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hyogo times

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Gaydar





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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

Message from the Editor

Well it's that time again.

The summer time poser of 'I'm so stupidly bored of spending my life in the staffroom, I'm running away for lunch' versus 'Free a/c!' will soon be behind us (well, me at least) instead being replaced by 'How can I minimize the amount I have to move in this boiling hot classroom?' The students are coming back (though half of them never left – looking at you, baseball team) and omiyage is appearing on desks as any teachers who did find the time to sneak off somewhere saunter back looking slightly more relaxed than when they left (or the opposite, and panicking because they have 'too much work to catch up on').

And what else do we have? Why, the September issue of the **Hyogo Times** of course! Within these marvelous pages you will find delicious recipes, questions about Japan's ability to trick your innate senses, jealousy-inducing tales of biking through Vietnam and a random article on kitkats *shifty eyes*. So if you find a moment between realizing that classes start this week and you haven't actually managed to plan anything for them yet (whoops), have a peruse.

...and having perused, why not then have a go at submitting something next month? Oldies – what advice do you have for the fledgling JETs just arrived on these fair shores?

New'uns – what stories do you have to remind the old crowd just why Japan's fantastic? Movie reviews, book reviews, restaurant reviews, music reviews – we want them all (and anything else you care to shake a pen at)! It would be great to have more from the different regions in Hyogo too. Let us know why we should all come visiting.

Email submissions/queries about submissions to publications@hyogo.ajet.net. (preferably by the 15th of the month, よろしく)

Looking forward to hearing from you!

Imogen Custance

Message from your AJET Representative

Hey Hyogo

We have a bunch of new Hyogo AJET PRs Patricia, Anna, Matt, Henry, Peter and myself. We'd like to thank Sarah, Sifton and Len for the great job they did last year and a big thanks to Sarah for doing such a great handover. I've had a busy but interesting summer. The highlights so far were going back to Tokyo Orientation for Group A and a fantastic road trip to the Iya Valley in Shikoku in June. The lowlights were my trip to Okinawa getting cancelled because of a typhoon and the beer vending machines at Yashiro being taken out. I have a sneaking suspicion that they took them out just for the new ALT orientation.

If you haven't already, please join the *Hyogo AJET facebook page* so we can keep you up to date with the events that we've got planned. It's also a great resource for information on Hyogo and teaching as well. If you were one of the lucky twenty to get in on our rafting trip congratulations! This year we've got a few interesting events planned including a trip to Nagashima Spa Land later this month, dinner after the skills development seminar in November, and a few others that we'll let you know about through facebook closer to the time.

Some of you are going into your first classes, best of luck to you. I remember my first class was terrible and I had armpit sweat stains that went all the way down to my waist. Three tips; don't worry if the students are very quiet, they're probably getting used to you; second, it's only going to get better; finally, don't wear a light blue shirt.

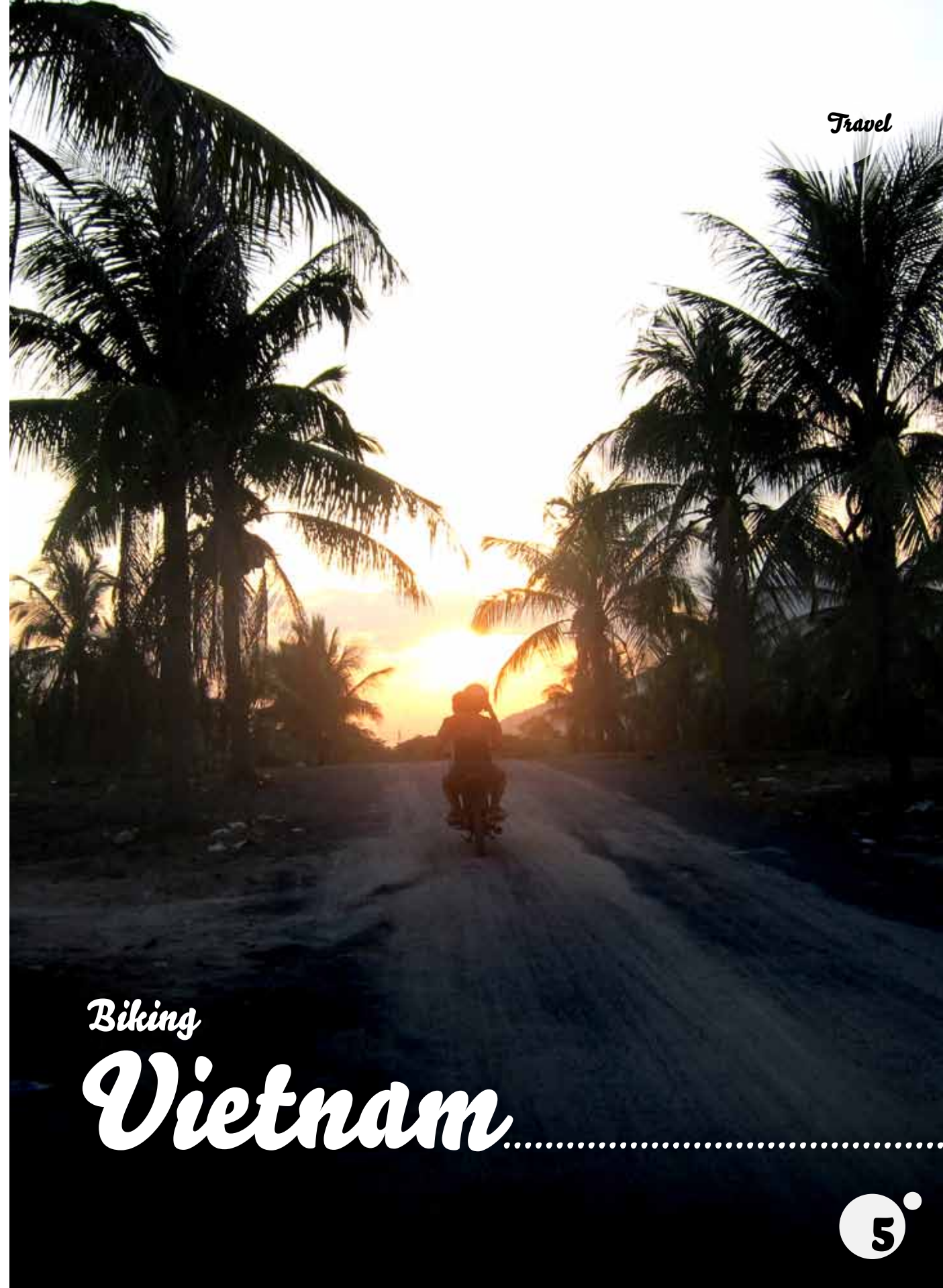
Arjan



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 **English 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



Biking
Vietnam



Biking Vietnam: Hanoi to Ho Chi Minh City

A few years ago, I was talking

to a friend about traveling when he told me a story about his mother traveling through Vietnam on a motorcycle when she was young. She said it was the most exciting and amazing thing she had ever done in her life and highly recommended it. It was settled then and there: I would do the same one day.

During the summer holidays, my two best friends and I met in Hanoi to prepare for the 1,750 km trip down Vietnam. After a quick two-day trip to the amazing limestone karsts of Ha Long Bay, we came back to Hanoi to buy motorcycles. We consulted the message boards at the backpackers where we were staying and there were over ten bikes for sale. The first number we called belonged to three British travelers who had just arrived from Ho Chi Minh City and were trying

to sell their bikes. Ten minutes later we met them in our hostel lobby, twenty minutes later we owned bikes. The next day, we were off.

We paid about \$200 USD (in Vietnam, high priced items are quoted in USD) each for our Honda Win bikes. They were 100cc, fully manual, and came with racks for our backpacks. None of us had ever driven a manual transmission motorcycle so we set off onto the streets of busy Hanoi to learn how to drive them. Every block, when one of us inevitably stalled, we were greeted by hundreds of angry drivers trying to get around us. Although there are traffic lights at busy intersections in Vietnam, no one pays attention to them and you have to learn how to weave your way through traffic coming from all directions. We figured that once we got

out of the city, the open roads of Vietnam would be more forgiving.

For three weeks we took to the roads of Vietnam, driving through thick, humid forests, beautiful rice fields, sand dunes, dry plains, and along amazing coastal roads. Some of the roads were perfectly maintained, while at other times they were in a terrible condition. Loose gravel, dusty highways with massive potholes, and flooded streets were all regular occurrences. The unpredictable road conditions caused me to have the first scare of the trip. While driving through some thick mud I lost control of my bike and fell over on the side of the highway. Unhurt, but very muddy, it took me a bit of time to clean myself and get my bike standing again. Ahead, my friends began to worry, especially when they

couldn't find me and Vietnamese people were signaling to them that I had crashed. They came speeding back to see if I was okay, their worried faces giving way to huge smiles when they saw me muddy, but safe.

The bikes were cheap and they sure did drive like it. At least once a day we had to stop for some reason or another to fix our bikes. My friend's bike became notorious for catching on fire. It happened a few times when we were riding. He would pull over, blowing furiously and pouring water on his engine, trying to douse the flames. Another time, I was driving through the rural countryside with a friend on the back of the bike when the chain fell off. Not knowing what had happened, I pulled over to inspect my bike and noticed



...continued

the chain was not there. A moment later a young girl came walking up and handed it to me with a big smile before walking away. We began pushing my bike to the next town (which we found out later was almost 20 km away) when an amazing group of Vietnamese people pulled over to help us. Like every man in this country, one guy knew how to fix bikes and immediately began to sort out my chain using makeshift tools he found in his car. After about an hour, and a deep cut later, he finished, bowed his head, refused the money I offered, and drove away.

Vietnam is full of beautiful natural wonders like the aforementioned beautiful Ha Long Bay, the beautiful mountain ranges of the highlands, and beautiful beaches like those of the party city, Nah Trang, and the more relaxed Mui Ne. History buffs will love the Vietnam war remnants in the old city of Hue or the Vietcong tunnels near Saigon (Ho Chi Minh City). The food is outstanding and cheap. Street food is the way to go in Vietnam. It is light on the wallet, filling, and delicious.

The most famous dish, *Phô*, certainly did not disappoint and for about \$1 USD, it was a staple of our daily life. Another necessity, beer, could be had for about 50 cents pretty much everywhere.

Even through all the hardships, and all the dangerous moments we encountered, I would not have picked any other way to see the country. We took roads that tourists barely see. Children would follow us down the street screaming at us, saying hello and trying to keep pace with us until they could run no more. The open highway unfolding in front of us; taking a side road if we felt like exploring; stopping where we wanted to take photos, or to enjoy the scenery; driving at night and looking up at the crystal clear skies, admiring the thousands of bright stars that loomed over us; moments like when my friend accidentally smashed into another man on a motorcycle causing him to fall to the pavement, screams coming from all directions, and the begging that ensued for him not to call the police to which he agreed after he was handsomely paid – all are just stories that we can laugh and

reminisce about now. It was truly a magical experience and one I will never forget.

The Nitty-Gritty

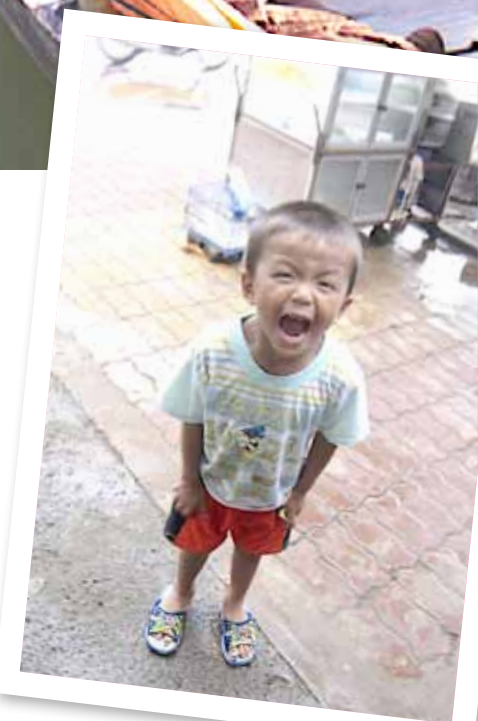
- ◎ Osaka to Kuala Lumpur (7 hours) » Kuala Lumpur » Hanoi (2.5 hours). This was the cheapest flight I could find on the Internet. There is also the option of flying though China or Korea. I booked the flight early with AirAsia and paid about \$400 USD for a round trip flight.
- ◎ I suggest starting in Hanoi, (because Ho Chi Minh City's traffic is horrendous, unlike anything I have ever seen the world over and it is not a good place to learn how to drive in Vietnam) and head south on the Ho Chi Minh trail which cuts through the middle of the country. It is very scenic and less busy than Highway 1 which is on the coast and a mess of fast driving buses, huge trucks, and unsightly cities.
- ◎ Bikes should be no than \$200 USD unless you buy it from a shop, which might charge a bit more. Bike repairs are cheap, usually costing less than \$10 USD for anything.

Gas was about \$5 USD for a full tank which took us about 300 km.

- ◎ It is “technically” illegal to drive any vehicle in Vietnam but tourists still do it all the time. Although we had not problems with the police, we were told that most police look the other way because they need tourism for their economy. If you are in a bind, you can pay them off with a few dollars.

- ◎ After the trip we sold our bikes back to a bike shop for \$150 USD. We could have got more if we tried to sell them to another traveler but we were short on time.
- ◎ You need to apply for a Visa before you go. They're about \$50 USD total, and take about one week to process.

Jon Burroughs





豆乳プリンといちごソース

Soy milk pudding with strawberry sauce

Ingredients

(serves 4)

Main dish

- ◎ 2 cups soy milk (tounyuu)
- ◎ 100 grams tofu (soft)
- ◎ 7-8 tablespoons sugar
- ◎ 4 grams gelatine made from seaweed (konakanten)
- ◎ ½ teaspoon vanilla essence

Sauce

- ◎ 150 grams strawberries
- ◎ 2 tablespoons sugar

Step one

Put tofu and sugar in a bowl and mix them until smooth.

Step two

Pour soy milk into a pot and add gelatine, mix well.

Step three

Add the tofu and sugar mix and the vanilla to the soy milk.

Step four

Bring to a boil while stirring. Continue to stir and boil for 2-3 minutes.

Step five

Put pudding into small bowls and once they are cool put them in the fridge for at least 30 minutes, but longer is better.

A
delicious
dessert for the
warmer weather.
It is also great for
vegans
too!

Step six

Mash the strawberries with a fork and add the sugar. Mix well.

Step seven

Serve the pudding with strawberry sauce poured over the top.

Strawberries aren't always in season but you can buy pre-made fruit sauce or use another fruit in place of the strawberries.

Lauren McRae

洒落

Paul Schuble's

I-word play

ナイスな
スイカは、
何になる
でしょう？

Answer: いか (Squid)

Ok, so this one was a little tough, I think. It appears to be asking "What does a nice watermelon become?" This riddle doesn't work in English, but in Japanese, 「すいか」 is "watermelon" and 「いか」 is squid. Figuring out what the question is asking is the main part of this one! If you change the Japanese a little, you have: 無い「す」なスイカは、何になるでしょう？ It wants to know, 「すいか」 without the 「す」 becomes... what?" So a watermelon without its 「す」 becomes a squid.

Haha ;)

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

By David Namisato



**Wishing all the new JETs
an awesome time in Japan!**

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

Man/l-function

If you are lucky enough to

be gay (eat your heart out bitches); have gay friends; even privileged to be in our presence (lol... It's a privilege), or know anything about gay culture, you should have heard of the word, **"Gaydar"** (gay + radar = "Gaydar"). Each and every gay person is equipped with this 'weapon'. Come close to us and you might set it off; then begins the strip and search (*wink wink*). So, basically, according to the NEW OXFORD HOMO Dic(k)tionary, the "Gaydar" operates as a sixth-sense which tells us if another guy is gay or not; and to what degree. In some cases, even on a weak battery, the "Gaydar" goes off like a siren [*that means, the person is gay as hell*]. Damn! It is said that all gay men possess this gift and that we can sniff out a Gucci-perfumed man in the middle of peak hour on a Friday afternoon. And I am sure our lesbian counter-parts can sniff out the home-depot and timberland boots of a girl from a million feet.

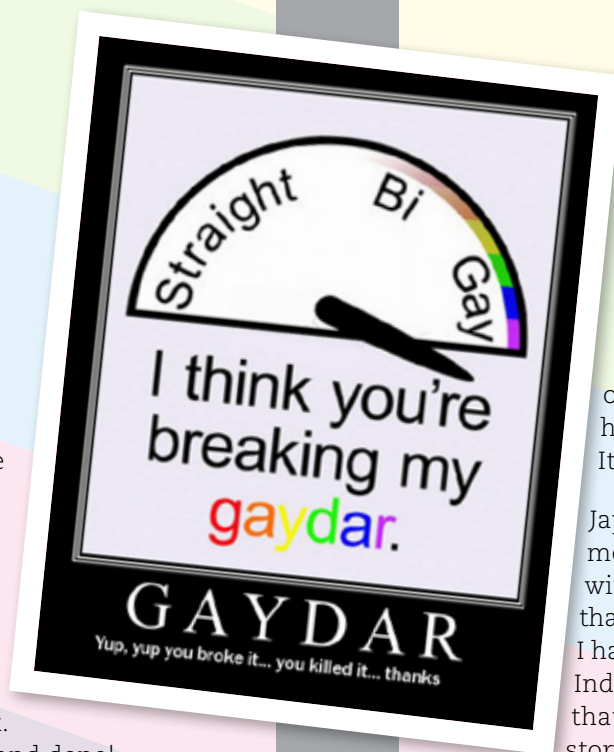
I thought my "Gaydar" was pretty good, or was it just Jamaica? Maybe! Coming to Japan, it seems like my "Gaydar" got thrown out of whack. I first noticed this just after I moved here. Japanese men are so different from Jamaican, or even western, men. They walk hand in hand; sit in each other's laps and are very physical with one another, and to top it off they wear jeans that are skin tight. Only a gay man would wear clothes that tight, I naively thought. But these Japanese are straight (or so they think)!!

However long I live here, I still continue to question my "Gaydar". So, you have the guys who carry purses (no not wallets)... I mean full-fledge Christian Doir totes: they wear make-up (no, not lip balm)... I mean as much make-up as RuPaul; and they go to the Salon (no, not the barber)... I mean the hair salon with curling irons and perms. Yep! Our little Oriental guys are sporting coiffes that only the most fashionista gay men in the west would try to get away with. Name it and they are doing it: accessorizing,

plucking eyebrows, tanning, fake tanning, listening to dance music and voguing out to the latest disco diva or club track. Done, done and done!

I felt hopeless at this point. My once reliable "Gaydar", that has been with me since BIRTH has been compromised. I felt lost and confused.

But what makes it worse is the difference between the guys in the city and the guys in the country. Holy Mary Mother of Jesus!!! Hold on to your bra straps, girls! The men in cities are virtually impossible to "detect." Maybe I would need to borrow RuPaul's "Gaydar" to pick them out of a line-up. Talk about handbag carrying, wearing barrettes in their hair, painting their nails and carrying cute little dangly cartoon character charms on their cell phones or bags. And, they are often holding hands with a girl



or seemingly have girlfriends! It's bizarre.

Japanese guys are more touchy-feely with each other than anywhere else I have been (except India... LOL... Now, that's another story.... **seriously**

it is). I've personally witnessed what looked like groups of average sports-playing teen guys fiddle with each others' hair and put their arms around one another's waists. And I assume they were straight. And if I should start telling tales about the *Junior High School* boys, now that's another story too (so many stories to tell..... damn!!!). The JHS boys literally play with each other's dicks and poke their fingers in each other's asses. And these are the straight kids! The gay boys are at their desks reading books. (DO NOT LAUGH!!). No straight man in Jamaica, or western countries, would behave in an even remotely similar way. It takes "metrosexual" to a whole new level.

So, here is one of the many mysteries of Japan. How then does one tell if a man is gay here? Perhaps a lot of these strange specimens are in fact gay and just don't admit it (and again, that's another story!). Surely, it is not possible for there to be so much cross-cultural confusion. And I know that with the "keeping up appearances" and conformity which pervades Japanese culture, many gay men are probably forced to stay in the closet and dare not venture out (well, only between 10pm and 6am), in fear of not getting married (which is a big thing in Japan). Perhaps some of these men can't even come to grips with the fact that they are, in fact, GAY. It would be stepping out of the box way too much, and that's sacrilege in Japan. So they grow up, get married and have kids, all the while secretly lusting after men and denying it to themselves. It's sad if this is the case. And it's no way to live.

I still haven't gotten to the bottom of this mystery. I hope someone can 'top' me (*pun intended!*). My "Gaydar" is as shaky as ever and I need to get it recalibrated when I return to the west: the land where straight men wear polo shirts, baseball hats, stay away from tanning salons and women's accessories and listen to hip hop or rap and play sports while gay men wear tight clothes, highlight and style their hair, accessorize, and groove to Madonna. Until then, I'll stick to my Indian and Pakistani "diet". [*It's about time I tell you that story...LOL*]

Dwayne Copourne

The Kitkat factor

How many of you tried the European cheese flavoured kitkat? How many saw it and thought someone had put something in the development team's coffee that day? How many of you don't have a clue what I'm talking about?

Oh the kitkat flavours of Japan. What a chase you have led me on. The thrill of stumbling across a new flavour at the conbini; the horror of discovering there was one you missed (salty watermelon – I will never forgive thee); the JTE-scaring delight at being presented with a flavour you thought was gone forever; the evil laughter at feeding random varieties to friends back home (the aforementioned European cheese). God love the obsession with time limited flavours in this country. They don't half make life that little bit more fun.

If you pop onto wikipedia and look at the list of kitkat flavours available, you'll see what I mean about it being a Japanese thing to experiment with this humble bar. Whilst the UK (my homeland) has some different flavours available (mint, orange, dark, white) at all times, Japan has taken flavouring to whole new levels. Along with the time limited offerings, there are also a multitude of regional flavours. You can only buy these when you are in the given region (or order them online, but that seems like cheating to me) so they make reasonably good souvenirs when venturing around the country.

The name itself 'kitkat' (as many of you may know) holds a special resonance around exam time in Japan. きつと勝つ (kitto katsu) with its approximate translation of 'surely win/succeed' sounds close enough to 'kitkat' that their offering as good luck charms before tests isn't wholly

surprising. I brought back the orange and mint flavoured kitkat's from the UK (since they don't have them here) and gave them to my third year class. They were subsequently charged by my JTE to eat them between sections of their university English entrance exams.

My personal collection started some time shortly after I arrived in Japan. Prior to my arrival I may have heard faint rumours of the strange flavours that could be found, but they weren't something I was intent on hunting for. I think that changed when I found my fourth or fifth type (I swear they came out more regularly back then...). I began homing in on the chocolate section to check if there was a new flavour every time I went to the conbini or supermarket, people started to tell me if they found a different one (salty watermelon again – grrr). Slowly but surely, wall space was consumed by perfectly

tessellating kitkat boxes and not-quite-so-perfectly packed kitkat minis still in their wrappers (oh multipack flavours, I love you, but you're annoying. You melt and go squidgy on the wall). The collection was born.

It was up in Sapporo, at Yuki Matsuri, that I discovered my first (well three as it turned out) regional kitkat's. I knew there were some odd flavours floating around (we come back to the salty watermelon YET AGAIN), but I don't think anything quite prepared me for jacket potato with butter flavoured kitkat. This sitting on the shelf next to grilled sweetcorn flavour. I saw them, but I didn't believe them. I'd had the triple berry flavour by this time, and the Muscat of Alexandria (wine) and thought they were disgusting. They'd tasted fake and were wholly unappetizing. I therefore expected the same from anything claiming to be both chocolate, and potato flavoured.

I opened the wrapper and smelt a jacket potato with just a hint of buttery goodness.

I was confused. I took a bite and it tasted like a jacket potato with just a hint of buttery goodness. I was at once both delighted and disturbed to my core. Here I was eating a kitkat shaped and textured jacket potato. The corn was the same. The desire to try every flavour that got produced to see if they could ever match this feat was crystallized.

So far nothing has quite managed to reach those giddy heights of 'WTF – there is no way that's going to taste anything like it's meant to' but some have come remarkably close. The cola/lemonade flavoured set was pretty good (they included the fizzing factor somehow) as was the sports drink one (yep, basically an Aquarius flavoured kitkat). But my favourite one?

That has to be the Valentine's Day special from a few years back; white chocolate with a hint of lemon. It's like love you see, sweet, but with the occasional hint of sour.

Note: It removes some of the fun, but if you want to check the currently available flavours, check out the [Kitkat Breaktown website](#) (Japanese). I have found things in shops before they've been on the site though. There's also a facebook page which if nothing else can provide some interesting (well I think so anyway ><) bits of Japanese practice.

Imogen Currence

Hyogo Times September Event Calendar

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
26	27	28	29	30	31	01 Hyogo AJET Welcome Party Sogo Beer Garden, Sannomiya Kobe
02 	03 	04 	05 	06 	07 	08 Takedao Art Event 2012 A full day of performances, camping, bonfire, portable fireworks, barbecue & swimming! Takedao Station
09 	10 	11 	12 	13 	14 	15 Ako Kotto-ichi Oishi Jinja Sasayama historic street art festival 15th – 23 September.
16 Kobe Steel Pan Carnival 11am – 5pm	17 Respect for the Aged Day	18 	19 	20 	21 	22 Autumnal equinox The 4th Akashi Manpuku Food Festival Akashi Park
23 Tajima Beef Festival Beef Parade, Objects and Performance competition regarding Tajima beef. Tajima Bokujo Koen	24 	25 	26 	27 	29 	30 Aioi Minato festival Hand fishing, Peron boats experience, Super Kids Boats... Free entry.

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