

*hyogo times*

 *Inside* 

**Just a small town girl**

# Supershow



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## Hyogo Times Staff

**Editor:** Emily Lemmon  
**Designer:** Karen Cornish  
**Online:** Jonathan Shalfi  
**Cover:** Jon Burroughs

**Contributors:**  
 Emily Lemmon, Jess Grigg,  
 Miriam Rollason, Lauren McRae,  
 Dwayne Cobourne, CJ Stearns,  
 Jon Burroughs, Veronica Chung,  
 and Emily Love.

All JETs in Hyogo are encouraged to send in articles, musings, poetry, prose and any ideas to improve the Hyogo Times for the betterment of the Hyogo JET community.

Submit by the 15th of each month to:  
[publications@hyogo.ajet.net](mailto:publications@hyogo.ajet.net)

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## Message from the Editor

Hi Hyogo!

### Happy New Year!

Hope you found a good way to ring in 2012, whether in silliness or sobriety, traditional Japanese fashion, or on the beaches of Thailand.

We've got some great things for you this month, including the reopening of the Culture column, welcoming our new culturist CJ Stearns! We've also got a special heartwarming story out of Awaji about the speech contest dreams of an island-dwelling high school girl. Finally, and I hope this is the first in a monthly series, we have a review of Supershow (which I may have attended) in December!

Not to mention that the recipe is for one of my favorite winter offerings, kaki ("I need that kaki in my mouth," and other various

lowbrow humor here), and this month's Love and Relationships column spoke to me particularly as well. Reminding me of a vacation I took with someone to this month's featured travel destination, no less. Everything is connected, you guys! A happy New Year indeed! Stay warm, stay safe, stay sane, and keep up the good work! Connect with us if you have stuff to share!

Luffles,

*Lemmon*

## WRITE FOR TOHOKU

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



## Greetings from National AJET!

### I hope you all had a great winter break

and that the return to school and cold weather (for those of you who traveled south) wasn't too bad! I have a few updates from AJET about things that have been happening over the past few months.

It was great having the chance to speak about AJET at the Skills Development Conference in November. Just as a reminder from that talk, we continue to offer a \$95 discount on a sweet online TEFL Course. Registration starts at any time, so please go to <http://ajet.net/outstanding-educators-program/> in order to sign up! We also have tons of lesson plans, professional development resources, and educational resources which can all be found on the website so please check it out!

In current events, AJET met with CLAIR and the 3 ministries on December 12-13th to present the findings of the surveys that you filled out about

"English Education in Elementary School" and the "Peer Review of the PA System." We made a number of suggestions based on your replies about the JET Programme and the situation of these in Japan. Make sure to go to <http://ajet.net/category/downloads/national-ajet-reports/> to read these reports and see what the replies were from the ministries.

Finally, AJET is also now preparing for elections, which will occur in late January. Please keep an eye out for information from me about how to run!

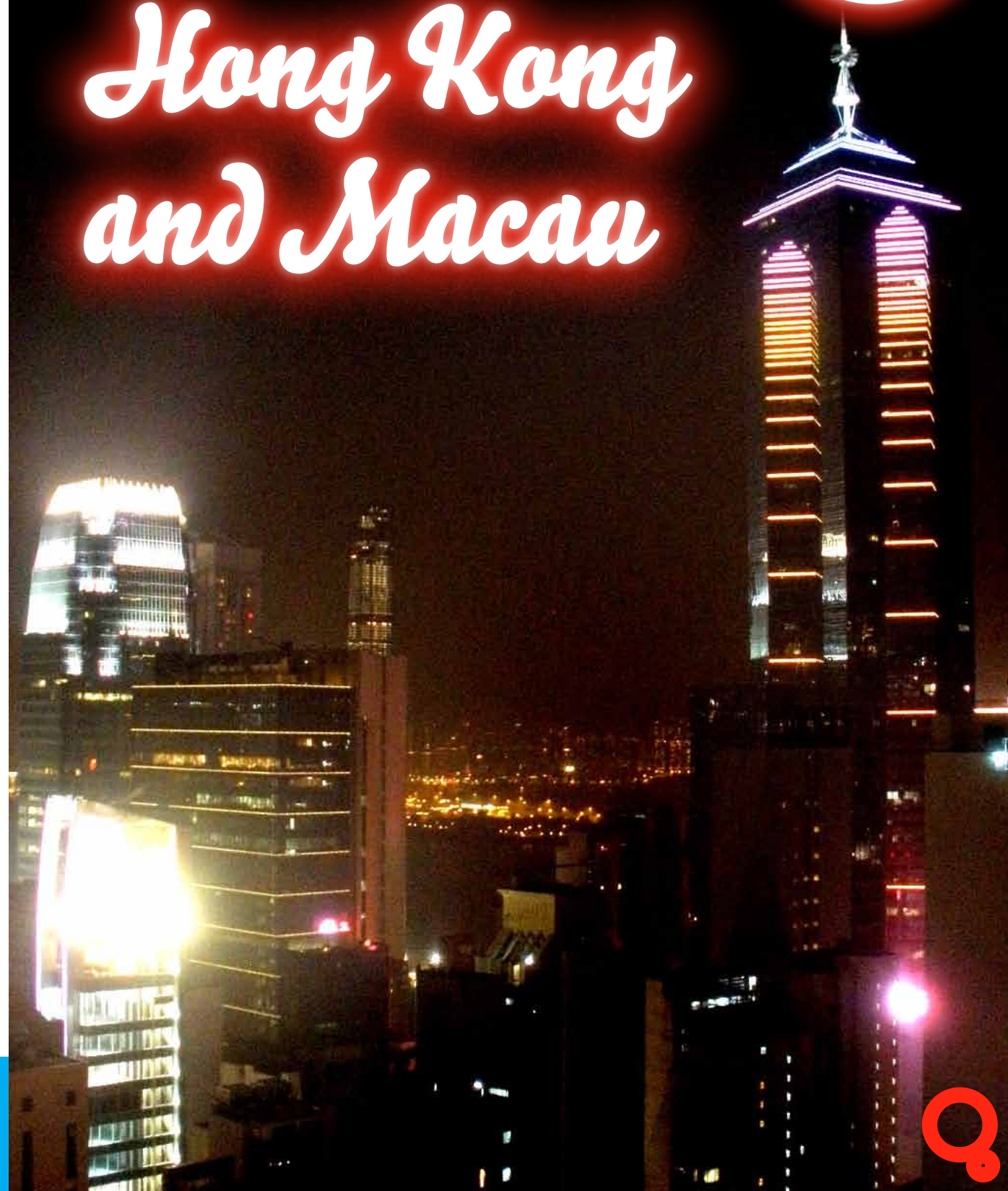
Stay warm (and go snowboarding, skiing, or nabe-eating once in awhile to beat the winter blues;)

Until next month,

*Miriam*



# Hong Kong and Macau





# Hong Kong and Macau

## Maximum travel and

minimum leave, the upcoming spring holidays are the perfect time to visit Hong Kong and Macau. You can cover a lot within a few days using the MTR system that puts Japan's train network to shame. Food, culture, architecture, shopping, and gambling make China's two 'Special Administrative Regions' very exciting and international destinations. At this time of year this region provides a very welcome break from the unrelenting Japanese winter with its perfect balmy, humid weather. For me, that's reason enough to jump right on it; for other reasons see below!

Amongst the sprawling streets and endless apartment buildings, there is no lack for cheap and cheerful accommodation. *Yes Inn* is one of these. *Yes Inn* included, many of the hostels have a main building and front desk on one floor, with apartments on other floors in the same building, or sometimes even in adjacent

building blocks. Based a short walk from Fortress Hill MTR station, *Yes Inn* is surrounded by many choices for Yum Cha breakfasts, bubble tea, and supermarkets.

Yum Cha is one of the types of food that must be experienced whilst in Hong Kong. Steamed buns, fried chicken feet, and birds nest pudding, there are many different foods to be sampled; some are very tasty while others prove challenging. Peking Duck is also a must and get into those egg tarts! For a novelty dining experience, check out '*Modern Toilet*' situated close to Times Square Station. *Modern Toilet* has many restaurants throughout Asia. Sitting in padded toilet seat chairs and surrounded by tiles and shower fixtures, it's all pretty unique. Drinks come served in urinal shaped containers, while meals and desserts can come served in ceramic plates and bowls in western style toilet,

squatter style toilet or hand basin styles. If only for a laugh, it's well worth checking out.

Hong Kong is quite well known for its cheap shopping and markets. Leather faux designer bags and luggage, quirky English items, and local crafts can be found in many of the market places throughout the city. My top pick is the *Mong Kok* markets as they have the best variety of goods, spanning over 4 blocks. Close to the Mong Kok markets, check out Flower Market Road, Gold Fish Market, Yuen Po Street Bird Garden.

In Tsim Sha Tsui head to the Avenue of Stars to watch the '*Symphony of Lights*'; lasers and lights spill across the river from Hong Kong Central in a nightly choreographed display. Nearby you can find endless local eateries spilling out into the streets, massage parlours, and the night markets.

Architecture buffs will want to make it over to Central Station. At the *Bank of China*, you can check out the observation platform on the 43rd floor for free; all you have to do is bring your passport to register at the front desk to receive your pass. The observation platform offers almost uninterrupted panoramic views so this platform has the perfect place to take it all in. From here you may also wish to head on up Victoria Peak. Day time or night (weather and smog permitting) here you can see out across the city and harbour, enjoy the gardens, and check out the surroundings of Hong Kong's most affluent residents.

Out near Diamond Hill MTR you can check out the *Nan Lian Gardens* and the *Chi Lin Nunnery*.

The gardens are beautiful. It's quite amazing to find such a serene garden inside the crazy metropolis of Hong Kong. Be careful not lose track of time, as Chi Lin Nunnery closes to the public at 4pm. From here is a short trip down the line to *Wong Tai Sin Temple* which closes at around 5pm.

Out on Lantau Island, you can check out Ngong Ping to see the *Giant Buddha and Po Lin Monastery*. The long cable car ride is quite

amazing, especially if there is fog hanging in the valleys; it seems you are floating through the air in your little capsule before coming upon the giant Buddha on the hillside. Back at Tung Chung station, you can check out the outlet mall for bit more shopping.

You may also wish to check out *Hong Kong's Disney Land*. Friends and family of mine both agree that the queues are much more palatable than their Japanese counterpart, and entry fees are much cheaper. An adult ticket will set you back HK\$399 or ¥3,994.

Lan Kwai Fong, is the nightlife district of Hong Kong. Expats, tourists and locals alike converge on LKF to drink at one of the many bars, including sports bars, ice bars, and just plain swanky bars. My pick is *Azure Club*, on the 29th Floor of Hotel LKF. Needless to say the views are stunning. The drinks, although considered pricey, were comparable to drinking out in Australia, and there is great range of delicious cocktails. When the DJ kicks off his set around 10:30pm, the dancing and debauchery begins.

## Macau

After a few nights on the budget side of things, why not indulge a little in Macau? Between 7am and 11:50pm, ferries run every fifteen minutes, with additional ferries departing throughout the night. You can take the ferry from Sheung Wan MTR station.

For those who do not know, Macau is famous for its casinos, flashing lights, and dash of Portuguese culture. As the first and last European Colony of China, Portuguese traders settled Macau in the 16th century, and held administration until the hand over on 20 December 1999. The economy relies heavily on the tourism and gambling industries, for which there is no lack of choice.

The hotel choices are also pretty mad; not wanting to be outdone, my travel companions and I lived it up at the *Venetian Macau*. Luxury is the word, and although you'll spend a pretty penny to stay there, the experience is well worth it. Everything you would want is within the resort complex (including a fishy feet spa).

If gambling is not your thing, you can try the delicious cocktails on offer, or head on into the nightclub adjacent to the casino floor. I quite enjoyed looking in on the more





...continued

experienced gamblers, whom you can back if you should so wish.

Besides the casino floor, the Venetian has a resident *Cirque du Soleil* show, many bars, restaurants, and designer shopping. The shopping plaza, designed after the style of the canals of Venice, makes it difficult to distinguish day from night. Take a seat at a lounge bar and ask for a lighter for your cigar; my travel companions and I were given no less than a small blowtorch. Be sure to check out the five pools, some of which are 'Adults only' ... Ballin!

Using the free inter-casino buses, head on into the main town and walk around to take in the lights, boutiques, and food. Whilst wandering through the Portuguese centre I stumbled upon an amazing little Portuguese restaurant, *O Porto Interior*. Ordering one thing simply isn't an option, so get a few dishes and share it between your companions (or just spoil yourself ;)).

So, that's Hong Kong and Macau in a nutshell! Go on and check it for yourself!

## Transportation tips

To get into the city from the airport you can either use the bus system, or the Airport Express and MTR. The buses are very very very cheap at around only HK\$40, and take approximately 10 minutes longer than the trains, depending on your destination. To train it will cost you around HK\$100.

For ease of commutation, I highly recommend grabbing an 'Octopus' card at your local MTR station. Similar to our 'ICOCA,' the octopus card initially costs HK\$150 with HK\$80 worth of spending value, you can surrender the card to your last MTR stop when you're done and get back your deposit.

If you plan to take the ferry from Macau straight to Hong Kong Airport, be sure to leave plenty of time to check in for your ferry as you have to check in your airport luggage and go through immigration for your flight in Macau before departing. Also there is not much in the way of food at the port, so make sure you eat or grab something before heading there.

## The prices

Return flights with *Cathay Pacific* start from ¥42,490

*Yes Inn Hostel* in Hong Kong offers basic, clean, brightly coloured and comfortable rooms; 8 bed mixed dorm at HK\$138 per night per bed; double rooms at HK\$338 per night per room; and a 5 Bed Room at HK\$595 per night per room.

On the swanky end of things, *The Venetian Macau* has two bed suites for HK\$2,459 per night per room.

The ferry from Hong Kong to Macau costs HK\$151 per person while the ferry from Macau to Hong Kong Airport costs a little bit more.

*Jess Grigg*



## Fried Oysters

Some foods are very seasonal in Japan, and now is the time to enjoy oysters!

### Ingredients

- ◎ 20 – 24 oysters (you can buy them in bags already removed from the shell)
- ◎ flour for dusting (komugiko)
- ◎ breadcrumbs (panko)
- ◎ 2 eggs, lightly beaten
- ◎ a little salt and pepper
- ◎ some salad oil
- ◎ 1 lemon

### Sauces

- ◎ 2 tblspn ketchup
- ◎ 1 tblspn Worcester sauce
- ◎ 1 tblspn balsamic vinegar

Mix above together to make a dipping sauce

- ◎ 1/4 minced onion
- ◎ 2–3 sprigs of parsley minced
- ◎ 4 tablespoons of mayonnaise

Mix above together to make a dipping sauce

### Procedure

#### Step One

Wash oysters in cold water with salt, then wash the oysters three more times without salt.

#### Step Two

Heat some salad oil in a pan deep enough to submerge an oyster

#### Step Three

Drain the oysters and pat dry with kitchen paper.

#### Step Four

Put some salt and pepper on the oysters.

#### Step Five

Dust oysters with flour; dip in the egg and then the breadcrumbs.

#### Step Six

Deep fry them in the heated salad oil until golden brown.

#### Step Seven

Put them on kitchen paper to soak up the excess oil.

#### Step Eight

Serve with rice, salad, and miso soup.

*Lauren McRae*



# Happy New Year!

**2012. A new year begins,** and for me, an American in Japan, it looks like it's going to be quite a ride. The yen is up, the dollar down. The Tohoku region is still picking up what the earthquake/tsunami left behind. The world scrambles against global warming and an uncertain economy. The ancient Mayans predicted the end of the world and all that mystical-conspiracy-theory jazz, and, those of us here have only (gasp!) a few months left until another re-contracting deadline.

So what is a JET to do? During the New Year, it is typical Western tradition to be out with the old, in with the new, to kiss last year goodbye and make promises (we usually can't keep) to the new one. It is around this time of year

that everyone begins to ask, "What's your New Year's Resolution?"

While the Japanese have a similar custom in the form of daruma dolls, there is another side to that coin. And the way they choose to move from one year to the next seems to make a whole lot of sense.

Countdown parties and resolutions have migrated over for the younger generations, but the traditional Japanese New Year holiday is all about family and togetherness. Every 31st December, on the second-most important day of the year, 大晦日 (Oomisoka), the largest dinner of the year is served. While meals across different regions of Japan vary, the most common food eaten is 年越しそば (toshikoshi soba), the length of the noodles

representing long life. At 11pm, whole families migrate to their local shrines to pray. Some are dressed formally in their kimono, some dress casually. All come to meditate on the good that has happened over the year past, and value what they have. A (usually) large cast bell is rung 108 times before midnight, ridding all of the 108 human desires that cause human suffering. Definitely a good start for a new year!

Days in advance, they begin to prepare the symbolic 御節料理 (Osechi ryoori), traditional New Year food. They are placed in special boxes resembling bento boxes. It is taboo to cook during the first three days of the New Year, so these boxes are prepared in the final days of the old year to be served during that

time. Each item of food carries special meaning. A few examples include:

- ◎ 昆布 (konbu) seaweed, similar to the word for joy or pleasure 喜ぶ (yorokobu)
- ◎ 数の子 (kazunoko) herring roe, representing a wish to have many children brought into the family during the new year
- ◎ 餅 (mochi) in a similar vein, two stacked rice cakes topped by a だいだ, a sour orange, the name of which means "many generations" symbolizing the continuation of the family generation to generation. It is also used as a decoration
- ◎ 豆 (mame) black beans, "mame" can also be the adjective まめな – a wish for good health
- ◎ エビ (ebi) skewered prawns, representing a desire to grow so old as to be bent with age

There are foods that symbolize fashion, foods that encourage festivity, and foods that invoke a good harvest. For the first three days of a brand new year families gather together away from the wintry cold and eat to their mutual health, happiness and prosperity, in a ritual of love and unity. There are many other customs during this time, such as exchanging cards and giving money, but it is this hopeful, united image that affects me the most.

Now, don't get me wrong. I love the tradition of pizza, booze, and Auld lang Syne just as much as the next American, and of course we have Christmas, but I think this year I'd like to take a little bit of the Japanese New Year with me. I think this year will be less about forgetting and more about looking back at what was good, less about setting half-hearted goals and more about allowing past experience to build on and inform the future. What did this last year teach me? How can I use that knowledge to move on to the next with strength and confidence?

For some of us, this is another year to look forward to the joys of living in the rich culture and character of the country that took us in. For others, this is our last, and we prepare to go home or move on to other shores. Many of us have yet to decide. For many of us, we have a difficult decision to make. It's easy to worry about what will come next, but I think it's a good idea be hopeful. Whatever we choose, life will carry us forward, and we will always find something to be grateful for.

## Happy New Year!

CJ Stearns



## St. Kilda: the most livable city in the world

### If you are anything like me,

you have already thought about where you want to go for your next vacation, and the vacation after that, and the vacation after that. The next time you are planning a trip, don't forget about the land down under and a small beach town in the city of Melbourne.

Situated about 6km south of Melbourne's central business district lies a small beach town like no other. It once was once the city's red light district, bustling with prostitutes and low-cost rooming houses. Now, it's a beautiful backpacking oasis, loaded with artistic charm and vestiges of its seedy past that make it that much more interesting. This little beach town is called St. Kilda, and it's one of the most uniquely amazing places in the world.

A few weeks ago, I found myself back in St. Kilda, after having lived there another time in my life years before. School testing, cheap flights, and summer in Australia meant it was time to have a small holiday. During my first trip here in 2009, St. Kilda was supposed to be a "stopover city" for me during my travels around Australia but an instant love affair with the city kept me here for two years.

I am back, strolling down Acland Street, the town's main drag, and I can feel the excitement in the air once again. Delicious bakeries display mounds of cakes and pastries in their windows as a buttery gust of wind takes me aback. Restaurants everywhere are jammed with people outside sipping coffee enjoying the cool, sea breeze. Bars are full of young people having an afternoon pint,

while old classic trolleys lumber by. Art is everywhere, hanging off the roofs of buildings above spray-painted alleys. Somewhere in the distance I hear a rollercoaster beginning its descent evident by the screams of enjoyment.

I look one way and see a busker playing a steel guitar belting out classic tunes. I walk a bit farther and see an Elvis impersonator with a huge crowd around him, people spilling out of nearby restaurant to see what the commotion is all about. A man with a leopard print outfit, a huge fake beard and oversized orange glasses walks up to me pushing what looks like a portable ice cream freezer on wheels with a huge radio blaring mellow tunes. He looks at me and hands me a party popper with a large smile. I pull the string sending the confetti up into the air and with a smile of approval he

resumes his sauntering gait down the busy street. That is St. Kilda in a nutshell: cool, relaxed, and different.

There is something for everyone in St. Kilda. The beautiful beach touches one of the oldest theme parks in the world, Luna Park. The Palais Theater and its beautiful art deco façade is a classic venue featuring top music performers from around the world. Countless bars and restaurants make it impossible to ever get bored eating at the same restaurant or drinking at the same pub. It is a great place to meet foreigners from all around the world while staying in one of the many hostel or hotel offerings. Locals and foreigners alike pack the beaches in the summer drinking and hanging as time slowly crawls by. Weekly festivals in the main square, outdoor movie showings, great shopping, live music, all night partying, penguins that live under the St. Kilda pier, and the famous Great Ocean Road are a few more highlights. Also, if you feel like going to the city for a day, downtown Melbourne (which was just recently named the most livable city in the world,) is only 20 minutes away by tram. It's a wonderful

place in the world and everyone should experience it at least once in their life.

There are two main ways to get to Melbourne. The First route is through Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia flying with AirAsia. Kuala Lumpur is a nice stop over city for a day where you can check out the massive Petronas towers, sample some local fare, and make a short trip to the Batu Caves where you can explore the ancient caves that are inhabited by monkeys. The other route is to fly Jetstar through the beautiful tropical city of Cairns in Northern Australia. Another great stop over city where you can check out the world famous Great Barrier Reef. If you plan sometime ahead you can find tickets on special and get a round trip for about ¥45,000. The best time to go is during the Australian summer which is from December to February, a nice summer escape from the harsh Japanese winter.

So, the next time you are sitting under your *kotatsu*, feet almost frostbitten, searching the internet for somewhere go during the cold winter, think about Australia. A perfect vacation in the sun, stunning natural

beauty, amazing culture, and nice break because sometimes it's nice to be able to just speak English for a bit, putting your brain on vacation too. St. Kilda will be waiting for you, but don't let the boundless adventures take you hostage, for once you come here it is easy to get lost in the life.

*Jon Burroughs*



## Just a small town girl

**This story is about a small town girl** – from Sumoto-shi on Awaji Island – who had a big dream of winning a speech contest and going to Tokyo with her ALT.

After arriving to Japan in August, my JTE at Suhama Junior High School asked for my assistance to prepare a student for a speech contest. During our first meeting, I asked Emika, “What is your goal with this speech contest?” She simply replied, “I want to win 1st place and go to Tokyo!” I explained to her that it would be a difficult, but I would do everything to help her make this possible, and that she would have to work hard. To her advantage, I was a communications major, and her chosen topic for the speech was her concerns of how technology impacts society. We had a rocky start writing the speech with the language barrier, causing us to have over six drafts until we confirmed

it was perfect – serious and relatable with a splash of humor.

With a month before the contest, we began rehearsals. Three times a week we would meet after school to work on it – even if I was at a different school during the week. Recalling my former speech contest days, I had her focus on pronunciation and delivery. Every week I’d push her harder and harder as she improved exponentially. To my surprise, she soaked up every criticism like a sponge to improve.

The day before the contest, I began watching her become discouraged and frustrated with her performances. I pulled out an award I made her and on the back I wrote this quote by Richard Bach, “You are never given a wish without the power to make it come true.” With the help of my JTE, I explained to her what this quote meant by using the example of my wish

to come to Japan and how it came true despite the odds. She lit up and became so inspired that she performed her speech without a single flaw.

On October 8th, we headed to Kobe for the Hyogo Prefectural Preliminaries for the 63rd Prince Takamado All Japan Inter-Middle School English Oratorical Contest. Emika preformed 14th out of the 30 applicants, and it was flawless! She even had the judges laughing. As we waited for the results, other ALT’s and students came to talk to Emika and me. They were shocked that it was my first year, her first contest, and that we lived on Awaji Island. Many had been attending for years and students had been competing since they were first years. Finally the results were announced, Emika Shibata won 1st place and scored close to perfect! Her mother sobbed hysterically with joy, others looked shocked,

and we just beamed. Tokyo here we come!

A month and a half away from the semi-finals, we continued her training. Emika practiced by performing at Suhama’s Cultural Day Festival. Everyone was impressed by her performance and she was complimented that she sounded like a native English speaker. I continued to cook up fun and creative methods to train her such as saying the entire speech to me with marshmallows in her mouth or dancing and singing as loudly as I could to distract her. Some days we’d spend more time having a cultural exchange than rehearsing. Over time, we realized that we had a lot in common: our silly personalities, our love for food, and our passion to win.

The day before leaving for Tokyo, I read her a letter I wrote her, this time without the help of our JTE. I wrote to her that no matter what happens in Tokyo, the experience for both of us was worth more than we realize. With tears in my eyes, I told her she would go and accomplish great things in her life and I can’t wait to hear about them.

On November 25th, Emika performed her speech in Tokyo for the semi-finals against 40 other students. She did the best she could, but before announcing the winners, the judge explained they didn’t like excessive hand gestures because it was not the Japanese way. My heart sank. He then

*“You are never given a wish without the power to make it come true.”*

announced the seven finalist and Emika’s name wasn’t called. Disappointed and frustrated, I still managed to give Emika the best speech I could to cheer her up as she cried. I explained to her that it didn’t matter if we won because we both knew she’d achieve far greater things in life than a speech contest and it was time to enjoy Tokyo.

She and I did enjoy our time there, regardless of our loss. Our favorite memory of the trip was spending the day together shopping and sightseeing in Harajuku. She showed me all her favorite Japanese things and I taught her about American shopping at Forever 21. This day alone is one we will never forget and treasure forever.

I didn’t share this story to just brag about my student or myself. I wanted to share the lessons that I (and others) learned in the past three month with Emika. Even though it is my first year, I can’t speak Japanese, or have a background in teaching English, I don’t let any of these odds hold me back.

I use my strong suits to make the most of situations. Teach what you know best. I not only taught her proper pronunciation, but life skills. Opportunities will arise and it’s your choice on what to do with them. I encourage us all to look for those doors, open them, and give it your best shot. Don’t be afraid to fail. My favorite motto is, “They get what they get, they don’t what they don’t, but in the end I tried my best and that’s all that matters.” Nobody asked me to work with Emika after school or think of pronunciation drills. I did this all out of love I had for the small town girl with a dream – who now has even bigger dreams.

*Veronica Chung*



## Let go...

### Failure!

Who likes failure? I don't! Failed friendships, failed marriages, failed relationships, and the lists go on. But failure is a normal part of life. Where it becomes tricky is when we FAIL to let go.

Human beings! We are a species that holds on to things until they are dead, eventually. We hold on to our first love, because that's all we knew and it was as familiar as finding the toilet while sleep walking. We hold on to clothes, jewelry, and letters because they have some symbolic meaning in our lives. We are so wired to hold on to things that we fight to stay in a non-existent relationship; we hold on to our exes even when they have obviously moved out and on; we hold on to memories of 'what ifs'; we cling to dreams we once shared of someone, knowing very much that they are only dreams and can't be realized; we grab so hard onto the past as if it were able to be moved forward. But there comes a point when we need to snap the hell out of it and realize that holding on is just a self-defense mechanism

and the only way forward is, forward!

Am I being a cold-hearted bitch? (don't answer that) Or, is it not so easy to let go? Self righteous – I am not! Yes yes... I know you love him... Yes yes I know you think you should be together... Yes yes, I know that it's hard... But nothing in life is easy! Letting go isn't easy. But it's what you have to do in order to save yourself. How many more lies are you going to believe? How many more times are you going to settle for second or third place? How many more nights do you want to go to cry yourself to sleep? How many more times are you going to forgive him? How much are you willing to compromise? At least if you are compromising, you should be getting something in return!

The clock has struck mid-night, Cinderella has lost her glass slipper, the carriage is turning back into a pumpkin, the horses are turning back into mice – It's TIME!!!! It's time to let go! No one said it was easy! It wasn't easy for me to let go of 'him'. But I had to do

it. I couldn't bear to hear one more "I'm sorry"; I couldn't stomach being placed 3rd, 4th and 5th place anymore (because of course, he comes 1st and "she" 2nd); I couldn't bring myself to sit across from him at another dinner while he sips his wine and tells me how much he loves me and then that's where it ends; I couldn't bear the burden of being the one who has to compromise, only to be lonely when I needed him; I couldn't bring myself to admit to the fact that he had let go long long before (as a matter of fact, was he even on board?) and I was the one holding on to a failed relationship, just wishing I had someone to help me LET GO!!

Failed relationships aren't the only thing we tend to hold on to. While a failed relationship might be more dramatic and heart-wrenching and cause you to pig out at an 'all you can eat Chinese buffet', eat an entire cheese cake and gallon of ice-cream and suffer the weight gain and pimple break-out (deeeep breath), a failed friendship can leave a bad taste in one's mouth (and it's not the taste you

like... if you are even into that.. LOL). But an investment is an investment, whether it's Wall Street, stock markets, a romantic relationship, or a friendship, and no one wants to feel like they have invested in the wrong "scheme" and have been taken for a fool. So, sometimes instead of letting go we think we are fighting back by holding on. But this is one of those "fights" that isn't worth it. Why would you want to hold on to a state of emotional and psychological rejection by your partner? Why would you cling on to be mistreated and ill-treated? Why would you fight to be with someone who obviously doesn't want to be with you and hence not fighting for you? Why would you continue to invest your last bottom dollar on him knowing that your investment is at high risk?

Fear! Fear cripples! Fear paralyzes! Fear holds us back! If we are not strong, fear will devour us and leave us empty! Fear prevents us from seeing the light at the end of the tunnel and hence letting go. Fear plays these

little sick games with us and allows us to think that it would be better to stick with the loser guy that we have now, rather than venture out into the ocean's deep and see what's out there. Fear is evil! But, rest assured, where ever there is fear there is always a friend there to help us through the rough times. A friend who believes in us and knows that we deserve better than what we are currently being served! Sometimes all we need is a friend and guts to help us LET GO!

*Dwayne Coburne*







Feature



Feature

## Supershow

Imagine yourself in one of Japan's great baseball domes, but you're not here for a game. There are no bases, no diamond, instead the house lights are off and you're surrounded by 30,000 twinkling blue lights. Shrieks and yells of excitement fill the air, anticipation rising by the second. Then, the stage turns red and nine silhouettes rise from the floor in a crescendo of screams and bass. This is *Supershow*.

*Supershow* is the name of the tours of Korean boy band *Super Junior*, this one being their fourth. Part of one of Korea's largest entertainment companies, SM Entertainment, *Super Junior* debuted in 2005, and at its peak was claimed to be the largest boy band in the world at thirteen members. Currently the group has nine active members: leader Leeteuk; Yesung, Kyuhyun, and Ryeowook as main vocals; Sungmin, Siwon, and Donghae as vocals; and Eunhyuk and Shindong as rappers, with the latter three also acting as the group's main dancers. There are also two members who participate only in their Mandarin sub-group, *Super Junior M*: Zhou Mi as main vocals and Henry as back-up vocals and dancer.

Imagine if the Backstreet Boys and Nsync joined together to form a super group to conquer Asia – the group is not only one of the most well known in Korea, but also is also a big part of the hallyu phenomenon, the quickly growing

Korean wave of exported pop culture and music. *Super Junior* has enjoyed popularity and commercial success in China, Taiwan, Thailand, Singapore, the Philippines, Malaysia, Vietnam, and, of course, Japan.

Their music ranges from catchy hip-hop and electropop, to silly bubblegum pop, to moving ballads. What's also great about *Super Junior* is that not only are they great at singing and dancing, but they have a lot of other talents – we've got actors, radio and television MCs, and comedians. All of these skills are put to use for their live performances. They also don't always take themselves seriously – they know how to be silly just as much as they know how to be sexy or charming.

Having been hit by the Korean wave myself, I grabbed three of my friends and headed to *Supershow*'s Japan stop at the Kyocera Dome in Osaka. Honestly, I was a little worried about whether they would like the show at all. Two of them were familiar with Korean pop (K-pop for short) but not necessarily interested in *Super Junior*, and one of them had almost no experience with K-pop at all. I had enjoyed *Super Junior*'s performance at SM Town, a live show that showcases all of SM Entertainment's artists, but I wasn't sure if my friends would enjoy what *Super Junior* brought to the stage. To my surprise, however, they enjoyed every minute of the four-hour-long show.

The show opened with one of their new songs, "Superman," and I couldn't have been more pleased; the song is epic, with martial-like heavy bass and brass line. It's like a military roll call showcasing each of the members' talents and personalities. It gave the group great presence and set the mood for the beginning of the show. From there the group did a couple more of their new dance numbers, impressing my friends and the audience with their complex choreography.

But when it came time for the members to introduce themselves, what we got was an adorable bunch of dorks. They all stumbled through their self-introductions in Japanese by looking at cue-cards. Nearly every member said something comy along the lines of "boku wa kimi no mono." The crowd laughed, but was charmed.

To go along with the change in mood, they went into some of their more lighthearted songs. They walked on treadmills for their song appropriately titled "Walkin'." For their song "Oops" they were accompanied by one of SM Entertainment's girl groups, f(x). In the song, some of the members tell outrageous lies about themselves through rap. Well, except for member Heechul, whose verse was outrageous because it was actually true. His part was pre-recorded and played via jumbo-tron because he was absent due to recently

beginning his mandatory military service (all South Korean males are required to serve in the military for two years). What was really nice about this bit was that everyone on stage saluted while his part was playing.

What came next was probably the most enjoyable part for us few English speaking members of the audience – the solos. Each member, including the two from *Super Junior M*, prepared a song to perform by themselves, and most of them choose English songs. *Super Junior M* member Henry (who is actually from Canada), did a Bruno Mars medley along with dancing and playing the piano and violin. Kyuhyun did Stevie Wonder's "Isn't She Lovely" on keyboard and harmonica. Ryeowook did Maroon 5's "Moves Like Jagger" complete with sexy choreographed dance. Leeteuk did "She" by Charles Aznavour and delighted the crowd with saxophone and piano. The charm didn't end there as he threw roses into the crowd as he moved around the arena. Comedian member Shindong surprised us and made us laugh with a dance remix of "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star" which featured pop and lock choreography.

After some more fast-paced, dance heavy group numbers, the solos returned, including Kelly Clarkson's "Because of You" performed by *Super Junior M* member Zhou Mi, and "Kiss Me" performed by Yesung

(who also threw roses into the crowd). Admittedly each member's English was a little accented, but you could tell that a lot of effort was put into each performance and we enjoyed each one. What was kind of neat was that one of my friends noticed that the Japanese girl sitting next to her kept looking over at us each time someone performed an English song to gauge our reactions. It was nice to have that little advantage.

There were some other hijinks that were especially fun for us. For their song, "Good Friends," the premise was that the members had all been good friends in high school but had gone their separate ways, then they reunited for *Supershow* to form a band. Where this got wacky was that each member donned a different persona for the band complete with costume. We had Hulk Hogan, Gollum, Charlie Chaplin, Superman, Steve Jobs, Chuckie, Britney Spears, Marilyn Monroe, and a giant chicken.

They also did an autotuned cover of "do rei mi." Before everyone came out to perform the song they played a movie trailer for *The Sound of Super Junior*. The von Trapp children (played by seven of the *Super Junior* members in lederhosen made from rejected drapery fabric) romped, rolled, and punched each other amongst rolling green hills under the supervision of their nanny Maria (Shindong in drag). The

antics continued when everyone came out on stage for the actual song. At one point Shindong-Maria even attempted to kiss the Captain, played by Siwon.

By the end of the show the members were exhausted, but still going strong. We had seen everything from cool, sexy, and flirty, to charming, cute, silly and even downright ridiculous. It was a little sad to finally see it come to an end, but we definitely went home happy. I'd tell you something along the lines of 'you should experience *Supershow* for yourself,' but sadly that may not be a possibility. *Super Junior* will more than likely be going on hiatus since terms of military service are fast approaching for some of the members. But sub groups and individual members will definitely continue activities, and there is always their extensive discography and DVDs to check out. Give them a try – I think you will be entertained.

Emily Love



# Hyogo Times January Event Calendar

More events for 1st  
and 2nd are viewable  
on the website!!

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
<b>01</b> <b>Hatsumode at Ikuta Shrine</b> A traditional event. Located in Kobe, it's one of the most popular destinations for Hatsumode.	<b>02</b> <b>Arima Hot Spring Irizomeshiki</b> Celebrating the 2 characters who are said to be the founders of Arima hot springs.	<b>03</b> <b>Pageant of Lights and Flowers 2011</b> Awaji, Kiseki no Hoshi Botanical Museum 1st – 15th January	<b>04</b>	<b>05</b>	<b>06</b>	<b>07</b>
<b>08</b> <b>National Kite Festival</b> Himeji Koen Keiba-jo 10:30 – 15:00	<b>09</b> <b>Toka Ebisu Festival</b> Nishinomiya Shrine Until 11th January	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>15</b> <b>Ako Kotto-ichi</b> , Oishi Jinja  <b>Janken contest for Matsuba Crab festival</b> Satsu Station	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>29</b> <b>Janken contest for Matsuba Crab festival</b> Shibayama Station	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>03</b>	<b>04</b>

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