacuation card is one step. Registration with Hyogo's emergency message network is another.

Stay safe and well everyone, and keep up the good work!

Lemmon

## Message from the Online Editor

### Dear Hyogo,

Sixteen years ago when the Hanshin earthquake hit Kobe, few people had cell phones or used the internet. The main form of communication was the land-line phone, a system that became damaged in the quake and which soon clogged with everyone trying to make calls. You can imagine how difficult it must have been to get or share information, or to confirm the safety of a loved one.

Flash forward to March 11th of this year. Just minutes after the quake struck, the Japanese Meteorological Agency's website was showing tsunami warnings, the mobile phone emergency message board was registering thousands of status updates, and countless websites were posting the breaking news. And unlike the case of the Hanshin earthquake, when foreigners were often at a loss for information, all of these services were available in English.

The internet has been an important resource for all of us over these past few weeks. Email, facebook, and skype have all played important roles in keeping our friends and family up to date. But I'd like to urge you to be careful about how you use the internet to get news. During times of disaster, rumors and false information spread quickly, and can even be picked up by reputable news organizations. Consider the reports of chaos in Tokyo, or the insinuations of an impending repeat of Chernobyl. These types of claims sound like tabloid material, but in fact many major news organizations have published (and often later retracted) material just like this. It's important to understand that all the news articles about the crisis in Japan are based off just a few original sources, any of which could be flawed or incomplete.

### What typically happens is something like this:

At a news conference in Tokyo, a government official announces that minute levels of radiation were detected in the local water supply, though these levels pose no risk to human health. In its rush to get things reported, the Kyodo news service, which is Japan's Associated Press and one of the main sources for foreign news agencies, publishes a news advisory about small levels of radiation being found in Tokyo's water supply, without mentioning the actual levels detected. The UK Guardian, in addition to many other prominent news organizations, then immediately churns out an article warning of Tokyo's now radioactive water, and Japan's growing issue of radioactive contamination. To extrapolate the chain of events further, 10,000 people will then tweet about Tokyo's unsafe water supply and Japan's radiation crisis. It's like the biomagnification of mercury in sea life.

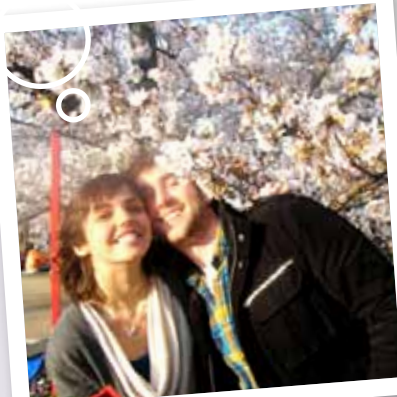
The point is that you have to be careful where you get your news from, and even then you shouldn't take everything you see at face value. At times like this, events unfold in less time than news agencies need to verify facts and give thoughtful commentary. I suggest watching NHK, reading The Japan Times, The New York Times, and consulting sites such as the World Health Organization and the IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency). The closer to the source and the more objective the organization, the better the quality of the information. And use common sense in trying to understand it all. Put everything in context, and use your own judgment.

I'd also suggest explaining the situation to your friends and family outside of Japan so that they better understand what's going on. It would be

good to mention that people in Tokyo are wearing masks not for radiation, but for the seasonal pollen, and that life in much of the country is pretty much as usual. We on the ground have no doubt a better understanding of the reality.

I'm grateful, as I'm sure you all are too, that we were spared from the damage here in Hyogo-ken. Let's do all we can to help those affected, and to help Japan make it through this crisis not only in a physical or psychological sense, but also in that of reputation.

*Jonathan Shalfi*



## Message from the PR

**First of all, thanks to those who responded** to the call for new members in Hyogo AJET! The official deadline to let us know if you're interested was the end of March, but you can still contact us anytime if you have any ideas or thoughts you would like to share. We are still looking for new location ideas for upcoming AJET events. If you have a favorite restaurant, museum, park, beach, hiking trail, or anything in your area that you want to share with others, please let us know! We want to make sure we aren't always having events in the same places, and we would love to help you plan and get the word out about your event. Send us an email at [pr@hyogo.ajet.net](mailto:pr@hyogo.ajet.net).

As for April, the big event is Hanami! This is my absolute favorite event of the entire year. Usually,

everyone goes to Himeji, but with the castle in a box, we wanted to try some different places. Saturday, April 2, we will check out the early blossoms in Shukugawa, and the following week on April 9th we'll be in Akashi. Details will be sent out, as usual, via Facebook and the Yahoo mailing list.

Finally, don't forget to send in your application for the July 3rd JLPT before the April 28th deadline. You can purchase the application packets for ¥500 at Junkudo.

I hope everyone has a wonderful April!

Sincerely,

*Sarah Lewis*



## Japanese Food and Philosophy

### You cannot write for the

Japanese culture and arts section and not address food. I've said this countless times, and as many of us who live in Japan know, food is such an important part of Japanese culture, both seasonally and traditionally. After *shodo* practice, when my legs have received enough pain from sitting *seiza* and my wrist can no longer control my brushstrokes, my sensei and I always end our sessions with a cup of *genmai cha* and *mochi* or *senbei*. We proceed with our usual deep conversations of life and cultural comparisons, discussions that can often last until late into the night. A very traditional Japanese woman by nature who enjoys international travels, she reflected "There is no country with food quite as delicious as Japan, is there?" A debatable statement, but I can see how many Japanese people may view too salty/too sweet and large portion size as unappetizing.

As *gaijin*, we may have a love/hate relationship with Japanese portions, some of us grateful for the loss of a few pounds, and some disappointed with never feeling quite full. And although I personally love *natto* and *umeboshi*, they are definitely

acquired tastes difficult for some *gaijin* palates. But we weren't just talking about flavors or portion size, we were also talking about presentation. In Japanese cuisine, the many small dishes of *tsukemono* (pickled things), *nimono* (boiled things), *sunomono* (vinegared things) are something to *楽しみ* "tanoshimi"; to enjoy and look forward to, with every dish served in various beautiful ceramics and pottery. Japanese cuisine is beautiful. It is art, and as I mentioned in a previous article, reflects nature. The beautiful dishware adds to the artistry, and the beauty of the presentation only makes eating and tasting more enjoyable.

Japanese cuisine is a skilled craft, and unique in that there is so much effort, time and love given for what seemingly is the simplest, insignificant dish. Take for example *tsukemono*. Those two pieces of *daikon* or wrinkled cucumbers – which take up an inch or two in your bento, whose odor you don't care for and that you probably leave untouched anyway – have been tended to with the utmost care. After harvesting your vegetable of choice and getting on your hands and knees to mix in your *nuka* (rice bran)

in the *tsukemono* barrels, the pickling process can take from a month even up to a whole year. And while there are many pickling processes with various ways of flavoring, it still seems like a hassle for a minute *okazu* (side dish). Even those two slices of *dashimaki tamago* – first the *dashi* soup stock had to be made with *bonito* flakes and *kombu* (kelp), then you add your *mirin* (sweet rice wine) and *shoyu*, and proceed through the delicate process of layering the egg mix, grilling and rolling it to form your log (difficult, believe me I tried). While these days there are square pans and *okononiyaki* spatulas to help with the process, making *dashimaki* really requires a skilled hand. Most chefs do it on a regular circular pan with chopsticks and a flick of the wrist. You also have to make sure you have the right ratio of ingredients to get that perfect flavor and fluffy texture. What seems simple is really done in elaborate ways. And as with many Japanese arts, simplicity is sometimes more difficult to perfect.

This brings me to an important part of Japanese cooking philosophy. Almost everything is flavored using *mirin*, *shoyu* and *sake* in varying ratios.

I learned this next part from my elementary students' lunch speech, which they do after preparing school lunch and before serving their classmates. Commonly known amongst the Japanese, the basics of cooking and adding ingredients follows the hiragana order: さ Sa: Sato (sugar), し Shi: Shio (salt), す Su: Su (vinegar), せ Se: Shoyu (soy sauce), そ So: Miso (fermented soybean paste). This is the best order to add condiments when cooking, and has to do with how heat affects flavoring. And while Japanese cuisine is quite light in flavor, it is difficult to calculate the perfect balance of ingredients to create the perfect balance in taste. A sushi chef once told me, "Add garlic, butter, and salt to anything and it'll taste good, but if I give you *mirin*, *shoyu*, and *sake*, let's see what you can make."

The perfect balance of salt, sweet and sour flavors, the balance of fried, boiled and pickled textures, and the artistry put into the presentation is what makes Japanese food so special and the Japanese masters in their craft. It is when you enjoy the eating experience that the food tastes even more delicious.

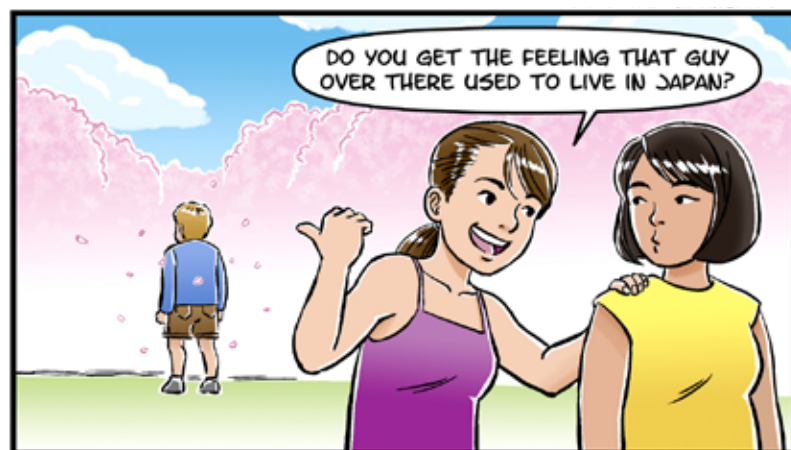
Raena Mina





Hehe...

## Life After the B.O.E. BY DAVID NAMISATO



**We all came back with some degree of cherry blossom obsession, didn't we?**

### 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](http://www.lifeaftertheboe.com)

洒落

Paul Schuble's

### I-word play

コーラの中  
に隠れてい  
る生き物は  
なんですか?

Answer: かめ (turtle)

First off, the meaning of the question. Read as it is, the riddle translates to:

"What creature is hidden inside cola?"

The solution to this one lies in the fact that コーラ, when katakana-ized like this, reads "cola." When written in hiragana, however, it is こうら (甲羅; shell). So what creatures hides inside a shell? And the answer is a turtle. I suppose anything along those lines, like hermit crabs or snails, would have been acceptable.

Travel Japan!

## Shiga Kogen.....





## Shiga Kogen, Nagano-ken

### After living in Japan for a

few years now, I am still adding to my list of 'must do' in Japan, and attempting to cross a few things off too. During February's three day weekend, I was happy to finally visit the snow monkeys in Nagano-ken while also enjoying some snowboarding in some amazing powdery snow.

Jigokudani wild monkey park in Yokoyugawa river valley is where about 3,000 wild monkeys live and come to bathe in the natural onsen waters. It was amazing to see so many monkeys in the wild taking a bath – they were so cute, and definitely the highlight of the trip.

There are onsens in this area for humans too, and those are about ¥500 to visit. Unfortunately some aren't open on holidays or to people who aren't staying at the attached hotel or ryokan. We were lucky to find an onsen near the bus station which had

a rotemburo (outdoor bath), which was amazing since it was snowing.

Shiga Kogen is one of the largest ski resorts in Japan, with about 21 ski fields. It is about 60 km from Nagano. The 1998 Nagano winter Olympics were held here, and you can visit the ski fields used in the Olympics.

We stayed in Hotel New Shiga in Shiga Kogen. It was convenient, and we shared a huge tatami room and used the hotel onsen, as there was no shower in our room. Most hotels range from about ¥8,000 a night, depending on the season. This should include breakfast, but it is definitely worth paying a little more and having dinner included too, since there aren't many restaurants in the area.

For snowboarding, we went to Ichinose where there are a variety of slopes, including

many for beginners. The following day, since we only had the morning, we walked across the street to the Maruike slope, which also had a few beginner slopes. Our hotel also had ski wear for rent, which was convenient and inexpensive, as they gave us a discount.

Famous foods of Nagano-ken are soba and oyaki (a type of dumpling with various fillings). Definitely worth trying!

In Nagano city, the main tourist attraction is Zenkoji, a famous temple which has artifacts dating from the 7th century, and is the third largest wooden structure in Japan.

Obuse is a small town only 30 min from Nagano by train. The main attraction here is the Hokusai gallery (famous Japanese woodblock print artist). There is also an outdoor onsen here.

### How to get to Nagano

Overnight and day buses leave from Shin-Osaka station to Shiga Kogen, and are about ¥8,000 each way. Trains take about 4 hours from Shin-Osaka to Nagano Station and cost about ¥12,000 each way.

### How to get to the Jigokudani Monkey Park

Catch the Shiga Kogen ski shuttle service bound for Yudanaka town train station. Buses depart hourly and will take you to the Kambayashi Onsen bus stop. From the Kambayashi Onsen Bus Stop, follow the monkey signs along a winding path to the Jigokudani Yaen Koen entrance. The path is over 2km long, but it is an easy walk.

**Entrance fee:** ¥500

**Open hours:** 09:00–16:00

**Feeding time:** 15:00

### How to get to Shiga Kogen

Buses from Nagano JR station cost ¥1,900 one way and take about an hour and 10 minutes to get to Shiga Kogen.

### When to visit Shiga Kogen

For snowboarding and skiing, late November to April is a good time to visit, sometimes even Golden week has a good amount of snow. From April 1st, discounts apply. The peak time is Christmas and New Year's, which means it is very busy on the slopes.

### Lift Passes

Lift Passes include ski lifts, gondola lifts, as well as ropeways and shuttle buses to all ski fields in the Shiga Kogen area. They cost ¥4,800 for a day, ¥8,000 for 1.5 days and ¥9,000 for 2 days. There is also night skiing on some slopes.

### More Information

[www.shigakogen.gr.jp/english](http://www.shigakogen.gr.jp/english)  
This site has a lot of information in English and also has a free downloadable English brochure.

Bus tour packages are available; ours included a return bus from Shin-Osaka to Shiga Kogen, two nights at Hotel New Shiga, dinner and breakfast, and a two days lift pass for ¥36,000.

Lauren McRae

## *The Death Penalty in Japan*

Living in Japan brings a whole new perspective of the country that living outside Japan does not usually afford. Yes, Japanese do drive cars; yes, there are Japanese who *do not* eat fish; and yes, there is crime in Japan. While still comparatively low, the feeling amongst most Japanese seems to be that the crime rate has been on the rise in recent years. Many foreigners are surprised to learn that Japan does have and enforce capital punishment.

### *How are trials conducted?*

In the past, trials in Japan were adjudicated by a panel of three professional judges. Recently, certain criminal trials are now being conducted according to a judge-jury system. A panel of three professional judges and seven citizen jurors decide the defendant's guilt or innocence. The system has yet to be applied to a death penalty case but that is likely to happen soon.

The death penalty is applicable nationwide and can be applied for a crime committed in any prefecture/administrative district. For the death penalty

to be applicable, at least one professional judge and five of the seven citizen jurors must elect to impose it. When a death sentence is handed down the condemned is moved to one of seven special detention centers (Sapporo, Sendai, Tokyo, Nagoya, Osaka, Hiroshima or Fukuoka) to await execution. There are currently a little over one hundred people on death row in Japan.

### *When is a convicted person executed?*

Appeals can be made, but once exhausted, the final order for the execution will be sent to the Minister of Justice for their signature. Once the signature is made, the execution will be carried out within days. This is where many executions will be held up. The sitting minister may not support the death penalty and simply refuse to sign any execution orders. As long as they hold office executions are effectively in moratorium. The order in which execution orders are sent to the Justice Minister is also somewhat nebulous and random. The two most recently executed convicts had over 60 people ahead of them on the

waiting list. The end result is that no specific execution date is ever set long in advance and the condemned are never aware of when they will be executed until the day it actually occurs.

### *How are the executions carried out?*

The execution rooms were only recently introduced to the public, but the general process has been previously detailed by former prison guards. The condemned person is notified of their execution on the day it will occur. They are then lead from their cell to a waiting room where the execution order is read to them and a chance for final prayers is given. The condemned will then have the opportunity to write a last will if they have not already prepared one. A final snack/cigarette is offered, after which a blindfold is applied and they are led to the execution chamber itself.

Hanging is the only method of execution in Japan. The condemned is made to stand on a trap door and a noose is applied. In an adjoining room three officers stand by a row of three buttons. Only one

button actually activates the trapdoor but the officers will not know whose button actually triggered it. A phone is present for any last minute stays. The buttons are pressed simultaneously, the trapdoor opens, and the condemned falls to a room below. After a period of time a doctor will check their vital signs to confirm death and the execution is then complete.

If everything proceeds quickly the execution can take as little as 30 minutes. If things stretch out it could take an hour and a half.

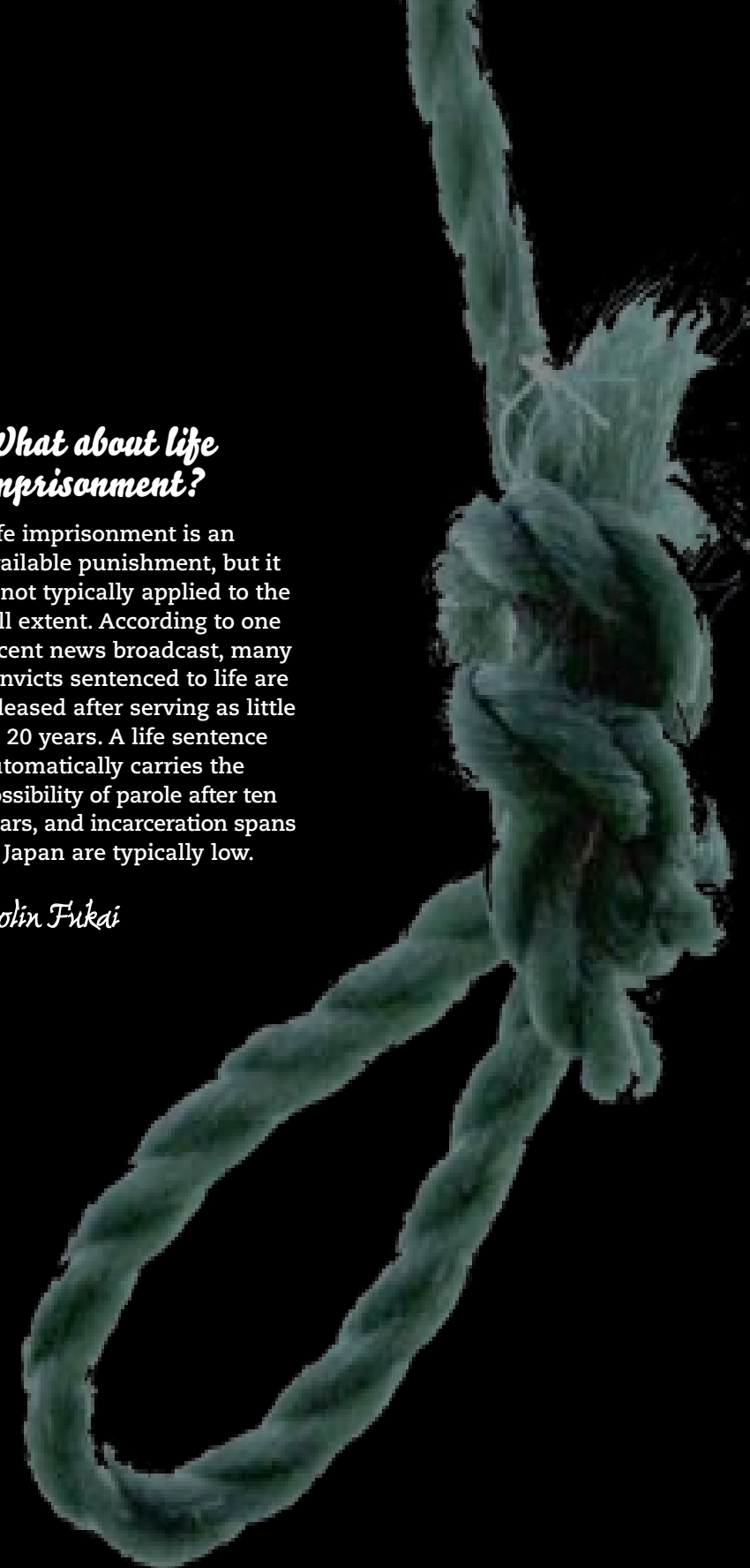
### *What is public opinion?*

According to opinion polls a clear majority of the Japanese public favors making no changes to the current death penalty laws: more than 80% according to one recent poll.

### *What about life imprisonment?*

Life imprisonment is an available punishment, but it is not typically applied to the full extent. According to one recent news broadcast, many convicts sentenced to life are released after serving as little as 20 years. A life sentence automatically carries the possibility of parole after ten years, and incarceration spans in Japan are typically low.

*Colin Fukai*





## Tohoku-Kanto Earthquake



### Protect Yourself

During emergencies (earthquake/tsunami/flooding), information is automatically sent to mobilephones registered for the service. Please visit this site to sign up your keitai: <http://bosai.net/e>

Information about how to create an emergency kit and evacuation card can be found here: <http://ajet.net/tag/emergency-procedures>

### Volunteering

As the infrastructure improves and becomes able to support more people in the area (right now, the concentration is on making sure there is enough water, food, and heat for the victims of the disasters), many volunteers will be needed to assist in cleanup efforts. As of right now, most volunteer duties involve collecting and sorting supplies for the victims. These website with information about

volunteer work for quake and tsunami relief will be updated as time goes on: <http://ajet.net/lang/en/2011/03/16/volunteer-information-for-people-in-japan>

<http://japanvolunteers.wordpress.com/volunteers>

### Giving Money

#### Man Up for Japan

(<http://www.facebook.com/event.php?eid=198359066854878>) is AJET's way of encouraging people to donate to the charities of their choice. While the easiest way to give is donating locally into boxes and collection bins, if you really want to make sure your money is going directly to disaster relief, it pays to do a little research. There are many big organizations involved in the disaster relief efforts, and they all have many projects going at one time. You will want to indicate where and when possible that your donation is meant for the Tohoku disaster relief. See these donor tips for more information: <http://japanvolunteers.wordpress.com/donor-tips>

Having said that, the **Japan Red Cross** ([www.jrc.or.jp/english](http://www.jrc.or.jp/english)) is definitely a good sturdy option. You can donate to the Japan Red Cross in a number of ways, including at the FamiPort terminals in Family Mart, Post Office counters, and online (the google crisis response page has a feature for this). Most of what you donate into collection boxes/cans/modified PET bottles will likely go here as well; disaster relief is something that is going

to take a long time and lots more resources, so keep on putting your okane in those boxes!

Other groups and associations are also accepting donations. For more information about donating rice, e-mail Barry Wyatt at [barry@kozmoz.org](mailto:barry@kozmoz.org). The following is a list of direct donation information for several organizations. Give the list a look and if you haven't already, donate to your favorite. For example, when I ㊦ed up, since I have a PostBank account (and transfers are fee-less), I chose number four and number seven on this list: <http://japanvolunteers.wordpress.com/japan-donations>

### Talent

Creative projects for Tohoku include Write for Tohoku, and the music project TerraNoble: <http://terranoble.org>  
<http://writefortohoku.wordpress.com>

### Stuff

The City Office in Himeji is accepting materials for disaster relief. I believe they really want blankets, towels, and underwear (all new/unused items). They aren't taking used items at this time. [www.city.himeji.lg.jp/koho/press/\\_23638/\\_24108/\\_24391](http://www.city.himeji.lg.jp/koho/press/_23638/_24108/_24391)

### Blood

The Japan Red Cross is always accepting blood donations. The second website shows how much they currently have or need. [www.jrc.or.jp/donation/index](http://www.jrc.or.jp/donation/index)  
[www.hyogo.bc.jrc.or.jp](http://www.hyogo.bc.jrc.or.jp)

### Google Crisis Response

Google's succinct (and international) homepage for all things Tohoku disaster: [www.google.com/crisisresponse/japanquake2011](http://www.google.com/crisisresponse/japanquake2011)



## News from your National AJET Rep!

### Hello Hyogo.

I know that this is a rough time for everyone in light of the Tohoku earthquake. We are very lucky to be so far away from all that is going on, but please keep your *nakama* in the north in your memory and hope that they are all safe and sound.

Thanks to everyone attending our big Valentine's/V-Day in February! It was a HUGE success. We raised ¥140,000 for Kozmoz, who in turn is donating all proceeds to the earthquake relief efforts in the form of rice (nice)! Kozmoz director Barry Wyatt explains:

*"It probably seems strange, it is much easier to donate money. I apologize but most groups that collect money use most of it for administrative costs, and usually only 10 to 20 percent is distributed to those that need it. That is why Kozmoz only donates food. And right now, rice and water is what is needed most. I appreciate your help."*

If anyone is interested in donating rice, please contact Barry Wyatt at [barry@kozmoz.org](mailto:barry@kozmoz.org)

Sakura season is here, and with it comes lots of opportunities for fun and frolic:

### April 16-17

Hyogo, Kyoto and Shiga JETs are donning their ninja gear and taking over MIE! This month is Ninja Fest in Iga-Ueno. As written in the Mie Guidebook, "come to Iga and pay about ¥1,000 to dress up in a fairly authentic ninja costume and walk around all day...[testing] your ninja skills at various booths around town, such as shuriken, candle-blowing, sling shot, and more. You'll be with a lot of children but who cares." Children? Psssh. We can take them.

### April 23

Hanshin Tigers vs. Yokohama BayStars! Over 200 JETs from all over Kansai will be in attendance. Visiting Yokohama fans will tremble and quake in our midst.

Finally, while you're soaking up the (springtime) sun, let your creativity soar and enter the *AJET Photo and Haiku Competitions* (both close Tuesday May 31). Haikus can be in reference to life on JET or in the traditional style and

can be written in English or in Japanese. We're not fussy, so Humorous Haikus are welcome. As for photos, we are interested in 'human' or humorous photos of your life on JET. Landscape photos are unlikely to get much attention, so start thinking outside the box. And yes, there **ARE** prizes!

As always, thanks for your time and support. Let's keep active and hope for happier times this spring for everyone, but let's also do what we can to help others whether we personally know them or not. "The world is a dangerous place to live; not because of the people who are evil, but because of the people who don't do anything about it." (That's not me, that's Einstein.)

Ninja vanish! \*poof\*

*Sifton Anipare*

[Block6@ajet.net](mailto:Block6@ajet.net)

Sifton is the 2010-11 National AJET Representative for Block 6 (Hyogo, Kyoto and Shiga). She currently resides in Kobe and lives on bubble tea and a secret stash of Tim Horton's coffee from home. Her reactions during suspenseful TV shows, movies and anecdotes are rumoured to be quite entertaining.

## Maigo in Hyogo

Where in Hyogo can you see this majestic mountain view?



## Ame-MuRa-men\*

## I had to run down to Osaka

the other day to get some stuff done, and after spending hours in the US Consulate followed by shopping in Daimaru, I decided to run over to America Mura to grab lunch and ogle the oddly dressed Japanese folk wandering about in midday. My first choice was a spot cleverly named “麺’s ルーム” or Men’s Room, with the “Men” portion being the kanji for noodles. I tried to find the branch right near Slices, but unfortunately, it seems to be part of a corner undergoing massive construction.

Somewhat disappointed that I’d be unable to dine in such a pun-derful environment, I turned the corner and happened upon “吉っちゃん” (Yocchan), a small establishment with a giant sign out front, replete with lovely pictures of their *tsukemen*. I ventured inside and found myriad pictures of the proprietor posing with pro wrestlers, wrestling masks, and lots and lots of posters

featuring hulking Japanese men with silly names. We’ve got a wrestling themed *yakiniku* place in Asago as well, and as a former Hulkamaniac, I found the décor amusing and relaxing.

I parked at the high counter and perused the menu. I ordered the spicy pork miso *tsukemen*, large, with their daily rice bowl (only ¥100!). The noodles, pork, bamboo, and nori come out on a large straw-like basket, with the fire-red soup in tow. Springy, chewy, and cool, the noodles scream *tsukemen* and fill your nostrils with a faint egg odor when eaten. Dipped into their unfortunately-not-hot-enough soup, the result is a delightful combination of spice and garlic, with the soup warming the noodles to a comfortable temperature. I say the soup was not hot enough because with an *oomori* order of noodles (300 grams at this particular restaurant), a great deal of heat is sucked out of

the soup with every dip. The last 1/4 or so of my noodles were unfortunately eaten at a somewhat less than ideal heat, and I actually *ran out of soup* before I finished my noodles. That was certainly a first.

Serving size aside, the meal was delicious. The rice bowl was simply bits of roast pork and chopped green onions with a *ponzu* sauce, a fine addition for the price. The pork, included in the soup as well as with my noodles, was full-flavored and had a texture firm enough to know you were eating meat and not fat.

Andrew Jamashiro

\*OK, technically Ame Mura *tsukemen*.



## Three Games for Practicing New Vocabulary

## Here’s something I wish

I knew when I was an ALT, especially when I was trying to get my students to learn 16 items of Aussie lingo in the “Slang” lesson I always kept up my sleeve. Language learners need to encounter a new word 10 to 15 times before it enters their “active vocabulary”; i.e. the words which they can actually use to make original spoken and written sentences. Students need more, therefore, than those thick tomes of English vocab which they are required to rote-memorise as one would a book of holy scripture.

I’d like to share with you three vocabulary practice activities which are regular features (one might almost call them old friends) of my teaching repertoire. I didn’t come up with them, but then there’s no need to reinvent the wheel in language teaching. I like them because they involve the integration of skills – namely speaking and listening – with language practice. Since I’m now teaching 4-hour lessons, I tend to use them as warmers or fillers: obviously you’ll find them consuming a more sizeable proportion of class time in a 50-minute team-teaching lesson.

## 1. Backs to the Board

This one is an old standard, and best used after you’ve taught and drilled a list of new words, which by the time you start the activity should still be sitting and waiting patiently on the blackboard. As the name of the game suggests, students work in pairs: one partner sitting with her back to the board. The other partner, who can see the words on the board, must try to make her partner guess them without uttering the words themselves. After a few minutes, have the partners switch places.

## 2. Lonely Students

This is a variation of a warmer activity I encountered in the dusty archives of my language school, where one student sits in front of the class with her back to the board. In my version, the class is divided into three teams, with three contestants from each team sitting at the front of the class and facing away from the board. The teacher writes one word at a time on the board, and teams must help their contestant to be the first to guess the word. The winning contestant is replaced with a new contestant, and points or Mitsuya Cider candy can be awarded if necessary.

## 3. Speak/Mime/Draw

I stole this amalgam of Pictionary, Charades and Taboo from another teacher. All you need is dice, a blackboard, and enough word cards for each student. Students roll the dice to determine how they will make the other students guess the word on their card. A roll of 1 or 4 means they have to speak, 2 or 5 means they have to use gestures (without speaking), and 3 or 6 means they have to draw a picture. I would give them a minute or so to plan how they will present their word before starting the activity. For large classes (which I guess are the norm on JET), this game can be played in smaller groups, or even in pairs.

Have fun!

Matthew Stott



*Better  
know a ken*

## Welcome to Kagawa!

**We are Japan's smallest** prefecture, home to less than a million people.

But just because we're small, don't think "little" of us. Our small size is actually a great advantage because it means all of Kagawa's treasures are well within reach!

Coming to Kagawa, you have to know the word "Sanuki." It's Kagawa's old-time name that everyone still uses. Most people here speak Sanuki-ben: a dialect of Japanese only to be compared to the thickest Cockney or rural Arkansas accents. Don't be intimidated, though. It's easy to learn and fun to use!

The most important Sanuki experience is Sanuki Udon. We have a saying: "If you stand on a mountain and throw a stone, it will hit the roof of an udon shop." We live on udon here, most people eat it at least three times a week; some people eat it every day. We're also famous for mikan (Japanese oranges) and olives. But don't put mikan and

olives in your udon; not even the most hard-core Sanuki-jin do that. Try tempura, raw egg, or gyudon (beef-udon) instead. My favorite is kitsune udon: udon with golden-brown tofu (it was the only thing on the menu I could read when I first came to Kagawa and it's still awesome).

Kagawa is also super famous for Uchiwa. You know: those flat promotional fans that have the names of banks, cell-phone companies or out-of-office politicians on them? Kagawa makes 90% of those babies – a staple of Japanese culture. There're a couple of museums in Marugame City where you can learn about the flat fan's grand history and even try your hand at making one yourself. Back in the day, people bought uchiwa for souvenirs because they were cheap, light-weight and easy to pack.

So what's cool in Kagawa, besides food and fans? How about the world's largest sand sculpture: Kanon-ji's Zenigata? (golfing

not permitted) It's by the beach and sports an awesome look-out point from which you can see the Seto Inland Sea in all its sunset glory.

How about the birth-place of Kukai, the man who brought Buddhism to Japan and established the 88 Temples of Shikoku? It's in Zentsuji. I really like this place because of the shrine at the spot of Kukai's birth. To get to it, you have to walk through an underground tunnel in complete darkness. After paying your respects in a small meditation room, travel back into the light amidst the images of bodhisattvas on your own journey into enlightenment.

Still not impressed? Then maybe you'd like to climb the tallest, original, in-tact, ninja-proof castle walls in all of Japan! Marugame-jo has stone walls 60 meters high. The keep at the top is the real deal and still houses swords, spears and armor. There's also a well at the top of the Castle hill

that has its own history. Grab a guide book at the bottom to get onboard the ghost story.

To tell the truth, the coolest thing I've ever seen in Japan was right here in Kagawa. The festival at Konpira-san in Kotohira (just down the road from Zentsuji) was well worth my effort. A procession of guards, dancers, musicians, lantern-bearers, miko, priests, and courtiers descend from the mountain's 1300+ steps to bring the goddess of the sea and her golden palanquin to Earth for a single day. Aside from being hauntingly beautiful, it was also an amazing feat of strength.

Hey, but I'm assuming that you're interested in Japanese history and culture. Who cares about a bunch of noodles, old buildings and shrines? For those leaning more to the present than the past, there's still plenty to enjoy!

Did you know that Kagawa is the core of modern art in Japan? The island of Naoshima has so much art on it that it could be declared a living museum and no one would be surprised. It's also home to a James Bond Museum because one of the more recent 007 novels by Raymond Benson took place there. But really, Naoshima is just the beginning. Last year Kagawa hosted the Seto-Uchi International Art Festival. You can still enjoy over 100 pieces of interactive modern

art on 7+ islands around the beautiful Seto Inland Sea. We also have the MIMOCA Museum of Modern Art in Marugame (the same place as the uchiwa and the castle). It's dedicated to Japanese modern art pioneer Genichiro Inokuma although it also hosts a lot of international displays that change about every three months.

But really, this is just the tip of Sanuki-Fuji, our most famous mountain. There's a lot more to do and see in Kagawa, from the world's longest two-tiered suspension bridge (Seto O-Hashi) to naturally occurring whirlpools (Naruto). We have battlefields (Yashima), international marathons (Marugame), and the most prestigious Kabuki festival in all Japan (Kotohira: tickets by lottery only).

Next time you have three days off in a row, scope out Kagawa: the biggest little prefecture in Japan! If you have questions, contact the good folks at I-PAL, Kagawa International Exchange Center at [www.i-pal.or.jp](http://www.i-pal.or.jp) or 087-837-5908. They'll hook you up.

**Best wishes for your  
Sanuki Adventures!**

*Julia Mace*

Second Year JET  
Mitoyo-shi, Kagawa-ken







## Himeji Riiide

### PEPY stands for “Protect

the earth, protect yourself.” In 2005, former JET Daniela Papi and Greta Arnquist began their long-term contribution to education in Cambodia, and their initiative has been growing ever since. The basic motivation behind PEPY is to give as well as learn, to teach as well as get. PEPY tours take people through Cambodia, hitting the highlights as well as bringing visitors to the schools PEPY works with. You see some of the touristy stuff, and some stuff other people don’t get to see. Many trips also feature overnight stays at homes in villages off the normal tourist path. Bikes feature prominently, as biking is one of the low-impact ways those on a PEPY tour can travel. The more physically demanding trips are conducted almost entirely by bike, while other tours employ other means like buses in addition.

Protecting the earth while/ by protecting yourself means supporting development of people in sustainable ways. Education is, I think, the key to anyone’s future, and PEPY adventures seem to me a great blend of exploration, learning, and contributing (both your time and perspective as well as your cash). But not everyone has the okane or the nenkyuu to fly to Cambodia. I myself have not yet been on a PEPY trip, although I do hope to go before I leave Japan.

Each spring and fall, several prefectures host bike rides to raise money for PEPY. The idea is to do on a prefectural scale what PEPY tours do bigger over in Cambodia. Get on a bike, have some fun, meet some new people and learn something along the way. Some prefectures conduct these tours over many kilometers and several days,

but here in Hyogo I’ve been keeping it simple, not least because I don’t think I could walk after that kind of a weekend; Hyogo’s bike ride is also comparatively easy on the wallet – bikes at Himeji station are only ¥300 for the day (the more to donate to PEPY with)!

Last spring, we biked around Himeji castle and up to Mount Shosha, stopping for shrines and snacks along the way. This past fall, we followed much the same route. This spring, things will be a little different, but it’ll still be the same ol’ captains (Chip Boles to retire from Himeji Ride captainship after this year; Emily Lemmon still in residence) and the same laid back approach. We’ll bring a lunch and have a picnic, and explore something you probably didn’t know Himeji had.



We’ll be taking two separate collections this year, the first being for PEPY, naturally (¥2,000 donation to participate, but of course you may donate more), and the second for donation to the disaster relief effort. Hopefully, it’ll be a day that’s good for your body (exercise!) and your soul, and heck, you might even make a new friend or discover something, about Hyogo or about yourself.

Come out and spend the afternoon in and around Himeji with us, **April 16th!**

For more information about PEPY:  
<http://pepyride.org>

To keep updated about the Himeji Ride:  
[www.facebook.com/home.php#!/event.php?eid=170825896299684](http://www.facebook.com/home.php#!/event.php?eid=170825896299684)

Emily Lemmon 





## An ode to Terajima Susumu, the Kevin Bacon of Japan

### Are you a director?

Is the female lead in your upcoming film in need of a shady older brother with connections to the “right” people? Does your period drama call for an actor willing to play a character that dies after delivering a single line of dialogue? Do you want a recognizable face to market Okinawa-themed pachinko in your next commercial? Happen to be looking for any of the following: soldier, medieval carpenter, samurai, playboy, gangster, sports coach, sushi delivery boy, or social worker to the recently deceased? Good news; Terajima Susumu is your man.

Terajima has appeared in over one hundred movies in myriad roles. During a career that has spanned three decades, he has also been in television dramas, promotional

(music) videos, and commercials. His relationship with many top Japanese directors is such that he is virtually guaranteed some role in every film they make. His Kevin Bacon number is two, but I am confident that he does not care about that, because in Japan, he is Kevin Bacon. You have probably seen his face afore; the man is literally ubiquitous in the Japanese film industry. And yet, he is rarely the star. This month, I would like to pay homage to one of Japan’s greatest and most prolific supporting actors.

The number of times Terajima has played a lead role is less than the number of fingers most people have on one hand, and less even than on the hand of an unlucky yakuza. Instead, he typically makes small cameos or plays supporting roles; his appearances run the gamut from bit parts to characters that are as critical to the narrative as those played by actors such as Michael Caine and Morgan Freeman (albeit less fatherly). However, whether he has screen time equal to the main characters or is dead before the credits roll, Terajima Susumu has a knack for making every line memorable (especially when it is his only line).

Yakuza roles are his specialty, thanks in no small part to the working relationship Terajima has with director Kitano Takeshi. Even in films that are not specifically about yakuza, he often portrays a gangster or tough guy. For example, Terajima has played a debt collector for the mob in a film otherwise about hula, and the inexplicably wiseguy brother in a serious drama about love and relationships. In a way, it is disappointing to see him pigeonholed into these roles so often, because he is not merely a character actor. However, that very sentiment goes against what I believe motivates his career.

Terajima has proven that he can play a wide range of characters effectively; amongst his most memorable performances is a polite social worker in a way station for the recently dead. He can also carry a film as the lead; his performance in *The Blessing Bell* (幸福の鐘) is outstanding despite not having a single line of dialogue until right before the credits roll. The skill with which he can and does perform any role does not suggest an actor that is desperate for any work that comes his way. The reason he accepts being typecast as

yakuza or will take small parts, on the other hand, is that Terajima Susumu simply loves acting. Therefore, he takes every opportunity to act and consistently gives stellar, convincing performances.

I have been studying Japanese film since college and writing this column for about a year now. Therefore, I typically rent five or more movies a month. In films released since his big screen debut in 1986, Terajima Susumu has probably appeared in nearly half that I have seen (and most of the good ones). Although his performances in *HANA-BI*, *After Life*, and *The Magic Hour* are particularly superb, it is not necessarily worth recommending a single film. The soldier he plays in *Casshern* is etched in my memory. His single line in *Taboo* left me wishing the character had lived a while longer. The list goes on and on, so if you like Japanese movies just go out and see some.

**Terajima Susumu will find you. And move you.**

Thanks for watching!

*JJ Cappa*





*Snowball fight  
on steroids*

## Yukigassen 2011



### On a cold February morning

in Tajima, a group of twenty ALTs and friends gathered on a snowy field, prepared for battle. At stake: an invitation to the national competition in Hokkaido. The method: a snowball fight on steroids.

This year's Hyogo Yukigassen championships were held at Muraoka Junior High School. The sport consists of two teams battling with seven players each – with the aim of grabbing the opposing team's flag first, or eliminating all of the other team's players by hitting them with snowballs. Each match is a best of three series, with the overall winner having the honor to represent Hyogo in Hokkaido.

The male Tajinators were initially set back by their skull-compressing helmets and subsequently blindsided by the organized barrage of snowballs from their first opponent, losing the first match.

A bit of strategizing and a weaker opponent in the second match, however, resulted in a win worthy of an excessive celebration penalty. This left the team with one win and one loss, unfortunately not enough to move on to the next round.

The female team did not fare any better, despite an impressive effort. Their smiles were unable to suppress their opponents' attacks, and they ultimately left the field with two losses, vowing revenge next February.

*Brian Doran*





## The Sushi experience

### Pushing the noren curtain aside

and sliding the wooden doors, you step into a whole new world that you cannot imagine from the indiscernible entrance: the sushi bar. There is an old, tough looking man behind the counter, with his wife as the only staff member. There is no menu except for the kanji written on wooden blocks. We chose this place precisely for the obscurity and authenticity and braced ourselves for real sushi one of our first nights in Japan. The couple speaks no English, and our Japanese at this time is meager at best. All the sushi chef does is make some sort of incomprehensible hand gesture and we nod slowly and anticipate what he makes behind the counter. Suddenly he whips out a net and removes a wildly flapping fish from the tank. His hands move busily and silently, but we cannot see what he is doing from the angle of our tatami mat table. He comes out with a fish, whose intact boney frame is skewered into a U-curve, with its tail and head pointing up, its glassy eyes staring back at us, and its flesh now resting on beds of rice.

We didn't expect it at the time but we had a surprisingly memorable experience trying *ikezukuri* for the first time. It was a great start to the many sushi bar adventures I would have.

Without a doubt, sushi is my number one food love, with its freshness and accessibility some of the many reasons I love living in Japan. Sushi has been growing in popularity throughout the world. While sushi booms in the West include many fusion inside-out rolls heavily doused in various sauces that would appall the Japanese, they do their job in easing the first timer into the world of sushi. And if enticed enough, the first timer will venture to explore what real sushi is all about; eventually getting into the slimy, cool, raw texture of traditional *nigiri* and *sashimi*. Many gaijin do come to Japan to enjoy authentic sushi, from the freshest fish markets like Tsukiji to the fun *kurkuru* sushi trains.

While my personal sushi choices tend to favor *shiromi* (white flesh fish) or *hikarimono* (silver/shiny skinned fish), living in Japan offers the unique opportunity to try rare fish that is hard to find (or hard on the wallet) in the West. This can be from dangerously exciting *fugu* (blowfish), the raw shellfish *sazae* (conch) and *awabi* (abalone), to crunchy textured *namako* (sea cucumber). What is also fun is the chance to try delicacies even *mezurashii* (rare) for the Japanese, like *suppon* (turtle). We are also lucky that we get to compare both saltier tasting Edo style *shari* (sushi rice) with Kansai's sweeter tasting *shari*.

But aside from the taste and texture of the best, freshest sushi, what I love and look for is the experience. And for me the experience literally lies in the hands of the sushi chef.

I have navigated the narrow alleys of Tsukiji market and waited over an hour in line, I've driven winding narrow roads to the Japanese sea, to coastal fish markets in *inaka* towns and to islands like Awaji just to eat the freshest, best fish. Nevertheless I will take an eight seat sushi bar in a windowless narrow old space, with an aged sushi master and his wife behind a cramped wooden counter, over a popular modern, slick and sexy sushi bar manned with several chefs any day. Both can serve a good quality of sushi, and even if the modern bar serves higher grades of sushi, it is incomparable to what you can get with the intimacy of a one-on-one sushi experience.

When I say "experience," you can liken it to a show: You may or may not wait in line, the curtains are opened and you hear the genki deep shouts of "Irasshaimasei" and "Dozo!" as you walk in and are seated front row. You stare in awe at the performance of how fast their hands form the *nigiri*. *Teishoku's* and sushi sets are reasonably priced, but nothing is better than directly ordering from the man who makes your food right in front of your eyes. You are seated in front of someone I can best compare to a magician.

How someone can cut your selected *netta* (actual fish topping), take the *shari*, and use their fingers to form a perfectly pressed bed of rice in less than 30 seconds is nothing short of magical, like pulling a rabbit out of a hat.

However what sets apart sushi masters is the attention to detail. The deliciousness of the sushi is equal to how much care the master puts into it. Like a long-time bartender, he learns what fish you like best, and knows what he can recommend to you. He can cater to you if you prefer smaller *shari* size. His style of cutting the piece of sushi, how he recommends serving it, if he offers *tataki* or grilled style, whether he serves you raw octopus with salt, or squeezes lemon on your *uni* or *ika*. These little details make the sushi experience more enjoyable and more delicious. And like a bartender, if you can crack that tough exterior, you can enjoy the chit chat depending on the atmosphere. If the chef cares about the food and your experience, he will tell you more about what fish you are eating, where it comes from, information about how its caught, when it's best in season and why. You really learn about the food you are eating. Not to

mention there is that intimacy of having your own personal chef. From your words to their fingers and their blade of steel to your plate, you sense you are being treated special and the food is special. The attention given to the customer and the sushi makes you come back for more. It's easy for us gaijin to feel intimidated to slide open the door and be put yourself at the mercy of old Japanese men, but these small, long-standing sushi bars are gems worth seeking out. So take advantage of your time in Japan: push back that *noren*, step inside and ready yourself for the delicious adventure of the sushi bar experience.

### Raena Mina





## Getting to Know Random JETs .....

### Kameron Srimoungchanh

I like: Nouns.

But I don't like: Nouns that are the opposite of what I like.

I can: Change my mind about something in less than a millisecond. Impressed yet? I would be.

But I can't: Not do the impossible.

I have: The innate ability to look at something and appreciate it.

I want: A green skittle.

### More Details

School and Location in Hyogo: Ichinomiya Kita Junior High School, Ichinomiya, Shiso.

Birthday: October 10, 1988.

Born and raised: Born and raised in Japan until I was 10. After that, I lived in Columbia, South Carolina.

University & Degree: Clemson University, B.S. Computer Science.

Other jobs you've had: IT support.

Travels since becoming a JET: Hiroshima, Hokkaido, Gifu, and Thailand.

Travels before becoming a JET: Malaysia, Guam, Kyoto, Tokyo, and all over America.

Hobbies: Verbing.

Staying another year? Yes.

### Favorites

Food: Mexican food, Cajun cooking, Southern BBQ, and Buffalo wings.

Sports: Soccer, American football, golf, and ultimate Frisbee.

Music: Alternative, Rock, Indie, and Hip-Hop/Rap.

Shop: Ralph Lauren, Tommy Hilfiger, and Banana Republic.

TV Show: It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia, Entourage, and The Wire.

Movie: The Sandlot, a story of the real American hero.

### Random Trivia

Proudest Achievement: Inventing the moon.

Advice for the younger: Be yourself. But if people don't like that, conform and be someone else.

Motto: Everything always works out.

I remember when....: Pangaea was still a supercontinent.

What are you drinking? Water, but I assure you, it's some pretty bad ass water.

Who would you like to meet? Myself in 8 years, purely for the sake of giving myself a high-five.

Why should we elect you President of the World? Aside from being totally awesome, I would have to say that I could really bring a lot to the table. It seems like a tall order considering it's the world's table,

but I have a lot of qualifications to back up my statements. For example, if a bear was eating your garbage, I'd fight it and win!

Best thing about Japan so far? Walking in and out of a store to hear the same people greet you with, "Irrashimase!"

Interesting Fact about me: I am a direct descendant of Zeus. I also came up with the idea of the widely popular peanut butter and jelly sandwich.

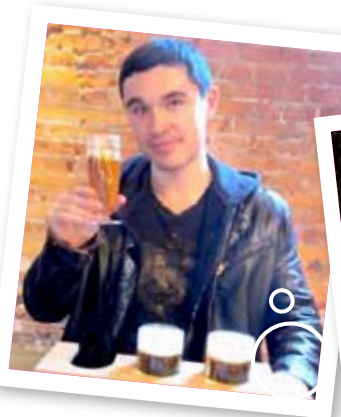
### Teaching

My top tip for teaching: If you can bring passion and charisma to the classroom, your students will react in turn. It also helps to treat them with respect and to find out their interests.

When the class is TOO QUIET I...: Try to make it less quiet, unless it has to be quiet.

Bribery for students.. YAY or NAY? I bribe students because there's really no better feeling than the sense of accomplishment achieved after compensating someone to do what you want them to do.

Funniest Story involving work: Finding out that one of the teachers in my school was a man after I was convinced they were a woman for several months. What makes it even better is that I only found out after one of my eikaiwa students asked me to, "Put in a good word for him."



### Miriam Truppin-Brown

I like: The smell of gasoline.

But I don't like: Fruits with pits.

I can: Roll my tongue, make it into that clover shape, and touch my nose with it.

### More Details

School and Location in Hyogo: Yamasaki Minami JHS, Shiso City. Turn left at the rice paddy.

Birthday: October 9, 1985.

Born and raised: Outside Boston

University and Degree: Washington University in St. Louis, B.A. in Art History

Travels since becoming a JET: Korea, Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore. Next up on my wish list is China. Or Mongolia. Or Vietnam.

Travels before becoming a JET: I spent a summer in Oxford, England when I was 17, and a year abroad in Italy, traveling all over Europe.

Hobbies: Trying to see as much of Japan as possible. Baking things in my teeny tiny toaster oven.

Staying another year? Nope, after third year my town kicks you out. But in any case, I'm ready for the next challenge.

### Favorites

Food: Pasta. Chocolate. Okonomiyaki.

Sports: Olympic level worrywart.

Music: Glee! The Japanese group VAMPS. Also, I just got into Tokio Hotel. I know I'm 25 you guys, but I kind of love them.

TV Show: Friends. Glee. 君はペット, Modern Family.

Movie: Pride and Prejudice (The Colin Firth one). The Last Samurai.

### Random Trivia

Proudest Achievement: Living overseas.

Motto:

*"A certain type of perfection can only be realized through a limitless accumulation of the imperfect."*

– Haruki Murakami

I remember when...: Taylor Hanson was hot.

What are you drinking? Instant Royal Milk Tea. Fifth cup of the day.

Who would you like to meet? Daniel Henney. Because, yum... I mean, a nice Jewish boy. (Happy, mom?)

Best thing about Japan so far? The friends I've made. And okonomiyaki.

Interesting Fact about me: When I was 10, I broke my back. Now I'm kind of crooked.

### Teaching

My top tip for teaching: Make a fool of yourself. You'll win their undying love.

Bribery for students.. YAY or NAY? Totally. I mint my own money: Miriam Dollars. Five Miriam dollars gets you a prize from the Miriam Store. My face is on the money.

Funniest Story involving work: Fed up with katakana English, I decided to teach phonics at elementary school. It went over really well, so I decided to try it with my junior high schoolers. I got up in front of the class, and just like with the elementary classes, I went "Ok, repeat after me: ah ah! uh uh! oh oh!" The girls dissolved into giggles and the boys burst out laughing, and I realized that what might have been benign in a room full of six year olds was, in front of a room full of 13 year olds, just me making a series of sex noises.



### Kobe has a lot of nice

restaurants, especially in Kitanozaka. Between the city's huge international population and the local branch of Le Cordon Bleu cooking school, the slopes of Mt. Rokko are practically layered with good eats. Expensive, but good. From that perspective, then, Vieni still stands out from the pack. Located across from Sone, a Kitanozaka Jazz club with an unearned reputation, Vieni is sitting on some prime real estate, so you know the place has to measure up.

The chef at Vieni produces exquisite Italian and fusion dishes and changes the menu daily based on what's fresh. Both he and the sommelier speak some English. Of course, this is a jazz column, not a food column, so let's talk about jazz. The owners made the savvy decision of booking a resident jazz duo to play twice

a week. Not unusual for a restaurant in the Kobe area, but notable for the duo.

Kobe ALT Sean Flynn (gt) and his wife Libby (vo) hail from Brisbane, Australia. Both are classically trained musicians, and together they work their way through a mix of Nat King Cole, Ray Charles, and other jazz standards. Their schedule varies from month to month, but it seems to have settled on Thursdays and Sundays for the time being.

Vieni is fairly small, seating only 20 people, and the place is not designed for its acoustics, but the intimacy of the venue and quality of the experience manage to make the whole thing work. The food is reasonable, for Kitano, averaging around ¥1000–1500 for lunch, ¥1500–2000 for dinner, and drinks at ¥1000

or so apiece. There's also a good selection of antipastos and other fare, so you could put a full course meal together for about ¥4000.

Sean and Libby are beautifully presented on Vieni's website: <http://italianbar-vieni.com/event>.

Check out the Kobe Jazz Group Calendar: <http://tiny.cc/wm1ek>

**Music charge:** ¥500

**Price:** \$\$

**Music:** 4/5

**Food:** 4/5

**Drinks:** 4/5

*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.

## Orange Chicken Stir-Fry

Stir-fry is one of the most basic techniques in Asian cooking; in Japanese, it's most common as 野菜炒め/yasai-itame, but restaurants usually use pork belly to give it both grease and savor. To do it properly, you need a stainless steel wok or griddle heated to within two degrees of hell, but a normal frying pan over high or medium-high heat will suffice. You'll also want a thin spatula or a pair of long cooking chopsticks with which to stir.

### Ingredients:

1-2 Tbsp olive or grapeseed oil

1 onion, chopped roughly

3-4 medium-sized shiitake mushrooms, sliced

1/2 head broccoli, cut into chunks.

1 chicken breast, cut into small bite-sized chunks

1 tbsp flour

1 cup / 200 ml orange juice

Fresh ginger and garlic, grated

1 tsp soy sauce

### Step One

Steam the broccoli in your frying pan for 4-5 minutes over medium heat. Just dump it in, add a splash of water, and add more water if it dries up. If you have a lid, so much the better. Stir-frying is a quick and dirty process, so you really want to have hard vegetables like broccoli cooked through beforehand. Remove the broccoli to a separate plate.

### Step Two

Mix the orange juice, soy sauce, ginger, garlic, and flour in a cup until the flour is dissolved. Set this aside. Add some red pepper to taste if you're feeling adventurous.

### Step Three

Add the oil, onion, and mushrooms, and toss to coat. Cook these over medium heat for a few minutes to sweat their flavor into the oil.

### Step Four

Crank up the heat to high, wait 30 seconds, add the chicken, and start stirring. Once the chicken is cooked through, which should only take 5-7 minutes, add the orange juice and continue stirring.

### Step Five

Move the chicken to the edge of the wok so that the orange juice can thicken in the center. Once the sauce is thickened, add the broccoli, turn off the heat, and stir everything together.

### Step Six

Serve over rice.

**Serves:** Two.

**Modifications:** Swap out the broccoli for any other seasonal vegetables, or even nonseasonal ones like moyashi. Swap the chicken for pork belly, or for vegetarians, more mushrooms of varying types, but add a little more olive oil if you do that. Swap the orange juice for white wine, or go for a soy / mirin mixture, or use Yakiniku sauce (たれ). Whatever you want, folks, it's just guidelines.

**Caveat:** Do not stir-fry tofu.

*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 on the HT website or via Facebook. He has never released a country music record.



# Hyogo Times April Event Calendar\*

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
27	28	29	30	31	01	02
03 <b>Nishinomiya Cherry Blossom Festival</b> Shukugawa Park	04	05	06	07	08	09 <b>Tokyo Yamathon for Tohoku</b> I know Tokyo is far the ef away, but this event looks interesting! Yamanote Line, Tokyo
10	11	12	13 <b>April Tokyo Orientation</b> Participants in Tokyo Orientation (A, B, C & April) arrive in Japan one day before the Orientation. Until 15th April.	14 <b>April Tokyo Orientation</b> As 13th April	15 <b>April Tokyo Orientation</b> As 13th April  <b>Tanto Tulip Festival</b> Until 25th April Toyooka	16 <b>Himeji Riiiiide: PEPY Ride Japan</b> Meet at Himeji station by 9am to explore a whole 'nother part of our famous castle city! Himeji
17	18	19	20 <b>Izanagi-jingu Festival</b> Until 22nd April Awaji	21	22	23 <b>Kinosaki Hot Spring Festival</b> Until 24th April  <b>Baseball</b> Hanshin Tigers vs. Yokohama Baystars
24	25	26	27	28	29 <b>Infiorata Kobe 2011</b> Until 1st May  <b>Green Eco Kasagata Spring Festival</b> Kamikawa-cho	30

For more indepth details about all the events, please visit our website: [www.hyogoajet.net/hyogotimes](http://www.hyogoajet.net/hyogotimes)