

New Beginnings New Ideas

Welcome to the new voice of Nagasaki LIFESTULE

CULTURE

JAPANESE

MUSIC... AND MORE

Culture
Lessons
From
a Local
Legend

PLANTANDO IDEAS

Nill's Café
just the place to chillax

¥0

's a well known fact that until 1853 Nagasaki was the only place in Japan that was legally allowed to have any contact with the outside world. This has of course given way to the modern era where you couldn't walk a block in most places in this country without being barraged by a mass of cultural influences that have coalesced into today's Japanese landscape. And vet it somehow seems sad that since the Nagasaki Beat went the way of the Tamagochi, we have been without an internationally focused cultural magazine here in the onetime bedrock of international exchange. Until now that is. From our collective roots of grass arises the Nagazasshi, a magazine by and for the citizens and temporary residents of Nagasaki-ken and it's surrounding neighbors.

Our hope is for this magazine to be fertile ground for planting ideas, watering them with opinions, and eventually reaping knowledge, and benefiting from the experiences of the people who have the pleasure to call this area home. We live in a beautiful place and we all have a unique experience of it. If we combine our familiarities with certain areas and institutions, the collective benefit could become rather impressive. So as much as this is a proclamation of our existence to the world, it is also be an open invitation to join us. The more people who come together to make this happen, the more exciting and beneficial it will be to the community.

**This first issue** of the Nagazasshi covers a number of topics pertinent to all of our lives. So, without further ado, please turn the page and begin your exploration of our new world.

-The **naga**Zasshi Editors



Cover Image: Plantando Ideias by Fabio Pantoja

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isanaya isutsuji Festivai
APRIL 18-26, Isahaya Park, Isahaya City
Described flavore pionic lunch and relevation

Beautiful flowers, picnic lunch, and relaxation

## Nagasaki Yokabai Yosakoi Festival

APRIL 19, Nagasaki (Nagasaki station, Seaside park) Japanese modern dance street festival

## Nagasaki Tall Ships Festival

APRIL 23-27, Dejima Wharf, Nagasaki City

#### **Tabiraharu Festival**

APRIL 25-26, Hirado City Taiko, dance carnival and other events

## **Umino-Nakamichi Global Village**

APRIL 25-26, Umino-nakamichi Seaside Park, Fukuoka foreign students and residents cultural exchange

#### A.I. Concert

April 27, Nagasaki Brick Hall 18:00 Open 19:00 start ¥6,300

#### **Arita Ceramic Fair**

APRIL 29-May 5, Arita City, Saga-Ken

## **Mii Temple Exhibition**

APRIL 1- MAY 10, Fukuoka City Museum, Fukuoka City

## Tonozaki Soumen Nagashi Festival

May 4, Tonozaki Park, Minami Shimabara Japanese noodles served via a bamboo chute

#### **Zazen Boys Live**

May 6 Wed - Drum Be-7, Nagasaki, 3,500yen

#### Gogo7188 Live

May 15 Fri - Drum Logos, Fukuoka, 4,000yen

#### **Bloc Party Live**

May 22 Fri - Drum Logos, Fukuoka 6,500 yen



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# SUB Features

# ROAD CONSTRUCTION WORKER TURNED FAMOUS ACTOR

- Joshua Lee

**BACK IN AUGUST,** I mentioned to the teachers at my school that I love this Japanese actor named Koji Yakusho. One of the teachers then informed me that he actually graduated from this very high school that I am teaching at!

BORN KOJI HASHIMOTO, he changed his name to "Yakusho", a Japanese word meaning "public office" when he began acting. Over the years he has performed in numerous plays, movies and TV dramas. Yakusho is probably most famous for the movie, Shall We Dance? which was a big hit in Japan. One of my other favorite movies of his was University of Laughs or 笑いの大学. The film deals with Japan in 1940 when the war in China was going badly. Yakusho plays a police censor who modifies a comedian's script.

His other major films include Memoirs of a Geisha, Kamikaze Taxi and Babel, in which he stars with the likes of Brad Pitt and which was nominated for the best picture Academy Award in 2007! Babel features many languages including Japanese sign language and shows the challenges deaf students, like the ones at

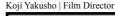
the special deaf school here in Nagasaki prefecture, face every day. He also got to use English, even if he had to become an international movie star to do so!

YAKUSHO STUDIED CIVIL engineering at Omura Technical High School and was supposed to work for a construction company in Nagasaki. One of the teachers at my school even knows his mother because he is from Isahaya! He apparently went to both elementary and middle school there, and we all know what a happening place Isahaya is, don't we?

My STUDENTS LOVE to joke around and can be quite dramatic at times, so perhaps becoming an actor like Yakusho isn't too far-fetched. Society may tell you what you should be, but sometimes you don't have to follow that "typical" path. We all have dreams, and at our school there is a beautifully drawn calligraphy painting encouraging people to do just that stating, "精神一到何事か成らざらん" which means, "If there is a will there is a way."

Now, if I can only get his autograph...

You can learn more about Koji Yakusho at this website www.pymmik.com or ask some of the older teachers who have taught at high school in Nagasaki prefecture!





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# CULTURE LESSONS FROM a LOCAL LEGEND

- Marika Galadza

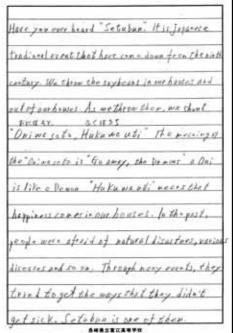
You are about to read the writings of a man dear to my heart. This man, who I will leave unnamed (albeit photographed), is a Goto retto native. From serving stints as a cow dung shoveler in Hokkaido to a street car attendant in Nagasaki he has now returned to the Goto islands and is teaching social studies to a gaggle of teenagers...and myself. Through infrequent chats and reports such as the one enclosed, he has been my insight into ancient, bygone, illusive, quirky and quizzical Japanese culture. Speaking of quirky: Did you ever wonder what an Oni drawn by a 56 year old man looks like? keep reading then.

**UNLIKE THE REST** of the busy bees at work, I find this guy's open displays of idleness inspiring. Apparently in between writing me weekly reports such as the one you're about to read, having the time of his life in the school tea room and languidly reading Dickens at his desk, he teaches classes...or so I assume.

And did I mention he doesn't wear socks? ever? including in winter? Of course I didn't, you cantforget crazy trivialike that!

In the tiny micro-cosm that is my school....he is somewhat of a legend.

**So while you're** reading the below account of setsubun, just think: "I reader, am now witness to the scratchy penmanship of a guy whose breed is dying out; A guy who could basically put his bare feet on his work desk and get away with it." Now sit back, ignore the grammatical errors and enjoy a sampling of Japanese culture narrated by a tweed wearing treasure chest of Japanese trivia. Preferrably sockless.





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# REVIEWSREVIEWSREVIEWS Reviews Reviews

### A Restaurant for a chillax

#### Review by Andrew Morris

is actually the name of a multifaceted company that has shops of various sorts located all over Nagasaki. The one that I know the most intimately however is Nill Style Café located just off the west side of Hamanomachi in the basement of a building on one of the boutique filled off-shoots of the arcade. The first time I stepped in the doors it was a case of love at first sight. I've got a definite 'thing' for cafes after living in coffee obsessed Seattle for three years, and Nill is most definitely my favorite in Nagasaki ken.

『ニル』は実際、多くの顔を持つ会社の名前で、いろいろなお店が長崎のあちこちでみられる。僕が一番良く知っているお店は浜の町の西側の、ブテェックがいっぱい並んでいる小道にあるビルの地下の『ニルスタイルカフェ』だ。初めてカフェの中に入った時、一目ぼれした。僕は四年前、コーヒーとカフェの文化が有名な、シアトルに住んでいた。その時に精神正銘のカフェおたくになった。そんな僕は『ニルスタイルカフェ』はまちがいなく長崎県の中で一番"いいお店"だと思う。

If you've ever longed for a place in Nagasaki to just sit and relax with a book and a cup of delicious coffee, this is the spot for you. It's also a great spot to go with a friend for lunch. The front of the café is a cheerily white room, often filled with animated shoppers taking a break from the arcade. The back area of the café is a more intimate, dimly lit area that has two sections that both face a beautiful Japanese garden that lends a calming, serene vibe to the dining/relaxing experience.

長崎でゆっくり本を読んだりおいしいコーヒーを少しずつ飲んだりしたいと思ったことはないか?ニルはまさにそんな所だ。また、友達と一緒に素敵な昼食を食べる所なのだ。店の前面は明るく、白い部屋で、よく買い物から休憩を取っている人で賑わっている。奥へ入ると部屋は、もっとくつろげるように、薄暗く、二つのスーペスに区切られている。両方は芸

術的な和風庭園に面している。この庭園を眺めながら食事するととても気持ちよくて、静寂な雰囲気を堪能できる。

To top things off, it's also rather affordable. Their lunch set is ¥800, and it includes a rotating main course, delicious bread, soup, a drink, and a desert. It's really a very impressive deal. I've also heard that their ice cream concoctions are delicious for those that are inclined in that direction. My favorite thing though is still to stop in after a strenuous bout of arcade shopping for a coffee and bit of relaxation. Head on down sometime, I'm sure you won't be disappointed. Check their website for details on other locations, and a map of it's location.

その上、値段もそんなに高くはない。¥800のランチセットできれいに盛りつけられたメインディシュと、手作りパンとスープ、さらに飲み物とデザートまで付いている。本当に有利な取決めだ!甘いものが好み人!ニールの手作りパフェもおいしいらしいよ。しかし、僕は普通にアーケードでショッピングした後、このコーヒーショップで休憩を取る事がいちばんすきだ。いつか寄ってみて!絶対期待はずれじゃないと思う。もっと詳しい情報はウェブサイトをご覧下さい

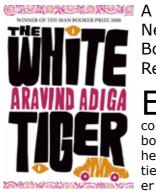


Nill Style Café | ニルスタイルカフェ

### 長崎市万屋町2番21号 プラザLB1-F

Tel: 0120-831-061 http://www.nill.co.jp/cafe.htm

# Tews REVIEWSREVIEWSREVIEWS



A Matthew Nelson Book Review

very so of-\_ten there comes along a book with adhesive qualities far greatthan

glue known to man. A book that becomes an extension of your palms for the stretch of time it takes you to complete it, at which point it becomes like a grenade of knowledge that you are compelled to pass on immediately. The White Tiger by Aravind Adiga is one of these books.

The tale of murderous entrepreneur Balram Halwai, The White Tiger (winner of the Man Booker prize 2008) weaves a narrative that takes the reader on a journey from the muddy banks of the Ganga river to the gleaming urbanity of present day Bangalore. Told in epistolary style, the novel takes the form of a week long address to a visiting Chinese ambassador. It's a structure that allows Balram to provide us with his own uniquely slanted view of his progression from servant to master. It's a jarringly frank narrative and one that has you nodding in ascent and colluding with a man who is, by his own admission ' not just any murderer....a virtual mass murderer.'

Though hilariously amoral and shot through with irreverence, it's a work

that, nonetheless, does not shy away from confronting serious social issues. Adiga's India is not the lavish Bollywood incarnation that adorns our screens: a land of saffron, silk and rakish villains, but a morally decaying one of moustaches, rooster coops and rotting teeth. It shares a similar coda with the Oscar winning Slumdog Millionaire- an unjust and corrupt India were 'a handful of men have trained the remaining 99.9 percent to exist in perpetual servitude.' In such a context Balram's brutal execution of his own master is symbolic as he frees himself of society's shackles. Indeed, Adiga accomplishes quite an astounding feat as not only does the reader find themselves consenting to this slaying, but also willing it to happen.

The White Tiger is a rampaging debut that has succeeded in steamrolling outdated perceptions of India as well as being thoroughly enthralling. Adiga has also shown a canny knack for capturing the current zeitgeist. Of late India has found itself the subject of a raft of alternative views (from Slumdog Millionaire to the non-fiction Planet India) that have floated into the cultural arena and aroused great interest. One Page wonders what acid tongued narrator Balram Halwai would make of all the tourism in his chaotic homeland that this is likely to generate. I suspect that his response might be the same one that he gave at the beginning of the novel when he learned of a Chinese ambassador's pending visit: 'What a \*%\$@ joke.'

# nori's nihongo

Even if you are not planning on staying in Japan forever, picking up some useful grammar points will make your life here easier and more fun. For this first issue, I've decided to give you an introduction to "SUGI", try to listen for it around you and use it yourself!

過ぎ(すぎ) "**~SUG!"** "too **~"** 

Example 1	Example 2
"mada go gatsu nanoni atsu <b>sugi</b> ."	「ちょっとこの服派手過ぎない」 "chotto kono fuku hade <b>sugi</b> nai?" "Do you think these clothes are too loud?"

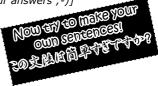
When you want to explain something is "too  $\sim$ " in Japanese, try to use "SUGI". Remove the sound "I" or "NA" at the end of adjective (all Japanese adjectives end with "I" or "NA") and add "SUGI".

#### Some adjectives:

I- Adje	ectives	NA- Adjectives	
痒い [kayui]	itchy, scratchy	綺麗な [kirei-na]	beautiful, pretty
楽しい [tanoshii]	fun, happy, nice	大切な [taisetsu-na]	important
厳しい [kibishii]	strict, severe	滑らかな [nameraka-na]	smooth
生臭い [namagusai]	smelling of fish or blood	複雑な [fukuzatsu-na]	complicated
馴れ馴れしい [narenareshii]	overly friendly	和やかな [nagoyaka-na]	sociable

Want to give it a try? Change these sentences to the SUGI-form and translate the meaning. [Ask you J-friends to check your answers ;-)]

- 1. これは小さいです。(Kore wa chiisai desu.)
- 2. 梅干はすっぱいです。(Umeboshi wa suppai desu.)
- 3. あの子はわがままだ! (Ano ko wa wagamama da.)



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# reasons commodore Matthew Perry should

be the next villain in a samurai themed Disney movie



His face lends itself. Check those sacs of fluid under his eyes!!!! Bags that big could only come from sleepless nights of war strategizing.

second battle of Tobasco and Tuxpan and on the USS United States (that would make it the United States Ship United States). Stranger than the names is the fact that, Matthew Perry probably didn't tro-

see the irony in any of them.

He served in the

# 2 He commandeered a ship called the USS Revenge

Every villain has to have a side-kick animal. Mathew Per-ry's was the Japanese chin dog, a breed he personally introduced to Europe. Wikipedia says they

have huge eyes and pant profusely... Perfect.

He was commander of the "mosquito" fleet (in the age before agent orange...there was...
insert omnious drum beat... citronella!!)

His brother's name was Oliver Hazard

Perry... maybe better to steer clear of the family all together.

**6.5** He's got a face of deception. Check out the wood block depiction of him below. Those droopy eyes might remind

you of the lovable nurse dog in Peter pan...but **STOP!** Hold your pity! Behind that bored visage lurks a mind plotting out how to do some "bi-lateral trade"... American style





SAKURA by Emilie Ito

SAKURA

What do you think of when you see sakura?

C o sakura (桜) season

is coming to an end and you may be wondering what all this brouhaha about the cherry blossoms was for. They're not even cherry trees, right? Well, in Japanese culture, since cherry blossom viewing was mentioned in the Tale of Genii during the Heian Period (794-1185), it has been a yearly tradition to admire the fleeting beauty of these little whitish-pink flowers. Although the symbolism for appreciating the ephemeral nature of Life remains, the feelings evoked by the sakura differ among the Japanese. So for this year's article on the Cherry Blossoms, I have decided to ask some friends what pops into there mind when they see sakura...

Hanami (a.k.a drinking parties)

You may have seen the blue tarps strewn across the lawn in parks with one lonely guy sitting and waiting seemingly aimlessly. Well, this lucky winner (usually the newest/youngest member of the group) will sometimes come hours before the drinking party just to reserve a good spot to see the flowers, as is sometimes the case in Tokyo. But we don't get too much of that down in Nagasaki; there is usually just a handwritten paper left on the tarp to reserve the spot. All kinds of groups (coworkers, friends, family, sports teams, etc.) like to gather and have a picnic under the sakura trees every spring. This is known as Hanami (花見 - literally "flower watch"). You can also admire the flowers at night, and this is called Youzakura (夜桜).

# Graduation and Nyugakushiki

April is the start of the school year in Japan. And depending on where you live and how warm the weather is you will probably see sakura at either your graduation or your school opening ceremony (nyugakushiki - I love that there is a word for starting school in Japanese!), or both if vou're lucky. This is something that all the students in Japan have seen throughout their entire schooling and will inevitably bring back memories of the emotional crying-sessions, picture-posing, flower-giving, suitpressing and lining-up involved around this time of year.

# **Beautiful Spring**

Well, with the weather getting warmer and the sakura blooming, it's a clear sign that Spring is coming. Spring is fresh, warm, delightful and long awaited! Spring is a new start – not only for the students, but for all of Japan: The fiscal year starts in April, companies transfer their workers in April, schedules are updated in April, life begins anew in April!

#### **Transience**

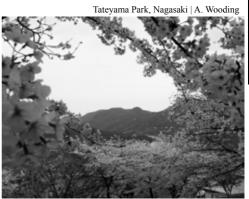
The cherry blossoms bloom for a week or two each year. They come and go so quickly, there's only one weekend to see them, maybe two, so you know the park will be full of tarps. Not only that, but the flower is lovely to look at. It's simple and lush and just abounding in the trees. That's why cherry blossoms have often been equated to Life: it's short, intense and ever-waning.

#### **Dead bodies**

You read that right! Dead bodies was one of the answers. There is a famous manga called Tokyo Babylon that explains why sakura are so beautiful: there is a body buried under the tree. The tree absorbs the blood and turns the white petals a pink colour. Despite being an omen of good luck and an emblem of love, to some Japanese sakura evokes a noble silent death because of the dying flowers' petals that fall quietly to the ground.

With these last two points, I can't help but be amazed by yet another paradox in the many that riddle Japanese culture: despite the restraint people show with their emotions in public, the Japanese can be very passionate and intense.

Next time you want to find out when there will be sakura in your area, just turn on the TV and tune in to your local news station: right after the weather forecast, you'll get the information on the "sakura front"(桜前線 - sakurazensen). They will let you know when the sakura will be blooming in your area and how long they will be around for. Be sure not to miss it!



Livingstone had the Zambezi river, Marco Polo had China. I had this, my Everest: finding a Japanese girlfriend. You might assume that my journey was somewhat less treacherous than those undertaken by the aforementioned illustrious names, but you would be mistaken. It was a journey fraught with pitfalls, snares, hostile locals and outrageously overgrown shrubbery....

ing a relationship with someone Japanese would help. Within a couple of days of meeting we had agreed to set up a 'language exchange', and that was the initial pretence of our relationship.

I can recall my first few dates with Ikumi; shyly clasping her hand as we weaved our way through the Kunchi festival, snatching kisses in the shadows cast by shimmering neon lights. We ate yakiniku together, sang karaoke and explored one another, tracing equators and continents. It was a halcyon period that lasted for all of three weeks.

**Soon I realised** that Ikumi and I were flawed as a couple in that she had very little sense

little sense of humour and that

# 

Flinting, faunting and frolics! One intrepted reporter recounts his varied experiences dating in Japan

#### I had only

been in Japan for a few days when I first saw Ikumi\* stood beneath spotlights, immaculate in a starched shirt fizzing detergent white. She was beautiful in a cold, calculating, Scandinavian furniture sense of the word and I was instantly attracted to her. At the time, we both worked for a language school behemoth (that has since been razed and then resurrected like a corporate Lazarus) so we had ample opportunities to get to know one another. It was a romance forged over photocopies and coffee; glances stolen from paperwork and furtive flirting instead of filing.

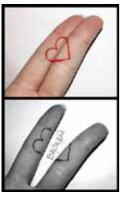
**Besides my inherent** physical attraction to Ikumi, I was enticed by her because I wanted to learn more about Japan and I thought that form-

the majority of my jokes made very little sense to her. She used to, totally unintentionally, refer to a mutual friend (named Sarah) as Sailor. Whenever she made this frequent slip I would salute her as if I were an admiral at sea. Soon Ikumi grew frustrated and, on occasion, hostile. 'Why does he keep saluting me?' I imagine her wondering, her fists balled in rage. Of course this gaffe was an obvious target owing to the pandemic of Japanese speakers who fail to distinguish between L and R sounds. Given Ikumi's formidable language skills it must have been frustrating to be mocked by someone who could barely say three words in any language other than their own. Nonetheless my mocking had been meant in a playful sense, but I think in this case Western

joshing was perhaps misinterpreted as disparagement.

**Obviously trivial disagreements** between couples such as when it is appropriate to give military salutes to one another are not grounds alone for separation. For a time though, Ikumi was searching for any crumbs of evidence that hinted towards our incompatibility. She eventually found them when she came across actual crumbs in her bed.

One fateful Sunday afternoon, an August sun arching high in an azure sky, I opened and ate a packet of Pocky in Ikumi's bed. Being a modern twentieth century man I disposed of the Pocky. However, being a man of any era, I failed to dispose of every microscopic crumb idling on Ikumi's futon. No amount of counselling could



overcome such an affront and we were finished. Unfortunately she didn't tell me herself that relationship the was over, I learnt that by word of mouth auite literally when a friend spotted her mouth attached to another man's.

What did I learn about dating in Japan after this first ill-fated foray into a relationship? Very little really. I would certainly suggest that the kind of jocular mockery that is such an accepted staple of Western culture is less evident in Japan. However, it's worth noting that I have met many people in Japan who have a playful sense of humour, Ikumi just didn't happen to be one of them. Equally I would hypothesise that intermittent mockery and

# It's reassuring to know that some dating etiquette transcends cultural bounds

littering would serve as deal-breakers for a considerable number of western women too. It's quite natural, having hurled ourselves into relationships, to look for any viable escape route when things start to go sour.

I once went out with a girl in Scotland and I distinctly remember all of the stomach butterflies having their wings torn off when we disagreed over what was a suitable walking pace (she insisted on a speed walker on steroids briskness). It's reassuring to know that some dating etiquette transcends cultural bounds; but somewhat disconcerting that the same traits that mark me as an unsuitable mate for so many women in the west are equally apparent in Japan. Somewhere in all of this there is a lesson to be learnt, I expect it might be something along the lines of: don't take the piss out of your girlfriend too much and don't ever, under any circumstances, spill crumbs on her futon.

\*This name has been changed.







## I am not the Queen of Green. I wish I was, but unfortunately, I am not.

I imagine the Queen of Green to be reminiscent of Snow White--a young woman daintily extending her fingers for twittering birds to perch on, whilst gracefully scooping litter off the forest floor with her other lovely hand. A warm ray of sunlight streams through a hole in the canopy, spotlighting her as the forest animals gather round to sing her praises. And just when you think the scene couldn't get any more magical, an aromatic breeze whooshes in, playfully blows about her gorgeous, silky locks, then lifts stray daisies off the forest floor, showering sweet-smelling petals all around her.

I, myself, am more like her lowly and pathetic apprentice, trailing behind her whilst stumbling over twigs and frogs, brushing sweat and knotty locks of hair out of my eyes, and struggling to hold up the flowing train of the Queen's beautiful 100% organic gown as the droppings of a singing bluebird land with a delightful "plop" on my shoulder.

Sigh.

I am not her. And I still have a ways to go before I am anything like her kind--those exemplary folk who make conscious efforts to ensure their daily decisions do not have a negative impact on the environment. They are so enchanting! I yearn to be like them, yet it feels so out of reach.

I've been attempting to live a more eco-friendly lifestyle for the past... oh, let's say six months now. But I haven't been too successful. It's just really difficult to kick certain habits for less convenient options.

But I'm not giving up just yet! I'm trying to take baby steps. Progressing with one small triumph at a time is progression nonetheless, right?

An area that I do consider having triumphed in is eating utensils. Inspired by a couple of friends, I now carry "my-hashi" wherever I go. My-hashi is Japlish for "my own chopsticks," and using them allows me to turn down waribashi, which are the wooden disposal chopsticks prevalent in Japan. According to the Japanese government's Forestry Agency, 25 billion pairs of waribashi are used in Japan alone each year. This means the average person in Japan

the average person in Japan goes through about 200 pairs per year. In seventeenth century Japan, waribashi were made out of scrap wood from production of sake barrels, but now it is estimated that 90 percent of waribashi used in Japan are made in China, where trees are harvested for that single purpose. That's a massive amount of timber being thrown out after one use!

I understand why waribashi accompanies bento boxes, however I've often wondered why restaurants provide waribashi instead of lacquered

7age 1**7** 

chopsticks. According to the Japan Times, many customers tend to think of reusable chopsticks as unsanitary and business owners fear customers would take their business elsewhere. Shinto belief maintains that hashi are a sacred bridge between humans and the gods, so it would be strange to use chopsticks previously used by someone else.

However, I doubt that's on the mind of most Japanese people. Those who

aren't refusing to use waribashi are most likely just oblivious to the environmental impact of them. Well it may not be on their minds, but it is on mine. After turning down waribashi at a dinner once, my actions inspired a fellow teacher. That really surprised me and got me thinking about who inspired me to change my habit.

My Queen of Green is my friend Tomomi. She does mind-boggling things such as refraining from using her AC, even on the most sweltering summer days. But what really knocked me out was something she did last August. We were at a barbecue and it was time to dig in, so I pulled out myhashi, all the while grinning from ear to ear at my personal triumph. But when I turned to her in hopes of a nod of approval, I saw her pull out not only her own pair of chopsticks, but also a ceramic plate. "My-zara?!" we all exclaimed ("My own dishware?!"). I scowled at the paper plate I had just been handed, which I had no choice but to use because I had failed to anticipate the need in advance. Boy, do I have a lot to learn.

Baby steps, baby steps...

It's officially spring now--a time for cherry blossoms and new beginnings here in Japan. So, are you planning on making any big changes in your life? How about beginning to use myhashi? I guarantee they'll be far more comfortable than your ordinary, splintery waribashi. And it doesn't take up any room at all in your purse! What's that you say--you don't have a purse? Then stick it in your girlfriend's purse!

# ...25 billion pairs of waribashi are used in Japan alone EACH YEAR.

Don't have a girlfriend? Find a handsome looking case and stick them in your back pocket--that'll attract attention to your behind, which can't be a bad thing! Don't want people checking out your behind? Try tsunagibashi, or "connecting chopsticks." They're collapsible and fit into tinier carrying cases, so they won't peek out of your pocket. Don't feel like spending much? Check out the 100 H store. I've even heard of ladies going as far as collecting my-hashi and color-coordinating with their outfits and nails. Hey, why not? Go crazy!

There are so many options! All you have to do is take the first step. So...what say you? やって見ましょうか?



by Andrew Morris

#### My Name is Hi. Andrew and I'M a Music addict.

I guess it's been really bad for a little over ten years now. As I've gotten older, my relationship with music has morphed into something that occasionally borders on obsession. The initial spark was when I inher-

ited a mass of records from my father's friend before I went off to live in a dorm in high school (aka, the classic rock years). Then, when I got to college I came in contact with something even worse than records, a group of friends, or should I say enablers, who were already ecstatically entrenched in their own bout of music addiction. It didn't take long before I

caved to peer pressure and from that first hit of this new sonic universe I was hooked. During those formative college years my love for the country of Japan became enmeshed with my love for music as a whole. But that was not even the first time that the two had met, and I'm trying to be honest here so it's probably best that I take you back to the beginning.

WHEN I Was 13, my family had an exchange student from Japan, Ryo, come and stay with us for a month or so one summer. His parting gift

of an X Japan mini CD may have just changed my life. What was I, a pubescent lad who thought that Kriss Kross was edgy, supposed to make of these Japanese metal warriors with their foot long rainbow afros and jaw dropping speed metal skillz. After them, things just weren't the same.

THEN, IN My aforementioned high school dorm life I was placed with

Japanese roommates two years in a row. It was through them the high-speed punk highjinks of Hi-standard. They also introduced me to Judy & Mary, who apparently thought it was an awesome idea to on the cover of their of "Masakazu", the

disquietingly reclusive,

that I was to discover have dogs fornicating CD. And then of course there was the influence

hair-to-his-lower-back, is-eithermaking-boatloads-of-money-or-hasgone-totally-insane-by-now senior with whom I scored serious 'cool points' slash 'escaped being embarrassingly hazed by' because of my prior exposure to his favorite band of all time, X Japan (they of the towering rainbow mohawks). Man, high school was weird...

But then it was college where things really started to get nuts. This was because I finally made a journey to belly of the musical beast itself, Japan. In the fall of 2003 I ventured to



X Japan member | ~Stetchi.deviantArt



Kansai for the ostensible purpose of 'studying abroad', and study hard I did. I spent night after night pondering the meaning of such eccentric bands as, 'Luna Sea', 'Porno Graffiti', 'Thee Michelle Gun Elephant', and 'Sex Machineguns'. Clearly this would send any normal individual into a mental tailspin and I was no exception. Luckily, I was brought back from the brink by the soothingly melodic impulses of the Pop songstress UA. At that point though, I was already far past gone, and the snowball kept tumbling down the hill, picking up genres as it went. I came to the realization that... Holy crap, Japan isn't only good at Rockity of any other given nation on the globe.

But Maybe you're thinking, "well actually, 'rocktastic insanity' isn't really my bag..." Fear not! There's also plenty of calm, soothing, beautiful music. There's the electronically enhanced, multi-instrumental virtuosity of Shugo Tokumaru for one. And then there's Clammbon, Ego-Wrappin', Tokyo Jihen, and the priorly mentioned mystical enchantress UA, all of whose respective existences have done a bit to make my own personal existence a bit more actively enjoyable, and what more can you really ask of music at the end of the day?

# Holy crap, Japan isn't only good at Rocking hard!

ing hard!?! They have some totally respectable Hip-Hop artists? Sure enough, DJ-Krush, K-dub Shine, Tha Blue Herb, and Scha Dara Parr, are living proof. And then... OMG... then I discovered "experimental music", of which Japan just happens to be masters.

It Makes SenSe really, for a country that's so stereotypically repressed that there would be a group of rebels in the midst that would be so ridiculously unrepressed as to start recording 20 plus minute techno infused, tribal space jams right? (I'm looking at you Boredoms) I really do think though, that the collective output of the Boredoms, Melt Banana, Boris, Cornelius, Deerhoof, ex-girl, Polysics, etc. is probably greater than the combined rocktastic insan-

ANd So you see, that's why I find myself here today, spilling my linguistic guts.

I'm addicted. But to be honest, I'm still not willing to check myself into rehab. Quite the opposite actually, I'm here to share my addiction with vou. It is my hope to spread this magnificent disease from which I so willingly suffer. With any luck my verbal coughings and hackings will spread my J-music disease to you like the influenza amongst the seitos on test day. So if you're ready, let's jump right into this dizzying world of Japanese music. There's something for everyone, and no matter where your musical tastes lie I assure you vou'll come out more fulfilled on the other side. 社 NagaZasshi is a free, bi-monthly magazaine intended for the thousands of foreigners living in or traveling to Nagasaki as well as for Japanese people interested in reading an interesting and edifying English publication.

Our hope is that this magazine will grow into an indispensible resource for information on local culture, living in Japan, travel in Nagasaki and Kyushu, Japanese study, local events and much more! We are eager to hear your feedback on this, the first issue of Nagazasshi and future issues. Please feel free to email us with your thoughts, suggestions, comments, requests and or questions at nagazasshi @ggmail.com

We hope to have a website up and running by the next issue (carded for June 2009) with lots more for you to enjoy, so stay tuned, it can only get better from here!



## 

The Nagazasshi is always looking for enthusiastic writers with interesting articles and stories to tell. Be sure to send us an email at

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