

08.12

# ht

hyogo times

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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](mailto:publications@hyogo.ajet.net)

## Message from the Editor

### Dear Hyogo,

This issue is a combination of July and August, for various reasons (including, but not limited to technical difficulties). We've got some really interesting stuff this time around.

It's my last letter as Editor of Hyogo Times! I don't even know what to say. Probably the same kind of thing I've been saying (and thinking and feeling) for the last two weeks. I'm so glad

I had this opportunity, I'm proud of the work I've done though I wish I could do more, and thank you so much for everything! To the contributors, thank you for writing, drawing, and taking photos; thank you for being on time, and for being interesting, and for being understanding. To the readers, thank you for reading, for laughing, for using our resources, for getting connected.

It's been a delight to serve these many months in this capacity, putting together a magazine for the uplifting educational enjoyment of all. As I depart this land of the Rising Sun and head for undetermined career fields in the US, I feel confident that I am leaving you all in capable hands.

Mostly, thank you for reading!

*Emily Lemmon*



## Message from the \*new\* Editor

### Well it's that time of year

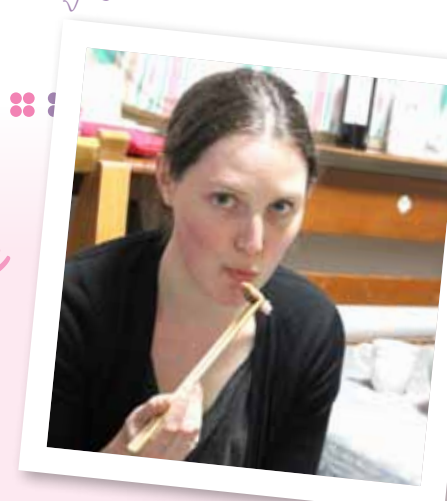
again where everything changes; it just so happens that I'm also one of them this time around.

**Hello!** The name's Imogen and I'll be your friendly neighborhood editor of the **Hyogo Times** from the September issue (since I'm inconveniently running away over the editing period of this sure to be wonderful bumper edition – sorry Emily). I've got some big shoes to fill, which I aim to do with as little treading on toes as possible.

I've been in Hyogo for far too long and yet the idea of leaving fills me with dread. It rocks, as of course, do the lovely JETs who have the privilege of working in this wonderful part of the world – things both frequently demonstrated in this humble tome that I'll be endeavoring to keep ticking over nicely. **But**, I can't do this without **you!** So tell me what you've been up to; where you've been going; what clever things you're trying out to survive the humidity this year!

Photographers! Travel writers! Budding poets and writers! Come one, come all, old hands and new alike. Let's let each other know exactly why we are the bestest of all the prefectures in the land. ^\_^

*Imogen Custance*





## Message from the Online Editor

### Dear Hyogo,

It's already reaching the end of July, and tomorrow is actually my last day at school. As my final message as Online Editor for the **Hyogo Times**, what I'd really like to do is say thanks. Thank you to all of you who read our magazine, thank you to our Editor Emily and Graphic Designer Karen, and thank you to all the contributors without whom we wouldn't have anything to show.

The **Hyogo Times** is a group effort which survives on the volunteer work we collectively put into it. I've always been amazed at how professional

a publication we put out, considering our budget of zero and the time commitments we each individually have. What we do each month is truly an accomplishment.

As Online Editor I've enjoyed building up our new site and seeing the readership grow. We recently crossed the 100,000 mark on the counter, which was nice, but we're not really doing this for the numbers. Even if the site reaches just a few ALTs (current or former), to contribute teaching ideas, share stores, and overall help form a sense of community, I consider our

efforts a success. That's my honest opinion.

The new Online Editor Andrew Brasher will be taking over from now, and I'm sure he'll do a great job. We also have a new Editor replacing Emily, and with these changes I'm certain the HT will continue as strong as ever.

I hope you've been able to get as much out of the **HT** as I have, and thank you again.

Sincerely,

*Jonathan Shalfi*

## Participate!

**Hyogo Times** is still looking for **English Sensei Spirit** writers, as well as a whole round of new positions that just opened up with the return of our excellent former staff members! We're looking for someone to coordinate **Maigo in Hyogo**, and **Engrish Corner**, as well as reviewers for restaurants, movies, music, or other media. We would also like to recruit more regional correspondents!

Contact us today at [publications@hyogo.ajet.net](mailto:publications@hyogo.ajet.net)

Australia's  
**South West**



## Australia's South West

### Western Australia is home to

the most isolated state capital in the world and, being a cool five hour flight from Sydney, is often overlooked. The south west of Western Australia is one of the few lucky places outside of the Mediterranean to be blessed with a Mediterranean climate; hot, dry summers and wet, mild winters. WA is my home and a summer lover's playground, so let me take you through some of the highlights as we head down the coast...

Ask any local, and they'll tell you Perth is like a big country town. The city is split down the middle by the Swan River, named so after the black swans that call it home. Just north of the river lies the business and shopping district, great for shopping, a variety of pubs and eateries. For more pubs and restaurants and a little dance, head a little further north to North Bridge. There are a heap

of different venues offering all sorts of music from Irish Folk, to drum and bass. On the southern foreshore, you can hire catamarans and go for a sail. Perth Zoo, also in south Perth is not to be missed. It has recently been revamped and has animals from all over the world in large modern enclosures. The Australian animal, African Safari and Nocturnal house are some of my favourite exhibits.

Rottneest Island, 18km from the mainland, was named for a curious little creature, called the quokka, which was mistaken by Dutch explorers for a giant rat. This adorable little marsupial calls the island home, safe from predators on the mainland. The island is surrounded by little bays with crystal clear waters, and some of the best surfing spots in WA. No vehicles are allowed on the island, so it's a biker's paradise.

Every summer season people join the lottery to see who can get a camping spot and other accommodation!

Many people have heard of Phillip Island, off the coast of Melbourne, home of the 'little penguin' (formerly known as 'fairy penguins'), but not many people know about Penguin Island, off the coast of the township of Rockingham. After checking out the cute 'little penguins' you can take a dip and do some snorkelling just off the shore. The island is also home to many other sea birds, and sometime sea-lions from the neighbouring island pop in for a visit too.

Heading further south you may come across a little place I called home for 15 years. Bunbury is surrounded by three bodies of water and has a greater population of around 80,000 people. Koombana Bay is

home to the Dolphin Discovery Centre where the local dolphins often come in to shore. The local dolphin colony numbers around 100 and an average of 17 new calves are born each year. Tour boats can also take you out into the bay for an almost guaranteed sighting. Along the quaint 'cappuccino strip' on Victoria Street, try the macadamia ice-cream at Gelaré complete with a fresh waffle cone. The waters of the Leschanault Inlet and Big Swamp Park are other great spots to see black swans in the wild.

Lying just a 40 minute drive to the south is Busselton. Busselton is home to the inspiration behind the train line in Miyazaki's Spirited away. The Busselton Jetty holds the record as the longest wooden structure in the Southern Hemisphere at 1841 metres. Follow the train tracks out

and walk to the Underwater Observatory to check out the local marine life, you may be lucky enough to see a sea-lion! Fishing from the jetty and jumping into the waters below are common place here, and you should also try the 'Ferrero Rocher' ice-cream at Simmo's Ice Cream... my favourite!

Further south again, Caves Road runs through the towns of Yalligup, Margaret River and Augusta. This road is home to some of the most beautiful and pristine limestone caves in the world. Mammoth cave you can tour on your own, while Jewel, Ngilgi and Lake Caves require either guided or semi-guided tours.

While down in Margaret River you should check out the wild-flowers (from August through to November) and wine region. Around 25% of Australia's premium wine

is grown here in the south. Margaret River is known for its robust dry reds and crisp dry whites. They quite often have great specials at the cellar door and tastings on offer, just be sure to nominate a designated driver.

While I feel I'm only just beginning to scratch the surface of what's on offer in the south west of Western Australia, I should stop there or risk going on forever. So to get a slice of European weather without the jet-lag, head down under and check out all my playground has to offer!

Check out **this website** for further information.

*Jessica Grigg*



## Awajishima Burger

### Since arriving in Japan I have

been in pursuit of the perfect burger to satisfy a burger lust that started as a child when I first bit into an In-N-Out burger in California. I was looking for the perfect balance of meat, cheese, onions, and a soft bun, but so far in Japan, this had proved to be impossible to find. It was only after hours of hamburger research on the internet that I stumbled upon a place that some claimed to serve the best burger in Japan. Best of all, it was located in the heart of Nishinomiya, just twenty minutes from Kobe and Osaka.

**Awajishima Burger**, a small, literal 'hole in the wall' in Nishinomiya has a cult following for those who know what they want in a burger. On a quiet and empty industrial street under a railroad track, a small 10 by 15 foot burger shack, only able to seat seven, awaits. It is quite difficult to find but if you get lost, just

follow the smell of burgers in the air and the look for the large cluster of people waiting outside what looks to be an abandoned building.

The choices are simple. You can have a large burger (¥650) or a small burger (¥500.) It comes with lettuce, tomato, sautéed Awaji onions, mayo and secret sauce, which tasted like a sweet and tangy BBQ sauce. It really is a good sauce and brought the whole burger together quite nicely. For an extra ¥100 each, you can add onion rings (which are famous and rightfully so,) bacon, a fried egg, or cheese. The freshly made onion rings are hot and crispy and alone are worth making the trip for. Any vegetarians who won't be partaking of the burger itself need not fear disappointment. They also offer Kona Beer from Hawaii, which is a nice treat for those who want something different to the sometimes insipid beers

of Japan. I made the mistake of ordering a side of fries with my burger. Unlike the rest of the offerings, the fries were not good at all – cold, a bit soggy, and boring.

The burger was amazing. I ordered a large burger with everything, and it was massive. The patty was soft and juicy and almost melted in my mouth. The pure taste of beef was a delight and not hindered by the chopped onions or breadcrumbs that sometimes hold terrible burgers together. The bun was soft and sweet, but did its job of containing the burger well. All the ingredients were fresh tasting and nothing seemed to have been pre-packaged. It was quite delightful.

Overall, **Awajishima Burger** was by far the best burger I have had in Japan. Its fresh ingredients, delicious beef,

and otherworldly onion rings make this place a must stop for all burger lovers. I recommend it to anyone that is tired of going to Lotteria and quickly regretting it; or for those who trick themselves into thinking that McDonalds is actually good by Japanese burger standards. After going to **Awajishima Burger**, you will be pleasantly enlightened to the fact that a quality burger can indeed be found in Japan.

### Awajishima Burger

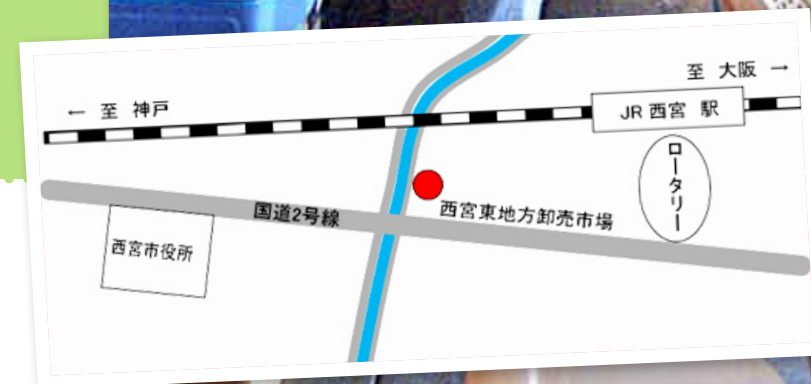
淡路島バーガー

4-1 Ikedacho,  
Nishinomiya, Hyogo  
西宮市池田町4-1  
西宮東地方卸売市場内

080-3036-4373

Business hours: 11:00 – 20:00  
(closed on Wednesdays)

Jon Burroughs





## 豚肉の生姜焼き

Stir-fried pork with soy sauce and ginger

### Ingredients

(serves 4)

#### Main dish

- ◎ 4 pork cutlets
- ◎ 2 tablespoons grated ginger
- ◎ 3 tablespoons soy sauce
- ◎ 1-2 tablespoons sake
- ◎ a little oil, salt and pepper

#### Side dish

- ◎ 1 pack enoki mushrooms (thin white mushrooms)
- ◎ 1 pack maitake mushrooms (coral shaped brown mushrooms)
- ◎ 1 bunch chrysanthemum leaves (shungiku)

This is an  
easy & delicious  
meal. This recipe uses pork  
cutlets but if you like you can  
use thinly sliced pork and  
it will be like the  
delicious pork  
you get in set

### Main dish

#### Step one

Mix grated ginger, soy sauce and sake in a bowl.

#### Step two

Put a little salt and pepper on the pork cutlets.

#### Step three

Sauté the pork cutlets with a little oil over a medium flame for about 5 minutes each side.

#### Step four

Pour the ginger, soy sauce, sake mix over the pork and sauté for a little longer.

#### Step five

Serve with rice, miso soup and any side dishes you fancy.

### Side dish

#### Step one

Cut the roots off the mushrooms and break into small bunches.

#### Step two

Cut the roots off the chrysanthemum leaves and cut the bunch in half.

#### Step three

Stir-fry the mushrooms in a heated fry pan with a little oil.

#### Step four

Add the chrysanthemum leaves and stir-fry.

#### Step five

Season with salt and pepper.

#### Step six

Serve with the pork or with other meals as a side dish.

Lauren McRae

# 洒落

Paul Schuble's

## I-word play

海もいる  
けど、空  
も泳ぐ生き  
物はなん  
でしょう？

Answer: たこ (Octopus/Kite)

Our riddle poses the question "What creature is in the sea but also swims in the sky?" The answer lies in the fact that たこ is the word for both "octopus" and "kite."

Another possible answer that seems to apply is 飛び魚 (とびうお ; flying fish).

Haha ;)

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

By David Namisato



Why you wanted to go to Japan.



Why you stayed.

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!

[www.lifeaftertheboe.com](http://www.lifeaftertheboe.com)





## Help! I've been mogged!!

As some of you Hyogo folk may have heard, about three months ago I acquired a new friend; a little two year old kitty called Clio.

Her story began when she was hit by a car and rescued by [Japan Cat Network](#).

[Japan Cat Network](#) was founded in 1993 by Susan and David who had been living and working in Japan as English teachers. Through their foundation, Susan and David, along with a small team of volunteers, take care of abandoned, rescued and surrendered animals. They microchip and neuter all the cats ready for their new homes. The foundation also provides shelter and care for many cats who suffer from FIV (feline immunodeficiency disorder), but are no less deserving of a good home and some TLC.

After the disaster of March 2011, the Japan Cat Network set up a secondary shelter in Fukushima to help process the animals rescued from the 20km evacuation zone surrounding the Fukushima Dai-Ichi plant. It also provides shelter for those animals whose owners were displaced in the disaster and can no longer provide care for them.

In the aftermath of the disaster and ensuing media storm, the foster family of a cat then called Cleo decided to return to their home country, and so she was once again at the shelter.

It was here she stayed for another nine months until an ALT with a mouse problem decided she would love to foster a cat for her remaining months.

After finding [Japan Cat Network](#) and searching through the available foster cats (they also have some dogs, but these are at the Fukushima shelter) I stumbled across Cleo's picture; round eyes and full of personality, I knew I had to meet this 'kitler'. After arranging a suitable time with the shelter, I drove over (the shelter is also a short walk from Inae Station, Shiga) to meet her and we bonded instantly. She was determined to make herself mine; jumping up and sitting on my shoulder for cuddles and purring like crazy. Not wanting to take up too much of the shelter volunteers' time, we set off back home, only to follow a Renault Clio most of the way home, and thus Cleo became Clio. I had become a victim of her charms.

So after filling out the foster form and being approved as a suitable carer, one of the volunteers at the shelter brought Clio all the way to Sasayama by train to both introduce and simultaneously inspect Clio's new living environment.

My curious little kitten was almost immediately comfortable in her new home, but some shelter habits remain. For example, she devours her food as if to protect it from the other cats. Having a pet to come home to is lovely, and helped me overcome the worst of my SAD (seasonal affective disorder) in the colder months, and rainy cloudy days. Clio now lets me bathe her and clip her nails without fuss. She also enjoys games of fetch (the joys of being brought up in a house with a dog) and will immediately welcome any visitors to my house with cuddles (and fur). Life has been much happier, and I've really enjoyed the opportunity of being responsible for another life form.

Now, sadly, my time with Clio is running short. Due to overly strict quarantine restrictions in Australia and a future apartment that doesn't allow animals, Clio is looking for a new home, as are many other cats at the [Japan Cat Network](#) Shelter. I implore

all cat lovers out there who are able to have an animal in their apartment to help out this worthy cause.

While you think about the possibility, please consider:

- ☉ Are you allowed an animal in your apartment?
- ☉ Are you prepared to pay for the veterinary bills should your kitty get sick?
- ☉ Is there someone who can feed your kitty in your stead should you go on holiday?
- ☉ Can you handle a ridiculous amount of cuddle time?

So if you find yourself answering yes to all of the above, jump onto the facebook group, have a look at their homepage, and get in contact with [Japan Cat Network](#)! It's so lovely to have a little someone welcome you come with 'Meow!' (this means 'Okaeri!' in Cat).

*Jessica Grigg*





# Tohoku Trip

*Hyogo CIR Tohoku Trip, March 26-19th 2012*

&gt;&gt;&gt;Liz

## Hello, everyone!

This is Liz Snell, second-year CIR and your faithful PA. In this article, I'll be reporting on the trip to Miyagi Prefecture in Tohoku that I took with fellow CIRs Jeremy and Ben and exchange students from the University of Hyogo. The trip was organized by the [Hyogo International Association](#) and the University as a way for non-Japanese youth to learn about the disaster recovery effort and the state of the foreign community in the affected areas. I have so much to say, but I'll try to confine my report to some of the most worthwhile experiences we had.

## Day 1

The highlight today was our visit to the Miyagi International Association. Ms. Omura of the MIA has been a central figure in support for foreigners after the disaster and was kind enough to arrange a group discussion for us with members of the foreign community. Here, I got a chance to hear firsthand from a fellow second-year American CIR who lives in a coastal Miyagi town. I could

barely believe her stories of living at her workplace after it became an evacuation shelter and working 16-hour days coordinating relief supplies and doing manual labor. I was impressed at her bravery and dedication and wondered whether I would have performed as well had fate (well, CLAIR) reversed our placements.

After dinner that evening we presented our findings for the day. As luck would have it, a fairly strong earthquake hit just as the discussion began. Since we were on the upper floors of the building we experienced a fair amount of swaying, and the earthquake was just strong enough that we all decided to get under the tables. I've experienced one strong earthquake in Seattle (6.8 magnitude, 2001) and numerous small earthquakes during my time in Japan, so I knew what to expect, but many of the exchange students had never experienced an earthquake before and were frightened. Considering the content of our discussion, it was an ironically timely event.

## Day 2

The next day, we left Sendai and visited Minamisanriku and Kesennuma, coastal fishing towns in Miyagi, where we had a chance to witness the effects of the tsunami firsthand.

As we headed to Minamisanriku on the bus, the students' cheerful conversations turned to hushed ones as signs of the tsunami began to appear outside the windows. Minamisanriku is full of surreal sights. Where houses and shops once stood, only the concrete foundations of buildings remain.

Mr. Goto, the leader of the Minamisanriku volunteer guides, gave us a tour of the town. He showed us a school on a steep hill that had been designated as an evacuation shelter but wasn't high enough to completely escape the waves, and the famous disaster prevention headquarters, where countless town employees lost their lives.

Next, we heard a very emotional and moving account from two pillars of the Minamisanriku foreign community, Mrs. Amelia Sasaki (originally from the Philippines) and Mrs. Kanae Sato (originally from Taiwan). Both of them have lived there for decades and are completely integrated into the life of the town. They told us that they didn't experience any differential treatment after the tsunami and that everyone received aid, regardless of nationality. However, they did need to make an extra effort to reach out to foreign residents who were newer to the town and hadn't yet formed neighborhood ties. I realized then that I didn't even know the names of my apartment neighbors in Kobe.

In the afternoon, we headed to Kesennuma, a small-size fishing city that also sustained heavy damage from the tsunami. There we had a tour of one of the many temporary housing facilities that has been constructed for people who have lost their homes. Mr. Sakai, the head of the neighborhood association,

was kind enough to show us the interior of his tiny temporary home, where he and his wife live in an approximately 9 x 12 foot room with attached bathroom and cooking area. He told us that life in the temporary housing is mostly harmonious, though walls are unfortunately thin. Many of the residents are over 65, and one of his duties is to check regularly on the elderly residents who live alone to make sure they are thriving. Recently the temporary housing provision was extended to a third year, so all the residents now have a bit less than 2 years to find a new place to live. For those without job prospects or close relatives, it will be difficult.

This trip was one of the most worthwhile experiences I've had in Japan so far. To be honest, I was initially trepidatious about visiting the disaster area; would I just be overwhelmed by the amount of damage and suffering? Yes, the amount of work remaining to reconstruct these communities was staggering. But my strongest impressions were of humorous,

vibrant, resilient people proud of their unique culture and natural environment and ready to welcome visitors to Tohoku.

I also had a strong urge to return to the places I had visited. There is still great demand for volunteers to provide emotional support and active listening to disaster survivors, especially the elderly. If you have an opportunity, I encourage you to visit Tohoku for yourself. Organizations like the ones I visited are starting to put together experiential learning programs to tell their stories, and they're eager for listeners. The ryokans and the restaurants of the area are also waiting for your visit; I believe that tourism will be an important part of the recovery process in the years to come.





# Tohoku Trip

Hyogo CIR Tohoku Trip, March 26-19th 2012

&gt;&gt;&gt; Ben

1st year CIR/PA, UK

During the trip, the staff at the Miyagi International Association were kind enough to set up a workshop that allowed us to meet some foreign residents who were affected by the earthquake and tsunami, most of whom were in Japan for work or study.

Among them were three fellow JET program participants, two prefectural CIRs/ PAs and a municipal CIR. I was able to speak at length with the PA's, Luke Happle from the UK and Cameron Peek from the USA. Despite rapidly worsening conditions, they remained in work after the initial earthquake and used every tool at their disposal to confirm the safety of the ALTs in their prefecture. As well as numerous other duties that included responding to various embassies and international media, in the following days, they participated in the search for Taylor Anderson, the Miyagi JET programme participant who sadly died. The bravery and sense of responsibility of both CIRs, who carried out

their duty to ensure the safety of others in the local foreign community, was astounding.

## Kizuna 絆

I think what left the biggest impression on me was the sense of community that endured in the places we visited, despite the innumerable hardships that the people there had been through. These community ties are perhaps best summed up by the term kizuna 絆 (bonds or ties, particularly between people) the **"kanji of the year 2011"** and unofficial slogan of our trip.

The people we met had no time for labels like "Gaikokujin", or "Nihonjin", instead, that they were just simply "Tohokujin", regardless of whether or not they were "Japanese" in the more traditional sense. It became apparent that as a foreigner in Japan, having kizuna with the people around you will not only enrich your day to day experience of this country, it will potentially save your life during a natural disaster. Even if it just means saying "Ohayo!" to the old lady

next door, forging some form of kizuna within your community could mean that if, God forbid, a large scale disaster did occur, you may have more people to assist you.

## Knowing how to react in a natural disaster.

No one can know for sure when an earthquake will occur (one hit during the trip while we were holding a seminar on earthquake safety). In addition to maintaining ties with those around you, our visit made me think at length about the importance of being prepared for natural disasters, or at least acquiring the basic skills and knowledge to help keep yourself safe. During the trip, I had the chance to speak to an Indonesian man who, with the tsunami approaching, made the life-saving decision to abandon his vehicle and evacuate on foot (a key point of evacuating during a natural disaster) despite heated protest from his Japanese co-workers. Having most likely experienced the 2004 Indian Ocean Earthquake and Tsunami to some degree,

the man knew that after an earthquake of such force, getting to high ground as far away as possible from the coast should be a priority.

My conversation with the people we met in Miyagi, the teachers from the University of Hyogo, as well as others who had experienced earthquakes at some point in their lives, made me realise how under-prepared I was to deal with a natural disaster. As a matter of course, after a high-magnitude earthquake, internet, cell phone networks and other lifelines are rendered unusable for extended periods of time. As such, confirming people's safety required the use of every possible medium. The more means of communication you have available and prepared in advance, the easier staying in contact with your loved ones, your workplace, your embassy etc will be.

## Overall Impressions

Like everyone on the trip, I would have really liked to have contributed in a more concrete way, if anything just

to repay the kindness of the people we met, who had to relive some very painful and fresh memories during our visit. On the whole, the people we met seemed satisfied with the responses of the government, local authorities and so on, but in some sense, the people we met were all "elites" of the local "foreign" community – brilliant men and women who thanks to years of living in Japan were able to assist their compatriots during and after the disaster.

Finally, of all the moving, tragic and downright inspiring stories we heard during the trip, there is one thing that the guide in Minami Sanriku said that I will always remember.

***"The tsunami wasn't a completely bad thing. It reminded us of the importance of community ties, something we had forgotten during the decadent days of the 'bubble economy'. It stirred up nutrients from the sea so that the fish can grow big and strong."***

This ability to see a "silver lining" in such dire circumstances is something we all could learn from.

I would like to thank everyone who made it possible for us to go on this trip, in particular the staff at the Miyagi International Association, our guides in Minami Sanriku and Kessennuma, as well as the members of the local foreign community who went out of their way to come to talk to us about their experiences of 3.11. I hope that by sharing your experiences with people all over Japan, as well as in our home countries, we are contributing in some small way.





# Tohoku Trip

Hyogo CIR Tohoku Trip, March 26-19th 2012

## >>> Jeremy

**Friends of Hyôgo, bonjour!**  
I'm Jérémy from France, fifth year CIR.

As a JET and a Hyogoite by adoption, I'm very happy to write for the **Hyogo Times**. Hyogo CIR/PA Ben first talked to me about writing an article for **HT** and this proposition came in a very timely manner as I was actually planning to write more often in English!

So here are a few lines on the trip that Ben, Liz and I went on in March.

Seeing as Liz has given a fairly extensive account of what we saw during those few days, in order not to overlap too much with what has already been said I will write less about what we did and will instead go straight to my own conclusions and thoughts about what seems important to me to mention about this experience.

### Number one: "itte yokatta!"

I think that even though we were obviously not able to offer any substantial help, this trip did make sense. For instance, it dramatically changed many of the participants' views

concerning key areas like natural disasters, being a foreigner in Japan and taking part in volunteering activities.

### Number two: My conclusion is that we have no conclusion

One of our goals was to learn more about disaster-stricken foreign communities, the problems that they have to face and the solutions we can think of. We also met some representatives of foreign communities, but most of the people we met were quite outstanding men and women with a long history in Japan, a very good command of the Japanese language, a job and a role to play in Japanese society (all of them were strongly involved in their local communities).

We really learned a lot from them. But it would be a huge mistake to say that all foreigners in Miyagi are like the people we had a chance to meet with; there must be some people struggling with the language and the locals, some overstayers, and people for whom living in Japan is a burden more than anything else. As a result I think that we need more time, expertise and work before drawing any conclusions on support for foreigners.

### Number three: Community is the magic tool that makes it possible to break the thick wall between "us" and "them"

In Miyagi, I got the feeling that at the basis of people's identity lay not with the country, but the region they live in. I heard the word "Tôhokujin" countless times, much more often than the word "Nihonjin." It seems that "Tôhokujin"-ness is more inclusive than its rather exclusive counterpart, "Nihonjin." There lies an interesting point: what really matters is the community you live in, so when you're part of it and you feel integrated and accepted, you've already won. You don't need to care about the rest of the country perceiving you as an outsider: it's not a war that you can win, and basically it's the wrong war to fight.

### Number four: We need events where Japanese and foreigners do constructive things together.

During this trip, I think that there were two ways of bringing help. The most direct one consisted of doing what we had planned to do at the beginning: i.e. understanding the current situation for foreigners in

Miyagi, knowing what their needs are and trying to come up with some solutions to provide them with what they were in shortage of. That's a very good way to bring help. But it's quite difficult to do, especially when you're limited both in terms of knowledge and time. The other way to help is more indirect and time-consuming, but in the long run could prove very effective. It consists in simply doing events where Japanese and foreigners work together towards a common goal that Japan can benefit from. It can be support to disaster stricken areas, but in a more modest way it can also be trips to rural areas. Indeed, during my 5 years as a CIR, I've taken part in 3 trips to lesser-known parts of Hyogo (Toyooka-shi, Ieshima), each time not only with foreigners from all over the world (mostly students from Asia, Europe, Americas, etc) but also with Japanese students. And we were not always alone; we were also dealing with the locals. For example, during one trip to Ieshima we even did some "fieldwork" by randomly interviewing people living on the island in order to come up with ways to promote tourism. I'm quite sure that if there were more events like this there would be fewer misunderstandings between Japanese and non-Japanese.

### Number five: Even when there's only goodwill, helping in the true sense of the term is actually harder than it seems

Helping can be very hard. That's quite unfortunate, because many people need help in this world. This time, the scale of the disaster made it difficult to really bring about some useful help. For instance, in order to go there we needed an official program and some preparation in advance, and this was something we were not able to do on our own. In fact, we needed the people from the areas we visited in Tohoku to help us (!). We needed them to give us time and energy. But did they get enough in return? It's not easy to give a clear answer. We also asked victims (some prefer the word "survivors") to talk about their experience. In a sense it's a double-edged sword, because it's a good way to raise awareness among those who listen and if it brings the victims some sort of cathartic relief by being having someone to listen. On the other hand, forcing them to reminisce what they've had to go through is also one more twist of knife they don't necessarily need.

### Number six: "once again, itte yokatta"

All in all, I really think that the global output of this trip is positive. What we actually achieved in Miyagi is tiny, nothing in the grand scheme of things, but it had the effect of changing us and back home in Hyôgo we've continued talking and reflecting on our experience. In my opinion it's hugely important not to rely solely on mass media to talk about 3.11. I think that we shouldn't care about the size of our contribution; the way forward is to do good, however big or small that contribution may be. I think that now we really feel an urgent need to improve our knowledge concerning disaster prevention and, at the same time, play an effective role in helping the foreign community in Japan being better prepared to cope with a large-scale quake or tsunami.

For those who love kanjis and kanas we've talked about this trip on the Hyogo CIR collective blog (the one in Japanese) [here](#). You can find some newspaper articles that were written about our trip and one radio appearance (it's online, you can listen to it). I've also written an article on my personal blog, but it's all in French...



# Karma

## Karma! Is she always a bitch?

One would think that Karma is always lurking in the shadows just waiting for you to make a mistake or do something 'bad'; and when you have, Karma waits for the most 'appropriate' time to 'get you back' for what you did days/weeks/months/years ago. But is it that Karma is always 'getting' us or does she do good deeds, too? While I always ascribe thoughts about Karma to the Fortune Cookie School of Psychology, I have often wondered, does a string of bad dates, bad relationships, bad friendships, bad sex, bad guys, really equal one good one? And will treating someone badly in one relationship ensure that you will be treated badly in the next? Does everything that goes around really come back around? And if so, will it come back to bite you in the ass? – Is there such a thing as relationship Karma?

Our Indian friends believe that Karma is the concept of 'action' or 'deed', understood as that which causes the entire cycle of cause and effect. According to the Hindu scholars, Karma is not punishment or retribution but simply an extended expression or consequence of natural acts. So, Karma means 'deed' or 'act'

and more broadly names the universal principle of cause and effect [*there goes my luck... LOL*], action and reaction, that governs all life. The effects experienced can also be mitigated by actions [*I wonder what could these 'actions' be... hmmm*] and are not necessarily fated. That is to say, a particular action now [*cheating on your boyfriend*] is not binding to some particular, pre-determined future experience [*being cheated on by your man*] or reaction [*he leaves you for someone else*]; it is not a simple, one-to-one correspondence of reward or punishment. Karma is not fate, for humans act with free will creating their own destinies. According to the Vedas (a body of text originated in India) if one sows goodness, one will reap goodness; if one sows evil, one will reap evil. Karma is the totality of our actions and their associated reactions in this and previous lives, all of which determine our future. The conquest of Karma lies in intelligent action and dispassionate response.

So, with all this mumbo-jumbo floating around in my head, I start to think of aaaaaaaaaaaaaa

{*it's not that many...*} my past relationships and how Karma has impacted them. Now, thanks to the Hindus I am getting some well sought after answers. Damn!

Then, it is safe to assume that all the ass-holes I have dated and that have treated me badly, they were ALL my fault. Were they? Well, according to the Hindu guys, they were. If relationship Karma does exist, it would mean all my past failed relationships were in fact caused by some evil deed that I had done before and now Miss Karma is coming back to bite me at the most inappropriate time. So, the saying that Karma is such a bitch is so right!! And the Hindus have the gall to say that Karma is not punishment but a consequence of our natural acts. What could I have done to have made these guys treat me so badly? What could I have done to have been cheated on with my close friend? What could I have done to have been disrespected? Well, it must be something awful like wearing white after Labor Day; autumn colors in spring; a two seasons' old loafer to a party

or having a cocktail before twelve noon. I just don't get it!

But I think the Hindus realized that something was wrong with this theory, because they claim that Karma is not fated and one can do 'things' to mitigate the 'consequences' of Karma. I sit here and I wonder, what are these 'things' I needed to have done to mitigate the tons of times Karma took a big bite out of my ass? Should I have been more 'understanding'? Should I have laid down even flatter while I allowed him to walk all over me [*in cheap shoes*]? Or, maybe when he told me he was married and he introduced me as his 'English Teacher' I should have said, "No, you are a liar. Speak the truth. We are fucking!" Who knows what I should have done. But, now I know that I need to be one step ahead of Miss Karma. She bites too hard!

So, if Miss Karma 'punishes' us for our bad deeds, does she also 'reward' us for our good deeds? If that were the case, why are we constantly looking for a good partner when we have been faithful, honest and true to a relationship, but in return got nothing

worthy of it? Like I said before, the Vedas promised us that if we sow good seeds, we will reap good seeds. Well, I don't know about you, but I have been sowing some good seeds, yet getting nothing but evil in return. Is Miss Karma in a coma? Well, if so, it's best for her to wake the hell up before someone comes looking for her!!

Am I the only one who is pissed at Karma? Or, are you afraid to get angry with her because she might just send some 'Ju-ju' your way? Well, I am a bad ass bitch and I am not afraid [*I feel secure knowing that my Mom is constantly praying for me...lol*]. I need to look Karma in the eyes and ask her:-

**"Where the hell were you when I was being faithful, loving, honest and supportive and his ass was making a fool of himself, and then you had it so that after I left him, he could find another innocent victim to torment? Shouldn't he have ended up with some toad that doesn't turn into a prince, but instead turns into a bitchier dragon?"**

**"What happens to the countless number of people who believed**

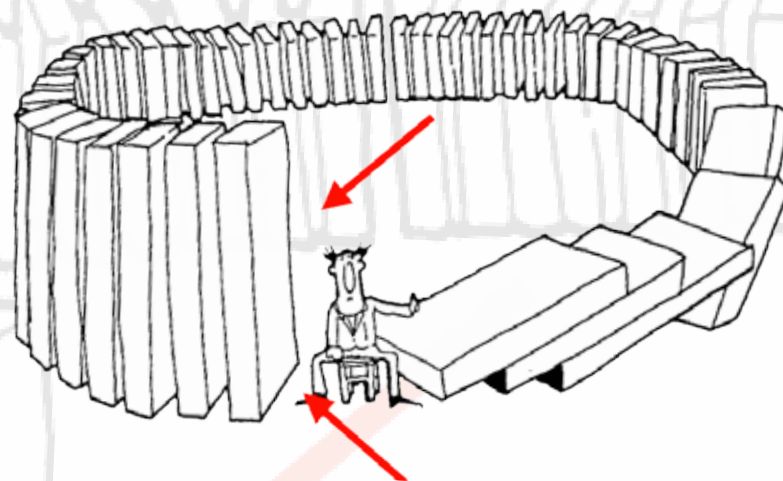
**in you for your good 'work' and wished that you could operate speedily, effectively and without prejudice, but instead realized that you are afraid of some people and only choose to be a bitch when it's convenient to you?"**

**"Where do you turn when you need to reconcile your punishment/reward balances in order to predict your future?"**

Karma! That lady [*don't ask me why, but I think she is a lesbian*] who thinks she knows what she is doing and keeps on cutting the wrong people all the slacks, but finds time to work me over, **everytime!**

For the Armani Exchange sweater you were wearing when you caught him cheating... \$150. For the Kenneth Cole loafer... \$300. For the dinner you prepared... \$90. For the look on his face because you know that Karma might just be nice to you and will get him, price-less! For everything else, there is your crazy mother waiting on the porch with the gun!

Dwayne Copourne





*Photo Feature*

# *Himeji Yukata Festival*

By Jon Burroughs





# Hyogo Times August Event Calendar

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
<b>29</b> Group A Tokyo Orientation	<b>30</b> Group A Tokyo Orientation	<b>31</b> Group A Tokyo Orientation	<b>01</b> Group A Tokyo Orientation	<b>02</b>	<b>03</b> The 63rd Himeji Castle Festival  The 65th Awaji-shima Festival	<b>04</b> The 63rd Himeji Castle Festival  Kobe Fireworks  <div>More events for Aug 4th are viewable on the website!!</div>
<b>05</b> The 63rd Himeji Castle Festival  The 65th Awaji-shima Festival	<b>06</b> Group B Tokyo Orientation August 5th – 8th	<b>07</b> Group B Tokyo Orientation August 5th – 8th	<b>08</b> Group B Tokyo Orientation August 5th – 8th	<b>09</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> Ako Kotto-ichi Oishi Jinja  Tanba Sasayama Dekansho Festival August 15th – 16th	<b>16</b> Tanba Sasayama Dekansho Festival August 15th – 16th	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b> Ji Beerfest Daisen Yonago, Tottori
<b>19</b> Ji Beerfest Daisen Yonago, Tottori	<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>30</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>01</b> Hyogo AJET Welcome Party Sogo Beer Garden, Sannomiya Kobe

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