

A GLIMPSE AT
NAGASAKI'S
PREMIER
HOT SPRINGS

NIPPON SPOTLIGHT
ON VANCOUVER,
CANADA

WHEN IT COMES
TO FINDING LOVE,
ARE YOU
THE PREDATOR
OR THE PREY?

NABE -
THE PERFECT
WINTER MEAL

¥ 0

Lifestyle
Culture
Japanese
Music...
and more

nagaZasshi
VOL 2.1 Jan-FEB 2010

Letter from the Editor

Winter can be a rough time. It's dark, it's freezing, and the weather can be unpredictable, which especially seems to be the case this year. In the past couple months we've seen bitterly cold days, wet days, sunny days, and snowy days that some Nagasaki residents claim they haven't seen the likes of in ten years! If you're prone to the "winter blues," there's no doubt this crazy weather isn't doing much to help it.

In order to beat the blues, experts have suggested eating protein-rich breakfasts, having a bit of chocolate with your breakfast, keeping the shades open when you go to bed (to take advantage of morning light), aerobic workouts, and eating certain fruits like blueberries, pomegranates, and cherries to help boost your mood.

Those fruits may be hard to get a hold of in Japan, but don't worry. You can replace them with something even better: *nabe*! Its hearty goodness will cheer you up in a second, not to mention you can surround yourself with friends by having a *nabe* party. While you're at it, make some plans to relax at an *onsen* with them too. Flip through this issue to learn more about how to make *nabe*, some notable *onsen* within the prefecture, and various other topics that we've compiled for you. I hope you don't let the winter blues get the best of you!

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Mutia Adisoma

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J-Addicts DJ Edition

Cover Art



courtesy of photoshop creative commons
photoshop artwork by Adriene Giese



FEB

6 - 27

Tomorihanabouro Festival

Unzen

During Unzen's 灯りの花ぼうろ festival, the Unzen hot spring area is illuminated into a magical winter world.

FEB
14 - 28

Nagasaki Lantern Festival

Nagasaki City

Experience Chinese culture with dragon dances, acrobats and lanterns galore.



René Lalique, Poppy, Hat pin, Musée d'Orsay
©RMN (Musée d'Orsay) / René-Gabriel Ojeda /
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FEB
UNTIL 28

Musée d' Orsay Art Nouveau Exhibition

Nagasaki Prefectural Art Museum

Featuring authentic French furniture and jewelry from the end of the 19th century.

JAN 22
MAR 31

Hina Matsuri

Shimabara City

Over 3,000 beautiful and historic Hina Matsuri dolls are on display around Shimabara City's arcade street.



JAN 23
MAR 22

Taoism Art

Nagasaki Museum of History

Come and learn about the origins of Taoism through artifacts and visual arts.

JAN 1
MAR 31

Hyakaryoran Flower Festival

Nagasaki Botanical Garden,
Nomozaki

Hundreds of pansies, violas and gladioli make for a beautiful sight.



JAPANESE Superstitions

Knock on wood.
Wish upon a star.

Step on a crack, break your momma's back.
Whether or not you believe in them, every culture has their own set of unique superstitions.

10

Heading North

Sleeping with your head pointed north brings bad luck because only dead bodies are laid in that position.

7

Bless You

Sneezing at random is a sign that someone, somewhere, is talking about you. One sneeze means something good is being said, two sneezes indicate something bad. More than two sneezes? Well, you might just be catching a cold...



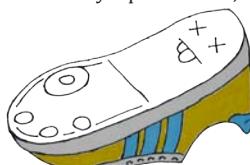
A Bouquet of Roses, Please

Bringing a potted plant to someone in the hospital is bad luck because it symbolizes that the patient will be rooted there for a while. Cut flowers are an excellent alternative.

4

Walking on Sunshine

You can predict tomorrow's weather by throwing one of your shoes into the air. If the shoe falls sole down it will be sunny. On its side, it will be cloudy. Upside down, it will rain.



2

Save it for the Morning

If you clip your nails at night, you won't be with your parents when they pass away. In Japanese, "yotsume" (to cut your nails) sounds like "yo o tsumeru" (to cut a life short.)

1

Lucky Poo

You're lucky if bird droppings fall on you or if you step in animal dung, as the word for luck, "un," (運) is pronounced the same as poo.

Watch Your Step!

Stepping on the cloth border of a *tatami* floor mat brings bad luck.

8

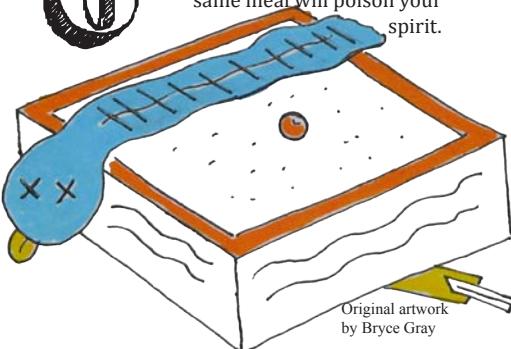
Unhappily Ever After

Rumor has it that going to the top of Mt. Inasa in Nagasaki city with your significant other will cause you to break up. What a waste of a decent date spot!

6

A Bad Combo

Eating *unagi* (broiled eel) and *umeboshi* (pickled plum) in the same meal will poison your spirit.



Original artwork
by Bryce Gray

3

Whistle a (Not So) Happy Tune

"*You ni kuchibiru o fuku to hebi ga kuru*" (If you whistle at night, a snake will come to you). During the Edo period, thieves would communicate with each other by whistling. Today, whistling at night is associated with inviting burglars (symbolized by the snake) into your home.

Nagasaki International Association

<http://www.nia.or.jp>



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chokotto dake

Will the Year of the Tiger bring you good fortune, good weather or good looks?

It's written in the stars

Aries

March 21-April 19

Don't deny it Aries, I know you've been singing Gloria Estefan's "If I Could Reach Higher" alone at night in your apartment. It's time to get out from under your *kotatsu* and grab those cookies you've been reaching for off the top shelf. Just go for it! Oh yeah, and go after your dreams too!

Taurus

April 20-May 20

Diploma's in the suitcase baby, give a Taurus a job! Thinking about a change in career this year? Embrace your love for *champon* and put your *nihongo* skills to the test— apply for a job at Ringer Hut! Lucky dates to apply are those containing the following numbers: 1, 3, 6, 8.

Gemini

May 21-June 21

Ichiyo has talent, J-Lo has booty and Oprah has... everything! But what do you have, Gemini? Oh, that's right, you have swine flu. Stay healthy this year and say *sayonara* to face masks— they really clash with the avant-garde look of 2010.

Cancer

June 22-July 22

People love people with love handles, isn't that right, Cancer? Don't feel ashamed about eating your midnight *zenzai* snack. Just remember: a *mochi* a day keeps the winter blues away.

Leo

July 23-August 22

Like the plates that go round and round at *kaitenzushi*, so too do the inbred cockroaches that run round and round your house. Make an effort this year to clean! Or at least tag them and turn it into a science experiment.

Virgo

August 23-September 22

After decades of speculation, you will finally be able to answer the age-old *katakana* question— which came first: ビール (beer) or ビアホール (beer hall)? Clearly you are only concerned with the important mysteries of life.

Libra

September 23-October 22

The future holds many ups and downs for you, Libra. Please take the following predictions into consideration. Lucky day: Vernal Equinox. Unlucky day: Some day next month when you'll want to take *byokyu* but are forced to take *nenkyu* instead. Lucky day: *Undokai*. Unlucky day: The *enkai* after *undokai*.

Scorpio

October 23-November 21

Time management is on your side this year, Scorpio. Finally you will be able to open your *onigiri* in just 1 quick step instead of 3. Wow! What will you do with all that extra time in your life?

Sagittarius

November 22-December 21

The quest is yours and yours alone, Sagittarius. You must sing, you must dance, you must use hair gel...yep, you've guessed it... you must become the 15th member of EXILE! (As if they would even notice one more person...)

Capricorn

December 22-January 19

Capricorn, it's time to start looking for love in all the right places. No, not at a love hotel—I'm talking about Family Mart! Your eyes will meet as you as you both reach for that *melon pan*. *Combini* dating is the way of the future.

Aquarius

January 20-February 18

Will 2010 see you watching your finances as closely as you watch the *pachinko* balls fall? Will mother be receiving her birthday present from the 100円 shop again this year? It's time to stop spending and start saving!

Pisces

February 19-March 20

O.M.G. Pisces, you are pregnant! Pregnant with the joy of song! Get to karaoke as quickly as possible and release your inner melody. Lady Gagaでもいいよ, SMAPでもいいよ, Kenny G...no, Kenny G is not OK.



A GRIPPING TALE OF SURVIVAL

Joe Van Acker

Earlier this year you couldn't avoid seeing headlines like: "Schwarzenegger Declares Emergency Over Swine Flu" or "Virus Alarm in Switzerland: Swine Flu Container Explodes on Train." Sigh... leave it to the Swiss. More recently, H1N1 has enjoyed considerably less media coverage, but those of us working in schools know that we haven't seen the last of "the new flu" yet.

My experience with H1N1 began innocuously enough. I felt a little under the weather, but I had no fever, headache or nausea; nothing that would suggest any real "illness." I'm eternally optimistic when it comes to my health so I chalked up my fatigue at day's end to an exhausting day of doing nothing.

However, that night I awoke feeling uncomfortably warm. The gears began to turn... I did my best to put all thoughts of the flu out of my mind, but deep down I had my suspicions.

My supervisor made an appointment with Dr. Oka the following morning. "Do you have a mask?" she immediately asked. Fortunately, I'd purchased one a few days earlier. Unfortunately, it had a ridiculous, toothy grin screened onto it.

Dr. Oka's receptionist gave me a thermometer which I assumed was of the "oral" variety and proceeded accordingly. My supervisor cast a horrified glance in my direction, leading me to think I had just mouthed a rectal thermometer (apparently it goes under your armpit.) At this point, I figured the worst was behind me.



I was in fact fever-free, but the good doctor chose to err on the side of caution and run a test for the

flu. After a quick swab of the nose, I returned to the waiting room anticipating good news. Shortly thereafter, a nurse ushered me into a smaller, separate waiting room. Not a good sign.

Eventually Dr. Oka reappeared, carrying a tiny strip of paper. He held it in front of me, indicating a line labeled: "Type A." I was dismayed that I had swine flu, and yet buoyed by the fact that someone had applied the term "Type A" to me without sarcasm. Not having a fever, I was simply given some anti-inflammatory pills and sent on my way.

Where was the agony? The misery? The hallucinations?

As quickly as the flu came, so too did it leave. Where was the agony? The misery? The hallucinations? After all was said and done, I was left with little more than some steroid, anti-inflammatory pills and the bitter taste of steroid, anti-inflammatory pills in my mouth.

The moral of my tale of woe is simply this: don't believe the hype. The flu by any other name would still just be the flu. Even at its zenith, the flu only made me feel *kinda* sick. Maybe you already knew this. If that's the case then I applaud you for your shrewd judgment. Even Schwarzenegger was scared and he was Mr. Universe (four times!). I'd still avoid Switzerland for a while though, at least until they stop storing exploding virus containers on their trains. 



HANA Izakaya
美食と美酒の隠れ庵
0956-23-2771
Sasebo-shi, Aioi-cho 2-22

chokotto dake

Macho men and demure maidens they are not. 草食男子 (*soushoku danshi*), otherwise known as "Herbivorous Males," and 肉食女子 (*nikushoku joshi*), otherwise known as "Carnivorous Females," are two of the hottest new Japanese expressions used to describe men who are uninterested in pursuing romantic relationships with women, and women who will stop at nothing to get their hands on the man of their dreams. This behavioral trend among Japanese people in their 20s-30s is far from the traditional gender stereotypes of yesteryear.

Men who are 草食, or "grass eaters," are interested in grooming themselves to perfection, afraid of commitment, and very close with their mothers. For these herbivores, platonic relationships with women are all the rage.

Women who are 肉食, or "meat eaters," are outgoing, determined, and know what they want in life and in love. Though not as violent as T-Rex, these carnivorous women are on the hunt...for men.

説長



ON THE HUNT FOR L'AMOUR

Meghan O'Connell

HOW TO SPOT AN HERBIVOROUS BOY

1. Likes spending time in his own room
2. Has a quiet voice
3. Likes skinny jeans
4. Poor at deciding which restaurant to eat at
5. Has a weakness for all the latest sweets
6. Takes his own lunch box and drink thermos to work/school.

HOW TO SPOT A CARNIVOROUS GIRL

1. Regularly keeps in touch with *keitai* emails
2. Wears strong eye make-up
3. Loves brand name bags
4. Always wears perfume
5. Loves fur and animal print clothing
6. Prefers to eat meat over fish courses

lists courtesy of <http://whatjapanthinks.com>

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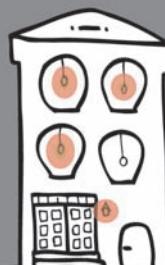
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THE NAGASAKI LANTERN FESTIVAL

Mutia Adisoma



How would you like to get a taste of Chinese culture without ever having to leave Japan? If your answer is "I'd love to!" then you're in luck, my friends. In celebration of the Lunar New Year, Nagasaki City will be hosting its annual Lantern Festival from February 14 to 28. The streets (as well as Hamanomachi shopping arcade) will be decorated with thousands of colorful lanterns, ranging from those familiar round paper ones to towering statuesque ones depicting zodiac animals and Chinese emperors in vibrant flowing robes.

Various attractions include parades, dragon dances, and performances by Chinese acrobats. You can also peruse the alleyways of Nagasaki's Chinatown to sample Chinese delicacies, as well as listen to a significant portion of passers-by prattle happily about in a language other than Japanese!

Since the festival will go on for two weeks, you'll have plenty of time to return if you find you haven't had your fill in one day. But in order to leisurely take in the glow of the city without having to worry about your last train home, consider making a weekend out of it. Nagasaki is littered with plenty of budget hotels, but I recommend Akari Hostel, conveniently located near *Meganebashi* (see page 8). Not only are their prices hard to beat, but their friendly English-speaking staff will provide you with homemade maps and tons of tips to make your exploration of Nagasaki all the more enjoyable.

I hope you make room in your schedule to visit this festival! The city is sure to be packed, but trust me, weaving through the dense crowds will be well worth the effort. Your eyes and taste buds will thank you!

A SPOONFUL OF

NABE

Emily Koh

In the bone-chilling freezing days of winter, there is no better remedy than comfort food and company—and one Japanese food lets you combine the best of both worlds. *Nabe* is Japan's hot pot cuisine; chock full of vegetables and meat, it is hearty and healthy, warming both belly and soul. *Nabe*'s flexibility makes it the perfect group food, as you can basically customize the ingredients to your heart's desires. So temporarily leave your den of hibernation and follow our guide to holding your perfect *nabe* party this season.

Getting ready

The great thing about *nabe* is that the hardest part is gathering the ingredients—the cooking itself requires no actual culinary skill.

You'll need a portable burner and a *donabe*, the namesake earthenware pot. Most *donabe* sell for around ¥1,000-¥2,000. If you are making *sukiyaki*, you'll want to invest in a *tetsunabe* (iron pot), as they retain high temperatures better. Portable burners can be purchased for around ¥1,500-¥2,500 yen.

Basic ingredients

The basis of most *nabe* are vegetables, mushrooms, and some protein base. Chinese cabbage (called *hakusai*) is a staple in almost all *nabe*, along with carrots, bean sprouts and tofu. Meat is usually thinly-sliced cuts of beef or pork. If you're making *shabu shabu*, you will also find specific *shabu shabu* cuts available at the supermarket. All of these are arranged on a platter and brought to the table for ease of cooking.

In the end, feel free to put what your heart desires in your *nabe*—there is no right or wrong!

Time to cook!

Pour water into your *nabe*, about 2/3 of the pot. Add a piece of *kombu* or a small sprinkling of *dashi* powder, and let it simmer for about 10 to 12 minutes.

Slowly put in ingredients that will take longer to cook first: cruciferous vegetables, carrots, mushrooms, etc. Softer items like tofu can be added right before you eat them. When most of the vegetables are done stewing, you can start picking up slices of meat and adding them in. Take one piece at a time and don't leave them swirling around in the broth—the pieces are thin enough that they cook within seconds.

Don't add any *tare* (sauce) to the hot pot, since it's communal! With most *nabe*, there is already a *dashi*-based broth. Use a small plate to pour your own serving of *ponzu tare*, a light soy sauce with a bit of citrus-y kick, or *gomadare*, a nutty-tasting roasted sesame seed sauce. If you're eating *sukiyaki*, crack and whip a raw egg in a small bowl. (Feeling squeamish? All you're doing is using it as a dip anyway, and the heat of the cooked meat and vegetables makes it perfectly safe. Just make sure to use relatively fresh eggs!)

Carbolicious closing

By the time most of the food has been eaten, the broth will be richer from absorbing all the flavors from the vegetables and meat. It's time to finish up with some carbs. Briefly boil the water on high to concentrate the broth. At this point, you can add some additional seasonings if you'd like, such as *shichimi togarashi* or *yuzu koshou*, to kick it up a notch before adding noodles. Most people put in *udon*, but I prefer *shirataki* noodles, which are made from *konnyaku*, and are filling but not gut-busting like *udon* might be. Alternatively, you can also put in some



cooked rice instead, cooking it over a low flame with the leftover broth and vegetables to make some *zousui*, or rice gruel. Either way, it's a delicious way to scrape up all the last bits of flavor of your *nabe*.

Finding ingredients at the supermarket

Having trouble finding some of these ingredients? Here is a list of some common ingredients and their names in Japanese so you can find them on your next grocery trip!



cabbage
キャベツ (*kabetsu*)



Chinese cabbage
白菜 (*hakusai*)



Japanese mustard greens
水菜 (*mizuna*)



bean sprouts
もやし (*moyashi*)



fishcakes
かまぼこ (*kamaboko*)



devil's tongue/konjac
こんにゃく (*konnyaku*)



shabu shabu beef/pork
しゃぶしゃぶ牛肉/豚肉



ponzu
ポン酢



roasted sesame seed sauce
ごまだれ (*gomadare*)



chrysanthemum leaves
春菊 (*shungiku*)

Different kinds of nabe

Oden – fishcakes, tofu, boiled eggs, *daikon*, *konnyaku* in light *dashi*-based broth.

Shabu shabu – thinly sliced beef or pork, dipped in *ponzu* or *gomadare*.

Sukiyaki – thinly sliced beef in a sweet soy sauce-based broth, with a raw egg dip.

Yudofu – tofu simmered in hot water, served with *ponzu*.

Motsu nabe – beef or pork offal.

Chanko nabe – famously known as the meal of sumo wrestlers due to its heavy protein content (usually chicken) and heavy servings.

Some unique and regional kinds

Sakura nabe – with horse meat, dipped in raw egg like *sukiyaki*.

Cheese nabe – “Western-style,” topped with cheese...?!

Tomato nabe – with tomato sauce or ketchup added to the broth.

Mizutaki nabe – Kyushu region, with chicken.

Ishikari nabe – Hokkaido region, with salmon in *miso*-based broth... and butter, of course!

Kiritampo – Akita prefecture specialty, with rice mashed and grilled on a stick before being added to the *nabe*.

Yami nabe – literally “pitch black *nabe*.” Everyone brings a random ingredient and contributes it to the pot (no peeking!).



THE REAL DEAL LET THE GAMES BEGIN

Meghan O'Connell

Two weeks, fifteen sports, and thousands of athletes all dreaming of glory. From February 12–28, the world will be looking to Vancouver, Canada as they host the 2010 Winter Olympic Games.

Nestled in the heart of the Pacific Northwest, Vancouver boasts not only majestic scenery but also a rich cultural heritage. The three mascots for the Games, Miga, Quatchi and Sumi, are all inspired by Pacific Coast Indian legends.

Miga, a young sea bear who is half-killer whale and half bear, inhabits the ocean off the coast of Vancouver Island. Quatchi, otherwise known as Sasquatch or Bigfoot, has his existence shrouded in mystery despite being the subject of hundreds of supposed sightings throughout the past few centuries. Sumi, believed to be a “guardian spirit” by Pacific North-

west Indian Tribes, is part orca whale, part phoenix and part bear.

Canada's Inuit culture, originating from the northern territories, is also integrated into the Games. *'Ilanaaq the Inunnguaq'* is the logo of the 2010 Winter Olympics. *Ilanaaq* is the Inuit word for “friend,” and an *inunnguaq* is a specific type of *inukshuk* in the form of a person. An *inukshuk* is a stone landmark, varying in shape and size, used by the Inuits as a navigational marker throughout the land of permafrost in the barren Canadian Arctic. Holding great significance in Inuit culture, it symbolizes safety, hope and friendship.

Under international spotlight, Vancouver will ignite the Olympic torch and present its character, culture and spirit of competition to the world. Let the games begin!



QUICK FACTS

- Number of Olympic athletes and officials: 5,500
- Number of Paralympic athletes and officials: 1,350
- Countries participating in the 2010 Vancouver Games: 80+
- Countries making their Winter Olympic debut: Ghana, Bahamas, Cayman Islands
- Vancouver's average temperature in February: 13.4°C (56.1°F)

Let's Meet the Athletes...

This February, 112 athletes (59 male, 53 female) will proudly represent Japan in the Vancouver Winter Games. Here are a few of the top contenders to root for.

選手の紹介

AIKO UEMURA

Freestyle Skiing

Date of Birth:

Hometown:

Event:

December 8, 1979

Itami, Hyogo
Moguls

Queen of the moguls, Aiko Uemura is a three-time Olympian who has her eyes set on gold. Uemura is no rookie to the sport, having made her Olympic debut in Nagano when she was a high school student. After placing seventh in Nagano, sixth in Salt Lake City, and fifth in Turin, Uemura claimed her first title when she won the women's moguls event at the 2009 World Freestyle Skiing Championships.



MAO ASADA

Figure Skating

Date of Birth:

Hometown:

Event:

September 25, 1990

Nagoya, Aichi
Ladies' Singles

Beauty and talent are among the many words used to describe the 2008 Ladies World Champion, Mao Asada. At age 15, Asada first earned international recognition when she defeated all three ladies who would go on to win medals at the 2006 Turin Olympics. At that time Asada was too young to compete in the Games, but nothing will hold her back this year as she takes the ice by storm in Vancouver.



DAISUKE TAKAHASHI

Figure Skating

Date of Birth:

Hometown:

Event:

March 16, 1986

Kurashiki, Okayama
Men's Singles

Strong technical skill combined with artistic presentation is Daisuke Takahashi's recipe for success! Due to ligament damage in his right knee, Takahashi was out of competition during the 2008-09 season, but as the Games grow closer, he is turning up the heat on the ice. At the 2009 Skate Canada International competition in Ontario, Canada, Takahashi finished with a superb second place.



JOJI KATO

Long Track Speed Skating

Date of Birth: February 6, 1985

Hometown: Yamagata City, Yamagata

Event: 500m

With his aerodynamic racing suit and clap skates in tow, Joji Kato is coming to the rink with a need for speed. In the 2006 Turin Games, Kato finished in 6th place but has since improved his ranking after securing the bronze metal at the 2008 World Single Distance Championships. At the 2009 World Cup in the Netherlands, Kato claimed the gold with an impressive time of 34.98 seconds in the 500m event.



13

ONSEN

Explore Nagasaki's Hot Springs

Trisha Hollenback

Onseん are perfect in any weather, but particularly during Japanese winters, when it is hard to escape the permeating cold. Most of you know what an *onsen* is by now, but in case you don't, it is a public bath usually built on a natural hot spring. With the winter slowly turning my apartment into an oversized ice box, I can't think of anything better than steamy hot springs. Here are some of my favorites around Nagasaki to help you keep toasty this winter season.

1 Sechibaru: There isn't even a convenience store in this small town, but *Yamanoren* is a wonderful *onsen* where you can gaze out across the valley as you bathe and let your cares melt away. It often snows in the winter on the mountains in Sechibaru, so if you're lucky, the valley will be coated in snow.

3 Hirado: The Kaijou Hotel's *Mizuki-no-yu* has two main baths: one outside with an ocean view and another inside where fish and sea turtles swim around you in tanks embedded in the walls as you bathe. There are also outdoor baths overlooking the sea that you can rent privately, and what with the elegant Japanese restaurant in the hotel, it makes this a perfect spot for a date.

4 Shimabara Peninsula: This kidney-shaped peninsula south of Nagasaki is riddled with hot springs. My favorite one in Shimabara City is *Nanpuro*, situated along the coast. If you're still feeling a little shy about bathing in the buff with a bunch of strangers, Shimabara also has a free foot spa near the shopping street.

2 Tabira: I would recommend the Samson Hotel's *Nagomino-yu* to anyone who loves the ocean. You can sit in the bubbly water inside, or sit outside, gazing out across the sea, in water that makes your skin glisten. Afterwards, if you feel like it, there is a conveyer belt (*kaiten*) sushi restaurant and even a masseuse in the complex.



5 Unzen: Unzen is in the center of the Shimabara Peninsula and deserves special mention. Setting foot in Unzen is almost like stepping into another world, shrouded in billowing steam from the volcano. Here, you can throw a stone in any direction and hit a hot spring, though some of them are just a little bit too hot for bathing. There is a variety of private and public, indoor and outdoor hot springs. All of the water used for these hot springs is heated by the volcano, so along with giving off a distinctive sulfur smell, it's great for your skin. It is even more stunning in the winter when it gets cold enough to snow. Even if hot springs aren't your cup of tea, there are still plenty of paths to walk around the different steaming pools, hiking trails and lovely places to have lunch.

6 Obama: Nestled at the foot of Mount Unzen, the quaint town of Obama can meet all your bathing needs. There are many *ryokan* (traditional Japanese inns) lining Obama's downtown area where you can watch the sun setting into the ocean from rooftop baths. An overnight stay will cost you a pretty penny, but for just ¥500, you can relax in the bath for as long as you want! My recommendations are *Yunoka* and *Iseya*.

7 Nagasaki City: Fuku-no-yu is one of the most remarkable places I've been to. It has everything from Dr. Fish, the tiny fish that nibble dead skin off your feet, to one of the most amazing views of Nagasaki. This hot spring complex has stone beds (*ganbanyoku*), a masseuse competent in Korean, Thai and other exotic massage styles, a salt sauna and a plethora of different baths including Jacuzzis, iron ore, baking soda and regular spring water. You can even watch TV as you bathe. It also offers a free shuttle bus service from Nagasaki Station.

8 Omura: What Sun Spa's *Yu-no-hana* may lack in scenery, it makes up for in variety. There's a cold bath, though probably not the best for winter, and a salt-scrub sauna room. It also has many Jacuzzis and even pools with built in reclining chairs.

福長

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For the love of Chocolate

Valentine's Day in Japan

Emily Koh

Men around the world tend to dread February 14, the day when proof of their love for their significant other must materialize itself in roses, a box of chocolates, or a candlelit dinner. The pressure to present a satisfactory display of one's affection is enough to put a damper on the entire month.

Yet in Japan, the pressure is almost entirely on girls, who must show their affection...via chocolate. Though less of a common practice these days, there seems to be some unwritten rule dictating that girls must give homemade chocolates to the men in their lives. As with all things Japanese, even a box of chocolate truffles must follow an unspoken social code. *Giri choco* (義理チョコ), or "obligation chocolate," is what you might call perfunctory chocolate, as it's given to most men in a girl's life: think co-workers and colleagues, or close guy friends. Giving out *giri choco* has become such standard practice that many shops now sell chocolate sets specifically marketed as *giri choco*.

As a guy though, you might be more flattered to receive *honmei choco* (本命チョコ). Usually homemade, *honmei choco* is more special because it's been made in earnest by the girl *just for you* (how's that for showing affection?). *Honmei choco* are usually given to one's significant other, or to a man that a woman is romantically interested in, but also to close family members.

In recent years, however, the pressure associated with Valentine's Day seems to have vanished.

For one thing, in this day and age no one has the time or patience to make chocolates, so consider yourself truly loved if you receive homemade sweets.

"My boyfriend loves sweets, but he says he likes chocolates from shops better because they are better than homemade ones," admits Kumi N., 23, a Siebold University student in Nagasaki City. Perhaps she has a point: why slave for hours in your kitchen struggling to make the perfect chocolate heart when department stores conveniently hawk an impressive array of tasty, beautiful chocolates, from the cheaply generic *giri choco* to the grander flourishes of *honmei choco*, some of which sell for as much as ¥3,500?

The increasingly casual attitude towards Valentine's Day has also created a third category of chocolates called *tomo choko* (友チョコ), or "friend chocolates"—which, as you might have guessed, are exchanged among friends, male or female. Not everyone's a fan, though, like 21-year old Shota I.: "It's really awful for guys, because [now] some of the girls stopped giving chocolates to guys!"

Before you complain that girls have it hard, mark your calendar on March 14, known as White Day, when men return the favor by giving gifts to women. However, the pressure of White Day may not be as great as Valentine's Day, especially since there is no need to reciprocate if you don't receive anything on Valentine's Day. (Why guys can't be just as forward as girls on Valentine's Day and confess their feeling is another mystery altogether.)

While some women may find this annoying, it seems most young Japanese people don't care too much. "I think most Japanese girls enjoy Valentine's Day, so no one is as concerned as much," says Kumi. "Besides, men feel pressure about giving presents on other events, such as birthdays and Christmas, so it's not that bad that women feel pressure on Valentine's Day."

Perhaps the cultural aspect of how Japanese society operates—that is, mostly on subtleties

and passivity—is a major reason as to why Valentine's Day is not met with as many groans as it is elsewhere in the world. "Japanese girls are modest and seldom convey their feelings," says Aya, 19. "So I think Valentine's Day is a good chance for girls to show how they feel towards a guy."

Even for men, what may have once been a day to look forward to receiving some edible affection is now treated like any other day. "Valentine's Day is not such a big day for me. I look forward to receiving something, but that's it," agrees Shota, who also adds that it's "so rare" to receive something really special from girls nowadays. "The definition of Valentine's Day is really flexible, so now guys can give something to girls on Valentine's Day too!" he says.

Well said. You hear that, fellas? Maybe this year you should try making some chocolates of your own...

Decoding the Japanese Language of Love

Eric Franz

Having trouble translating your love letter to that special Japanese-someone? Here are a few tips to help you on your quest for bilingual l'amour.

好き (**suki**) means "(I) like," but can also be used in a love confession to initiate a relationship.

大好き (**daisuki**) literally means, "I REALLY like you," but is generally equivalent to "I love you" in English.

愛している (**aishiteru**) has a **very** strong meaning of "I love you." It's a very serious statement and is seldom used, so you might be better off sticking to *daisuki*.

Remember: "I love you" isn't thrown around as casually as it is in English, so don't feel blue if your love doesn't shower you with *aishiteru*s all the time! Besides, who says true love always needs to be verbalized?

Where it gets tricky: How would you respond if students ask you the question "XX先生が好きですか"? If you say, "好き" it might mean that you are interested in XX先生 romantically, but if you say "いや、好きじゃない," then it might sound rude. Saying 友達同士 (*tomodachi doushi*), which means "companion," or 友達として好き (*tomodachi toshite suki*), which means you "like XX先生 as a friend" will get you out of such predicaments.

SHARKSKIN MAN &

Peach Hip Girl

Brendan Thornton

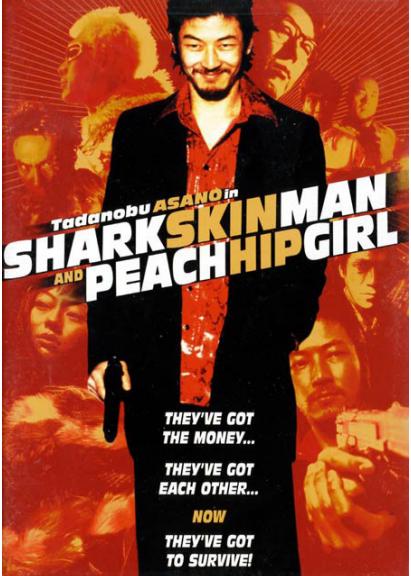
Please dismiss any comparisons you may have heard about *Shark Skin Man and Peach Hip Girl* (鮫肌男と桃尻女, Samehada Otoko to Momojiri Onna) to *Pulp Fiction*, *Snatch* or *Kill Bill Vol. 1*. Though writer and director Katsuhito Ishii evinces a style evocative of all of the above from a manga series, this is a unique synthesis that is not to be missed.

I came to this film after first watching Ishii's whimsical *Cha no Aji* (茶の味) and had high expectations. Having heard that the main adjective used to describe this film was "flashy," I was unsure of what to expect. *Shark Skin Man* is undeniably flashy. But it is also piercingly witty, expertly woven together and features a fantastic pantheon of outrageous characters, all brilliantly acted with just the right touch of melodrama.

The story begins with Toshiko (Shie Kohinata), who, in trying to escape the clutches of her depraved uncle, first finds herself in the middle of a bank robbery and then a mob chase. The man being chased is Samehada (Tadanobu Asano), who in effortlessly cool fashion seduces Toshiko to join in his escape. The story follows Toshiko and Samehada as they try to elude a group of unusual gangsters as well as a wildly eccentric amateur hit-man.

The first sequence of dialogue between Asano's Samehada and mob boss Fukuda (played by Shingo Tsurumi in a portrayal that rings Alan Rickman) was personally my favorite scene in the film. In a conversation held via walkie-talkie, Samehada visibly enjoys taunting his pursuer while Fukuda struggles to keep his cool, his voice monotone but radiating a smoldering rage barely kept in check. Great acting combined with quick

scene cuts keep the viewer raptly attentive. Actress Shie Kohinata delivers a slightly restrained performance as Toshiko, but has great chemistry with Asano and holds her own in all the scenes she shares with him. Also of note is actor Tatsuya Gashuin as the hit-man Yamada, who might not be as evil as Toshiko's uncle would like him to be.

If you are looking for characters on the scale of Jules Winnfield and Bullet-Tooth Tony with exceptional storytelling in the vein of the best of Tarantino, you need to see *Shark Skin Man and Peach Hip Girl*. Clocking in at about 106 minutes in length, the movie flies by but leaves with no regrets. Highly recommended. 

鮫肌男と桃尻女 (Japan)
(*Shark Skin Man and Peach Hip Girl*)
1998 | 106 minutes
Director: Katsuhito Ishii
Writer: Katsuhito Ishii
Starring: Tadanobu Asano, Shie Kohinata

TAKARAZUKA

Genevieve Seah

When I was asked to watch a Takarazuka musical called *Passionate Barcelona*, I was initially somewhat reluctant (c'mon, *Passionate Barcelona?* Really!?). Nevertheless, I wanted to see for myself what the Takarazuka rave was all about.

You see, Takarazuka Revue is not your regular kind of theatre. It boasts an all-female cast, with women playing both male and female roles, in a theatre extravaganza reminiscent of early Broadway, Vegas show girls, Moulin Rouge and yes, Cher.

A warning is necessary at this point: to my fellow theatre buffs, if you look for subtlety in your theatre fixes, my advice to you is, you can stop here. Skip this page, forget about Takarazuka and buy a ticket for Noh instead. Takarazuka leaves *nothing* to the imagination. From lavish costumes, elaborate settings and clichéd story plots, Takarazuka celebrates, with much relish and fanfare, an excess of everything.

The first half of the show spelled out a cheesy romance story set in Spain. You know the drill: girl meets boy, boy meets girl, they fall in love despite parental disapproval and blah, blah, blah. As if things could not get any worse, the overused plot was embellished with cringe-worthy stage lines and melodramatic acting, accompanied with a sordid combination of horrid stage direc-

tions, messy lighting, and tacky costumes (one of which clearly reminded me of a gigantic moving wedding cake).



But wait: it gets better. The performance took a surprising turn in the second half. The Spanish romance story was abandoned altogether, and exploded instead into a psychedelic montage of disco lights, blinding glitter and feathers galore, all set in the backdrop of... *Rio de Janeiro!* Do not ask me what happened to Barcelona. *I don't know.* Then came a rapid succession of random song and dance scenes, none of which had any relation to the main plot or to each other whatsoever. A Mardi Gras dance number rolled swiftly into "Mamma Mia!" before cutting abruptly into an abstract modern dance involving wounded soldiers and mysterious phantom beings. I also recall butterflies, Brazilian soccer, a diamond necklace heist and feathers. Yes, *lots* of feathers.

It was like Broadway on LSD.

So, after two and a half hours, I staggered out of the theatre, mind reeling from the aftershocks of sensory overload. As I sat, wide-eyed and speechless, my eyes caught sight of the promotional pamphlets for Takarazuka's upcoming musical, *Heat on Beat!* I scoffed at it, but grabbed one and made a mental note of the dates.

Even with its brazen tackiness, Takarazuka can be so ridiculously addictive.



Andrew Morris

Thankfully in this 21st century (it's freaking 2010 people!!!) one no longer has to argue for turntablism as a legitimate musical art form to critics. DJs have entirely revolutionized the way we interpret recorded music-not to mention how we shake our booties. Japan is no exception to this, and since the 80s, DJs from this country have been delivering quality tunes that have been recognized both domestically and abroad as top shelf material. Turntablism is such a varied art form, so to acknowledge the specializations that lie within that field, we will be focusing solely on those DJs that take a decidedly B-boy stance with their hip-hop flavored tuneage. For now I'd like to introduce you to or further acquaint you with Monsieurs DJ Krush, DJ Baku, and DJ Quietstorm.

DJ Krush is by faaaaar the most well-known DJ in Japan, historically speaking, and he has probably been a first step into Japanese music culture for many a Western listener. Ever since being inspired by the classic hip-hop exposé *Wildstyle* back in the early 80s (shortly after giving up life as a *yakuza!*), Krush has focused his entire life on the pursuit of the 1s and 2s. Beginning his ascent by forming one of Japan's first hip-hop groups, Krush Posse, he soon gave

that up for his solo projects in the early 90s. Over the course of his studio output, Krush has developed a style mixing ambient hip-hoppy with a jazzy, soulful base, with a dash or two (more at times) of traditional Japanese musical influence. His joints have frequently been the basis for a number of the world's best MCs such as, Aesop Rock, Mr. Lif, Guru, and Black Thought to strut their lyrical stuff. Check out *Zen* (2001) for a taste of the

more MC-oriented tracks, or 2004's *Jaku* for his more atmospheric works. Of course there's also his most recent self-remixed best-of collection, *Stepping Stones* (2006), which covers all those bases at once.



DJ
KRUSH

HOUSE ENTERTAINMENT

In recent years, one of the DJs doing his best to take up Krush's crown as the modern king of underground hip-hop has been **DJ Baku**. While maintaining a staunchly experimental bent with his recordings, Baku has steadily built himself up to be one of the kings of Tokyo's hip-hop scene, and recently has even been taking his brand of psyched-out beats to an increasingly international stage. While his beats can sometimes have distinctly punkish influences and push the BPMs to the upper extremes, he still grounds the tunes with grooves so smooth you start to nod your head, tap your toes, and drop your jaw all at once. Working with such MCs as Dose One, Dälek, and a host of domestic rhyme masters, DJ Baku has been a part of some of the most intriguingly forward-thinking hip-hop to come out of this country in the last couple of years. Both of his recent albums, *Spin Heddz* (2006) and *Dharma Dance* (2008) are packed with unstoppable collections of aggressively weird and undeniably tight songs that will keep you wondering where he's headed next.

**DJ
BAKU**



DJ QUIETSTORM

Next up is **DJ Quietstorm** who is something rather unique and against form for a Japanese music column. He is-gasp!-a *gaijin*. Far from a recent "I'm big in Japan" type poser however, Quietstorm first moved to Tokyo in the mid 80s at the age of 13 with his family and has remained there for the most part ever since. In addition, both of his most recent albums are named in Japanese (as are many song titles), and although he is also a member of the English language hip-hop crew, the Living Legends, from Oakland, California, a majority of his songs are done with Japanese MCs. Quietstorm has a laidback, "blunted" style to most of his instrumental beatology, but he's also not averse to charging up the flow a few BPMs when some MCs are on the track. If you're more of an instrumental hip-hop connoisseur then you're going to want to check out his aptly titled *Damare* (2001), which features a few voice samples as the only vocal accompaniment. If however you're in the need for some of that ol' boom bap, then you're going to want to check out his nearly entirely collaborative *Soramiro* (2004), featuring the work of a number of Japanese MCs as well as various members of the Living Legends crew. Quietstorm is also still active on the touring circuit so be sure to check out one of his shows or festival appearances.

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