

The Mikan

EHIME'S OFFICIAL JET NEWSLETTER: WRITING AND PICTURES BY MIKANS, FOR MIKANS

2013 summer



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FROM THE EDITOR

Hello again Ehimeans!

Cicadas are buzzing, air conditioners are blasting, and summer festivals are nearly in full swing. That's right, folks—it's summer in Ehime and a new issue of The Mikan is rolling out once again! For many of you this season is punctuated by a series of difficult final goodbyes to the land of mikans aplenty, and to you we wish you a safe return home and the best of luck in the years to come. For a chosen few, however, Ehime will become a new home for any number of years, and to all arriving JETs in the 2013 cohort—WELCOME to gorgeous, verdant, and citrusy Ehime! For the rest of us, another year will bring another round of both rituals and surprises (and enkais, lots of enkais). Let's make the most of it.



And for EVERYONE equally? A new issue of the Mikan jam-packed with content! In this summer issue we have grown up a bit and are examining a couple mature topics in addition to some delicious vegan recipes, cycling and rainy season guides, and a bit of travel writing as well. You'll be a multidisciplinary Japanese bodylore, Singapore, arson sociology and cycling expert in no time. Oh, and don't forget to take a look at all of our lovely new PAs and RAs!

As usual, HUGE thanks to every one of you contributors who continue to make our community publication possible. For those of you interested in getting involved with the team, please shoot an email to [isitatonic\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:isitatonic[at]gmail.com). We are especially looking to hand the reigns over to a new graphic designer! graphic designer!

Harrison Fuerst
Mikan Editor / Content Director

PA MESSAGE

Hey there Ehime,

Mark and Emily here, your new PAs for 2013-14. With the arrival of summer, it is time to bid a fond farewell and otsukare to the awesome faces that will be leaving the love princess this year. It has been great meeting you all (however briefly) and we hope you had an amazing 1-5 years in Ehime.

It's not all sad news though! Summer is also the season of matsuri, beer gardens and kakigori, as well as the arrival of the new JETs. I'm sure that everyone will do their bit in showing the new folk what an amazing place Ehime is!

If you need anything, or just want to chat, feel free to call or email us. You can reach us on the PA account (ehimepa@gmail.com) or by using the contact info below.

Have a great summer,

Mark and Emily

P.s. We would just like to say an extra otsukare to last years PAs (the wonderful Steve and Dansby) and RAs (Thomas, Heather, Rebecca, Kyle and Emma). Thank you for all of your hard work into making Ehime a nicer place to live :) we will miss you all

Welcome to Ehime and the JET Programme! I'm Emily, one of the two PAs for Ehime. I'm originally from Leeds in the UK and currently live in Toon, a small city to the east of Matsuyama. Ehime is a great, if slightly rural, place to live but there is always something going on somewhere! Just ask myself, Mark or one of the great RAs and get involved. If you have any problems or questions, or just want to hang out, give me a bell. I'm sure you will all have an awesome time in Ehime!

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Hello Everybody!

Welcome to Ehime and congratulations on being appointed to one of the loveliest, friendliest places in all of Japan!

I'm originally from Austin, Texas, and have inherited my city's love of music, media, and general weirdness. My home in Ehime is the mountain town of Iyo-Nakayama, but I can be found in Matsuyama several times a week. I enjoy art, writing, and most forms of gaming, so if you're ever in the mountains and want to play some Rock Band... call me! I also play actual guitar, so if you're a musician, I'd love to jam.

RA SPOTLIGHT



AARON AYLING - TOYO A

Hello everyone! I'm Aaron, a Brit stationed on Kamijima - the tiny islands at the northmost point of Ehime. While it is lovely, it can get a bit lonely up here, so I like to get about at the weekends and hit up as much of the rest of Japan as possible. I'm looking forward to working with everyone in Toyo A and hope I can be as much help as my predecessors were to me.



ZACHARY PINTCHIK - TOYO B

Hello and welcome to Toyo B! My name is Zack, I'm a second year ALT from New York City living in Niihama. My goal is to make your transition to life in our exciting corner of Ehime as fun and worry-free as possible, so if you've got any questions or just want to chat over a bowl of ramen, feel free to shoot me a call, text, email, LINE, or carrier pigeon (some of these may be more effective means of communication than others). I'm also excited to get some fun events going, so if you've got any ideas of things you'd like to do, or know of any local events that might be more fun with company, let me know!

DAMON ROBINSON - TOYO A

Hey all you delicious looking Mikans! I'm Damon Robinson, a second year ALT in Imabari City who's enjoying his first as an RA. I spend my free time reading, learning to cook, watching the news and biking, usually all at the same time. Ehime is full of surprises, so I am always looking for new places to explore and try to keep on top of the happenings around town. I also do a weekly radio show and would love to bring some guest JETs on. Give me a heads up if you ever roll through ;)



REYN HALFORD - NANYO A

Hey there! My name is Reyn Halford, and I'm from Honolulu, Hawaii. I'll be the RA for the Nanyo A region in the south of Ehime. I live in Uwajima City as a second-year ALT. My hobbies include anything that has to do with the outdoors: hiking, cycling, sea kayaking, camping, and exploring the great unknown! Also, I can never say no to a dance party. If you're in the Nanyo region, give me a call so we can enjoy the sweet spots this place has to offer!





ANATOMY OF A JAPANESE HOUSE FIRE

BY DAMON ROBINSON

Fire struck. It was arson. Newscasters announced each new incident with a place on the map, forming a tight ring around a single community. Fear in the community was palpable and fuel for a media frenzy alight in Tokyo.

Japan is a safe country by most measures, but I have begun to suspect the reputation it enjoys is due to discrepancies in the way crimes are viewed between Japan and my home culture. Take murder, for example. In the US we are taught to keep a constant fear and awareness that you could be murdered by anyone, anywhere; the feeling I get from hearing way too many “*Yappari*”s watching Japanese news coverage over the past year is that you can consider yourself safe so long as you don’t associate with a crazy person. An even bigger discrepancy is in the stance towards arson.

On the whole, the acceptance of disaster is a widely studied thread that flows throughout Japanese history, religion, and literature. The root of this thinking lies in the reality of living in an archipelago where volcanoes, earthquakes, mudslides and typhoons were and are commonplace. Natural disasters are to be expected, and not so much prepared for as recovered from.

The proliferation of modern technology has introduced confusion into this traditional acceptance of disaster, however, in regards to the extension of this philosophy to immediately man-made sources of disaster. The application of this thought to modern technologies is one reason that TEPCO’s “想定外” statement, that the disaster scenario was unforeseeable, caused such reverberations.

ARSON

This is why, unlike natural fire, arson is a big deal in Japan. Arson is purposeful, unnatural, disrupting—and due to easy access to materials and techniques, an easier and more versatile crime than ever. Considering that historical architecture focused on wood products, and buildings in the modern day are often created from wood or other light materials not made to last, it makes sense that arson is of such primary concern in the Japanese psyche. The backbone of Japanese architecture is woodwork. A great deal of buildings in Japan are still made of wood, and many ancient dilapidated wood structures still stand flush with more modern buildings in cramped urban areas.

Arson isn't a crime that can be viewed as one you are only exposed to if you know a crazy person. Serial arsonists are called 放火魔 (*houkama*) - firereleasing demons - and when a string of incidents are reported in the media, it turns into a real witch hunt. Security cameras are only now becoming common as their role in catching and prosecuting criminals is praised on the news, meaning apprehension rates can only improve. While a criminal psychology textbook, "Applications of Geographical Offender Profiling," claims that roughly 60% of prosecuted arsonists in Japan cite "societal revenge" as their motivation, more than the fear and outrage being based on the possibility of being directly a target of arson, it is simply far too easy for fire to spread.

CLOSE PROXIMITY

In Japanese, searching for 密集市街地火災 ("conflagrations in concentrated urban areas") turns up a wealth of city planning, disaster preparation

and related laws and research that hint to the extent of the threat fire poses.

Two almost contradictory social problems being talked about now are related to housing. The first, and most recently discussed news topic, is illegal housing (affectionately dubbed 違法

ハウス).). In Japan, too, property owners in urban areas prey upon the working poor by offering relatively cheap, definitely-not-up-to-fire-code housing disguised as office spaces.

On the flipside, 空家 (*akiya*, meaning abandoned or unused housing) make up a significant portion of the older homes that lie flush against other buildings. These abandoned and sometimes squatted buildings form an immense fire risk, and yet the government has little power to demolish or repurpose them without the consent of the usually absentee property owners.

FIGHTING

I have only experienced a few fires in my lifetime, the majority of them occurring in Imabari. Each time it has been an 空家 that burned (the remains are still standing), and each time the town has come alive.

In my own country, an open fire hydrant in the city is stereotypically a picturesque moment, an event where a community of poorer folk simultaneously come together to escape the heat of summer and recreate the small town neighborly interactions that are lost among the high-rises.

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Here in Imabari, it means thin fire hoses snaking their way through narrow winding streets, sometimes 100 or 200 meters away from the source of the fire. Fire hydrants are not easy to find; many are under the streets and must be pulled out of the ground and set up before they can be used. In other areas, particularly ones where fire trucks are expected to have trouble accessing, a hose is housed within the vicinity for community members to use themselves. Firefighting in Japan is dominated not by professionals but by volunteer firefighters, who have their work cut out for them.

From my own observations, fire hydrants are weaker and less prevalent than in the US, and firefighting takes much more effort and time. The streets are crisscrossed with long hoses carrying water from hydrants in other district divisions, and firefighters are in the area for hours and hours, and the smell of smoke permeates the streets for days after the incident. It may be due to my own bias from knowing of Edo-era fire fighting techniques, but they seem content to let the structure itself burn, more concerned with preventing the fire from spreading than stopping it ASAP and salvaging what remains.

WATCHING

For Imabari residents, the long burning times and the sheer number of firetrucks that seem to make their way to the area make quite a spectacle. The area surrounding the fire, to which you can get incredibly close, is awash not only with neighbors worried about their own possessions, but all of the curious people attracted by the plumes of smoke that billow about town. A great majority of these people are in fact junior high school students. What a surprise, eh?

PANICKING

For area schools, this is a huge problem. When news of a fire is broadcast, teachers immediately check a map of student's homes to determine whether any student's homes could be burning. Schools often send a teacher into the burning flames to check firsthand, and help to calm any students whose houses are in the area. They also perform a policing and safety role, as the area can literally swarm with junior high school students, who depending on the time are still in uniform. Of course, the local residents harshly judge students' behavior and if there are any misdeeds the school will be flooded with angry phone calls, so I do believe there is a self-protection element to it.

It is more than just junior high school students who gather, though. People who live in the affected community are out—either standing in front of their own homes or roaming the streets—and talking, but not about the burning building. A fire is a rare opportunity for information exchange and community building on a scale not normally seen on Japanese streets. It

is worth getting close to the fire just to check this out, although you may get questions if you run into a teacher from your school!

ASHES

As mentioned above, the effects of these fires linger for weeks and months, in smell, sight and mind, but do eventually fade; this could be a reason there has not been a vast overhaul of the law affecting abandoned property despite the risks they pose. One example of how crazy the laws regarding personal property can be, bikes abandoned



in Tokyo cannot be removed by the city unless abandoned in a designated bicycle removal zone. Tokyo Station is one of many stations suffering from a deluge of abandoned bikes.

One of the greatest faults with the popular imagination of Japan both inside and outside of the country is that it is one with little economic inequality. In Imabari, it is the poorer areas that contain a disproportionate amount of older, dilapidated, and abandoned wooden houses crammed together, and these areas are at a much greater risk for fire. People who have bought a マイホーム tend to cluster in richer areas with western style 2-story houses and gardens, or in walled Chinese-style residences with courtyards, spaced correspondingly.

If you haven't already, please take the time to explore your town. Do it with special emphasis on architecture, and you'll see that the landscape isn't so bland and homogenous. Keep on the lookout for fires, too, as they could open up to you an entirely new way of viewing your own community.

SHIMANAMI KAIDO: A RIDER'S GUIDE

BY HARRISON FUERST

Every year as spring begins to boil over into summer, JETs from all corners of Ehime trek to Imabari for an annual group cycling expedition, banding together to tackle the Shimanami Kaido cycling route terminating in the city of Onomichi. By all accounts it is a picturesque and empowering journey crossing from island to island, bridge to bridge, propelled only by your own pedal power. Having gone along twice now and looking forward to a third run next year, I can't recommend participating highly enough. The chance to hang out with loads of other JETs from around the prefecture, test your cycling mettle, and take in the phenomenal scenery of the Seto Inland Sea just a few of the reasons why the Shimanami ride be marked on every Ehime JET's yearly calendar.

Perhaps the best thing about this "ride," though, is that there is quite a bit more to do than simply "riding" along 80-kilometer stretch of road. From studying pirate relics to spelunking underground temple caves, the time between your morning departure from Imabari and evening stroll into Onomichi is all too easy to fill. Below you'll find a few of the choice stops worth making during your journey, and don't worry—none of them will require veering terribly far from of the designated cycling path. Before jumping right into the good stuff, though, let's go over a few things to keep in mind prior to departure.



PRE-DEPARTURE TIPS...

1 – The golden rule for any traveler—PACK LIGHT! There are plenty of convenience stores and places along the way to grab an energizing snack or bottle of Pocari Sweat. A simple change of clothes and a water bottle are great!

2 – Arrive early to the Sunrise Itoyama rental desk if you don't want to ride a *mamachari* to Onomichi. Hybrid bikes fly out the door more quickly around the time we go in May.

3 – Bring strong sunscreen and use it EVERYWHERE! A lot of folks on their first ride learn this the hard way, myself included. Reapply at least one more time during your ride. After lunch is a good idea.

4 – Be friendly and support your fellow riders! It's perhaps a bit unusual at first for non-Japanese riders, but you will quickly warm up to the cyclists around you offering "Ohayo!"s and other greetings as they fly by.

5 – The blue line cycling course marker is your friend, but the numbers are deceptive! The kilometer countdown will actually stop short of Onomichi proper, so don't psych yourself up for that final finish moment—you've still got just a little bit more to go!

6– Don't sweat it! It's not quite as difficult as it seems and you can definitely make it as long as you stick to your personal pace! Personal pace should also obviously mean safe pace, so listen to your body and take a breather if you need it. There are trade-in stations for bikes all along the cycling road and about as many buses back to Imabari, too.



ROSE ICE CREAM@ YOSHIUMI ROSE PARK

1292, FUKUDA, YOSHIUMI, IMABARI, EHIME 794-2103

Our first stop, Yoshiumi Rose Park! Tucked away on the western coast of the very first island called *Oshima*. Sure, this park full of transplanted French roses is a nice touch to add to an otherwise typical Japanese island, but is it really worth visiting? If only for a taste of their delicious rose ice cream, the answer is "YES, absolutely!" There are other flavors on hand as well if you are keen to mix and match. I went with one cone of rose, and one concoction of matcha and black sesame. For only a few hundred yen it's a perfect treat to start your long day's ride.

Photo - <http://dourakubiyori.blog.fc2.com/>



MURAKAMI SUIGUN (PRIVATEER) MUSEUM

1285, MIYAKUBO, MIYAKUBO, IMABARI, EHIME 794-2203

Another attraction found on the very first island of the cycling road, the Murakami Suigun Museum showcases elements of the Seto Inland Sea's privateer past. Located in the northeastern part of *Oshima*, the price of a small detour and modest 300 yen admission fee will afford you a peek into some local cultural pirate heritage—yarr! Inside you'll find boat replicas, armor, weapons, the iconic Murakami clan emblem, and other historic artifacts. Make sure to get your picture taken while wearing some fancy feudal privateer garb while yarr at it!



Note: Bad pirate impersonations encouraged but not required.

Photo - <http://en.japantourist.jp/>



TATARA SHIMANAMI PARK

9180-2, INOKUCHI, KAMIURA, IMABARI,
EHIME 794-1402

This is it, your first big break and rough halfway point to the whole adventure. Tatarashimanami Park is THE place for riders to grab lunch and recharge for the second half of the trip. Yakisoba, fish burgers and fries can be made to order outside, with an additional set lunch restaurant located indoors. I highly recommend stopping by the souvenir shop for a bottle of pure *kiyomi* mikan juice to go with your meal. If you're lucky you may also catch some locals selling dried sharks outside of the main building. In any event, congratulations! You are now finished with the *Omishima* section of the cycling road with your next quarry, Tatarashimanami Bridge and *Ikuchijima*, in plain sight.

KOSAN TEMPLE & MUSEUM

553-2 SETODA, SETODA, ONOMICHI,
HIROSHIMA 722-2411

Photo - <http://tripadvisor.com/>

Some time after making it over the Tatarashimanami Bridge you will come upon Ikuchijima's Kosan Temple and Museum. With the temple and museum's founding in 1936 and 1952 respectively, you won't necessarily be here for the rich history. Of interest, however, is the fact that nearly every structure on the temple grounds was constructed as both an architectural and stylistic homage to a number of more ancient temples in Kyoto and Nara. What made the 1,200 yen admission fee most worth it to me was the underground cave network that snakes beneath the main courtyard. With endless spiritual carvings from floor to ceiling, unforgettably graphic pictures of what seemed to be a Buddhist hell, and the constant sound of water trickling down the walls... well, let's just say it makes quite the impression! Check out the wooden masks and other trinkets sold across the street if you intend to grab a small souvenir to remember your adventure. Feel free to give the white marble monuments above the temple area a pass, though.



INNOSHIMA PRIVATEER CASTLE

3228-2 INNOSHIMANAKANOSHO,
ONOMICHI, HIROSHIMA 722-2211

Here we go again! You've made it to *Innoshima*, island five of six on the cycling route. If you have some time to spare and the sky is still bright, head over to the Innoshima Privateer Castle to round out your full Shimanami Kaido pirate history experience. Though it's not located right on cycling path, it is still awfully close. I've yet to make it here myself since at this point along the way I am beginning to tucker out, but it is on my to-do list for that third and final ride. You should come along, too, because what better castle to visit than a pirate castle??








After a final push through Mukai Island and an easy ferry ride, you've finally made it to Onomichi! Exhilarating and awesome ride wasn't it? Just drop your rental bike off at the designated location near the city center and settle in to Onomichi. Or maybe you are hardcore enough to bike back the next day, in which case I salute you. In any case, do stick around for at least another day in Onomichi and make your plans while strolling down the boardwalk. You could try making and (and baking) your own clay Buddha in Jiko Temple, taking the ropeway up to Senko Temple for a fantastic full view of the city and environs, ambling along through the old shopping arcades, or just treating yourself to some brick oven baked pizza at Fandango. You earned it all!

See you on the cycling road in 2014!

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR LOCAL FIRE DEPARTMENT

BY DRAGO FLORES

STRENGTH AND VARIATIONS OF RAIN!

10~20mm	20~30 mm	30~50mm	50~80mm	80mm and up
Mild Rain	Strong Rain	Heavy Rain	Extraordinarily Heavy Rain	Torrential Rain
YayaTsuyoiAme ややつよい雨	TsuyoiAme つよい雨	HageshiiAme はげしい雨	Hijō-niHageshiiAme 非常にはげしい雨	Mō retsu-naAme もうれつな雨
				
Puddles start to form, need to strain a bit to hear a conversation. Take precaution when this rain continues for a long period of time.	Landslides possible. Rain so heavy you get wet even if you use an umbrella. Overflowing drains and rivers, flooding of small streams also possible at this stage.	Rain like someone is tossing a bucket of water over you. Large-scale landslides may easily occur. Road Closings. Begin to make evacuation preparations	Water falls like a waterfall, air is white from the spraying water. This kind of rain will be heavy enough to wake most people out of their sleep. Small to mid-size rivers flood, water damage on structures possible.	Rain comes down like a waterfall. Extreme damage due to structural failure, strong precaution is absolutely necessary. Sirens may sound over your town's PA system alerting you to evacuate.



ASIAN TIGER. MERLION. CASH COW.

BY DYLAN LAWSON BROWN

In the past year, at least seven Matsuyama JETs have been lucky enough to visit the spectacular city of Singapore, home to the world's highest footbridge, the world's longest (and probably only) curved spiral bridge, the world's biggest bird park, the world's highest Ferris wheel and some of Ehime's cutest female ALTs. This is for the rest of you to know what you're missing!

"The Little Red Dot," as it is colloquially known, is one of the smallest countries in the world, but has the third highest GDP per capita behind Qatar and Luxembourg (which, incidentally, are also very small countries). It is a nation of superlatives. It is the fifth biggest arms buyer in the world (where does it put them all?) and it has the third highest population density. It is, however, one of the greenest cities in the world, earning it the occasional moniker "Garden City" and it has the stupidest name for a shopping mall ever: The Shoppes. For some reason, the powers that be behind the phenomenal Marina Bay Sands project, (you know, that one with three towers

and a humongous swimming pool lying haphazardly right across the top of them?) decided Ye Olde English would be an appropriate angle to take for naming one of the most modern and expensive malls yet conceived by the mind of man. Don't expect to find anything less than Vuitton, Versace, Chanel and Prada when you hand the keys of your Jaguar over to the valet at The Shoppes. It's actually quite empty a lot of the time, especially in comparison with the seething mass of humanity in the city-state's other malls, and it's hardly surprising since there are only about forty-seven people in the world who have the kind of money needed to go shopping there—and they all live in Qatar and Luxembourg.

From the viewing deck on top of the Marina Bay Sands (which is screened off from any possible glimpse of the filthy rich splashing around in the ginormous swimming pool) you have a fantastic view of the skyscrapers of the downtown core and those of the Marina Bay financial district, which look like a cluster of huge fancy navy blue crystals.

Casting your eyes from west to east you'll see the iconic Merlion (I still have to figure out the significance of having a

giant, spewing, hybrid fish-cat beast as one's national emblem); the old Fullerton Hotel, which, with its classical fluted columns, harks back to a grander age when the British invaded everyone and owned everything; The National Theatre, which looks like pieces of a giant golden pineapple (I think they tried to outdo the Sydney Opera House and somehow ended



up with a metallic fruit salad instead); the floating stadium from the 2010 Youth Olympics, which is intersected by the F1 track; the Singapore Flyer (the tallest Ferris wheel, which is almost, but not quite, as high as the Sands' viewing deck) and (by now you're facing the opposite direction from where you started) Gardens by the Bay, an extraordinary extravaganza of exotic plants, many of which are housed in



two space-age bubbles known as the Cooled Conservatories, one containing the climatic necessities for an orchid-packed cloud forest, the other dehumidified for a collection of flowers and cacti from around the world. A wander around inside these structures is pretty awe-inspiring. They won the 2012 Building of the Year award at the World Architecture Festival and it is easy to see why: when you run into that blast of muggy tropical air upon leaving all you want to do is go back inside again and hang out with the flowers some more. Nearby are the mind-boggling super trees. Mind-boggling not so much because they are amazing or big, but more for the fact that their actual

purpose remains brain-hurtingly elusive. They are huge concrete towers covered with a complex latticework of pipes, topped by solar panels and rainwater collection devices, which power their LEDs at night and water the plants growing on them respectively. So they are self-sustaining... that is, until the solar

panels break and the plants die. Sounds very eco, but for all their carbon neutrality what they are actually doing there remains a mystery.

Many people have the impression that Singapore is very clean city—and it is, after the Sri Lankans and Bangladeshis have finished cleaning it up for the day. The fines do nothing to deter anyone since the police are usually nowhere to be seen. People throw garbage anywhere and everywhere, even out of high-rise windows. I was nearly hit by an ice block hurtling out of one of the upper windows of a skyscraper on Stamford road. In Ang Mo Kio, someone kept throwing snotty tissues out of their

window and they'd invariably land in the tea leaves that their neighbor put out to dry on sunny days. I don't think either person made the connection, and whoever is drinking that tea is still getting their Ceylon with a vague hint of nostril.

Japanese people would be so horrified they'd spill their *chu-hai* over how badly behaved Singaporeans are on public transport. Sometimes the MRT train carriages sound like arcades with all the ringtones, movies and games bleeping out from iWhatever's speakers. You risk being fined hundreds of dollars if you're caught drinking water though. It seems that virtually everyone has something with a touchscreen, and they MUST use it on the train. Because so many people are in digital la-la land, crowd flow is not something that works very well in Singapore. Put these people in Osaka and everything would grind to a halt.

Singapore of today is like a teenage girl with too much makeup. The country has literally grown up too fast, so that culture has been unable to keep up with the pace of development. In contrast with Japan, which has had decades and the

blessings of homogeneity to adjust to the complexities of rapid development, Singapore has got a bit too big for her boots in the last few years, leaving her young and relatively well-off population not very well adjusted to the reality of high-density, highly developed living.

So it's worth a visit just for the sociological snapshot you'll be afforded of a city in historic transition. But if you aren't an anthropology nerd you'll also dig it for all the fun stuff you can do: ride roller coasters and fly a plane (the city has one of the only Boeing-certified 737 simulators in the world that is open to the general public). Hire a Lamborghini for the morning from beneath the Singapore Flyer or eat as much mouth wateringly delicious and eye wateringly hot south-east Asian food as you can manage. Visit the Grand Prix or ride around on an amphibious tour bus/boat. Look at the ridiculous prices in The Shoppes or go for a simple traditional *kopi* and *kaya* toast at a sidewalk café. But don't even *think* about eating or drinking anything on a train or in a station. You'll be fined so much you'll wish you'd never hired that Lamborghini.

(AN EXCERPT FROM) SEMEN AS SELF: BODYLORE & JAPANESE PEARLY WHITE IDENTITIES

BY DAVID TITTERINGTON. FORMER EHIME JET

I lived in Ehime from 2005-2010 and am currently at the University of Kansas researching the materiality of semen in Asia for a book coming out next year called "Men's Milk: A Culture History of Semen." So far I've found some fascinating connections between semen, ancestry, rice, and consciousness within Japanese bodylore.

As [scholar] Janet Carsten makes clear, concepts of kinship are linked to substances of the body, such as blood, milk, and semen. These become metaphors for unity and sameness. [Scholar] Victor Turner argues that within an ethnic identity, homogeneity is sought instead of heterogeneity. "The members of the community are to be regarded, at least in rite and symbol, a unit.... purified from divisiveness and plurality." Japanese identity centers on rice not only because it is food, but also because of its uniform whiteness.

Rice, therefore, concretizes "imagined communities" and the pure, transcendental self, anchoring these ideas in a shared, material substance. Without objects such as rice, the Japanese identity would be "as airy as the wind," as Michel Serres puts it.

This is not just an aesthetic pronouncement. For example, in the past rice was used as money in Japan, and rice fields meant status for Lords. The term for cooked rice, *gohan*, can stand for all food, as bread can stand for all food and money in English. Rice-wine, *nihonshu*, "Japanese liquor," remains the staple drink in rituals and ceremonies.

The Japanese origin myths of rice are quite fascinating. In one, the deity in charge of food is ritually slain and various grains came out of his corpse: "rice emerged from his abdomen, millet from his eyes, and wheat and beans from his anus..." The eyes, mouth, and anus are all important places in Japanese bodylore, but the abdomen, which houses the fetus, is believed to be the home of the soul. This is why *hara-iri*,

"stomach cutting," is the well-known cultural institution of male suicide. Opening the stomach releases the soul.

Within *Shinto* cosmology, rice is the only grain given a soul. Each grain of rice is a kami named *Uka no Mitama no Kami*, a spirit-force supporting material life. Unlike most kami who possess both positive and destructive attributes, rice kami are completely innocent, unable to do harm. This rice is then consumed in order to produce semen, its liquid form, and consciousness, its most refined form.

After further creations and kami appear, the gods dispatch a grandson, Ninigi-no-Mikoto, to be the first Man to receive rice and rule Japan with his decedents. The great grandson of Ninigi-no-Mikoto, called Jinmu, was enthroned as the first emperor of Japan, and the imperial sovereignty has to this day remained in the dynasty



established by Jinmu some two thousand or more years ago. Ohnuki-Tierney points out that the Japanese Emperor, unlike other Emperors, is not a Warrior King, but is instead “the guardian of rice-plants.” According to many Japanese historians, *the key role* of the dynasty is to enact the *Onamesai*, a rice harvest ritual where rice, semen, and soul conflate.

Part of the secret ceremony involves the emperor lying on a bed and two women “receive the emperor’s soul that is departing from his body and renew it.”

Within Buddhism, semen is also believed to exist in both men and women and is metaphorically related to *bodhicitta*, meaning “mind of enlightenment” (see Powers 2009). Translator Keith Dowman elaborates that within the Buddhist conception of the body, *refined* semen is “stored in the heart center as “radiance”, which produces long-life and gives a shine to the complexion. Unrefined semen is excreted during sexual intercourse and is, of course, procreative seed.” He continues: “The *refined* semen in the heart center permeates the body as Awareness;



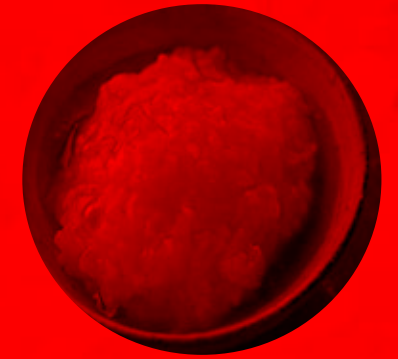
“heart center” is here a metaphor for the all-pervasive sphere of essential being (*dharmakaya*). Loss of semen, by any means, causes life-span to be shortened and causes a pallid complexion.” Clifford: “The brightness and radiance of the face is said to come from the essence of “semen” at the heart...From the years one to twelve the essence of “semen” supports the growth of the body. From twelve to fifty it goes to strength, or during pregnancy, to the breasts for milk. From fifty to one-hundred it goes to maintenance of the body.” Japan is where this esoteric Buddhist view of semen mixes with the shamanic Shinto one of rice.

It is believed that we personally experience the Clear Light Mind of Buddha for a brief second at the moment of orgasm. Semen is thus not only a symbol for this mind, but also a physical incarnation of it. Could this be one reason beloved Japanese pop artist Yayoi Kusama uses white polka-dots in her important 1967 film “Self-Obliteration”?

In Japan, semen is also associated with chthonic forces and mythic origins of the world. According to the most ancient Shinto text, the Kojiki, (A.D. 712), ancestors of all creation, Izanagi and Izamami, Sky-father and Earth-mother thrust down a gifted “heavenly jewel-spear” into the “oily” ocean of chaos. They move it around, pull it out, and drops

from the spear’s tip become the *onogoro*, “self-hardening,” islands of “luxuriant reed-plain-land-of-fresh-rice.” The sexual overtones are obvious, as are the geological, volcanic ones. Vannovsky’s interpretation of the Kojiki, *Volcanoes and the Sun* argues the mythical penis spewing forth self-hardening semen can stand for a volcano spewing forth magma.

Studies in material culture reveal how physical substances affect our culture and our bodies. Japanese historians such as Ohnuki-Tierney chart the many ways white rice stands for the purity and superiority of the Japanese race, as well as the pearly radiance of the skin, the positive energy of deities, the origin of semen, breast milk, and money. They also remind us how each grain is considered, within Shintoism, a tiny, individual spirit whose consumption rejuvenates humans and gives them a soul.



SPINACH SHIRAAE RECIPE



BY HARRISON FUERST

INGREDIENTS:

- 1/4 box silk tofu
- 1/2 bag spinach
- 1/3 carrot
- 1 shiitake
- 2 tbs ground white sesame
- 1 1/2 tbsp sugar
- 2 tsp soy sauce & dash salt

PREPARATION:

1. Wrap tofu in paper towel to remove moisture
2. Place tofu in a large bowl, add sesame and sugar, and mix
3. Boil carrot, shiitake, then spinach
5. Strain the veggies, dry with a paper towel
6. Add the veggies to tofu, then mix
7. Add soy sauce and salt to taste
8. Enjoy!



References:

<http://www.japanfoodaddict.com/vegetables/spinach-tofu-salad-shiraaе/>
<http://www.sirogohan.com/siraaе.html>

MAPO TOFU RECIPE



INGREDIENTS:

- 4 slices ginger (minced)
- 2 tbs green onion
- 2 cloves garlic
- 1 box silk tofu

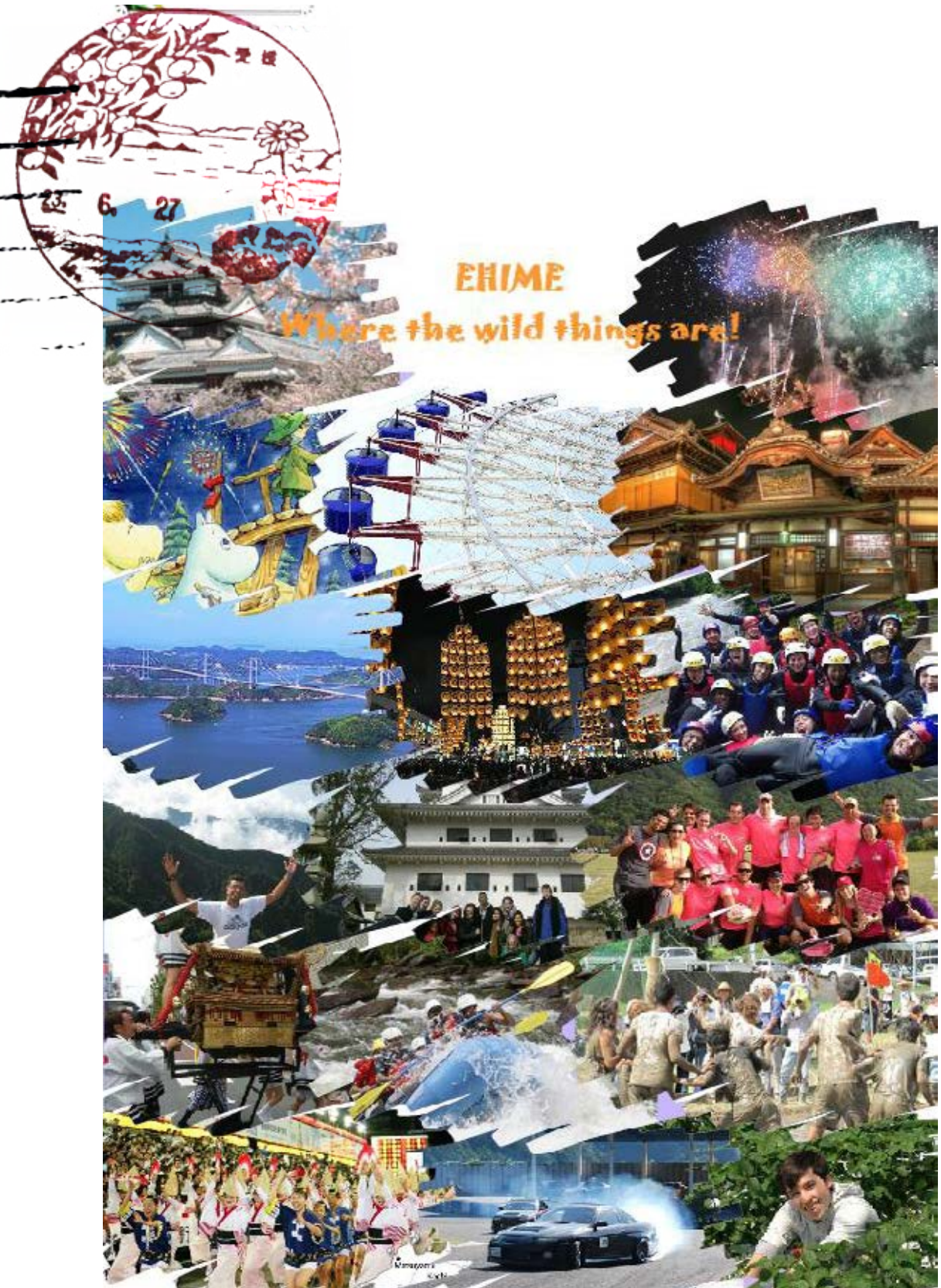
SPICES:

- 1 1/2 tbs fermented bean paste
- 1 tbs starch
- 1 1/2 tbs soy sauce
- 1 tbs sugar
- 1 tbs cooking wine
- 3 tbs oil

PREPARATION:

1. Bring water to Boil, turn off and blache tofu for 5-10 mins
2. Heat wok with medium high heat
3. Heat oil till it smokes, add fermented bean paste; Stir for 2-3 mins
5. Then add garlic and ginger
6. Stir well and soon add some cooking wine, then soy sauce, then sugar
7. Add tofu plus 2 tbs water
8. Stir for 5 mins
8. Sprinkle starch water





Photocollage by ABDULLA ZOKARI

EVENT CALENDAR

August

松山祭り MATSUYAMA SUMMER FESTIVAL (August 9th - 11th)

The Matsuyama Summer Festival actually consists of several events spread out over the course of a month. Every Saturday through July and most of August there is a night market held in Okaido and Gintengai with festival food and games. The actual festival itself is a two day event in the beginning of August and includes group parade dancing down Okaido. The end of the festival is signaled by a fireworks display from Mitsuhaman port.

EHIME PREFECTURAL ORIENTATION FOR NEW JETS (August 12th - 13th)

EPIC INTENSIVE JAPANESE COURSES (August 19th - 30th)

September

運動会 FIELD DAY FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

October

西条秋祭り SAIJO AUTUMN FESTIVAL (October 14th - 17th)

Held The Saijo Matsuri takes place in mid October over a series of two days. It is a festival to celebrate the four shrines of Saijo city. On the first day 77 danjiri (floats) parade through the city from 2am to 6am. The following day, four mikoshi (portable shrines) gather at the bank of Kamo River, with some being carried into the water at the climax of the festival.

新居浜太鼓祭り NIIHAMA TAIKO FESTIVAL (October 16th - 18th)

The Niihama Taiko festival is a 3 day festival that takes place in mid-October. It is traditionally a harvest festival to celebrate the year's good harvest. Each of the 50 neighborhoods in Niihama makes their own float, which is in turn carried by the local townspeople and paraded through the city while consuming copious amounts of alcohol.

December

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE (Usually 1st week of the month)

ORPHANAGE CHRISTMAS EVENT (Usually 2nd week of the month)