



05.12



Inside

Hanami Highlights
Karaoke!



17



20



22

Contents

- 3 :: Message from the Editor
- 3 :: Useful information
- 4 :: Message from the Online Editor
- 5 :: *Travel Japan!* Shimanami Kaido
- 8 :: Maigo in Hyogo
- 9 :: Readers' Recommendations
- 9 :: Life After the B.O.E.
- 10 :: *Harima Happenings:* May you enjoy
- 12 :: BTOLA: Thirst for adventure
- 14 :: Kicchiri Kitchen: Shabu-shabu
- 15 :: Engrish Corner
- 15 :: Participate!
- 16 :: Book Discoveries
- 17 :: Culture: Karaoke
- 18 :: *English Sensei Spirit:* Hi, Friends!
- 20 :: *Love & Relationships:* In the shadows
- 22 :: Photo Feature: Hanami Highlights
- 24 :: May Calendar

Hyogo Times Staff

Editor: Emily Lemmon
 Online: Jonathan Shalfi
 Designer: Karen Cornish
 PR: Sifton Anipare
 Cover: Jon Burroughs

Contributors:

David Namisato, Jess Grigg,
 CJ Stearns, Dwayne Cobourne,
 Veronica Chung, Lauren McRae,
 Jonathan Shalfi, Emily Lemmon
 and Jon Burroughs.

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

Message from the Editor

Hi Hyogo!

Hope you're getting enough vitamin D these days. While you're out gallivanting over Golden Week, don't forget that the quest for a new **HT** editor is still on! Check out last month's issue for more details, but if you are interested in being editor of Hyogo Times next year, your deadline for letting me know is May 7th!

Otherwise, there are lots of ways to enjoy May in Hyogo, from all manner of outdoor activities (as May is, in my opinion, one of the Four Best Months of Japan) before rainy season kicks in, to some indoor pastimes as well. Stay tuned to the calendars and AJETs of all levels for more details on upcoming events near you!

Lem



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.



Message from the Online Editor

Dear Hyogo,
It's hard to believe it's May already. And that our contract year ends the month after next. It's sad, but at the same time you have to realize change is a good thing and you have to keep moving.

I'm still looking for someone to replace me in August as Online Editor for the **Hyogo Times**. It's so important that there's someone to take over my job... our website cannot go dormant or people will stop reading it. If you read the **Hyogo Times**, consider this your call

to duty! The time commitment is not that great, but the impact you can make really is. Again, if you're interested or have any questions please email me at ht.online.editor@gmail.com!

I'd like to remind everyone about our new **HT** Readers Recommendations map: <http://g.co/maps/fmh78>. The idea is to have everyone contribute their favorite places – cafes, tourist spots, shops, whatever. It's a Google map and it only takes two minutes to add

a spot to the map. If enough people contribute to this, it will become quite a valuable resource for JETs present and future alike, and maybe one of the most important sections of the Hyogo Times. Can I ask you to put just two places on the map this month?
よろしくおねがいします!!

Thanks, and enjoy this great spring weather!

Jonathan



Hyogo Prefectural Advisors

Liz
A second-year CIR from Seattle, USA.
Phone: 078-230-3267
Email: hyogo.pa@gmail.com

Ben
A first-year CIR from Milton Keynes in the UK.
Phone: 078-362-9107
Email: hyogo.pa@gmail.com

Looking forward to hearing from you!
We'd like to know how you're doing.



Shimanami Kaido.....

Shimanami Kaido

About this time last year, I'd been hearing stories of this epic bike ride called the 'Shimanami Kaido', seven bridges that span between the islands from Onomichi in Hiroshima Prefecture to Imabari in Ehime Prefecture. After further research I found out that the first bridge (if you start in Onomichi) is usually bypassed as it is very out of the way, and not suitable for pedestrians or bikers, so six bridges, no worries right? 71 kilometres of sunshine and cycling, here we come!

Before heading off, you can book the type of bicycle you'd like to rock (or ride, as it were). Electric engine assisted (¥800 per day), bikes with gears, and fixed mamacharis (both ¥500 per day) are all available. The main bike terminal at Onomichi Port has the longest opening hours, is very accessible (Onomichi JR station), and has a large selection of bikes to choose from. If you leave from one of the minor hire stations, it's important to book ahead so they have the bike you need ready for you. Unfortunately,

it's impossible to pre-book for 'Golden Week', you'll just have to get there well ahead of opening time if you hope to get anything decent, as I did.

My journey started from the second bicycle hire terminal on Mukaishima (free parking here guys!). Rocking up 7:50am, I managed to snag one of the last remaining decent and geared bikes complete with a lil' basket for my luggage.

Some of the ramps are fairly steep and short, while others span over a steady incline of nearly 2 kilometres. Whizzing down the other side of the bridge is pretty damn fun, just be sure to watch out for other bicycle folk, the occasional wild boar, and unexpected brontosaurus statues! Most of the course runs along the coastline, providing beautiful scenery along well marked paths.

One of the highlights along the route is the Kosanji Temple and Museum on Ikuchijima Island.

The gardens are a lush green and in May are filled with blooming wisteria vines. The large koi pond is home to the goldfish I've ever seen. The completion of the temple took 30 years, and each building is modelled after other famous temples in Japan, including Nikko Temple's Yomeimon Gate and Byodoin's Phoenix Hall. Follow the temple path around and underground and you'll find a cavern lit delicately by the ornate lanterns and filled with many images of Buddha. But first you must descend down along halls displaying artwork that depicts the tortures of Buddhist hell...

At the rear of the temple is the winning piece of the 2005 international "Marble Architectural Awards". Created by artist Kazuto Kuetani, "Miraishin no Oka" (Heights of Eternal Hope for the future) this series of Italian Marble sculptures are described by the artist himself as his "life's work". Although this instalment has no part of the

temples religious functions, it's really something quite special.

Beware the hill on Oshima: you may need to walk your bicycle. It's the second highest point along the route, second only to the impressive Kurushimakaiyo Bridge. Kurushimakaiyo Bridge is actually 3 connected bridges that span the gap between Oshima and mainland Shikoku. On the rare clear day, the view from the bridge is spectacular, and I spent a while in the middle of the bridge watching ferries and cargo ships come and go.

For those that don't want to cram the 71k into one day, you can drop off your bike at a rental terminal along the way, for a small fee. From these points you can either take a ferry to your next destination, or jump on the highway bus. There are also spots along the route where you can hire camping gear and chill out for the night, including the Onomichi Marine Youth Centre on Mukaishima. A list of accommodation can be found in Japanese (unfortunately the English website is far from complete) on the **Kaido's official homepage**. The islands also have some beautiful beaches along the way, so if you can, make time for a dip!

Imabari town was the end of the cycle for me. Here, you can find a lovely little castle, with an impressive display of samurai armour. But one of the true gems worth visiting in Ehime is Matsuyama. Matsuyama is home to the very famous Dogo Onsen. This is the bath house that inspired Yubaba's hot spring in spirited away. The hot spring can be very, very crowded (especially in Golden Week), so be prepared to fight the crowds. The line to enter the hot spring for one of the bathing packages (including access to other baths and a snack) can stretch around the building, spilling out into the street.

This is another of my trips in Japan that left me feeling a little proud. 71k is a lot to tackle at any fitness level. And just to prove to myself that I could do it again, I rode back the whole way after just one day's rest; blissful exhaustion.

Surviving the Shimanami

Clothing

Although terribly unfashionable, I highly recommend investing in a pair of padded biking shorts. Even with these shorts you'll be left a little saddle-sore. I'd also recommend grabbing a pair of riding gloves.

Sustenance

It's handy to take some snacks for the ride. There are a few places to stop and eat along the way, but you never know when you'll need to rest and refuel so come prepared. Arm yourself with some 'Sweat' or Aquarius too.

Protection

Sunscreen! The sun can get pretty intense, especially on the top of those pumpin' legs. Sunnies and a hat won't go astray either.

Money

Make sure to take small change to pay the bridge fees along the way. If you plan to cross all six bridges, you can purchase discount coupons at the cycle stations. ATMs are also few and far between, so come prepared.

To book your bike, you'll need to fill in the form and fax it in at least 1 week before your intended departure date. There are other block-out periods in 'Silver Week' in September and in the summer holidays in August. The form can be found here: <http://www.city.onomichi.hiroshima.jp/english/kanko/shimanami/reservation.doc>

Jess Grigg

Maigo in Hyogo

What temple has the weary pilgrim found?



Your favorite restaurants & hangout spots!

Cowboy Curry

58-101 Kandecho Kosokuno
Kobe Nishi Ward, Hyogo Prefecture 651-2304, Japan
078-964-3345

Most accessible by car, this gem is a western themed wonderland. If you are not wowed by the decor you will be wowed by the roast beef curry. It is not like anything you have tried before! And don't forget to save room for the cheesecake because it is the real deal. If you are up for it, it is a 30 minute walk from Shijimi Station.

Bakery Lamp

68 Honmachi, Himeji, Hyogo Prefecture 670-0012, Japan 平和不動産ビル1階西
079-284-9775

Burgers here are awesome, and they actually have root beer and Dr. Pepper among the drinks! Bakery Lamp is counter service only, but the newly opened café section around the corner offers comfy seating and good atmosphere.



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 recently released the *Life After the BOE* book! Check it out, along with more *Life After the B.O.E.* comics at his [website!](http://www.lifeaftertheboe.com)

www.lifeaftertheboe.com

May you enjoy

Our cherry blossoms may

have been here in an instant, gone with a flash, but if you missed out on Yabu's thousand-year-old sakura blooms, you can still get your ancient (but still going strong) flora on in the Yamasaki (Shiso) area early in May. Shiso's thousand-year-old wisteria is a beautiful sight to behold.

Typically, the fuji (wisteria) blossoms come out en force about the same time as Golden Week, so anyone who doesn't have plans to be in Korea or the Philippines can take in their beautiful colors and heady perfumes. Some famous places include Nara's Kasuga Taisha Grand Shrine, but more relaxing travels may involve biking to your local park (so many parks have a little fuji lattice!) and sitting under the small arbor watching the bees buzz from purple flower to purple flower.

May 26-27th, Aioi will be having its 90th Peron Festival. Peron is an all-weekend event, boasting some excellent fireworks. You can see the hanabi out over the water from 7:50 to 8:50 on the 26th, Saturday night. The main event is a series of boat races, taking place on Sunday from about 8:30am to 4:30pm. Between 10am and 3pm there will also be some dance performances, music, and other presentations. Of course there is also the beautiful weather, good company, beer, meat on sticks, and other fun festival things—the whole city smells like BBQ and sounds like fun. Since this is the 90th anniversary, they're going to do it bigger and better than in past years! Check out our past article on Peron for more info and a link to the city's Peron page. www.hyogojet.net/hyogotimes/2010/09/02/aioi-peron-festival/

Getting there

To get to Shiso, take the 31, 32, 33, or 41 bus from Himeji. This [link](#) can help you search for times at the stops. The departing place (blue) you want is 姫路駅 (北口), and the arrival place (green) is 山崎.

If coming from Osaka or Kobe there are more direct buses. From OSAKA take a bus bound for Tsuyama (津山) and get off at Yamasaki interstop (山崎インター [schedule](#)). From Kobe there is a bus direct to the Yamasaki bus terminal (http://www.shinkibus.co.jp/hw/kobe_yamasaki.html), from where you can easily walk to the shrine with the wisteria, or take another bus to Imajuku (今宿). You are looking for the 大歳神社「千年藤」(ださいじんじゃせんねんふじ) or “Dasai-jinja, sen-nen fuji.” [Here are some photos.](#)



For walking directions, [use this map](#), or this address: 671-2571 兵庫県宍粟市山崎町上寺122. If you drive, park at the Yamasaki michi-no-eki on rte 29 and walk up the street.

To get to Aioi (相生), take the JR line to Aioi station, just to the west of Himeji. The boat races happen down by the port (相生湾特設会場).

Here is a [map](#) of buses to and around both Yamasaki and Aioi:

In both cases, follow the crowds and/or direction of helpful uniformed dudes directing traffic.

Emily Lemmon

Thirst for Adventure

Sometimes when you're

homesick and nothing is working to keep you motivated and happy, you need to do something out the ordinary. Similar to most of you, I decided to go traveling around Japan for spring break. Even though I love Awaji, every now and then I get island fever.

I prepared for this trip a few weeks beforehand to go to Hiroshima, Miyajima, then bike Shimanami Kaido (from Onomichi to Imabari), and finish the trip in Matsuyama. With my teachers and friends' help, I had planned how I would get everywhere and go to everything I wanted to see. The only problem was that I didn't want to do it alone. Besides moving ½ way around the world, this would be my first trip traveling alone.

I honestly didn't book the hotel until the night before because I was avoiding going. Have you ever wanted to do something,

but were also scared of the unknown? Will I really be safe? Will I be lonely? Who will I meet? Worry. I recently learned that if you can't do anything about it, why worry? If you can do something about it, why worry?

Eventually I packed my suitcase, got on the bus to get off Awaji, and faced my fear of traveling "hitori de." After deciding I would be an American tourist on this trip, I went to Hiroshima's Peace Memorial Park. I loved it! I had forgotten how taking pictures at new places made me happy. I had Vietnamese food for dinner and hung out at the infamous foreign bar called, "Mac." The owner speaks English and his cool bar is filled with over 8,000 CDs. Here I had met an ALT who biked the Shikoku islands before. He told me that even if you're tired and want to quit, don't. "The sights are so beautiful, keep going so you don't miss them!" That night I booked the hostel for my finish

line in Matsuyama and decided I would bike the islands on Friday.

The next day, I went to Miyajima and made a friend for the day. It was so much fun, and unexpected. We got along great and were able to do everything on my checklist. This included things like, "Pet a deer," "See the Floating O-Tori," "Eat oysters," "Hike Mt. Misen." On the hike, my new friend constantly reminded me to "Slow down! It's not a race. You can stop and take picture if you want. It takes two seconds." This got me ready for my bike ride the next day too.

Finally, the big day had arrived. I sat in a café for a long time during breakfast because I had to mentally prepare for this ride. It is 70 kilometers and would take me about seven hours depending on stops for pictures, complications, and the unknown. I did it in 8 hours and didn't even use my iPod!

I just enjoyed the beauty of the ride the entire time. After the longest day adventure of my life, I rewarded myself with a relaxing bath at the infamous Dogo Onsen in Matsuyama.

I was so blessed to be able to go on this excursion and proud of my accomplishments. It helped that every person I met served a purpose and I never once felt lonely at all. I was able to do and see everything I wanted to. The memories I created will last a lifetime and I now have a newfound love for traveling alone! I'm sharing this story in hopes that you too will face your fears, however big or small they may be, because you never know what unexpected surprises lie ahead.

Veronica Chung



Shabu-shabu.....

Ingredients

(serves 3-4)

- ◎ 300-500g pork, beef or white fish. (eg. sea bream (Tai))
- ◎ ¼ chinese cabbage (hakusai)
- ◎ 1 packet of tofu
- ◎ 2 leeks
- ◎ 1 packet enoki mushrooms
- ◎ 1 packet shimeji mushrooms
- ◎ 1 packet maitake mushrooms
- ◎ 1 bunch of mitsuba
- ◎ 2 pieces kelp; 2 x 2cm squares
- ◎ **seasonings:** you should put these in a bowl and eat them with the meat and vegetables. Radish with spice and green onions (momojioroshi) ½ Japanese radish (daikon) grated mixed with Japanese red pepper spice (一味 ichimi), ¼ bunch spring onions chopped finely.

- ◎ **saucés:** you can buy these ready made or make them
- ◎ **ponzu:** soy sauce, vinegar and yuzu juice (Japanese lime)
- ◎ sesame sauce (gomadare), sesame paste, vinegar, salt and pepper

Step one

Cut the cabbage into 4-5cm wide pieces.

Step two

Slice the leek diagonally.

Step three

Cut the tofu into 8 pieces.

Step four

Cut the stems/roots off of all the mushrooms and divide into bite sized pieces.

I love this style of cooking in Japan. It's wonderful to all sit around the hot pot and enjoy cooking and eating together. This dish's name comes from the sound of the meat or fish swishing in the water as it is cooked.

Step five

Fill the pot ¾ full of water, add the kelp pieces and bring it almost to the boil.

Step six

Take the kelp pieces out just before it boils.

Step seven

First put some of the meat/fish into the pot, when cooked dip it in one of the saucés and then in the seasoning.

Step eight

Cook some vegetables, when cooked dip them in one of the saucés and then the seasoning.

Step nine

Eat as you go and alternate between meat and vegetables.

Lauren McRae

English corner



It's the new black!

Participate!

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

◎ Web Design Manager

◎ Online Editor

◎ Editor

Contact us today at publications@hyogo.ajet.net

Born to Love – Taught to Loathe

Hi! My Name is Loco and I Am a Racist by Baye McNeil

The book's title is a bit surprising, first of all, but don't be put off!

I downloaded *Hi! My Name is Loco and I Am a Racist* to my kindle midway through a spring-break workday, partly because it was something I wanted to read, and partly because I thought I "should," for various reasons, most of them being I'm not sure I understand racism. Having read a bit of Loco's blog, I expected to laugh and to be challenged, but I never expected to cry.

Author Baye McNeil, called Loco, is a popular blogger who lives in Yokohama, Japan; he is originally from New York. This book is part memoir, part exploration of a social psyche, and is presented in a very accessible voice. Loco writes like he's just sharing himself with you as the reader, which he mostly is. Loco is incredibly candid about his adventures (and misadventures; though he never whines like even the best of us are apt to do sometimes), giving us a glimpse into his childhood experiences growing up in Brooklyn, his time in the US military, 9/11 in New York, and his move to Japan.

Once in Japan he was first an eikaiwa teacher and later took a job in a junior high school. In Japan, Loco met the woman he would fall in love with, even as he found himself increasingly angry with the rest of her race. Any foreigner living and working in this country will find that his stories about life (and racism) in Japan ring all too true.

It all begins with the empty seat, perhaps so powerful because of its near constancy: that spot beside you on the bench that remains open even though the train is pretty crowded. Fear and distrust push people away, but Loco does not focus so much on the Japanese reaction to him as he does to his own reaction to their behavior. He has invented games to try to keep him from assuming the worst about his fellow human beings, and strives still to give them the benefit of the doubt, lest racism leak in and win over his good sense.

The most interesting thing for me about this book was the unabashed treatment Loco is able to give looking into his own racism. Through this book, we find that racism isn't something only for

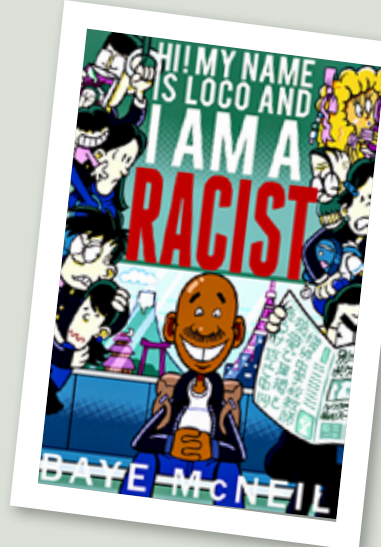
the ignorant or evil, and though it may be an exceedingly uncomfortable discussion, we do need to ask ourselves important questions about our reactions to others. Even thoughtful folks with intelligence and compassion can and have been conditioned to be racist; the line Born to Love - Taught to Loathe summarizes it neatly. We all have biases and prejudices whether or not we admit them (or examine them). Loco invites you to explore them through his eyes!

It's raw, honest, laugh-out-loud funny in some places, seriously challenging in others, and heartbreaking in still others. I highly recommend this for all my fellow JETs and other foreigners who live, love, and even loathe in Japan.

Loco's blog:
www.locoinyokohama.com

Are You a Racist? This Guy is...
[An interview with Loco]:
www.survivingnjapan.com/2012/02/are-you-racist-this-guy-is-interview

Emily Lemmon



Karaoke!

The lights are dim. Drinks litter the table. People are laughing and talking somewhere in the dark. Suddenly, the TV screen changes and music swells – it's the opening of "My Heart Will Go On." Someone hands me a microphone.

"Ganbatte!" excited voices shout, chuckling, waiting.

Ugh.

We've all been there. Karaoke is an integral part of Japanese life, whether at a staff party or with friends, whether you love it or loathe it.

The exact date of the start of the karaoke trend is uncertain, but it is known worldwide to have begun in Japan in a little town called Kobe, in fact. Go Hyogo! But what has made it as popular as it is today?

I know that back home, karaoke is generally not the most comfortable experience – usually there is a stage on which you can get up and sing in front of a large room full of strangers, or worse, sit and listen to strangers get up and sing on stage. For the outgoing, this can

be a good time. For those less outgoing, it can be torturous.

Here in Japan it's different. You can go to an exclusively karaoke dedicated venue that has "karaoke boxes." Only you and your party are subject to each other's skills (or lack of them) in small, intimate, soundproofed rooms made just for singing. I believe this serves the Japanese character quite well – privacy and a minimum of embarrassment.

But why has this trend caught on, and in fact become almost an integral part of Japanese culture? It is my opinion, and that of others, that karaoke is a release from the everyday restraint and reserve that must be displayed in the workplace here. What better way to do it than head to a karaoke box, belt out some tunes, and drink? What happens in the karaoke box stays in the karaoke box.

Also, I think that karaoke can sometimes be used as an opportunity to make a small change to one's social status. Imagine what a help it would be for the new guy at work to get a reputation for having

a voice like an angel. Or for the usually stuffy woman at the office to show off her bad self with a racy song. Or for the foreigner to prove that she is fun and approachable by being game for whatever stupid song that gets thrown at her.

So for those who enjoy karaoke (I happen to be one of them) go belt it out! Try to get the high score! Try to lose the most calories during your next song! (Those machines sure are weird sometimes...) And for those of you who don't really like being forced to sing when you're shy or tone deaf or just plain hate karaoke, try to be objective about it. Why not get in there for one song and let 'em have it? I hear "Louie Louie" doesn't really have any discernable lyrics – do your best drunken impression of the Kingsmen and let the karaoke culture have you for a moment.

And as for Celine Dion, I got up, and I sang it. I killed it. Because in the karaoke box, that's how I roll.

What do you think about karaoke?

CJ Stearns



Those of you who teach in elementary school have probably already gotten your first taste of “Hi, Friends!”; the book they’re using to replace good ol’ 英語ノート (EIGO NOTO). **Hi, Friends!**, which in no way lends itself to funny mock-titles, is dragging my elementary school kicking and fighting into the 21st century.

Because while the book is basically more of the same, a slimmer, differently illustrated version of 英語ノート with a few of the chapters altered a bit, instead of an audio CD, it comes with a computer-only option in the audio department, but dude, have you seen this CD-ROM?

Actually I think it’s a DVD-ROM, which is only a problem because the laptop thrust into my arms at the school was probably made in the late 90s, so I’m bringing my own computer to

run it and praying we know how to hook it up to a bigger screen and speakers or something because **Hi, Friends!** CD-ROM is baller.

Or it seems that way, from the first few pages. Where 英語ノート 1 had a handful of recorded greetings from around the world, **Hi, Friends! 1** boasts a full ten videos showing some filmed time from each of the countries featured, then a brief “Hello” and self-introduction in the language of that country, followed by one in English. On the cartoonier pages, highlighting shows who is speaking so the kids won’t get confused. To make someone speak, just click on them!

The flashcards are all electronic, too, though I’m keeping my giant boxes of 英語ノート cards for use with the younger students so we,

too, can enjoy games like *eraser-get* and *blackboard flyswatter* game. Everything is adjustable now, with options in the “chant” section to make it slower, or karaoke version. Flashcards can be shown in order or at random, with or without text.

Most pages also contain a video of a woman saying the key phrases and vocab, with cameras on her from all sides to help with face and mouth shapes. It all makes me feel a little obsolete, which is half the point. Not all elementary schools have an ALT to visit, or not very often, so the CD-ROM is complete enough to be run by almost anyone and still expose the kids to a lot of native English.

Fear not, however; there’s a definite difference between hearing real English and



engaging with an English speaker. And being an ALT in elementary school is still about the equivalent of being a celebrity hero.

The downside of the CD-ROM’s compact awesome is, try running the lesson without the CD-ROM and there is a much higher chance of lameness. Looks like we’re having 5th and 6th grade English in the computer room for most of the rest of the year. For the first few weeks, as things get settled, it might be wise to put together what cards seem appropriate from the old book as a standby visual aid in case you have to go technology-free into the classroom, but try to make the other teachers see just how useful the CD-ROM is and hopefully they’ll find the cords to connect you to the big TV.



The other downside is, the entire thing is in Japanese (just like the teacher book) because this isn’t designed for you to use; it’s for the HRTs. But with a little playing around and button mashing, you will soon know which button does what!

Emily Lemmon



In the shadows

So, you wake up one day and you find yourself staring at a stranger in the mirror. And in addition to your eye-brows that need to be re-arched, a facial that is over-due and the nose job you have been contemplating, you also find yourself thinking a certain way, you are embedded with certain thoughts, beliefs, values, attitudes; you have a specific ideology and view point; you have dreams and aspirations; 'morals' and 'standards', and then you start to question yourself: "Who is this person in the mirror?", "Am I 'me' or someone else?", "Do I really believe all these things, for real?", "Am I a replica of my parents or am I my own person?", "Who am I living for?" And then it dawned on me to wonder, am I living in the shadows of someone else, have I created a shadow for myself, or am I my own being?

These are questions many people live with throughout their lives. And if these questions are left unanswered, a person would have robbed him/her-self of 'a life'. As we get older and life throws us some experiences, bones, challenges and heart-breaks, pleasure and pain, we start to search ourselves and question our 'make up'. Have you created a person in your head that you would love to be and that is the person you have projected to your friends, or are you really you? Are you a sweet, loving lesbian who needs to take revenge on men because you blame yourself for losing the one guy you really loved? Are you really so cold and withdrawn from everyone because your father left your family when you were six years old, or are you a fabulous guy who just needs to talk it out and forgive him?

In many cases, we find ourselves creating a persona in our heads of what we should be, what society expects of us, what "gay" is, or what would please our parents and then we try to live our lives to meet this expectation [and rarely make it]. What would it take for us to wake up and smell the vodka on our breaths? What would it take for us to finally realize that maybe, just maybe we have been kidding ourselves in believing that we are who we are, and we have been walking in someone else's shadow all this time? What would it take?

Well, for some people, it takes tons and tons of disappointments to finally show them that what they have been working all their lives for isn't really what they want to do, but what their parents wanted to do and couldn't do, and so they have to fulfill their parents' dreams. For others, it's a failed marriage or relationship to jolt them back to consciousness and point them to what they really want – a gay partner of course. For some, it's a close friend who has been through the same eye-opening experiences and has come to their rescue before it's too late. And there are the few of us who are strong and resilient enough to have identified our true self within "our self" and have decided to be that individual instead of the one created by society; religion, church and indoctrination; influence of friends; family pressure and just life.

So, how do you know if you are living in the shadow of someone else? Well...

- A) Are your hopes and dreams "YOURS" or are they those created by your parents, society, religious beliefs, or the education system?
- B) When you are driving and you catch a glimpse in your mirror, who do you see? Do you see "YOU" the guy who is struggling with his sexuality and confidence and secretly dying to find a guy on www.gayromeo.com, or do you see a strong confident guy who loves himself and has family and friends who support him?
- C) When you introduce yourself to someone do you show them your true side or do you show them your pseudo-persona in fear that the person won't like you for you?

Deep down everybody wants to be themselves. It's just something human beings want! We like individuality. But sometimes, on life's crazy road we tend to lose ourselves and then we create pseudo-selves. But then, there comes a point where you start to think that, "If I have created shadows for myself, then who am I meant to be and what are the reasons I've created these shadows in the first place, and how do I remove them and start living 'freely'? ... start being ME!"

Dwayne Cobourne

Photo Feature

All 'Hanami Highlights' photographs by:

Jon Burroughs ☉



22 • kyo-to times • may 2012



Hyogo Times May Event Calendar

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
29 Showa Day	30 Showa Day (Substitute Holiday)	01 Awaji Flower Festival 2012: the Spring Festa 17 April – 13 May 2012 Various locations	02 Awaji Yume Butai Rose Festival 28 April – 31 May 2012 Kiseki-no-hoshi-no-shokubutsukan	03 Kyu-shaku Fuji Festival Byakugo-ji Temple, Tamba Shobu-yu Festival Kinosaki Hot Spring	04 Kyu-shaku Fuji Festival Byakugo-ji Temple, Tamba Shobu-yu Festival Kinosaki Hot Spring	05 Kyu-shaku Fuji Festival Byakugo-ji Temple, Tamba Shobu-yu Festival Kinosaki Hot Spring
06 Awaji Yume Butai Rose Festival 28 April – 31 May 2012 Kiseki-no-hoshi-no-shokubutsukan	07 Awaji Flower Festival 2012: the Spring Festa 17 April – 13 May 2012 Various locations	08 Awaji Yume Butai Rose Festival 28 April – 31 May 2012 Kiseki-no-hoshi-no-shokubutsukan	09 Awaji Flower Festival 2012: the Spring Festa 17 April – 13 May 2012 Various locations	10 Awaji Yume Butai Rose Festival 28 April – 31 May 2012 Kiseki-no-hoshi-no-shokubutsukan	11 Awaji Flower Festival 2012: the Spring Festa 17 April – 13 May 2012 Various locations	12 Awaji Yume Butai Rose Festival 28 April – 31 May 2012 Kiseki-no-hoshi-no-shokubutsukan
13 Awaji Flower Festival 2012: the Spring Festa 17 April – 13 May 2012 Various locations	14 Awaji Yume Butai Rose Festival 28 April – 31 May 2012 Kiseki-no-hoshi-no-shokubutsukan	15 Ako Kotto-ichi (antique market) Oishi Jinja (Shrine)	16	17 Awaji Yume Butai Rose Festival 28 April – 31 May 2012 Kiseki-no-hoshi-no-shokubutsukan	18	19 Kobe Festival 19 – 20 May 2012 Flower Road and several other places in Kobe
20 Kobe Festival 19 – 20 May 2012 Flower Road and several other places in Kobe	21	22	23 Awaji Yume Butai Rose Festival 28 April – 31 May 2012 Kiseki-no-hoshi-no-shokubutsukan	24	25	26 Aioi Peron Festival 26 – 27 May 2012 Aioi
27 Aioi Peron Festival 26 – 27 May 2012 Aioi	28	29 Awaji Yume Butai Rose Festival 28 April – 31 May 2012 Kiseki-no-hoshi-no-shokubutsukan	30	31 Awaji Yume Butai Rose Festival 28 April – 31 May 2012 Kiseki-no-hoshi-no-shokubutsukan	01	02

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