

# THE FOOD & FILM ISSUE

# JQ

JETaany MAGAZINE

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WE CHAT WITH  
THE QUEEN OF  
HOME COOKING  
HARUMI  
KURIHARA

MEET THE  
SAMURAI UMPIRES

LISA KATAYAMA  
GIVES US 2-D LOVE

WENDY NELSON  
TOKUNAGA'S  
NEW NOVEL



JET FILMMAKER  
AARON WOOLFOLK  
TAKES US TO THE  
HARIMAYA BRIDGE

## ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

AN ADDITION TO THE  
JETWIT FAMILY, J-GRAD  
SCHOOL PROGRAMS  
MADE E-Z, AND MORE

BRINGING JAPAN A  
LITTLE CLOSER TO YOU

Jan/Feb 2010 Vol. 19 Issue No. 1



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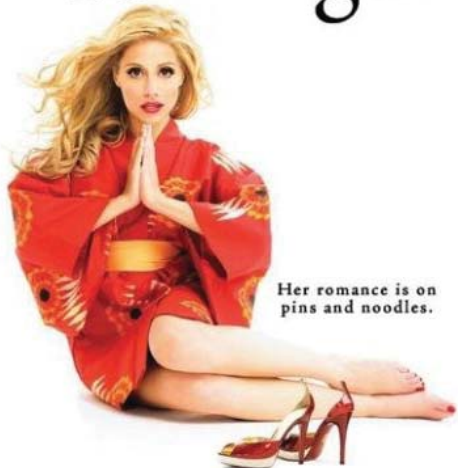
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Brittany Murphy

## The Ramen girl



Her romance is on pins and noodles.

JQ remembers the late Brittany Murphy (1977-2009).

Check out her leading role in the 2008 dramatic comedy *The Ramen Girl*, which was filmed in Tokyo and Yokohama.

It's good, really.

<http://jetaany.org/shop>



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JQ Magazine

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## Letter From the Editor

Welcome to **JQ**'s first issue of the new year! It's only recently sunk in for me that we've also broken the bottle on a fresh decade. The 2000s brought a lot of changes; by the time they were over, we ended up listening to music mainly on iPods, watching TV mainly on laptops, and enjoying social interaction, friendship and a sense of community mainly on Facebook (with some exceptions).

We're also changing. Starting here, we'll be churning out a new issue every other month, which means more variety and timelier coverage of your favorite goings-on in New York, Tokyo, and beyond. So grab a bottle of Aquarius, fix a big bowl of Wasabeef, cue up your favorite J-pop tune (maybe downloaded, maybe not), and get ready for the future.

Editorially yours,

**Justin Tedaldi (Kobe-shi CIR, 2001-02)**  
[magazine@jetaany.org](mailto:magazine@jetaany.org)



## Letter From the Secretary

Haro minasan,

When Justin asked me to write a letter for the magazine, I was honestly stumped because a) I'm a horrible writer, and b) I had no clue what I would say. After careful consideration and suggestions from those who are more experienced than I in this—that is, advice from JetWit guru Steven Horowitz—I have decided to outline my past year as a JETAANY member.

I returned in September 2008, looking forward to a bright and shining year back in the States. Little did I know what I had in store. Literally weeks after I had returned, the stock market had crashed lower than a kid on a sugar high, banks were going under, and everyone was shouting "recession!" Needless to say, this was not what I had in mind. My lofty goal of finding "my dream job" turned into just finding any job. I wouldn't say I was depressed, but I was certainly not happy.

It was at this time that a friend invited me to a JET alumni event (I think it was the annual softball tournament), and I met Steven and other friendly and outgoing members of JETAANY. Right away, Steven encouraged me to get involved. He was full of great ideas and needed someone to help execute them. At the forefront was his idea for a JET alumni author showcase. Since I had nothing better to do and really wanted to be productive, I decided to offer my services. The showcase went fabulously, and before I knew it, I was getting more involved and eventually ran for secretary.

It's mind-boggling to me that despite being a volunteer organization, the members of JETAANY are so organized and dedicated. It truly is a great community of people who are always ready and willing to help. With that in mind, I really wanted to contribute to this community in some way, which is how the mentorship program came into being. In this challenging economy, it's nice to have an ally. JETAANY was my ally last year, and I have a feeling that it can be for others as well. If you want to get involved in the mentorship program as a mentor or as a mentee, please contact me at the address below. As they say, "Sharing is caring"!

Going forward, I would like to plan more networking and career advising events including a networking brunch and industry-specific panel sessions. My other pet project, along with Randall David Cook, is to do a reading of his play *Sake with the Haiku Geisha*. If you would like to help with any of those, please let me know!

Best wishes and happy new year,

**Amber Liang (Kochi-ken, 2006-08)**  
[secretary@jetaany.org](mailto:secretary@jetaany.org)



JETAA London members fancy **JQ** in the UK!  
Send your story ideas to [magazine@jetaany.org](mailto:magazine@jetaany.org).



Aaron Woolfolk: Writer. Director. **JQ** subscriber. Contact [magazinesubscriptions@jetaany.org](mailto:magazinesubscriptions@jetaany.org) for info.





# Nippon News Blotter

**10/12/09:** Japan is considering making Tokyo's Haneda airport into an international hub, according to Transport Minister Seiji Maehara. That would be an about-face from current arrangements in which Haneda mainly serves domestic flights while the larger Narita airport caters for international traffic, the report said. (**Bloomberg**)

**10/15/09:** A Tennessee man arrested in Japan for forcefully taking away his own children from his Japanese spouse was released from jail. Christopher Savoie's first wife, Noriko, violated a U.S. court order by taking their two children, Isaac, 8, and Rebecca, 6, out of the country and to Japan. According to the U.S. State Department, as of May 2009, there were 73 recorded cases of abduction to or retention in Japan, more than in any other country. (**ABC News**)

**10/24/09:** A Tokyo court ruled in favor of rock band GLAY over the ownership of copyrights on 147 songs and ordered its former management company to pay ¥670 million in back royalties and unpaid contract fees. (**Japan Times**)

**11/4/09:** Hideki Matsui became the first Japanese-born player to win the MVP trophy for the Most Valuable Player of the World Series with a record-tying six RBIs in the clincher to lead the Yankees over the Philadelphia Phillies 7-3. In Japan, the game ended just before 2 p.m. local time, giving workers an excuse to take an extended lunch break. (**AP**)

**11/9/09:** Singer-actress Noriko Sakai, 38, famous in Asia for her sweet, girl-next-door image, was given a suspended jail sentence for using illegal stimulants in the latest celebrity drugs case in Japan. The court handed her an 18-month jail term, suspended for three years. (**Reuters**)

**11/14/09:** Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama met with U.S. President Barack Obama in Tokyo in a bid to bolster the bilateral alliance and cooperate on pressing global issues, including climate change and nuclear disarmament. The two also touched on the sensitive relocation of U.S. Marine Corps Air Station Futenma in Okinawa. (**Japan Times**)

**11/16/09:** Japan's economy rebounded sharply in the third quarter as government stimulus measures and exports to rapidly growing Asian neighbors fueled growth that outpaced economists' expectations. Japan's 1.2 percent growth in gross domestic product over the previous quarter was the country's fastest growth since early 2007. (**Wall Street Journal**)

**11/25/09:** Toyota Motor Corp. will replace gas pedals on 3.8 million recalled vehicles in the United States to address problems with sudden acceleration, or the pedal becoming stuck in the floor mat. Popular vehicles such as the Toyota Camry and the Toyota Prius, the best-selling gas-electric hybrid, are part of the recall. The recall involving the accelerators was Toyota's largest in the U.S. (**AP**)

**12/2/09:** Mitsubishi Motors Corp. said it is in talks with PSA Peugeot-Citroen about a capital tie-up that could see the French auto maker take a significant stake in the Japanese company as an industry-wide slowdown and the need to invest in green car technology fuel consolidation pressures. (**Wall Street Journal**)

**12/7/09:** Brewer Sapporo has launched a new limited-edition beer called "Space Barley" grown from seeds which spent five months on board the International Space Station. Scientists involved in the joint Japanese-Russian project say this bodes well for attempts to grow other edible plants in space. (**BBC**)



**1/6/10:** Anti-whaling activists accused Japanese whalers of ramming and sinking a high-tech protest boat in the frigid Southern Ocean, but Japan said that its ship could not avoid the collision. The Australian government called for restraint by all parties after the hardline Sea Shepherd Conservation Society said its futuristic powerboat *Ady Gil* was cut in half by the Japanese security ship *Shonan Maru No. 2*. All six crew were rescued, but the collision left one activist with two broken ribs and the \$1.37 million carbon-fiber trimaran was sinking, Sea Shepherd said. (**Reuters**)

**1/19/10:** Japan Airlines Corp. filed for bankruptcy and will be restructured with the help of a state-backed turnaround fund, the Enterprise Turnaround Initiative Corp of Japan. The Tokyo Stock Exchange will delist JAL's shares on Feb. 20. The carrier will cut its group workforce to 36,201 by fiscal year 2012 from 51,862 in fiscal year 2009 and reduce routes. (**Reuters**)

**1/26/10:** Foreign travelers to Japan in 2009 declined for the first time in six years due in part to the global recession and the appreciation of the yen, the Japan National Tourism Organization announced. Overseas tourists to Japan dropped by 1.56 million, or 18.7 percent, from the previous year to an estimated 6.79 million in 2009, the sharpest decline since records were first kept in 1964. (**Mainichi Japan**)



## JetWit Baby!

On December 28 at 6:05 p.m., JETAANY's editor emeritus and JetWit honcho Steven Horowitz and his wife Wynne became the parents of a bouncing baby girl named Helen (aka Mini-Wynne)!

And of course, the very next day she began preparing for her JET Program application.

*Go-shussan omedetou gozaimasu!*

**Peace Corps  
Calls Out to JETs  
By Marea Pariser  
(Kagoshima-ken,  
2003-04)**

What comes to mind when you think of the Peace Corps? Is it the image of young, daring humanitarians performing HIV/AIDS work across Africa? Or how about the ambitious environmentalist who flocks to Third World Latin America to build aqueducts in the locals' backyards? Sure, we all know the stereotype: adventurous, somewhat experienced travelers willing to spend two years out in the bush roughing it with the locals as a result of their passion to see the world and an underlying desire to help others.

Perhaps we've thought about the opportunity for ourselves. And it's likely that we all know at least one person who's a current or returned Peace Corps volunteer. What probably doesn't come to mind, though, regarding this nearly 50-year-old program—founded in 1961 by the Kennedy administration—is the image of native English speakers flying abroad to teach English as a second language to locals in over 70 countries where the Peace Corps has a presence. Sound familiar? It should.

And recruiters at the Peace Corps New York Regional Office hope this familiarity will lure promising JET alumni across New York, New Jersey, Connecticut and Pennsylvania (the region's territory) into their office for an interview, which is part of the yearlong application process.

"We really have to reach out to organizations that have a like interest such as ours with respect to people interested in teaching and interested in an international focus," said Peace Corps New York Regional Manager Vincent Wickes from his office on Varick Street in Greenwich Village. "And certainly, JET represents that."

Wickes said education makes up the largest component of current Peace Corps programs overseas with 36 percent of volunteer jobs taking place in the classroom, from preschool to college-level instruction. It also is the greatest area of need "as identified by the countries asking for Peace Corps assistance" with a majority of the jobs in ESL, according to a Peace Corps brochure given to **JQ** last December. In fact, it's in more demand than health and HIV/AIDS work, which trails in second at 22 percent of all overseas programs.

B.J. Whetstine is an example of that. A Peace Corps recruiter in the New York office since late 2008, Whetstine served as a university English teacher in Guizhou Province in Southwest China from 2006 to 2008 with his wife. While his primary job was teaching English, Whetstine said he did promote HIV/AIDS awareness around his town: "Pretty much every Peace Corps volunteer, regardless of what their primary assignment is, does HIV and AIDS awareness work."

For Whetstine, that meant spearheading a campaign at his university, where a group of about 200 student volunteers worked together to promote HIV/AIDS awareness.



Lisa Reitmeier and B.J. Whetstine of the Peace Corps at the World AIDS Day panel.

He said his biggest project was for World AIDS Day, when his group of student volunteers spent three months making thousands of AIDS ribbons, each woven in a traditional Chinese knot pattern, which were passed out on campus and around town. As a recruiter, Whetstine remains enthusiastic about teaching English in Asia and appreciates the similarities his experience on the Peace Corps has with the JET Program.

"I have a good friend who did the JET Program and loved it," Whetstine said. "I had always wanted to do it myself, but ended up teaching English in China with the Peace Corps."

The friend he's referring to is William Childress, a fellow returnee who served in a nearby town in Southwest China. Whetstine said the two became close friends and traveled together with their wives throughout Asia during vacations (Peace Corps volunteers get 48 vacation days over two years).

"I think the experience William had

in Japan—both through teaching and just living in a pretty homogeneous Japanese community—really prepared him for what he faced in China," Whetstine said. "Because a lot of the things he said were the same. He stood out; he's not Asian. So people took notice of that and since he was a JET [prior to Peace Corps], he had gotten used to it."

In fact, Whetstine said his friend's JET experience proved to be beneficial in more ways than just preparing for cultural immersion; he feels it opened the door to a new dialogue.

"In China there are a lot of preconceived notions about Japan,"

must have a bachelor's degree in any subject and at least six months of teaching or tutoring experience in English, literacy or English as a second language.

Such teaching experience will be useful for any facet of the Peace Corps, Wickes said. "Truthfully, the educational program constitutes about 36 percent of the total volunteers, but ultimately most of the volunteers who serve will end up in some type of capacity where they're teaching.

"And that may not be in a classroom, but it's teaching health education, or teaching business advising."

Such was the case for returned Peace Corps volunteer Lisa Reitmeier, who is now, along with Whetstine, one of Wickes's eight regional recruiters.

While Reitmeier served as a health volunteer in a rural community in Africa's Burkina Faso from 2002 to 2004. Caring for patients suffering from elephantitis, malaria and HIV, she said education was a large part of her service.

Education is such a strong point for the Peace Corps that the organization offers scholarships, assistantships, college credit and stipends to those volunteers seeking graduate school opportunities.

When asked about the best part of her Peace Corps experience, Reitmeier said it was "definitely the relationships that I made with the people in my community. My best friend at the time was 24 years old; she was the third wife of her husband and she had never stepped foot inside a school. She had had four kids, two of whom had died. I mean, we just had nothing in common. But we were really best friends....It was a really wonderful experience to be in a relationship with people who just came from a totally different viewpoint in everything."

It's this interaction, Wickes says, that makes the program two years in length.

"Really, if you're there on a short-term basis you're a tourist. And we're not tourists," Wickes said. "We're there really as a part of their culture."

*The Peace Corps New York Regional Office is located at 201 Varick Street in Manhattan.*

*For more information, visit [www.peacecorps.gov](http://www.peacecorps.gov).*



**Gearing Up for Grad School**  
**By Aly Woolfrey**  
**(Aomori-ken, 2005-08)**

*Looking for a graduate school can be an intimidating process, and it's one that lots of JETs go through after they get back from their stint of being immersed in all things Japanese. Before I hit upon the place that was right for me, I felt like I'd scoured the entire Internet for leads. I wanted to get a degree here in the States, but I wasn't ready to give up my connection to the Land of the Rising Sun just yet, either.*

*This column is all about giving you ideas. The graduate programs, scholarships, fellowships and other opportunities introduced here all give you ways to use your unique JET experiences while getting the degree you need for the rest of your career.*

**The Luce Scholars Fellowship** is an independent program run by the Henry Luce Foundation that provides graduate-level opportunities for students to travel to different countries. From their Web site, it appears that fellows can choose the country they would like to go to, and Japan happens to be on the list of options! Specifics about what kind of graduate program you need to take are not listed, so I assume that there are a variety of options. For more information, check out the fellowship description at [www.hluce.org/lsprogram.aspx](http://www.hluce.org/lsprogram.aspx).

It's not an American graduate school, but **Tohoku University** in Sendai offers a variety of international doctoral study programs in engineering. Candidates can choose from among 22 departments. As a candidate, you would also have a chance at getting MEXT to pay your way through a couple of scholarship options. And, just in case you were too much of a lazy bum to study up on your Japanese during JET, don't despair; in this program, most courses are taught in English. For more information about curriculums, check out this

year's application announcement and homepage at [www.eng.tohoku.ac.jp/english/program/?menu=itn](http://www.eng.tohoku.ac.jp/english/program/?menu=itn).

Masters students at the **University of California, San Diego** can go to Tokyo University's graduate school of public policy to take classes towards a program in international relations. Opportunities for the fall, the spring, or for the whole year are available. You get to spend a little time back in Japan while getting your studies on, and you can brag about being a



TCNY campus. (Teachers College homepage)

Today student to all your friends!  
[www.eap.ucop.edu/our\\_programs/countries/japan/graduate\\_studies\\_to-kyo.shtm](http://www.eap.ucop.edu/our_programs/countries/japan/graduate_studies_to-kyo.shtm).

The first foreign university to have a branch campus in Japan was Philadelphia's **Temple University**. You can do a class, a semester

or something else while getting your degree in the States, or you can study TESOL, business, or law entirely in Japan. Learn more at [www.temple.edu](http://www.temple.edu).

This issue's feature program is the **MA program in TESOL at the Teachers College in Tokyo**. The main campus for the Teachers College is located right here in New York City, and is closely affiliated with Columbia University. While the main campus offers a ton of different degree programs—making it one of the most extensive graduate schools in the country—Tokyo focuses on teaching English to speakers of other languages, or TESOL. According to Dr. Bill Snyder, the program's current director, the program itself started 22 years ago, and currently boasts about 100 students at any given time, with a sizable number of Japanese.

So far, MAs are the only degrees offered at the Tokyo campus, but they are looking into options for expansion. Also, if you are a TESOL or applied linguistics student at the main Teachers College in New York and are feeling nostalgic for Japan, you can come to Tokyo for just a semester or a term in the summer to take a class or two. The program sees lots of movement from one campus to another, whether it's New York students going to Tokyo for a class or Tokyo students transferring here for the remainder of their program. They are even considering expanding the course offerings to give students from other departments and programs a taste of Japan while studying abroad.

To learn more about the TESOL program, visit [www.tc-japan.edu](http://www.tc-japan.edu) or contact them directly at [office@tc-japan.edu](mailto:office@tc-japan.edu). To see what the main campus in New York has to offer, go to [www.tc.columbia.edu](http://www.tc.columbia.edu).

*Help out your fellow JET returnees! If you know of a graduate program, study abroad opportunity, financial aid opportunity or anything else that can help a graduate student maintain their connection with Japan, tell us! E-mail your tips and links to Aly at [mnjetter@gmail.com](mailto:mnjetter@gmail.com).*

**At the ISE Cultural Gallery**  
**By Michael Glumac**  
**(Miyazaki-ken, 2008-09)**

The sidewalks lining the stretch of Broadway that extends south from Houston Street are some of New York City's most heavily trafficked, as visitors and locals alike are drawn to this patch of SoHo by its many boutiques and restaurants. On this strip sits a Japanese institution widely regarded to be touchstone of Sino culture, style, and taste. The establishment of which I speak—fashion monolith Uniqlo.

While a Mecca for returned JETs wanting to keep up with the latest Japanese trends or to nab \$30 jeans, Uniqlo is not the subject here. Instead, it is another treasure given to us by Japan—across the street, tucked beneath a children's book publisher, stands the ISE Cultural Gallery.

While not as visible as its four-story towering



Diane Landry's *Mandalas in Series Blue Decline* installation at ISE Cultural Gallery, SoHo.

clothing kin across Broadway, this location certainly rivals it as a point of interest, especially for the Japan-crazed returnee.

The ISE Cultural Gallery was founded in 1984 by a Japanese businessman of the same name (ISE is pronounced as the Japanese family name, not an acronym) with the aim "to support mostly emerging, under-represented artists and

curators by providing the exhibition opportunities in New York."

The gallery can be found by its street level display window that features frequently changing works of art. After heading downstairs, the visitor encounters a desk helmed by gallery assistant Mayumi Sarai. Behind her extends a large white walled space filled with fruits of creative labor by both Japanese and international artists.

ISE's feature when I visited was the captivating "Light in Motion" curated by Yuko Suzuki. This "kinetic group exhibition" includes pieces from Erik Guzman, Diane Landry and Daniel Wapner. All of the works explore the relationship between illumination and movement.

Unlike a typical gallery experience where one might observe paintings behind a velvet rope, "Light in Motion" engages the viewer with its departure from the static. The first surprise for the senses upon entering the gallery is the sound of dissonant piano strings. The cacophony

**Harumi Kurihara**  
**The JQ Interview**  
 By Yukari Sakamoto  
 (Chiba-ken, 1989-1990)  
 Photos Courtesy of Conran USA

A *doyenne* of domesticity, the tireless Harumi Kurihara is often called the Japanese Martha Stewart. A media maven, she is omnipresent from magazines to TV in Japan, guiding followers not only with recipes, but also tips on entertaining at home. A popular author of washoku cookbooks, Kurihara recently released her third cookbook in English, *Everyday Harumi*.

What makes this book unique is the research that Kurihara did to find out what ingredients are most prominent in Western kitchens and crafting suitable recipes ranging from traditional Japanese to innovative and creative fare. The resulting book empowers home cooks unfamiliar with Japanese recipes to quickly become fluent. While visiting New York City last fall to promote her book at Japan Society and Mitsuwa, among other places, Kurihara answered questions for JQ.

**Congratulations on a beautiful cookbook. The chapter on kitchen cupboard essentials is packed with good information, and we love your healthy and delicious recipes. Can you tell us a bit about your background and how you decided to make cookbooks in English?**

I started working as a cooking assistant on TV, behind the scenes. Conran Octopus asked me to publish *Everyday Harumi*. This was made with a British-only crew. American people can cook all the recipes in this book.

**What are your three favorite Japanese kitchen tools?**

The first one is a *suribachi*, or a mortar, to grind sesame and other ingredients. The second one is an *akutori*, or a scum remover. The third is called *daikon oroshi*, or a grater. You can grate a radish, ginger, or wasabi with it.

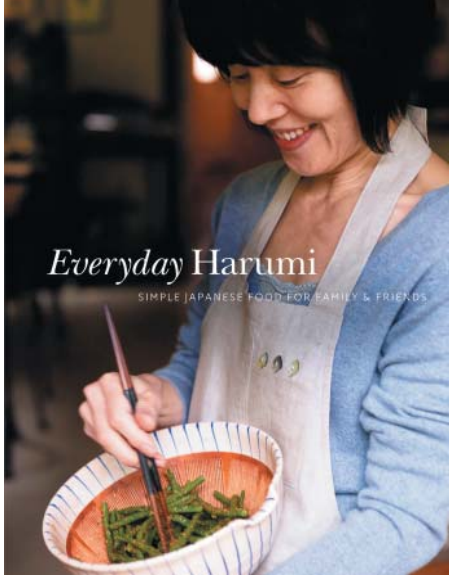
**Help us create a menu for a picnic in Central Park.**

Deep-fried chicken, sweet egg rolls, and quick pickled cucumber.

**Can you suggest bento ideas for Americans who want to bring lunch to the workplace?**

Green pea rice, ginger pork, and spinach with peanut dressing.

**In your cookbook, most of the ingredients are things we can find in American**



**supermarkets, notably the seafood. How did you conduct your research for the book?**

I went to supermarkets in London and checked everything myself. I wanted to know what was easily available.

**How do you stay so skinny when testing all of these recipes?**

I don't do anything special. I taste all the ingredients, and I eat small portions regularly.

**President Obama and his wife Michelle are encouraging Americans to eat healthful diets. Can you make any suggestions?**

From the book, I recommend pork and vegetable miso soup, and *tsukune* [ground meat patties].

**Did you find any new favorite restaurants in New York from your visit here, and do you have any favorite restaurants in Tokyo if we come for a visit there?**

Sorry, I have no idea. There are so many great restaurants, but what is more important is enjoying the people you are dining with.

**You are indefatigable. How do you manage all of your projects like cookbooks, magazines, TV, etc.?**

Out of love for my family and all my friends.

**Any ideas on what we can look forward to in your next cookbook in English?**

The basic seasoning, soy sauce. I saw a lot of ingredients at the supermarket, and everyone gets confused which one to choose. I recommend you use soy sauce in addition to your own seasonings.

**Your English is getting better and better. Have you been studying?**

Yes, I'm studying English on the phone, every morning.

**At your Japan Society lecture, you gave brilliant advice on entertaining at home. You said that when you have guests coming over, the first thing you do is check to see what's in your fridge and freezer and create your menu based on what you can build from what's in your home, going to the supermarket only to purchase additional ingredients. Do you have any other tips for entertaining at home?**

Two tips for you. The first one is to prepare some dishes in advance. The second is that I cook some dishes in front of my guests. I can save time this way, and my guests enjoy watching my cooking.

**Any final tips or advice?**

You should not only go to Japanese restaurants but also cook Japanese dishes at home. Japanese cooking looks difficult, but it can be done easily. I recommend that you try to cook some Japanese dishes.

Learn more about *Everyday Harumi* at [www.conranusa.com/ProductDetails.aspx?pid=9103997&cid=Books&language=en-US](http://www.conranusa.com/ProductDetails.aspx?pid=9103997&cid=Books&language=en-US).

ony emanates from a mechanical sculpture by Daniel Wapner. As the strings are plucked, they come into contact with an electrical circuit, causing LED lights to twinkle like stars on a dark canvas.

Diane Landry's work creatively incorporates recycled materials and everyday objects. Laundry baskets and plastic soda bottles are bundled together as a spotlight projects an endlessly morphing kaleidoscope on the gallery's white wall.

Along the rear wall of the gallery are the light installations of Erik Guzman, activated by motion sensors that detect the proximity of gallery visitors. The organic forms whizzing around draw from both Eastern and Western architecture.

Suzuki, the curator, also serves as the ISE Gallery's assistant director. "Light in Motion" is

the first exhibition she has curated. "It was really fun to communicate with artists and make a plan and choose which works to show," she said. "When I go to other galleries, all of them are 'for sale.' I wanted to have an exhibit unlike anything we've seen before; more creative and from a different point of view."

Exhibits at the gallery change every few months. For "Volcano Lovers," the most recent display, Sarai explains the concept: "This show is managed by two curators, one from Japan, and one from Iceland; both are volcanic islands. The artists in Iceland are not very well known or represented in this area, so it will be interesting to see the similarity."

In addition to exhibitions, ISE holds special events and receptions. A summer tradition is the "Art Student's Exhibition in NY" which

features works by art students from the United States, Japan and all over the world. At an award ceremony and closing party, renowned art professionals serve as jurors to award selected works, as T-shirts for the student exhibitors are donated by a certain neighboring bargain fashion emporium.

When you next find yourself at this same Japanese juggernaut, possibly to purchase slick attire if you are a recently returned JET, make the time to visit ISE Cultural gallery across the street. Or make a separate trip—you'll surely enjoy your visit to this fantastic subterranean den of creativity. And best of all, admission is zero yen!

ISE Cultural Gallery is located at 555 Broadway. For more info and listings, visit [www.iseny.org](http://www.iseny.org).



**Nihonjin in New York**  
**Takayuki Tanaka**  
By Stacy Smith  
(Kumamoto-ken  
CIR, 2000-03)

*Budding filmmaker Takayuki Tanaka is the creator of the documentary Samurai Umpires in the USA, which premiered in New York last fall. The film profiles the previously unknown world of Japanese umpires in minor league baseball and their struggles and triumphs. JQ talked to him about his motivation for making this movie, as well as the path that brought him to New York.*

**Can you tell us a little bit about your background in Japan?**

I was born and raised in Nara in a small town where it took an hour to get to the closest movie theater. Although there were many good schools in the Kansai area, I convinced my parents that for college I had to go to Tokyo to get the best education possible. So I ended up going to Waseda, where I majored in sociology in the philosophy section of the literature department.

I had a professor who specialized in the sociology of television and media. He was helping to work on a variety show popular at the time about a boy and girl who fall in love. Along with my 25 classmates, I became involved with aspects of the program such as production. It was a nine-part series, and when it concluded I got to interview the participants and ask questions regarding their experience, like whether they had really complied with the rules of the show.

**So that was your first introduction to the world of TV. Did you pursue this field?**

My first job was at Fuji Television, and I got to work on a political debate show called *Hodo 2001*. It aired from 7:30 to 9:00 on Sunday mornings, so for the most part we were holed up in the office from Thursday on. Fuji had its own version of a capsule hotel that could house at least 100 people. That kind of work took its toll on me, and I was once brought to the hospital for stress-related issues.

But I really enjoyed my time working on *Hodo 2001*, as I was able to meet many interesting people such as novelists, economists and politicians. My favorite encounters were meeting former Taiwanese president Chen Shui-bian and former Japanese prime ministers Junichiro Koizumi and Shinzo Abe. My staff and I went drinking with Abe!

**Sounds like an amazing job! Why did you leave?**

For a while I had been thinking that I wanted to study film more formally, so it was a matter of finding the right timing. There happened to be a period when the program was going to be "refreshed," meaning some people would be fired or transferred and new staff would be brought on. At the time, I was 26 years old. I thought if I remained and worked for another two or three years, I would be approaching 30, and at that point it would be hard to make a move to do something different.

I also realized that not all, but the majority of Japanese directors didn't know much about the technical aspects of production; they just gave orders. I wanted to know more about camera editing, etc. and decided entering a program would be the best way to do this. I had studied abroad in San Diego at a summer program during college, and from that time on I had liked English and wanted to come back to the States.

Of course it was a tough decision, especially since everyone was questioning why I would be so *baka* as to leave a stable job at a great company. It was also hard because although I lived in Tokyo, the show was televised nationally so my parents in Nara could see my name in the credits at the end of the program every week. I think this reassured them that I was doing OK, and I felt bad for depriving them of this reassurance by quitting.

**How did you decide on New York as opposed to the West Coast?**

I ended up attending the New York Film Academy, and that is what brought me to the East Coast. There I studied all aspects of filmmaking, from technical to creating stories and direction. My class was incredibly international, with students from Germany, Korea, Iceland, India and Egypt. It was the American students who I found to be lazy, and my international classmates were the ones with motivation.

During my second semester I had to develop my thesis. I always carry around an "idea book" that I can make notes in at any time should inspiration strike. On a Post-it in this book I had written *shinpan no kunou*, or "umpires' struggles," and this idea stayed with me. In 2008, they introduced instant replay to Major League Baseball via home run cameras, and I thought this would greatly change the game for



Director Tanaka with senior-most Japanese minor league baseball umpire Takeshi Hirabayashi. (Courtesy of Takayuki Tanaka)

umpires as it would officially prove whether or not their calls were correct. I wanted to take a deeper look at how this would affect them and the profession.

I wanted to focus on the majors but it was difficult to get the necessary permission, so I decided to change to the minors after reading a book by the senior-most Japanese umpire in America, Takeshi Hirabayashi. Upon his suggestion I opted to profile all six of the Japanese minor league umpires, so my filming took me all over the country. By the time of graduation I had put together the trailer, which they showed at the ceremony. Post-graduation, my travels continued when I went to the umpire academy and met with some of the umpires again before making the necessary final touches. The completed film debuted in New York last October, and going forward it will be entered in assorted film festivals where hopefully it will receive visibility and funding.

**What was the most interesting or surprising aspect of the filmmaking process?**

Before making this movie, I knew nothing about the minor leagues. I had only been to the Yankees' and Mets' stadiums. However, I loved traveling to places where baseball is the sole source of entertainment for its residents. In places like Idaho, Utah and Iowa, the locals were really nice and took the time to chat with me. These people can pay as little as \$5 to see a game, and many will attend every day on dates or with their families. You can barbecue in the parking lot beforehand, and it's a really fun atmosphere that I don't think exists in Japan for minor league baseball. I enjoyed experiencing this slice of life.

**What are your upcoming film projects?**

There are a ton of documentaries I want to make, but they might have

to be put on the back burner as I am returning to Japan and will be busy once I find a new job. Before going back to Tokyo, I will be home in Nara and while there I hope to visit the two restaurants in Kyoto specializing in *suzume* (sparrow) *yakitori*. I've never tried this, and I think it might be interesting to profile someone who works there or who is involved with sparrow hunting. Another idea I have is to explore the unique hospitality, training and work ethic of *ryokan* employees.

**What will you miss most about New York, and what are you most excited for at home?**

Having lived in New York for over two years, there are many things I will miss. For example, seeing big budget Hollywood movies being filmed almost every day as I walked through areas like SoHo and Midtown. Another thing I will miss is the city's diversity—people of all races speaking their own versions of English while laughing and talking together. Back home I will have less of a chance to speak English, and I won't be able to eat greasy diner food anymore!

To be honest, I'm not super excited about going back to Japan. Part of the reason is that I'm almost 30, and in Japanese society it's tough to begin again once you are past this age. I'll be starting from zero and that worries me. In New York, it doesn't matter how old you are; you can always start from scratch! So I'm feeling some frustration regarding that aspect of home right now.

But of course, I'm also looking forward to beginning a brand new life there that builds on what I have cultivated here in New York. Also, I can't wait to have my fill of cheap, delicious Japanese food!

Visit the film's homepage (Japanese and English) at [www.samuraiumpires.jp](http://www.samuraiumpires.jp).



**Lisa Katayama on  
2-D Love, Japan Pop  
By Crystal Wong  
(Iwate-ken, 2002-04)**

Lisa Katayama writes about Japanese culture, technology and human rights. Her work has been published in the New York Times, Popular Science and Wired. She also is the author of *Urawaza*: Secret Everyday Tips and Tricks from Japan. **JQ** caught up with Lisa to find out more about her infamous New York Times Magazine story from last summer on the 2-D lover phenomenon (featured as a subplot on a recent episode of 30 Rock) and her thoughts on Japanese culture.

**Tell us a little about your background. You wrote *Urawaza*, a collection of handy and offbeat Japanese household tips, and you also write about Japanese culture for U.S. audiences. How did you get started covering these topics?**

I started writing about Japan when I was an intern at *Wired*.

**You wrote about the 2-D lover phenomenon in Japan for the *New York Times Magazine*. When did you first become aware of this trend, and how did the story come about?**

I first tapped into this while reporting on a story about 2channel, a Japanese Web bulletin, in February 2008. A friend in Tokyo helped me get in touch with the right people.

**What was your research for the 2-D story like? Were people embarrassed to talk about their experiences?**

No, the ones I talked to were very candid about

their hobbies. Nothing was forced.

**What do you think the 2-D trend signifies for the future of love in Japan? How does it connect to *otaku* culture in general?**

I don't think it hints at the future of love in Japan, necessarily. It just shows that with a twist of the imagination, anything is possible.

**During your conversations or your research for the story, did you come across any women who have 2-D relationships, or is this purely a male phenomenon?**

There are women who engage in the 2-D world, too. They're called *fujoshi*. I did interview several *fujoshi* while reporting this piece, but they didn't make it into the story this time.



*Urawaza* author/bloggess Lisa Katayama. (Brian Lam)

**You also blog for Boing Boing. How do you decide what topics get covered in your personal site, Tokyo Mango, and what gets into BB?**

TokyoMango = anything that has to do with Japan. Boing Boing = everything else I find intriguing.

**What are some of the most common misconceptions about Japanese culture and**

**tech that you discover in talking with your readers, if any?**

I like to think most of my readers are pretty savvy.

**A lot of JET alumni lived in rural areas of Japan, where certain aspects of Japanese pop culture may not have been as accessible, apparent or accepted. Do you find that trends you see in Japan's cities make their way up to more rural areas or does it seem that things are totally segregated? Many Japanese youth trends come and go so fast—they suddenly become hugely popular for, like, two weeks, and then they're gone. I think the bigger trends do eventually make their way to the rural areas, but the ephemeral ones might not.**

**Japan is struggling with a staggering amount of national debt and adjusting to a new government. How do you think these political changes affect the culture as a whole, if at all?**

I don't think it has a big effect on pop culture—the political system has been pretty stagnant for a while now. It'll have to take something much more earth-shattering for there to be a bottom-up interest in it, I think.

**What's something cool and interesting that you've seen in Japan that you wish would make it over stateside soon?**

I've always wished they sold hot soup and coffee in vending machines here.

**What are you working on next that Japanophiles can look forward to?**

It's a surprise! Visit me at TokyoMango to keep updated.

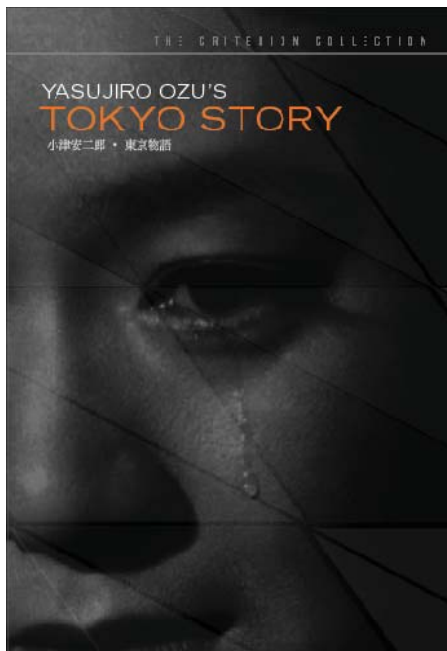
For more trends, tips and technology, visit Lisa online at [www.tokyomango.com](http://www.tokyomango.com).

**Film Review**

**The Legacy of Tokyo Story  
By David Kowalsky  
(Hiroshima-ken  
ALT/CIR, 1991-93)**

When watching any new Japanese film that deals with family, a recent one being 2008's *Still Walking* (*Arutemo arutemo*), directed by Hirokazu Kore-eda, it is inevitable that there are going to be comparisons to the works of Yasujiro Ozu. I recently decided to educate myself on Ozu by watching the Criterion Collection DVD of *Tokyo Story* (*Tokyo Monogatari*). Originally released in 1953, it is the most famous film from the prolific director and scriptwriter who made a remarkable total of 53 films from 1927 to 1962.

I wasn't prepared for the slow pace and at first what seemed like a real lack of much happening, but a story does emerge about an elderly couple from Onomichi, Hiroshima visiting two of their grown, married children living in the suburbs of Tokyo. The parents find that their kids are so wrapped up in and busy with their own lives that they don't know what to do with them, so they are eventually sent off to a hot spring resort



at Atami in Shizuoka. Instead of doing an exhaustive rehashing of the rest of the story after the parents return to Tokyo, I will say the film brilliantly captures the aging parents dealing

with the disappointments of their children in the early years of postwar Japan.

When watching *Tokyo Story*, you can't help but notice Ozu's distinctive camera style, which has as little movement as possible. The scenes are shot almost always from a waist-high viewpoint, or the view of someone below eye level sitting on a tatami mat.

Ozu employs "intermediate spaces" instead of a direct cut between scenes. The intermediate spaces fall between the action just completed and the action forthcoming. The first one is a shot of smokestacks, but there are many more throughout the film, so watch closely for them.

Another key technique is the use of "dramatic ellipses"—events that do not happen on the screen, but come up later in dialogue. The first one is the parents' train trip to Toyko, which we never see.

A final thing to watch for are scenes with a "mismatched" action. The first time this appears in the film is when the parents face each other in one direction, quickly followed by them facing each other in the opposite direction. It looks like some kind of bizarre mistake, but is in fact deliberate.

It may seem crazy to take very seriously any lists that rank the “greatest” films ever. But it was amazing to read that *Tokyo Story* has done quite well. In *Sight & Sound*, a British film magazine that makes a list of the greatest films ever made every 10 years as voted on by directors and critics, *Tokyo Story* came in third in 1992 and fifth in 2002. More recently, in October and November 2009 in New York, the Museum of the Moving Image and Queens Theatre in the Park collaborated on launching a “Moving Image Masterpiece” film series. For this inaugural series, a sampling of a half dozen of the greatest, must-see films of all time were selected. Yes, *Tokyo Story* was one of the six, which also included *Citizen Kane*, *Metropolis*, *The Rules of the Game*, *8 ½* and *2001: A Space Odyssey*.

The Criterion Collection DVD of *Tokyo Story* does not disappoint when it comes to the extras. The two-disc set has an audio commentary by Ozu scholar David Desser, editor of Ozu’s *Tokyo Story*. Also included is *I Lived, But...* (1983), a two-hour documentary about the man’s life and career. And as if that isn’t enough, there is also *Talking with Ozu*, a 30-minute tribute featuring directors Stanley Kwan, Aki Kaurismäki, Claire Denis, Lindsay Anderson, Paul Schrader, Wim Wenders and Hou Hsiao-Hsien.

Learn more about *Tokyo Story* at Criterion’s homepage at [www.criterion.com/films/284](http://www.criterion.com/films/284).



John at a press conference with Secretary General Ban Ki Moon (rear) and the Japanese media on climate change.

This issue features John Ellis-Guardiola (*Miyagi-ken, 2002-04*), New York bureau producer for *Tokyo Broadcasting System*.

#### What made you participate on JET?

One of my friends from Macalester College, Curtis Gilbert, was telling me about this colleague of his who participated in the JET program. According to him, she was ranting and raving about the experience. That was the first I ever heard about JET; it seemed like a great opportunity, so I applied. [Cont on 11]

## The Language(s) of Love By Nichole Knight (Shiga-ken, 2007-09)

Last November saw the release of *Love in Translation*, *Japan enthusiast Wendy Nelson Tokunaga’s second novel. It’s the story of Celeste, who travels to Japan in hopes of finding a distant relative and learning about the father she never knew. JQ talked with Wendy about her Japan experiences and how they helped to guide her.*

#### What inspired you to write the book?

It’s kind of my cockeyed valentine to Japan, a place that I’ve loved and loathed. I also wanted to explore the themes of how *gaijin* are treated in Japan and what it’s like for someone to find the feeling of family in a homestay. It’s also about the power of music.

#### Being a *gaijin* in Japan is something JETs can relate to. Yes. And I’m sure some people handle it better than others.

#### True. What are some of your most memorable experiences in Japan, good or bad?

There are so many. My first trip to Japan was as a winner in a song-writing contest sponsored by a Japanese record company. I got to go to Tokyo and sing my song at Nakano Sun Plaza which was all very exciting. And I thought maybe I could make it in music in Japan but that didn’t happen. Later I lived in Tokyo for about a year. I found that I could never feel that I could just blend in physically. Being a Caucasian—and being there before most Japanese were dyeing their hair—I really stuck out. I could always be found, whether it was by some student I didn’t want to see, or the police checking to make sure that I wasn’t a prostitute!

Another incident was when I traveled to Japan with a Japanese American friend who didn’t speak the language. Whenever I asked Japanese people for directions or whatever, they answered by looking at my friend, who of course couldn’t understand them. In Japan, it’s all about the face. Things don’t compute when they see a *gaijin* speaking Japanese, and when I started singing in Japanese—like my character in the book does as well—the same thing happened.

#### I think the book will bring a sense of nostalgia for anyone

#### who’s been to Japan, but it’s also a fair introduction to the culture for those who haven’t. Who was your intended audience?

I hope the book will appeal to readers who like to get immersed in a good story and who also like to learn something about another place and culture. And, of course, it’s fun to hear from readers who have had the experience of living in Japan and/or are in a cross-cultural relationship or marriage.

#### You and your main character, Celeste, have that in common—you’re both also singers. How closely do you identify with this character?

I certainly have taken some of my experience in my life and put it into Celeste. Yes, I made her a singer and I am a singer as well who has sung in Japanese. And I’m married to a Japanese man who was born in Osaka. But when I first went to Japan I had studied the language and culture extensively, unlike Celeste. And the whole family issue—the search for the long, lost relative and childhood background—is all fiction, as are most of her experiences there. And I have never been in a homestay situation, but I thought it would be interesting to put a character in that situation who had been raised in foster care where there wasn’t much family warmth going on.

#### I found it interesting that Celeste goes to Japan to search for family. We have many types of families in the States as opposed to Japan. How did that affect the characters’ differing views of family?

I liked the irony of someone finding the feeling of family in a culture that felt so foreign to her in the beginning. And the idea that you can be brought into a family and have room and board just because you are a native speaker of English is interesting to me. I think Celeste yearned for a traditional family because of her background, and while some people might have found the situation with her host mother rather stifling, she instead welcomed it since she’d never had much of a family growing up.

#### In your first novel, *Midori by Moonlight*, you write about a Japanese girl who moves to America. This book features an American girl living in Japan. How are these two characters’ situations similar?

I think they are only similar in general. Midori doesn’t feel that she fits in Japanese society and thinks that marrying an American

and moving to San Francisco is her ticket to freedom and the perfect life, and of course it doesn’t exactly work out that way. With Celeste, I feel as though she’s in a rut and finally realizes that life isn’t a dress rehearsal.

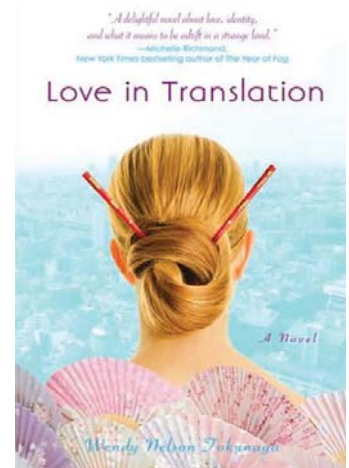
#### On your Web site, you feature a trailer for the book. You also have a CD featuring the song from the book, “Nozomi no Hoshi” (The Wishing Star). Did you intend for the reader to grasp the story on another level?

I don’t know if that was my goal, but I guess that’s the way it turned out. The trailer ended up being a mini-movie version of the book that will have to stand if the book never gets made into a film. And the song is very meaningful because it’s a fictional song, although I’ve had readers think it was real. But my husband wrote the music and I co-wrote the lyrics with our friend Hiro Akashi, and I get to sing it. Singing in Japanese is something I’ve done for a long time and something I really enjoy, so it kind of came full circle. But this happened rather organically and not necessarily as something out of some grand scheme; it just seemed like the right thing to do. I had so much fun creating both the trailer and the song; the fact that it kind of blends together is very satisfying.

#### One last question: what do you want readers to take away from your story?

I guess that if you are open and flexible and willing to take risks, life can take you in directions you never anticipated or thought possible. And taking a chance on living in a culture that is foreign to you and stepping outside of your comfort zone will almost always turn out to be an enriching experience.

For more on Wendy and *Love in Translation*, visit [www.wendytokunaga.com](http://www.wendytokunaga.com).





## Bridge Building with Filmmaker Aaron Woolfolk

By Lyle Sylvander (Yokohama-shi, 2001-02)

Most JETs enjoy telling tales about the cities they lived in. Aaron Woolfolk (Kochi-ken, 1992-93) has made a movie about it. He is the writer and director of *The Harimaya Bridge*, which received a theatrical release in Japan last year and premiered at New York's Upper West Side in December as part of the African Diaspora Film Festival. This spring, it will receive a wider release in the U.S. JQ talked with the JETAA Southern California alum about the making of this bilingual, bicultural film.

### How did you get involved with JET?

During my senior year in college, I ran into a couple of friends who were on their way to pick up an application for the JET Program. I had nothing to do when I saw them, so I tagged along. I had never heard of the program before, but it definitely intrigued me. I had always wanted to experience another culture firsthand, and thought the best way to do that would be to live in that culture, rather than merely visiting it for a limited time.

### How did you decide to be a filmmaker?

I was always a storyteller, even at a young age. I also had a practical side to me and when it came time to decide on a career, I briefly considered law school, but the storyteller side of me won out and I applied to film school. I got in to Columbia's MFA program, and I've never looked back. I found the decision to be very liberating and know that I'm much happier now than if I had gone to law school.

### Are there any Japanese filmmakers who have influenced your work?

Yes, definitely. As a teenager I discovered many foreign directors I admired, including Japanese directors—particularly Ozu, Mizoguchi, Itami and Kurosawa—and they've all had an impact on my work in positive ways. In particular, *The Harimaya Bridge* is a kind of homage to Kurosawa's *Ikiru*, which is my favorite film of all time.

### Can you talk about the genesis of *The Harimaya Bridge* and how the film came together?

I first started writing *The Harimaya Bridge* in film school but knew that it would be difficult for a first-time filmmaker like me to convince people I could make a feature film in Japan. So I made two short films

in Japan—a comedy called *Eki* and a drama called *Kuroi Hitsuji*. These shorts had successful showings at film festivals and I won a few directing awards, which made the idea of me making a feature film in Japan more viable. Then I won a development grant funded by Disney and offered through Danny Glover's theater company in L.A. Danny's star power lent support for the film but it was ultimately producer Ko Mori who helped pull all the necessary elements together. He's one of the smartest people I've ever met and his passion and integrity really kept the whole thing together during the financing process. In the end, there were three major backers—Eleven Arts, Ko's company, based in the U.S.; Toei, a Japanese distributor; and SSD, a Korean company.

### The film received a theatrical release in Japan last summer. How was it received?

The film's reception has been uniformly positive. Audiences love the characters and story, and really appreciate the fact that it was made by someone who actually lived in Japan. I purposely wanted to avoid many of the clichés found in American films about foreign places, particularly the arrogance and sense of superiority with which they denigrate foreign cultures. So, the Japanese audiences I talked to were impressed by my portrayal of Japan's culture and people. In fact, some audience members were surprised that it was directed by a non-Japanese person. Also, a lot of JETs and JET alums in Japan were really enthusiastic in their response to the film, which really made me happy.

### What are your future plans?

I'm currently working on a comedy-drama that takes place in the American South called *Summer SOULstice*, and also a drama called *Dream I Have*, which is inspired by a true story about a Japanese man who dreams of opening a jazz club in New Orleans. In terms of my hopes for a career, ideally I'd like to go back and forth between making intimate dramas and big Hollywood movies. Ang Lee and Christopher Nolan both have the type of career I'd like to emulate.

For more information and future screenings, visit [www.theharimayabridge.com](http://www.theharimayabridge.com) and [www.facebook.com/pages/The-Harimaya-Bridge/222376906581?ref=ts](https://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Harimaya-Bridge/222376906581?ref=ts).



Saki Takaoka and Victor Grant star in *The Harimaya Bridge*, directed by JET alum Aaron Woolfolk and also featuring Danny Glover. © Harimaya Bridge, LLP

### [Cont from 10] Did you know any Japanese prior to JET?

No. I had no exposure to Japanese culture prior to JET, and I took an intensive five-week course at the University of Minnesota the month prior to going to Japan. I may not have learned a lot in that limited time, but what did sink in gave me just a little bit more confidence in those first few weeks when I asked myself "what are you doing here?" in the middle of attempting to communicate with the cashier at the Family Mart in my neighborhood. Eventually, I learned to say *hitotsu*, meaning one thing, as opposed to *ichi*, which means the number one. The cashier, Hiroto-san, perhaps out of pity, became a friend of mine and his family welcomed me into their home on several occasions.

### How is your experience on JET helping you today?

I've been working at TBS' New York bureau for the past four years. I know that without JET—and later, JETAANY—I would not have found my way into this job.

### How did you find the job at TBS?

After I came back to the U.S. from JET, I tried working at an architecture firm, BLT Architects, in Philadelphia. The job was interesting, but it made me realize that I really missed speaking languages in general and Japanese in particular. That's when I started my job search. In short, I found my current job as a news producer through a posting on the JETAANY Web site. I landed the job hours after finishing the interview, and it was a very exciting move for me.

### What does a news producer for a Japanese TV station do in New York?

Where should I begin?! My job at TBS is all about staying on top of

news stories, following up with sources, setting up and conducting interviews, researching contacts, editing video, transcription and interpretation, setting up logistics for satellite feeds, and on and on. One of the main differences in working for a Japanese TV station in New York versus a U.S. media company is the lack of unions. This means that working at TBS has really taught me a lot about the many layers of TV news production through hands-on experience.

### What kind of stories have you covered for TBS?

The range is wide, but I spend a lot of time paying attention to what's going on at the United Nations, especially as it relates to Japan's role on the Security Council and actions taken by or against North Korea. Beyond that, last year I was working with my colleagues to cover the tragic extradition of [convicted businessman] Kazuyoshi Miura while also following the primary and presidential elections. I have had to learn a lot more than I ever expected to about the stock market as a result of the economic crisis, but the best part of my job is that it keeps me learning new things and meeting new people all of the time.

### How has your JET experience helped your work at TBS?

In so many ways! One of the things that surprised me at first when I lived in Japan was the number of questions people asked all the time. I am over the shock of the barrage of questions, but I am still awestruck by the level of detail that my Japanese colleagues will put into asking questions. What is different about my JET years and now is that I can no longer feign a lack of linguistic competence!

Visit TBS online at [www.tbs.co.jp/eng](http://www.tbs.co.jp/eng).

# THE FUNNY PAGE

Whether it's dropping pounds, netting a new job, or helping to make the world a better place, a new year's resolution is an opportunity. Reflecting on the plans we made during our stay in Japan, JQ presents our totally tongue-in-cheek...

## Top 12 JET New Year's Resolutions

12. Exercise more (Wii Fit *dame dayo*).
11. Cut back on teaching class hungover to once a week.
10. Act more honorably in the *purikura* booth with your sweetie.
9. Go green. Eat more fish heads.
8. Reconnect with your spiritual side by visiting a non-Kitty-chan place of worship.
7. New Yorkers: give that Hideki Matsui voodoo doll a day off (sub the Jay Leno one).
6. Choose one: teach your class to properly say "yield," "yeast" and "year," or the slightly less difficult task of achieving world peace.
5. Master writing the kanji for *bara*, instantly impressing your J-friends and colleagues.
4. Watch *Kohaku Uta Gassen* for the musical achievements instead of the hot pants.
3. Entrepreneurs: pitch new "Tiger Woods *saabisu*" idea to your local *fuzoku*.
2. Pretend harder to read Japanese newspapers.
1. Stop being such a non-pillow.

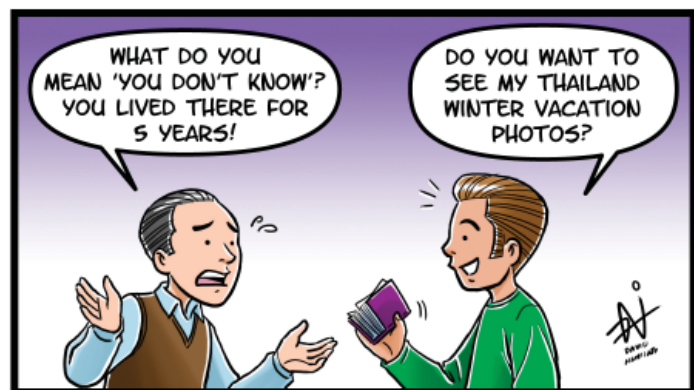
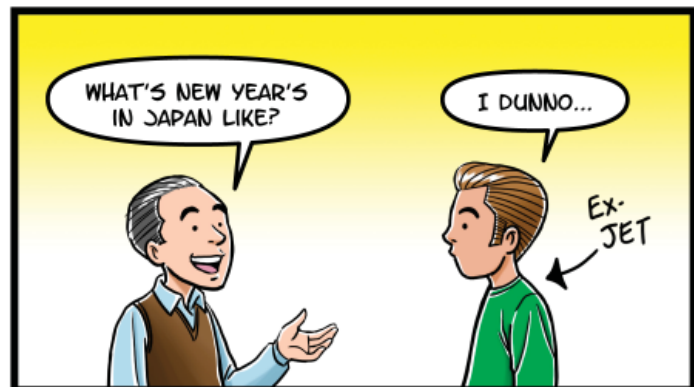


ericmchu

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