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hyogo times

11.11

Inside

PEPY ride

Japan 365: Drawing-A-Day



Contents

- 3 :: Message from the Editor
- 4 :: Message from the PR
- 5 :: News from your National AJET Rep
- 5 :: Useful Information
- 6 :: Life after the B.O.E.
- 6 :: J-Word Play
- 7 :: Travel: Gero Onsen
- 10 :: English Sensei Spirit
- 12 :: I Heart T-Points: Ghost-o
- 14 :: Kobe Jazz Review: Yorozyua Soubei
- 15 :: Maigo in Hyogo
- 18 :: Love & Relationships: Lonely Planet
- 20 :: Kicchiri Kitchen: Nikujyaga
- 21 :: Engrish Corner
- 24 :: November Event Calendar

Features

- 16 :: PEPY ride Hyogo
- 22 :: Japan 365: Drawing-A-Day

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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

My fellow Hyogonians,

November is upon us, that wonderful time of bright autumn leaves and crisp (effin' cold) mornings. We've got some great activities on tap for you this month, as well as some good reads to keep you busy on those rainy days. Fall is (reportedly) the time for sports, studies, and good food, so keep your ear to the ground for invitations from your local townsfolk who sometimes take pity on the ALTs. Good luck in your training, and enjoy those momiji!

Speaking of which, please come on the PEPY Ride Himeji! (see p16-17 for more details) There's more info on facebook too, about this year's ride particulars. Hope to see you there!

As always, we're still in the market for contributors. December's issue will focus on overseas travel (both the explorative and the visiting-home variety), so if you have stories, recommendations, or photos, send them our way! Otherwise, we'll take your Engrish photo submissions, your Maigos in Hyogo, your reflections on life and its meaning, your lesson plans...



Hey that's right! This month is *KobeConference*, AKA the Skills Development Conference. Consider sending us your lesson suggestions and hints for the English Sensei Spirit column as well!

Don't forget to leave comments for the authors of your favorite articles at the website!

Fondly and nostalgically yours,

Lemslice

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 PR

It's November, which means it's time for the most monumental event of the year! Get ready to run into old friends, make brand-new ones, learn a few cool new games you can take back to your students, eat your weight in cake, get nice and ossified and paint the town red – with FIREWORKS!

Wait, wait, I'm thinking of my birthday. Okay, let me refocus here. But first let me mention that my favourite colours are black and pink and that I LOVE Star Wars. And Hello Kitty. But mostly Star Wars.

Moving on... It's November, which means it's time for the Hyogo Mid-year Seminar (aka Skill Development Conference). When you head on down to Kobe on November 16th and 17th, bring all your burning questions, comments, critiques, and class experiences - what worked amazingly well, what bombed, hilarious things your students say, you get the idea. Yes, there are speeches and long periods of sitting involved, but we'll do our best to make both days interesting and informative. We promise to do our best. Please note that I didn't use the word "try" there. Wink wink, nudge nudge. >:D

Until then, please don't forget to take a break from your JLPT studies and Nanowrimo freak-outs. Get out and enjoy the fall leaves once in a while. Take advantage of the public holidays. Himeji has its 10th annual Budo (martial arts) festival November 3rd, and



Kinosaki has a huge crab festival on the 23rd. If you feel like getting out of the neighbourhood for a wee bit, the Kyoto Imperial Palace will be open to the public until November 6th.

Go go go!

See you all in Kobe on the 16th and 17th. And good luck to those of you running in the Kobe, Fukuchiyama, Tamba and Ako marathons! Work those gams, everyone!

Sifton

(P.S. Star Wars!)

Greetings from National AJET!

Hope you all had a wonderful Halloween! Thanks for all those who came out to the Block 6 and 7 AJET party in Amemura. It was a spooktacular success!

As we head into holiday season and look forward to winter trips, food, and ESS Christmas parties, please try to make room in your schedule for the following great opportunities from AJET.

AJET released its *Outstanding Educator's Program* in October, and announced its first partnership under this program which is designed to provide educational opportunities to JETs and to showcase what they're

already doing! As a part of this, two full TEFL scholarships will be given away in November. The scholarships are provided through partnership with International TESOL Teacher Training (ITTT). Submit your application by November 10th! ITTT is also providing a \$95 discount on its 120 hour online TEFL course for JETs! Just go to ajet.net/ and look under "Resource" for more information about the *Outstanding Educator's Program* & the TEFL scholarships.

Also, this month is drawing really close to the winter season! Stay warm! For winter break, if you haven't decided

on a trip and still want to, check out our non-profit partners! Tons of them are offering sweet educational/outdoorsy/volunteer/sightseeing and fruit eating tours and are great opportunities!

That's it for this month! Hope to see you again next time around! :)

Miriam



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)

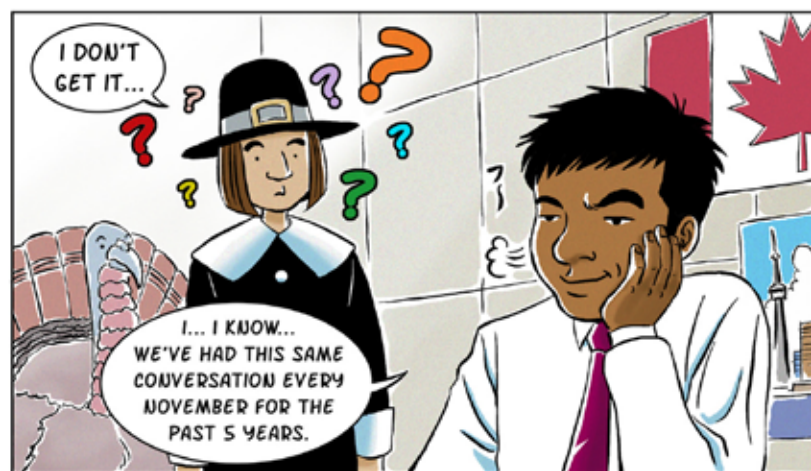
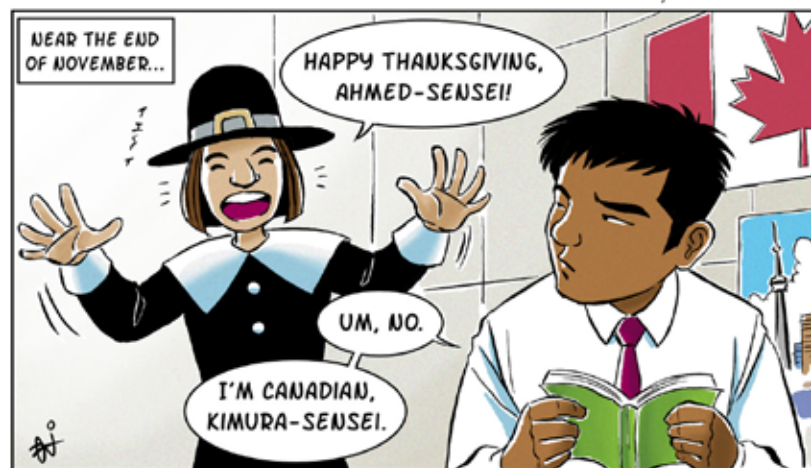
03-5774-0992

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.



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

旅行用の
靴下は何
でしょうか？

Answer: 旅 (Tabi)

The riddle asks, "what socks are made for traveling?" The word to focus on here is 旅行 (traveling). "Tabi" is a kind of footwear, but can also mean a trip or journey.

Travel Japan!

Gera Onsen

Travel Japan!

Gero Onsen

In a world not so far away

lies Gero Onsen, a hot spring resort in the middle of Gifu Prefecture. It has been named one of the top three hot spring resorts since the Edo Period. As long as I have been in Japan, I had been wanting to head up to Gifu prefecture to see the Gassho (thatched roofed) houses, and while not quite Shirakawa-go (stay tuned... hoping to head there in February), this little spot is the perfect place to enjoy the best features of the cool weather... Hot springs and momiji.

Most accommodation in Gero Onsen have their own hot springs baths for the use of their guests, and others who wish to pay for their use. My hotel, Kankou Hotel Yumotokan, also had its own. The room I stayed in at Yumotokan was lovely and big, with 2 tatami rooms and a western style sitting area, in which you can enjoy the delicious complementary manjyu

and tea. Many of the meal plans at Yumotokan also include the famous local Hida Beef.

In true Onsen village spirit, make sure to go out and have a bath before dinner. Grab your hotel yukata (and geta if you don't plan to walk too far) and go out to explore the many baths on offer. Yumotokan will provide you with a village map, and you can also purchase a three onsen pass (which doubles as a cute souvenir) for ¥1,200. These passes are available from all hotels convenience stores, and the tourist information centre in Gero Onsen. Sasara Onsen is my recommendation for pre-dinner onsen bliss. This onsen has a beautiful outdoor bath that overlooks the town and river below. Its also has a lovely lounge and changing area, with great products provided for guest use. There is also a small bath infused with nice smelly things;

something like bathing in herbal tea. Another onsen I would recommend trying is Suihouen, with its beautiful rooftop bath, and private baths for rent. There are also free foot baths dotted throughout the village; why not try them all!

During November, Gero's Onsenji temple (also with its own foot bath) opens its gates late at night so that visitors may enjoy the Momiji Illumination. The winding path up the hillside offers a beautiful view of the momiji, to which no photos can do justice.

One of the famous (infamous?!) features of Gero Onsen is its public hot spring. Right next to the river, this onsen is open air, and free to the public. There are no facilities for changing or toilets, as it is meant to be enjoyed wearing bathing suits... however, upon my visit; it was only the foreigners who weren't

in the nick. This made for some light entertainment as our group of 20-something foreigners stripped down to our bathers and jumped in, right next to the naked people. Even some Japanese women entered wearing only towels. Needless to say, it is quite an experience, please check it out!

Gero also boasts a cute local market and Gassho Village. The market sells local produce including fresh milk and organic apple juice. The houses that appear in the village have been taken from Shirakawa-go (a UNESCO world heritage site) and reassembled within the village. Built to withstand and shed the massive amounts of snow typically experienced in the region, the roofs of Gassho houses are the thatched; beautiful, quaint, and functional. Inside the village, you can also enjoy a foot bath, paint your own pottery and purchase some of the handicrafts found throughout the village. Entry to the village is ¥800 for adults, and ¥400 for children.

In southern Gifu lies the famous Ena Valley, famous for its rock formations along the gorge, as well as the momiji in autumn and is well worth a visit on your way home. Make a group booking

ahead of time, and request the house boat; a Japanese style cruise boat with tatami mats and open to the air. There are options with and without lunch; with lunch will set you back ¥2,500 per person, and without is just ¥1,250. The tour meanders along the river, pointing out the interesting rock formations. Of course, the mandatory local crafts and pottery can be found for sale along the banks of the river.

Travel Tips & Access

Cheap as chips, you can take the highway bus from Shin-Osaka station to Gero Onsen for around ¥2,500 per person in around 5 hours and 40 minutes (more information at www.upon.co.jp/tour/gero/).

The Hida Express will take you from JR Nagoya station, after taking the Hikari from Shin-Osaka station. It will take 3 hours and 24 minutes and will set you back ¥9,510 per person one way.

Should you head up to Gero Onsen by car from Northern Hyogo, taking the Maizuru expressway north and connecting to the Hokuriku and Meishin Expressways via route 27 will

help you avoid the congestion near Takarazuka and Kyoto IC's. It takes around 6 hours and 45 minutes from Sasayama. From Kobe, along the Meishin, is approximately 5 hours.

Yumotokan is a great hotel for larger groups, they have rooms accommodating 4 people and more! Packages with breakfast and dinner start from ¥8,400 per person, while late check in plans (breakfast only) start from ¥6,400. (for further details and rates, check jalan.net)

For modesty at the outdoor hot spring, wear the yukata that your hotel provides you with. You will be able to change out of your wet bathers underneath your yukata with relative discreteness.

Most of the onsens in Gero are closed between 10-2; refer to the onsen guide given to you by your accommodation for further details. Also, some lesser onsens do not provide body soap and shampoo; carry your own in case.

Ena Valley is located 10 minutes from the Ena IC on the Chuo Expressway, or can be reached by the Totetsu bus from Ena station, bound for Ena-kyo.

Jess Grigg

How my 6th Graders Learned to Spell

No, seriously, we do spelling activities, and the kids get way more into it than I ever would have predicted. Here is how it happened. I'll warn you now that this isn't a tips-and-tricks kind of ESS for this month; this is a whole system that will take several weeks to get implemented, but will serve you potentially for years.

I got the *AJET Foxy Phonics* book at some point. This book is meant mostly for JHS, and I do use it there, but my JTEs aren't as religious about giving me ten minutes for phonics as I would like. In elementary school, where I make the entire lesson plan, it's another story. If I want phonics, by God, phonics there will be.

Foxy Phonics starts out simply enough, asking kids to circle the letter they hear in different words as I say them, but by about the 4th page, we're starting something that initially worried me: spelling. Kids are given two or three blank spaces, and each space is one letter. I was convinced that trying something like spelling would take the wind out of our sails, and was tempted to skip the spelling sections altogether, but I'm glad I didn't, or spelling day wouldn't be the ridiculous game show it has now become.

The ingredients you need are a bit time-consuming to make, but once made, will serve you in good stead for the rest of your ALT life. I use a full set of hand-colored (I'm too dedicated, I know) alphabet letters in both capital and lowercase for a ton of different elementary activities, the most basic of which is "everyone put your letter in order on the board" and the most complex of which is, so far, spelling.

The other important ingredient is a reward system. My students collect stickers to fill up a gridded sticker sheet on the back of their "English Passports," but any reward system will do.

The other obvious addition is the *AJET Foxy Phonics* book, which you can also do without, but which does make this entire activity a lot easier. The books introduces letters a few at a time, and I get the kids to say the letters, make their sounds, do the activities, and keep moving along. Each spelling activity only uses the letters you have "learned" up to that point in the book, so it starts off small.

On our first spelling day I put up all the letters the kids had officially learned to that point: a, m, s, d, and t. I reviewed their pronunciations, and gave the kids the hint that the letter

a would appear in every single spelling word (I set it on the other side of the board, where the vowels would then appear together, always with the hint that you would need at least one of those in each word).

I then said each word slowly and carefully, and walked around the room saying it to different groups, especially those with kids that were saying "One more?" Some kids wrote out very katakana interpretations, although they were often stymied by the limit of only three letters for the word "mat." One kid stared at me. Mat. Matsu? No, mat. Matto? No. Listen carefully: mat.

Months later, kids are spelling words like thin, wax, fish, and more. Obviously, some kids get the hang of it faster than others, but I'm still happily surprised when I say what I think is a really difficult word, and I walk around and see that half the class has nailed it.

The most exciting part for them is the "let's check answers" segment of the activity. At first, I gave out stickers just for giving it a shot, and now it's established that you get a sticker if you get at least one letter right, possibly two stickers if the teacher is in a good mood and you get all the letters right on the first try on a really hard word. Whatever the reason,

kids will basically jump all over each other raising their hands for a chance to get up and throw letters on the board.

Kids approach the board and select letters from those posted (which by now is everything except, I think, Q), and place them in the spaces. Sometimes they write them instead, which is an optional twist that gives you the option of teaching how letters like g, y, and j go below the line. If they use the magnet cards, I replace to the side the cards that are in the wrong place, and remove entirely the letters which are not in the word at all (if they write, it's just a matter of erasing letters that are not where they belong). The kids feel supported by their classmates when I remove mistake letters and the entire room shouts "eeehh?!" because they really thought the person answering was right about that letter. I like to give this part a little flourish as I'm revealing the big secrets of the right answers.

They love it, and we collaboratively (though sometimes kids do just get ridiculous words correct on the first go) spell our way through the activity. It does end up taking a lot of time, some days, but they seem entertained, and I feel like

they are learning, so heck!

One other thing I've begun to do as we added more and more letters to the board is group them by "families." I put letters next to each other that have similar sounds or which are phonetically related. Voiced consonants go next to their unvoiced counterparts. This makes it easier in hint-giving if I want to say "it's not that letter, but it is in the same family..."

Lastly, I'd like to mention that this whole using Foxy Phonics in ES flies better with some classes than with others. As of now, I like to start when kids are in the 4th grade, but to be honest, some of my 4th graders are being resistant. On the other hand, I've got a great little class of ES 3rd graders who, because they love English or something, have started on phonics already (we started phonics before they learned Romaji), and are doing a great job (we just got to the first spelling part with them, and they did quite admirably!). Go with what you know of your group, but be willing to let them surprise you!

Emily Lemmon



Ghost-o

The Ring tore through

American cinemas in 2002, leaving many a theatergoer to forever fear unmarked VHS tapes, mysterious phone calls and strange young girls with long black hair. When word spread that the film was actually a remake of the J-horror film *Ringu*, those same traumatized viewers also developed severe Japanophobia. However, *The Ring* was a success at the box office and set off a short-lived J-horror boom. For the first time, it was cool to make remakes. This was an uncharacteristic moment in Hollywood, considering remakes are rarely marketed as such. Even obvious ones, like Peter Jackson's *King Kong*, would never advertise with a catchphrase like "Based on the 1933 classic, but with 100% more Jack Black!" Furthermore, with a foreign film as its source, *The Ring* could have

easily avoided being exposed as an adaptation, and the secret is often better when kept. For example, after word escaped that *The Departed* was "stolen" from Hong Kong, some critics tried to discredit Martin Scorsese and crush his Oscar hopes *again*. Japan, to my surprise, does not have this problem.

America is not exactly a welcoming place for films from abroad; the consensus opinion of 1997 Oscar-winner *Life is Beautiful*, around the Cappa household at least, was "It was good, I think, but my neck was killing me after reading all those damn subtitles!" In the states, there is ample the motivation to appeal to the local audience (and traitors can watch un-American movies at film festivals and art house cinemas, thank you very

much). Here, however, the average movie store has a section for foreign cinema that dwarfs the Japanese films; there appears to be no need to remake already popular Hollywood films. Therefore, I was a little confused when I saw a DVD box in TSUTAYA that read ゴースト (*Ghost*, or *Ghost-o*). On the cover, a man is wrapping his arm around an ethereal-looking woman. Nearby, a small advertisement displayed a snapshot of Demi Moore and Patrick Swayze potting. Suspicious, I took *Ghost-o* from the shelf and, turning the package over with bated breath, discovered that which I feared most; *Ghost-o* has a pottery scene too.

Ghost-o (2010) is a reasonably faithful remake of the 1990 film that starred Demi Moore, Patrick Swayze, a lot of clay,



and Whoopi Goldberg. The twist, however, is that the Japanese Patrick Swayze character (who is actually Korean) is not the one murdered. Instead, his wife is killed by a biker, and she spends her time in limbo searching for the truth behind the murder. She also gets into cat fights with her ex-best friend, but eventually fulfills her ghostly destiny by saving her husband from a *yakuza*. Thanks to this role-reversal, the scene in which the ghost enters the medium's body and shares a "moment" with her spouse is much less disturbing (Whoopi Goldberg holding wrinkly hands with Demi Moore always freaked

me out). However, I never got the notion that Nanami, the ghost-wife, was acting as nobly as Patrick Swayze had in the original. His character was selflessly trying to save Demi Moore from bad men; Nanami wants revenge as much as, if not more than, she wants to protect her widower. If you enjoyed the original *Ghost*, however, the Japanese adaptation will probably be entertaining enough to warrant a viewing, despite its faults. Even if they replaced the scary subway ghost (that gave me nightmares) with the cutest little girl Japan had to offer.

Japan loves Hollywood. Ask the average person here to recommend a movie, and they will not suggest the latest from a famous Japanese director; you will be pointed towards the "foreign" section. If you press harder for a Japanese film, prepare to be asked a sincerely concerned, "Why?" Yet, although American cinema is king in Japan, the Japanese are not known for mixing English with anything other than hilarious T-shirts. A popular variety show once polled its celebrity guests on

the issue, and unsurprisingly, the majority preferred the ease of listening to dubbed audio over reading subtitles. Even more recently, the woman that provided the replacement voice for Milla Jovovich in *The Three Musketeers* has launched to stardom, with reporters begging her to perform her scenes live during interviews. In Japan, remakes take this obsession with making films "easier" one step further; they keep the popular Hollywood stories, but replace the dialogue, as well as the people, places and themes with their Japanese counterparts. And that is what brought us a film like *Ghost*. I mean, *Ghost-o*.

Thanks for watching!

JJ Cappa

Yorozuya Soubei

I'll admit, I was mildly

skeptical when I heard about *Yorozuya Soubei*, and not just because I couldn't remember the name, or walked by the place a dozen times before I found it. *Yorozuya Soubei*, hence **YS**, is a stone's throw away from the eastern entrance to the Motomachi section of Center-gai, or whatever the shopping district between the station and Chinatown is called. It's underground, it advertises with its cheesecake, and the best way to find it is to look for the impish sax-wielding caricature over the stairs, pictured above. In other words, it's hidden in plain sight.

I was doubtful. Dubious, even. The guy who recommended **YS** to me also recommended Big Apple, which is a much more avant-garde spot, but he's a cool guy who can handle his guitar well, so I trust his judgment. **YS** is... solid.

Descending the staircase farther down than should be possible leads to a bar that is homey and comfortable and dark at first entrance. Lots of dark woods, and tables made from well-worn cross-sections of actual trees. The Sambo theme from above

continues, with a little tableau of them in an orchestra behind the main stage. There's a brick fireplace. There are vintage beer ads, in frames. There is a proper espresso machine behind the bar.

The first time I went was pretty standard, musically, but the second time was awesome. I've seen names on the **YS** schedule that I've never seen anywhere else. I guess that means they can be hit-or-miss, but if you're in Kobe often and don't want to gamble on a more expensive bar, check **Yorozuya Soubei** out. They're also the only bar I've been to so far that hosts a Jazz Orchestra on occasion – or anything with a serious horn section, for that matter.

Final verdict

This is what **Sone** must have been like before it got all big and popular. The ambience alone is worth a visit. The music is a cut above *Satin Doll* or *Alfie's*, since they have enough space, and their location means you won't be brushing aside hostesses on your way back to the station.

Also, the cheesecake? It's good.



Food: 4/5.

Reasonable selection, excellent cheesecake, modest prices.

Booze: 3/5 *Not the selection of a fancier place, but they make their cocktails suitably strong, and they're all ¥500.*

Music: 4/5 *Hit-or-miss, but never a complete miss.*

Cost: \$ (Most cover charges include one drink.)

YS Website: <http://soubei.net>

YS Map: http://soubei.net/freepage_3_1.html

YS Schedule: http://soubei.net/freepage_26_1.html

Travis Love

Travis Love is an ex-Hyogo JET now living and working in the Greater Kobe Area. He invites your comments via e-mail, the Hyogo Times website, or Facebook.

Maigo in Hyogo

Okay...where to begin.
Hmmm. How to do this...?

All righty. This is a two-parter Maigo. Can you guess where this... particular statue... can be found? Can you also guess what this... guy... is trying to sell you? No wait, that looked weird as soon as I typed it. OK. Never mind that part! This guy is actually the mascot of a very tasty and popular item. Oh gosh that sounds worse... you know what, never mind. **Just start guessing.**



PEPY Ride Hyogo

PEPY (formerly “Protect the Earth, Protect Yourself”) has a new acronym to reflect their changing focus as an organization. Though they still care about the earth and sustainability, PEPY’s true focus is on education in Cambodia, and the hope that an investment in today’s youth of that country will lead to a better future for all.

I’ve been wanting to go on a PEPY tour in Cambodia for some time now, having become

almost accidentally involved in fundraising for them back in the spring of 2010. I stumbled into leadership of the PEPY Ride Hyogo – JETs on Jitenshas – when I innocently inquired about the Hyogo ride, assuming then that it would be out of my league either because of my full calendar or because of my inexperience at riding a big-kid bike.

But the great thing about being in charge is, you get to say where and when and also

how hard, far, and fast you’ll be going, so the latest string of Himeji-based Hyogo PEPY rides have been leisurely bike strolls from Himeji station to local points of interest, most frequently and especially Mt. Shosha, the famous location of *The Last Samurai*, and Taiyo Koen, the eclectic collection of world monuments gathered helter-skelter round... an old folks’ home?

The bike rides’ seasonal timing, visitation of temples and

shrines (and oddities), and frequent breaks for things like eating suit me just fine. We do two rides each year here in Hyogo: one in the spring, which we try to time for enjoyment of those ephemeral sakura blooms, and one in the autumn to take in the vista of Japan’s other great arboreal showman, the momiji.

We attempt in our Japan-local rides to emulate the ideas espoused by PEPY in their Cambodia tours. Sustainability and human power (so, the bikes), sightseeing, learning, and donation to a good cause. Participants will be donating to PEPY, and will also have the option of donating to ongoing cleanup efforts here in our own Japan.

This fall’s ride will be much like last autumn’s; Himeji Castle is still in its scaffolding box, but we are going to make a new shrine stop along the way. The focal point will be Mt. Shosha and Engyo-ji, the temple located at the top. JETs (and friends) will have the option of taking the cable car or hiking up the mountain, where we’ll have a picnic lunch (the most eco-friendly and healthy-looking lunch wins the bento prize!). I’ve

done some new research on the Saigoku Kannon 33-Temple Pilgrimage, of which Engyo-ji is the 27th Temple, so I’ll be able to give a more knowledgeable tour of the grounds to anyone interested in following along.

I love the PEPY Ride because every one of them that I’ve been on so far has been filled with fair weather, good scenery, and a feel-good group of people from all over the place, gathered to meet new friends and have a good time exploring a part of their (or their neighboring) prefecture. We capitalize on some of the best seasons in this country and spend the whole day outside, getting lots of exercise and fresh air, and we finish the day good-and-tired, a little worn out, but happy.

The next ride will be on November 19th, starting from Himeji station and lasting until about sundown. Our plan is to use the free rental bikes available from the Himeji tourist office, but participants can also either rent one from the station (¥300) or bring their own. All participants should also bring a picnic lunch (combini bento will cause you to lose the bento contest), and ¥500 to get in to the temple on top of Mt. Shosha. The ropeway costs ¥900 round trip.

We’ve also consistently raised hundreds of dollars for PEPY’s educational initiatives in Cambodia! Find out more about PEPY and what they do (including how to donate, and their tours in Cambodia) here: www.pepyride.org

Here are the photos from Spring 2010: <https://picasaweb.google.com/eclair.lemmon/HimejiRiiiiide?authuser=0&feat=directlink>

Here are the photos from Fall 2010: <https://picasaweb.google.com/eclair.lemmon/HimejiRideFall2010?authuser=0&authkey=Gv1sRgCIHkwNnWyYuLDA&feat=directlink>

And here are the photos for Spring 2011: <https://picasaweb.google.com/eclair.lemmon/HimejiRideSpring2011?authuser=0&authkey=Gv1sRgCLOCm4m10efXtgE&feat=directlink>

Emily Lemmon

Lonely Planet...

Dating is an experience like

no other. Everyone likes how they feel whenever they are dating. The anticipation, the first kiss, shopping for the perfect outfit, the restaurant choice, the first “first”, talking about the dates with your friends, evaluating your date with your friends, and the weeks of butterflies that fill your stomach every time you receive an email/text/SMS from him/her. Who wouldn’t?

With this in mind, recently I have been bombarded with quite a few friends who have not been in the dating game for some time, but however have been forced to take cover on the “reserve” bench waiting for the coach (Cupid) to call their names to run into “play”. And what made me put my strawberry milkshake down, fold my arms and really think about this was the fact that these friends are attractive, educated, have some sort of Japanese ability, are both straight and gay, and are foreigners. After taking a good gulp of strawberry shake, many questions started to strut through my mind, some of which I have no answers for. Is it that it’s impossible for foreigners

to date in Japan? Is it that Japanese are afraid to date foreigners? Are foreigners afraid to date each other? Why is it that it’s easier for a straight foreign guy as to land a date than girls? Why are so many foreigners (who have gone through the stress of learning the language) still left date-less and distressed after being in Japan for so long? Why are Japanese men so afraid to approach a girl and ask her out? Why is it that when a girl asks out a Japanese guy he says he is ‘busy’?

With a half cup of strawberry milkshake left, I was determined to get answers, so I went to the source: my *gaikoku-jin* friends indeed. After several interviews, testimonials and semi-counseling sessions [and now I need to talk to Dr. Phil and Oprah], it was clear that there is an EPIDEMIC: Distressed foreigners at the end of their ropes.

My fabulous *gaikoku-jin* girls complained that even after studying Japanese and being able to speak it, it is very difficult for them to land a guy. At first, they assumed that the Japanese guys were afraid to speak to

them because they (the Japanese men) do not speak English, but then they soon realized that that wasn’t the issue. While reassuring my friends that they are fabulous and attractive and they shouldn’t feel bad, they expressed to me that back in their home-countries they are not accustomed to approaching guys (as guys back-home would be chasing after them), but since coming to Japan and realizing that men here do not approach women, they (the girls) have decided to be the “approach-er” and see if that would yield them a good ‘catch’. Well, needless to say the ‘fish basket’ is still empty and no one has bitten the bait yet. As attractive, educated, and international as these girls are, it lead me to wonder, what are Japanese guys looking for?

Then it dawned on me (still drinking my milkshake), maybe they are just not into foreign girls and would rather date their own-kind: and that’s perfectly ok! So, I suggested to my friends that they should seek refuge in the land of the “*gaikoku-jin*” boys. This was where another shocker hit me. According to my very reliable friends, my own observations

and Facebook (and you know that Facebook never lies), the foreign men are not so keen on dating other foreign girls, but have opted to date Japanese girls.

To my friends, this is like a slap in the face, a grenade in your pocket and vomit in your lunch box. But it’s all good: it’s a level playing ground and all is fair in love and war. With not much milkshake left, I decided to add some vodka (to settle my nerves) and make it into a cocktail, just to deal with all this information. Well, you heard here first: Foreign guys are into Japanese girls, big time! But do you blame them? (YES!) – Who wouldn’t like a girl who laughs at everything you say, wears Mickey-mouse hair bows, sports fake eye-lashes and never leaves home without tights? So, after taking all that into my pipe to smoke it, I am left speechless. Cupid has flown the coop and left our dear foreign girls to ‘die’.

So, after realizing that the milkshake won’t cut it and I would need a stronger drink to deal with the “interviews”, I switched over to vodka based cocktails and then called up

the boys (gay) to hear their side of the story. Well, the guys are not in as bad a position as the girls (well, depends on how you look at it), but still not in the best position. It would seem to me that the active gays (tops) are the ones who are having an easier time on the lonely planet, than the passive gays (bottoms): And this just opened up a whole new can of worms (see my next article for that).

But even though these guys don’t speak Japanese and are getting some sort of “action”, it still lacks the “za-za-zu” of typical dating, in that the Japanese guys (gay) are not willing to date the foreign guys, but however will take part in one-night stands in the blink of an eye. While this might be fantastic and oh so fabulous for some of the guys for some time, most of the guys are still looking for that special ‘one’; the one who they want to build a lasting relationship with and share special moments. While the lonely planet might be lit on a Saturday night, and even a few bright stars might fall, the remainder of the week serves a cold, lonely plate of bitterness as the guys (foreign)

try to contact the Japanese guys for a cup of coffee, a bowl of ramen, a cone of ice-cream or just merely socializing. Just another failed attempt at dating on this oh-so lonely planet.

As I leave my apartment to go to the supermarket to fetch a fresh bottle of vodka (I ran out...), I ponder, are we as foreigners missing something? Is there a pamphlet/manual we failed to get at immigration? What else can we do? I, for one, have taken a personal resolution and have made peace with Cupid/karma/destiny. Their loss! I am fabulous!

Dwayne Copourne



Nikujaga (meat and potato stew)

An easy and delicious
stew to warm you up.

Ingredients

(serves 3-4)

- ◎ 250 grams thinly sliced beef
- ◎ 1 onion
- ◎ 3 potatoes
- ◎ 1 carrot
- ◎ ¼ cup green peas or beans
- ◎ a little oil

Seasoning

- ◎ 2 cups Japanese stock (dashi- you can make your own or use instant dashi)
- ◎ 4 ½ tablespoons of soy sauce
- ◎ 1 tablespoon sugar
- ◎ ¼ cup sake (cooking sake)
- ◎ ¼ cup mirin (sweet cooking sake)

Step One

Peel the potatoes, onion, and carrots and cut them into medium sized pieces.

Step Two

Cut the beef into 3-4cm strips.

Step Three

Put the beef and onion in a pan with a little oil, stir-fry for about 3 minutes.

Step Four

Add the potato, carrot and seasoning to the beef and onion.

Step Five

Gently boil for about 15-20 minutes until vegetables are soft, add beans or peas in the last 5 minutes.

Step Six

Serve with rice and miso soup.

Lauren McRae

English corner



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

'Every college
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| ◎ Web Design Manager | ◎ Settsu regional
correspondent | ◎ Awaji regional
correspondent |
| ◎ English Sensei Spirit
(column writer) | ◎ Harima regional
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Japan 365: Drawing-A-Day

This year I have committed to drawing a picture every day, using nothing more than normal ball pens. No erasing, no time to spare getting frustrated and tossing papers in the bin. Just focused, intent drawings of subjects inspired by Japan. So far subjects include rice, houses, people, history, art, animals, music, festivals, architecture, Tohoku earthquake and tsunami aftermath, Typhoon Talas' wrath, prefecture names in graffiti style and counting...

And, I have less than 80 days to go!

Since I have gotten such good response from friends here in Japan and abroad, I decided to use this collection I am amassing to try and do some good. I plan now to turn them all

into a professionally published Bilingual art retrospective on Japan in 2011. With images dating back to the Jomon period, all the way to robot professors giving lectures at Osaka University, I think that with 365 pages including all 365 pictures, captions and explanations giving history to enrich the viewing experience and educate the viewer... This JAPAN 365 book has the potential to become the essential visual representative on every JET's bookshelf. (And hopefully on all your families and friends' bookshelves, too!)

You can go here to view all the drawings on my photo blog to date: <http://jmuazcz.posterous.com>

And you can go here to support the project, claim a book,

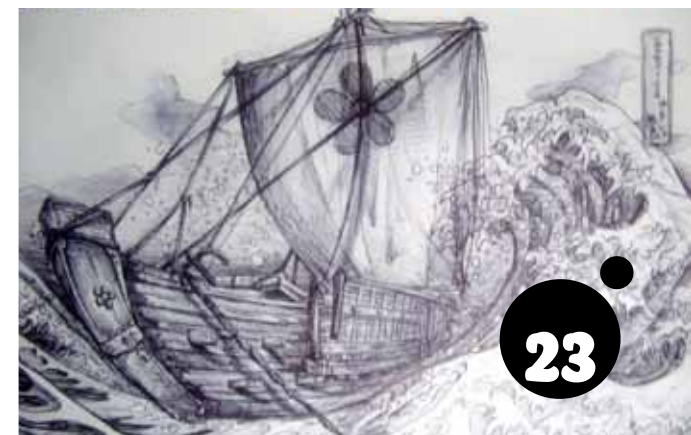
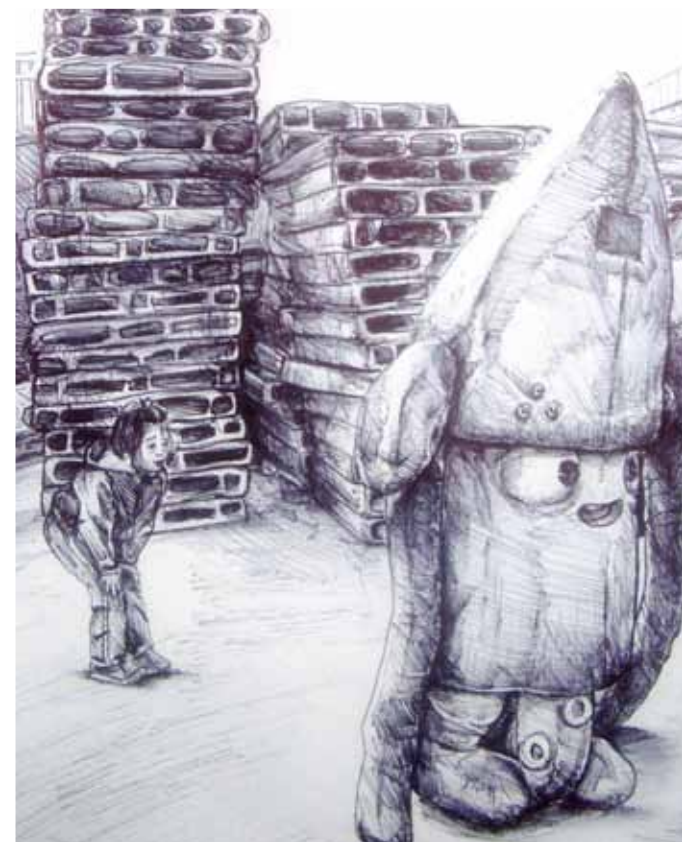
postcards, original artwork and get updates: www.indiegogo.com/JAPAN365-Drawing-A-Day-Project

Please consider supporting it yourself, giving the book as a gift for Christmas (I will send out special claim slips to put under the tree!), and passing along the links to your friends and family back home to see for themselves. Really, this is just my humble way to promote multicultural exchange and Japanese appreciation here and abroad.

Thanks!

J Muzacz

ALT Kyotango City, Kyoto



Hyogo Times November Event Calendar

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
30	31	01	02	03 Izushi Castle Festival Izushi www.hyogo-tourism.jp/english/whatsnew/index.php?id=236	04	05 Miki Hardware Festival Miki, Until 6th November www.hyogo-tourism.jp/english/whatsnew/index.php?id=261
06 Miki Hardware Festival Miki, Until 6th November www.hyogo-tourism.jp/english/whatsnew/index.php?id=261	07	08	09	10	11	12 B-Gourmet Grand Prix Himeji Tamba Bus Tour Time: 8:00-18:30. Cost: ¥4,500
13 B-Gourmet Grand Prix Himeji RISE art event, Shinsaibashi Until 14th November.	14 RISE art event, Shinsaibashi Until 14th November.	15 Ako Kotto-ichi antique market	16 Skills Development Conference Until 17th November	17 Mid-Year Enkai Kobe www.facebook.com/event.php?eid=248093255240738	18	19 PEPY Bike Ride Himeji www.facebook.com/event.php?eid=272193686154511
20 Kobe Marathon Kobe www.hyogo-tourism.jp/english/whatsnew/index.php?id=265	21	22	23 Kinosaki Crab Festival www.hyogo-tourism.jp/english/whatsnew/index.php?id=263	24	25	26
28	29	30	01	02	03	04

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