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## Wide Island Update

Welcome to the first edition of Wide Island View for the 2007-2008 JET year! In this issue, you'll find articles covering a range of diverse topics, such as blogging etiquette, tips for adapting to your new environment, advice for the would-be travelers among you, a mouth-watering recipe for those of you fed up with

a steady diet of ramen, sushi and rice, AJET news and a guide to nearby autumn events. We hope you enjoy this issue of Wide Island View and don't hesitate to write to us at wideislandview@gmail.com if you have any comments, suggestions or ideas for future articles. Thanks, and see you in November!

## Happy Reading!

MATT and JEN

## eyecandy:



Sunrise just below the summit of Mt. Fuji, taken during the AJET-sponsored Mt. Fuji Climb.

## BLOG TIPS for JETs

by TRISTAN VICK

When I first received my contracting organization's welcome letter I emailed my supervisor a link to my online blog. After all, I have been blogging about Japan and Japanese

culture for over four years, and although I consider myself a hobbyist, I thought my employers should know a little bit about my love and passion for Japan. My advisor still checks my blog updates regularly and lets me know his opinion. My students are aware that half the images I take of them will probably end up on my blog. It is still my right to express myself and my feelings as I share my life quite openly for others, but it's

also my responsibility not to injure anyone else's feelings in the process.

Not so unlike the blogger who recently stirred up Japanese sensitivity (CLAIR NEWS, April 20th edition, page 5), I find that I too post everything which interests me about Japan, the good and the bad. Granted, the first thing we need to realize about blogs/blogging is that it is not a traditional medium. It is cutting edge, and because of this new sharpness many people don't realize that as a new medium of expression they are putting themselves into a situation of having to answer for their personal feelings and opinions made public. The bottom line is, if you don't want to be challenged for your personal beliefs then keep a traditional diary. Put your thoughts down with pen and ink and lock up the book when you're done. Otherwise keep your offensive thoughts to yourself. My mom always used to say, "If you can't say anything nice, then don't say anything at all." I think this motherly advice definitely applies to blogging as well.

But we can't pre-guess everyone's disposition before we blog, so I have created a short list from my extensive writing experience of what I find necessary in keeping in mind every time I post a blog or write an article. Blogging is a publicly published medium, and as such has certain rules and regulations which apply to its unique traits. Hopefully this list of blogging tips will aid some of you in enhancing your own blog content and blogging experience.

## 10 BENEFICIAL BLOGGING TIPS

### 1. INTENT

Am I expressing an opinion/thought or simply reporting on something? What's my focus? Am I writing random musings or do I have a goal, something to say? For example, is my blog about: "My Random Thoughts," or "Strange Dreams I've Had about Frogs," or is it more topical, i.e. "My Life in Tokyo," "My Japan Adventure," etc.

### 2. SUBJECT MATTER

Is my topic something I like or something which puts me off? Is my blog and or blog topic aimed at a specific demographic? Does it make a point or am I only rambling? Limit the rambling.

### 3. CREDIBILITY

Am I portraying it accurately, do I have

my terminology right, are my depictions accurate, and do I have my references and citations where needed?

### 4. RESPECT

Is my content respectful? Is my critique respectful? Am I being provocative or sociable? Try to be more sociable.

### 5. CONTENT

Do my pictures and other content (including podcasts, etc.) better enhance the blogging experience? Does my additional content meet the respectability prerequisite?

### 6. MANNERS & ETIQUETTE

Does my blog keep in tone with representing my topic in a respectable light? If not, is my argument well supported by a worthy defense? Is my complaint in anyway justified? Am I in keeping with proper etiquette, i.e. Netiquette (online forums/blog/web-journal etiquette guidelines), the journalistic code, etc? Or am I only being insensitive? Cut out the insensitivity and be more cordial.

### 7. CLARITY

Is my opinion stated clearly so people know that it's just an opinion? Are my thoughts and sentences clear? Am I repeating myself too much to emphasize a point? Is my style and technique presented professionally as possible? Being artistic is fine as long as whatever I'm attempting is clear to the reader/viewer.

### 8. AUDIENCE

Is anyone going to be offended by my opinion and what I have said or said about them and their culture? If so, was it necessary to make a point or am I in danger of being libelous and rude? Cut out the prejudice.

### 9. PERSPECTIVE

As an outsider is my perspective in complimentary terms, am I making a compare and contrast with relevance based upon my own experience in distinction to my own culture, or am I only nagging? Cut out the nagging.

### 10. VERDICT

Is my blog something everyone will enjoy and appreciate? Or am I trying to influence people into making an obligatory judgment call about either me or my subject matter? If anything is lacking, offensive, or defamatory, then go back to square one and start from scratch until you get it right.

These are just a few of the things to consider when blogging. Whether you are a hobbyist like me, or have dreams and aspirations of becoming a professional blog journalist, I think these ten things are vital when considering whether your blogging is productive or destructive. And when in doubt, it's best to listen to our mothers. §

### Notes from the editors:

*Tristan Vick is a Hiroshima JET who enjoys blogging about his daily adventures in Japan. You can find the detailed chronicles of his time and life in Japan at his online blog: [www.swirlymuffins.blogspot.com](http://www.swirlymuffins.blogspot.com).*

*This is one person's opinion of blogging etiquette. We'd like to know what the rest of the Wide Island View community thinks. From the next issue, we will be publishing a Letters to the Editor section where you can air your views about anything you read in Wide Island View.*

## NIHONGO no BENKYOU

by ALEXIS FRANKS

### TODAY'S TOPIC:

**KANJI:** 日本の諺

**KANA:** にほんのことわざ

**ROMAJI:** nihon no kotowaza

**ENGLISH:** Japanese Proverb

### JAPANESE:

十人十色。

### ROMAJI:

Juu nin to iro.

### LITERAL TRANSLATION:

Ten people and ten colors.

### ENGLISH EQUIVALENT:

Different strokes for different folks.

### VOCABULARY BUILDER:

十・じゅう・juu・ten

人・にん・nin・person/people

と・と・to・and

色・いろ・iro・color

# EVENT IN REVIEW:

Bill Lawson reviews three days spent at Fuji Rock Festival in Naeba, Niigata Prefecture.

## FUJI ROCK FESTIVAL

by **BILL LAWSON**

“For those about to rock we salute you!” There are no better words to describe my feelings about the Fuji Rock Festival. Let’s be honest here; going to this festival is a true testament to your love of rock. The three-day ticket costs 40,000 yen, the Shinkansen costs another 40,000 yen, and then all the food, drink and swag you buy at the concert is going to cost you as well. Of course, you clever people will have figured out that there are cheaper ways to get around Japan, but I couldn’t go with the clever option. I had a workshop the day before and made the last train out of Fukuyama. I was off and ready to rock out with my wallet out!

### Day One – Friday

I get to the venue about 1:30 am, then eat and set up my tent. Get about 4 hours sleep and meet my friend Rory. Tip #1: When meeting people leave cell phone on! We see our first band; I’ll call them Kanji Orchestra. They have a crazy show with dancers and nakedness that totally matches their cool sound. Then we go to the “Stoned Circle” (insert your funny laugh now) to play drums and see what’s going on at the other end of this huge venue. This changes the course of events for Rory and I. Our Fuji Rock experience becomes very different from everyone else’s once a group of cavemen, or cave people, comes by. No matter what the proper term is these days for cavemen; these things grab Rory and he becomes an instant member of their group. I at once take the role of Jane Goodall. But our good friend Jane was not at a rock concert and I am. So, after some time taking photos and laughing, I go to see Kings of Leon, Muse and Fountains of Wayne. All three put on a great set and I’m enjoying Rocking Fuji. But what about Rory? I’ll explain as best I can. He and the cavemen are walking around with a big rock, bringing a bit of pre-historic fun to a concert full of people

from the year 2007.

I meet up with Rory after he evolves again and we go to see Hifana. Hifana is a two man Japanese DJ group that mixes music and video to create a wicked cool show. After getting into the vibe set by Hifana, we dance the night away listening to various DJs until about 5am.

### Day Two – Saturday

I hit up the onsen after waiting in line for an hour. Tip #2: Hot water feels better than cold water. Then, we hit up the Dragandola ropeway to listen to the Dexpistols and keep the dancing vibe going strong. It’s raining a little at this point, but the weather in general was great for the first time ever at Fuji Rock. Very little rain until Monday when it was over! Let’s not get there too fast, though. Rory de-evolves and joins the cavemen. I have bands I need to see to-

day, the main one being Less Than Jake, who I’ve seen tons of times before and want to watch rocking out Japan. They live up to my expectations by getting a huge circle pit going around the sound stage. The band claims it’s the biggest one they’ve ever seen, so we must believe them! They also say later that this was the cleanest festival in the world; now this is very believable and very true. Go Japan!

After resting from mosh pitting activities, I go to chill out with G. Love & Special Sauce: apparently a very popular group in Japan, if the wall-to-wall people sweating in the covered stage are anything to go by. Rory evolves in time to see the Beastie Boys; in my opinion the best show of Fuji Rock! That night we hang out with the evolved cavemen and enjoy some music at the “Rookie a Go-Go” stage, where Kingdom Afrocks put on a pretty good show. One of the members plays the keyboard with her

## RECIPE:

### Pesto Chicken Wraps

by **JULIA MAYEDA**

#### TORTILLA INGREDIENTS:

- 2 tbs butter
- 1 1/2 tbs pesto
- 1 1/4 cups flour
- 1/4 cup water

#### FILLING INGREDIENTS:

- 1 chicken breast
- 1/2 tbs olive oil
- salt and pepper
- 2 tbs pesto
- 1 yellow or red pepper
- 1/2 onion
- 2 medium tomatoes
- lettuce
- avocado
- cheese

#### TORTILLA DIRECTIONS:

- Mix all ingredients for the tortillas (the dough should be moist but shouldn’t stick to your hands)
- Pinch off a golf ball size piece
- Roll out on a floured surface
- Try to get the tortilla as thin as pos-



sible without tearing it

- Grill each side of your tortilla on a large dry frying pan over low heat for about 30 seconds on each side

#### FILLING DIRECTIONS:

- Cook the chicken in a frying pan with the olive oil, salt, and pepper
- Slice the chicken and generously coat with pesto
- Cut up your veggies and cheese
- Assemble your wraps and enjoy!

#### NOTES:

- Prep Time: 40 minutes
- Makes about 5 wraps
- This can be easily made vegetarian by substituting more of your favorite veggies for the chicken
- Pesto can be found at most supermarkets in the pasta section
- You can also make your own pesto using olive oil, basil, garlic, salt, pepper, and pine nuts

feet as well as her hands!

### Day Three – Sunday

I wake up after another few hours sleep. This may be the reason I decide that it will be a great idea finally to join Rory and the others. Yes, I will de-evolve and get down to the basics of what Fuji is all about...Rock! Yelling the word ROCK!", and running around enter-

taining people. That makes it sound a lot less crazy than it turns out to be! But really, having a blast with the concert-goers while dressed as a caveman is better than seeing any of the bands on Sunday. No offense to them; I'm just saying that I can see them again. Being a caveman is a once in a lifetime opportunity! That being said, I do get to see The Shins and The Chemical Brothers while dressed as a caveman.

So, go to Fuji Rock, because you never know what can happen. I even met some non-cave people from Wales and Australia! There is so much going on each day that you end up sleep deprived, but you still have the energy to get up and want more! The music, food, and people all make Fuji Rock worth every yen I spent and my experience, which was truly unique, will be with me forever. §

# AJETbulletin

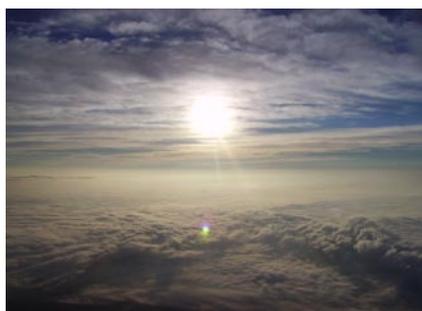
## Hiroshima AJET

*A word from Cybil Litwiller,  
Hiroshima AJET Representative*

### Hey Hiroshima JETs!

First off we want to thank everyone who came out to conquer Fuji-san. We had 39 troopers who made the trip on September 1 and 2, and everyone had a great time... right? We hope everyone's legs recovered quickly. Now the question is... who wants to do it again?

We have some exciting events coming up in the next couple of months, so mark your calendars.



Just after sunrise on the summit of Mt. Fuji

### October 20 – Our first Charity Quiz Night

Come out to Kemby's in Hiroshima on October 20 for a night of brain-numbing madness. Use your mind for something other than counting down the minutes left in class each day. Come challenge last year's winners, The Geezers (Bill Lawson, Marc Milsten, Tanya Lee, Matt Hazel, Gil Forsyth, and Jody Denoncour), and see if they really are that smart or if it was just sheer luck.



AJET climbers (and orbs) at the Gogoen Rest House at the 5th Station of Mt. Fuji

This year's participation fee is ¥1,000 per person, with all the money raised going to Peru to help those families displaced by the recent earthquake. Teams are 4-5 people. Please email [HiroshimaAJET@hotmail.com](mailto:HiroshimaAJET@hotmail.com) by October 10 to reserve your team. Please include your team name and the names of your team members in the email. Prizes will be awarded to the 1st to 3rd place winners. Everyone is welcome, JETs and non-JETs, English and Japanese speakers. All questions can and will be translated if needed. If you have any questions (about the event) please email us!

### November 17-18 – SUMO!

In November we will be heading back to Fukuoka for Sumo! We will be heading down on Saturday morning, watching the Grand Sumo Tournament, having a night on the town, then heading back to Hiroshima on Sunday morning, with a stop at Space World.

This is an event NOT to be missed! Come

and see fat men push their way into history, and try some famous Hakata ramen while you're at it.

The trip is ¥20,000 for AJET members and ¥21,000 for non-AJETs. This money pays for transportation, hotel, sumo and Space World tickets. Email [HiroshimaAJET@hotmail.com](mailto:HiroshimaAJET@hotmail.com) with questions or to reserve your seat. We only have a limited number of spots, so sign up now!

We look forward to seeing all of you soon!

## JLAND • FACT

According to Japan Today, in 1999 Japan Tobacco (in which the Japanese government has a 50% share) handed out cartons of cigarettes to elderly residents of care homes to commemorate Respect for the Aged Day!

# “FAUX PAS 101”

An brief overview of some of the more common etiquette mistakes made by foreigners in Japan.

## SO YOU THINK YOU'RE AN EXPERT...

by GIL FORSYTH

Japan. The Land of the Rising Sun. The Land of the Gods. The love child of Izanagi and Izanami. Where failed Western rock stars come to succeed. The most bureaucratic country on the face of the Earth. And above all, the most orderly.

Order is built in to Japanese culture. The language is ordered in several levels of politeness, each with a specific use for a specific status. The Emperor even has his own conjugation pattern! Well, he did. I think he forgot it. The point is that order and manners, etiquette (if you will), plays a very important part in Japanese culture. Now I'm sure you all know to take your shoes off inside the house and not to jump into a public bath all soaped up, but there are hundreds of cultural taboos waiting for to stumble upon them.

A disclaimer: If you mess something up, it's OK. You're a foreigner and you are accorded a certain number of Mulligans when dealing with Japanese etiquette. The more obscure the point of etiquette, the lesser the shame you heap on your name, your family, your honor and, if applicable, your liege lord.

### Shoes

Yes, you take them off inside, but there are a few other points to keep in mind. If you're going to a Japanese person's house, or a temple or a shrine, remember that you're going to be taking your shoes off, and be prepared. Don't wear the last pair of socks in your drawer. You know the ones, with the faded S&M Hello Kitty decals and a hole at both ankles and your left big toe. We



Shoes are poison to *tatami*

don't want to see those and neither do the monks. Also, you may notice that your shoes are frequently turned towards the door by your host or at a Japanese-style restaurant. It is OK to do this yourself, but do not turn your back when stepping out of a *genkan*. Step out of your shoes facing forward and then reach down to turn your shoes around.

### Chopsticks

One in the right hand, one in the left and a lot of patience. If you tell a Japanese person that's how you learned to use chopsticks, the chance that they'll believe you is disturbingly high. But you've mastered the art of picking up soft tofu in your chopsticks. You're noticeably more talented with them than your elementary school students, so don't mess it up.

Never stick your chopsticks into a bowl of rice and leave them there. This is how rice is offered to the dead at Japanese funerals and it's very, very unlucky. Also, never pass food from one pair of chopsticks to another. If you want to give your friend a taste of something, put it on his plate. Japanese cremate their dead at a lower heat than Western countries so the bones are still solid. Family members then pass the bones

from the urn in a circle, chopsticks to chopsticks. Doing this with food is also very, very unlucky.

### Shrines

When you visit a shrine, there will usually be a *chozusha*, or water basin, near the entrance. The *chozusha* is a disaster waiting to happen. You are supposed to purify your hands and your mouth with the water from the *chozusha*. Do not drink the water no matter how hot the weather is. Also, do not pour the water all over your head. Scoop out some water and pour it over your left hand, then right hand and then pour some water into your hand and sip. Do not sip directly from the bamboo cup thing. Also, do not swallow the water. Instead, spit it out near the base of the *chozusha*. There should be a drainage area. Lastly, hoist the cup upright on its handle and use the remnants of the water in the cup to purify the handle where you touched it with your impure hands. You may notice many people foregoing the mouth purification. These people are heathens; do not emulate them.

### Other points

Never pour a beer for yourself. This is equivalent to screaming "I'm an

alcoholic” to the room. Whether or not that’s true, it’s best to avoid the reputation. Pour for the person next to you and then wait for him to pour for you. Coughing politely and staring at your glass when it’s empty is acceptable behavior. If you’re alone at the bar, chances are you’re an alcoholic.

At meals, always try to finish all of your rice. You can leave the rest of the meal untouched but finish the rice. Also, never pour soy sauce over white rice. If you’re having sushi, try to eat each piece in one go. If you try to separate

it into two pieces, you will likely fail. Hands or chopsticks can be used to eat sushi.

Blowing your nose and burping are considered incredibly bad manners but slurping your noodles or soup is a compliment to the chef. Spend some time at a ramen shop observing to learn prime slurping techniques.

Accept business cards with both hands and don’t put them into your wallet. Either buy a business card holder or hold on to them until you’re out of

sight. Then put it in your wallet.

As a last rule of thumb, when giving or receiving anything, use both hands and bow a lot. If you’re giving *omiyage*, you can try to bust out *tsumaranai mono desu kedo* (It’s a bit boring, but...) when you hand over gifts, to earn brownie points.

Whatever happens, don’t worry too much. You will commit cultural faux pas, it happens to everyone. In a new situation, “monkey see monkey do” will serve you well. Make mistakes and learn from them and you’ll be fine. §

# SHIKOKU

## Beer, Black Squirrels and Bridges: a Shikoku Adventure

by **TANYA LEE**  
and **JACKIE HOFFART**

Tanya and Jackie share their adventures and advice on travel in Shikoku, the smallest of the four main islands of Japan.

### *Tanya’s Story:*

When faced with Golden Week, the choice is either to splurge on an inflated overseas holiday or stick to somewhere closer to home. This year a group of friends and I decided on the latter and bundled into two cars with a map of Shikoku in hand. Faced with time and money issues, we made a loose itinerary and decided only to stick to camping sites and cabins for accommodation.

Hitting the road, our first stop was the Asahi Brewery in Saijo, Ehime-ken. Asahi beer is a mainstay favourite of many in Japan, so it was fascinating to watch the beer evolve from its initial beginnings as a seed to the amber-coloured liquid stored in the giant silver vats we could see extending tens of metres into the sky. There is also an excellent reward for staying and trying to understand as much of the all-Japanese tour: a free beer sampling session in the beer hall for half an hour. Needless to say, a few of us were a little tipsy towards the end, except for me, the driver. However, the driver does not go away empty handed: he or she is presented with a complimentary *omiyage*



Ritsurin Park in Shikoku

bag upon leaving.

We then rolled to our next destination, Kazurabashi, site of the famed vine bridges, in Iya Valley Tokushima-ken. The valley is absolutely stunning with deep gorges, dense vegetation and clear water. Our first cabin was in this beautiful, picturesque setting. In this tiny cabin, we slept peacefully, albeit shoulder to shoulder ... that is, until we had a night-time visitor. A black squirrel was on a rafter above me, perched and ready to pounce on us until I noticed it and screamed! Unfortunately, the poor thing jumped the other way and got stuck in the wall. I

told the camp manager the next day and I sincerely hope that our little friend got out of the wall safely.

The next day the bridges that I had hoped to see were a little disappointing. The site was overcrowded with tourists and the lines for crossing the main bridge seemed endless. Needless to say, we did not stay there very long. The moral of the story: don’t visit tourist spots during Golden Week, since loads of tourists can really dull a place.

The third place we stayed was a campsite on the border of Kochi-ken and Ehime-ken. It was smack on the border; there

was a line drawn through the hotel and you could take a picture with one foot in each ken. Political geography aside, the drive up to this place was absolutely mesmerizing. Lush green foliage and mist followed us as we drove higher and higher along increasingly narrow roads. The weather was not kind to us on this particular day and soon we were surrounded by clouds. It was difficult to see the car I was following, and, to make matters worse, it had started raining. Then suddenly we reached the summit of the mountain and were at the camp site. Thankfully this site had an *onsen* with a huge glass window overlooking the forest and suddenly I wasn't in Japan anymore, but at some luxurious cabin retreat.

The next day we packed up and left, but on the way home I think all of us were planning our next trip back. Shikoku was truly lovely, almost like visiting another country while staying in Japan. My one regret was only staying a day in each location. Next time, I will definitely plan a longer trip.

### Jackie's Suggestions:

Some "Definitelys" for planning your travels:

Shikoku's mountainous topography will prove likewise bumpy for your trip if you plan to get around by train: definitely rent a car if you can (use [www.tocoo.com](http://www.tocoo.com) for user-friendly English-language discount rentals). Definitely pick yourself up a bilingual map (they are not difficult to come by in Hiroshima-ken's cities) because, despite the island's seemingly small bean-shape, getting the route to your *ryokan* wrong, or relying on the "this road looks cool" navigation method can translate into several hours of night-time one-way mountain-road backtracking if you aren't careful. Definitely do your homework online or with your guide-book beforehand. Shikoku is beautiful, and the *udon* is excellent, but sometimes the sites are few and far between, so regardless of how fly-by-the-seat you like to travel, it's advisable to have at least a few destinations in mind within each of the kens you plan to visit. Finally, definitely don't bite off more than you can chew while planning. I've been to Shikoku twice, and have still only made it to two of the four kens.

Some "Don't Miss" locations to visit in Eastern Shikoku:

Takamatsu, capital of Kagawa-ken, is a nice big city, but if it's city sights you fancy why are you going to Shikoku?! This place is also, however, home to one of Japan's national treasures and biggest parks: Ritsurin Park. A sprawling, but manageably-sized, park, it is best visited during Japan's peak pretty seasons: for the changing of the colors of the leaves in late fall, or for the cherry blossoms in early April. Mind you, if your travel plans don't mesh with the Goddess of Nature's schedule, Ritsurin still has plenty to offer year-round. Don't miss it. Takamatsu also serves as one of two port-towns which offer ferries out to the "art island" Naoshima with its many galleries (the other ferry leaves from Okayama). If you are into modern art and camping, don't miss Naoshima ([www.naoshima-is.co.jp](http://www.naoshima-is.co.jp)). If you want to avoid the 1 million people who flock to Tokushima city during *obon* (a traditional holiday celebrated in August, during which the Japanese celebrate the return of ancestral spirits to



Tokushima's Bon Odori

their homes), you can check out the year-round performance of their famous *Obon Odori* (dance) at the slightly cheesy yet amusing hall at the base of the ropeway downtown.

Not far from Tokushima city, at the right times of the year, you can catch the "world's most powerful current" at the Naruto whirlpools (visit [www.wel-shikoku.gr.jp/eng](http://www.wel-shikoku.gr.jp/eng) for more info). If you like paper (Japanese *washi* paper) and want to find out more about it, don't miss the Awagami Paper Factory, which is about an hour outside of Tokushima city ([www.awagami.or.jp](http://www.awagami.or.jp)). Once you weave your way

## TRAVELTIPS

### HELPFUL LINKS

- Kazurabashi Camp Site  
<http://www.city-miyoshi.jp/kazurabashi/guide/camp.html>
- Tenguso Cabins  
[http://www.tenguso.com/shisetu/5\\_index\\_msg.html](http://www.tenguso.com/shisetu/5_index_msg.html)

along the road to this small factory and shop (and it may take some weaving), be sure to have the staff set you up with the English video describing the process of the paper-making, and don't miss the gift shop! In the mountains of Tokushima, the Iya and Oyogi valleys have many hidden



A waterfall in Tokushima

treasures such as waterfalls and *onsen* nestled amongst the narrow mountain roads; in particular keep an eye out for the "Peeing-Boy" statue in Iya Valley. The statue is right next to a decent *onsen*, which, by the way, has clean water!



The famous "Peeing Boy" statue of Tokushima

Oh, and hey! Don't miss the *udon*! You can enjoy it anywhere on Shikoku; but go rural if you can. §

Things to do this autumn...

• **September 17**  
**Respect for the Aged Day**

*Tell an old person you care...*

"This national holiday traces its origins to 1947, when a town proclaimed September 15 as Old Folks' Day. Its popularity spread nationwide, and in 1966 it took its present name and status. Annually, Japanese media take the opportunity to feature the elderly, reporting on the population and highlighting the oldest people in the country." The Asa Zoo in Hiroshima celebrates the day by allowing you to feed cake to the rhinos!

• **October 3**  
**Hiroshima Peace Marathon Sign Up Deadline**

*Get in shape...*

Although the race is on November 3rd, there is no day of race sign up in Japan, so make sure and sign up as early as possible! There are two distances available: a 5km run for 2300 yen and a 10km for 3000 yen. Entry forms can be found at Yanbo's running shop in Hiroshima.

• **October 8**  
**Health and Sports Day**

*Get some exercise...*

"The law sets aside this day as a national holiday for enjoying sports and cultivating a healthy mind and body. It was created in 1966 on the anniversary of the opening day of the 1964 Tokyo Olympics."

• **October 13-14**  
**Saijo Sake Festival**

*Get drunk...*

Sake lovers from all over Japan will descend on Saijo this weekend to sample the nearly 1,000 different brands of sake offered by the many vendors. Tickets for the sake garden are 1,000 yen beforehand and 1,500 yen at the door. There are also food vendors, parades, and sake brewery tours. You'll develop a love of sake... or end up never drinking it again!

• **November 3**  
**Culture Day**

*Take up a Japanese hobby...*

"Culture Day has been a national holiday since the Public Holiday Law took effect in 1948. It commemorates the adoption

of the Constitution (which took effect six months later). The date was also a holiday prior to World War II, having been the birthday of Emperor Meiji. On this date, the Emperor awards the Order of Culture to recipients in the Kokyo (the Imperial Palace)."

• **November 3**  
**Hiroshima Peace Marathon**

*Run!*

• **November 3**  
**Betcha Matsuri**

*Take pictures of crying babies...*

Held in Onomichi, the *Betcha Matsuri* is otherwise known as the 'crying baby' matsuri. According to the official Onomichi website, "This festival is said to have its origins in an attempt to ward off the plague during the Edo Era (17th to 19th centuries). Dancing to the beat of music played on drums and bells, young men wearing comical masks or lion costumes run through the city streets, chasing the children there, and hitting them on the head or body with bamboo whisks. The children thus "beaten" are then said to be safe from illness or disaster for the coming year. Even though they may be frightened, toddlers are held by their parents and subjected to a "thrashing", all in good fun. Within Hiroshima Prefecture, this festival is unique and has been designated an Intangible Folklore Cultural Property." All in good fun, but watch out you don't get hit by those pesky whisks!

• **Three Three-Day Weekends**  
**Hiking, Biking and Momiji**

*Enjoy the cool weather and the days off...*

Take advantage of the three day weekends scattered throughout September and October and enjoy some hiking and biking around Hiroshima-ken. For the hikers, there is the 16km hike along Sandankyo Gorge, north of Hiroshima-shi, and for the bikers the bike ride to Matsuyama in Shikoku. If hardcore exercise isn't for you, then check out the beautiful maple leaves, otherwise known as *momiji*, which lend a backdrop of riotous color to the Japanese countryside during the autumn months.

**Sources:**

• [Wikipedia.org](http://Wikipedia.org)

## JLAND • FACT

Many Japanese golfers have "hole-in-one" insurance because if you are "lucky" enough to hit a hole-in-one, it is traditional to share your good luck by sending gifts to all your friends! For only 2,000 yen a year, the insurance can save you from having to shell out over 100,000 yen in celebratory parties and presents.

## FYI: announcements

### PICTURE PERFECT

Calling anyone who owns a camera! Have you seen the Hiroshima JET photo site yet? As a public site, anyone is free to join or simply to peruse other people's pictures. You can upload any pictures at all from your time in Japan. As inspiration, members also set up regular photo challenges.

In association with this photo site we will be featuring one particularly impressive photo in each edition of the Wide Island View, starting in the November-December edition. So get snappin'!

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Got an idea? Opinion? Complaint? From the next issue, we will be publishing a Letters to the Editor section, where you can air your views about anything you read in the Wide Island View. Email us at [wideislandview@gmail.com](mailto:wideislandview@gmail.com)

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**NOTES:**

Questions? Comments? Something to contribute? This newsletter is written by and for JETs! If there is something you'd like to say, please don't hesitate to contact us.