

# **The ¼ Cheap Trick Issue**

**Exclusive! Rick Nielsen  
Shares His Memories of  
Japan and Talks About the  
Band's New Album**

# **JQ**

**JETaa NY QUARTERLY  
MAGAZINE**  
[jetaany.org/magazine](http://jetaany.org/magazine)



**CLOSE-UP: HISTORY OF BIG APPLE J-NEWSPAPERS  
JAPAN SOCIETY GOES CRAZY! FOR ANIME, MANGA  
PHILADELPHIA ON A ROLL WITH JAPAN SUMMER  
JET AUTHORS CRISTY BURNE, JAMES SHEA SPEAK  
COSPLAYER RENI, MARSHALL CRENSHAW ROCK  
AMBASSADOR SHINICHI NISHIMIYA SETTLES IN**

## **ALSO IN THIS ISSUE**

**A NEW SUBCHAPTER,  
THE REAL BEARD PAPA,  
PRE-DEPARTURE SEMINAR  
PHOTOS, AND MORE**

**BRINGING JAPAN A  
LITTLE CLOSER TO YOU**

**Summer 2009 Vol. 18 Issue No. 3**

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This issue is dedicated  
to the life and legacy of  
Walter Cronkite

1916-2009

And that's the way it is.

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JQ Quarterly Magazine

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## Letter From the Editor

Summer is usually considered something that marks the middle of the year, but working on this issue reminded me that for us JETs, summer is more like the beginning. After all, the new recruits zip off to Tokyo before July ends, and by the time August starts, most of the new returnees are back home, already grappling with things like reverse culture shock/finding a job/Morning Musume withdrawal.

New directions in life discovered through our shared Japan experience are the heart of this issue. Whether it's a roji tea garden tucked away in a part of your hometown you never knew existed, mining the inspiration from your years abroad to write award-winning books, or rocking a sold-out crowd at Budokan 30 years after you first visited Nippon, the stories you'll find here are the ones that continue to inspire new visitors from both sides of the globe, while keeping the JET Programme vital. Dig in.

**Justin Tedaldi**  
Editor (Kobe-shi, 2001-02)  
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## Letter From the Professional Outreach & Development Chair

Hi everyone,

As some of you may already know, after serving as the JETAANY Newsletter editor for about six years, I handed over the reins to Justin Tedaldi in January 2009 so I could start focusing more on [JetWit.com](http://JetWit.com) and the Writers Interpreters Translators (WIT) Group.

I've since taken on the title of JETAANY's Professional Outreach & Development Chair. This is really a title that describes what I've already been doing as opposed to a new position. And what I've been doing is focusing on ways to help JET alumni as well as current JETs find jobs and move forward with their careers. I've also strived to get JET alumni out of the woodwork and self-identify as part of the JET alumni community. I was even invited to be the keynote speaker for JETAA Canada's National Conference at the end of May.

Times are tough, and after existing for 21 years, the JET Alumni Association is now well-positioned to be able to help its members. Things have changed since I came back from JET in 1994. Now we've got a community of JET alumni established in all sorts of fields who can help the JET alumni community in various ways, including:

Posting job listings on JetWit and in the weekly JETAANY e-mail; helping JET alums connect with other JET alums who might be helpful; talking to JET alums about their work and careers and figuring out new approaches to finding jobs; creating opportunities and structures to contribute to JETAANY and JetWit that give JET alums hands-on experience that helps lead them to other career opportunities; and organizing activities such as the JET Alumni Author Showcase, Learning to Blog Workshop series and the upcoming JET Alumni Artist Showcase.

If you're looking for work or trying to figure out your career, feel free to get in touch and I'll try to help. The JET alumni community is a terrific resource and it's there for your benefit.

Going forward, I'll be at various JET alumni events, continue the Learning to Blog Workshop series and perhaps come up with some new career development activities. And of course, I'll continue to post, publish and promote on JetWit for the benefit of the JET alumni community.

*Minasan, yoroshiku onegaishimasu and gambarimashou!*

**Steven Horowitz (Aichi-ken, 1992-94)**  
[Professional@jetaany.org](mailto:Professional@jetaany.org)



Contribute to **JQ**. No diplomatic experience necessary.  
Send your ideas to [magazine@jetaany.org](mailto:magazine@jetaany.org).

"We used to be pitchy. Now we're awright. Thanks, **JQ!**"  
Contact [database@jetaany.org](mailto:database@jetaany.org) to subscribe.



# Nippon News Blotter

**5/29/09:** The nomination of a virtually unknown lawyer as the next U.S. ambassador to Japan was greeted with more concern than optimism by experts and the government. Chief Cabinet Secretary Takeo Kawamura welcomed John Roos' nomination, calling it "proof that the Obama administration considers the Japan-U.S. alliance important." ([Japan Times](#))

**6/2/09:** Japan approved plans for a missile early warning system and some ruling party lawmakers suggested Japan should inspect North Korean ships, as a report said the North was preparing to fire a mid-range missile. ([Reuters](#))

**6/2/09:** Reports of four organ transplant operations at a UCLA surgeon performed on members of a Japanese crime syndicate have sparked debate as to who should receive precious donated organs—and whether wealthy foreigners should be allowed to "buy into" a system to which they do not contribute. ([ABC News](#))

**6/15/09:** Due to their lack of interest in sex and preference for less competitive lives, *soushoku danshi*—literally translated as "grass-eating boys"—are provoking a national debate about how the country's economic stagnation since the early 1990s has altered men's behavior. ([Slate.com](#))

**6/30/09:** Wakamatsu Park in Kobe City will soon be the home of a life-size Tetsujin (aka Giganter) robot, 60 feet tall and weighing nearly 50 tons, which will be on permanent display starting in October to symbolize the city's revival after the 1995 Kobe earthquake. ([CNET](#))

**7/4/09:** Japanese parliament enacted an amended law claiming that a group of Russian-administered islands off Hokkaido is an "integral part" of Japan, a move many analysts believe will undoubtedly provoke Russia and therefore poses a new hurdle for the settlement of the dispute. ([Xinhua](#))

**7/5/09:** Japan's taxation authorities ordered a Seattle-based affiliate of online retailer Amazon.com Inc. to pay 14 billion yen (\$119 million) in back taxes. Amazon.com has requested U.S. and Japanese tax authorities review the matter in light of the two nations' bilateral tax treaty. ([MarketWatch](#))

**7/6/09:** Pornography fans are feeding a surge in demand for movie downloads in Japan, home to the world's first third-generation wireless network. While profiting from the traffic, Tokyo-based mobile carriers DoCoMo and KDDI Corp. say they've been forced to impose limits on the heaviest users. ([Bloomberg News](#))

**7/7/09:** Panasonic Corp. said it has developed a medical robot that dispenses drugs to patients, the Japanese electronics giant's first step into robotics. Panasonic will sell the robot to Japanese hospitals next March and will market it in the United States and Europe later. ([AP](#))

**7/9/09:** The Diet passed bills that tighten controls on foreign residents, paving the way for them to take effect within three years, despite opposition from foreigners and human rights activists. The planned enforcement follows an agreement on the bills reached last month. ([Japan Times](#))



**7/12/09:** More than 500 supporters of China's ethnic minority Uighurs on Sunday rallied in Tokyo as the Chinese authorities banned public gatherings in restive Urumqi city after ethnic violence. ([AP](#))

**7/13/09:** Japanese Prime Minister Taro Aso and his ruling coalition agreed to hold a general election on August 30, a few weeks later than Aso initially intended, to buy time to try to boost the coalition's popularity after a disastrous Tokyo local assembly election loss the day before. Analysts said the move by Aso's government likely won't prevent a big defeat for the ruling Liberal Democratic Party that would in all probability cause it to cede power to the Democratic Party of Japan, ending more than half a century of nearly uninterrupted LDP rule. ([Wall Street Journal](#))

**7/13/09:** Suntory Holdings, the Japanese beverage company, said that it was considering merging with larger rival Kirin Holdings in a move that would create one of the world's leading food and drinks companies and catapult the joint entity to pole position in Japan. ([New York Times](#))

## Beautiful Apartment for Rent!

•One-bedroom apartment, 745 sq. ft., 10th floor of the Atlantic building at 31 River Court in Newport, Jersey City.

•Large windows, abundant sunshine, SW views of Battery Park, the Hudson River and Newport Marina below.

•Rent is \$1915/month for lease beginning August or September 2009 and ending February 2011. No broker fee.

The Atlantic building is meticulously maintained, doormen are on 24 hours and the management company provides incredibly good service. Location ([www.newportnj.com](http://www.newportnj.com)) has all amenities; all within very short walking distance is a supermarket, Duane Reade, a deli, Starbucks, dry cleaners, a wine store, a big shopping mall, great restaurants and a marina. The Pavonia Newport PATH train station (to get to New York City) is one block away; go to the West Village in 10 minutes, to 33rd Street in 20 minutes, or to the World Financial Center in 10 minutes. The New York Waterway ferry stops just outside your door and goes to 39th Street in eight minutes.

I was a JET from 1994-95 in Kagoshima-ken, and president of the JETAANY chapter ('98-'99). This unit is really perfect for any returning JET or JET alum tired of paying Manhattan rent and needing some light and fresh air! I want to secure this transfer very soon, so e-mail me with questions, or to come see the place: Yvonne Thurman at [yvonne@dollybellbakery.com](mailto:yvonne@dollybellbakery.com).



# Comings & Goings



## NEW YORK WELCOMES AMBASSADOR NISHIMIYA

On March 30, the new ambassador and consul general Shinichi Nishimiya arrived in New York and took office, succeeding Mr. Motoatsu Sakurai. Born in 1952, Mr. Nishimiya joined the foreign service of Japan in 1976. After working at the Embassies in Washington D.C., Moscow and London, he served as the Director of Policy Coordination Division, Foreign Policy Bureau and as Deputy Director-General, Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau, both in Tokyo. From 2005 to 2006, he served as a minister and subsequently as Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary at the Embassy of Japan in Beijing. His most recent post was Director-General of the North American Affairs Bureau in Tokyo. Ambassador Nishimiya has said that the relationship between the Consulate and the local community should be as "interactive" as possible, and you can read an exclusive interview with him on page 6.



## NEW ASSISTANT DIRECTORS AT JLGC

Since last spring, the JLGC has welcomed five new assistant directors. Here are three more of their new faces in addition to Chizuko Kawamura-san, who was introduced in our last issue.

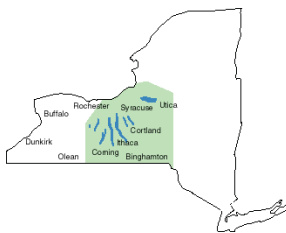
**Name:** Kazuaki Nakajima  
**Furusato:** Saitama-shi and Itabashi-ku, Tokyo  
**Interests:** The outdoors, watching games and shows, playing golf and U.S. policing systems.  
**How is your stay in NY?** Great! I've enjoyed city life in on weekdays and the outdoors in New York and New Jersey on weekends where I live with my family.

**Name:** Yuko Nishida  
**Furusato:** Izumo-shi, Shimane  
**Interests:** Eating, drinking and sleeping  
**How is your stay in NY?** It's my first time to visit here, and I'm so excited to be living here for two years.

**Name:** Shinya Abe  
**Furusato:** Suita-shi, Osaka  
**Interests:** Football, surfing and drinking different types of wine.  
**How is your stay in NY?** I was overwhelmed at first by the diversity of this big city, but I really enjoy it now!

*Dozo yoroshiku onegaishimasu!*

Nakajima-san, Nishida-san and Abe-san get the sign of approval from Hanzawa-san.



## FINGER LAKES SUBCHAPTER LAUNCHED

Do you live in Upstate New York and wish you had more contact with other JET alums in the area? Feeling left out because you're far from the JETAANY hub in Manhattan? My name is Kate Chevarley (Niigata-ken, 2004-06; photo at right), and I will be moving to Ithaca in August to begin my MBA at Cornell.

After my time on the JET Programme, I worked as a fundraiser for two and a half years at Harvard Medical School and served as treasurer of the New England JET Alumni Association. I will be launching a new Finger Lakes subchapter upon my arrival in Ithaca and hope to connect with other JET alums in the area! Potential events include *Nihongo Dake* Dinners, *hanami*, wine tastings, and other social and cultural activities to promote networking among JET alumni. If you are interested in joining, please e-mail me at [kate.chevarley@gmail.com](mailto:kate.chevarley@gmail.com). Cheers!



**Diplomat, Collaborator, Fly  
Fisher: An Interview with  
Ambassador Shinichi Nishimiya**  
By Anne Koller  
(Fukuoka-ken, 2002-04)

*Having been spotted at various local Japan-related events, JETs were curious to know more about Mr. Shinichi Nishimiya, the new Consul General of Japan in New York. JQ spoke with Ambassador Nishimiya to find out his plans for the Consulate and how JETAANY can help.*

**How are you and your family adapting to New York life? What has been the hardest part about living in the city and the most satisfying? What do you miss the most about our beloved Nippon?**

We are adapting very well. The hardest part has been the weather. Nobody told us that New York weather is this unstable and unpredictable. [*Jokingly*] I have been told that there is no spring or fall between the long hot summer and a long, cold winter; then how do you describe what we have now? There is no spring or fall, [so] how do you describe what we are in now? The most satisfying part of living in New York for my wife and I is meeting people. Everyone has been very welcoming and kind. I miss ramen! There are ramen shops everywhere in Japan and they are always open. You can go to places in New York, but it isn't the same. I do think the lack of eating ramen has allowed me to live a healthier life here, which my wife is certainly happy about. [*laughs*]

**I have heard of your spectacular English abilities from various JETs. When did you start learning English and what are some secrets you could give to better grasp the language and perhaps culture?** This boils down to curiosity and working hard, which of course is not what everyone wants to hear. [*laughs*]

Most people interested in languages will say that cramming doesn't work. The key is to learn and study from actual experience by picking up phrases from native speakers and using them. When you hit a wall, which sometimes happens, don't give up. I know that bridging two languages is difficult, but also rewarding. The intricacies and differences between languages are what make learning them interesting. Words that don't translate have always fascinated me. In Japanese, for example, we have *gambatte*, *hisashiburi* and *shikataganai/shoganai*, which are difficult, if not impossible, to translate in English. In English, you have "identity," which doesn't truly translate in Japanese; our latest version, *jikodoitsusei*, does not fully capture its meaning.

However, adapting to another culture in an organizational or business situation is a tougher question. I would suggest learning the ropes from colleagues and teachers daily, which will help form a base to build on instead of just plunging in. Immersing yourself in the culture is very important and many JETs have accomplished this by experiencing taiko, ikebana and other Japanese activities to adapt easier. Most importantly, people are unique and it is impor-

tant for people to have the psychological room to enjoy each other's differences.

**What are your hobbies and when do you find the time to enjoy them?**

Fly fishing. I started during my tenure in the UK and have enjoyed it ever since. I have already been to the Croton River in Westchester and have planned an upcoming trip to the famous Catskills to try the waters there. When you are a fly fisher, you find and make time to do it.

**What made you decide to work in diplomacy and foreign affairs? What advice would you give for any JETs interested in pursuing a career in the foreign service?**



Anne with Ambassador Nishimiya. (Noriko Furuhashi)

It was actually by accident. As a student at the University of Tokyo, I was interested in international relations and pursuing an academic life. The moment of truth was when I failed the post-graduation exam into a master's program and decided to work in the public sector in foreign affairs. The advice I would give to JETs interested in public affairs or the foreign service is not a general recommendation, but more of a specific mindset. Firstly, be ambitious. As the historically famous William Smith Clarke, who was involved in the opening of Hokkaido University, said, "Boys, be ambitious!"

Secondly, as I am a "relativist," I would advise people to always see things both in perspective and proportion. For example, many people focus on the shrinking size of Japan, but forget that the size of its economy is still one of the largest in the world, much larger than China. Thirdly, in all careers, be engaged with the real world and learn as much as possible.

**After serving in various Japanese embassies in Moscow, London and Beijing, what is the main difference between Japan's relationship with the U.S., UK, Russia and China?**

People sometimes forget that Japan and the U.S. are officially allies and great friends. Opinion polls conducted in both countries consistently show that we like and trust each other. In Japanese polls that ask "Which country do you like the most?," the U.S. is always number

one, scoring around 75 percent. The Foreign Ministry conducts polls every year with Gallup and Japan is always a top trustworthy ally; 80 percent for the general public and over 90 percent with experts. [*Link below -ed.*]

The basis for this is the "grassroots" friendship found between everyday people and the interest in each other's culture. The relationship between Japan and the U.S. cannot be found anywhere else.

As for the UK and Japan, we have many things in common. We are both tea lovers and island countries on the edge of huge countries. From my vantage point, Japan has looked and will continue to look towards the UK model in terms of international politics and also its alliance with the U.S. as a model to consider.

Russia is a very important neighbor of Japan. There is huge room for us to develop more neighborly relations and work together on mutually beneficial issues together. The Northern Territory issue is still pending, however. The good news is that it is a rare case in which both sides acknowledge that the territorial issue is there, unresolved, and must be resolved. Although it is taking a long time to come to a mutually agreeable resolution, both governments are eager to resolve the issue.

China is the most important neighbor of Japan and both sides need, and should have, even more friendly relations. This is coming at the government level, helped by the expansion of trade and people-to-people exchanges and travels. This will position both countries favorably and is fundamental to smoother relationships between Japan and China.

**What are the key issues that you will address in your new role? What organizations in New York will be essential to engage to improve U.S.-Japan relations and increase awareness about Japanese culture in New York?**

That depends on how long my government keeps me here. [*laughs*] My main goal is to consolidate existing friendships between various groups in New York and bring groups together. I believe the Consulate will be better off if we strive to strengthen the network among stakeholders of Japan.

For example, JET is a prestigious and successful program that exposes people to Japanese culture. Roughly speaking, there are around 50,000 JET alumni in the world and around half of them are from the U.S. This means that one in every 10,000 Americans is a JET alum and one in 2,500 families has a JET. These are compelling figures and they are constantly growing. We hope that through contact with the New York chapter, we can work together and capitalize on our mutual interest in each other.

Additionally, Japanese businesses have a strong linkage with the U.S. thanks to the thriving economic relations and the Consulate appreciates the support given to Japanese activities. Japan Day @ Central Park, for example, would not have been possible without the strong business support we received. I think that when the fun factor gets bigger, it provides a good vehicle for

stakeholders and businesses to get together. It is natural and healthy to have a series of stakeholders in the U.S. who we can collaborate with to improve U.S.-Japan relations even more. This will be essential to developing a horizontal network instead of through a vertical approach with the Consulate just maintaining relations with the respective groups.

**How will the economic crisis affect the number of foreign workers in Japan, and most importantly, the JET Programme?** JETs are very welcome in Japan and the JET Programme remains strong. The challenge is that the local and central government fund JETs, which can be expensive, especially during these difficult times. However, structurally I see no changes and don't think JETs have anything to fear. Also, with the Ministry of Education's ambitious 2011 timeline to establish English classes in elementary schools, there will be a big need for JETs. I foresee the number of JETs accepted increasing in the near future.

**What expectations do you have for JETAANY and is there anything you would suggest we encompass in the year 2009?** Actually, there is. I would like not only JETAANY, but other organizations in New York to come together on a specific project. The consulate organizes school caravan visits where Japanese volunteers go to local schools. It is a half-day introduction to Japanese culture through sharing various Japanese arts, such as origami, *shuji*, etc. with students.

Up until now, the consulate has done this on their own, but I would love to partner with JETAANY to make it even more successful. JETAANY has many resources and would be better positioned to do the job. All of you have learned to be more adaptable and would be great examples for the students to learn from and share Japan's culture with.

**How has Japan changed when it comes to embracing diversity in the workplace and how do you think the future looks for more women and minorities to work as public figures and leaders from within Japan?**

My sense is that women are making strides in the workforce and that trend is not reversible. Although this may be slower in Japan than other countries, there is a steady increase of more female workers in leadership positions. It is an issue that Japan has consistently faced, but is hoping to change.

More and more women and minorities are making a name for themselves in the economic pages of newspapers and through mergers and acquisitions of companies. I don't foresee any setbacks for women and minorities in the future, but the question for Japan will be of pace and timing.

For more on Ambassador Nishimiya, visit [www.ny.us.emb-japan.go.jp/en/a/03.html](http://www.ny.us.emb-japan.go.jp/en/a/03.html).

For a summary of the 2009 U.S. Image of Japan Study opinion poll, visit [www.mofa.go.jp/announce/announce/2009/5/1191907\\_1134.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/announce/2009/5/1191907_1134.html).

## Japanese Demons Help JET Author Win Award By Gregory Anderson (Fukuoka-ken, 1990-92)

All JETs remember the *jinjas*, or shrines, of Japan that can be seen throughout the country whether you're in the city, *inaka*, or a small island off the coast. Similarly, just as numerous are the religious practices and folklore of Japan. Some of these are very easy to understand, while others such as stone phallic symbols which people bring their young children to...well, let's just say they're a little more complex.

Cristy Burne, an ALT (Hyogo-ken, 1998-2000) assigned to Midoridai High School in Kawanishi, used Japanese folklore and her love of writing to pen *Takeshita Demons*, a fictional children's book which chronicles the life of a schoolgirl named Miku as she attempts to reconcile life as an immigrant in the UK, maintain her identity as a Japanese, and accept the reality that the spirits of her grandmother's stories are not just fantasy. As Cristy explains it, "The spirits are not always friendly."



Cristy with author Ruth Patterson. (FrancesLincoln.com)

One such being that appears in *Takeshita Demons* is the *nukekubi*. *nukekubi* are monsters or demons that look and act like humans by day but at night their heads and necks detach to allow them to fly around in search of human prey. They must return to their bodies by sunrise like vampires or they will die. In fact, legend has it that one such defense against them is to hide their bodies while the head and neck are flying around. The only way to distinguish a *nukekubi* from a real human is a red spot at the base of the neck where it detaches from the head.

In April, Cristy was awarded the first-ever Frances Lincoln Diverse Voices Children's Book Award for the best manuscript for eight- to 12-year-olds that celebrates diversity in the widest possible sense. The award was created to honor the life of Francis Lincoln, whose husband, a managing director of the Francis Lincoln publishing company, felt his wife was passionate about nurturing new talent, and this award is the sort of endeavor she would support. The prize is £1,500 (about \$2,400) along with the option to have your book published by

Frances Lincoln Children's Books. *Takeshita Demons* will be published in 2010.

Cristy is not new to writing; she has been doing it professionally since 2002. In fact, the first article she wrote was entitled "Weird Science: Up to Your Ears in Wax?" for *Science Max*, an Australian children's science magazine. Before Cristy won the Frances Lincoln Diverse Voices Award, she received the Young and Emerging Writer Award from Varuna House for her first manuscript, *One Weekend with Killiecrankie*, which also won the Voices on the Coast children's writing competition. Not one to sit still, Cristy is now patiently awaiting an agent's reply regarding her new creation: a 50,000-word adventure thriller for kids entitled *Beyond the Safe Zone*. And if all of this isn't impressive enough, Cristy is at the time of this writing 39 weeks pregnant, and will likely be a mother by the time you read this.

When asked about the future, Cristy said, "I'm taking a year off to have my first child and focus on fiction writing, which is an incredible luxury and a great thrill. I'm also keen to publish more books and increase the work I do with and for

children, both in science and literature." She explained that her love for writing began as a child. Her parents read to her when she was in primary school and she developed, as she puts it, an "insatiable" appetite for reading.

When asked what she misses most about Japan, Cristy says the food, and that although she now lives in London and Japanese restaurants are ubiquitous, it's not quite as good as the real thing.

One final fact about Cristy which many will find interesting is that she is a connoisseur of wasabi. I learned from reading an article on Cristy's Web site that most of the wasabi that people eat is artificial. What's the difference? According to Cristy, "Fresh wasabi is subtler, brighter on the tongue. It's like the difference between the smell of fresh cut grass and the smell of that same grass after a few days in the sun."

We wish Cristy the best on her new book and motherhood. *Omedetou gozaimasu!*

For more on Cristy's editing, writing, books and her blog, visit [www.cristyburne.com](http://www.cristyburne.com).

# Philadelphia **LOVEs** Japan!

By Therese Stephen (Iwate-ken, 1996-99)

What many people don't know is that the City of Brotherly Love is in love with Japan, and has been since the 1876 Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia when the Japanese Pavilion became one of the most popular exhibits of that historic World's Fair.

When you think of Philadelphia, you probably think of cheesesteaks, the Liberty Bell, Independence Hall or the Rocky steps at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. What you might not realize is that Philly has many ways for Japanese, and the Japanese-at-heart, to get their Japan fix for a lot less than a roundtrip ticket to Tokyo.

So, whether you're planning a quick weekend getaway or day trip this summer, or if you're a returning Philly JET looking at your hometown with a new post-JET perspective, read on for Philly's best Japan picks.

Let's start with those famous Rocky steps. It's cheesy and we know it, but everyone who visits Philly has to replay that famous Rocky Balboa moment. So once you've run to the top of the steps and done your obligatory fists-in-the-air pose, head on into the Philadelphia Museum of Art (PMA) and find your way to the East Asian Galleries.

One of the most endearing and exciting things about the PMA are its period rooms. While there are plenty of rooms displaying objects on pedestals or paintings on walls, a few steps through a doorway connecting two galleries will suddenly put you in the middle of an Indian temple or the hall of a Chinese palace.

Wander a little further and you'll find Sunkaraku Tea House, the highlight of the Japanese collection in the East Asian Galleries. A complete teahouse and accompanying waiting room, Sunkaraku (translated as "evanescent joys") was designed by architect and tea master Ogi Rodo and built in Tokyo in 1917. It is one of four structures built by Rodo that still exists today, and the only one outside of Japan.

Although you can't walk through the structure, you can peek through windows and doorways to examine the teahouse, where many financial

and political leaders of early 20th century Japan once participated in tea ceremonies.

The PMA also has three Japanese exhibitions in the Main Museum Building and in the Perelman Building this summer. Perelman admission is included in the \$16 adults/\$12 students Main Museum Building admission, or you can visit just the Perelman for \$8/\$6.

## **Daidō Moriyama: Tokyo Photographs | February 28, 2009-August 23, 2009**

Photos taken by Moriyama, known for his urban photography around Tokyo in the 1980s. Julien Levy Gallery, first floor, Perelman Building - <http://www.philamuseum.org/exhibitions/342.html>.

## **Hello! Fashion: Kansai Yamamoto, 1971-1973 | May 24, 2008-August 2009**

Exhibit of fashions by modern Japanese fashion designer Kansai Yamamoto. Costume and Textiles Study Gallery, second floor, Perelman Building - <http://www.philamuseum.org/exhibitions/318.html>.

## **The Art of Japanese Craft: 1875 to the Present | December 6, 2008-October 18, 2009**

Collection of woodwork, ceramics, lacquerware, paintings and metalworks that highlight 20th century Japanese crafts, including items made by six artisans named Living National Treasures by the Japanese government. Location: Main Museum Building, second floor, Galleries 241-243 - <http://www.philamuseum.org/exhibitions/316.html>.

**PMA ([www.philamuseum.org](http://www.philamuseum.org))** Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (Open until 8:45 p.m. on Fridays.) Admission: \$16 adults/\$12 students; pay what you wish all day on the first Sunday of each month. Japanese visitors can ask for a 360-page guide to the museum in *Nihongo*.

If the view looking into Sunkaraku teahouse from the outside has whetted your appetite for Japanese architecture, then you must make Shofuso Japanese House and Garden in West Fairmount Park the next stop on your Japanese tour of Philly.



Tea students demonstrate serving to guests at Shofuso in Philadelphia.

After leaving Japan, I found myself going through a fairly typical post-JET period of reverse culture shock. But when I found Shofuso, I knew it would be my Japanese home away from home. I go there to pretend I'm back in Japan for a while when I start feeling nostalgic, but not for the bright lights, karaoke-and-dance club Japan.

Nope. When I sit on the veranda at Shofuso, I'm transported to my Japanese homestay family's *tatami* room where in summer we'd open the sliding doors to the garden and dangle our legs over the edge, enjoying the breeze and zoning out on *Okaasan's* tidily kept garden.

**Shofuso ([www.shofuso.com](http://www.shofuso.com))** Open May to October 3; Tuesdays through Fridays, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.; Saturdays and Sundays, 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Admission: \$6 adults/\$3 students and seniors; free for members.

Visit their Web site for information on tea ceremonies and special events. Wear or bring socks to avoid having to wear paper slippers to tour the house. Also, call ahead at (215) 878-5097 before you visit, as a possible strike by city park workers may temporarily close the part of Fairmount Park where Shofuso is located.

Shofuso is an exquisite building designed by Japanese architect Junzo Yoshimura and based on 16th and 17th century Japanese architecture. Its deep, well-shaded verandah looks out over a large, koi-filled pond and Momoyama-style viewing garden designed by Sano Tansai.

City noise is masked by the garden's waterfall and the sound of the breeze blowing through the

pin. It's no coincidence that this collection of buildings—including its teahouse, bathhouse and kitchen—was dubbed Sho-fu-so, or Pine Breeze Villa.

Though the structure itself is a piece of art worthy of notice, since 2007 Shofuso has also displayed a permanent installation of 20 modern *Nihonga* murals painted by world-renowned Japanese artist Hiroshi Senju. His waterfall paintings reflect the colors of Shofuso and match the mood and history of the site.

Initially built to be exhibited in the Museum of Modern Art's sculpture garden in New York City from 1954 to 1955, Shofuso was dismantled, moved and then reassembled in Philadelphia's West Fairmount Park. The spot was chosen because, not long after the 1876 Centennial Exhibition, a Buddhist gate called *Nio-mon* had been displayed there from 1905 until it burned down in 1955.

The closing of the Shofuso exhibit at MoMA and the need to find the house and garden a new home was a fortuitous coincidence for Philadelphia, which has hosted a Japanese structure on this spot almost continuously since 1876.

There are too many Japanese treasures in Philly to mention in one article, like the unexpected *maneki neko* waving tirelessly through a window in historic Elfreth's Alley, or the 102-foot tall *Bolt of Lightning: A Memorial to Benjamin Franklin* sculpture by Japanese American artist Isamu Noguchi at Monument Plaza.

But for tips on Japanese restaurants, shops or spots where Philly





Artist Hiroshi Senju describes to Shofuso visitors how he created the waterfall effect of the "Water Curtain" mural seen behind him.

locals can keep up with their Japanese hobbies, click the "Resources" link at the Japan America Society of Greater Philadelphia Web site at [www.jasgp.org](http://www.jasgp.org).

Visitors to Philadelphia can get around easily on the Philly Phlash bus ([www.phillyplash.com](http://www.phillyplash.com)). An economical, hop-on hop-off bus (\$5 for an all-day pass or \$2 per ride); it stops near all the major Philly tourist attractions including the PMA (stops #14 & 18) and Memorial Hall/Please Touch Museum (stop #16, just a short walk from Shofuso). The route runs near the Suburban and Market East rail stations.

Finally, for Japanese tourists, a look at the Japanese translation of "The Constitutional Walking Tour of Philadelphia" can help you plan a tour of Philadelphia's historic district at <http://www.theconstitutional.com/selfguided/tour.php?lid=12>. See you this summer!



Stone lantern amidst peonies and azaleas in Shofuso's roji tea garden.

## JETAA in the Big Apple and Beyond

By Megan Miller  
(Hyogo-ken, 2000-02)

Often cited as one of the most active chapters in the world, the Japan Exchange and Teaching Alumni Association of New York—better known as JETAANY—has served JET "graduates" for decades. JETAANY was informally founded shortly after the 1988 kickoff of the JET Programme itself and was officially organized several years later as an incorporated non-profit with executive leadership roles. In 2007, JETAANY achieved 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status.

Early activities included mostly informal gatherings such as happy hours and loosely organized outings, as well as the annual softball tournament. Today, JETAANY has blossomed into a bevy of cultural, social and professional experiences that extend well beyond the occasional *enkai*.



JET Alumni Author Showcase.

### Cultural Events

What is it that you miss most about Japan? Is it the relaxing swirl of steamy *onsen* waters around your shoulders? Or perhaps it's the cool feel of *tatami* below your feet contrasting with the warm touch of a bowl of *matcha* against your fingertips.

Before you ask—yes, there is an *onsen* in New York! We made this lovely discovery last year, and now our *onsen* outing has become another annual tradition. We also host an annual sake tasting event, and this year we leveraged our JETAANY network by holding it at Bao Noodle, a Manhattan restaurant owned and operated by JET alumnus Chris Johnson (Oita-ken, 1992-95).

In recent years we have organized a Japanese dance class, a roll-your-own-sushi event, a Japanese cooking class, and tea ceremonies at the Urasenke Chanoyu Center in Manhattan. Taking advantage of the plethora of museums New York offers, we have arranged private tours of museums hosting Japan-related exhibits and shows.

### Professional Events

In addition to re-creating those "*natsukashii* for Japan" moments, one of our foremost goals is to assist JETs and JET alumni with their career development. Each year, we partner with the Japanese government on their initiatives, such as the Pre-departure Seminar for Departing

JETs and the Career Forum for newly returned JETs. Every June, the Pre-departure Seminar is honed and refined by alumni to bring the best assistance and information possible to the newly selected JETs departing for Japan.

In October, the Career Forum and Welcome Back Reception invites newly minted JET alumni back into the fold. These alumni-led sessions include a résumé development workshop, a career panel and a "meet the recruiters" session. The evening is capped off with a sushi- and sake-laden reception hosted by the ambassador.

A marquee event that has really put JETAANY on the map is our annual Meishi Exchange. Each year, 50 to 100 JET alumni, Friends of JET (FOJ) and recruiters gather together to network, job hunt, recruit and just have a great time. More recently, we have established several career groups, kicked off by the Writers Interpreters Translators (WIT) Group. This initiative has expanded rapidly into an extensive resource for JET alumni: [JetWit.com](http://JetWit.com), led by JET alumnus Steven Horowitz (Aichi-ken, 1992-94).



Bon Odori Dance Class.

Additional groups include a Music Group, a Teaching Group, a New Moms Group, and coming soon, an Artist Group. This March, JETAANY and JetWit.com hosted a highly successful author event, showcasing several JET alumni authors and their work, followed by a book signing and reception.

### Social Events

Sometimes, it's important to just have a little fun. But even our "social" events tend to pack a two-fisted punch by incorporating networking opportunities and cultural experiences along with the laughs. happy hours, New York Harbor cruises, *Nihongo Dake* Dinners, quarterly meetings, softball tournaments, *bōnenkai*, *shinnenkai* and the like all offer a chance for alumni to expand their networks and utilize all that JETAA has to offer.

Behind the scenes of all of these activities is our best asset—a competent and dedicated executive committee fully supported by our board of directors. Also critical to our success are strong partnerships with both the JLGC (CLAIR New York) and the Japanese Consulate. And finally, we would be nothing without our 1,300-member roster of unique and skilled alumni that enable the organization to constantly grow, evolve and be successful. To all of you—*otsukaresama deshita!*

For more on JETAANY and upcoming events, visit <http://jetaany.org>.

**Japan Day 2009 Brings  
Japanese Culture to the Masses**  
By Stacy Smith  
(Kumamoto-ken CIR, 2000-03)

On May 31, Central Park's East Meadow was transformed into a microcosm of Japan. There were musical performances, food and tea samples, calligraphy, origami and other cultural activity booths and a plentitude of costumed anime and manga fans wandering about. Welcome to Japan Day @ Central Park!

This year was the third time this large-scale event was held, and the 45,000 people who participated surpassed last year's record-breaking amount of 40,000. Among the luminaries on hand were the new Japanese ambassador Shin-ichi Nishimiya and singing sensations orange pekoe and Ai Kawashima, the latter holding the title of Special Supporter and whose "Daijoubu da Yo" was the day's theme song.

Things kicked off at 8 a.m. with two Japan Day races in Central Park. Following a Kids' Run held for 364 young athletes, 4,856 adult runners took part in a four-miler led by the Japanese representative at last year's Beijing Olympics, Yoko Shibui. The cute race shirt given to all participants was decorated with a sakura tree, and there was a kimono-clad all-female band giving the runners an energy boost at the start line. Thanks to the donations of generous sponsors, the post-race raffle featured some amazing loot. Besides household goods from Takashimaya and teriyaki beef-flavored chow mein noodles from Nissin, the grand prize was a round-trip ticket to Tokyo courtesy of Continental Airlines!

The main event started at 10:00 a.m., allowing runners to cool down and stake out their spots at the booths giving away free food which opened at 11:00. Because of the mouth-watering offerings of cold *udon*, *gyudon*, Nissin noodles, *gyoza* and miso soup, the lines were insanely long. Nevertheless, the crowds patiently stood under the sun awaiting their turn for a taste of *washoku*. There were no free tissues, but there were people giving out bottles of Ito-en tea in varieties of green, jasmine and oolong which helped to cool things down.

The events taking place on the main stage dubbed "Cool Japan" kept the crowd entertained. The acts ranged from traditional taiko to an all-women's choir to a jazz musician to samurai swordplay, and in the afternoon things heated up with a *mikoshi* carrying and *bon odori*. The final slot was a concert given by the



Stacy, JET alum Sachi Fujimori and Friend of JET Elena Togashi enjoy the sun and *gyudon*.



Japan Day 2009 four-mile run commemorative shirt.

forementioned groups as well as a few others, and this captivated many in the audience. When Kawashima was later interviewed about her performance, she revealed that it was the first time she had sung in front of people wearing bikinis and that she was initially taken aback by these sunbathing fans.

Of course, no Japan-related event would be complete without Hello Kitty, and she was indeed on the scene taking pictures with squealing fans. But perhaps even more striking were the numerous young people who came clad in the costumes of their favorite anime and manga characters. They showed great spirit, but also seemed to scare some of the people who came to experience more straightlaced aspects of Japanese culture such as *go*, *shogi*, tea ceremony and Japanese-style weaving.

Among the goods to be purchased were Japan Day-themed T-shirts (separate from the race shirts given to runners as part of their registration fee) and wristbands, the proceeds from these sales going to the Central Park sakura planting fund. The information booth had pamphlets from many of Japan's prefectures, so JETs feeling *natsukashii* about their former hometowns could pick up materials there. This area also had a stamp rally for kids, where the goal was to fill up a map of Japan by going to all the different booths and getting a different prefecture stamped at each one.

Each year Japan Day continues to grow and improve, and Ambassador Nishimiya expects this to be a lasting trend. Regarding this year's effort he commented, "Only in New York could they so easily pull off an event of this scale where everything blends together so seamlessly." Going forward it will be interesting to follow the future evolution of Japan Day, a now-permanent aspect of the city's cultural landscape.

For more info and photos, visit [www.japandaynyc.org](http://www.japandaynyc.org).



Co-hosts Sandra Endo and Brian Nishii tell Kitty-chan that Sarah Jessica Parker's got nothing on her.

**JETlog**



Yukari with a furry friend in Kawagoe, Saitama.

*This issue features gourmet Yukari Sakamoto (Chiba-ken, 1989-1990), a JET alum originally born in Japan.*

The JET Programme was still in its initial years when I joined in 1989 to teach English in Japan. Although born in Tokyo, I was raised in Minnesota and did not have much exposure to the language. My Japanese mother is a member of a Japanese dance group, so from an early age I studied with the group. And of course, I was exposed to the cuisine at home, as we often had miso soup, *ohitashi* (blanched spinach dressed with sesame seeds and soy sauce), homemade pickles and rice.

I was fortunate to be placed in Matsudo, Chiba for my year on JET. While most of my family in Japan is in Yamagata, I did have a few cousins living in Tokyo who I could spend time with. The JET Programme was a brilliant introduction to Japanese culture, and of course, the lovely people. Twenty years later, I am still in touch with some of the friends I made through the JET Programme. While living in Japan, I applied myself to studying the language and culture. It is crazy to think how life was 20 years ago; the Internet didn't exist and phone calls home were ridiculously expensive.

Living in Japan for the first time, I was exposed to many new Japanese foods including sushi, *shochu*, and soup with the fish's head in it: "Yukari, this is the special bowl, so you should have it." A night out with the some of the teachers and the nurse found a few of us in the infirmary the next day nursing our hangovers.

Upon returning to the States, the best way to keep up my language was through the Concordia Language Villages in Northern Minnesota. The Japanese summer camp, *Mori no Ike*, immerses children in the language and culture of Japan. It was very similar to teaching English in Japan: working with teachers, coming up with fun ideas for the students, and incorporating the culture into lessons. I spent ten summers there, eight of them as the dean.

As the dean of Concordia Language Villages, I had the great fortune of meeting students of Japanese. It was exciting to introduce the campers and staff to all things Japanese each summer, including food, festivals, traditions and the language itself. Over a dozen of them have gone on to teach on JET, and a few of them have married Japanese.

Fascinated with food, I trained as a chef at the French Culinary Institute in 2001 and returned to Tokyo a year later to study Japanese food. I am currently a columnist for *Metropolis* magazine in Tokyo and contribute to several publications including *Food & Wine*.

I have lived a total of eight years in Tokyo and have held interesting jobs including the sommelier at the Tokyo Park Hyatt and at Takashimaya's *depachika* (department store basement) in Nihonbashi. While at Takashimaya I passed the exam to become a *shochu* advisor, similar to a sommelier, but specializing in *shochu*.

Last fall I married a Japanese fishmonger, Shinji, whose company also sells Japanese fish to restaurants in New York, and returned to Tokyo to write a book inspired by my time at Takashimaya. The book, *Food Sake Tokyo*, will introduce readers to the food culture of Japan, as well as direct them to shops throughout the city, especially areas like Tsukiji Market and *depachika*. At the moment, I conduct culinary tours that demystify the food culture of Japan. Popular destinations include, of course, Tsukiji, *depachika* and Kappabashi. I also conduct hands-on cooking classes.

JET alumni in New York are spoiled with the many different ways to stay involved with Japanese culture. There is now also a large Japanese culinary center in Midtown. For sake aficionados there is SakayaNYC in the East Village, a great sake shop. The owners, Hiroko and Rick, do many tastings of *jizake* so you can taste before you buy. A host of other places to enjoy include Chibi's, Sakagura, En Japanese Brasserie and even a *shochu* bar at Umi no Ie. Ramen, yakitori and gyudon are also plentiful. There is even Beard Papa for their choux creams and a bakery to get the thick sliced bread.

My husband and I plan on returning to the New York City area in the fall. I hope to continue teaching people about Japanese food and culture while my husband hopes to introduce people to the rich seafood culture of Japan. And I also look forward to connecting with JET alumni in the city.

Visit Yukari's "Food Lover's Guide to Tokyo" blog at <http://tokyo-station-yukari.blogspot.com>. For more information on Food Sake Tokyo, her forthcoming book to be published April 2010, visit [www.littlebookroom.com/foodsaketokyo.html](http://www.littlebookroom.com/foodsaketokyo.html).

## Nihonjin in NY: Beard Papa's Masashi Wada

By Janice Chow  
(Saitama-ken, 2005-06)

*The aroma of creamy custard and freshly baked puffs and the sight of Beard Papa staff in bright canary yellow and blue uniforms behind a counter of irresistible pastries are welcome signs for any dessert aficionado. I often frequented the Beard Papa at Shibuya Station, one of the busiest areas in Tokyo. It has a culture all its own, from the "Papa" vernacular to the colorful assembly line of workers and the cult flavors. JQ recently had a chance to talk to Masashi Wada, the man behind the delectable treat of Japan.*

### What is your title at Beard Papa?

Manager of operations and marketing.



Wada (rear left) with his Beard Papa colleagues.

### Where are you from in Japan?

I was born in Gujo City, Gifu, and moved to Nagoya after I graduated from high school. Yes, I am a country boy!

### How long have you been in New York?

I have been here for almost seven and a half years.

### How long has BP been in the U.S.?

Beard Papa has been in the U.S. since 2004, with its first location opening in New York's Upper West Side on March 5 of that year.

### How many BP stores are there in the U.S.?

Right now we have 31 stores in the U.S. and four in Canada.

### Who is BP, anyway?

That's a good question! Beard Papa is the grandfather of Mr. Hirota, BP's founder and the former CEO of Muginoh Ltd. Mr. Hirota's grandfather used to bring choux cream puffs to him every time he

came to visit, and he also had a sliver beard and always smoked a pipe.

### Very interesting, so Beard Papa is a real man. What's your favorite BP flavor?

I personally like our caramel flavor—it tastes like custard pudding! The most popular flavors in the U.S. are chocolate custard cream as well as our original vanilla flavor.

### So tell me, why did you come to New York?

I was just tired of adapting to the Japanese culture or common rule in Japan, and was looking for a chance step away from a familiar place. I thought about either going to Tokyo or overseas. Fortunately, I had some savings and a friend who lived in New York, so I decided to come here without any plans.

### That's quite a bold move. Did you encounter any difficulties adapting to the U.S.?

The first thing is the language!

interested in fashion like a normal guy in Japan. Before I came here I dreamed that I could find cool stuff for better prices, however the reality was totally different. All American clothes I can easily find here is a totally different taste than mine, and all European clothes are astronomically expensive. So I didn't have a choice but to adapt my style to be more American. In New York this is not a problem, but whenever I visit Japan, all my friends call me "dasai" (lame)!

### I know that saying, too! I used to live in Saitama, and everyone calls it *dasai*. Were there any difficulties in bringing BP to the U.S.?

The labor issues in federal and state law are the most difficult things to handle here. The quality and system of labor is still our biggest headache. In the U.S., all job duties are systematic and employees usually do not share positions. In Japan, all workers have to be familiar with all operations. For example, a worker in Japan combines food prep, assists and cleaning, but in the U.S., the cashier will only do the cashier's position, etc. In the end, this means that we have to hire more people.

Also, we often have to deal with issues regarding the quality of customer service. As our company policy, we must provide the same level of customer service as in Japan, but it's very difficult to do here. In Japan, we have almost the same customer service at McDonald's as at a fine dining restaurant. But in the U.S., we have to pay for customer service as well. So some employees are confused why we have to provide such a high standard of customer service when we're only selling less than two dollars of product.

### I see. So there's a significant amount of training needed. Did you have to adapt the product when you brought BP to the U.S.?

Yes, we did a lot of research and testing to try to create products especially for the U.S. However, at some point we found out that there are no borders for taste. If we think it tastes good, the majority of our customers in the U.S. also feel the same, with the exception of some really Japanese tasty things like red beans, green tea, etc. Now our goal is to provide exactly the same products that are sold in Japan. We try to serve the kind of desserts one can enjoy at a *depachika* or food court in Japan.

For Beard Papa locations, visit [www.beardpapa.com](http://www.beardpapa.com).

**Cheap Trick's Rick Nielsen**  
**The JQ Interview**  
 By Justin Tedaldi  
 (Kobe-shi, 2001-02)  
 Cover Photo by Danny Clinch

There are some bands that achieve legendary status in Japan, and Cheap Trick are a prime example. In 1978, the Rockford, Illinois-based group recorded a little album called *At Budokan* for their Japanese fans, but something unexpected happened: the disc went viral as an import, becoming one of the most beloved live albums of all time and cementing the reputation of Tokyo's Budokan as Japan's top rock venue. Now in their 35th year, Cheap Trick recently released a new album called *The Latest*. JQ said "hello there" to guitarist Rick Nielsen, the man who penned such classics as "I Want You to Want Me" and "Surrender" and can be heard shredding that familiar theme to *The Colbert Report*. Here's what he had to say.

**I want to start with a serious question: Have you ever been photographed without a cap?**

Ehh...[long pause] not recently.

**I bet you could get some good money if someone had a good photograph of that—I've never seen it.**

Ahh, who cares? [laughs]

**Regarding your first tour of Japan, how many shows total did you do there in addition to the two Budokan shows that you played?**

The very first trip, we played all over the place. We played Fukuoka, Shizuoka...we were there almost two weeks.

**You play in Kobe, too? That's where I used to live.**

We were there two tours ago, I think. Love it. Like all Japan, I love it. Ever since I've been there—'78 was the first time.

**Do you have any specific memories of the shows that you did before Budokan on that tour? Anything notably different in terms of the performances or the crowds?**

Not the performances so much, we were just going out from city to city, [but] there was nothing in English anyplace way back—that was 30 years ago—obviously, the street signs are Japanese and there's always some English, at least in Tokyo itself, but back then there was no English at all, so it was really difficult to—not that we went to that many places, but it was difficult to know anything at all that we could recognize. I mean, we were the only *gaijin* there back then in '78, you know. We were *gaijin* for sure. But now you go there and it's, like, you think somebody's from the United States and they can be from Russia or New Zealand or Australia or wherever, England—I mean, there weren't that many foreigners there.

**When Cheap Trick played at Budokan again last year, there was a special press event where the people who kept their original Budokan ticket stubs were al-**



Rick Nielsen onstage at Budokan, 2008. (Mike Graham)

**lowed to come in, watch you guys give an interview and also see an impromptu acoustic performance. How many people actually showed up with those stubs?**

All I know is the room was full, so I'm not sure what the number was. We had a good show; it was fun to have that many people who still had their tickets and still wanted to go see Cheap Trick.

**That Budokan show sold out in minutes. Is there going to be a full DVD or audio recording of that concert planned any time soon?**

That, I don't know...maybe we'll wait another 30 years. [laughs]

**Speaking of how long you guys have been around, the *Silver* album celebrated your 25th anniversary, and now you're looking at 35 with *The Latest* coming out. Is it safe to say that you guys will be around for another 15 years so you can go for the *Gold*?**

Why not? I guess, because we never thought about it. We enjoy playing. You know, I always wanted to be a musician; I always wanted to play...nothing has changed.

**What kind of jobs did you have before you were a full-time musician? You've been doing this for a long time.**

The only job I ever had was—I was a musician, but we weren't playing much. I lived in Philadelphia, and I went from being a busboy to a bartender in three months.

**Is that where you got your theatrical flair from?**

Well...[pause] nah. Everything I brought, whatever I had, was from being a musician and wanting to be a musician.

**Going back to Japan, let's say that you had a full week there to do whatever you want. What would you do, or what places would you visit?**

I'd like to work in the studios there; I'd like to be a producer there three months out of the year with Japanese groups. I always wanted that opportunity and never have had it...I used to study it, and it's frustrating, because I wanted to be a producer of new and talented Japanese groups because I like Japan so much.

**Was that fascination or that respect for Japan there before you guys ever toured there? Was it ever a dream of yours to play there?**

[At that time] I didn't really know that much about it. I mean, we had fan mail, little drawings of ourselves, but I'll be honest, I didn't really know.

**I think it's like that for a lot of groups.**

Yeah, I love it there. Love the people, love the culture, love the food, love how clean it is. Just loved it a lot. Plus, [the Japanese] studied our music; they studied our group. Fantastic.

**What's the weirdest food you ever ate in Japan?**

I ate *fugu* with [legendary Japanese concert promoter] Mr. Udo, and that was just weird because they told us it was poisoned...and I never liked *uni*. I thought it was horrible!

**You ever try *nattou*?**

I think I've had that, too. You know, I like the chicken restaurants, where everything's chicken. And I like to go to the places where everything's made with bacon. [laughs] Bacon makes everything tastes good.

**Bacon-wrapped chicken. You guys tour a lot. On average, how many gigs per year? At least 200-something.**

**What is it that keeps you out on the road consistently like that?**

We get asked. This is what we do for a living. I mean, we're either recording or performing. We've never been the band that goes out and, you know, makes the most money; it's never about that. If you notice, we don't play just big places, we play to small places—we play to every kind of place.

**You guys have such a joy of playing. Why do you think Cheap Trick deservedly has a reputation as one of the best live bands out there?**

[We] treat every show like it's very important. They're all important.

**After 35 years, to still be around and loved and respected all over the world, it's something that not a lot of bands get the opportunity to have.**

Or deserve.

**Let's talk about the new album. It seems that there are a lot of things about it that kind of go back to the beginning of Cheap Trick's career. Is this something that you thought about while you were recording it?**

Well, we are what we are. It's not like we had to reinvent ourselves, so we just stuck with what we know. So, the elements came together as they are. It's not like something we planned—I mean, music can just take you where it wants,

not where you want it to go, and that's if you do it honestly.

**How ironic is it to call a new album also released on 8-track *The Latest*, and whose idea was it to do that?**

I don't know [laughs]....Just straight left and right is fine.

**People lose sight of that; they get caught up in the technology sometimes.**

Yeah, with technology sometimes you can sound worse. The iPods and MP3s and all that stuff. You're losing a lot and you don't really notice it.

**On the *From Tokyo to You DVD*, you say at one point, "It's been so long since I told the truth I can't remember what's real and what's not." Why?**

Well...[long pause] I can't remember. [laughs]

**The [1990 music video compilation] *Every Trick in the Book DVD* is finally out in July...**

Is it?

**Any idea what took so long?**

I have no idea. I didn't even know it was coming out, so there you go.

**So it looks like you'll have two things to promote on your summer tour.**

Yeah!

**Any plans to have a *The Latest* guitar created especially for this tour and album?**

I don't think I should, but I don't have a plan right now for it.

**The song "High Priest of Rhythmic Noise" [from 1980's *All Shook Up*] is legendary for not having the complete lyrics posted anywhere online. Can I get any help on the third verse?**

[After listening to it twice] Ahh, I can't remember. I'd have to look at it closer, but you're right, it's been too long since the truth came out. I'll figure it out for you one of these days.

**Yeah, they've gotta go up somewhere.**

But not today.

Special thanks to Ben-David Fenwick for media assistance. Catch Cheap Trick on tour with Poison and Def Leppard through September. For audio clips, videos and more on *The Latest*, visit [www.cheaptrick.com](http://www.cheaptrick.com).



## U.S. *FrontLine*'s Ken Haraguchi on NY's Japanese Newspapers By Junko Ishikawa (Contributing Writer)

It was the summer of 1998 when Ken Haraguchi first came to New York as a political reporter in Washington, D.C. for a small Japanese newspaper company that distributed political news and articles. After three years there, he moved here to work for *U.S. FrontLine*, the biweekly national Japanese newspaper, after finding out that his previous company was not interested in expanding its operation through buying another political newspaper. At that time, he was an editor-in-chief looking for the next step, such as establishing his own publishing company. After having applied to an editorial position at *U.S. FrontLine*, he successfully passed the interview and came to New York, where he still lives today.



Haraguchi noted that the biggest strength and difference of *U.S. FrontLine* from other Japanese newspapers in the U.S. is its original investigative style of reporting. Other Japanese newspapers often purchase their content from other news organizations and just run it with their own stories. For *U.S. FrontLine*, each writer bases their articles on their own reporting.

According to Haraguchi, when he first came to New York there were only three newspapers published here in Japanese (of which today there are 17 newspapers and weekly newsletters). They were *Yomiuri America*, *OCS* and *U.S. FrontLine*.

When asked about his newspaper's competitors, he said, "Until *Yomiuri America* discontinued its service, the only national newspapers were [*OCS*] and us. But now that *Yomiuri America* is gone, *U.S. FrontLine* is the only nationally published Japanese newspaper.

"What this means is that we have many competitors in various local markets. In New York and L.A., there are many local newspapers. Speaking of the L.A. market, I would say our biggest competitor there is a tabloid called

*Lighthouse*. In New York, I would say *Japion* and *Shūkan NY Seikatsu* (Weekly Japan Life)."

Looking back at the long history of Japanese newspapers in the U.S. and his own, Haraguchi sees the biggest change in Japanese newspapers and the market trends as follows: "In the past, it was the norm that Japanese newspapers were sold, unlike now. About 12 years ago, *U.S. FrontLine* became a free newspaper pressured by market trends, which became the emergence of 'free newspapers.'

"Three or four years after our decision to go free, *Japion* came out in the New York newspaper market. The amount of the impact that *Japion* has brought into the Japanese newspaper market was enormous, I believe. *Japion* is a weekly newspaper, and *U.S. FrontLine* was also forced to be a weekly paper once, pressured to compete with *Japion*. Recently, however, we went back to publishing biweekly."

Regarding earlier days, he said that "*Japion* was using content taken from Japanese national newspapers or from news agencies in Japan. In recent years, however, they are cultivating their own content, focusing on local topics, Japanese food, health and travel that appeal to a wide range of readers. I think that they are becoming a genuine newspaper that consists of original content and in-depth information.

"They have been nurturing local advertising in ways that we or *Yomiuri America* couldn't reach. They discovered the opportunity to fund themselves by advertising local bars and restaurants. We, as a national newspaper, never thought of this type of viewpoint. These papers don't usually advertise restaurants, bars, or any firm that exists in a specific local market."

Haraguchi believes that there is a big difference between Japanese newspapers and American newspapers in the way their contents are listed. In the case of Japanese newspapers, they tend to list nationally appealing news content. However, American newspapers tend to stick to local news and do not cover international news as much as Japanese newspapers. Another difference is that American newspapers tend to attach their own commentary along with news and public announcements, while Japanese newspapers merely list news announcements sans additional commentary.

Haraguchi also said that American newspapers tend to work on many investigative reporting articles, the length of them sometimes shocking to Japanese newspaper reporters. This may be a result of the different systems of "press clubs" between Japan and the U.S. In the U.S. the prime newspapers like the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post* and the *Wall Street Journal* are treated differently from others, and they might have special access to a news source that most of their counterparts would have trouble accessing.

This system is known as the so-called "inner circle," and it exists in the Japanese media world as well to a certain extent. "I think that in the U.S., interviewee organizations such as the government are pretty used to using media effectively, and the inner circle may [Cont. on 19]

# JETAActivities & Events



The last ones to leave the party at the JETAANY quarterly meeting at A Café. From left: Glen Milan, Monica Yuki, Stacy Smith, Kirsten Phillips, Rick Ambrosio, Shree Kurlekar, Megan Miller, Kat Barnas and Justin Tedaldi.



JETAANY Secretary Amber Liang (third from left) with new and less-new JETs at Urasenke Chanoyu Center.



Roland Kelts interviews Hayao Miyazaki, UC Berkeley.



Amber, Anton, John, Lily and Carleen at Grimaldi's.



The JETAANY table at Studio Square Beer Garden.



Tommy Zhou (right) gives advice to a new JET.

JET Pre-departure Seminar at Nippon Club, 6/20



Remarks by Hiroshi Sasaki, JLGC (CLAIR NY).



Keynote speech by Randall David Cook.



ALT Job Skills workshop by Porsha Childs.



Money Management workshop by Anton Phung.

# JET Farewell Reception, July 24



Ambassador Shinichi Nishimiya addresses the attendees.



Ambassador Nishimiya, Madam Yukiko Nishimiya, Megan Miller and Matthew Wypycha.



JETAANY President Megan Miller making her remarks.



From left: Former JETAANY President Jennifer Olayon, President Motoatsu Sakurai of Japan Society, Lisa Birzen (JETAA) and Megan Miller.



Matthew Wypycha speaking on behalf of the new JETs.



Justin Tedaldi, Ambassador Nishimiya and Adren Hart.



Alums Kia Cheleen and Nicole Bongiorno swap meishi.



Country Rep Shree Kurlekar and Madam Nishimiya.

**Maid in America**  
**Cosplay Singer Reni**  
 By Adren Hart  
 (Nagano-ken, 1998-2000)

New York's Javits Center will host a horde of animation fans for the New York Anime Fest from September 25-27, and the annual event is more than just a chance to check out the latest comics or manga-related products. Increasingly, cosplay, or Japanese-style costume play, has become a big part of the experience. It's a chance for people young and old from all walks of life to don elaborate costumes and become their favorite anime character or persona. JQ talked with Japanese maid cosplayer and recent New York transplant Reni Mimura for more on this evolving performance art.

**From what I can tell, cosplay is more than just putting on a costume. It seems as though one also puts on a different persona. Tell us about Reni. Who is she and what are her likes and dislikes?**

Reni is an ordinary girl who likes to be loved and needed by everybody. That is why Reni cosplays in many different ways and draws attention with adorable costumes and pretty staging from all generations. Reni likes to have fun with everybody. Reni does not like excluding any particular person. Reni loves peace and strawberry shortcake and hates war, which separates loved ones, and injections, because they're painful.

**Does Reni have a special mission here in New York? What is the special power that will help her complete the mission?**

I would like to be an idol singer who is loved by everybody. I will put everything on the line, so I need your lovely support to become the real idol. Ability, feeling, strategy, force and energy to sustain these factors are the things, I feel, I need to become an idol singer.

**What was the inspiration behind your cosplay character Reni?**

The recession, that's it. I would like to represent healing. Now is the time to recognize spiritual wealth. This is the time for spiritual development advancing one step higher.

**What anime influenced you growing up?**

*Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind* and *My Neighbor Totoro* produced by Hayao Miyazaki's Studio Ghibli.



They taught me how beautiful it is to dedicate my life to fulfillment and to always grow on a personal level by encountering different types of people.

**Akihabara and Harajuku are two places in Tokyo well-known for their cosplay scenes. Describe the difference between the two.**

Akihabara is a Mecca of anime and otaku culture which clearly express what men want to see in women. The culture allows men to platonically fill their imaginations with a sense of healing and for women to express without shyness a feminine and girlish side of them based on men's imagination.

Harajuku is more unisex and about fashion. Harajuku, whether it's beside or adding to mainstream fashion, has its own unique young fashion trends, which often interact with Akihabara culture. Because fans of Harajuku fashion are usually young people, the fashion has a very free, new and imaginative side. The similarities of these two cities are forever 16, sometimes described as Lolita.

**Is Reni more Akihabara or Harajuku?**

I like cosplay and cuteness, so I like both cities. I have a lot of clothes from both cities.

**Describe cosplay in New York. What surprised you the most?**

People here cosplay with confidence, and completely become the characters they want to be. Japanese people are shy in general, so that surprised me the most. But what they feel about cosplay is pretty similar—wanting to become different, unusual and outside the routine of daily life.

**Tell us about "Reni's Japanese 'Maid' Karaoke Cosplay Show."**

Reni's Japanese "Maid" Show is basically a monthly show which people enjoy my original songs along with Japanese songs from anime

and J-pop, cosplay and unique dances and games from Akihabara. I would like to offer the most fun and authentic Japanese pop experience you can have without ever having to travel to Tokyo that can appeal to everyone. We started it back in February, and after that I was invited to perform at Japan Society in March, so the show is getting more attention.

**What's the difference between Japanese crowds and American crowds?**

Direct communication. People cheer very much if they like it. They sometimes give me hugs and standing ovations. It's much easier to see what people like or dislike here than in Japan. I am sometimes deeply touched by those reactions.

**You're going to perform at the New York Anime Fest in September. Will this be your first time? What are you expecting?**

This is my first time, and I'm honored to be invited and to perform at an event which is expecting more than 20,000 people in attendance! I'm so excited to perform and will also be at an artist table to meet with fans in during the three-day event, so I'm looking forward to seeing many people. If you see bunny ears, talk to me and tell me you read JQ!

**How did you get into singing?**

Since my father is an entertainer, I was deeply into singing and dancing from an early age. I began formal ballet training at the age of seven, and studied all kinds of dancing ranging from jazz and hip-hop to *Nihon Buyo*, or traditional Japanese dance.

Later on, I joined the well-known Japanese company Seinenza, in which I both performed and directed. In 2005, I auditioned for and won a major music contest in Tokyo, and released my first CD in 2006, which is available in Japan.

**What singers have been most**



Reni onstage at Japan Society. (Hiro)

**influential for you?**

Alanis Morissette—very soulful performance. I realized to sing freely by her performance.

**Who's your favorite J-pop artist?**  
 Me!

**What do you think about the future of anime and Japanese pop culture in America?**

Anime as a medium has introduced many Japanese cultural values and historical background to other countries. Asia, South America, Europe and especially France are full of anime fans.

And generations who grew up with Japanese anime are reaching the age of socially influential, important roles in the U.S. I believe we have more space for anime to grow in America, and the Internet society makes it even easier.

**What's Reni's message to readers of JQ?**

A life that's too convenient leads us to confusion and nihilism. That's a big issue that many Japanese are now facing, and Akihabara culture has come in to rescue us from this situation. Since the urban lifestyle is not much different in the U.S. or Japan compared to 100 years ago, I thought there might be people who become interested in what I am pursuing. Please come to see my performance and enjoy the show of idol Reni!

*Reni will be performing at Top Tunes Karaoke Bar at 303-305 East 53rd Street on September 6. Visit [www.reniren.com](http://www.reniren.com) for more details. Translation and media assistance by Satoshi Yoshimura of Aspire Communications Inc.*



## The History of JETAANY's Webmaster

By Shree Kurlekar  
(Shiga-ken, 2005-07)

Since the fall of 2006, Lee-Sean Huang (Oita-ken, 2003-06) has served as the Webmaster for JETAANY, revamping our site and making it one of the best and most user friendly across the global JET network.

Born in Taiwan, Lee-Sean spent most of his formative life in the suburbs of Phoenix, Arizona. At age 18, he fled to the East Coast to the south of Boston, attending the prestigious Harvard University. At Harvard, he studied abroad in multiple countries, a prelude to what was to come upon graduation. He spent time at the University of Barcelona, the Sorbonne in Paris and Lund University in Sweden.

Having taken Japanese all through college, Lee-Sean knew that he wanted to live in Japan, and much like the majority of the JET population, with no clear idea of what he wanted to do in the "long-term career" department, decided to apply to the JET Programme.

Lee-Sean spent three years on JET as an ALT in Oita-ken, Nakatsu-shi on Kyushu. The memories that still linger in his heart the strongest are of the *onsen* and the monkeys. (Oh, and going to the Naked Man festival...)

Relocating to New York after his stint in Japan, Lee-Sean has been living almost exclusively in lower Manhattan. Though he ventures north and to the other boroughs regularly, he has only lived in Tribeca and the Financial District. However, this summer he left the city to take part in an internship at Creative Commons in San Francisco ([www.creativecommons.org](http://www.creativecommons.org)).

His official title there is "International Outreach Intern," and he's currently working on a wiki-based community site called OpenEd that is currently in beta. It aims to be a portal site to promote open educational resources, which encompasses everything from lesson plans to worksheets to multimedia assets. Since the JET community already does a lot of sharing of this kind, he definitely recommends checking them out at [http://opened.creativecommons.org/Main\\_Page](http://opened.creativecommons.org/Main_Page).

This internship is in conjunction with his current pursuit of a master's degree in interactive telecommunications at New York University. It's an interdisciplinary program that deals with the convergence of art, technology, design and how they interact with people and society.

Before committing himself to academia again, Lee-Sean used to work in the non-profit sector in tech and media, doing things like making Web sites and producing videos for non-profit organizations.

When asked how his current career relates to his experience on the JET Programme, Lee-Sean was quick to point out that JET definitely helped him with his public speaking and pre-



JETAANY Web guru Lee-Sean Huang.

sentation skills: "Hey, if you can 'perform' as an ESL teacher in front of a bunch of Japanese *chuugakusei*, you can pretty much do anything in front of any audience."

Though he doesn't use it much now, Lee-Sean also credits JET with increasing his knowledge in Japanese and enriching his life with the cultural experience and knowledge he gained there. The most direct relation, however, was being able to write "international experience" on his applications to international non-profits and non-governmental organizations.

In the near future, Lee-Sean plans on finishing up his last year of grad school, which means the next year will be spent solidly on his thesis. He would also love to live abroad again sometime, maybe somewhere in Europe or Southeast Asia, with Thailand or Singapore as frontrunners. He's open to lots of different possibilities after he graduates and is even considering a trip back to Nippon.

In the long term, Lee-Sean would love to grow his freelance work into some sort of sustainable full-time business doing consulting, strategy and media/Web production for non-profits and social causes, or do that and teach part-time somewhere.

He can see himself teaching media studies and production at a high school or college. He also wants to further develop his art and musical projects, including the band and multimedia production company he created with a friend: Hepnova Multimedia, which he describes as "a genre-defying music collective, multimedia production company and modern lifestyle brand."

In the precious spare time he does have, you might catch Lee-Sean on the waterfront in Battery Park City in warm weather. You might also see him at St. Mark's for his Japan fixes, especially his favorite food: any kind of Asian noodles.

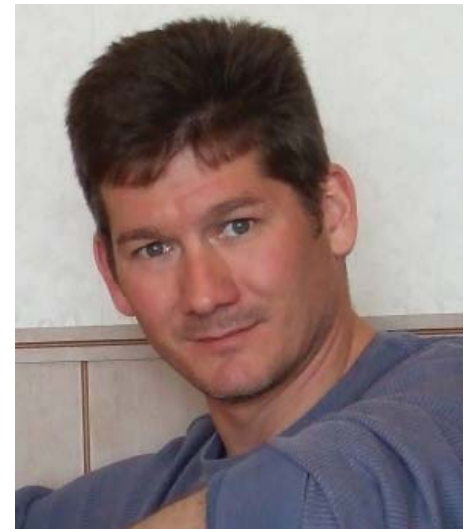
Visit Lee-Sean's homepage at <http://leesean.net>.

## Like Japanese Girls? Then You Need This Book

By Rick Ambrosio  
(Ibaraki-ken, 2006-08)

There I was again, outside my apartment, in the car with Hitomi. Again, at this awkward moment where we both fidget and she puts the Toni Braxton CD in. This is, of course, over a year ago, back in Japan. Even after living in Japan for a year and a half, I still had moments like this; social impasses as I liked to call them. We both didn't know what to say, or what to do. Well, in reality, I didn't know what to say or do. This was before I understood what "*nan demo ii*" really meant, before I could fully understand all the silent cues. This was before I read David J. Radtke's *Understanding Japanese Women*.

I know, I know, you're thinking, "oh no, not another pick-up line book. Not another cheesy how-to." It's what I feared before I started reading it, too. However, I was delightfully surprised that the e-book was instead full of very useful tips for interacting with Japanese women. No pick-ups or tricks, just a lot of hard-won infor-



JET alum/Japanese women *hakase* David Radtke.

mation from a lot of trial and error. Also, the mystifying question, "why do I see so many attractive Japanese girls with super-dorky Western guys?" was finally answered!

Radtke graduated from Detroit's Wayne State University in 1995 and was a JET in Shiga prefecture from 1995-98. While there, like many other JET males before and after him, he did some dating and eventually settled down, married and had two *genki* kids. After a few years of marriage, he began a Web site for other foreigners trying to understand Japanese women. It was here that he began doling out the wisdom he and others had gained from years of dating and marriage to help Westerners dealing with the confusion and frustration that one often encounters when dating women from another culture.

"In the beginning there were only about 15 articles, and yet I began to receive e-mails from quite a few Western men, and even some Japa-

nese women, about the content,” David said. “Each e-mail contained a battery of questions that the Web site had yet to cover. Many of the same questions kept popping up, but questions about problems that I had yet to experience were also included.” Thus began David’s research.

Using Craigslist to swap questions from men across the globe and conducting interviews with Japanese men and women of all ages and stations, David began to piece together the main cultural roadblocks that existed not only for many Western men dating Japanese women, but also the issues and viewpoints of Japanese men as well. “The more I talked with Japanese people, the more I found the same answers popping up,” David said. “There was consistency. There was stability in the advice they gave me. And that was what I wanted—solid, reliable advice to solve the problems Western men were having in relationships with Japanese women.”

The book tackles an assortment of issues from multiple angles, one of which I found interesting was confidence. This section of the book contained some guidance I felt would be found in other advice books; how to gain confidence and why it’s important. Unlike other books, he then builds upon that by helping us understand the concept of confidence through the Japanese lens, and how it’s displayed and perceived by

Japanese men and women. It’s these cultural insights from the book that are invaluable, and frankly, I wish I had known about before I went to Japan. The e-book takes situations that have left many a Western man furrowing their brow, breaks it down, explains the cultural significance from both the male and female perspective, and then suggests a thought-out way to deal with the situation.

David isn’t done, though. “Right now I’m doing the research for a second book on relationships with Japanese women [provisionally] called *UJW - Marriage and Beyond*.” His next e-book will cover the adjustments one needs to make when in an interracial marriage, from dealing with communication issues and raising bilingual children to in-laws and divorce.

Maybe it’s too late for me since I’m back from Japan now, and those awkward silences in the parking lot with Hitomi are long gone, but *Understanding Japanese Women* gave me some nostalgic flashbacks as well as a bunch of “ohh, so that’s why!” moments. The e-book puts into writing many abstract concepts I tried explaining to my Western friends in America about dating in Japan. Many embarrassing situations could have been easier navigated had I read the book years ago. If I were in charge of JET (read: probably not a good idea) I’d think about make it a required reading for single male JETs. It

would certainly ease grassroots international relations and allow clearer perceptions of each other’s culture.

I bet you’re still wondering, “What about the geeky guys and the cute girls!?” Well, I suppose I could tell you, but I figure you’ll just have to read the book to find out. (I can’t spoil everything!) As for me, armed with all this new and useful information, it’s about time I give Hikki Utada another call.

*David Radtke presently lives in Shiga and is working on his second e-book. His current publication is available online through his Web site at [www.japandatingtips.com](http://www.japandatingtips.com).*



**Theatre Review: Takamine Jokichi, Science’s Samurai**  
By Anne Koller  
(Fukuoka-ken, 2002-04)

On April 10, I had the pleasure of attending the U.S. premiere of *Samurai Takamine Jokichi* at the Kay Playhouse at Hunter College. Produced by Toshi Hirano of TKO Entertainment for a two-night run in Manhattan, the play tells the life story of Takamine Jokichi (1854-1922), one of the most respected chemists of the 20th century. The play was the first attempt at portraying Takamine’s life to Japanese and American audiences and I suspect we will see many more productions in the future.

Less known today, Takamine was one of the first people to bring cherry blossoms to New York. He also established the Nippon Club and was a cofounder of Japan Society. Because of the relevance of the U.S. and, most importantly, New York, in Takamine’s life, Hirano diligently pushed for the play to be performed in New York. Takamine lived during the Meiji era, when Japan was rapidly transforming from a feudalistic to an industrialized society. The play provides a showcase of Takamine’s dedication to being a hero for Japan through science, and in turn, opening Japan to the Western world.

I was brought into the life of Takamine right from the very beginning of the play. When Takamine encounters a samurai early on in his life, he is inspired to become a strong force in and for Japan. With each passing scene, writer-director Yoshimasa Shinagawa involves you in Takamine’s life and encourages the audience to draw out their own “samurai spirit.” His passion

for science and his determination to help others is the driving force throughout his career and life. His discovery of Takadiastase (an enzyme used in the distilling process) while working at a whiskey company, and adrenalin, which he dis-



Official program of *Samurai Takamine Jokichi*. (TKO)

covers after 15 years of testing, are testaments to why he is considered the Japanese father of American biotechnology. You become his advocate as soon as he steps on stage and the feeling grows stronger with every new hurdle he faces.

Prior to attending the play, I avoided researching Takamine or his life to determine whether the play was compelling and comprehensive. I was a bit worried for my non-Japanese speak-

ing American friend who accompanied me, as the play was entirely in Japanese. There were English subtitles on a screen high above the stage that were hard to read in the front row; however, the acting was so rich and refined that the subtitles were only used sparingly and not depended on to understand what was happening. In fact, my companion kept leaning over to ask me, “are you sure this is a true story?”

The scenery and costumes were not overdone but sufficient enough to let you know where you were and what time period you were in. The play takes you through Kanazawa, Nagasaki, New Orleans and New York over a 30-year period which would have been difficult for any producer to portray. The costumes, background, props and music provide important pieces to understanding Takamine’s life. The use of jazz and the Charleston let you know you are in New Orleans where he first experiences American culture and meets the Hitch family, whose daughter Caroline later became his wife. The traditional kimono and samurai garbs put you in the middle of feudal Japan in Kanazawa and Nagasaki where he grew up and later started a brewing factory.

As a whole, the play was entertaining. Because it was the first production to portray the life of Takamine, it had the advantage of mesmerizing the audience with a forgotten story of an important man in history despite having a small cast and production. Hirano’s play passionately interweaves Takamine’s samurai spirit into the story and you feel as if you are a direct witness to history.

For more on the play, visit TKO Entertainment’s homepage at [www.tkonyc.us/pages\\_English/en\\_takamine.html](http://www.tkonyc.us/pages_English/en_takamine.html).



**Film Review: One Times Three Makes Tokyo!**  
By David Kowalsky  
(Hiroshima-ken  
ALT/CIR, 1991-93)

After watching *Departures* (see Lyle Sylvander's review in *JQ's* [spring 2009 issue](#)) and *Tokyo Sonata*, two films by Japanese directors, I recently went in an entirely different direction by viewing *Tokyo!* Released on DVD in June, *Tokyo!* is actually made up of three short films from three different directors: two French (Michel Gondry and Leos Carax) and one Korean (Bong Joon-ho).

The opening short, "Interior Design," directed by Gondry (*Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*), is based on the title story from Gabrielle Bell's graphic novel *Cecil and Jordan in New York*. The short chronicles the ups and downs of the first week or so of a young Japanese couple moving to Tokyo. Akira (Ryo Kase), a not-so-established filmmaker, is the one with something resembling a career, but Hiroko (Ayako Fujitani) is clearly in charge of almost everything: their money, car, and also has a friend who provides them with a place to stay while they look for their own apartment. It's not long (after all, this is a short) before Hiroko clearly becomes "lost" and her world falls apart. Without giving away too much of the plot, I will say there is a Kafkaesque plot twist by the end.

The middle short, "Merde," directed by Carax (*The Lovers on the Bridge*), is about a very odd half-human foreigner (Denis Lavant) who unexpectedly surfaces from the bowels of Tokyo to first terrorize and eventually kill some of the otherwise orderly and, of course, innocent Japanese citizens of your average shopping/business district. After being incarcerated, a French lawyer turns out to be the only one who can communicate with the man called the "creature from the sewers," but in an incomprehensible language to the rest of the world. The tone is an identifiable spoof of the Godzilla films, and at times this short is comical, but it still manages to also be viewed as a much more serious cautionary critique of a nation's suppressed historical memory.

The final short, "Shaking Tokyo," directed by Bong Joon-ho (*The Host*), is a look into the hauntingly lonely world of a man (Teruyuki Kagawa) who is a *hikikomori* (see this author's *JQ* review of *Shutting Out the Sun* [here](#)): that bizarre phe-



Merde (Denis Lavant) apparently gets the JET superstar treatment in a scene from *Tokyo!* (Liberation Entertainment)

nomenon of mostly Japanese young adults who willingly choose to stay in a room and have no or very limited contact with others for many years. What is a normally routine, home weekly pizza delivery abruptly changes everything for this man as the almost simultaneous combination of an earthquake and real eye contact with the pizza delivery girl yields a love at first sight experience.

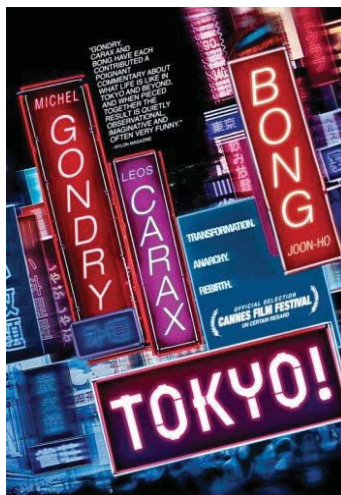
Wandering around the neighborhoods of Tokyo in a desperate attempt to find this girl, what stands out is a city of millions that can be so crowded, yet feel so empty. While *hikikomori* is reported as being so uniquely "Japanese," a case could be made for this being actually the least "Japanese" of the three shorts, since this is really a tale of two people making a romantic connection after coming out of their comfort zones.

The three shorts as a whole, beyond all showing people living in Tokyo through the eyes of foreign directors, may at first seem completely unrelated. But a common theme does emerge after giving it some thought: the challenges of fitting in and dealing with being accepted by Japanese society.

In "Interior Design," when we first meet Hiroko, she appears to be fine, but we soon learn that she can't cope with change. At least the resolution of her situation, despite being so strange, does appear to be a happy one. "Merde" and "Shaking Tokyo" are both about loners, one living underground (who was perhaps once a gainfully employed foreign worker in Japan?), and one living in a house alone for the last ten years. Both are complete outcasts in Japan. Both reject conventional human behavior.

For those who enjoy extras, Liberation Entertainment's *Tokyo!* DVD and Blu-ray include short segments on the making of each film and director interviews. The making of "Interior Design" is hands down the best of the bunch with surprisingly introspective comments from the cast about working on the film.

Special thanks to Aaron Madden at Liberation Entertainment for photos and media assistance. For more on *Tokyo!*, visit [www.tokyothemovie.com](http://www.tokyothemovie.com).



[Cont. from 13] be well utilized for their PR purposes," he said.

Finally, Haraguchi predicts the future of newspapers to be completely unique in a format that we've never seen before.

"While many newspaper companies [responsible for] major ones such as the *Chicago Tribune* and the *Seattle Post Intelligencer* have switched platforms from print-based news to the Web, we can never totally forecast that print-based news will cease to exist. There may be a possibility that all the breaking news-type of content or immediate announcements will be handled by news agencies such as AP and Jiji Press, while classifieds, commentaries and essay-type content will become major content in print.

"Reporters working for newspaper companies may start specializing in local news only. Or, there may be newspaper companies that completely transfer their services to new technology devices. We never know what the future of the news market will bring to us."

Visit U.S. FrontLine online at [www.usfl.com](http://www.usfl.com). (Japanese)

<http://jetaany.org/shop>



**Book Corner: The Story Behind  
Japan's Most Iconic Brand**  
By Lyle Sylvander  
(Yokohama-shi, 2001-02)

In 1996, UC Santa Barbara Professor John Nathan was given official access to Sony Corp.'s top executives and historical archives to write the first book-length history of the company. Given free reign, Nathan constructed his narrative without corporate interference and the immensely informative and entertaining result was published in 1999 as *Sony: The Private Life*.

From its humble beginnings as a radio repair shop and maker of electronic rice cookers to its current status as a global electronics brand and entertainment conglomerate, the Sony experience is one of the great success stories of post-war Japan. The company's trajectory paralleled and epitomized that of Japan itself as both company and nation rose from the ashes of war and became global powerhouses. But as Nathan's subtitle suggests, the book recounts this epic tale largely at the human level by focusing on the personalities at the heart of the company. In fact, *Sony: The Private Life* reads more like a family saga akin to a novel than a corporate history. This stems from Nathan's background as a professor of Japanese literature and culture.

Speaking the language as well as any *gaijin* possibly can (he has an MA from Tokyo University), Nathan understands the intricacies and subtleties of Japanese discourse, providing a valuable insight into the company's decision-making process. While Sony's business dealings and strategizing through the years are fascinating, it is this unique vantage point that makes *Sony: The Private Life* such a rewarding read.

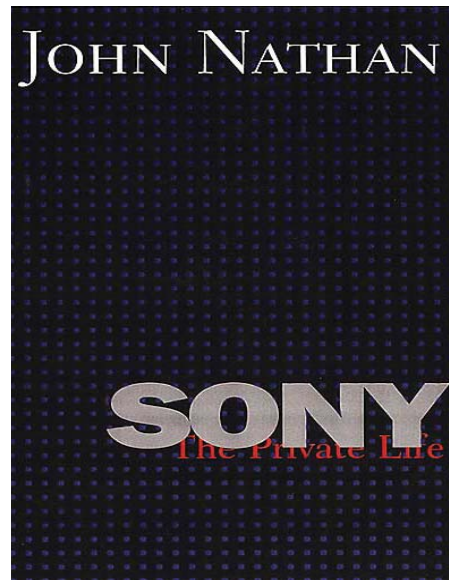
The two patriarchs of the Sony family are Masura Ibuka, the pragmatic engineer, and Akio Morita, the master marketer and salesman. The talents of these two complemented each other and drove the company's growth over the years as the Sony brand epitomized both technological and marketing ingenuity. From the beginning, Ibuka introduced the standards of scientific methodology to the company's research and development department, which attracted Japan's best engineering graduates.

Its first noticeable success was high quality magnetic tape, the proceeds of which financed research into transistor technology. While the transistor had been invented in the United States at Bell Laboratories, Ibuka and his team successfully applied the technology to the radio, bringing about a revolution in portable consumer electronics.

Eventually, Sony would develop an even more personal music device—a portable cassette player with headphones that allowed the consumer to listen to a recording anywhere. The concept of the Sony Walkman, launched in 1979, is so ubiquitous in today's MP3 players that it is hard to recognize how revolutionary the product was in its time. But as detailed by Nathan, the development seems all but inevitable in the hands of Ibuka's engineering team and Morita's marketing vision.

As opposed to the introverted and studious Ibuka, Morita was an extroverted charmer, a relatively rare quality for a Japanese businessman. He not only negotiated the transistor license with Bell Laboratories, but set up the Sony America subsidiary and its respective distributors and retailers. The transistor story repeated itself when Morita negotiated the license for a color picture tube that was used in the Trinitron, the world's best-selling television set in the 1960s through the 1970s.

Morita also had the prescience to recognize the importance of the content side of the media equation. In the late 1960s, he formed a joint venture with CBS Records to service the Japanese marketplace, a deal which eventually led to the outright purchase of the American record company from CBS Inc. in 1988. The company was renamed as Sony Music and boasted a catalog of the world's most successful recording artists, including Michael Jackson and Billy Joel. Two years later, Sony became the first foreign company to own a Hollywood movie studio when it bought Columbia/Tri-Star Pictures, which not only made feature films but television programs as well and supplied a lucrative programming library.



A third player in Sony's history is Norio Ohga, who brought a unique background as a classically trained musician and electrical engineer to the company. As the head of industrial design, product planning and business strategy, Ohga launched Sony into the digital age in the late 1970s by jointly developing compact disc technology with the Dutch company Philips Electronics NV. Even though the sound quality was vastly superior to the older analog technology, it met with fierce resistance from the recording industry, which feared that digital technology would be easily susceptible to piracy. The CBS-Sony partnership provided leverage in committing the recording industry to the new standard. However, Sony was not so fortunate with its videotape recording device.

The initial success of the Sony Betamax, which launched in Japan in 1975, was cut short by the later industry adoption of the VHS standard, developed by Sony's rival Matsushita (Panasonic) Electronics. Despite the higher quality of the

Betamax technology, consumers preferred the longer running time of VHS, and by 1985 Sony was forced to abandon Betamax and manufacture VHS machines and tapes as well. Morita realized that Sony would have had more leverage in the Betamax case if it had owned a studio and thus attain standards-adopting power—note the later success of Sony's Blu-ray disc technology.

Nathan also details the drama behind Sony's international dealings, particularly emphasizing the antithetical business culture between Japan and the United States. The most salient characteristic involves the more direct and confrontational nature of American business, particularly the threat of litigation. In order to navigate the "shark-infested waters" of American deal making, Morita and Ibuka relied on two "adopted sons": Pete Peterson, an investment banker and founder of the Blackstone Group, and Edward Rosiny, a corporate lawyer.

From the American perspective, the Japanese decision making process was relatively slow and relied on building consensus before taking action, a trait which caused friction among the executives from both countries. Most entertaining is the story of Peter Guber and John Peters, who were hired to run Columbia Pictures and whose impulsive management style, irresponsible even by Hollywood standards, resulted in a \$2.7 billion write-off.

The book ends on a positive note as Columbia Pictures manages to turn itself around into profitability, the VAIO computer is launched and Sony's PlayStation game console overtakes Nintendo's lead in market share. Nobuyuki Idei, the then-current CEO, established a new business model, an ambitious plan to "synergize" the core electronics and entertainment businesses with a new network services business. While Idei correctly saw the future of digital distribution networks, his vision has not been fulfilled.

Unfortunately, Sony has stumbled since the book was published, most notably in the advent of the MP3 player, where Apple's iPod has been an enormous success. Indeed, Nathan's book deserves to have an update as a lot has happened in the last decade, including Sony's entry into the mobile phone market, Sony Music's merger with BMG (and subsequent purchase of Bertelsmann's 50% stake in 2008), the Sony-led consortium to buy a second Hollywood studio (MGM-United Artists), and most notably, the appointment of Sony's first foreign CEO, Sir Howard Stringer.

As Nathan's story comes to a close, Stringer is hired by Idei to run Sony America because of his experience in running a content distributor as president of CBS Broadcasting. The story of how he eventually came to replace Idei as CEO of the parent company in order to fulfill Idei's vision would be a fascinating read. Even without this unwritten chapter, however, *Sony: The Private Life* is a brilliant and insightful account of the world's premier electronics company.

Read a review of author John Nathan's lecture at Japan Society from our spring 2008 issue at [http://jetaany.org/newsletter\\_files/Newsletter%20Web%20Version%2004-28-08.pdf](http://jetaany.org/newsletter_files/Newsletter%20Web%20Version%2004-28-08.pdf).

**Japanimation 101**  
**A KRAZY! History**  
 By Anton Phung  
 (Shimane-ken, 2006-08)

Let me start off with this disclaimer: I don't know anything about manga. I spent two years in Japan and never once opened up a comic book. Sure, when I was in elementary school I thought *Voltron* was the coolest thing in the world, and when I was in junior high I had *Dragonball Z* posters on my wall and a couple Gundam figures scattered around my room, but I couldn't tell you anything about the characters or storylines. I just thought the artwork was amazing, and I still do; it's just not my cup of tea now.

But when Justin asked me to attend *KRAZY!*, an exhibition at Japan Society organized by the Vancouver Art Gallery on manga, anime and video games, I thought, What the heck, why not? If anything, it'd be amusing to laugh at the *otaku* doing cosplay. So on June 14, the last day of the exhibition, in between running my typical Sunday errands around town, I popped in with my notebook and pen, ready to take notes of what I was about to experience.

Displayed in a series of enveloped spaces designed to evoke Tokyo's clamorous cityscape, the exhibit included an Anime Garden with simultaneous projections of six landmark films—*Paprika*, *Super Dimension Fortress Macross*,

*The Place Promised in Our Early Days*, *Akira*, *Patlabor 2* and *Mind Game*, accompanied by a special music room featuring soundtracks mixed and compiled by Japanese cult artist Yoko Kanno. There were also two rooms solely dedicated to manga, complete with a Manga Pod with close to 1,000 magazines.

I personally found it hysterical that whoever designed the pod decided to leave the inappropriate ads of scantily clad Japanese schoolgirls on the backs of all the magazines, as I watched young children run by and do double takes.

Finally, in what can only be described as an homage to gamers everywhere, there was a small, singular room featuring the groundbreaking consoles of the past 20 years including Famicoms, Super Nintendos, GameCubes and timeless games such as Pac-Man, Super Mario World, *The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker* and even a Galaga arcade table.

In all, 200 works of art, objects and ephemera were assembled to illustrate the interconnected roots and themes of the three genres and to situate them within the context of Japanese art and life. Seminal works by six influential anime artists, eight manga artists, one sound artist and two video game designers were also featured in *KRAZY!*

"In the 19th century, the Japanese master Hokusai incorporated aspects of European art into traditional Japanese visual style, creating

a revolutionary new art, which was then avidly absorbed by European painters as a purely 'Japanese art,'" said Joe Earle, director of Japan Society's gallery. "Such a give-and-take describes in part the dynamic nature of this new wave of art and popular culture as well."

After having been truly absorbed in these altogether unique yet still intertwined styles of Japanese artistic expression, it was clear that what was once considered the preserve of an insular youth culture within the last decade has migrated into the mainstream, with reverberations both high and low—but that's not to say that I'll be dressing up as a Transformer any time soon.

Special thanks to Shannon Jowett of Japan Society and Amanda de Beaufort at Anne Edgar Associates for media assistance. For upcoming events at Japan Society, visit [www.japansociety.org](http://www.japansociety.org).



1990 was the year of the Super Famicom, which sold out its initial shipment of 300,000 units within hours of its debut in Japan. (©Nintendo Co. Ltd.)



Installation view of *KRAZY! The Delirious World of Manga + Anime + Video Games*. (Richard P. Goodbody)



Moyoco Anno's *Sakuran*. (Kodansha, 2003)



Manga Pod designed by Atelier Bow-Wow. (Richard P. Goodbody)



Junko Mizuno's *Pure Trance: Kaori the Nurse*. (KidRobot, 2007)

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**Pop Rock**  
**Q&A with Marshall Crenshaw**  
 By Justin Tedaldi  
 (Kobe-shi, 2001-02)  
 Photo by Todd Chalfant

The praise from *The New Yorker* appears right on the album cover: "One of the finest songwriters of his age—or, for that matter, any age," and you'd be hard-pressed to sum up the career of Marshall Crenshaw in fewer words. Since his self-titled 1982 debut that gave the world the Top 40 hit "Someday, Someway" all the way through the recently released *Jaggedland*, few artists from that era are around today that command the respect of Crenshaw, and even fewer have found new ways to merge the musical styles of 1950s Americana and beyond without sounding utterly lost. **JQ** talked with MC about Japan, New York and his special relationship with the number 447.

**What were your impressions of Japan growing up in Detroit, and how have things changed regarding your impressions today?**

It's a bit of an awkward question since I was born in 1953, a few years after World War II; all my childhood impressions of Japan came from old movies and cartoons on TV, negative imagery; not that it really meant anything to me.

I didn't start to have any realistic sense about the place until my twenties, and by that time the shape of the world was totally different, so to speak. When I was in [the Broadway musical] *Beatlemania* there were three different companies—six different casts in all—and one of the companies was sent over to Japan for a few weeks; I was really jealous of the guys who got to go and perform there, especially when I saw the pictures that they brought back. I got an image of Japan as an exciting, vibrant place.

**When did you first visit Japan?**

I first visited Japan in 1996 and pretty much loved every minute of it. Both of my trips—I went back in 2001, right after 9/11—were at the behest of a woman named Izumi Ito, who used to publish *TWANG* magazine, a Marshall Crenshaw fanzine; she and a couple of friends, Shin and Ruriko, I think, put the whole thing together, which impressed me quite a lot. They were great, and the people that I met after the gigs were unbelievably sweet. I was with two good friends of mine, Brad Jones—Swan Dive's producer—and Mark Zoltac; after Japan we went and played in Hawaii and L.A.; it was a great Pacific Rim road trip, very memorable.

**Are there any Japanese-made things like snacks, gadgets, recordings or guitars that you can't live without, or just like to hunt for whenever you visit?**

The first things that come to mind are routine things in my life like Japanese food, which I've loved since the first time I tried it, and my Nissan hybrid car, which is a good ride.

**You co-wrote the title track to the 2007 comedy *Walk Hard*. The film flopped (full disclosure: I saw it in theaters), but the song was nominated for a Grammy**

and a Golden Globe. Has this inspired you to consider writing more songs for movies so you can skip right to the Oscar?

Over the years, film-related stuff has been good to me. I remember getting to Hawaii and L.A., and Arizona after my first trip to Japan and hearing "Til I Hear It from You" by the Gin Blossoms constantly, coming out of storefronts in Honolulu, on TV, etc. I co-wrote that with the guys for the soundtrack to *Empire Records*. Doing *La Bamba* back in the day was a blast, also. So I'm always open to that type of action. I loved working on *Walk Hard*.

**You live in the Mid-Hudson Region. To quote one of your songs, where are some of your favorite places to go "Rockin' around in NYC"?**

When I go to New York, I always stay at the Roger Smith hotel on Lexington Avenue. I've stayed there a few hundred times so it feels like a home base; the place is really quiet and has a great, intimate kind of vibe. Two blocks away is a nice Italian restaurant, Il Postino, that I'm real familiar with. I also love the Park Slope neighborhood in Brooklyn with Prospect Park, etc. My family and I lived there from 1999 to 2003. I remember going to see [the 1930 Marlene Dietrich film] *Blue Angel* with live musical accompaniment at the Park Bandshell, sitting there under the stars eating fried fish and collard greens, feeling pretty happy.



**The new album has some of the most engaging guitar solos I've ever heard in your catalog. Did you map them out before going into the studio, or were they more spontaneous creations?**

They were almost all first takes; in general, most of the playing on the album was straight from the soul, not labored over.

**Since the beginning of your recording career, your songs have always touched on love, but there also seems to be a running theme of longing and yearning for heartfelt wishes and deep desires to be fulfilled, especially on some of *Jaggedland's* cuts. Where does this come from, and would you consider it one of your signatures when it comes to songwriting?**

Music and love, they both have to do with human sensuality; there's always been a connection between the two. I write about love because I know about it; I've given a lot and gotten a lot, and seen it from lots of different sides. On *Jaggedland* the music all came from an emotional place in the first place; I didn't have a pre-



planned agenda. With the words, I wanted to make sure that I meant and believed what I was saying—there's only a little bit of storytelling involved; it's mostly personal experience and observation. But I do want to mention that it's not all love songs on *Jaggedland*; the main topics are love, mortality and the state of the world.

**You and Bruce Springsteen both wrote songs for Robert Gordon before the days of CDs. If you could record any tune from the Boss' songbook, what would it be and why?**

I did one on a Springsteen tribute CD a few years ago, "All or Nothin' at All" [originally from 1992's *Human Touch*], which is a good straight-ahead rock tune. So many of his songs are "signature songs"; I guess I chose that one because it wasn't. A recent one that I loved and wish that I had written was "Radio Nowhere," a great commentary on vacuous corporate-controlled mass culture. But I'd rather hear him do it than to do it myself.

**In a 2001 gig of yours recorded at the Stone Pony, you said that your song "T.M.D." was co-written with "a Japanese pop star named Bill." What did you mean by this, and could you tell me what that album's title #447 refers to?**

I was referring to Bill DeMain of Swan Dive; right around that time they'd had a couple of hit singles in Japan, if I remember correctly. Bill and Molly of Swan Dive and Brad, who I mentioned [earlier], I'm really fond of these people. The number 447 was a random number, as in, "Q) How many albums have I made? A) 447!!" It's kind of a silly album title for a great album, if you ask me.

**You portrayed Buddy Holly in the Richie Valens biopic *La Bamba*. Who would you cast to play you when they make a movie out of your life?**

Arch Hall Jr.'s pretty good, but I think he's retired from acting. A woman at a radio station last week told me that I reminded her of William Hurt; maybe he could do it if Arch Hall's unavailable. For some reason I can't really think of a serious answer to your question, but thanks for asking it.

Special thanks to Kurt Nishimura at Silverlake Media for photos and interview assistance. For more on Marshall, *Jaggedland*, tour dates and audio clips, visit [www.marshallcrenshaw.com](http://www.marshallcrenshaw.com).

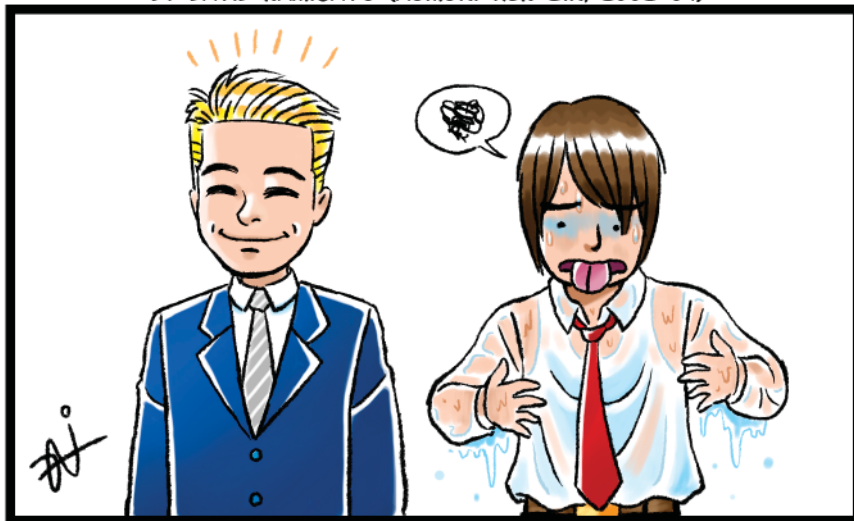
Earlier this summer, JET administrators and alumni hosted a day-long summit to introduce newly accepted JETs to the programme and bestow their own wisdom and advice to ensure a smooth transition for those living and working abroad for the first time. JQ was also there, and being the faithful reporters that we are, will now share with you the...

## Top 12 Things Overheard at the Pre-departure Seminar

12. "I bet the speeches they give in Japan are way better than this."
11. "Gosh, I dunno...what do you think Bob said to Charlotte at the end of *Lost in Translation*?"
10. "I for one am looking forward to dating in Japan—I've always found American women to be far too reserved and polite for my tastes."
9. "No, I've never had to cope with sudden weight loss before. Why do you ask?"
8. "I'll explain it to you: see, that's Akane Tendo from *Ranma ½* in the corner there, and *Citizen Kane* is this old movie, so..."
7. "Of course I'm ready for life in Japan—made my own pit toilet for compost last week, I did!"
6. "At last, an excuse to wear highlights around other guys!"
5. "*Honto ni*, I'm *sugo-kku* excited about living in *Nihon*. After *rainichi-suru*'ing, I just can't wait to *gyousan tabei ya* some *mechakucha umee* food at a *chaamingu iza-kai-ya, yokaroumon*?"
4. "I'm glad I was selected for JET so I can give my students a broader worldview. I mean, some of them have probably never even *heard* of Michael Jackson."
3. "Got any tips on how to fit all my plastic instruments in a single carry-on?"
2. "I for one am looking forward to dating in Japan—I've always found American men to be far too chauvinistic and perverted for my tastes."
1. "Who the heck's that white guy sitting in on the Asian Americans in Japan discussion!?"

## Life After the B.O.E.

BY DAVID NAMISATO (AOMORI-KEN CIR, 2002-04)

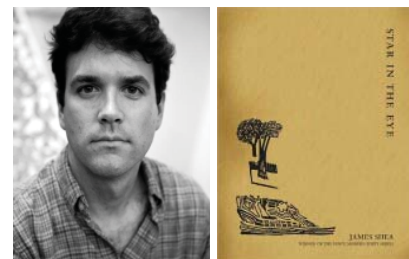


### Tokyo Orientation at Keio Plaza: Can you guess which JET had to walk over from the Hilton?

For more Life After the B.O.E., check out [www.namisato.org](http://www.namisato.org).

### Jyū Q! Ten Questions with JET Alum Poet James Shea By Liz Wanic (Kagoshima-ken, 2003-06)

Last year, James Shea (Tottori-ken, 1998-99) published *Star in the Eye*, an award-winning debut book of poetry. In addition to molding young minds as an ALT, serving as a research fellow for the Ministry of Education at Utsunomiya National University in Tochigi-ken and helping develop young writers as a visiting professor at both Columbia College Chicago and DePaul University, Shea also finds the time to write award-winning books, translate Japanese poetry, and, of course, answer some questions for us.



#### Which poem in your book is your favorite and why?

Robert Frost said that if you have a book of twenty-four poems, the book itself should be the twenty-fifth. If that's true, then I'd like to think of them collectively as my favorite.

#### What got you interested in the JET Programme?

My Japanese language teacher told me to apply. I wasn't entirely sure what it was.

#### How did your time in Japan inspire your poetry?

I lived in a small town, so I had lots of time to read and write.

#### How long did it take you to write your book?

A few years and then a few more years.

#### What do you think of Louis Vuitton bags?

I think about how to pronounce "Louis Vuitton."

#### What is your favorite karaoke song?

Probably Kitajima Saburo's "Yama."

#### If you could bring one aspect of Japanese life to America, what would it be and why?

Vegetables at every meal.

#### Sumo or kendo?

Sumo.

#### Asahi Super Dry or Kirin?

Kirin Ichiban.

#### What should we be on the lookout for from you in the future?

I've been working on translations of Japanese poetry, and lately, an essay by Masaoka Shiki.

Read samples, blurbs and reviews of *Star in the Eye* at <http://fencebooks.fenceportal.org/popups/stareye.html>.

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