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The Classic Obi
Sayonara Party Photo Collage
Second Hand Himeji



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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

Visit us online!

Message from the Editor

Ohayoooo, Hyogo!

Well it's summertime again and I hope you're enjoying getting your swelter on here in the heart of Japan. This month is a very special one, as we say farewell to our departing JETs and welcome our newcomers! The Times is also special this month, with an extra-large helping of awesome, and in some cases, two scoops of your favorite columns!

English Sensei Spirit is fresh with a few New-Crown friendly maru/batsu games to blow your students' minds, while our recipes will attempt to keep you cool this summer. If that won't do the trick, there's always the featured list of alfresco dining options in Kobe. Check out some live Jazz in that same international city! Or stay inside in the AC and discover some new entertainment in the form of a piggy movie, or a book about a captain's wife. Check the calendar and get out to the welcome parties and summer city festivals. If you have too much stuff, or too little, you might want to hit up one of the secondhand stores in your area.

We also welcome Dwayne Coburn to the Hyogo Times writing staff with the re-ignition of the Love and Relationships column, and encourage as always that if you'd like to be one of us, you

need only let us know, and we'll see what we can do to find a place for you. We're still looking for lots of regional correspondents (Harima, Settsu, Tajima, Awaji), as well as a Web Design Manager to keep our online presence looking modern and spiffy. We also accept creative writing and poetic submissions, photo collages, and one-shot features!

Stay cool, greatest of kens (well not by landmass... or number of JETs.. both of those distinctions belong to our northern archrivals in Hokkaido, who incidentally probably have a lot less issue keeping cool even in August... er, anyway), and enjoy this edition of Hyogo Times!

EmLem



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!



Hello x 2!

AJET News

Message from the Online Editor

Dear Hyogo,

First, I'd like to say welcome to all the new JETs! It's always a little tough settling in after Tokyo Orientation but there are a lot of resources the HT can offer. We have articles on almost every topic, from daily living to teaching help and travel, so if you're looking for some ideas, feel free to browse through our issues. And I should say you're lucky, as we've just started our brand new website... which makes it easy to look through back issues.

Anyway I'd like to mention a couple of new things on the site. First, the **Flickr photo pool** (which by the way could use some more photos). Next is the **HT Classifieds**. We started this mainly with the goal of helping out-going JETs sell their stuff, but it's a feature we'll be keeping permanently. I'm happy

to say there have already been some people who successfully sold their stuff through the site. Beyond this, we've moved the front page layout around a bit, and made a few other small changes.

Just one request – we're looking for a web graphics designer, that is, someone who can work with and improve the graphics of the site. If anyone would like to take on this role, we'd be more than grateful. You can send an email to the editor at publications@hyogo.ajet.net if you're interested.

Finally I'd like to mention that our page view count is over 16,000 and fast approaching 20,000!

Have a great August!

Jonathan



Message from the PR

Hello Hyogo!

This month we have lots of people to whom we want to wish good luck – hopefully the following covers everyone. ^__^”

To those of you not so bogged down by heat that you can still study (a rare talent indeed), good luck on the JLPT! Don't drink too much water, your break time will be very limited, and if you're really panicking, just think of July as the dress rehearsal. December, you go on live before the studio audience.

To those of you who have been practicing their hand blocks and layouts for months, good luck at Tajima Ultimate Frisbee! This is one of if not

the biggest JET-related sports event of the year. Come up to Tajima Saturday July 9 and cheer your team on if you can!

To everyone gearing up for this summer's beach parties, fireworks and matusris, good luck beating the heat! (Two words: ice pillows!)

And of course, to the leavers, a huge お疲れ様でした! from all of us at Hyogo AJET. **We will miss you!**

As always, pr@hyogo.ajet.net is where you can reach us. Happy summer, everyone!

Sarah Lewis



News from your National AJET Rep!

Greetings from Block 6 (specifically my little corner of Block 6 in northern Hyogo)!

The new National AJET council has officially taken office as of June 15th, which makes me the new Block 6 Representative for the coming year. I'd like to extend many thanks to Sifton Anipare for all of her hard work over the past year. She's done a great job which I'm sure she'll continue as she transfers over the Hyogo AJET team.

To introduce myself for those of you whom I haven't had the chance to meet, I'm finishing my first year as a JET in Tajima, Hyogo's northernmost region. Some fun facts about me: I used to be a vegetarian until the famous Tajima Gyuu swayed me, I'm from South Dakota (which is no longer the Dakota territory f.y.i.), and I sort of have old woman hobbies like pottery and gardening :). Being from a rural area, I'm quite in love with my small inaka town in Tajima and would encourage you all to visit sometime during your stay in Japan! It's also a great place to go snowboarding in the winter (which I also encourage to break the January blues).

Just to remind you what National AJET does:

- ◎ We write reports and make suggestions to the Governmental Ministries to make your life as a JET better.
- ◎ We compile resources like teaching plans and make them available to you (through Planet Eigo etc.)
- ◎ We make sure that there is some JET community for you to connect to by supporting the prefectural chapters of AJET.
- ◎ Many more things, big and small, from helping at Tokyo Orientation, to giving you the chance to show off your mad photography skills through the yearly cultural contests.

You'll be hearing from me throughout the year with important updates and announcements from National AJET. We have some exciting things coming up! First is Tokyo Orientation which the whole council is happily preparing for right now! We have over 1,600 new JETs coming this year and I'm sure we're all excited to hear as they get placed in our towns and neighborhoods. In Block news, I hope to continue



some of the big Block events and I'm currently working with some other council members to make the Block 6/7 events happen again this year as well – stay tuned for details!

On that note, thanks for all those who attended the first Block 6/7 event of the new council year in Kobe at the Sayonara Formal! It was great to see so many faces (though many of them are sadly leaving). We wish you the best as you pack up for your next adventure!

I'll sign off for now. Please stay genki despite the rainy season (and avoid the stray Mukades)!

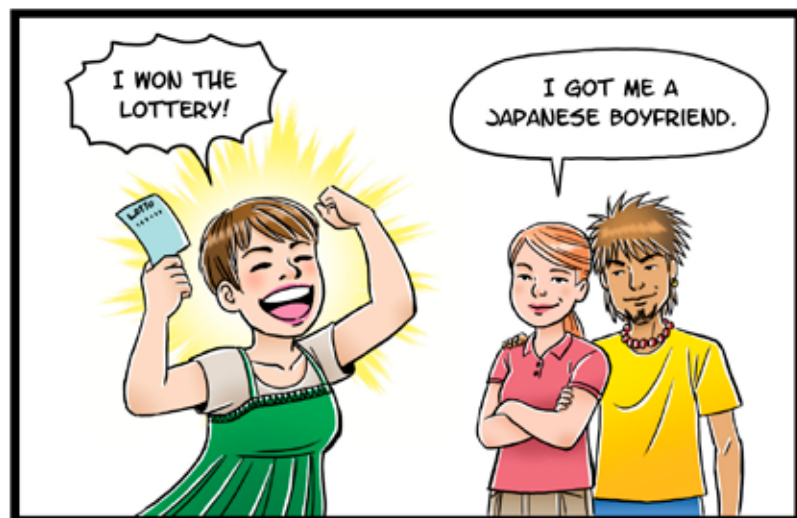
Miriam Rollason

Block 6 Representative
block6@ajet.net

Hehe...

Life After the B.O.E.....

By David Namisato



David Namisato is an illustrator in Toronto, Canada, and a former CIR (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

洒落

Paul Schuble's

I-word play

When is Meat Day in Japan?

Answer: February 9th.

This is because the Japanese for "meat" is 肉 (にく; niku). に = 2 and く = 9. にく is 2-9. Therefore "Meat Day" is 2/9.

Travel Japan!



Shinakama.....

Shinahama, Wakayama-ken

Shirahama is situated in

Wakayama-ken, a prefecture full of amazing coastlines, beaches, and onsens – the perfect summer getaway. Since it is a popular place to visit in summer, be prepared for crowds, or visit slightly off season.

Shirahama beach is a beautiful 'Australian' white sand beach with palm frond shelters and clear, blue water. In the past, the sand from the beach was washed away, so white sand from Australia was imported.

The most popular onsen is Sakino-yu on the coast, with great views of the Pacific Ocean. This onsen opens onto the ocean, so depending on the tides you may be lucky enough to get waves in the onsen! It has a small charge (about ¥300) and is open from 8:00 – 17:00 (18:30 in summer).

The town of Shirahama is quite small and the main attractions are the beach and onsen.

Around the beach there are small supermarkets, restaurants, beach equipment stores, and take away food stores. Along the coast you will also find other small cafes, restaurants, and ryokans. Wandering in the backstreets near the beach you can find a restaurant that has a foot onsen, so while you eat your dinner, your feet are in water!

The station is situated a little way from the main attractions so you will need to take a bus for about 20 minutes or you can rent bicycles from the station for ¥1,000/day.

Where to stay

We stayed at a campsite called *Auto Camp Grampus*, it is within walking distance (15 minutes) from the beach and main area. Reservations should be made especially during the peak season which is July to August. *Auto Camp Grampus* is open from mid May until December. There

are toilets and an indoor onsen and rotenburo (outdoor bath) attached to the camp office.

Hotel Senjo is located close to the main tourist areas and is only ¥7,800 a night with dinner and breakfast included. Also if you stay at Hotel Senjo they have a round trip bus from Sannomiya for ¥3,000 return. <http://h-senjo.jp/index.html>

Campsite costs

Camping is about ¥4,500 per site/night (fits about 2-3 tents) plus an additional ¥300 per person. A 6 person tent can be rented for ¥3,000/night.

Other accommodation at the campsite

- ◎ Trailer house or caravan is available from ¥21,000/night and sleeps 6 people
- ◎ A pao is a kind of one room hut which sleeps 8 people for ¥20,000/night
- ◎ A geru is a large permanent tent which sleeps 4 people for ¥12,000/night



A BBQ set can be rented for ¥1,000.

www.kurasho-group.co.jp/grampus/top.html
073-42-2102

Getting there

We took a bus from Osaka which takes about 3½ hours and is only ¥5,000 return: www13.ocn.ne.jp/~meikobus/high_speed/osaka.html

There are 2 bus companies that go to Shirahama from Osaka.

Meiko bus: 0739-42-2112
Nishinihon JR bus: 06-6371-0111.

The train from Osaka takes 2 hours and costs about ¥5,000 each way. Shirahama is 160km from Osaka and would take about 2½ hours to drive.

Other information

Tourist information is in the station.
073-42-2240

Lauren McRae

Changes to Alien Registration Cards

Sometime between January

and July next year, new immigration procedures will come into effect. In many ways, these changes are beneficial, but be warned as there are some strict penalties if you should fail to comply.

Under current law, you must register as an alien with your local ward office, or, if you live in a city without wards, such as Ashiya or Nishinomiya, at your local city hall, within 90 days of setting foot in Japan.

Immigration controls are being centralized, and Alien Registration Cards will soon be replaced by a new "Residence Card" issued by the Immigration Bureau. Residence Cards will be issued to foreign nationals who are staying in Japan

for more than three months and not on Diplomatic or Official visas.

As is currently the case, your name, date of birth, sex, status of residence, and the existence or absence of a working permit will be included on the Residence Card, along with a photograph. Moulded into card will be an IC chip containing all your important information (e.g., place of birth, passport number, etc.), as well as data about family and dependents, if any.

No longer will you have a visa stamp in your passport. Better yet – no more trips to the Immigration office in Kobe for re-entry visas!

With the new card and a valid passport, you will be basically free to leave and re-enter the country as many times as you like until your Residence Card expires (increased to five years, rather than three). The exception is if you will leave Japan and plan to re-enter after more than one year, in which case you will need to obtain re-entry visa. However, the maximum validity for that re-entry permit is extended from three to five years.

Although you don't have to replace a valid Alien Registration Card until it expires, there is a huge advantage to replacing it once the new procedures come into effect.
(charge applies)

You'll still need to visit your local Ward office within 90 days of arrival or within 14 days of any change in address, but any other changes will need to be reported to the Immigration Bureau. Lost cards need to be reported to the Immigration Bureau within the same time period.

Another change coming is that visa renewal applications can be filed up to three months in advance of expiration, and if you apply in timely fashion, you can stay beyond expiration until the sooner of two months or the date of approval, and can even leave and return to Japan once during that time.

Failure to do so within the time limits will automatically attract a ¥200,000 fine. In some cases, visas may be revoked. In other words, no excuses. Do not forget.

For those fluent in legalese, here's the detailed FAQ in English: www.immi-moj.go.jp/english/newimmiact/koumoku1_english.html

Finally, a reminder. One of the most awkward and inconvenient problems we face is being asked by the police for your Alien Registration Card and not having it with you. The requirement to have this ID on you at all times will not change with the new Residence Card. There is a real chance that you may be spending the next several hours at the police station while someone fetches your Alien Registration Card from home.

Don't attempt to argue your way out of this one. Humility goes a long way in resolving such problems. The law is clear, and arguing or getting mad will definitely create further problems for you, such as being forced to appear at that particular police station (no matter how far from home) at a certain time on a certain day, for several weeks.

Lisa Nylander



Alfresco Dining in Kobe

Though summer in Hyogo

can be sticky, there are days when the oppressive humidity gives way, and one's thoughts turn to evenings of frosty beers in the open air as a light breeze rolls in.

Until recently I believed that, besides beer gardens, Japan just doesn't do al fresco dining, but I have happily been proven wrong. Here is a selection from Kobe.

Central Sannomiya

Pizzeria Tana Forno

www.tana26.com

<http://r.gnavi.co.jp/k412102/lang/en>

On the street behind McDonalds, opposite the Hankyu Station and Tully's Coffee. Lunch until 3pm; dinner from 5pm. Reasonably priced lunch sets, and there is a wide variety of pizzas and appetizers for dinner. ¥1,500 for lunch, ¥3,000 for dinner. Also offers an all you can drink option.

Korean Cuisine Japuche

www.ko-z.com/japuche

<http://r.gnavi.co.jp/k130402/lang/en>

Up the small street on the left of

ドン・キホーテ, this restaurant holds a table for 12 on the terrace, plus ten counter seats and four tables indoors as well as a party room to seat 40 guests. Don't miss the platter of assorted kimchi, cream cheese and chanja ganache, fresh spring rolls, yam salad with ume dressing, octopus and nori omlette. An average meal will set you back around ¥3,000. Open 5pm – midnight.

Laputa the Flanders Tale

<http://r.gnavi.co.jp/c350315/lang/en>

Lunch sets start from ¥890, dinner costs around ¥3,500; a la carte dishes include salads, seafood carpaccio, fresh pasta, gratins, pizza, rice dishes and dessert. Located behind Sogo department store on the 8th floor of Progres Kobe. Seats 40 on the terrace and 60 indoors. English menu and English-speaking staff available.

Tooth Tooth Garden Restaurant

www.toothtooth.com/dining

<http://r.gnavi.co.jp/k113401/lang/en>

At the top of Kokusai Kaikan next to the Sogo Department Store,

this restaurant looks out onto a rooftop garden. Popular for lunch, quieter at dinner, you'll find something to tempt you, whether one of the reasonable lunch sets (~¥1,000) or from the dinner menu, the roast lamb, charcoal grilled beef, oysters and salmon stewed with cabbage in a cream sauce and scrumptious desserts.

The mid Diner

www.mid-kobe.jp

My personal favourite and popular with the locals, I considered for a moment keeping this to myself. But as it's easy enough to find (behind Tokyu Hands, opposite Ikuta Shrine and above the live venue, Chicken George) you'd likely find this on your own. Offers pasta, sandwiches and desserts; will run you about ¥1,000 for lunch and ¥2,000 for dinner. There are 12 seats outside, 30 inside. Best of all, it's open 24 hours.

Little Shanghai

www.little-shanghai.com

<http://r.gnavi.co.jp/ka2f800/lang/en>

Walk up Higashimon-suji from



the south, the restaurant is halfway up on the left side. Open for dinner only, dishes include standard Chinese fare; chilli prawns with mayonnaise, steamed gyoza, minced pork wrapped in lettuce, beef stew, balsamic pork and vegetable stir-fry, fried noodles and desserts. Expect to pay about ¥3,500.

Motomachi

Caffera

www.ufs.co.jp/brand/cfr/index

Outside the northeast entrance to Daimaru department store. Good for a coffee and cake while people-watching.

Café Terrace & Bistro Mark Place

www.trusty.jp/kobe/event_plan/food/index.html

Walk south on Ikuta Road, two blocks past the large torii gate. Located on the 2nd floor of Hotel Trusty. A great place for a relaxed lunch, with modern western-style dishes and a pleasant setting. Open 7am–11pm; breakfast until 11am from ¥1,050, lunch from ¥1,500 to ¥3,500. A la carte options and course sets served for dinner; after the kitchen closes at 9:30pm, stay on to enjoy the bar.

Bar & Bistro 64

www.kobe64.com

Next to the Trusty Hotel, open 11am – midnight. Lunch sets from ¥1,050 and include soup or salad, bread bar and drink.

Meat, seafood and pasta for dinner. Offers a free-drink plan for ¥1,575.

Central

www.cafe-restaurant-central.com/central.html

Down near the Immigration Office, this café is a convenient spot for a bite while grabbing a re-entry visa. Lunch sets from ¥1,200, dinner from ¥1,500. Open 11am–10pm.

Beer gardens

OK, so beer gardens are actually a great thing if you want to a few hours of drinks on a nice breezy evening. Kobe has lots of options.

Sogo Sky Beer Garden

¥3,500 for men, ¥3,000 for women two hours nomi/tabehoudai. Ladies day Tuesday ¥2,500. Open until September 22.

Hotel Okura Beer Garden

Open from 5:30-9pm, July 1 – Sept 18). Plans start from ¥2,000.

Kobe Portopia Hotel Beer Garden

30th floor. Open 5-9pm, last food order 8pm. ¥3,500 per person, ¥3,000 for pre-paid tickets.

ANA Crowne Plaza Summer Beer Garden

30th floor. Open 6-9:30pm weekdays, 5-10pm weekends. ¥2,500 nomi/tabehoudai for two hours.



Sannomiya Terminal Hotel Beer Garden

12th floor. Open 5-10pm. Nomi/tabehoudai for 2.5 hours ¥3,200 women, ¥3,500 men.

Green Hill Hotel Beer Garden

Open 5:30-9pm, ¥3,500 per person. Located up the street from Kobe YMCA.

Seaside Beer Terrace

3rd floor Meriken Park Oriental Hotel. Open 6-9:30pm weekdays 5-8:30pm weekends until September 5th. ¥2,500 for adults with free drinks and fresh cut pineapple. Side dishes can be purchased separately from ¥500 a pop.

Lisa Nylander

Teriyaki

Teriyaki (照り焼き) can be any fish or meat that has been cooked or broiled in a sweet soy sauce. In Western countries, it seems that teriyaki is considered a very 'Japanese' flavour, although it doesn't seem to be so common in Japan. This recipe is extremely easy and adaptable, but most importantly it is absolutely delicious!

Ingredients

(serves 4)

4 pieces of Japanese Spanish Mackerel (sawara 鯖 although this fish can be substituted with chicken, pork, or another type of fish)

1 onion

1 red bell pepper/capsicum

1 piece of ginger

1 bunch spring onions

½ cup soy sauce

½ cup sake (cooking sake or one cup sake)

½ cup mirin (sweet cooking sake)

a little oil

Step One

cut the onion and the red bell pepper into wedges

Step Two

thinly slice the ginger and then cut into thin strips

Step Three

sauté the onion and red bell pepper with a little oil, add salt and pepper to it

Step Four

remove the onion and red bell pepper from the pan

Step Five

cut the spring onions into 4cm long pieces

Step Six

reheat the pan with a little oil, add the fish or meat to the pan, and cook both sides

Step Seven

when the fish or meat is cooked, add the spring onions and ginger to the pan

Step Eight

pour the soy sauce, sake, and mirin over the fish/meat

Step Nine

serve with the onions and red bell pepper

Step Ten

heat the remaining teriyaki sauce until it reduces a little and thickens, pour over the fish/meat

Step Eleven

serve with rice and miso soup and enjoy!

Maigo in Hyogo

June's Maigo in Hyogo was in Akashi Park and July's Maigo in Hyogo was at USJ... But, where's this?



Photos

Sayonara Party



All photos courtesy of Len Krygsman IV

School Days with a Pig

This month, it was a challenge

settling on a film to review. Initially, the article was going to explore Japanese remakes of American films, because as it turns out, Hollywood is not the only place “borrowing” ideas from overseas. Then, because I am cheap and ゴースト (which exists, seriously) is not eligible for half-price rentals yet, I decided to put that article on the backburner. The school culture festival had put me in a high school dramedy mood, however, so I happily switched gears and picked up *Linda Linda Linda*. I might someday return to that glorious mash up of girl talk and *The Blue Hearts*, but not this month. No, thanks to **School Days with a Pig** (ブタがいた教室) I decided, this month, I am writing about pigs.

In the West, a cute pig escaping the butcher knife is a surprisingly common trope in children’s literature. There is Wilbur, also known as “Some Pig,” from *Charlotte’s Web*, who proves his worth through the aid of the world’s smartest spider. Then there is Babe, who survives Christmas dinner thanks to his ability to herd sheep, and later goes on to have not-as-good-as-the-original adventures in a big city. Although western nations eat their fair share of meat, once an animal is anthropomorphized or becomes a pet, it is difficult

to reestablish the connection between pig and food. After all, no one roots for the “roast pork feast” ending; the characters might as well be eating grandma at that point.

Japanese culture, on the other hand, approaches the relationship between animal and food in a much different way. I teach at a vocational school dedicated to agriculture, and have therefore seen (and smelt) my fair share of cows, pigs and chickens during the past three years. One bit of culture shock I experienced at work, that still makes me laugh to this day, is that Japanese people can look at a live animal and casually remark, “Wow, that looks delicious.” In Japan, animals being raised as food are meat, regardless of which stage of edibility they currently occupy.

School Days with a Pig tackles the same issue addressed in *Babe* and *Charlotte’s Web* but from a Japanese perspective. The film starts out like an issue of *Great Teacher Onizuka*, complete with a young, unconventional teacher, an overly understanding (female) principal, the somewhat villainous (and balding) vice principal, and a very angry mother rallying the PTA against the school. Basically, the teacher



brings a pig to school (buy first, get permission later) and proposes that his sixth graders raise it as a class project. He suggests that once the school year is over, they should eat the pig in order to understand the relationship between life and food. Also, perhaps, between an irresponsible education system and permanent mental scarring.

Based on a true story or not, I had a hard time suspending my disbelief with this film almost immediately. The first time I saw **School Days with a Pig**, I only caught the second half on television, around the time when the students start debating about whether or not they will eat the pig. There, sitting on my high American horse, I thought it impossible that they would decide in favor of sending poor “P-chan” to the slaughterhouse. They voted, however, and the result was astounding yet perfect: a dead tie.

The hour that I missed turned out to be rather inconsequential. The students build a pen, name the pig against their teacher’s wishes, and protect him during bad weather. A few parents get

angry because their daughters come home smelling less than ladylike, but the principal politely tells them to hit the road. The gym teacher mentions to a few kids that they are raising their pig deliciously, and is subsequently pummeled by eleven-year-old fists. It is all very charming, but these are not necessarily original or unexpected plot points.

The debates are what drew me back to **School Days with a Pig** even though as a viewer I think I was a pretty hard sell. Thirteen kids voted to (albeit indirectly) kill and eat a living thing they had affectionately named “P-chan” and raised for a year? Having grown up on *Charlotte’s Web*, this was the most unrealistic nonsense I had thought I had ever heard. Until that second viewing, that is.

School Days with a Pig makes it clear that children are a heck of a lot smarter than we give them credit for. In essence, my way of thinking was too simple; kids like cute stuff, so they would never be able to eat their pet. I was convinced **School Days with a Pig** was about the most irresponsible teacher of all time traumatizing twenty-six eleven-year-olds for life, but in reality, what he did over the course of a year was turn a bunch of immature kids

into young adults. There are plenty of students in the class that take a stand against eating their friend, pet, or classmate (some even call him *nakama*), but others, and remember, these are eleven-year-olds, presented ideas that convinced me eating P-chain was the right choice. It is truly something that must be seen to be believed.

The only complaint I have about the film is that in an attempt to create a documentary atmosphere, the camerawork relies heavily on the shaky handheld technique that works well for *The Office* and made audiences sick during *Cloverfield*. Sadly, it leans a little too far in the *Cloverfield* direction during the debate scenes I was so taken with; at some times it was easier to only listen to the dialogue instead of watch the screen. Although I have nothing against this technique itself, there is no reason a close-up on a schoolchild needs to look like it was filmed during an earthquake in order to be realistic.

This is but a minor issue in a film that has quickly rocketed to the top of my favorite Japanese films. **School Days with a Pig** is a superb film and despite all my initial criticisms, it convinced me that children really are capable



of amazing, unexpected things. I do not want to give away the ending (and the choice they make for P-chan) but I will say that this movie is definitely going to get remade in America. And Hollywood will change the outcome.

Thanks for watching!

JJ Cappa

The Ainu Game

ALTs are frequently charged

with presenting cultural games in addition to their English grammar repertoire. To my surprise, there aren't many culture games available on Englipedia!

Maru-Batsu, or true-false games, are a great way to surprise and amaze your students. All you need in order to play are some true/false cards they can hold up (though in a pinch, just having them form their arms into a circle or an X will do).

This is one of the best games I played with my students in three years (I played it each year!). I call it simply: **The Ainu Game**. In essence, it's a True/False game played in teams of 5 or so students. (I just tell my kids to get into "lunch groups" and they seem to know what to do!) Each team needs to have a TRUE card and a FALSE card – I taped colorful construction paper with TRUE and FALSE on

them to chopsticks, so the teams can hold up actual signs when they guess the answer.

You will say a sentence in English about the Ainu, for example: "The Ainu have 20 letters in their alphabet." The students will have a few seconds to deliberate in their groups before you count down: "5, 4, 3, 2, 1!" – each time they will raise one of their cards: True or False. You then share the answer, in this case, FALSE! The teams who guessed right get a point. You can then explain that the Ainu do NOT have an alphabet at all. Next, you repeat with other sentences and explain away! You can find more facts online if you'd like, but I was never able to get through all of the ones attached here. While the English may be a little intimidating, I was able to successfully act out each one so that my students could

understand them better. On a few of the questions, you can offer bonus points if you'd like. I only offered one question for bonus points and I marked it below. You could change the sentences around though, if you'd like, and make more bonus points available!

I also handed out various photos I printed online at the end of the class so the students could see the tattoos and houses. It was a big hit!

The Ainu Game was awesome because:

- A.) It let the students be exposed to lots of English they didn't know – but, could understand via acting on your part. For some of the words, I let them use their dictionaries – for others, they had to just watch and listen. But, I mainly wanted

to stress that if they tried and paid attention, they could get the general idea of what I was saying.

- B.) They have to think about the answers – this puts everyone one on an even playing field in their groups – rather than previous games I have played where the student who understood the most English answered all the questions.

- C.) It's just fun to play games that are informative and interesting! I learned so much about the Ainu that it became my priority on a trip to Hokkaido to go to an Ainu village. And, indeed, we saw a mukurri concert, saw tons of bears in cages,

and ate dried salmon! It was so amazing.

Here is the list of all my questions and answers. I will also include a worksheet that I gave out so we could see how much the students were paying attention – for two teachers this was graded, and for another it was corrected in class for activity points.

Caitlin Orr

All worksheets and pictures can be downloaded from the Hyogo Times website.



Dekansho Festival



In 1954, the town of Sasayama decided to create a festival that integrated the annual Bon Odori that was previously held in the old town centre. The result was what is now known as Dekansho festival, held every 15th and 16th of August.

Professional and amateur dance troupes, as well as individuals from the very young to the very old can join the constant line of dancing up and around the pavilion, where the 'Dekansho band' pump out their catchy tune... all night long (A-yoi yoi~)

Many festival goers don Yukata or Jinbei and walk around the many stalls on offer (why not try a wild boar skewer?) and test their nerves in Sasayama's very own House of Horrors.

The water spraying at Sasayama castle signals the impending start of the fireworks display, and people scramble for a good vantage point.

If you're lucky you may also get a photo with one (or all) of our town mascots, Giant Black Beans, and Maruino, the wild boar.

This is my favourite time of year in Sasayama, so come out and experience the famous Black-bean hospitality!

How to get there

Take the Takarazuka/Fukuchiyama line to Sasayamaguchi station, and catch the bus to Nikaimachi station; head towards the castle grounds (if in doubt, follow the throng of people!). Things kick off at around 6pm and carry on into the night (around 10pm). The last bus to Sasayamaguchi departs at 8:55pm, (from Nikaimachi), so be careful not to miss it!

Places to stay

Shin Tamba-Sou

On the budget end of the scale. About a 20 minute walk from the castle grounds, and it costs ¥5,500 per person in a western style twin room with breakfast.

Jinyourou (潯陽樓)

Located a 1 minute walk from Nikaimachi bus stop, and is very close to the castle grounds. Accommodation starts at ¥6,300 per person, including breakfast.

Sasayama-sou

On the upper end of the scale. A great hotel and hot spring located on the hill in the historic district of town. The castle grounds are a 20 minute walk west of Sasayama-sou. Prices start from ¥7,950 per person including breakfast.

(All accommodation can be booked through Jalan.net)

Jessica Grigg



Travel with family: Making it work.

Showing your family around Japan is always going to be exciting. However, there are a few things you should keep in mind. The absence of creature comforts at home which your family takes for granted, such as being able to travel by car anywhere, can cause tension. No one wants their holiday to be ruined by grumpiness and misunderstandings, so here are my 10 tips for a smooth trip with 'The Fam'!

Point One

Let your peeps know what they're in for. If you forewarn your family, they are less likely to get culture shock. It'll make the whole trip smoother.

Point Two

Let them know this is your home. You may be surprised that you get offended by small comments that are made that may feel insulting to your current home and way of life. Try and take things with a pinch of salt and remember how Japan was for you when you first arrived; your family will most likely be experiencing similar feelings.

Point Three

Oh my god.... SHOES!

Shoes are a crucial element of any Japan trip. Make sure your family brings shoes that are appropriate for your plans (not brand new! Oh no, blisters!)

Point Four

Lead by example. Things like lining up for the train correctly and how to eat with chopsticks won't be second nature for them.

Point Five

Give yourself a breather.

I'm always tempted to cram my schedule stupid with all kinds of cultural and crazy fun. Don't forget, travelling is tiring, and being tired makes people grumpy. Make sure you schedule a sleep-in or two!

Point Six

Space. If you have visitors for a long period you may want to consider sending them off for a short interlude (eg. Ryokan in Kyoto, day trip to Kobe). Giving yourselves some space will help you both recoup and refresh, ready for the next lot of adventures together!

Point Seven

Try and visit somewhere new.

It's always nice to go somewhere new with those you love, so you can share the experience and excitement; too many 'been there's and 'done that's may leave you feeling like an underpaid tour guide.

Point Eight

Don't leave out your town!

Bright lights of Tokyo, shrines and Maiko of Kyoto, and the beaches are all very beautiful and exciting, but most families want to see what you are doing and where you live also. For those of us longer staying JETs, it helps our families understand just why we are still here...

Point Nine

Check-in online and take an early train to the airport.

My sister may have found herself in some trouble if she had not. The recent typhoon delayed trains by an hour, and traffic created further delays; it could have been an interesting end to her trip!

Point Ten

Don't get drunk with the Yakuza. Enough said.

Jessica Grigg

Ahab's Wife or, The Star-Gazer

Sena Jeter Naslund took a brief reference in *Moby Dick* mentioning Captain Ahab's young wife (and son) and from that seed, she planted and grew herself a transcendent novel. What kind of woman could hold up against the magnificent (and stubborn) Captain Ahab? If Naslund had asked herself this question, then she easily found her answer in Una. I don't know how long I have waited for a heroine like her. Reading **Ahab's Wife** was like swimming through an extraordinary adventure – constant awe at the strength of Una's character, and such pride. It takes a woman like Una to brave the storms she faced and to still hold a willingness to live, and allow herself to be happy. For the novel's entirety, you are in the hands of an amazing storyteller. The book itself is like a ship: Naslund your captain and Una your first-mate (though sometimes, it may seem to be the other way around).

Our book begins: "Captain Ahab was neither my first husband nor my last." It's every bit an adventure as it is a spiritual journey. Naslund has created a woman who can not only hold up against the infamous Captain Ahab, but who also sees into his innermost being while retaining her own integrity.

Within the first few chapters, Una, struggling under the religious microscope of her father, is sent to live with her aunt, uncle, and young cousin, Frannie, on a remote lighthouse island. While Una is living there, the family is visited by two young men, Kit and Giles, who come to change the lens in the lighthouse. For me, this is where Una's story becomes something other than the tale of a young woman. Her initial interaction with the men along with her means of socializing reminds us that we are not in the hands of a weak narrator – she isn't swooned or flirtatious any more than she allows herself to be. I love her control, her concentration, and above all else, her compassion. I believe that the strongest female characters are not the ones who are susceptible to fate, but those who choose to be vulnerable – thus claiming their independence. They do not experience pain because they are weak; they experience pain because they allow themselves to.

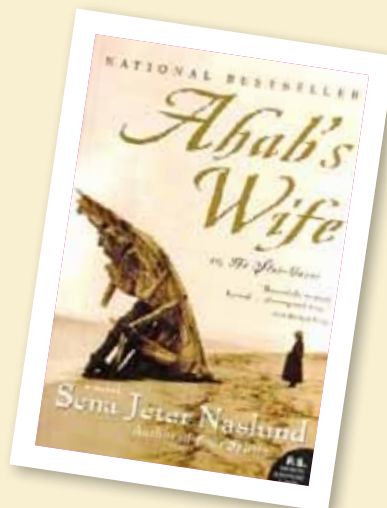
One thing I particularly enjoyed about this novel was the freedom and honesty of the story. It is a pet-peeve of mine when (I feel) an author is bending their characters to their will to make their story work, rather than letting the characters be themselves.

This allows them to make errors that are true to themselves – rather than ones that are just convenient for the narrative. **Ahab's Wife** gives breathing room to everyone – I believed in everyone's choices, their actions, and especially their understanding of the human spirit. Una is open to the pain and the joy of everything she endeavors. I couldn't have asked for a better narrator.

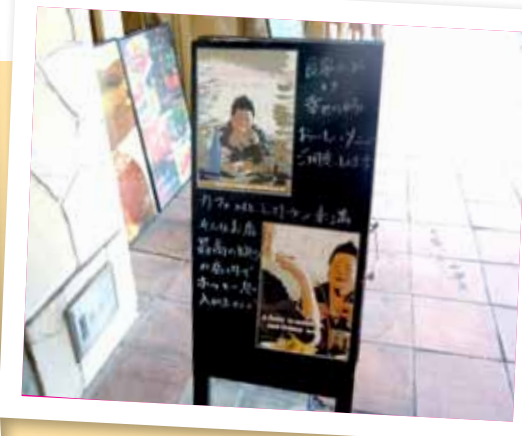
For me, the novel is broken up into the phases of Una's life. We see her chapters from the lighthouse island where she first meets Kit and Giles. We follow Una through her turmoil at sea. We experience her first marriage, we react to her second, and we ultimately witness, however briefly in the novel, her last. We mourn with her, we rejoice, we bond, we believe, we argue. I would say this book was all-encompassing for me. Una is my favorite heroine, and I don't think this novel could have been written by any other author or in any other way.

I loved it absolutely, completely.

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!

'A fatty is satisfied, and thinny too!'

Participate!

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

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Beached as Bro!

Summer is Here!! Hazzah!

So time to get organised and check out some of the beaches on offer in Japan. Get some peeps together and hire a car for the weekend! Most of Japan's best beaches lie along the Japan Sea. It's camping time!

Wadahama Beach, Fukui Prefecture

Take the Maizuru expressway and exit at Oitakahama IC; turn left and follow the 16 toward Sonobe, then turn left onto the 237 and follow the signs to the beach! You're there! Alternatively, train it to Wakasawada Station and walk 10 minutes north to the beach.

A very popular beach, due to its shallowness, this place has many beach stands and various rental places. Parking is typically ¥1,000 per day in July and August. If the weather is still good in September, you can park some places for free! The main beach is quite shallow and flat (great for those who want to splash rather than swim) but if you head further west along the bay, there are areas where the water is

deeper and you may catch a wave or two. There are also onsens and camping grounds along the bay, so check it out!

Takeno Beach, Hyogo Prefecture

I have to say that this is one of my favourite beaches in Japan. It's a small secluded beach, just a 10minute drive from the well known Kinosaki Onsen (or a ¥190 9 minute train ride, and 15 minute walk north). It has been ranked in the top 100 beaches in Japan by the Ministry of Environment.

A long and sandy secluded beach in a town with a population of 4000 people = Heaven! Stands are set up along the beach in summer, selling food, and providing cold water showers to wash off. Public toilets are at both ends of the beach, and for those looking for a nice warm dip to clean off after your swim, you can pop in to Kitamaekan. This hot spring has a lovely view of the beach from the second floor of the building. Parking up here is around ¥500 a day.

Probably best to avoid night swimming in September, as the jellyfish come in on the warm current and can't be seen in the dark. During the day this hasn't been a problem for me.

There are camping facilities at Bentenhama Camping area (turn left at the lights as you walk out of Takeno station), and a number of guest houses in the town. Camping is ¥1,000 per adult or ¥500 for children.

On the other end of the Japan spectrum...

We have the ever reliable Okinawa. White sand or pebbled beaches, it's a place that even beach spoilt Australians can appreciate.

On my recent tour of Okinawa I visited Tokashiki Island, just a 30 minute high-speed ferry ride away (from Tomari port). The beaches are accessible from the port... if you wish to walk for at least an hour in the heat. Instead, best to hire some floaties, or grab some accommodation, and take advantage of the 'Service' ride to either Aharen Beach (The main beach with most of



the accommodation, the one grocery store and a selection of restaurants) or Tokashiku beach, where there may only be one restaurant, but you have quite a high chance of seeing a sea turtle grazing on the sea grass (check about 10 metres out from the last red buoy in the swimming area). Tokashiku Marine Village also offers use of its showers for ¥500, and a ride to Aharen beach or the Ferry Port for ¥300 per person.

For accommodation, I recommend Sea Friend. You can book discounted rental gear, including snorkels and fins here at half the non-guest rate and they also organize dive experiences (so don't worry if you do not have your diver's license yet!). ¥6,000 per person will get you breakfast and dinner (a great option considering there aren't many) in a twin room with western beds, and nice little flat screen mounted on the wall. Sea Friend staff will pick you up from the port and bring you to the resort, and there is a pathway that runs from the dining hall to the beach. Try renting a sea kayak and heading towards the uninhabited Shibugaki Island off the coast. There is some fairly good snorkeling around here, but be careful on the northern shore of this island: because of strong currents, it's best to stay bay side if you're heading out there guide-less.

On Zamami Island you can enjoy great snorkeling just off the shore. Again, best to hire some gear, so you can take advantage of the free

bus ride to the beach, it's about a sweaty half hour walk to both Ama (sea turtles are said to be here, but I wasn't fortunate enough to see them) and Furuzamami beach (my recommendation for snorkeling). You can also take a sea taxi out to the uninhabited islands for a dip and further snorkeling, but hire an esky (cooler box) before you head out and fill it with your favourite cool treats.

Unfortunately there is no service for travel between Tokashiki and Zamami, although they both lie in the Kerema Island group. Ferries can be taken to both island from Tomari port in Naha.

Back on the main Island of Okinawa, the beaches are a little more typical of Japanese beaches (ie roped off from the rest of the ocean). If you're headed to Chatan for some shopping at American Village you can visit Sunset beach, a nice little place for a dip. Ahara beach is a 20 minute walk from here and is also known as 'Pirate Beach' for its amazing pirate ship playground (was I tempted? Yes!).

This time around, I was determined to see Churaumi Aquarium as well, so I decided to hire a car after returning from Tokashiki Island. OTS Rent-a-car is right at the port and I got a k-car (actually they gave me a Honda Jazz [sweet!]) for ¥5,300 for 24 hrs, including insurance (a ¥500 surcharge). You can also pre-purchase your aquarium tickets and get a discount of ¥400 at OTS.

A 2 hour drive north and we arrived at our accommodation, a massive 'family room' with tatami, futons and 2 single beds overlooking the beautiful Emerald beach. Accommodation at the Yugafu Inn Bise will set you back from ¥3,000 per person, but gets you amazing views, access to the onsen at the Hotel Mahaina Wellness Resort just down the way, and puts you right on the door stop of the Aquarium too! (Did I mention there is a pool too, for those who don't like to get sandy). If you have time after all this, pop into Nakajin Castle, a 7k drive from the hotel. It's the most intact of all the Castles in Okinawa and a World Heritage Site.

Well, I hope I have gotten you all sufficiently excited. I sure as hell know I am! So grab some sun-screen and your friends and get out there! It's going to be a long hot summer!

P.S. For those of you who haven't found the magic of Jalan.net yet, check it out. They have great specials and plans and you earn points for your bookings which later turn into discounts! It's a very user friendly website and won't let you accidentally book 2 hotels for the same night; very handy! :)

Jessica Grigg



Look at us now!

A decade or two later and you can vaguely see the scars (and I'm not talking about Mac make-up working its magic here); we don't cry anymore (or at least not for the same reasons); we are bandaged up, and all our bones have finally been reformed; we emit love instead of the hate that we were shown; we embrace instead of repel; we lend a helping hand instead of standing and watching someone perish; we walk up-right and proud instead of timid and ashamed. We have over-come.

Being a kid growing up wasn't an easy thing for most of us. The 'normal' kids have to suffer with acne, sibling rivalry, fitting in, "full-ing" out, trying to find him/her self, parents aspirations conflicting with their own, voice changes, puberty, girlfriend or boyfriend dramas, and the list goes on.

All these issues have a major impact on one's self confidence. Ok!!!! So, that's for 'normal' kids. Now, let's look at typical gay kids growing up in a not-so-gay-friendly environment. These kids have to ensure that they are not seen as 'Sissies': God forbid if you cry after falling off your bike or out of an oak tree, want to take piano lessons instead of playing soccer, like to shower more than once a day, enjoy watching 'Dora the Explorer' instead of 'Dragon Ball Z,' and help your Mom in the kitchen instead of trying to peek on your neighbor's daughters.

Constantly throughout their child-hood into adolescence and teenage years, their 'voices' are being muffled for fear of sounding too 'gay', fear of being the 'baby,' fear of 'showing emotion,' fear of not fitting in, the fear of not being like all

the other boys, the fear of being the only one who sounds like Barbie and not like Ken, fear fear fear fear fear.

Fear! It's a bitch, and not in the good way (oh yeah, there is a good way of being a bitch)! Come on, let's get REAL here! What happens to a child who grew up in fear of not being himself? Well, two things can happen: He can either turn into ME... or, an adult who has major self-confidence issues! Ok!!! Ok!!! Let's do me first (hmmm, where have I heard that before?? Lolol). So, you know my story... Grew up in a religious house-hold, my mom eats, breathes, and sleeps with Jesus (hold on.... that sounds wrong...anyway), my father died before I came out (but I'm sure he knew), my sister is cool with whatever, my older brother is an EVIL, VINDICTIVE, WICKED, BITTER,

ANTI-GAY, CLOSETED bastard who deserves "happiness" (lolol), and my oldest brother lives somewhere on earth (DON'T ASK!!!!) Growing up in a rural community, I was called all the names you can think of because I wasn't a 'normal' kid... ohhhhh... plus I was fat! Good lord! (How did I ever make it out? Damn!) My 'friends' use to tease me that I behaved 'girly,' and what made it worst was that I loved playing with dolls (and that's some weird shit...a gay kid who loves to play with girls... How do you explained that? Lolol). Anyhoo, as I got older, the teasing continued. But one thing was very constant in my life (even to this day): my mother's love and support. My mother never disapproved of my behavior nor asked me to change. She showed me love, and I think that is what has been keeping me throughout this journey. Getting older, I soon realized that people can be cruel and are scared of things that they do not understand, or which deviate from the norm. I realized that I have no choice in who I am, and what I like. I soon came to the conclusion that I can't afford to lose my voice; I will not allow people

to rob me of my joy; I have to be self assured and confident in who I am as a person and what I want; I will never be burdened with unconstructive critiques and ignorant negative comments. But I must love myself, walk upright and proudly and value the family and friends who have stuck with me throughout the down times.

But, everybody isn't so lucky to have support from family or friends. Not everybody can survive the constant bashing and negative criticisms; the teasing; the public humiliations; the child-hood horrors; the teenage scars and the constant gray clouds over your head. It can be exhausting! And eventually some people don't see any hope: no sign of change, no glimpse of light at the end of the tunnel (but perpetual darkness). At this point, confidence in oneself grows frail and the years of 'torture' have finally triumphed. Self confidence destroyed!

It's not an easy road. Many see the glamour and the glitter and so they think it's a bed of roses. But, who feels it knows.
[Buju Banton]

Buju Banton warned us that it wouldn't be an easy road. Though many of us are smiling and it seems as if it has been a bed of roses, it hasn't. All we can do is to remain strong, draw strength from the past and look forward to the future; and while we enjoy our 'gayness,' reach out to out fragile and less confident brothers and sisters around us.

'till I'm laid to rest...

This article is dedicated to all who are fighting with confidence issues, and especially to my dear friend B.H. who has been through a rough past and is been encouraged to look for a brightened future. Love you B.H.

Dorwayne Coburn

The Classic Obi

Every movement in Japanese

art has meaning and purpose, and is done with precision and perfection. In the simplest way I could put it, I love kitsuke because it is essentially folding fabric in beautiful shapes, creating the most flattering lines for the female body that can find a balance between being provocative and demure. The beauty of kimono is that there are many different types, styles, and fabrics to cater to a specific occasion or season. This however is also a reason why wearing a kimono is becoming a dying art, with fewer and fewer women wearing kimono for reasons of convenience and complexity. Not only is it difficult for most women to put on by themselves, the categories of kimono, including when a certain kimono can be worn is specific, making it a bit cumbersome and overwhelming to keep in practice. In addition to choosing the right kimono to suit the occasion/season, there are also the accessories that you must correctly match with the outfit. This is the main reason it may be necessary to go to a kimono school to learn all the intricacies and traditions of wearing proper kimono. In my opinion, I truly believe that traditional old school kimonos are more beautiful than many of those weird sparkly, Barbie-type kimonos that girls

wear during Seijin Shiki these days. However I am also a firm believer in using your personal style and creativity, and as long as it's not on a serious formal occasion, it's perfectly alright to bend the rules. Nowadays a lot of younger kitsuke senseis are more accepting about how different outfits are put together. Although the Japanese culture and tradition is so respected and sophisticated because things remain unchanged for years, often with a one and only way to do something, I think a little flexibility can keep kimono wearing alive in modern times and help spread the art of kimono internationally.

The obi sash is the one component that can allow you to really express your creativity and set yourself apart from others: the type of obi, pattern, and the musubi (way of tying the bow) changes the look and formality of the whole outfit, which is why I think the obi is more important to how the whole kimono looks visually. With origins in functionality, it has become almost the main fashionable accessory. The various ways of tying obi musubi is most definitely an art form in itself, basically akin to doing origami with beautiful fabric.

I'm going to go with the most commonly worn, classic obi type of musubi: Taiko musubi, named after the famed Tokyo bridge for its drum like shape. For a casual occasion (although now there are also formal types), you must use Nagoya obi. This obi has a wide end (the tail end of the obi and part that is ultimately shown as the "taiko" – taresaki) and is folded and sewn in half about halfway, making it easier to tie around the waist – tesaki. (Photos above)

Aside from the obi, the accessories you need are:

- ◎ **Obi-makura** literally a pillow that is hidden underneath the bow or taiko to give its overall shape, with a full and blossoming type of musubi being more "kawaii" (style for young women) and festive.
- ◎ **Obi-age** almost like a scarf, material used to cover the obi-makura and is tied in various ways at the center of the obi tucked inside with a bit peeking out; in my photos it is salmon pink colored
- ◎ **Obi-jime** it is a cord/rope that wraps around the waist and ultimately keeps the obi in place as well as the shape of the "taiko." There are various ways to tie the bows. The way to tie the obi has to do with



formality and occasion, often more elaborate and decorative when worn with the furisode. If the cord is round, generally it is used for formal occasions, as they can be tied in various ways. The flat ones often are worn for usual occasions. There is often a specific way for obi-jime to be tied, and the ends (tassles) are tucked in and point upwards; in my photos it is cream colored

- ◎ **Obi-ita** is very convenient, as it serves as a hard, thin, flat piece of plastic or cardboard that keeps the obi around your waist looking smooth and flat. It is hidden under the layers of the obi wrapped around your waist, often at the back as well as in front over the kimono; in my photos it is pink and attached around the waist with Velcro. Normally the hard part must be at your stomach while the Velcro ends attach at the center of your back, but since you will be putting on the obi yourself (in the front) and eventually twist it around your waist until the bow properly sits on your back, you must put on the obi-ita backwards, in other words, the Velcro is tied at your stomach.

- ◎ You will also need a long piece of cloth to be able to tie around the obi at your waist temporarily to keep in place until you are finished. And you will need another elastic piece of string that can be tied around your waist with Velcro to keep your taiko in its shape until you are finished.

How to tie the taiko musubi on yourself

This style of musubi-kata is done at the front so that you can see it before it is finished, and you twist it around afterward so that the bow is in the back.

Step 1: The folded end should be placed over your right shoulder and place it over the center of the makura (covered with the obi-age (Photo 10)), making the edge fold completely straight (Photo 11) and tuck the makura into the obi (Photo 12) so that it sits at the center, and tie the strings temporarily at your back. (Photo 1, 2)

Step 2: At your waist above your navel, you then fold the obi diagonally so that the open hem edge is pointing up, and wrap it around your waist (towards the left) twice. (Photo 3, 4) Ensure that when you tie the obi around your waist twice, each layer is perfectly flush.

Step 3: Hold the bottom-most layer (the point where you first

folded it diagonally at the center of your waist in front) and the outer most layer, and pull apart (making it sit tighter around your waist). (Photo 5)

Step 4: The taresaki which you are holding with your right hand will go underneath the tesaki end (that is now pulled off your right shoulder and folded over the obi) and folded diagonally inward up towards your face. (Photo 6, 7)

Step 5: Here you should tie an easy bow around your obi at the center (making it easy to remove later) to hold it temporarily in place. (Photo 8, 9)

Step 6: Take the taresaki (the wide end of your obi) and place it over the center of the makura (covered with the obi-age (Photo 10)), making the edge fold completely straight (Photo 11) and tuck the makura into the obi (Photo 12) so that it sits at the center, and tie the strings temporarily at your back. (Photo 13)

Here you should remove the temporary tie you tied in Step 5. (Photo 14, 15)

Step 7: Bring the bottom edge of the wide obi bottom up, and fold it inwards with the fold coming at the bottom edge of your obi and having the last

flap of fabric about the length of your finger – you have now made the taiko shape. (Photo 16)

Step 8: Keep holding that folded edge and take the left folded end of the obi (tesaki) inside the taiko (from right to left) (Photo 17, 18). Have the bottom edge of it meet the folded edge at the bottom of the taiko (Photo 19, 20). Using the obi-jime, place it evenly inside the taiko at the center with both ends coming out of either side and tie it behind you so that the taiko keeps its shape (Photo 21). You should temporarily tie a string with Velcro around this part so that the fold and taiko is kept in place. (Photo 23)

Step 9: Using your right hand at the top of your obi and your left hand at the bottom of the obi, carefully turn your obi around –so that it is now behind you (turning toward the right) in the center and the taiko has kept its shape. (Photo 24, 25) afterwards you can slightly pull a bit back to the left so it gets rid of wrinkles at your back

Step 10: Now with the taiko behind you, you can now tightly tie the obi makura strings so the makura is tightly sitting against your back and tuck it in bottommost obi layer (Photo 26, 27). Temporarily tie the obi age

loosely at the top so that it is out of the way. You must now tie tightly the obi jime at the center of the obi and make sure the ends are tucked in and pointed up (Photo 28, 29, 30, 31)

Step 11: Now you must properly fold the obi-age scarf in thirds before tying a knot in the center and lastly tucking it in the obi and letting a little peek out. (Photo 32, 33, 34, 35, 36) Make sure all the knots are in line with the middle of your body. (Photo 37, 38, 39)

Make sure that at the most a finger's length of kimono fold (hashi ori) is peaking out from under the obi. Smooth out any wrinkles (especially near the bust at the front and back sides of the underarm slits.

I apologize for blurry pictures; they were taken by a kind obaachan at the kimono school.

Raena Mina



Second Hand Himeji

You might recall the smash hit evening that was Himeji Prom-stravaganza 2011. My point of pride for the night was that my entire outfit cost me about ¥1,200.

Thrifting was an essential part of my young unprofessional life. Being broke as hell does not cultivate in a person a taste for expensive fineries, but rather an appreciation for the tacky, and a sense of adventure. And then of course, if you forget your shoes on the side of the road in Kobe, it's not such a big deal, since they only cost you 310.

There are a lot of reasons to buy used, and price is but one of them. I also enjoy the uniqueness-to-price ratio to be found in secondhand shops. In "real" stores, if you want to pay a reasonable price, you will probably be buying something fairly standard or plain, which everyone you know will also have in a different size or color

pattern. Buying used goods ensures that there's probably only one or two available of whatever you're getting.

The hunt is another perk, that sense of accomplishment that comes with finding something that is not only unique, and not only fits, but also flatters you, all for less than you pay for a month of internet. Buying used is also more eco-friendly, and secondhand stuff means you are not directly supporting any poor-conditions sweatshops in developing countries.

But of course I'm preaching to the choir here. You don't need the why; all you really want to know is what, where, and how. I'll focus on Himeji, because that's the area I've personally been able to explore, but note that these stores have multiple locations!

What

◎ **King Family:** of the two stores I visited in Himeji (one near the Bantan, and one south of the station), the one south of the station was a bit larger, with more offerings. There are also locations in Kobe, Akashi, Nishiwaki, and Kakogawa. Typeキングファミリー into google maps to find the one nearest you!

◎ **ChakuChakuChaku:** affiliated with King Family, this Ishikawa store boasts a narrow price range, from ¥100 to ¥300. The quality of clothing is not always on par with King Family, but jackets, suits, football (soccer) shirts, sportswear, slacks, jeans, and t-shirts are all in stock. Chaku has a point card system and are open until 8pm every evening.

◎ **Off House:** from the people who brought you Book Off and Hard Off, Off House in Himeji is the classiest of

the secondhand stores. Rob Wilkinson points out that, since it just opened last September, it doesn't quite have that "secondhand smell" to it just yet. There are also locations in Taishi, Itami, Nishinomiya, and Sanda.

But Emily, I hear you say, what of those of us who are leaving Japan soon? But of course, you'll want to get rid of those extra clothes you don't want to ship home or throw away! **King Family** accepts clothing by weight, but doesn't pay much for them. Off House seems to have more extensive rules, but also they accept more than just clothes (furniture, for example); they also have a pick-up service option. Check out their website (http://www.hardoff.co.jp/shop_off.htm) for details, and the best thing would be to call them if you are unsure.

Getting There

◎ My tour of Himeji's secondhand offerings began with **King Family**. My adventure was in roadtrip form, which may be the easiest way to explore these stores, but I'll attempt to give you some kind of suggestions for how to get there even if you aren't licensed to drive.

◎ **King Family off the Bantan**

(キングファミリー姫路保城店)

Take the Bantan line to Nozato station. Head east toward Mizukami Elementary school. Once you reach 312, turn left (north-ish) and you'll soon see the store on your right.

◎ If driving, take 2 east from the castle until you reach 312. Turn left on 312 and the store will be on your right after 3.7km.

◎ **King Family south of the station**

(キングファミリー姫路飾磨店)

Go over to Sanyo Himeji and take that train to Shikama, where you'll change to the山陽電気鉄道網干線 (Sanyo Aboshi line), and get off at Nishi-shikama. From there, walk east til you get to Tsuda Elementary school, and turn left. If you get all the way to the big road, don't worry, just turn left and follow that street north until you see a Lawson's on the right side (at which time, turn left). Go straight and the store will be on your right. It's about a 1km (15 minute?) walk.

◎ If driving, take 62 south from Himeji station, and turn right on材木市場北 onto 418. Turn left at 飾磨西中学校東 (Shikama Nishi Chugakko Higashi), then right rather quickly onto 構二丁目 (Kamae 2 Chome). Take your first left, and the store is on the left.

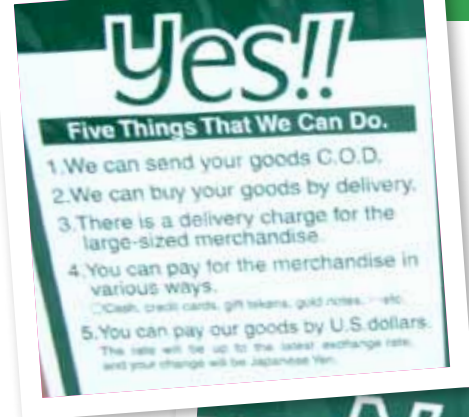
◎ **Off House** (オフハウス姫路野里店) take the Bantan line to Nozato Station, it's about a four minute walk to the south east.

◎ **ChakuChakuChaku** (ちゃくちゃく) With coordinates at 34.987407,134.763826, this store in Ichikawa is a ten minute walk from Amaji station. Take the Bantan to Amaji, then walk east, across the river, and hang a right at the light.

So good luck, ye knights seeking the gilt cup of crazy-cheap fashion goods. And Godspeed, ye handkerchief-waving departing maidens, leaving prizes 'long the way.

I'd like to thank Rob Wilkinson, Philip Farrell, and Jason White for their information and directions to these various shops.

Emily Lemmon



The Hague Abduction Convention

Visit the US State Department's (Foreign Office) travel website, and in the main navigation bar amongst the headings that one would expect to find prominently displayed, such as "Passport", "Visas" and "International Travel", one link conspicuously stands out: "Child Abduction".

Reading through the copious amounts of information is a depressing reminder of the extreme difficulties that spring forth when parental relationships sour and innocent children are caught in the middle. When disputes seem irreconcilable, it can be tempting for parents with foreign citizenship to return with the children to their home country in order to provide both a geological and legal barrier against visitation by the other parent. This is known as "international child abduction." The State Department writes that with

regard to international child abduction, Japan "represent[s] one of the largest portfolios in the Office of Children's Issues and are among the most difficult to resolve."

To combat the problem, many nations are signatories to what is colloquially known as the Hague Convention. The convention itself as a larger international legal framework that attempts to normalize notions of law between signatory countries in the hopes that settling international legal disputes will be simplified, but the specific framework at play here is the Hague Abduction Convention (HAC).

The HAC provides a legal tool to parents whose children have been taken to a signatory country against their wishes and/or against pre-existing court orders of their country

of habitual residence. Essentially, the HAC makes courts reviewing international abduction claims decide on where the claim should be heard (not the merits of the actual claim itself).

Japan is not a signatory to the HAC, but after significant diplomatic pressure has begun the process of ratifying the convention. One major obstacle to ratification – and the one most frequently cited by the Japanese government as the reason for its non-signatory status – is existing Japanese domestic law and custom concerning parental custody rights.

Custody arrangements after a divorce in Japan are typically set by the parents. In most cases mothers will retain full custody of the child, with any visitation by the father to be regulated by

her. In general, the authorities have viewed child custody disputes as a family matter and are hesitant to get involved. This in turn makes enforcement of legal frameworks like the HAC challenging.

Another domestic concern within Japan is the ability of the HAC to prevent children being returned to abusive household situations. Many of the Japanese parents fleeing with their children to Japan are seen as escaping from abusive spouses. The HAC includes a provision that if there is "clear and convincing evidence" that a return would place a child in a position of harm then that return can be denied, but a recent Japanese news report pointed out that this clause has rarely been enforced in practice.

Ratification of the convention will be a delicate balancing act. On the one hand it must ease domestic concern that Japan would be placing children into abusive situations as well as seek to harmonize the HAC with existing domestic family law. On the other hand, it

must provide a ratification substantive enough to ease diplomatic pressure and ensure that Japanese parents who are seeking return of their children from abroad are not impeded in their efforts.

What form Japan's HAC ratification will ultimately take has yet to be decided, but regardless it is clear that international child custody disputes will remain a complicated, difficult and all too tragic situation that the legal and cultural norms of two differing societies only amplify. It is a stark and sobering reminder that when one chooses to live overseas they are very much subjecting themselves and their children to the rules and norms of that overseas country.

In Saudi Arabia, Islamic law decides child custody. In the United States, courts will frequently grant significant visitation rights to the non-custodial parent. In Japan there is little legal notion of joint custody and in most cases the courts will probably favor the mother. They are the facts of life in these countries. We may

not accept them, but if we live there we are subject to them, Saudi, American, and Japanese parents alike.

Colin Fukai

Hyogo Times August Event Calendar

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
31 Tokyo Orientation B	01 Tokyo Orientation B	02 Tokyo Orientation B	03 Tokyo Orientation B	04	05 Awaji Island Festival Fireworks festival	06 Awaji Island Festival Port of Kobe Fireworks Festival 19:40–20:30
07 Awaji Island Festival Fireworks festival 20:00–20:50 on the 7th	08	09	10	11	12	13 Summer Sonic Osaka, Tokyo
14 Summer Sonic Osaka, Tokyo	15 Ako Kotto-ichi (antique market) Oishi Jinja (Shrine) (Ako-shi) Held the 15th of each month.	16	17 Yashiro Orientation	18 Yashiro Orientation	19	20 Hyogo AJET Welcome Party Sogo Beer Garden in Sannomiya 17:30–23:00
21	22	23	24	25 Tokyo Orientation C	26 Tokyo Orientation C	27 Taxim for Tohoku Osaka, Nara
28 Taxim for Tohoku Osaka, Nara	29	30	31	01	02	03

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