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The Art of Gundam
Surviving Japan
Beat the Heat

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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 hyogotimespublications@gmail.com

Message from the Editor:

hello!

You would never know by reading my past Hyogo Times contributions that it pains me to use idioms, platitudes, and other literary clichés, but like many, I am prisoner to their simplicity. So here goes a brief summary of my current thoughts as the new Hyogo Times editor: time flies, times change and we with it, and time for a new beginning. Although if I had to guess, these thoughts are running through just about everyone else's head this time of year as well. Late July and early August are filled with sad goodbyes to those leaving and joyous greetings toward new JETs arriving. It's both a time to look back and remember why you came to Japan and think about what you want to accomplish going forward.

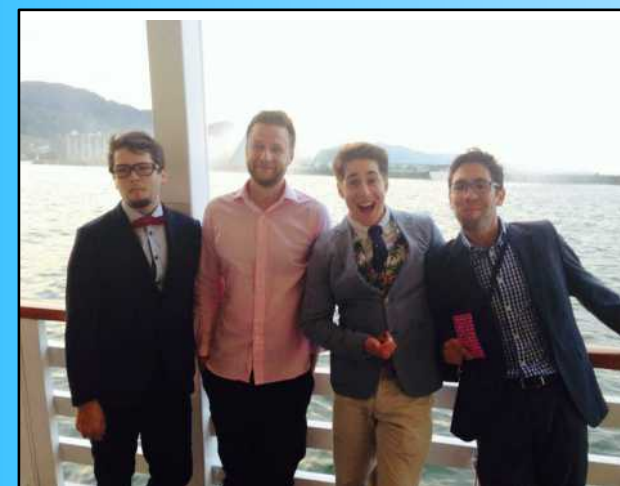
Just remember that with all this looking back and forward don't become dizzy or overwhelmed (Japan's summer heat will only make it worse). We are all taking new steps into the unknown, perhaps having to fill some pretty big shoes – Charlotte, the previous editor, left some giant ones – but we all have something unique to offer in any new position we enter. Go forward with excitement, positivity, and a willingness to try new things, like eating fugu or perhaps becoming a contributing member to this webzine (the mental image of me

giving you an elbow prod should appear right about now). Kidding aside, try not to get bogged down by the small issues because it takes away from the truly remarkable opportunity we all have been given.

This issue, possibly the first for many of you, is overflowing with even more advice and tips from your fellow JETs, just take a look at Ashlie's suggestions on [how to survive in Japan](#) and Claire's article on [beating the heat](#). Two new contributors, [Scott](#) and [Brittany](#), take us to imaginative worlds of fiction, while Anastasia brings us [the world of Ultimate](#), and our new chef, Helen, gives us the insight on [how to make a delicious pumpkin](#). As usual you can update yourself with [current events](#), see why JETs decided to [stay another year](#), and keep busy during the summer lull by [reading](#) and enjoying [live music](#).

One last piece of advice I'll give is to please, please for all that is sacred on this Earth, use Google (or Bing for those sticking it to the Man) to find answers to your questions. After initial research with still no answer, then feel free to put it on [Facebook](#) – although I would still recommend reaching out verbally as a way to build personal relationships. You don't want to become that person known for constantly annoying posts. You will be judged. You have been warned. Other than that stay cool and have an amazing year. As an old friend once said, "The story of life is quicker than the wink of an eye, the story of love is hello and goodbye...until we meet again."

Sean



hello!

Messages from the Online & Layout Editors:

>> Hello Hyogo! First of all, a great big welcome to all the newbies arriving this month in the world's best prefecture. And a great big がんばって! to the awesome second, third, fourth, and fifth years staying on to guide those precious こうはいs in this grand adventure. I'm Dana, a third year high school ALT in Sasayama, home to the always delicious Wild Boar (いのしし), often tasty Black Soy Bean (くろまめ), and decidedly gooey Mountain Yam (やまいも). In my free time, I pursue an interest in everything! The Hyogo AJET and Block 6 events are particularly interesting, but I also enjoy the accidental discoveries found while traveling alone in the far flung recesses of this grand prefecture we call home.

I fell into the Hyogo Timesworld when a former editor casually mentioned trouble finding an online editor two years ago. Since then, I have enjoyed creating a webpage to rival all webpages, but I couldn't do that without the splendid words and pictures created by YOU the true makers of the Hyogo Times. So keep it coming Hyogo; together we can change the world... or at least, make a cool webzine.

Dana Warren



>> Hi all! I hope that your summers have been full of adventure – be it preparing to join JET and move to Japan or spending time with friends and taking advantage of summer nenkyu, time is certainly passing by quickly. It's been hard to say goodbye to the departing ALTs, but exciting to welcome the new ones!

I'm Erika, a second-year teaching high school students in Sanda. When not spoiling my ESS club with baked goods, I can be found trying new conbini snacks, waxing poetic about the wonders of penguins, and deciding on my next travel destination. I'm also one of the new Hyogo AJET prefectural reps, and am excited about the events this year! From recurring meet-ups like Book Club to annual trips like whitewater rafting in Shikoku or Yuki Matsuri in Hokkaido, there are some pretty wonderful things to look forward to!

Another great way to be more involved in the Hyogo JET community is to contribute to the Hyogo Times (shameless plug, I know, but subtlety isn't my strong point). Whatever your interest is – photography, cooking, current events, reviews, fiction, poetry – the HT can be your creative outlet (and a nice addition to your résumé). I started as the layout editor a few months ago when the position opened up. I've done some design work before, but not much layout, so I am loving the opportunity to learn new creative techniques and explore design programs.

So, welcome to Hyogo (or welcome back!) for a new year – let's enjoy!

Erika Horwege

>> photo by Erika Horwege

Love photography?

The Hyogo Times needs YOU! Submit photos each month to hyogotimespublications@gmail.com to be featured on the cover, backpage, and throughout the issue, or upload your work to the [Hyogo Flickr pool](#) to share and inspire.

hello!

message from the Prefectural Representative

I cannot believe it is August and we are welcoming all the new JETs already! I hope that you are all surviving the humid and hot weather and settling into your new homes. I remember this time last year I was sitting in my empty apartment with nothing more than a fold-up chair and about ten cooler boxes, which had been given to me by all the lovely teachers at school (just in case I decided to buy enough in those two days to fill the other 9 coolers already in my possession) thinking, "Wow! I actually made it. I live in Japan now".

You have all made it now! The waiting is over and so many amazing new experiences lie ahead. For those of you who have never been to Japan, よこそ (welcome), and for those who are returning, welcome back.

Now, who am I? I am Ashlie O'Neill, fellow Hyogoian, HAJET member and Block 6 Representative. I was elected to organise a bunch of FUNTASTIC events (with the help of other amazing JETs) including the **Block 6 Welcome Picnic** coming up on September 13 in Kyoto, the **Hawaiian Luau** in Kobe on August 15 at Sogo Beer Garden and many many more events that will soon be coming your way! I am also here to help you and represent your interests on the AJET National Council.

By now you're probably thinking "wait what is the AJET National Council? Don't we already have the Hyogo AJET? How are they different?" I hear you and now I will go ahead and explain AJET National Council vs. HAJET.

National AJET (Blocks and National Council) is a council of elected JETs that

represent their peers at the National Level. As Block 6 Rep I collaborate with prefectural AJETs to organise combined events for Hyogo, Kyoto and Shiga. Each block representative also has a secondary position. The council's members work hard in their secondary positions to enhance your experience on JET by creating opportunities for further education, special discounts, involvement in Special Interest Groups (SIGs) and much more.

Prefectural AJET (HAJET) operates independently from the AJET National Council and as a result varies greatly from prefecture to prefecture. Hyogo AJET, aka HAJET, organises events for you, the lovely people of Hyogo. This year's events will include rafting on Shikoku, Camping on Awaji and of course the upcoming **HAJET Welcome Party** to be held on August 30 at Sogo Beer Garden in Kobe.

Both National AJET and Hyogo AJET are here to make your experiences in the next 1-5 years the best they can be.

Check out my article "Surviving in Japan;" I hope it will make you laugh - but it also has some really useful hints about your new life in the Land of the Rising Sun.

Well that is all for me. Stay cool Hyogo (literally and figuratively). If you have any questions or would just like to say hi please feel free to email me at ashlie.oneill@ajet.net or find me on [Facebook](#).

Ash O'Neill

Want to learn more?

- >> [National AJET Website](#)
- >> [HAJET Website](#)
- >> [HAJET Facebook Group](#)



Simmered Pumpkin

kicchiri
kitchen



Ingredients

1/4 pumpkin (kabocha)

1 to 1 1/2 cups water

1 Tbsp mirin (or 1 Tbsp sake + 1

tsp sugar)

1 Tbsp sugar

1 Tbsp sake

1 Tbsp soy sauce

This is one of my go-to Japanese side dish recipes. It's super easy and keeps in the fridge for up to a week, making it perfect bento filler material. You can also add it to salads for a bit of extra colour and flavour or have it as a healthy snack.

Step One

Remove pulp and seeds from the pumpkin, peel skin here and there, and cut into 2.5cm cubes.

Step Two

Place pumpkin in a pan skin-side down. Add enough water to cover the pumpkin pieces (the tops should stick out a bit). Season with the mirin, sugar, sake and soy sauce.

Step Three

Cover the pan and bring to a boil over high heat.

Step Four

Lower heat to medium and simmer, still covered, for 10 minutes or until a toothpick passes easily. (If the water evaporates before the pumpkin becomes soft, add hot water - not cold - to the pan.

Step Five

Turn off the heat and keep the pan covered for 5 minutes to steam before serving.

Hints & Tips

>> Pumpkin is easier to cut if it is heated briefly beforehand. Heat in the microwave for 1-2 minutes for easier cutting.

>> Peeling the pumpkin here and then allows flavours to penetrate better.

>> As with many Japanese dishes this leans on the sweet side. If you prefer your vegetables less sweet, simply cut the amount of sugar and mirin.

Helen Yuan

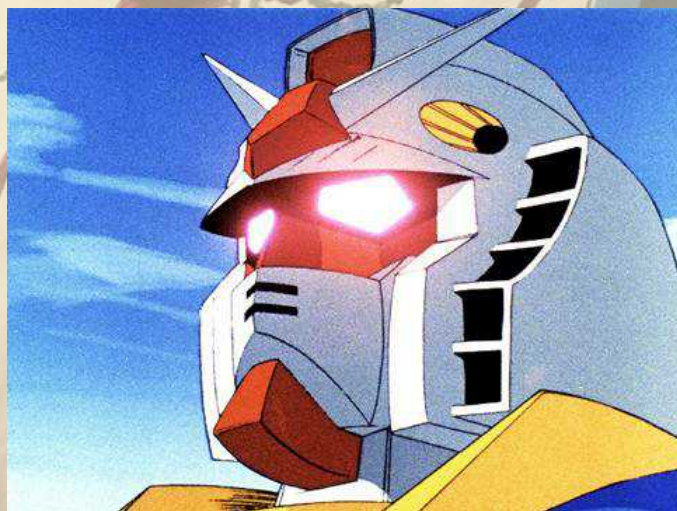
The Art of Gundam

Mobile Suit Gundam was principally developed by renowned animator Yoshiyuki Tomino and made its tentative first steps as the rather more punchily titled Freedom Fighter Gunboy before its initial TV debut on April 7, 1979. The original series was based upon a premise that recurs frequently in the milieu – that of a child who stumbles upon, and consequently befriends, a hulking robot, usually at a time of personal or social upheaval, and they begin a cathartic and ultimately redemptive journey together. The show is now a fifty billion yen industry, spawning over 600 animated episodes, 14 movies and numerous live action spin-offs, not to mention a variety of merchandise ranging from rocket shaped backpacks to 3 Gundam cafés in Tokyo, serving up ‘Jet Stream Chicken’ and ‘Char Aznable Pilot Lunch’ since 2010.

The difference with Gundam is that rather than the robot being an anthropomorphic guardian, our hero Amuro, a 15 year old mechanic, is controlling his own redemption from within as he wears the robot as a suit, or ‘mecha’ (メカ) – a sort of autogenous patriarchy, but with rocket boots and jerky movements impaling evildoers at will with the aid of a retractable light sword.

On a turbid afternoon in an unfamiliar part of Osaka myself and two other ALTs decided to check out what on earth (or maybe space) any of this meant.

Our first point of call in the show was the deck of White Base, an ‘assault all environment use carrier’ if you



are au fait with the genre, or ‘spaceship’ if not. Usually when I visit an attraction of this type and am led into a large dark room I expect a certain level of entertainment – disgruntled teenage staff members lurking in the shadows spraying shaving foam at non-plussed fathers, intermittent subwoofer blasts, salacious rumors, sticky flooring. However the expected three tier strawberry chocolate fondue turned out to be more like half a mince pie found down the back of the sofa as we were treated to ten minutes of ‘specially commissioned’ animated footage of people talking, including a rear accoutrement of another person talking which nobody seemed to notice.



After this somewhat deflated opening we were spat out into the exhibition proper. According to the sleeve notes there are over 1,000 works on display, with original character sketches, storyboards and painted backgrounds making up most of the numbers. The early character sketches in particular are breathlessly executed and exude a warmth and dare I say it, humanity, that is often missing from the final production, and are a must for those interested in character design. There are also a number of hand painted cels which reveal a deftness of touch that transcends the computer assisted coloring of today’s animation processes. The show focuses primarily on 2D works but in one of the central rooms there are also some detailed models housed, disorientatingly, behind magnified glass which provides the viewer with a unique experience akin to reading the small print on the back of a shampoo bottle whilst wearing your grandma’s inch thick bifocals.

The show is arranged chronologically, with the final room pondering the age old question: ‘What next for

Gundam?’ After 10 minutes spent perusing various developmental sketches and maquettes the answer seems to be – slightly larger ears.

A word of warning for those with somnambulistic tendencies – once you have exited the last room of the exhibition there is, like a mech suit hurtling towards earth and burning up on re-entry, no way back. Even a two foot sojourn outside of the designated enjoyment area will result in immediate expulsion by fleet footed attendants. As I was met with the standard crossed arms rebuff favored only by professional wrestlers and Japanese service industry workers, and seeing my endeavors on re-entry fall on deaf eyes, I decided to acquiesce and skulked down to the gift shop.

A riot of shuffling, grabbing and occasional squeaking, the gift shop represents all that is good about the museum visit, and in broader terms, life. Judging by the speed in which most patrons digested the show itself revealed the true purpose of visiting for most – the fine art of gift buying.



Non-robot shaped biscuits stacked high at inconvenient prices were devoured mercilessly, comprehensive exhibition catalogues the equivalent of yesterday’s cold pizza. The image of the scorched earth of what used to be my bank balance fresh in my mind, I decided to aim low and plumped for a single 100¥ postcard, only to immediately rescind my consumerist desires when I saw the line for the cash register; thick, undulating and undercut by palpable malevolence, it was time to leave.



Verdict: ★★★ (3 stars out of five)

The low ceilings, high density of works on display and visitor numbers can make a weekend visit slightly overwhelming, but the comprehensive content is worth making the trip for.

Scott Patterson

» “The Art of Gundam” at Osaka Culturarium at Tempozan, Minato Ward, in Osaka runs from July 12 to Aug. 3; open daily 10a.m. – 9p.m. Admission: 2,000¥ for adults, 1,500¥ for children. For online ticket sales and more information, visit www.gundam-ten.jp/en/ (English/Japanese).

Surviving Japan: Ashlie's Top Tips

1. When in doubt the phrase "because Japan" comes in handy. Why did a giant cream puff with Himeji Castle on its head just rollerblade past me in the middle of the city singing Katy Perry's "I Kissed a Girl?" ... because Japan.

2. Try everything...think Yes Man. That means food, sports and whatever else you can think of. You do not want to be 98 years old sitting on the front porch saying to your best mate, Mavis, "You know once I had the chance to become a Ninja and I said no." To which she will no doubt reply, "No you didn't Beryl..." but you will know the truth and it will haunt you... even if Mavis doesn't believe.

3. Make a "Japan To-Do" list and actually do the things on it. Mine includes things such as climb Mt. Fuji, learn to snowboard, visit Tokyo Robot Restaurant, attend a festival in Yukata, have a beer or five under the Sakura (cherry blossoms) and learn at least one Japanese song for Karaoke with Japanese people. Some more ideas include: make a friend at an izakaya, eat natto (fermented soybean), or learn to cook Tamagoyaki (they say when you can make this you are wifey material).

4. Get involved in your community. It seems like common sense, but I did not do this straight away and now I am kicking myself. Take a local cooking class, sign up for Japanese classes and visit nearby temples and shrines. I visited a local park and met a lovely man who showed me around for the day. Did you know that Harima-cho has its own archeological dig park complete with really old thatched roof houses? Me either.... until that day.

5. Smile. I know that some days the last thing you want to do is smile, especially when you're hot and annoyed and you woke up at 4:00a.m. that morning to what you thought was a fire alarm only to remember, "Oh wait, that's just the truck load of cicadas in the tree next to my bedroom." Smiling can open up a door to so many things.

6. Learn to ride a bike/buy a bike. It is such a fabulous and cheap form of transportation. Without my bike I would not have found the beaches near my house and walking is just so... slow

7. Learn simple Japanese phrases. They go a long way when someone speaks to you in Japanese. Even if you don't understand what someone is saying, and instead of looking confused and scared you can reply with a confident WAKARIMASEN (I don't understand). Following this, they will do one of two things: they will stop talking to you, or simply keep going with the knowledge that you don't understand. This happened to me in Hiroshima just the other day. The lady sitting next to me kept talking happily to me, but at least she knew I had no idea what she was saying and that I was simply admiring her enthusiasm.

8. Make friends and be kind to people. Some days you will need them regardless of how strong you think you are. With good friends, these bad days can be forgotten with a coffee, bike ride, gym sesh, or beer.

9. "Gaijin Smashing" is permitted only when absolutely necessary... for example losing your parking ticket in Hiroshima and having a plane departure looming. If you are using your foreign status just to cut a line or get a seat on the train, please don't. Be considerate.

10. Ask for recommendations at restaurants. Waitstaff will actually recommend the best thing on the menu, not the most expensive. Therefore they will offer their famous 1,000¥ Don, not the 20,000¥ lobster-stuffed turducken that has eaten only the finest truffles throughout its entire life.

11. Buy a pair of crocs and take advantage of the fact that they are hella comfortable and are considered a fashionable form of footwear in this country - and possibly only this country.

12. Omiyage Omiyage Omiyage. Omiyage means souvenir and is the way to your coworkers' hearts. When you are travelling pick up a box of (insert prefecture name) cookies and your coworkers will love you eternally.

13. Every Situation Is Different (ESID) is no longer advice but a mantra to lead your life by.

14. ICOCA cards are like magical fairy cards that will help you ride the train with a simple tap. Invest in one, love it, look after it and you can avoid navigating the ticket system in Hyogo.

15. Always take a rain coat or umbrella with you in this season you enjoy feeling like a drowned rat; in which case, carry on.

Ash O'Neill

Advice from your Senpai JETs

"A good thing to keep in the back of your mind is that for every person, there are many ways to approach, handle or interpret a situation. Never limit yourself to one person's perspective or anecdote, especially when it comes to expat stories. Analyze your situation, take multiple opinions into account and continue from there. Find and carve your own path as much as you can. Also beware of culture shock and all the unfortunate things that come with it. It will absolutely happen, regardless of how many times you have been to Japan or how prepared you think you are."

- Kyle "Drop Bear" Cardine

"Set small goals for yourself when you first arrive and try to complete one every day. There's lots of stress and uncertainty when you first move to a foreign country and balancing the big obstacles with small victories can boost your confidence. Even simple things like "today I will go to the post office" or "today I will understand the kanji on this appliance" can be helpful forms of self-empowerment."

- Claire Bronchuk

"Google translate can be your best friend and your worst enemy. Simple English translates oddly but it's manageable. Anything complex will get you confused looks and a bunch of "ちょっと (a little)" as someone "tries" to help you. If you don't speak Japanese, I encourage you to try and learn some basics. They will get you much further than Google in some situations. On the other hand, the

Google Maps and Hyperdia apps will be life savers. How did people get around before GPS? Hyperdia has timetables for various modes of transportation. It's very handy to know how many more drinks you can have before the last train home from your enkaï."

- Kimberly "Mathosaurus Rex" Rosario

"At school, ask questions about the way things are run, the students, the teachers, the surrounding area, the history of the school. Ask a million and one questions and do your best to really get to know the place.

When in doubt use photos. When you need to do something and you're not proficient in Japanese, take pictures. For example, when I wanted to get a connector cable for my TV, I had no idea how to explain it, so I took a picture of the back of TV and showed it to the store staff. SUCCESS!

MAKE FRIENDS. These are the people that will keep you sane when "because Japan" fails.

ACTUALLY GO TO THE DOCTORS when you're sick. It's taken me the full five years to figure this out. Living in Japan can be stressful and often your sickness will linger until you see a doctor. So go before it impacts on your ability to enjoy Japan."

- Erica "Trivia Master" Reynolds

"Always carry a hand towel in your bag to dry your hands in bathrooms and, in summer, to wipe your sweaty sweaty face"

- Amy "The Amazing" Kelly

"Don't be afraid to spend money on something you really want with your first couple of paychecks. You should buy that rice cooker, oven, or TV/gaming system"

- Arjan "The Arjanator" Tsuli

"At school, sometimes it's easier to ask for forgiveness than to ask for permission"

- Anonymous "I'll Never Tell" Secret

>> photo courtesy of James Bosley >> HT Flickr

For Those of You About to Rock, Summer Sonic Salutes You

Thinking back to the summers when I was an angst-filled teenager, I remember always looking forward to the Vans Warped Tour. My friends and I would lather ourselves with sunscreen, wear our coolest band clothing (mine was a Thrice t-shirt), then pile into a parent's van to be dropped off and picked up later in the evening. As I have grown older, I still look forward to summer concert events and I feel fortunate enough that Japan has two outstanding ones, Fuji Rock Festival and Summer Sonic. For those who missed Fuji Rock (or its [preview](#)) in July, don't fret, Summer Sonic offers another chance to catch amazing international and local artists from 10:00a.m. to 11:00p.m. on August 16 and 17.



Unlike Fuji Rock, a three day camping extravaganza at Mount Naeba, Summer Sonic ditches the wilderness for the city, or more precisely two cities. The concert event is held on the same days in both Tokyo and Osaka with slight variations in the lineup. Most well-known bands that play in Tokyo on Saturday will play in Osaka on Sunday and vice versa. Unfortunately, we Kansai folk must do - to the dismay of this writer - with only four stages, while those in Tokyo have an additional three, therefore having more performances. Yet with such a great variety on those four stages, it is hard to be too upset.

Looking at the lineup for both days, Osaka's Summer Sonic central theme is rock. This is apparent with the decision to have classic rock gods, Queen with vocalist Adam Lambert, and fellow Englishmen, Arctic Monkeys, as the much anticipated headliners. Most stages having a mix of classic, hard, indie, pop and punk rock. If you are in the mood for something heavy and neck-breaking, head over to the Mountain Stage on Sunday for an eardrum numbing experience brought to you by Avenged Sevenfold, Megadeth, Suicidal Tendencies, and Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas. When you are there make sure to catch BABYMETAL, a band that is rapidly growing in popularity due to the pairing of three genki Japanese teenagers and intense breakdowns typically found in the hardcore genre.

Of course if you want something lighter that provides the opportunity to sway and dance, you might be better sticking with indie and pop groups like Phoenix, Ellie Goulding, KEYTALK, the 1975, and dare I say, Avril Lavigne. Even hip hop sneaks into the weekend festivities with Azealia Banks, not to be confused with Banks or Iggy Azalea, and MTV favorite Twenty-one Pilots. In fact, these artists tend to blur the lines of hip hop and indie, weaving their music back and forth between both.



Obviously it would not be a proper Japanese music festival if there were not choreographed-filled pop bands interspersed between all this rock. You cannot go wrong

with Tempura Kidz, five Japanese children dancing to music produced by Ram Rider, でんぱ組.inc, and きゃりーぱみゅぱみゅ. If this genre is where you are truly at home, claim a spot at the Flower Stage for a day filled with great dance moves and lovely vocalists strumming their acoustic guitars. Be warned that the Flower Stage is where you are very likely to spot one or more of your students, so keep the embarrassing behavior and drinking to a minimum.



If you are looking to go, I recommend buying your tickets sooner rather than later, especially given that the festival is only a few weeks away. One-day tickets are 13,000円 while two-day tickets are 23,500円. Directions for purchasing tickets are available in Japanese [here](#), or you can buy them in Sannomiya or anywhere they have booths that sell discount movie tickets and the like. Worried that you might have to go alone? Don't be! Join the Hyogo AJET Summer Sonic event on [Facebook](#) and meet up with fellow JETs to enjoy the experience together! Remember this is the perfect opportunity to see some great live music from bands you actually know. As the school year starts such an opportunity will be few and far between, don't miss out!

After hours of sifting through the Osaka lineup so you don't have to, I have made a list, albeit from my musical taste, of recommended bands to see at this year's festival. Here are the Editor's Picks:

- >> The 1975
- >> A Great Big World
- >> Arctic Monkeys
- >> あゆみくりかまき
- >> Azealia Banks
- >> Babymetal
- >> Banks
- >> Blue Encount
- >> The Bots
- >> Charli XCX
- >> Circa Wave
- >> Coldrain
- >> Dinosaur Pile-up
- >> Fear, and Loathing in Las Vegas
- >> The Hiatus
- >> Mayday
- >> Metronomy
- >> Mogwai
- >> Phoenix
- >> The Pixies
- >> Sky Ferreira
- >> Twenty-one Pilots
- >> Vintage Trouble

Sean Mulvihill

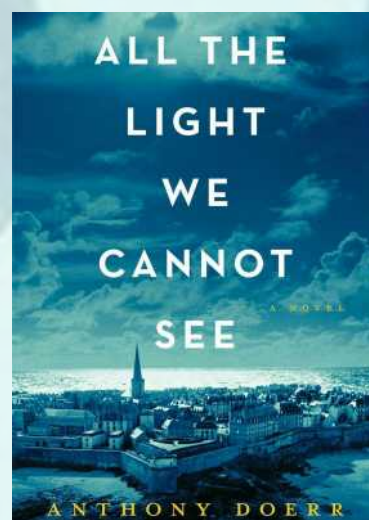


A Fistful of Fun: 5 Books You Should Read This Month

You might be skimming through this month's issue while sitting at your desk, slightly sweating (are they ever going to turn on the air conditioning?) and bored out of your mind, wondering why in the world you have to be at school during the students' summer vacation. It is a good question, especially for those JETs just joining us, but searching for the answer is a practice in futility. Instead, ask yourself what you can be doing to keep yourself entertained. Finished lesson planning? Already studied your Japanese for the day? Have you devoured your lunch simply because it was something to do? Well luckily there is a solution to your boredom. Below are five literary recommendations that will not only kill some time, but offer genuine insight regarding your time here in Japan. They include topics ranging from classroom management and language to Japanese anime and history. However, if you are a little hesitant to pull a book out at your desk because you aren't able to pretend that it is work, I suggest upgrading to an e-reader. Their sleek tablet-like appearance is much more official. Add a furrowed brow and serious eyes at different intervals during your reading and no one will question the importance of what you are actually doing.

All the Light You Cannot See - Anthony Doerr

Of course, there is always room on the recommendation list to do a shameless plug for the Hyogo A-JET Book Club. Besides enjoying a captivating World War II tale about a the relationship between blind Parisian named Marie-Laure and Werner, a young German boy involved with the Hitler Youth, you will simultaneously be able to experience wonderful discussions and refreshments in the Sannomiya-Motomachi area. The Book Club will be held next month on Sunday, September 22 at 2:00p.m. The link to the event is [here](#) and we hope to see you there!

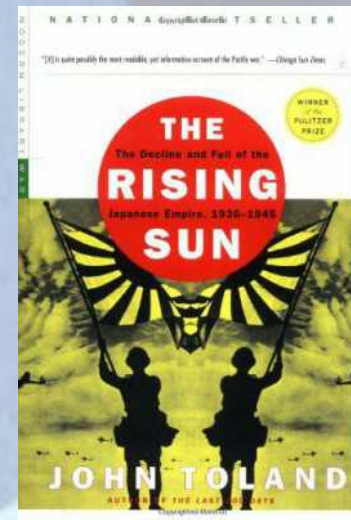
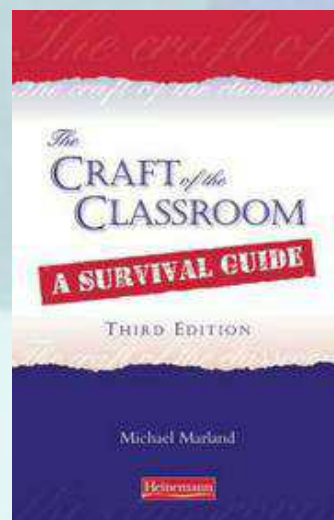


The Craft of the Classroom: A Survival Guide to Classroom Management in the Secondary School - Michael Marland

This book is small enough to be carried around in your back pocket and pulled out whenever you need a helpful reminder in classroom management. Though older than many of the other teaching guides currently in stores, Michael Marland's advice is still relevant in today's classrooms. Using largely his own experience and common sense (one sense frequently forgotten about), Marland preaches organization, consistent discipline that is fair, yet firm, and an appropriate, but strong relationship with the students. Although his techniques are a little harder to apply as an Assistant Language Teacher, most are valuable, even more so if you see yourself in the educational field after the JET program.

The Rising Sun: The Decline & Fall of the Japanese Empire, 1936-45 - John Toland

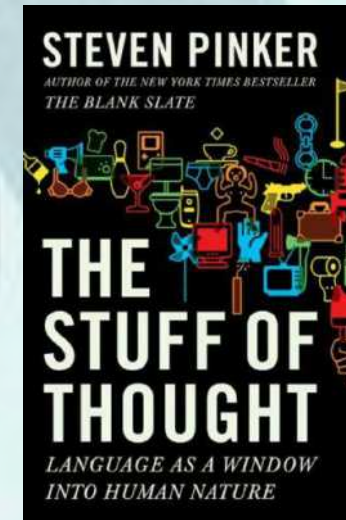
Winning the Pulitzer Prize in 1971, The Rising Sun of three Pulitzer Prize winning books for general fiction on Japan that will be recommended over the next few months. Author John Toland been praised over the years for providing a book that weaves a broad historical account of Japan from 1936 to 1945 with intimate personal stories of those living in the period. He provides the reader a look into the hearts and minds of decision-makers and those responsible for carrying out their orders. A



number of important events are covered in this manner including Japanese expansion into China and Southeast Asia, the debate on attacking the United States, World War II's Pacific theater, and finally the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. A must read for anyone interested in modern Japanese history with the added bonuses of providing potential conversation topics with your colleagues.

The Stuff of Thought: Language as a Window into Human Nature - Steven Pinker

"Huh, I never thought about it that way," "Wow, is that true?" or "I can't believe I am actually understanding this," are just a few of the thoughts that may cross your mind while reading The Stuff of Thought by Steven Pinker. Language and human nature, two areas that will put the usual layman to sleep (you probably got a little drowsy simply reading the title), are transformed by Pinker, a cognitive scientist and psychologist, into an intriguing and vibrant topic. At its core, the book attempts to show how language helps explain who we are, arguing that language expresses our innate human nature. It also offers a better understanding of why we say the things we do at the times we do. Plus, what more could you ask for than to be able to discuss obscene words dealing with sex, swearing, and the digestive process and sound intelligent about it.

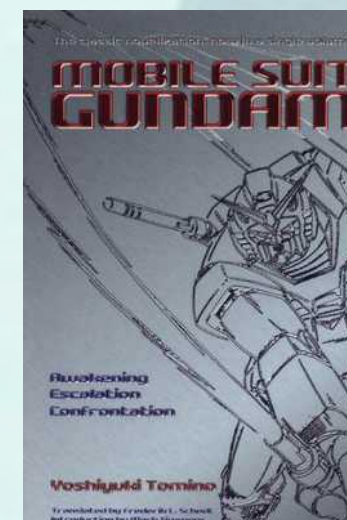


Mobile Suit Gundam: Awakening, Escalation, Confrontation by Yoshiyuki Tomino, translated - Frederik L. Schodt

If you were not aware, 2014 marks the 35th Anniversary of 機動戦士ガンダム or Mobile Suit Gundam in English. To celebrate, both Osaka and Tokyo are holding art exhibitions displaying Gundam works throughout the years (read more about the Osaka exhibition, ending August 31, in this month's issue). Mobile Suit Gundam: Awakening, Escalation, Confrontation is the novelization of the original anime series by creator and director Yoshiyuki Tomino. The story follows a deadly war in the Universal Century year 0079 between the Principality of Zeon and the Earth Federation. The Principality of Zeon with its tactical superiority attacks a colony and a recently landed warship at the colony to pick up the Federation's new secret weapon. The ensuing destruction leads the protagonist Amuro Ray to find the weapon, RX-78 Gundam, and fend off the attackers. So begins the series. First appearing on Japanese television in 1979, Tomino expanded upon his mobile suit universe in literary form that same year. However, if your Japanese reading skills are not at the manga-reading level, you can pick up the translated edition by Frederick L. Schodt instead.

There you have it, this month's fistful of fun recommendations. Keep sane, keep busy, and keep reading JETs.

Sean Mulvihill



Taj Ultimate: An International Tradition in Northern Hyogo

"To build and strengthen connections between Japanese and foreigners through the Taj Ultimate event and introduce people to the wonderful scenery and community in Tajima" - the vision of Taj Ultimate

For the past eleven years, Taj Ultimate has provided a platform for foreign and Japanese people of all ages to come together and enjoy the sport of Ultimate. It is grassroots ambassadorship at its finest. People come from all over Honshu to participate in this two day tournament located in beautiful Northern Hyogo. Taj Ultimate 2014 was held on July 12 and 13.



This year's tournament started off with a bang. Despite worries from Typhoon Number 8, the first day's weather was perfect. Four hundred plus participants spent the day playing four games in leagues for their

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placement in the second day's tournament ranking. While teams were not playing, there was merchandise to buy, local food to try, and even a Frisbee-catching dog performance to watch. Once game play came to an end, everyone headed over to the local Lodge Utopia for the legendary Taj Ultimate BBQ Party. Every year players have a chance to mingle over a BBQ and dance party. It is a great chance to meet new people and let loose after a long day. Wrapping up the day's festivities around ten at night, players headed to their lodgings for a good night's rest before tournament play.

Unfortunately, the second day's weather was not as pleasant as the first. The rain required the event to move locations and created less than ideal conditions. With muddy grounds and only tents for protection from the rain, the day got off to a slow start. Nevertheless,

everyone kept up their fighting spirit and managed to have a good time. Players gave it their all while slipping and sliding in the on-off drizzle of the day. Luckily, with only a few minor scrapes and bruises, the tournament ended only slightly behind schedule. The top 3 teams, male MVP, and female MVP received prizes, including local specialties such as the famous Tajima beef curry and Kasumitsuru sake. Congratulations to this year's 1st place winner, team Moriokake, and all the players who did their best! Thank you for making it a great year!

If you are interested in Ultimate Frisbee, please feel free to ask about local teams. It's a great opportunity to make new friends, especially since sports have less of a language barrier. If you have a team and have not heard of this event, please consider joining next year. If sports are not your thing, consider volunteering and meeting new



people. Everyone is welcome. The next Taj Ultimate tournament will be held July 4 and 5, 2015. So come out to the Taj and have some fun in the summertime!

Anastasia Windeler



>> All photos courtesy of Shoco Nakamura

Unconventional Ways to Beat the Heat

Is it humid? It feels a little humid to me. As a second-year ALT, I knew it was coming. I knew that summer would make a grand entrance, bringing high temperatures, blazing sunlight, and moisture levels that seem to turn the air into a solid mass. No matter where you're from originally, nearly all JETs can agree that summer in Japan is an intense experience. Here are few inexpensive and creative tips to beat the heat in your apartment, at work, and all those places in between.

#1: Seal your home! You may have heard that Japanese housing structures lack insulation. Be your own hero by taking the time to seal your windows and door frames now! Not only will your efforts work to keep the heat out in summer, but you'll have the additional barriers to help retain more heat during winter! Simple sealing processes can also act as reinforcements in the battle against bugs and other crawling creatures.

What you need: weather stripping, towels, scissors

Where to buy it: 100-yen stores, Konan, and other home improvement stores

How to install: Weather stripping comes in coiled strips of varying width. This foam-like padding has double-sided tape on one edge. Be sure to wipe all surfaces first with a damp rag – window tracks, door frames, and any other nooks where weather stripping would be appropriate. Then peel back the tape and slowly apply the foam.

Pro tip: I went a bit crazy this winter with weather stripping. I stuffed the foam into all of the tracks of my sliding windows as well as exterior and interior edges. Unexpectedly, the foam forced my windows to sit tighter in their frames. This stopped the rattling during windy storms and made the windows fit more snugly (though sometimes making the windows difficult to close all the way). Rolled towels can also be used at the bottom of door frames and large sliding doors that lead to balconies.

#2: Clean your air-con/ heater! If you have an AC unit installed in your home, it probably doubles as a heater (and maybe a de-humidifier, fan, and clothes-dryer). A simple way to help manage your electricity bill is to be sure your unit is working efficiently. So give your favorite appliance some TLC by cleaning the filter!

What you need: your air-con filter, a shower

Where to buy it: new filters can be purchased at home improvement stores; hopefully you have the shower part covered

How to: I confess, I dreaded cleaning my air-con's filter after several long winter months of use. I knew it had to be done but I envisaged endless amounts of dust, hair balls, mold, and dirt blowing all over my apartment the minute I opened the casing. Fortunately, a good friend told me to stop procrastinating and suggested I just put the filters in the bathtub and use my shower to clean them. Brilliant! The filters pop out easily; you can use a trash bag to contain any dust while walking from the air-con to the bathroom (which probably isn't a great distance). Then I just turned on the shower and all of the filter's accumulated lint and dust washed right off! I didn't even need elbow grease. Twenty minutes later, the filters were dry and ready to be re-installed. Since then, I have noticed that my air-con unit runs more evenly with a stronger airflow.

#3: Get rid of the sun! Like many life forms, we need sunlight to grow and stay healthy. That does not mean that we need endless amounts of burning sunrays baking our homes 24/7. Closing the curtains when you leave for work is a big help (and any chocolate-based oniyage you may have stored will fare better). If you're feeling creative, you can also make your own Super Curtain to send that sun right back where it came from!

What you need: a large piece of sun reflector material (like a car shade), clothes pins, paper clips

Where to buy it: 100-yen stores, home improvement stores, car supply stores

How to install: I can't take full credit for this idea; I found it online somewhere. I wanted to block the sun from entering through my large sliding glass doors without investing in extremely expensive curtains. I'm cheap and I like to save money. I purchased a large sheet of sun

reflective material from Konan for less than ¥1,000. Then I folded the sheet like an accordion and placed heavy boxes and other weights on the sheet for several days. Once the folds were pressed, I hung the curtain from a spare curtain rod using clothes pins and paperclips. The trick is to hang the curtain with the reflective side facing out. This acts as a shield against the sunlight, forcing those rays to bounce back out into the world instead of into your apartment. The accordion folds help shrink the sheet when I want to access the door.

Pro tip: When the winter months arrive and you set up a small heater in your room to keep away the chill, turn the curtain around, using the reflective side to keep the heat from escaping out of that giant window. This curtain has had a huge impact in my quest to keep my apartment at a comfortable temperature. Maybe it's all placebo (I did not study thermo energy), but I encourage everyone to try it out!

#4: Bring the cool with you! Small, hand-sized portable ice packs are quickly becoming a thing in Japan. Although they don't last long, if you're traveling from one cool space to another, but have to cross a desert in-between, bringing a small ice pack or two can help get you there safely. They come in names like "Pocket Cool" and "Cool Refresh Neck". Pop them in the freezer and then apply to the back of your neck, wrists, and lower back.

Where to buy it: Most retail stores like Loft, random places in Aeon or Itoiyokado

Pro tip: If you buy a slice of cake from Fujiya or a mildly expensive pastry from a fancy bakery, the packaging typically includes a few tiny icepacks to ensure that your treat remains in perfect condition. These ice packs can be re-frozen and used again and again. Freebie!

#5: Fight the sweat! Some days, the humidity is so high that even a five minute walk to the train station can leave you longing for a change of clothes. A simple trick is to actually bring a change of clothes. But if you're set on one outfit a day, some retailers have gone the extra mile by manufacturing shirts and under-layers designed to absorb your sweat for you!

Where to buy it: Uniqlo, similar clothing stores, and

high end athletic stores

Pro tip: Uniqlo sells pre-packaged tank tops made with a special "AIRism" material. According to the ads, these shirts also control odor! While adding layers may seem counter-intuitive, these lightweight undershirts are very good at keeping your skin dry and keeping your outer layer of clothes less sweaty and more presentable. Frequent re-application of deodorant also helps.

#6: Know your office! Maybe your school has air-cons in every classroom. Maybe your school doesn't have any air-cons in any classrooms. Maybe the teacher's room is a cool oasis in the corner of a concrete sauna. Maybe the teacher's room is the hottest place you've ever experienced because it's packed full with seventy-plus people. Beating the heat at school can be the most challenging fight in summer because we also want to maintain a level of professionalism. Hopefully, your school has some form of climate control even if it's just an electric fan in the corner by the copy machine. If this is true for you, start making copies! If the only air-con in the office is in the far corner near the PE teachers, start chatting up those PE teachers! Moving around the office will help you get to know different colleagues. If you're strategic, you can also regulate your body temperature while being a social butterfly.

Pro tip: Stock up on cute and culturally hip tenugui, or sweat towels. These are great conversation starters that can buffer the awkwardness of mopping perspiration off your face while several coworkers crowd your desk for early morning conversation.

Claire Bronchuk

>> photo courtesy of James Bosley >> HT Flickr

Looking to get away from everyone's living and travel advice or maybe you need a break from current events, in short you simply want a few minutes away from the real world. Welcome to The Refuge, the newest section of Hyogo Times, where we bring you works of fiction from our very own Hyogo JETs. The works you will find here may be part of a larger continuous story or a one and done deal, but all are created through creative processes that provide new and imaginative worlds to the reader. So take a breath, relax, and escape from reality for a brief moment.

I. The Durants

The sun, growing ever hotter by the year, beat down upon the barren soil. There were only a handful of oases left. With them, just a few bands of people remained. Among one of these bands were a young medic and his wife. The star blistered their skin painfully, necessitating long, flowing garments. Brion favored a pale aquamarine, while Gaia wore a deep emerald that brought out her forest-colored eyes. The thick air burned their lungs, reminding them of one reason why they had fled from what was left of society.

"Brion, when do you think we'll get back home?" Gaia covered her mouth with her sleeve, trying to prevent the haze from poisoning her.

"Maybe an hour. I'm not sure, dear. I have to pick up more supplies from Dr. Carlton."

Gaia brightened. "I'll go talk to Mr. Sullivan while you do that then!" She hummed to herself. Drake Sullivan had been their first friend when they moved to this remote

The Durants

desert two years ago. He had helped them with everything, from finding a well-hidden home, to finding work, and adjusting to life among the sands. It was a very different lifestyle from that in Taesh, one of the last cities.

Upon seeing the post declaring their arrival to Hyra, Gaia leapt forward, bounding toward the small market Drake ran. "I'll wait for you here, Brion!" she shouted over her shoulder. Brion rolled his eyes at his wife in response as he continued on toward Dr. Carlton's humble clinic.

The footsteps attracted Drake's attention and he looked up. A grin spread across his face, his worry momentarily forgotten. Gaia Durant was a rare creature. She seemed at home everywhere and was terrifyingly knowledgeable about nearly everything. It had taken less than a week before she had adapted to the desert, despite having lived in the capital her entire childhood.

"Hey Drake! Any eruptions this week yet?" Gaia greeted, as per usual.

"Only from young master Oscar so far. How long are you here for?"

Gaia's eyes sparkled in anticipation of playing with little Oscar. "Probably about an hour." She wiped the sweat from her brow as she looked around the stall hopefully, straining to hear the pitter-patter of tiny feet.

"Great. Plenty of time to tell you something important." Drake smiled, bemused. "Sorry, Gaia. Oscar is sleeping after his great fit. He might wake up before you go."

Dejected, Gaia began to deflate. In a morose voice, she prompted, "You mentioned something important?"

Drake's eyes darkened, the smile slipping from his mouth. "Someone came by earlier, asking after you and Brion. Someone not from around here. There was a golden sun on his clothes."

Sweat gushed forth, her heart and stomach dropped, and her mind began running in a frenzy. Never in her wildest nightmares had Gaia thought they'd be found so quickly. "Brion..." she whispered to herself, horror gripping her firmly. She turned on her heel, preparing to sprint to the clinic.

"Wait, Gaia! Take these," Drake reeled her back, handing her two items. "This is what you asked for last week. Take this to protect yourself." The second item was a curved blade with an emerald in the pommel and two crimson sashes dangling.

"I don't—"

"Shhh. You'll learn. Now go! And be careful!"

Gaia thrust the small box into her pocket, gulped, and took the blade with trepidation. She locked eyes for a brief second with Drake, fear and worry saturating the thick air. Adrenaline pumped through her veins, pushing her toward her husband. If they failed to be cautious, they could be hauled back to Taesh, or invite destruction into Hyra.

The clinic came into sight, and with it Dr. Carlton speaking with the intruder. Gaia ripped her eyes over the rest of the area, searching for some sign of her husband. Her heart pounded, the blood distending her temples. The seconds between each beat stretched into minutes as she crept forward, gripping the sword tightly in her sweaty palm. She saw a flash of Brion's pale gown in the clinic. The intruder caught sight of it too, breaking off his assailment of Dr. Carlton mid-sentence and stalking toward the building. With each of his steps, the sky brightened and a grating whistling grew more intense. Gaia brought her hood up in a futile effort to block out both the light and the

noise. The rustling of her cloak drew the intruder's attention, and he pivoted in Gaia's direction.

Fear clawed at her insides and bile rose in her throat as she locked eyes with the brown-eyed man she'd seen once before. Tears threatened to spill out of her widening eyes, dread settling in. Officer Zoran's mouth widened in surprise. Before he could draw breath, the light became blinding and the whistling blared. A rock collided with the back of Zoran's head. He crumpled to the ground, unconscious. Dr. Carlton rushed toward him, beginning to drag him toward the clinic.

"Gaia, Brion, go now! Quickly, before he regains consciousness!"

Brion scrambled out of the building and scampered toward his wife, sweat dripping down his forehead. "Dr. Carlton, I—"

"You need to leave. I will take care of things here. Lay low for a while. I'll visit if I can." The doctor huffed as he pulled the officer. The young couple took a brief look at the doctor, nodding their thanks before scampering back to the outskirts of the oasis, far from the rest of the town. Upon descending into their home, both exhaled sharply. Panic still held them in its fist. Gaia wandered off while Brion set about concealing their entryway further. After finishing, he sat down in silence, holding his head. He grew concerned about his wife after he'd sat in deepening silence. He pushed himself to his feet and searched their abode, finally finding her moving as in a daze, clutching something to her chest.

Gaia smiled softly at her husband, murmuring. "We're going to have a child."

Brittany Teodorski

Down Under, But Not Out: Prime Minister Abe visits Oceania

When we think of summer we often think of relaxing on a beach, enjoying coconut drinks adorned with tiny umbrellas, and maybe some light conversation with friends about the books we finally have time to read. Far from the summer mind is the desire to improve cultural, economic, and security ties with neighbors, unless perhaps it takes the form of a barbecue or you just happen to be a national leader. Last month Prime Minister Shinzo Abe did just that – that is strengthen relations, not have a barbecue – when he visited New Zealand, Australia, and Papua New Guinea.

The tour was significant for a number of reasons. For starters, it came after Abe and his Cabinet announced a reinterpretation of Japan's constitution, which allows for collective self-defense. As a result, Abe took the time to reassure these nations that although collect self-defense is now allowed, his government is still dedicated to the preservation of peace. This message was continually repeated as he addressed the Australian Parliament offering his "sincere condolences" for the horrors of World War II and again when he visited Wewak and Cape Wom in Papua New Guinea, areas also historically significant during the war. However, over the past year Japan's moves to increase their global role militarily, a move that has been largely welcomed by Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott, also sends mix messages to other countries Japan is trying to reassure. For instance, as he preached peace an agreement was also signed during Abe's Australian visit that now opens the door for the transfer of defense equipment and technology between the two nations.

In addition to security issues, Abe continued to promote close economic ties with each country. Abe along with his counterparts in New Zealand and Australia, John Key and Tony Abbott respectively, continued to give optimistic lip service to the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement, hoping that a deal will be reached by the end of this year. Abe and Abbott also officially signed their own free trade pact that was initially agreed upon during Abbott's visit to Japan this past April. As Australia's second largest trading partner after China, this agreement and his visit to the mineral-rich Pilbara region further emphasize Japan's desire to both secure economic

ties with allies and ensure vital raw materials for the nation.

In Papua New Guinea, the last leg of the trip, Abe had another opportunity to promote a positive image of Japan by being the first Japanese Prime Minister to visit the nation in 29 years. His visit came at a time when Papua New Guinea is becoming an enormous liquefied natural gas supplier to the rest of Asia. Always looking to secure additional energy sources, especially as his nation struggles to restart its nuclear power program, Abe promised further investment toward the development of Papua New Guinea's LNG infrastructure.

However, some criticisms were made about Japan's ongoing refusal to lower tariffs for its local farm industry – a major hurdle in the TPP discussions – and Abe's decision to find alternate ways to pursue whale hunting despite the [International Court of Justice's ruling](#) earlier this year.

Despite what appeared to be a friendly trip to promote mutually beneficial relationships, it must also be viewed as part of Abe's never-ending efforts to curb China's growing influence in the region and what many view to be their hostile attempts to change the status-quo. Although, China was never directly brought up in any of the public statements, it was quite obvious that the country was on everyone's mind – similar to a distracting piece of lettuce covering your colleagues tooth, in which you can't help but glance at numerous times during a conversation. Simply put, it is a message that Japan will not sit idly by while it perceives China to take dangerous unilateral actions. By visiting these nations and providing both military and economic benefits, Abe is attempting to shore up allies in the event that it finds itself in a drastic dispute with China, a dispute many see as inevitable.

Portraying the Japanese work ethic to a tee where vacation is all but a foreign word, Abe continued to work on Japan's image and relationships when he visited Latin America and the Caribbean this past month. You, however, should be taking full advantage of the summer vacation and relaxing before the fall semester begins.



Sean Mulvihill

Why Did You Stay?

Last month we took a short break from "Where are they now?" to bring you information on what ALTs will be doing after they finished their JET experience. We are going to continue to break from the typical WATN section this issue to bring you information on those who are still with us in what we are calling "Why did you stay?" Much like the rest of this issue, these Hyogo JETs answer that very question and let us in on their "must dos" for Japan. Make sure to check out next month's "Why did you come?" as we close out this series and return to WATN. We will introduce a few new ALTs and the reasons they came to Japan. If you are interested in answering some questions feel free to email hyogotimespublications@gmail.com.

Sean Mulvihill, USA, Kobe, 2nd Year

>> Why did you stay?: Personally, I like a two year period to get use to anything I do. I often feel one year is too short to experience something, most of the time it takes a year to finally settle in. I feel that I'll be more confident in my

teaching, now that I have a better idea of what works and what doesn't. There is also a lot more countries and cities I need to visit and festivals I need to see. Two years is usually my cut-off point, but who knows maybe something undeniably incredible will happen this year and I'll be answering this same question next August.

>> "Must do" for all JETs: I don't know if this counts, but if you have the chance go to Vietnam. I only spent time in the northern part, but it has been my favorite vacation spot so far. It is completely different from the typical city experience you get in Kobe, Osaka, Taipei, and Seoul. There is a lot of culture with tons of good food. As an American, there was also a strange feeling being in a country that a half-century ago I would have been in for completely different reasons.

>> One item still on your to-do list: Okinawa!!

>> Advice for new Hyogo/Kobe JETs: Challenge yourself to get out and do something different every

weekend. It gets easy to stay in the house reading and binge-watching television, especially when it becomes unbearably hot then cold, but you'll miss a lot of things you may never have the chance to see again.

Anastasia Windeler, USA, Kami-cho, 3rd Year

>> Why did you stay?: Definitely for the people. I have a less than ideal work situation but the locals, students, and coworkers are amazing. I feel I still have more to give to the community here.

>> "Must do": Visit Hiroshima

>> One item still on your to-do list: Climb Mt. Fuji

>> Advice: Make the most of your location. You can get anywhere from Hyogo pretty well. Check out Kyoto and Osaka often. Kansai food is the best! (but of course I'm biased)

Brittany Teodorski, USA, Ono, 2nd Year

>> Why did you stay?: There is so much to see and do just in Japan, never mind all of the other interesting countries that are so close. I knew coming in that there was no way I'd be able to accomplish everything I wanted to do in just one year. I'm also really interested in cultural psychology and related fields, so a year would not have been sufficient to truly embrace and experience Japan's unique culture first-hand.

>> "Must do": Explore Japan. Make friends close to you who enjoy the same things. Take a trip alone at least once; you'll learn a lot about yourself.

>> One item still on your to-do list: Pass the JLPT N2. I probably have at least another year before I can do that, but a girl can dream!

>> Advice: Throw yourself out there and travel as much as you can. There are so many interesting things to do and people to do them with, even in just our prefecture. The bonds you make with people while living abroad are extraordinary.

Erika Horwege, USA, Sanda, 2nd Year

>> Why did you stay?: For me, one year isn't enough - I'm excited for another year to travel and explore Japan with wonderful people, another year of omuraisu and takoyaki, and another year to enjoy teaching and spending time with my students now that I'm not completely clueless about this whole teaching thing.

>> "Must do": Outdoor onsen in the winter. There's nothing like soaking in a hot spring while watching snow fall on the forests and mountains.

>> One item still on your to-do list: Visit the wisteria tunnels in Fukuoka's Kawachi Fuji Gardens next Spring.

>> Advice: Explore your placement! Get a local map and visit recommended places, or just get lost and enjoy - from temples and parks to cafes and friendly ojii-sans, I've found some pretty amazing local gems tucked away on side streets and unexpected locations.

Howard Tobochnik, USA, Tamba, 2nd Year

>> Why did you stay?: Two reasons. First, I thoroughly enjoy living here. The people are awesome, the food is delicious, the pay is good, and there's always interesting things to see and do! Second, I want to continue improving my teaching skills and Japanese. The Japanese is coming along, but just takes time. As for teaching, this first year was spent making mistakes and finding out what actually works. I'm now starting to feel like a real teacher, gaining more responsibilities and being able to make a bigger impact in my school.

>> "Must do": Hanshin Tigers Game at Koshien Stadium. Buy balloons!

>> One item still on your to-do list:

Visit the Ghibli Museum

>> Advice: Try as many flavors of soft cream as possible. There are a surprisingly large number and many cool seasonal ones too. My favorites are local delicacies, クリ (chestnut) and 黒豆 (black soy bean). If you don't like ice cream, trying every kind of convenient store おにぎり is another worthwhile challenge.

Julie Lee, USA, Asago, 2nd Year

>> Why did you stay?: I decided to stay for the teaching experience. It was fun to teach international students, but it can be challenging to teach a group of homogenous

students outside of an English speaking community. Another reason is that it is so easy and safe to travel in Japan. I have traveled more within Japan than I had back in the States.

>> "Must do": Try a traditional activity like kendo or sadou.

>> One item still on your to-do list: Go to Fuji Rock.

>> Advice: Try everything at least once, but don't be afraid to say no.

Octavio Seijas, USA, Kobe, 2nd Year

>> Why did you stay?: I stayed for the job security, solid pay/benefits, the opportunity to live abroad and learn a new language and the culture (plus the food is awesome).

>> "Must do": Go to a Hanshin Tigers game at Koshien Stadium!

>> One item still on your to-do list: I have 2: Climb Mt. Fuji & watch a baseball game at all 12 stadiums.

>> Advice: "Be water, my friend" - Bruce Lee. Just remember to go with the flow. You're going to disagree with A LOT of things your OTEs might say and Japanese culture in general. Just go with it. Voice your opinions when you can, discuss it if possible, but at the end of the day you have to take a back seat. Yes, it will cause stress so find an outlet. Continue old hobbies or find new ones here. There's a lot to see, do, and experience while you're here. Don't let your time here go to waste!

Sarah McGowan, UK, Kobe, 2nd Year

>> Why did you stay?: One year is such a short amount of time to spend in Japan. I really enjoy my job and there are still so many things I want to do while I'm here.

>> "Must do": Get involved in as many of your school events as possible! Your students will probably be more enthusiastic talking to you outside of the classroom and the events are really fun.

>> One item still on your to-do list: Climb Mt. Fuji

>> Advice: Find something productive to do for when you have free time at school. This could be studying Japanese, taking a distance learning course, making new teaching materials, visiting other classes, etc.

>> Compiled by Sean Mulvihill

calendar

august

Outside Hyogo

Awaji

Hanshin

Kobe

AJET Events

Tajima

Tamba

Harima

monday

tuesday

wednesday

thursday

friday

saturday

sunday

all
month

Castle Boat Tour

Trout Fishing in Arima Hot Springs

Diamante Giyaman Exhibition

Otomate x Osamu Tezuka Special Exhibition

Takarazuka Revue 100th Anniversary Exhibition

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

Port of Kobe Fireworks

Fireworks (Lake Biwa)

Takarazuka Fireworks

Gojozaka Toki Ceramics Matsuri (Kyoto)

Sports Night (Akashi)

Shan Shan Matsuri (Tottori)

11

12

13

14

Ako Antique Market

15

16

17

Tamba Sasayama Dekansho Festival

Relay for Life Sign-Up Deadline

Sports Night (Akashi)

Setsubun Mantoro Matsuri (Nara)

Daimonji Gozan Okuribi (Kyoto)

Shan Shan Matsuri (Tottori)

HAJET Does Summer Sonic (Osaka)

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

Tajima Welcome Party

Block 6 Luau (Kobe)

Awaji Flower & Plant Tropical Garden

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

HAJET Welcome Party (Kobe)

Awaji Flower & Plant Tropical Garden

26



a new year begins...