

05.11

ht

hyogo times

Inside

Wwoof!

ABC Sasayama Marathon



20



22



31

Contents

- 3 ::** Message from the Editor
- 4 ::** Message from the Online Editor
- 5 ::** News from your National AJET Rep
- 6 ::** Daruma is my homeboy
- 8 ::** Life after the B.O.E. / J-Word Play
- 9 ::** Travel: Matsue, Shimane-ken
- 12 ::** The Power Dilemma
- 14 ::** Kobe Jazz Review: Sone
- 15 ::** Maigo in Hyogo
- 16 ::** English Sensei Spirit
- 18 ::** I Heart T-points
- 20 ::** Better know a ken: Ehime
- 24 ::** Book Discoveries
- 25 ::** Engrish Corner
- 26 ::** Ramentary: Witty Thai-tle
- 27 ::** Getting to Know Random JETs
- 30 ::** Kicchiri Kitchen: Risotto
- 34 ::** May Calendar

Features

- 22 ::** Wwoof!
- 31 ::** ABC Sasayama Marathon

Hyogo Times Staff

Editor: Emily Lemmon
Designer: Karen Cornish
Online: Jonathan Shalfi
Cover: Wendy Ikemoto
Contributors: Sifton Anipare, Raena Mina, Paul Schuble, JJ Cappa, David Namisato, Lauren McRae, Colin Fukai, Travis Love, Zach Price, Wendy Ikemoto, Taryn Senkiw, Caitlin Orr, Daniel Bromberg, Andrew Tamashiro, Chip Boles, Amanda Hahn, and Monica Harvey.

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

Visit us online!

Message from the Editor

**Hey there Hyogonians,
 your faithful editor here,
 just wanting to gather the family
 'round and say a few words:**

Firstly, thank you all for your generosity. I've heard tales of JETs who have traveled to Tohoku already, and of more who are planning to go during Golden Week to help out. Care packages are taking off from Hyogo as well (my group sent ours a few days ago!). The Himeji bike ride totaled out at ¥450,000 for PEPY and 36,060 for Tohoku (this, from JETs who already manned up!).. Basically, I'm so proud of you!

In other news, I'm super excited about this month's English Sensei Spirit; it's something I heard about from Zach and started this year with my 2nd and 3rd years, and as soon as the 1st years officially "know how to read," they'll be getting it too. I really have high hopes for what it can do for them.

US JETs, if you haven't started on your tax process yet, this is just a friendly reminder. See the HT website for more help (look under "Letters from Editor"). I know I'll need it.



Finally, in anticipation of next JET year, the Hyogo Times is looking for new writerly talent! Do you want to write the Love and Relationships column of Hyogo Times? Drop me a line and we'll see what we can work out. More details on openings as they surface. I'm also accepting idea submissions for new columns and sections.

Stay sunny,

Lemmon

WRITE FOR TOHOKU.....

The **Write for Tohoku** e-book, a collection of nonfiction short stories about Japan, is now published and ready for purchase! All proceeds go to Japan Red Cross. Alon Adika, a Kobe JET alum (2006-2009) is among the JETs and JET alumni included in the work. Go to <http://fortohoku.org/> to download a copy!

Message from the Online Editor

Hello Hyogo,

Looking forward to Golden Week? Soon, the best time of the year will be upon us – endless traffic on the expressways, sold out shinkansens, and crowds crowds crowds. Think of this time as a challenge – an opportunity to go beyond the obvious destinations and take advantage of our location here in Hyogo. One idea is to take your bike out for the day - you'll surely discover new things about your area you never knew before. If you have a car, even better. Use this opportunity to go on an aimless one-day drive. You're bound to come across something unexpected – some amazing ramen shop, for example, or a sex-museum or two. How about taking the train in the opposite direction? Most of us take our local trains in one direction when we go out. Try going the other way! Another idea is to spend some time in nature. For everyone that lives in the inaka, you've got prime hiking at your doorstep

(I'm jealous). Or even if you don't, you don't have to travel far to get to a "course" (as the Japanese call hiking trails). Have a BBQ at your local riverbed. Have a picnic in your local park. Take a trip to a remote onsen somewhere. And if you're all out of ideas, ask someone at your school. Take advantage of our unique off-the-beaten-track placements and use these eight precious vacation days to the fullest. That way when someone asks you what you did for Golden Week, you'll have something better to say than 'nothing'!

Jonathan Shalfi



Useful information

HYOGO PAs

078-362-3026

Mail: hyogo_pa@yahoo.com

URL: www.hyogoajet.net/wiki/Living_Guide

JETLINE

03-5213-1729

Call the JETLINE and talk to a CLAIR Programme Coordinator about anything you like. We are former JETs, and can answer most questions regarding the programme, and will try to help with any issues or questions you have regarding the workplace, or life in Japan. Hours are Monday – Friday, 9am – 6pm Japan Standard Time.

AJET PSG

050-5534-5566

Need to talk? Call the AJET Peer Support Group, a free, anonymous listening and referral service for JETs by JETs, every night of the year from 8pm – 7am.

TELL (Tokyo English Life Line)

03-5774-0992

Call the Life Line for free, anonymous, and confidential telephone counseling from 9am to 11pm, 365 days a year. Trained volunteers can offer counseling and support, as well as information on a broad range of English-speaking services in Japan.

News from your National AJET Rep!

As you no doubt have heard,

we have lost two fellow members of our JET family to the Tohoku tragedy. We at National AJET are asking the JET community to honour Taylor Anderson and Monty Dickson by sending postcards for an online tribute to our extremely devoted and sorely missed JETs, both of whom were willing to place the safety of their students above their own. Letters/cards can be anonymous or signed, and messages will be uploaded without editing. If interested, please send your postcards of memories, wishes, thoughts, or messages addressed to Taylor, Monty, their friends and families to:

Apt. 111, Haitsu Poronia,
Katase 44-28-1, Katsuyama-shi,
Fukui-ken, 911-0811.

You can visit <http://najettribute.blogspot.com> to read the current postcards received so far.

Although the recovery process is underway – Sendai Airport has reopened, and volunteers can now enter the area to help – Tohoku still has a long way to go. Right now all over Japan, prefectures are doing what they can to help. For those of you who contributed to March's *Man up for Japan*, thank you and お疲れ様でした! If you are still keen on doing more, take a look at <http://tinyurl.com/3k4rf5w> for news and updates on some of the great

project ideas popping up all over the country. For example, Paul Yoo, an Akita JET has started the *Fruit Tree Project* for Kesennuma, where shelters are in desperate need of fresh fruit to keep people healthy (right now they're surviving on prepared meals of miso soup and rice). National AJET is also putting together a database for JETs who need care packages. This project has started only recently so it might take a while to hear back from someone, but if you are interested in sending a package (individually or with a group of your friends), please sign up here: <http://tinyurl.com/3nyojfd>. If you're in the Kobe/Amagasaki area and would like to join the group we've got going here, please let me know!

Speaking of JETs doing great things in and for Japan, it's that time again. To make fun of the Disney channel? To say something cute? No! It's time for the annual National AJET Awards! Every year National AJET recognises some of the outstanding contributions JET participants have made to their local communities. If you know an individual or prefectural AJET chapter that fits this profile (and that can include yourself or your own chapter), please nominate them for one of the following categories:

AJET Chapter Award; AJET Service Award; Internationalization Award; Best Charity Event Award; Best Sports Event; Best Online Resource Award; Best Publication Award; Best Inter-Prefectural Event/ Project; Special Interest Group (SIG) Award.

Please send your nominations to awards@ajet.net. In your nomination please include your name, contact details, prefecture, the name and address of the group/person you are nominating, a description of what believe deserves recognition, and if possible include publication scans, links to websites, event photos, feedback and any other relevant material is welcome.

The deadline is Friday May 20, but don't put it off for too long – nominate people now! We are looking forward to hearing about the great things JETs have been up to this year.

All of the preceding info can be found in detail on <http://ajet.net>. Have a safe and happy Golden Week everyone!

Sifton Anipare
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.



Daruma is my homeboy

“七転び八起き” “ななころびやおき”

“Seven times fall down, eighth time get back up.”

It is a famous saying in Japan associated with the father of Zen Buddhism; called Daruma, the first monk from India to have brought the sect to China and Japan is otherwise known as Dharma.

Daruma is my favorite Japanese talisman because he is a symbol of perseverance, motivation, and good luck. He is commonly depicted in a round shape, perfectly representing the image of “rising again” and turning the expression into a literal symbol. The Daruma “tumbler” dolls that can be purchased in Japan are round and weighted so that even after being knocked over, will spring back into upright position. No matter how many times he falls or is pushed down, he will get back up. A very Japanese/Samurai mentality, Daruma and the expression 七転び八起き represents that fighting spirit of keep trying, and doing your best through adversity. Daruma is famously portrayed with no limbs, which stems from the legend that he mediated in a cave while staring at a wall for 9 years in zazen state, causing his arms

and legs to fall off. This symbol of undying perseverance, concentration and mediation makes him an inspirational figure in difficult times.

He is also a symbol of motivation since Daruma dolls are always drawn “blind” to serve the owner in setting goals. When you have a goal, you draw in one eye – as in “eye on the prize” and when you have fulfilled that goal, you fill in the other so that he can see clearly, marking your achievement. With both eyes open, you have been enlightened (having fulfilled your goal), because you learned something in overcoming the obstacles to achieve your success, and newfound knowledge allows you to see things in a different light. I’m sure you have often seen his red, cloaked, round, papermached figure commercialized during New Years, a time when you reflect on goals of the past year and set new ones for the upcoming year. Takasaki, claimed to be the birthplace of Daruma dolls, holds a Daruma festival every January at the Shorinzan Daruma Temple in Gunma-ken.

In many famous *sumi-e* works, Daruma’s eyes have an angry expression, which I totally dig. To some, this hooded, bearded, frowning *gaijin* can seem quite frightening, but to me it’s so “badass,” as he has the image of a strong fighter. The shape of his scowling eyebrows is meant to represent the figure of a crane, while his moustache represents that of a turtle, both symbols of longevity in Asian culture. Because of his tough but positive image, I am pretty much obsessed with anything Daruma and own all sorts of Daruma paraphernalia. I also love giving Daruma dolls as gifts of encouragement and good luck. With it being April, a new school year, and for some of us, nearing the end of our JET experience, the image and concept of Daruma is important to help us reflect on what we have accomplished and what we want to achieve next. It’s a time where we need that new energy to prepare for new *ichinensei* classes, or for some of us who are burnt out, that last ignition of fire to complete the time we have left.

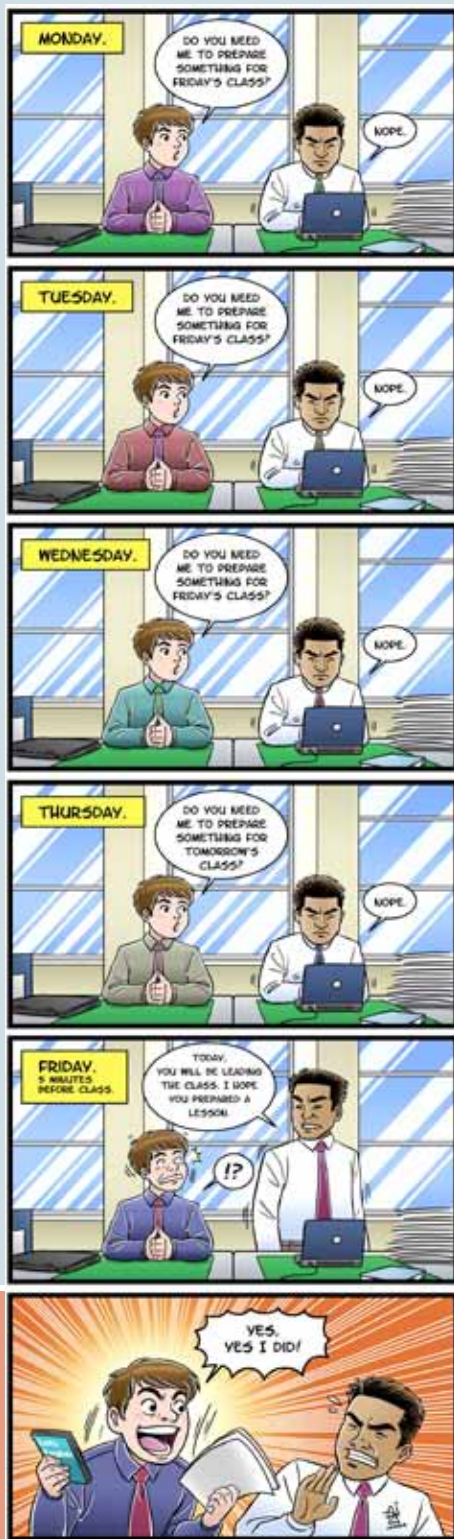
As a country and as individuals, the disaster in the Tohoku region put a lot of things in perspective. For those of us who are new, it’s a time to think about what you hope to gain out of your JET experience and to make sure you don’t lose sight of it in the craziness of living in a foreign country and culture. For those of us who are leaving this summer, it’s a time to reflect on our Japan journey and personal growth, did we accomplish everything we wanted to and if not, to plan and use our remaining time wisely to achieve it.

Life is filled with goals that we want to complete and it is so easy to get caught up in the frustrations of things not going according to plan or how we want them to. Whatever you rely on to help you get through in times of trouble, whether it be spirituality, friends, or family, while in Japan, get yourself a Daruma: it’s nice to have that menacing but encouraging figure to remind you to keep your hunger alive.

Raena Mina



Hehe...



Life After the B.O.E.

By David Namisato

David Namisato is an illustrator in Toronto, Canada, and a former CIR (Ajigasawa-machi, Aomori Prefecture, 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

洒落

Paul Schuble's
I-word play

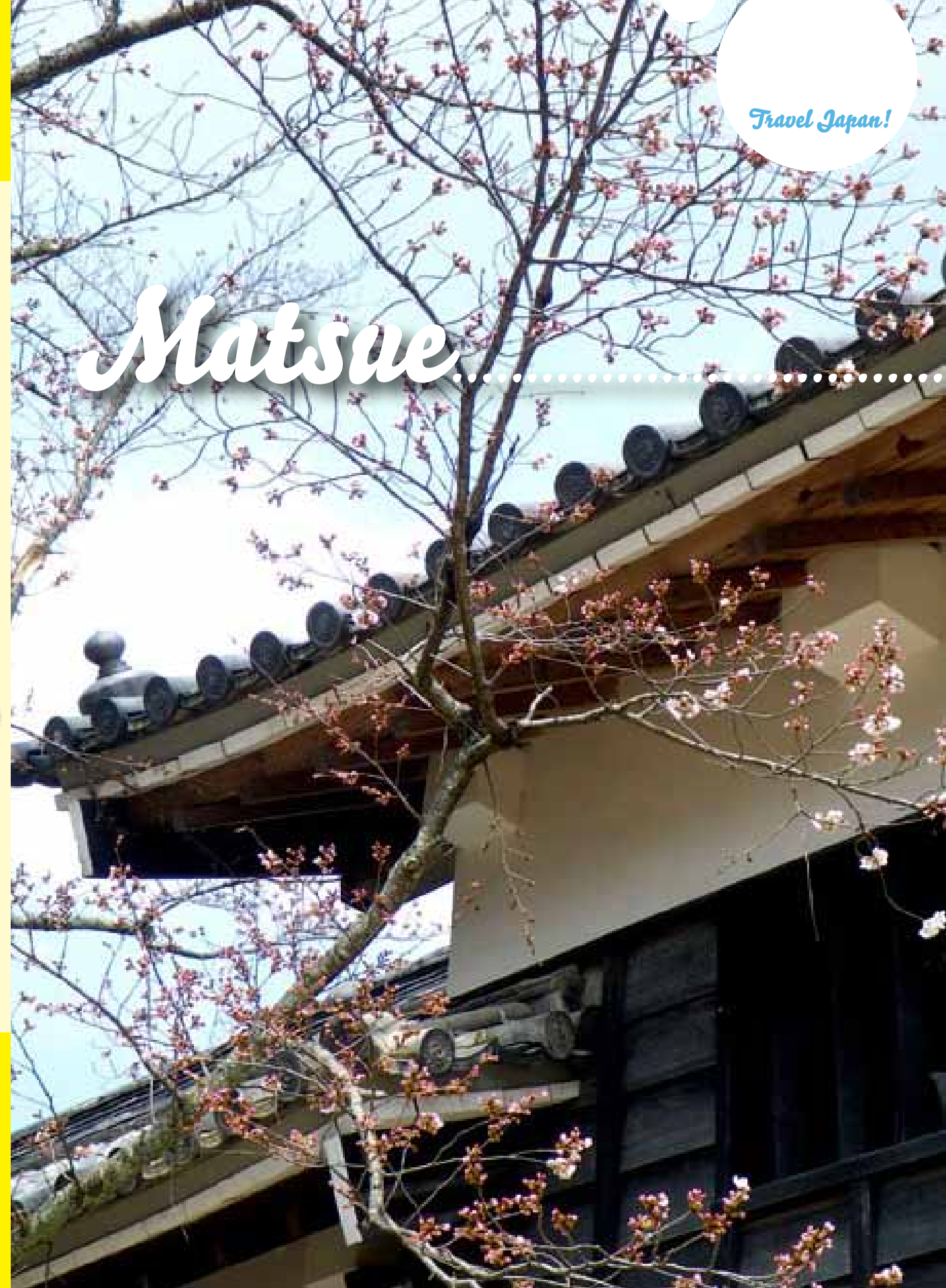
たぬきの
宝箱には、
何が入って
いる？

Answer:
何も入っていない (nothing)

This one is a bit tricky.
「た」ぬき means
“without 「た」” and a
treasure chest (たからばこ)
without 「た」 becomes
からばこ(空箱), which means
an empty box. So really
there's nothing inside!

Travel Japan!

Matsue



Matsue, Shimane-ken

Situated on the edge

of Lake Shinji, Matsue is a beautiful city with canals and a river running through it. Matsue has a mix of modern cafes and stores, while also maintaining traditional houses and buildings. We spent a day exploring the older part of the city around the castle.

The old samurai residences are called *Buke Yashiki* and were built in 1730. There are some weapons and household items to look at within the rooms of the residence. There is also a nice garden, and you can take a break in the coffee shop that looks out over the garden.

There was a famous foreigner called Lafcadio Hearn who lived in Matsue in the late 1800's and was a well known Japanese writer. It is said he told the world about Matsue and Japan through his writing. He took on a Japanese name,

Yakumo Koizumi, and lived in a traditional house in Matsue.

Matsue castle was completed in 1611 and it has the only castle tower on the Sea of Japan coast. We happened to be there for the castle festival, held every year from April 1st to April 15th. Matsue castle is about two kilometres from Matsue station.

Just out of Matsue, in a town called Yasugi, is the Adachi Museum of Art. It is an amazing museum where you get to experience contemporary Japanese art inside the museum while enjoying views of the garden outside. There is a free shuttle bus from JR Yasugi station to the museum which takes about 20 minutes.

Marine Park Takobana is situated north of Matsue and sits on a peninsula jutting

out into the Sea of Japan. It is a campsite which also has cottages for rent. It is a beautiful place full of natural scenery and amazing views. We went there in early spring, which was a little cold, but I think it would be beautiful in any season, particularly summer. There is a swimming beach nearby, scuba tours, and a boat trip around the coast.

Matsue and its surroundings are beautiful places to visit, and there is even more to explore in Shimane-Ken.

Costs

Matsue City has a discounted rate for foreigners visiting cultural sites. *Buke Yashiki* and *Lafcadio Hearn Residence* will cost ¥150 each to enter. Matsue Castle is discounted to ¥280 to visit, and the Adachi Museum of Art is ¥1,100.

Where to stay

In Matsue there is a Toyoko Inn which costs ¥5,000 per night for a single room.
www.toyoko-inn.com/eng

We stayed on the coast 30 minutes north of Matsue at the Marine Park Takobana in a cottage. The cottage price varies depending on the number of people staying. It is about ¥4,000 per person per night with three people sharing. The cottage sleeps 4-6 people, and there are bigger cottages available. They are equipped with a kitchen, bathroom, toilet, TV, and balcony, and bedding is also included. There is also a campsite available for ¥1,050 per site per night.
<http://asokoi.shimanecho.jp/shisetsu/mp-takobana/>

Phone number: 085-285-3387.

Getting there

From Himeji, it takes 3 ½ hours by train to get to Matsue and costs about ¥8,000 each way. We drove to Matsue, which took about the same amount of time, and we avoided most toll roads, so it was quite inexpensive. To get to Marine Park Takobana from Matsue, there are some buses available, but it involves a lot of changes. It is easiest to drive there as it only takes about 30 minutes by car.

Lauren McRae



The Power Dilemma

With the gravity of the

situation at Fukushima lessening, attention has begun to shift to larger questions surrounding the accident. What were the failures of the power company TEPCO and government oversight that lead to this incident occurring? Was the accident really preventable given the sheer scale of the tsunami? Discussion and investigation continues, but wrapped around it is the nature of the electrical power and distribution industry in general, and the idiosyncrasies of the Japanese power industry in particular.

Electricity is essential for modern human life. There are many methods of creating electricity: burning fossil fuels like coal or natural gas, using controlled nuclear reactions, or harnessing natural forces like wind, water and solar rays. Beyond the issue of generation is the problem of delivery.

Electrical distribution systems are designed like a network. At the heart of the network are power stations which generate the electricity. The interconnected nature of the system allows power to be routed in many different ways. This makes the system more

redundant to assist when there are problems (with stations, transmission, etc.). Numerous factors, however, can limit how much power can be shuffled around and where.

A big problem with Japan's power network is that it is essentially two entirely different networks inside of one country. When electricity was first introduced to Japan the standard used in Osaka was 60hz (America) while in Tokyo it was 50hz (Europe). This basic divergence continues to the present. There are a limited number of conversion points between the two networks, so not much power can be moved between them. Standardizing the network would take time and require a massive investment.

Since transferring power is not a viable option in order to overcome the shortfalls in Kanto, damaged power plants and distribution networks will have to be repaired and more fossil fuels will need to be bought and burned to make up for the difference.

The nature of power demand itself must also be considered. The amount of power you

consume every day varies by the hour, season, etc. In other words there are constant variations in the loads required to meet demand. Once electricity is generated, it needs to go somewhere, so power companies want the flexibility in their generation capabilities to match output to demand.

This leads us back to the question of power generation. With the incident at Fukushima and in light of past accidents, along with the disaster prone nature of Japan, it is natural to wonder if nuclear power is really worth the risk. There is no clear answer, but the pros and cons of the different generation methods will probably lead the way there.

First, let's consider nuclear power. When operating normally, nuclear plants release almost no carbon emissions and are particularly attractive in countries with limited natural resources for generating electricity by other means, such as Japan. A drawback is that many nuclear power stations currently in service do not have load matching capabilities. This means the power company needs

to deal with excess generation when demand is low. In large interconnected networks like Europe and America the power can be sold or moved to other companies, but for Japan that is less of an option. Newer plant technologies may offer the prospect of greater load matching capabilities.

The biggest con is obviously the prospect of catastrophic failure like that witnessed at Fukushima. There is an ancillary argument to this threat. Because a catastrophic nuclear plant failure would be so devastating, a company could not hope to bear the entire liability cost on its own. In order for the plant to be built in the first place, the government will have to, at some level, provide assurance that it will help if there is a disaster. Critics argue that this artificial "liability cap" distorts the economic models of nuclear power, making it seem more attractive financially than it really is.

The most prevalent power generation technology in the world today is fossil fuel burning. These plants can be load balanced, but they obviously produce emissions

which are hazardous to human health and the environment. Countries like Japan which lack these fossil fuels also pay premiums to import them and are quite vulnerable to supply fluctuations and political instability at the source (the Middle East, etc.).

With all of the health risks associated with fossil fuels and nuclear power, attention has turned to renewable energy generation methods: water, wind, and solar. Though these technologies are cleaner and more sustainable than their competitors, significant drawbacks remain. Most hydroelectricity is generated by dams, the construction of which can have negative effects on the ecosystem. Solar and wind power are obviously very sensitive to weather patterns so they are not as reliable as other methods. Wind farms can generate noise pollution. Perhaps the most pressing drawback to all renewable energy methods is that the technology is young, insufficient in certain areas, and the economics remain uncertain.

There is no one-size-fits-all solution to the human dilemma

of the need for power. In Japan and abroad, the specter of Fukushima will renew the push to reconsider the wisdom of major investments in nuclear power. At the same time, political pressure and treaty obligations to cut carbon emissions will also press leaders to seek alternatives to fossil fuel burning. With few proven alternatives available many countries may have no other choice but to invest in nuclear fission.

One positive of Fukushima is that engineers will learn a great deal from the breakdown and be able to construct better safety systems as a result. Yet it remains true that no structure or system can be made 100% safe or redundant. Failure and the unexpected will occur, it is just a matter of when and to what degree. How we deal with that uncertainty is probably as critical a question as whether to build or not to build.

Colin Fukai

Sone Jazz

Sone is the oldest jazz club/ restaurant in Kobe. It's a family business. It's also one of the largest clubs in Kobe. It's in every guidebook that mentions Kobe's Jazz scene, English or Japanese, and is at the top of the list, or near the top, every single time. Their food is, while expensive, very good, and their bartenders make a wide selection of proper cocktails, which are rated in the menu by alcohol content. If I were just judging the food and drink, I'd put it in the guidebooks myself.

Hearing that, you might assume it has quality Jazz, and from a certain standpoint, it does. If you're a Japanese businessman who knows nothing about Jazz, walking into a dimly lit bar with dark wood paneling and 50's movie posters and pinups on the wall might make you think you're in a place where real Jazz lives. Truthfully, a type of Jazz lives here. I call it "Salaryman Jazz."

What do I mean by "Salaryman Jazz?" I mean Jazz that is about as full of fire and spirit as a salaryman sitting at his desk, doing exactly as he's told to do, day in and day out. I have not managed, all month, to stay through an entire evening at Sone. I can make it for one

set, and after that, I'm gone.

The first cue that something was wrong was when I heard the piano trio the first night I went there playing exactly in sync. If you listen to a lot of live Jazz, you know that that hardly ever happens, because it requires a lot of rehearsal. I cannot describe Sone's musicians as untalented or unprofessional, just as – well, let's say uninspired.

I hear that Sone wasn't always like this. People say that the place got ruined when it got so large, because they expanded the venue, and the performers can't keep up the energy levels to keep people's focus in a larger club. They say that Sone got so big, it started having to pander to a wider audience, book musicians who all had similar styles, and essentially dumb-down the music.

I guess the bottom line is, Sone has become a place that people go to convince other people that they like Jazz, rather than to actually appreciate Jazz. My verdict of Sone is thus that of

a Jazz snob; thumbs down. Their cover charges are less than other places, but for the number of people talking during the performances, you can tell that something just isn't right.

Price: \$\$\$
Music: 2/5
Food: 4½/5
Drinks: 4/5

Sone has Jazz every night starting at 6:30, with a music charge of ¥1,200, and a special afternoon session for ¥1,000, with one drink included, from 2-4 on Sunday afternoons.

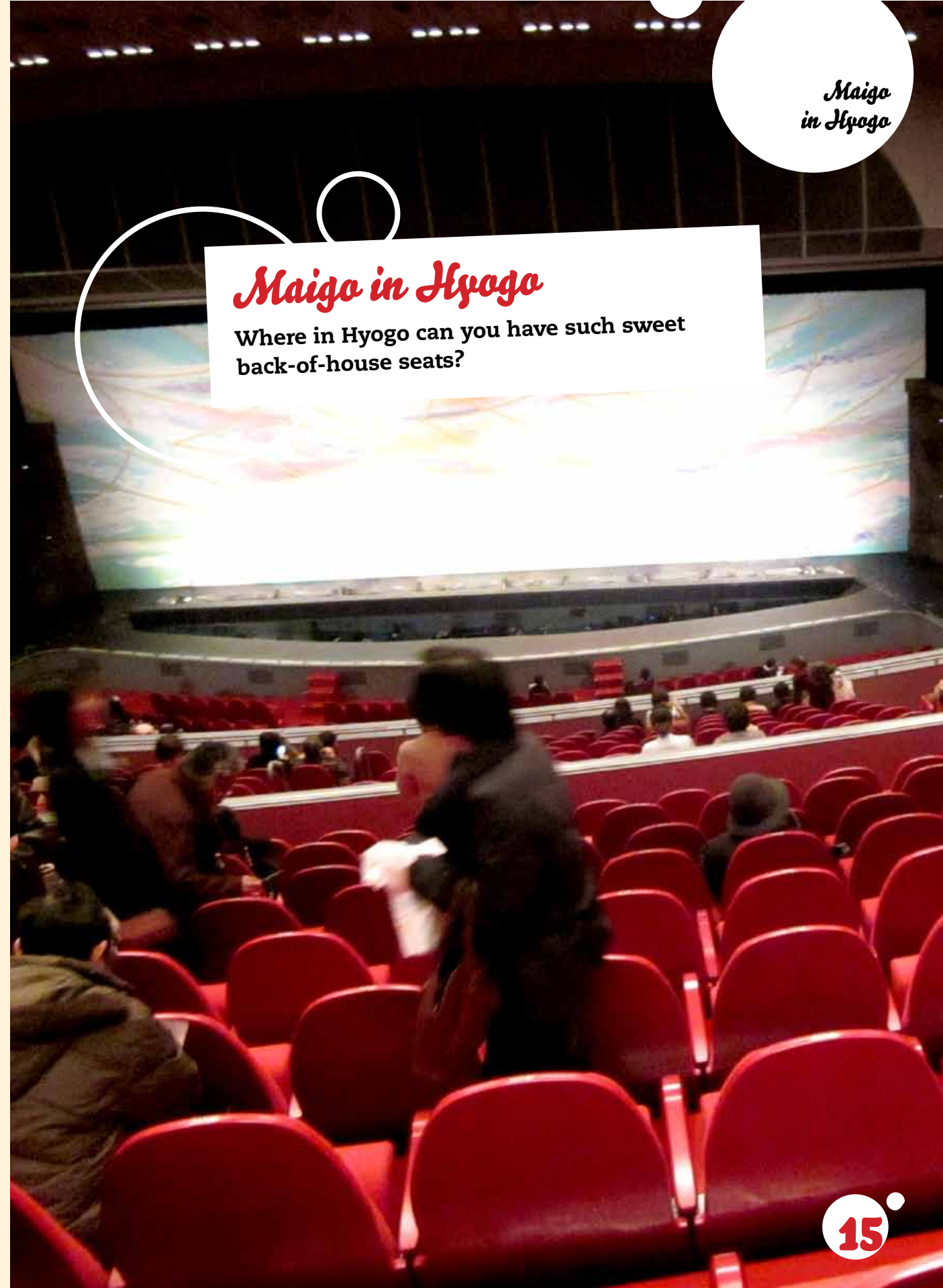
Travis Love
Food / Jazz correspondent

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.



Maigo in Hyogo

Where in Hyogo can you have such sweet back-of-house seats?



Q&A Daily Speaking Practice

One of the greatest disasters

of the Japanese English education system is the lack of speaking and listening practice. But with the ever looming "Entrance Exams," it's always a question of how?

Students already have too much to memorize and not enough time to memorize it, so how do we take the time to teach listening and speaking skills? As a compromise, my school has "Question and Answer" time: 5 minutes out of every class devoted to every student asking and answering twenty questions. This activity aims to improve speaking and listening proficiency, while also providing daily practice for various types of grammar, and is especially useful at reinforcing the basic grammar that tends to be forgotten as things grow more complicated in later years.

This activity will get your kids standing up, moving around a bit, talking, asking questions, and saying silly things. It can be fun. It doesn't take too much time, but if they do it every day, it sticks! This has worked wonders for my rural middle school students' speaking skills, so I wanted to share it with everyone.

Time

5 Minutes

Tools

- A stop watch
- Pages Q & A for each student
- A "Check sheet" for each student

Process

Every day after "aisatsu".

- ① The ALT or JTE yells, "Pull out your Q & A sheets. Stand up and make pairs!"
- ② The students quickly find a partner (a different person every day).
- ③ The students write the date and the name of their partner on the check card. (Of course in romaji! Why are even you asking?!)
- ④ Check to make sure the students are ready with, "Are you ready?" When they say "Yes!":
- ⑤ "Ready, set, go!" Time the students for two minutes.
- ⑥ One student asks questions from the question list, the other student answers using the answer list.
At first, the students may look at the English to ask and answer, but after a week or so, try requiring them to look at the Japanese list while asking or answering in English. They can always flip to the other page to check if they forget.

- ⑦ When the 2 minutes are up, say "Stop and switch!"
- ⑧ The students who answered questions write down the number they successfully answered.
- ⑨ Repeat steps 4-8 with the students' roles reversed.

Repeat every day!

Note 1: The ALT and/or JTE should walk around the class and correct errors. Otherwise the students will get into bad habits (like mine are starting to! Argh!)

Note 2: Just in case this isn't obvious: be sure to go over all the questions and answers with your students before making them try this.

Goal

The goal for the students is to be able to consistently answer all 20 questions in the 2 minutes.

Variations

As the students advance in years, the number of grammar patterns they know increases rapidly. Also, using the same list for more than two months is pretty boring for the students. Try updating the list every now and then to keep things interesting and to ensure that students are applying their speaking skills to new grammar patterns.

Zack Price

Question & Answer Practice

A

Class() No() Name()

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| 1. What is your name? | 1. 私の名前は…です。 |
| 2. Where do you live? | 2. 私は…に住んでいます。 |
| 3. How old are you? | 3. 私は 12 / 13 才です。 |
| 4. What sport do you play? | 4. 私はバレーボールをします。 / スポーツをしません。 |
| 5. When do you play volleyball? | 5. 私は毎日、バレーボールをします。 |
| 6. What subject do you like? | 6. 私は英語が好きです。 |
| 7. Do you like dogs? | 7. はい / いいえ |
| 8. Do you want a computer? | 8. はい / いいえ |
| 9. How many brothers and sisters do you have? | 9. 私には兄(弟)が…人と、姉(妹)が…人います。 |
| 10. Where is my pencil? | 10. あなたの机の上にあります。 |
| 11. What day is it today? | 11. 月曜日です。 |
| 12. Does Mr. Nagao practice table tennis? | 12. はい / いいえ |
| 13. What is your favorite food? | 13. 私の一番好きな食べ物はピザです。 |
| 14. What time is it now? | 14. 11 時 35 分です。 |
| 15. What month is it now? | 15. 1 月です。 |
| 16. When is your birthday? | 16. 5 月にあります。 |
| 17. Who is your math teacher? | 17. 私の数学の先生は坂本先生です。 |
| 18. What is your mother's name? | 18. 彼女の名前は…です。 |
| 19. Is Mr. Zach speaking English? | 19. はい / いいえ |
| 20. What is your mother doing? | 20. 彼女は(今)働いています。 |

Q&A Check Card

Class() No.() Name()

日付	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
相手									
答え た数									

I Heart
T-points

Otôto

おとうと

(Otôto or Her Younger Brother) went on my radar the moment promotional signs went up in the local video store. The simple title, written in *hiragana* as opposed to *kanji*, was reminiscent of Oscar-winner おくりびと (*Departures*) and piqued my interest. The grinning man on the posters, a popular comedian, caught my eye each time I visited TSUTAYA for my weekly rentals. Later, when I learned the director was Yamada Yôji, whose long-running series *Otoko wa tsurai yo* (*It's Tough Being a Man*) has been finding its way into my DVD player every other week for a year, Otôto was upgraded to “must-see.” The film did not disappoint, and as a fan of the director's other series I found it especially intriguing.

Yamada Yôji is extremely skilled at directing the same thing over and over... and then once more for good luck. The *Otoko wa tsurai yo* series has forty-nine entries, all of which Yamada wrote and forty-seven which he directed. Spanning four decades, each title portrays another small step forward in the evolution of Japanese culture between the sixties and the nineties. However, the basic pattern goes essentially unchanged from film to film. The namesake *otoko*, Tora-san, is a traveling salesman who frequently returns home to visit his aunt, uncle, and half-sister. Without fail, though, their family reunions turn to arguing and Tora-san leaves as quickly as he came. On his travels, he finds both love and heartbreak. Eventually, Tora-san will find home again, but rarely does an *Otoko wa tsurai yo* film end without yet another departure.

Tora-san, for all his weaknesses, has a good heart; the character makes the oft-repeated scenario entertaining film after film. Now twenty *Otoko wa tsurai yo* installments deep, however, some of the series' shortcomings are becoming apparent. In specific, that Tora-san lives in a magical world only possible in movies is beginning to test the limits of my suspension of disbelief. For example, I have often wondered where the money is coming from. Tora peddles his wares for about one minute of screen time in each film, and his aunt and uncle have sold less than one hundred *dango* in a decade. Presumably, boring things like conducting business and using the restroom are taking place off screen, but even so, the man is always broke. The amount of traveling he does is in no way within his means. Moreover, though deep down he may have good intentions, one can

only slip up so many times before enough is enough. He brawls with the neighbor or his half-brother-in-law, and makes his aunt cry in nearly every film in the series; his other exploits include running out on bills and getting arrested. Yet, the *Otoko wa tsurai yo* films always end amicably, whereas in the real world, I suspect Tora would be broke, homeless, and unwelcome amongst even family.

That is where Otôto comes in.

Otôto re-imagines the *Otoko wa tsurai yo* series in a world where actions have realistic consequences (that cannot be resolved by simply waiting until the next release). Testurô, the grinning man on the movie posters, is the “Tora-san” in his family; a failed entertainer, he is even unwelcome at his own neice's wedding. Unexpectedly, however, he shows up, and puts on a drunken spectacle that leads to the dissolution of the marriage. The family angrily casts him out, although he manages to put them through yet more hardships still; later, his sister is forced to pay back a staggering amount of money he borrowed from a girlfriend. The financial and social burdens brought on by Testurô are tangible in Otôto. Unlike the

flippant way in which *Otoko wa tsurai yo* handles similar issues, Tetsurô's behavior is a real destructive force; his niece loses her husband and his sister loses money saved for expanding her family business.

While the resolution in Otôto is similar to those in *Otoko wa tsurai yo*, the payoff is much greater. As Tetsurô lies on his deathbed, his family accepts and forgives their “Tora-san,” in spite of the lifetime of hardships he imposed on them. I now expect that by the end of an *Otoko wa tsurai yo* film, Tora-san will be forgiven by his family whether he deserves it or not. Their forgiveness, however, does not hold much weight, nor do his apologies; they are automatic and by comparison shallow. On the other hand, Tetsurô's gratitude towards his sister, his only true supporter, is sincere. Likewise, the niece, whose first marriage ended thanks to him, moves on, realizing her uncle's actions, while crude, led her to a better life. As director Yamada Yôji has remarked, every family needs one person who is a little “different” to bring out the best in everyone else. *Otoko wa tsurai yo* sugar coats it; Otôto tells it like it is.



I am a huge fan of *Otoko wa tsurai yo* and will continue to watch it until I reach the forty-ninth and final entry in the series. The reinterpretation of the Tora-san character in Otôto, however, is one that presents realistic hardships, and therefore evokes genuine emotions. I watch *Otoko wa tsurai yo* to study Japan. I watch Otôto to study humanity.

Thanks for watching!

JJ Cappa

Hello from Ehime! 愛媛

We're nestled on the island of Shikoku between Kagawa and Kochi Prefecture. Maybe you've heard of us from the Japanese drama "Saka no Ue no Kumo"? No? How about as having the oldest onsen in Japan? No? That we're the third phase in the famed Shikoku 88 temple pilgrimage? Still No? Well, let me personally introduce you to the "Love Princess." (愛: love, 媛: princess) She's quite charming once you get to know her.

First of all, the two most famous things in Ehime are *mikans* (mandarin oranges) and Dogo Onsen. As the *Sex Machine Guns* sing in their quintessential song, "Mikan no uta," "*Ehime no mikan wa sekai ichi!*" (Ehime mikans are the best in the world!) The next time you hit the grocery store, hunt down a bottle of orange "POM" juice for a little taste of it.

Now to Dogo Onsen (道後温泉), the oldest onsen in Japan with a history spanning more than 3,000 years. Anime-lovers may also recognize its curvy roof and traditional exterior as that which inspired the onsen in Hayao Miyazaki's movie "Spirited Away." For being so famous and a national treasure, the onsen is surprisingly small, but the ambience makes it a worthwhile visit.

Actually, Dogo area's theme is based on the classic book

"Botchan." It was written by the celebrated author Natsume Soseki after his one short year teaching in Matsuyama, the capital of Ehime. It's amusing that Matsuyama so embraced a book that poked fun at it. Still, I think Soseki would have enjoyed today's sweet Botchan Dango, Madonna beer at Dogo Brewery, and the Gizmo Clock (featuring animatronic Bothchan characters).

Soseki's mentor was Matsuyama-born Masaoka Shiki. Most of you have probably never heard of him, but I'm sure you know his three line, 5-7-5 syllable haiku style. Shiki is credited as the father of this haiku structure and is considered one of the four great masters of haiku! There is a Shiki Memorial Museum in his honor.

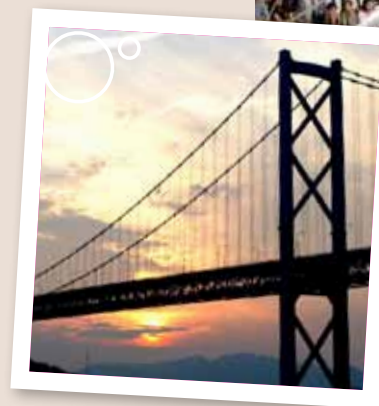
Shiki's not the only renowned Ehime writer. An Internet search for Japan's only two Nobel Prize winners in literature brings up the name Kenzaburo Oe, who hails from the little town of Uchiko. Uchiko is famous in its own right for the historical, 150-year old merchant shops and houses still in use today. These buildings are remnants of its once flourishing *mokuro* (Japanese vegetable-based wax) and *washi* (Japanese paper) industries. Those days are long gone, but visitors today can still buy wax candles or try their hand at making *washi*. The standout building amongst all this is

Uchiko-za, their full-scale kabuki theater. Call ahead for one of the volunteer English guides who will give you a tour of Uchiko for free.

A 9-minute express train away is Ozu City. In Ozu runs the Hijikawa River, one of only three major cormorant fishing locations in Japan. If you visit sometime from June to September, reserve a boat and bento, then prepare to be mesmerized as masters aptly coax multiple cormorants to dive and fetch *ayu* (sweet fish) amidst firelight and the foreboding Ozu Castle. Not an experience to be missed.

Anyway, if you're like me, eating local delicacies is high on the to-do list. There are two MUST eats in Ehime: 1. *Tai meshi*. (鯛飯) 2. *Imabari yakitori*. (今治の焼き鳥).

When talking about *tai*, or sea bream, I have to mention Ainan (愛南), the southernmost area in Ehime. Ainan is a seaside haven, whose rich, calm waters nurture tropical corals, colorful fish, and the abundant pearl and *tai* farms in the region. Ehime produces 50% of the *tai* fish consumed in Japan, so tasting the popular *tai meshi* here nearly guarantees a culinary win. But don't get confused by the two types: the south (Uwajima/Ainan) proudly serves sweet, *tai* sashimi over rice; while the north (Matsuyama and Imabari) serve



it cooked and flavorful over rice. Both are irresistible.

Imabari yakitori is up north. Believe it or not, it's home to the most yakitori restaurants in Japan! About one restaurant for every 10,000 people. Maybe it's because instead of using a typical grill net and flame, Imabari-ans cook on a griddle, or metal plate. This helps maximize the moisture and flavor in the meat creating possibly the best yakitori in Japan.

There are many other local dishes worth mentioning such as jakoten, Yawatahama champom, horaku yaki, etc., but I'll let you stumble upon these gems serendipitously. Also, don't forget about the little fruit farms! Depending on the season, you can pay to pick all the strawberries, blueberries, apples, grapes, figs, or tomatoes you can eat.

This sounds strange, but Ehime also has great water. Yes, water. Saijo City up north is known for *uchinuki*, its exceptionally fresh and "delicious" spring water. *Uchinuki* was named one of the 100 famous spring waters throughout Japan and is the focus of Saijo's "Aqua Route," which takes tourists through the city using springs as markers. Maybe *uchinuki* is the reason Asahi decided to place their only Shikoku

beer brewery in Saijo. This too, is available for touring.

On the flipside, there are the clear, seawaters previously mentioned in Ainan. The area is a spectacular spot for snorkeling, glass-bottomed boats, sea kayaking, and swimming. Even my friend from Hawaii gave it the thumbs up!

Swimming isn't the only outdoor activity around. Aside from the triathlon, camping areas, marathons, and small ski areas, I recommend that everyone hike Mt. Ishizuchi and bike across the Shimanami Kaido bridges. Honestly, you don't need to be athletic at all to do it. (I managed!)

Mt. Ishizuchi is the tallest mountain in West Japan, so hiking it means one can brag a bit. Its coolest features are the climbing, "trial" chains hung along 4 points of the path. It sounds intimidating, but the optional chains made for a very memorable hike. I took them up, but not down.

Shimanami Kaido is a 60 kilometer bike route through six islands between Imabari and Onomichi (Hiroshima Prefecture). It is simply gorgeous. Parks, museums, beaches, and natural whirlpools along the way made this one of my best outdoor experiences in Ehime. Please rent a bike at one of the route's cycling center locations.

If you have extra time in Imabari, also swing by the towel museum. Yes, such a thing exists, especially in a city that accounts for 60% of Japan's towel production! If towels bore you, there is always the small but quirky sex museum, *Dekoboko Shindô* (凸凹神堂), down in Uwajima on the grounds of the *Taga* fertility shrine.

Uwajima is also known for bullfights! No, don't think Spanish matador, think a pair of 1-ton bulls sumo-ing with their horns. It happens 5 times a year, most notably on July 24, during the city's Gaiya Festival.

Gaiya is not the most famous festival in Ehime though. That honor goes to the Niihama Taiko Matsuri Festival (October 16-18) and the Saijo Matsuri Festival (October 14-17). Niihama's festival showcases impressive 2.5 ton *taiko-dai* (drum floats) being carried by 100-150 men to a rousing drum beat. Held around the same time is Saijo's Festival featuring floats and portable shrines.

Oh no! I haven't yet mentioned Matsuyama Castle, Tobeyaki (Tobe Town pottery), or even Nanrakuen (my favorite garden), but I'm running out of space. Guess you'll just have to come on down and explore lovely Ehime for yourself.

Wendy Ikemoto

woof!

The scratchy yodeling of a

rooster stirs me from my slumber on the tatami. Reluctantly I roll over to look at my watch. 3:15 am. Nowhere close to sunrise. My idyllic visions of humble farm life are slowly being whisked away by the winds that sculpt the land of northern Japan.

As a WWOOFer, or Willing Worker On Organic Farms, I rise with the murmur of my host family from the kitchen and the clatter of dishes preparing breakfast. Groggily I attend to setting the table, carefully laying out each set of *hashi*. Kazuki-chan watches with lively brown eyes that plead with me to come play instead.

Miso soup splashes into bowls with lingering scents of the sea. Rice topped with fried egg is paired with plates of steaming root vegetables. Tealeaves unfurl in the boiled water and homemade yogurt shines in a clear jar. With casual utters of 'itadakimasu,' we eat.

Despite months of living in Japan as an ALT, conversation remains a challenge as Aiki-kun babbles about basketball practice, voice squeaking with notes of puberty. Fortunately, host father Ken-san has great English and fills me in with a smile so big his eyes become thin as crescent moons. We layer ourselves in work clothes, pull on mud-crust rubber boots and head for the chicken coops.

"They like when you talk to them," chuckles Ken-san as we carefully gather the eggs; I linger, cupping the ones that are still warm.

My Japanese colleagues were perplexed by my decision to volunteer on a farm over the school break, especially since I already lived in the *inaka*. Yet the thought of being glued to my desk for a week perfecting the art of looking busy weighed heavily on my psyche. Little did I know I had discovered an ideal alternative for JETs everywhere.

WWOOF is a network of organizations also known as World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms that began in the UK in 1971. The concept is simple: bring together volunteers with organic farmers to practice more sustainable ways of living. In return, participants live as part of the family sharing meals, lodgings, and knowledge.

WWOOF hosts are found in over fifty countries and the variety of possibilities means anyone with a *genki* streak and hint of *kôkishin* (curiosity) can partake. For many, the experience is a chance to travel cost effectively with purpose, learn new skills and lifestyles, practice a second language and connect with another culture.

After purchasing a year-long membership with the Japan WWOOF Association for ¥5,500, I completed an online profile and viewed hosts across Japan. Everything from the location



and type of farm to family values and setting helped me narrow down my top choices. I communicated with hosts until setting up placement in Ibaraki-ken; with a bit of faith, a *nihongo jisho*, and some rubber boots I was on my way.

Now, in the sprawling fields with host mother Ayako-san squatting stoically on her heels, I pause in awe of our labour. The long plots had seemed endless; our fingers poking into the damp soil dropping sprouts into each hole, crouched low enough to inhale the rich decay of earth. Buzzed with satisfaction I begin to understand that time exists only in the position of the sun and rising hunger in our bellies.

Peeling off layers of dusty clothes, boots and gloves the aromas of dinner cooking are a welcome end to the day. With an encouraging nod Ayako-san grants me the first bath.

"It's good for relax," she adds reassuringly.

Even with daily invitations I continued to opt for the shower. Although I'd done *onsen* before, the intimate nature of a family *ofuro* was a new level. Yet here was my host family gladly sharing their bath water with a newcomer to their home. As a JET, it's easy to joke about being *gaijin*, but not once had I felt like an outsider here. Casting doubt aside I slip into the steaming water, a newly honoured family member.

Murmurs of conversation carry over from the kitchen and my own head is alive with thoughts. WWOOFing has opened my eyes to a way of living that's in harmony with the cycles of life. Amidst the routines are subtle variations in the language of the land that reveal themselves to the careful observer. Looking down at my wrinkled fingertips, I see the dirt has become part of the colour of my skin.

For more information, or to get involved with WWOOF Japan, visit www.woofjapan.com/main or check out international WWOOF organizations at www.woof.org.

Taryn Senkins

Tuesdays with Morrie.

I don't know what took

me so long to read *Tuesdays with Morrie*. It's famous and recommended constantly, but I somehow let it go by the wayside for years. Finally, I got my hands on a copy, and it was horse-blinders until I was finished with it. I read the whole book in a day: I started it after the morning meeting – I read it between classes – and then I sped home so I could finish it in my apartment. It took hold of me, as it seems to have done with the other 11-million-plus people who have bought it. I wondered, what could all of us millions of readers find in this little book that is so compelling? I found the answers in both the ying and the yang – we find life in the face of death.

The book chronicles the Tuesday conversations between its author, Mitch Albom, and his college sociology professor

Morrie Schwartz. After graduation, Albom promises Schwartz he will keep in touch, but his life takes him in other directions, from poor pianist to wealthy sports writer. Then, out of the blue, sixteen years after graduating, Albom finds himself staring at his old professor on the TV.

Morrie had been diagnosed with Lou Gehrig's Disease (ALS) and is slowly dying. This becomes the catalyst for their reunion, and what follows is chronicled with compassionate prose by Albom in this book.

The two meet every Tuesday afternoon to discuss various themes of life, from love to compassion to forgiveness and ultimately, to death. I was struck particularly with the honest and humble nature of the entire book. I didn't once find myself far removed from the pain or the lessons – it was written to be accepted, and it does a marvelous job of that. There were chapters that pulled my heart strings, and others that made me crinkle my nose and laugh.

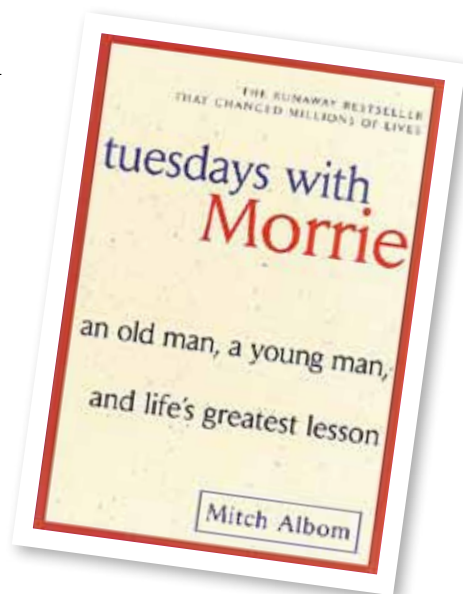
If you're feeling homesick or a little lost these days, I think you should brave the book and see what it has to offer you.

"Love to compassion to forgiveness and ultimately, to death"

There is no harm in getting a dose of memoir-ific literature, right?

It feels good to be reminded about some of the small and important facts in life and the lessons we find betwixt them.

Happy reading!



P.S!

Mitch Albom also wrote another non-fiction book titled *Have a Little Faith*. AND – if neither of these novels makes you cry, re-evaluate your life, or want to hug every person you've ever loved, then you can also pick up Randy Pausch's *The Last Lecture*. All three of these books have something in common besides dealing with the powerful inertia of living and subsequently, dying – they are all on my "read-in-a-day" list. Such is the power of a well-written memoir.

Caitlin Orr

English corner



Got English that deserves to be shared? Send it to Hyogo Times and it might be featured in the next issue!

Anywho, this is from the entrance of the cable-car station at the top of Mt. Aso (Kumamoto). Taken by Daniel Bromberg.



Participate!

Hyogo Times is currently looking for writers to contribute to the following sections:

- ◎ Love & Relationships
- ◎ Restaurant Review
- ◎ Kicchiri Kitchen
- ◎ Book discoveries
- ◎ ... and many more!

Contact us today at publications@hyogo.ajet.net

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Witty Thai-tle

Took off for Thailand this spring break, so instead of ramen news, here's some quick info about eating in the land of pad thai and myriad other delicious dishes. I'm just going to talk about a few of the noodle-based delights I managed to sample.

The quintessential Thai noodle dish is pad thai; it's delicious and it's everywhere. We were in admittedly touristy areas often, and as a result the prices may have been a little higher than normal, but you can find very good Thai food for about 30 baht (35 baht = ¥100). The prices go up a bit if you include some of the better meats (seafood is slightly more than pork, for instance), but often the differences are insignificant. My Thai-based ex-JET buddy recommended the pad thai with egg, which was good, but not all I had hoped. Still, a solid dish and an easy foot in the door, since you can dictate ingredients, spice level, and even noodle thickness.

Lesser known, at least where I'm from, but equally as good is khao soi. My buddy is in northern Thailand, outside of a major city called Chiang Mai. Apparently khao soi is originally Burmese, but either way, it's delicious. Immediately spicy with a coconut milk-laden curry base, it comes topped with fried bread noodles, crunchy and light before they soak up the soup and become a bit like dipped bread. The noodles in the soup are broad rice noodles, firm to the chew and at an interesting contrast to those served up top. Included on the side are spicy pickled veggies for yet another texture and flavor. Rounding out a packed bowl are small chicken legs, infused with curry flavor and fall-off-the-bone tender. A favorite.

Last but not least is beef noodle soup. I don't recall the proper Thai name (a google returned *lao pho* or *kuai tiao neua*, neither of which rang a bell), but this is a milder dish, somewhat different than the typical perception of



Thai food. Broad rice noodles, very reminiscent of Chinese chow fun, accompany poultry meatballs, strips of beef, sprouts, green onions and spices in a light but tasty example of Thai comfort food. Add enough bonus spice from the rack on your table and the soup turns from light brown to red, a sure sign indicator of its current flavor.

Andrew Tamashiro

Getting to Know Random JETs ..

Amanda Hahn

I like: good people, food, fashion.
But I don't like: drama, meat.
I can: sign up for anything in Japanese if I can do it over the internet, deco anything.
But I can't: play sports.
I have: lots and lots of clothing.
I want: a wig(s), a Kindle, a dresser.

More Details

School and Location in Hyogo: Shirakawadai JHS/Shirakawa ES/Matsuo ES, all Myodani (Kobe) area.

Birthday: October 24, 1985

Born and raised: Born Davenport, IA but never lived there/Rock Island, IL/Wayne, PA/Dayton, OH/Honolulu, HI (this list confuses almost everyone).

University and Degree: Miami University (OH) '05 Japanese Studies & Creative Writing University of Hawaii at Manoa '07 MA Library & Information Science.

Other jobs that you have had: grad research assistant, various library jobs.

Travels since becoming a JET: South Korea.

Travels before becoming a JET: Japan, England.

Hobbies: writing, reading, fashion, and cooking/baking.
Staying another year? Yes.

Favorites

Food: okonomiyaki. And any fruit.
Sports: running, but I'm bad at it and am out of practice now.
Music: Namie Amuro, Lady Gaga, Radiohead.
Shop: Maison Gilfy, Lip Service, GLAD NEWS.
TV Show: The Office.
Movie: Run Lola Run, Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind.

Random Trivia

Proudest Achievement: I co-ran two big J-culture related programs in college. I'm happy our little Hyogo Writers' Group is running, too.

Advice for the younger: If you want something, get it, but don't worry if you wanted it or got it later than others.

Motto: Better late than never.

I remember when... there were no lady train conductors in Kansai.

What are you drinking? Sugar canned coffee from the machine, something that only happens when I'm very tired.

Who would you like to meet? Interesting people.

Why should we elect you President of the World? All your information would be very organized and you would get succinct, timely World Update emails from the President.



Best thing about Japan so far? My first day at elementary school when I was surrounded by very tiny, very excited third grade individuals firing questions at me.

If it was my last day on earth I would... hang out with the people I love.

Interesting fact about me: people mistake me for dyed-blond Japanese from the back sometimes.

Teaching

My top tip for teaching: You're likely never going to feel like you're doing it right.

When the class is too quiet I... they are barely ever "too quiet", but when they are I do something silly.

Bribery for students... YAY or NAY? I like cute stuff. So I give the students cute stuff sometimes.

Funniest Story involving work: The impromptu teacher kumitaiso at a work party was pretty good.

Getting to Know Random JETs.....

Chip Boles

I like: to draw, to keep a list of my favorite words, and biking.

But I don't like: when combini staff says *Irashaimase!* in high, shrill voices.

I can: throw a decent party, apparently :)

But I can't: run or dance without embarrassing myself/ endangering those around me.

I have: exceedingly good taste in friends, as well as an illustration side-career, both of which makes it worth getting up in the morning.

I want: more time with my awesome friends, and to draw all day.

More Details

School and Location in Hyogo: Himeji Higashi Senior High School.

Born and raised: in Gallatin, Tennessee, pretty close to Nashville.

University and Degree: BFA in Drawing, and an MFA in Illustration.

Other jobs that you have had: Retail Manager of The Chocolate Fetish, the best chocolate shop in the world, Mural Painter, and I worked in the Guest House of a Zen Buddhist monastery.

Travels since becoming a JET:

Have restricted myself to exploring Japan thoroughly, with one exceptional trip to Korea because I had a cool buddy to hang with.

Travels before becoming a JET:

Extended foray in Sweden and Norway, extended roadtrips horizontally (TN to CA) and vertically (TN to Canada) across North America.

Hobbies: Hacky-sacking, cooking.

Staying another year?

Though it's been great, 4 years is about 2 more than I ever expected to be here – poke me with a fork, I'm done.

Favorites

Food: Milk Ramen, found at Koba and More in Himeji (www.facebook.com/kobaandmore, see favorite shop).

Sports: Eww, sports... I still have to pick one? Uh, ok... Women's beach volleyball.

Music: Partial to stuff with strong, compelling percussion.

Shop: Koba and More, jazz ramen shop in Himeji.

TV Show: *Being Human* (UK, but the new US one is actually pretty good, too), *Danger Mouse*, *30 Rock*, *You Can't Do That on Television*.

Movie: *Harvey*, with Jimmy Stewart.

Random Trivia

Proudest Achievement:

Having illustrations published in three major English-language magazines in Japan (Metropolis, Japanzine, and Kansai Scene) all in the same month.

Advice for the younger:

My ER doctor friends say that, because of what they've seen, they will never

A. Drive drunk, or

B. Drive a motorcycle.

Sounds pretty good to me.

Oh, and don't go rock climbing without ropes. Falling three stories onto pointy rocks sucks.

Motto: "Years ago my mother used to say to me... 'In this world, Elwood, you must be Oh So Smart or Oh So Pleasant.' Well, for years I was smart. I recommend pleasant."

~Elwood P. Dowd, Harvey, 1950~

I remember when...

80s music came on the radio for the first time.

What are you drinking?

Beer or freshly ground coffee

Who would you like to meet?

a recently divorced Tina Fey looking for a rebound relationship (swoon)



Why should we elect you President of the World? I guess because I don't want to be President of the World?

"To summarize: it is a well-known fact that those people who most want to rule people are, ipso facto, those least suited to do it. To summarize the summary: anyone who is capable of getting themselves made President should on no account be allowed to do the job. To summarize the summary of the summary: people are a problem."

~Douglas Adams, The Restaurant at the End of the Universe, ch.28~

Best thing about Japan so far?

The public transport system. I'm really gonna miss that.

If it was my last day on earth I would... Have a grilled-cheese party with all my friends, drinking and talking and all that.

Interesting fact about me:

I was an honest-to-god cartoon voice. I did some of the American dubbing for a Japanese cartoon called "Miami Guns." Go ahead, look it up on IMDB.

Teaching

My top tip for teaching:

Teaching is a lot like performing in theater. Connecting with your audience through clear speaking and appropriate material is key. Plus rehearsal helps.

Also, student name-cards have made a tremendous difference in my school life and ability to connect with students easier, explained here:

[www.facebook.com/media/set/fbx/?set=a.387454618770.166545.506153770](http://www.facebook.com/media/set/?fbx/?set=a.387454618770.166545.506153770)

When the class is too quiet I...

Have them stand up for the reading/repeating, stretch, jump up and down, etc. Had a great drawing teacher in uni who warmed up our 8am drawing class with dancing to James Brown, and it worked well, too.

Bribery for students... YAY or NAY?

Eh, candy to a game's winning group is cool – they need something to work toward, plus it makes it fun.

Funniest Story involving work:

Can't think of any stories, really. But I do share an office with God. Well, I don't know that he's God, exactly, but he does have 4 computers on his desk. And I figure who could possibly need four computers? God, that's who. And I can tell you – God has a high, shrill voice, not like James Earl Jones AT ALL.



Basic Risotto

I am tired of steamed white rice. Are you?

Then check this out.

Some say risotto requires special Arborio rice from Italy to make properly. I denounce those people. I have made risotto with Japanese rice and been amply satisfied. I have made it with Basmati rice, and been satisfied. Recently, I've been making it with barley, which is not even rice at all, and I have been satisfied. Barley is commonly available next to the rice labeled as 大麦 おおむぎ, and is much healthier.

Don't let anyone fool you. Risotto is dead simple to make, and is extremely popular in Japan. You might also know it as a variety of pilaf. Here's how to do it.

Ingredients

2 cups rice or barley (400 g)
4 cups vegetable stock, chicken stock, or reconstituted bouillon/consommé cubes
1/2 – 2/3 cup parmesan or other hard cheese, grated
1 cup white wine
2 Tbsp butter or olive oil
Pinch of parsley or basil.

If you want to add anything to your risotto, like chunks of chicken or vegetables, cook them beforehand and add them back in at the last step.

Step One

Bring the stock to a boil and set it aside.

Step Two

Heat a frying pan over medium heat. Heat the oil/butter.

Step Three

Add the rice, and stir to coat it with oil. Continue sautéing for a few minutes, then add the wine, and enough hot stock to cover the grains. Add the herbs.

Step Four

Simmer over medium-low heat until there is not enough stock left to cover the rice.

Step Five

Add more stock to cover the rice.

Step Six

Repeat steps 4 and 5 until you are out of stock. By this point, the rice should be cooked through. Add the cheese, any additional things you want to have in your risotto, and serve. Serves 3-4.

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.

Sasayama.....



ABC Sasayama Marathon

On March 6th 2011, I joined 10,000 other participants in running just over 42km at the ABC Sasayama Marathon. Being a first year JET, I thought it would be a great way to explore a new city in Japan, to get into shape and make some new friends.

I started running when I first arrived in Japan. I was suffering from jet lag and waking up at 5am in the hot, July, summer sun. With the extra time I started running before work by the river that runs through my city. It helped me explore my new home and I felt refreshed and energized for the upcoming work day. The fresh air, endorphins and the wonderful scenery of storks fishing in the shallow river surrounded by wide open rice fields and mountains with cascading greenery, all in the morning sun. I started to really enjoy running. Then winter hit and I slept in more than ever and running outside seemed like going into space: stupid, cold and with the constant threat of death by exposure. Unfortunately I had already registered for the marathon.

My training for the marathon consisted of: telling everyone I was in marathon training, going to Hokkaido for a snowboarding trip 1 week before, running sporadically and thinking I shouldn't drink beer or eat

junk food but then doing so anyway. My training runs were about 5 to 10km of panting and whining and usually ended when I thought of something good to eat. I was often passed by 80 year old men in polyester track suits asking me politely to get out of the way. The three days leading up to the race, I didn't run and ate as much as I could. For some reason I started reading marathon training guides the day before. This made me realize how unprepared I was for the marathon. I felt nervous and was beginning to feel I had made a huge mistake.

I woke up on the day of the race to grey, sullen clouds covering the sky. The air was still and cold, a silent mourning for the hardship I was about to endure. I met my friend at the train station and the electronic schedule sign that would normally say Sasayama was changed to ABC Sasayama marathon. It could have said *this way to hell, abandon all hope*. The train was scattered with people in tight pants, running shoes, and t-shirts with logos of other marathons. We got off the train and followed a sign with hundreds of other people being caroled on to a bus to get to the registration area. We got off the bus into the picturesque castle area of the city. The streets were flooded with people. Balloon archways marked the path to

the registration area. We stopped and I bought two lime flavored gel packs, later these would prove to be the secret of life and the best friends I ever had.

We registered. We tied a chip that tracked our start and finish times to our shoe. We pinned our numbers on the front and back. We checked our bags, we went to the bathroom. Then we lined up at the starting point in our designated section D, the last one, and we waited. I started stretching and lightly jogging on the spot to stay warm and look cool.

Suddenly the gun fired the crowds cheered and loud inspirational rocky sounding music filled the air. We took our marks, gritted our teeth and... waited. Then we waited some more. Then we started to walk slowly forward. Then we crossed the start line and started to jog really slowly and I pressed start on the timer I borrowed from my friend. Then we crossed another start line and my friend said that this was the start line and that last one was just a decorative arch. An intense panic came over me, not just because I didn't know how to reset my friends stop watch, but because I had jogged an extra 5 minutes than I needed too.

I'm sure this will be met with doubts and a possible punch in the face, but the first 30km



were easy. During training I was averaging a speed of 8km/hr and a distance of about 10km. I don't know if it was all the other runners, the crowds, or if high fives from children have popeye spinach powers but I ran the first 30kms in about 3 hours. I stopped at two or three water stations but often would skip them and even skipped the food station where they were serving famous Sasayama boar stew. The marker for 30km greeted me like a proud parent and seemed to pat me on the back and tell me I had done a good job. Only 10km left, I told myself, *I did it*.

Then something happened. I started to feel tired as if something had snapped inside me and I couldn't keep going. I stopped to have a gel pack I had bought earlier and it tasted like gooey happiness, I drank it down with some water and the liquid flooded my mouth washing the sweet life nectar into my body. I started again. Only 8km left but I had lost it and I started to slow down. At 5km left I stopped again and had my second gel pack, again it filled me with comforting sweetness. As I finished it I slapped myself in the face and told myself to suck it up. Less than 5km to go and you're going to give up? No, that doesn't make any sense. I stood tall looked ahead and took

the first step to the finish line. A sharp stabbing pain ran through my leg and hit me in the face like a drunken sorority girl who realized we were wearing the same dress. Come on body. I slowly started again, my body still resisted but I convinced it to trust me and keep going. Slowly we started to work together and I knew I was going to make it. 500 meters to go and I could see the finish line but another pain in my leg forced me to stop causing a domino effect with the other runners behind me. I can't imagine how mad those runners behind me were considering how mad I get when someone stops at the turnstile in the train station. I looked ahead and started hobbling and then jogging and finally running. As my foot touched down on the finish a wave of emotion swept over me and I felt like falling to my knees and weeping, but everyone around me was just moving along like it was no big deal so I had to keep it together. A kid ran up to me with a bottle of water while another one removed the chip on my shoe. I walked into a resting area and a medal was placed around my neck. "Finisher" it said.

For those of you who are thinking about running a marathon, I have some tips. You need your

friends. I couldn't have done it without all the support I received. One friend waited in the cold before work to see me for two seconds and hand me a drink. My boyfriend rode his bicycle along side me the whole marathon and even played the rocky theme song during one uphill section. Thank you to everyone. Second tip is to train when you want to. I never followed any of the schedules or training programs and therefore neither should anyone. Third tip is to have fun. A marathon is a challenge by itself, if you are running it to beat some time or beat everyone, then you probably already have a program and don't need these tips. Last tip is to run the Sasayama marathon. It was a great event well organized and with thousands of enthusiastic participants, volunteers and spectators. It's a scenic run through mountains finishing at the picturesque castle backdrop of the city. I can't imagine a better first marathon, and while I was walking funny for the next 2 weeks, it was a great experience and something I will mention as often as I can for the rest of my life.

Monica Harvey

Hyogo Times May Event Calendar

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
01 Infiorata Kobe 2011	02	03 Kyu-shaku Fuji Festival Byakugo-ji, Ichijima-cho, Tamba Shobu-yu Iris Bath Festival Kinosaki	04 Kyu-shaku Fuji Festival Byakugo-ji, Ichijima-cho, Tamba Shobu-yu Iris Bath Festival Kinosaki	05 Kyu-shaku Fuji Festival Byakugo-ji, Ichijima-cho, Tamba Shobu-yu Iris Bath Festival Kinosaki	06	07
08 Nishinomiya Cherry Blossom Festival Shukugawa Park	09	10	11	12	13 Kobe Festival 13 – 15 May 2011	14 Kobe Festival 13 – 15 May 2011
15 Kobe Festival 13 – 15 May 2011	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	01	02	03	04

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