

nagaZasshi

VOL 1.2 JUL - AUG 2009

**Rifles &
Skateboards**

OpulentY
THE JAPANESE
IMAGE OF THE U.S.A.
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Hustle Heart

FOOD FOR THE SOUL
PG.10



LIFESTYLE

CULTURE

JAPANESE

MUSIC... AND MORE

¥0

We all know that making Japan into our new home can be a trying experience.

Who can count the number of times we have tiptoed around attempting to be culturally sensitive, but in the end unknowingly committed a social faux-pas? No matter how much we try, it seems almost impossible to fully grasp all aspects of Japanese culture. At the same time, there is a lot about foreign cultures that remains a mystery to many Japanese. The resulting speculation can lead to some very strange but interesting encounters.

This issue's cover story, "*Rifles and Skateboards Aplenty*" sparks discussion about stereotypes in Japan. We hope it will remind us of how socially naïve we can all be sometimes and how important it is to communicate and learn from each other. Hopefully mutual understanding will make life here all the better, especially during the frustratingly hot summer days!

We know what can make your life even better yet... exploring fantastic restaurants and hidden gems around Nagasaki prefecture, learning more about the local lingo, finding causes to get involved in, and enjoying great music and entertainment. You can find out how to do all of that (plus more!) by turning the pages of this issue.

Enjoy!

-The **nagaZasshi** Editors



COVER GRAPHIC: Nuno Lopes

<http://nunosk8.deviantart.com/>

MANIP.: Jacqui Richardson

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THE ATOM

- Crystal Uchino

The development of nuclear technology remains one of the single most volatile global threats on a personal, state, and environmental level. In an article entitled, Japan as a Plutonium Superpower, Gavin McCormack describes the destructive potential of plutonium as being "so dangerous to humanity that a teaspoon-sized cube of it would suffice to kill 10 million people". Despite this fact, governments throughout the world continue to rely on the development of nuclear energy as a primary source of electricity.

In spite of Japan's no-nukes persona it has become one of the world's leaders in nuclear energy development and production. McCormack cites that Japan, "with stocks of plutonium amounting to more than 45 tonnes, equivalent to 5,000 Nagasaki-type weapons, has become the world's largest holder of weapons-usable plutonium." According to Green Action Japan, there are 53 nuclear power plants in operation in Japan, which have to date generated approximately 20,000 tons of nuclear waste. There remains no tangible plan for the storage of this waste over the duration of a nuclear half-life in this, a small island country notorious for destructive earthquakes. As recently as 2007 a mild earthquake caused the spillage of nuclear waste into the sea.

On May 10th over one thousand people gathered in Saga City's DonDonDon Forest Park (どんどんどんの森公園) to protest the arrival of approximately 1.7 metric tons of [a new type of] weapons-usable plutonium fuel (MOX) recently shipped from France for use in several Japanese nuclear power plants including a brand new one in neighboring Saga-ken. Partici-



pants demanded that Japan be accountable to its own non-nuclear principles of non-production, non-possession, and non-introduction of nuclear weapons as well as to advocate for increased investment into sustainable energy development.

Speakers throughout the day reminded the crowd of the horrors nuclear technology has already brought to Japan, and were critical of Japan's now growing Plutonium program saying it is uneconomic, unsafe, a detriment to Japan's energy program, and that it fosters proliferation. Though this all may sound rather somber, the atmosphere of the demonstration felt more like a funky festival than a protest. There was live music, costumed dancers, speakers, and a myriad of workshops including solar cooking, discussions on MOX, make your own 'my-hash', or even your own 'my-bowl'! The day culminated with participants forming giant letters in the park spelling NO MOX, and a colorful march/parade through Saga city's center.

Over the last 20 years, the anti nuclear movement has been slowly fading with the passing of so many of the older people who lived through the nuclear attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Their stories however, remain stirring reminders of the challenges that lie ahead. How many more earthquakes dumping nuclear waste into the ocean will have to occur before people start listening?



5 HUMBLING 'gaijin' MOMENTS

You may not have been socially retarded in your home country.... but this is Japan! Learn from those who came before you...

List Me Gender

- Marika Galadza

1 Professing your love of diarrhea to your co-workers. There is a one vowel difference between the most embarrassing of gastric maladies (下痢), and pickled ginger (かき). Grammatical foibles are endearing...eating fecal matter isn't.

2 Nearly walking into "free swim hour" stark naked. Yes, it happened. A misdirected gaijin walked into a swimming pool with only towel and birthday suit in tow. You see, sometimes public baths and swimming pools are housed in the same building. On top of this, the gaijin pronunciation of furo (public bath) and pûru (swimming pool) somehow manages to confuse the locals. If you're not sure where they're taking you, you can gauge the intended destination from whether they try to rent you a swimming cap or not. If they do, you're headed for the pool my friend. If not, you're on your way to the onsen, where you should soap up at a ratio of two times as long as the oldest person there to earn street cred from the Showa crowd.

3 Getting caught taking advantage of the toilet comforts of home... by a line up of septuagenarians. The real test of one's moral fiber comes when you are faced with choosing between a cramped squatter and a single occupancy

handicap bathroom when no one is looking. It seems like a harmless misdemeanor, but while you're giving those hamstrings a rest on the private porcelain throne, imagine a 75-year-old toothless obaachan who woke up at 5 in the morning to harvest daikons, squatting for your sins in the stall next door. Grow some glutes and learn to live with it, or face the shame of walking out of the western loo to a line up of wrinkly-lipped disapproval.

4 Losing your ability to operate photocopiers, printers and remote controls without help or supervision, i.e. the sort of things you could usually train a monkey to do; a monkey that can read kanji that is. Forget learning how to write rice field and river; learn the kanji for stop, start, resume, duplicate and enlarge so you can regain your clerical dignity.

5 Getting caught without your wallet at your own welcome party. Yes it is your party; yes you have the option to cry if you want to... but in contrast to western customs, you don't get to forfeit the incumbent costs of your own fete. In Japan, you will be expected to foot the bill in solidarity with other guests... if only those Dutch had left a little sooner.

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nagaZasshi

Got something you wanna share?

Send it along to

nagazasshi@gmail.com

see page 23 for more info

CULTURE LESSONS FROM A LOCAL LEGEND - Marika Galadza

This Spuds for you...

With the influx of foreign imports in the last 100 plus years, the Japanese language has had to expand its vocabulary to encompass a whole array of never before encountered foreign oddities. Now every Tom, Rick and Saori uses 外来語 (Japanized foreign words) such as パン (pan) or パソコン (pasokon), but try asking them if they know where these words come from and you'll encounter a blank faced, "Wakaranai".

This month, Nagazasshi's in-house culture specialist will break down the veil of etymological ignorance surrounding the Japanese names of some common grocery store veggies. Soon you'll see that despite its Nihongo sounding namae, the jagaimo, like many of us, is a foreign implant on Japanese soil.



About Japanese food again. Do you know
"Jyagaimo" (ジャガイモ) We call "Jyagaimo" potato
in English. Why we call potatoes Jyagaimo in
Japanese. In fact, the potato has been brought
to Japan by the Dutch from "Jyakarta".
Jyakarta is now Indonesia. In those days,
the Japanese called Jyakarta "Jyagataro".
So first Japanese people called them "Jyagataro-
in". Later, people named them "Jyagaimo"
for short. "Miso" came from Korea. "Udon"
came from China. Japanese culture is
a blend of many other countries. But

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government prohibited that Japanese people went
to foreign countries. The government closed
door of Japan against foreign countries. We
call this policy "Sakoku". Consequently, few
Japanese went there. "Nihon-ja Mazi" disappeared.
We call a pumpkin "Kabocha" in Japanese. Do
you know why we call it "Kabocha". In fact,
"Kabocha" was introduced to Japan from India
by the Portuguese. In those days, Japanese
people called them "Kabocha" after "Cabo da"
As you know, a pumpkin has rich nutrients.
Please eat it sometimes. It makes you strong
and healthy. That's all for today.

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Please wait a moment and enjoy it with pleasure.





Jared's Japanese

Are you down with the 長崎弁?

Mastering the Japanese language is no easy feat. Yes, there are thousands of kanji with multiple readings, but another area of difficulty is dialects! Perhaps you, like me, studied some Japanese before coming here, or are currently studying it, and yet you still feel lost in conversation when someone speaks in non-標準語 (standard language). Don't fret; you have come to the right place! I will introduce you to a few useful Nagasaki dialect tips to help you get by and impress the locals. Just don't discuss the grammar behind it with your 国語 (Japanese language) teachers; it will cause them to tear their hair out!

For this issue, we'll focus on a simple yet important grammar pattern. Let's start with an example.

(+ polite form) (casual form)
今から帰りますか? => 今から帰るの?

This is the break down of your standard polite and casual forms of the question "**Are you going home now?**"

Now, to 'Nagasaki-ben-ize' this, all you need to do is change the question denoting の into a と, simple as that.

(casual form) (Nagasaki-ben)
今から帰るの? => 今から帰ると?

Note that the と is similar to のんだ in that it can be used as a question or a statement. The way to differentiate these usages is by the intonation of the と. Let's consider the response to this question; "Yes, I am (going home)."

うん、帰るんだ。=> うん、帰ると。

That's all for this lesson. Next time we'll jump into some more complicated stuff. Go ahead use it around friends and students and impress away. Just be careful not to use this with your superiors unless it is within the context of, "Oh look at what I just learned!"

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What do you mean?

わあ、どういう意味?

As an aspiring linguist, I often think of fun language tidbits in English and Japanese to spice things up. One area of interest is finding phrases in each language that sound similar to each other, as you may have picked up from the title. Mentioning these to teachers and students is a great way to fill any potential conversational gaps. Here are two phrases that I have come across lately.

What time is it now?

掘った芋いじるな!

(Don't touch the potato I dug up!)

How much is this?

ハマチです。(It's yellowtail fish.)

Food for the soul....

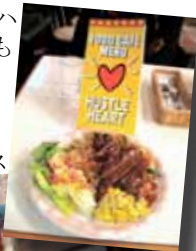
- Andrew Morris

Comfort food can be one of life's greatest pleasures, and **Hustle Heart** just off of the Hamanomachi arcade in Nagasaki serves up some of the best comfort food to be found in this area. **Hustle Heart** strays about as far as you can get from the stereotypical presentation focus of much of Japanese cuisine and instead features massive piles of assorted deliciousness. Their menu covers all the basic knee jerk delicious foods such as pizza, pasta, steak, hamburg, and curry rice. **Hustle Hearts** specialty though is two items called the Hustle Heart (yup) and the Muscle Heart. These two consist of salad, pasta, toroko rice (A Nagasaki-ken specialty), and a generous portion of saucy meat (Chicken for the Hustle Heart and steak for the Muscle Heart). Needless to say that if you can finish off the plate you will feel entirely satiated.

In addition to the deliciousness, **Hustle Heart** also features a homey, eclectic interior as well as a very friendly, charming owner. The room in a way looks like the basement pleasure den of a culture obsessed individual (in fun not at all creepy way). The owner has at least 5 external hard drives filled with music and movies to entertain, and is often willing to take requests. So, if you ever find yourself wandering around the arcade needing a lunch or dinner break (and I know you will), make sure you stop in to hustle heart and enjoy some of their deliciously filling menu items.

“Comfort food”は人の人生最大の喜びの一つだ。長崎市の浜の町近くにあるハッスルハートはそんな“comfort food”を出している。ハッスルハートの食事は普通の芸術的な和食とは違うけど、その代わりにめっちゃうまい物の大盛りがこのレストランの特徴だ。『うまい料理』の基本的な物がすべて入っている、ピザと、パスタと、ステーキと、ハンバーグと、カレーライスなど。しかし、ハッスルハートの得意メニューアイテムが二つある。ハッスルハートとマッスルハートだ。一皿にサラダと、パスタと、トルコライス(長崎県の名物)と、ソースたっぷりの肉(ハッスルハートはチキン、マッスルハートはビーフステーキ)も付いている。当然ながら、全部を食べ切ると、幸せな満腹感に包まれる。

そのおいしさに加え、ハッスルハートは居心地が良く、マスターもとても親切な人だ。中はなんとなく、ポップカルチャーに浸っている人の巣窟のようだ。マスターは五つ以上のハードディスクを持っていて、音楽や映画もたくさん楽しめる。リクエストもできるらしい。いつか、アーケードでぶらぶらしているときに、昼食や夕ご飯に行く機会があれば(可能性あるじゃない?)、是非是非ハッスルハートに寄って、満腹できる食事を楽しんでください。



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H U N G E R

:the movie reviewed

- Matthew Nelson

If there is any film I have seen over the last few months that deserves to be lacquered with superlatives, it is Steve McQueen's directorial debut *Hunger*.

Released in 2008, this portrayal of the I.R.A hunger strikes of 1981 and protagonist Bobby Sands' starvation is astonishing for its stark brutality and unflinching authenticity. Previously McQueen (not to be confused with his deceased namesake), was known to most as a Turner prize-winning artist who specialized in celluloid installations, and it's with an artist's quiet repose that he tells this bitter tale of human misery.

The long takes McQueen employs give the audience a sense of meditative space and time to reflect on singular images, such as a prison guard's bloody knuckles and an inmate's fingers groping meshed wire. McQueen's sparse, non-intrusive direction gives his subject matter room to breathe and crucially allows the audience to make up their own mind as to the merits of Sands' martyrdom. One key scene involving Sands and a priest (also notable for its intense performances and lingering single-shot form), deconstructs the notion of glorious martyrdom, replacing it with the domesticated reality of a son starving in front of his mother and father.

Also noteworthy is the distinguished

and powerful performance delivered by Michael Fassbender as Sands. Fassbender channels the spirit of countryman Daniel Day Lewis by undergoing a total physical transformation to enable him to play the starving, bed-ridden Sands. It is a sublime turn that is as harrowing as it is compelling to watch.



HUNGER

(UK/Ireland)

2008 | 96 minutes

Director - Steve McQueen,

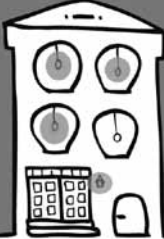
Script - Steve McQueen and Enda Walsh

Starring Michael Fassbender and Stuart Graham

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THE SOUND SHOWER MUSEUM

- Eugene Ryan

THE SOUND SHOWER MUSEUM houses a vast treasure trove of recorded sound reaching back over a century: over 150,000 records, over 60 record players and a sound room where you can compare the tone of 11 different antique speakers.

For a first time visitor, the tour begins in the main display area with a history of recorded sound. From an original 19th century Edison player through to a 1973 American jukebox, you get to see and listen to these beautiful machines in action. And beautiful they are--whether the sturdy simplicity of the US Army player in olive green, or the varnished wood and brass of the magnificent 1940's radio with its glowing amber dial.

Following this, the visitor is directed up a covered wooden walkway through the forest ferns to the first of the main outbuildings. This section forms a kind of cultural archive, the expression of the founder, Mr. Kurihara's belief that nothing should be discarded. As well as the entire collection of SP records, scores of antique record players, tape recorders and radios, there is a home here for every imaginable kind of cultural flotsam, from primitive calculators and photocopiers to semi-strung balalaikas. It is from here that the Herculean task of cataloguing the records has begun. The humble beginnings of the record database are stored in the central aisle, while around it loose stacks of SP records make a dignified attempt at a semblance of order. Most importantly, the records and players are not hidden away or protected, but there at your fingertips. Even as the staff struggle to organize the collection, you are invited to browse unsupervised and trusted to treat the items with respect.

Continuing the tour, visitors are led back along the walkway to the further part of the central building, which houses the main collection of LP records. This room is a superlative spot for lounging. On our first visit we sat in rocking chairs watching the rain fall darkly through the mist. Warmed by cups of coffee and the wood stove we had been left to tend,

we listened to Ella Fitzgerald singing sweetly, if optimistically, of summer-time.

For the finale, visitors are led up a short ramp into the last outbuilding. It is a concert hall in reverse, where a humble group of chairs sit facing a preposterously impressive bank of huge vintage speakers, like some monstrous church organ. This is the domain of Mr. Kondo, who nurses the discarded old speakers back to life. Like a delighted grandfather he enthusiastically talks you through the qualities and charms of each one. Using carefully selected records, he demonstrates the astonishing richness and depth of sound of which they are capable. Politely passionate, he also delivers a technical sermon on how digitalization and misguided consumer emphasis on power has eroded much of the fidelity of the sound produced in modern times. Hi-fi buff or not, once the needle touches the record it is difficult not to be moved by the sumptuous tone of these old machines.

'RECORDS ARE LIVING THINGS.'

The staff of The Sound Shower Museum are proud of the many treasures and curiosities they have discovered as they undertake the immense task of cataloguing the collection. There are ceramic cylindrical Edison recordings of stage hall comedians from a century ago, record players that run on a stylus of fresh-cut bamboo, and glamorous showpiece radios, which in their day cost more than a home. Rarer still, and more precious than any of these however, is the spirit of the place, encapsulated in the philosophy of its founder, Mr. Kurihara.

It was his belief that records are living things, which have value only in so far as they can be enjoyed. Fragile as they are, to keep these things out of harm's way would defeat the point of

their existence. This is why visitors are given the run of the collection. It is precisely this trust in people that makes the museum unique. I can't think of another place on God's earth where I would be encouraged to leaf through antique records while sipping coffee and feeding a wood burner. To top it off, the staff seem to take pleasure in your delight. I'm sure I didn't deserve to have a whiskey slipped into my hand as I crooned along shamelessly to 'Danny Boy', but it felt good.

Mr. Kurihara has now sadly passed away, but his idea lives on in his place. Mr. Takashima made it clear that the main area of the LP collection (all the shelves reachable by hand) will remain permanently out of the catalogue that they are currently compiling. 'If everything is known,' he explained, 'no one can make a discovery, and where's the fun in that?'

ADDRESS

Onyoku Hakubutsukan
342-80 Yuki no Ura Goutsugo,
Saikai Oseto, Nagasaki 857-2323

〒857-2323長崎県西海市
大瀬戸町雪浦加河通郷342-80

PHONE

095-937-0222



RIFLES AND SKATEBOARDS APLENTY!



- Mutia Adisoma

It was humid when I disembarked from the Sea Side Liner late last summer, but I managed to ignore the discomfort as I made my way towards my favorite salon. I was refreshed after a three-week getaway abroad and ready for a new haircut to match my upbeat mood. Upon arrival at the salon I was quickly plopped into a vacant chair, shampooed, and afterwards as I was craning my neck to admire a particularly dreamy coiffeur, I was startled by an abrupt “どこからきましてか?”

I looked around to find the words had come from the mouth of the shampoo boy. He asked again where I was from as he lightly towel-dried my hair, and after a bit of nervous mumbling I managed to respond that I was from the States. “Ooh,” he said, his voice trailing off. Then after somewhat of a hesitant pause he ventured, “I’d like to go there someday, but the image I have of America is that everyone walks around carrying guns.”

Absorbing his statement, I found myself imagining a street where every single person was carrying a firearm and all the bizarre places they were

concealing them. I imagined the outline of a handgun in the back pocket of someone’s jeans and another in a young woman’s purse amongst a mess of maxed out credit cards and store receipts. Then my imagination really began to run wild as I imagined one secured in a shoulder holster ala Miami Vice, another tucked underneath a bushy toupee, one crammed into a not-so-opaque Nalgene bottle, and one in a stroller nestled between a stack of diapers and...a sleeping baby! The absurdity of the last image really got to me, and I burst out loud laughing as I imagined this all in detail.

“HAHAHAHA.....oh.” I realized I was the only person laughing. Apparently, this was no joke. He was communicating his honest view of the United States--a view I would soon find to be shared by more than just a few of his Japanese counterparts.

A few weeks later I was asked by a teacher whether or not Americans kept guns at schools for emergencies. He also asked me if I owned a gun, and when I answered no, he mused, “Because your father owns a gun?” He looked absolutely baffled when I told him my father has never owned a gun, and on top of that, most men I know from the U.S. do not own one either.

On numerous occasions I have heard remarks linking Americans to guns and it has made me wonder why Japanese people make this association. The U.S. is indeed the most heavily armed society in the world, with about 90 guns for every 100 citizens, according to the Small Arms Survey 2007 by the Geneva-based Graduate Institute of International Studies. But who really walks around with statistics like that floating in their head?

According to the members of my English chat club, their views have mostly been influenced by TV, movies,

and word of mouth. "My cousin said America was dangerous and I believe him." commented one young woman. "I've seen movies like the Godfather, and I assumed that's how it is all over the America." added an older lady. These are not uneducated people (they asked me to explain the difference between the words "inspiration" and "motivation" for goodness sake!), but they still believed Hollywood exaggeration to be the truth. Who can blame them; if it is all they have ever been exposed to, on what else would they base their opinions?

My brief conversation with the shampoo boy was the first time I had ever encountered a situation where a stereotype of a western country was brought up. I was so unprepared that I didn't even attempt to dispel it. Before I left the salon the shampoo boy also asked me, "People skateboard all over the sidewalks too, don't they? That's another image I have of America." If I recall correctly, I replied, "Sure!" waving him a carefree goodbye as I left the salon. I giggled as I imagined streets swarming with skateboarders skidding off stair railings and knocking over garbage cans, their guns fully-loaded and tucked away under Volcom caps and super-baggy skater clothes. But now that I've had time to reflect upon the experience a bit, I rather regret not having taken the time to stop and explain.

As foreigners living in Japan I think it's partly our responsibility to shed light on these kinds of misconceptions no matter what our occupation here is. It might seem like a bother, but just think about it--you might be one of the few foreigners someone here encounters in their entire lifetime, especially if

you're living somewhere remote. If you stop and explain to one person, they might pass on their newfound knowledge to family and friends, who will in turn tell their family and friends, and so on and so forth. One of those people might someday become very important in Japan, and your actions may alter the course of future international relations because you managed to convince one person to think positively about another country. I know it seems like a stretch, but you never really know!

So if you ever encounter a situation similar to mine, why not take some time to clear things up? Sit back and enjoy their reactions when you say something along the lines of what I told my chat club members the other day: "When I was growing up in Arizona, gang violence in my neighborhood was rampant and drive-by shootings were not uncommon. But the two years I lived in Vermont, we never locked our doors and many of my neighbors left their cars running with their valuables unattended as they stopped into the store to pick up milk."

You won't believe how entertaining it is to watch their jaws drop in disbelief! Plus, in a mere span of a couple minutes you will have done your good deed for the day.

Source:
MacInnis, Laura. "U.S. most armed country with 90 guns per 100 people." Reuters 28 Aug. 2007 <<http://www.reuters.com/article/topNews/idUSL2834893820070828>>.



The Soybean

- Yoko Hayashi

Translation by Andrew Morris

How Higashisonogi's soybean

東彼杵町の大豆プロジェクトがアマゾンを救う？！まるで見当違いな話だと思われるかもしれませんが、実は、密接に関係しています。

Can a soybean project in Higashisonogi help save the Amazonian rainforest? This may seem like a strange association, but in reality there's a rather important connection.

地球の肺であるアマゾンの森は、毎年のように四国の1.5倍もの面積が消え、希少な動物も植物も関係なく焼かれた森の跡地には、広大な大豆畑が広がっています。ここで収穫された作物は食料や燃料として運び出され、先進国の物質的な豊かさや利便性といった、飽くなき欲望のために消費されています。もちろん日本も例外ではありません。むしろ日本は、アマゾンの癌(ガン)であるといったほうがいいかもしれません。なぜなら、日本はアマゾンから大豆を大量に輸入している。

Every year in the Amazonian rainforest, an essential place for the world's oxygen production, an area 1.5 times the size of Shikoku is burned to the ground to make room for vast soybean fields without a thought to the endangered indigenous plants and animals. The crops of these fields are then used as bio-fuel and foodstuffs to feed the ceaseless desire for convenience and the unchecked materialism of the developed world. Of course Japan is no exception. On the contrary it is fair to say that Japan is a cancer of the Amazon. This is because Japan is one of the largest consumers of those very Amazonian produced soybeans.

の代表食品である、納豆、豆腐、醤油、味噌、などは、全て日本の僧侶たちが考えた大豆の加工食品です。大豆は「殺生禁止(狩猟禁止)」の仏教が普及した日本にとって、肉の代わりになる大切な蛋白源でした。そして、お米に不足するアミノ酸を補給してくれる大豆は、昔から栄養の補完関係を保っていました。日本の歴史と大豆はとても深くつながっています。しかし、実は、日本の大豆自給率は、わずか5%しかないのです。

As I'm sure you all know, soybeans are one of Japanese culture's flagship food products. In fact, it was Japanese monks who invented tofu, natto, soy sauce, and miso. When Buddhism and its doctrine of not killing animals spread throughout the country, soybeans became an essential source of protein in place of meat. Soybeans are also a good source of the amino acids that are lacking in white rice, so the two have long been nutritionally complimentary food items. Indeed, soybeans are deeply intertwined with Japan's history. However, despite this level of societal importance, Japan's current self-sufficiency ratio stands at a mere 5%!

消費国 ≠ 生産国！ Country of Consumption
≠ Country of Production!

日本は、戦後経済を成長させるために、今までの大切にしていた大豆畑を工業地にかえてしまい、輸入大豆に関税をかけないことによって、自給率は一気に落ち込みました。日本は大豆の輸入大国であり、その中でも約3分の1は、このアマゾンから来ているのです。



Project

ns can help save the Amazon

period of economic growth, many domestic soybean fields were converted to industrial production space. At the same time, the tax embargo on imported soybeans was eliminated and Japan's soybean self-sufficiency ratio began to rapidly decrease. Japan is now one of the world's leading soy importers and nearly one third of these imported soybeans come from the Amazon.

そこで、私たちは、今、町の休耕地を利用した大豆の栽培プロジェクトを始めています。東彼杵町は、町民の高齢化、離農が進んで耕作が放棄され、荒廃した田畑がたくさんあります。そういう所から場所を借りて、みんなで集まって少しずつ、大豆を作っていこうというプロジェクトです。実は、大豆の根には荒れた畑をもとの状態に戻すのに、とてもすぐれた栄養分を持っています。

それに、大豆は通常11月～12月に収穫しますが、9月に、枝豆として収穫することもできます。

To address this issue, we here in Higashisonogi have started a project to cultivate a new crop of soybeans in fields that have long lain fallow. Higashisonogi has a large aging population, and thus there are many people who are forced to give up farming and let their fields grow wild. In one such field, our group now gathers together and little by little we have begun to plant a new crop of soybeans. One of the added benefits of this project is that the roots of soy plants have nutrients that are very helpful for returning fallow land to an arable state. In addition, while soybeans are generally harvested in November and December, you can also harvest a second time in September to use as edamame.

自分たちが食べる大豆は自分たちで作る。そ



う考えてくれる人が増えることによって、これ以上アマゾンの森が大豆畑に変わるのを防いでいくことができると信じています。

"The soybeans we eat should be the ones we produce." We believe that if we can convince more people to think like this, we can help to stop the Amazonian rainforest from being turned into the soybean fields that we are now sadly helping to create.



大豆プロジェクトのお問い合わせは、こちらまで。yokohayashi_xxoo@hotmail.com

For more info about the Higashisonogi Soybean Project, please contact Ms. Yoko Hayashi at yokohayashi_xxoo@hotmail.com (English is okay ☺!).

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PHILANTHROPOY

- Matthew Nelson

The most dangerous writer in Nagasaki recounts his experiences volunteering in Cambodia with all of his usual wit, verve and panache.

Phil Starling is such a philanthropist that his given name is actually embedded in the word. Phil runs VMad, a volunteer organisation that provides housing and sanitised water for impoverished Cambodians; he also finds time to ride a dirt bike recklessly and smoke King Edward cigars. However, Phil couldn't find the time to charter a driver to meet my fellow volunteers and I upon our arrival in Siem Riep, so we were woven through dirt tracks in the moonlight by a driver we commandeered ourselves (or who commandeered us- the buyer-seller dynamic it a little more fluid in Cambodia) who claimed to know exactly where he was going. He didn't. We stopped outside a temple and teenage monks, their phosphorescent domes glinting, gave us directions. We stopped again near a brittle looking shack stood on spindly sparrow legs and an aged man gave more directions with a laconic flick of his wrist.

When we eventually arrived at the Mad House, our lodgings for the duration of our volunteer work, we were greeted by a large man in a dress: Phil Starling. Imposing in girth and moustache, there was no doubt that Phil possessed all of the right chromosomes- even if he was wearing a dress (or a traditional Khmer Krama as we later found out it was). Apparently Phil wasn't expecting us until the next day. Mishaps cast aside, we were greeted warmly by Phil and his family and plied with beer and fish soup. Then we were treated to a truly bizarre orientation session. Sticky, exhausted and apprehensive we sought reassurance that the mortality rate on these volunteer projects was low to non-existent. No such reassurances were offered by Phil Starling. Instead we were warned about the thriving community of snakes, spiders, fire ants and foul mouthed lizards that lay in wait. Apparently someone in the last volunteer group nearly lost a foot when a wayward axe fell; however the shock absorbing properties of rubber crocs saved the day. This presented us all with a perplexing conundrum- would you rather wear crocs for a week or risk losing a foot? Of course, seeing as none of us died or lost a limb, the orientation was harmless scare mongering on Phil's part- all except the bit about the foul

mouthed lizard, that was true. A lizard that lodged somewhere on Phil's roof did shriek something that sounded a lot like 'f@*\$ you' at unforgiving times in the night.

Before this trip I hadn't used a hammer since craft design and technology class in high school. Given that the remit of our volunteer project was to build a house for a rural community this was somewhat of a limitation. I wield a hammer with all of the dexterity and composure of a sexually aggravated chimp. The Cambodians that we were working with deftly hammer nails in with three or four strokes. I was there for long periods of time, sweating profusely and only sporadically making contact with the nail head. One of the Cambodians looked at me, smiled, shook his head and in a departure from his usual garbled, murky English said something crystalline in meaning: 'Matt no good.'

It's true. I was totally useless. We did succeed in building a house, but I feel like my input was decorative at best- I held babies and tried to feign enjoyment when made to swallow strange local delicacies. This makes me think of something someone said to me before I went to Cambodia. A friend questioned the merits of these volunteer projects. 'What practical skills do you have Matt?' She mused, eyeing my twig arms sympathetically. 'If you want to do good, the best thing you could do would be to donate money and then just take a holiday there' she ventured. By then it was too late, I had already signed up. She has a point though. Before I left for Cambodia I questioned my motives for going- was I genuinely trying to do good or was I going to experience poverty for a week before retiring to my comfortable air-conditioned existence or was I going to do something

that might impress girls. Now I have returned I'm still not sure if I know exactly. I would definitely maintain that I went to do good, but I would have to admit that a big part of it was the opportunity to experience something otherworldly and exciting.

Of late I have pondered the true nature of philanthropy and the selflessness it requires. We live in a brutally solipsistic society, in a world of instant gratification, fast food, high-speed internet and accelerated living. People don't seem to be able to find the time to give to others, and often when they do, they are actually giving to themselves- 'I went to Cambodia, I did volunteer work, it's a cause I really believe in'. This brings

imposing in girth and moustache, there was no doubt that Phil possessed all of the right chromosomes.

me back to Phil Starling. Now Phil is a man who undoubtedly loves to massage his own ego; however, never once did Phil ladle out anything particularly self aggrandising with regard to his undoubted generosity. Now, far be it from me to eulogise Phil Starling before he is even dead, but he is an amazing man. Not only has Phil set about improving the lives of many local families, he has also adopted ten children who all live in his house. Admittedly, Phil did tend to swan around in a regal fashion reminiscent of a colonial master and he had some odd ideas (animals regularly commit suicide apparently), but as my travelling companion rightly said, 'it's a lot easier to judge Phil than it is to be Phil'.

How many of us could be Phil Starling?



ROCK DA HO

MUSIC ARTS AND

J-addicts anonymous ROCK

- Andrew Morris

While I do not wish to undermine the other genres in Japan's musical family tree, rock is definitely the patriarch. For this issue I will center in on three of the classic, time-tested, can't-really-go-wrong-with-them type rock bands: Thee Michelle Gun Elephant and their subsequent halfway reincarnation The Birthday (they count as one), Guitar Wolf, and Shonen Knife.

Thee Michelle Gun Elephant has the distinct honor of being my number one-all-time-most-favorite-ever-Japanese-band. They were a perfect storm of impeccable musicianship and raw rock-n-roll attitude. Chiba Yusuke's grave yet melodic vocals conjure up the most propulsive, involuntary spasm inducing garage rock 'tuneage' to ever flow out of my earphones. Their stone cold classic album is by most accounts (including my own) 1998's *Gear Blues*, which even saw a celebrated release in the US of A and Europe. Sadly the band disbanded in 2003, but Yusuke and TMGE's drummer Kazuyuki Kuhara formed a new band, *The Birthday* in 2006. *The Birthday* has a more matured, weathered tone to their songs,

but they are nonetheless an amazing band and their live show is a pure rock-n-roll spectacle.

Next is Guitar Wolf, who are absolute legends. Their signature style of fierce punk energy and theatrically overblown homage to every single leather clad, greased hair, sunglasses at night, rock and roll stereotype has earned them a fanatic fan base the world over. This became especially true when they released their 2000 film *Wild Zero*, which features the band battling aliens and zombies with laser spewing guitars.



GUITAR WOLF

Yeah, they're that kind of band. Sadly the band went on a hiatus in 2005 after their bassist Billy tragically passed away from a sudden heart attack. Fortunately they have just started playing live again this year with a new bassist named Ug.

Seeing this band live is basically one of the surest ways out there to secure you a spot in rock-n-roll paradise. DO IT.

And finally we have *Shonen Knife* who have been creating a delicious mix of Ramones meets 60's girl group sweetness for over 20 years now. The band has even seen a fair amount of success overseas and opened for

Nirvana on a few dates back in 1991. Their blend of fun, whimsy, and classic pop punk energy makes them a perfect fit for an outdoor summer BBQ hang out session. Never ones to sit still, Shonen Knife are still touring the world and releasing new tunes to this day, most recently with their 2008 album, *Supergroup*.

Well, that's all that time and space will allow for this month's edition. Tune in next time when we will stare deep into the looking glass of Japanese pop music (NOT J-pop).



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VENUES

Here are some great places to catch music and other great events in Nagasaki Prefecture.

DRUM BE7 (NAGASAKI)

<http://www.live-drum.com/be7>

Drum Be7 gets probably the steadiest flow of bigger name Japanese rock acts in Nagasaki ken. It's conveniently located near Hamanomachi too. It's also small enough that shows seem very intimate. A few of us got rocked pretty hard here last year seeing *Polysics*.

NEUTRAL + (ISAHAYA)

<http://neutralx.com>

Neutral is known and loved in Isahaya as the hippest spot to spend an evening out on the town. Neutral is part of an art collective of sorts, and the front part of the club is a store where they sell very cool, unique (if somewhat pricey) items. Recently Neutral has also been getting bigger and bigger acts to come through, including the synapse realigning awesomeness that was *Gang Gang Dance* back in October.

OMURA BECK (OMURA)

<http://www.beck.jp/top.html>

Shows can be a little rare here, but they're a ton of fun, featuring young local bands with a ton of energy. The bar here can be a little dangerous though. Once when I asked for a whiskey on the rocks, I got a 16 ounce soda cup literally filled with whiskey and ice. I can't honestly tell you much of what happened after that, but I've heard it was great fun.

Did you know?



Jerome Charles White, Jr
of Pittsburgh, PA, USA

Age: 27. 'Jero' is Japan's first black enka (traditional Japanese music) singer.
Hit Music: *Umiyuki* (海雪) (2008)



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