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Inside This Issue:

- Kaichou's Letter. 2
- Technology Regional Conf. 2
- News from the Consulate
Akihito's anniv. & birthday . . 3
- Returnee Reception 3
- Japan Now 3
- On Paper Wings* 4
- Room to Read Charity 4
- Career Panel 2009 5
- First Ever Eugene Event 5
- Notes from the Field 6-7
- Tabemashou! *Miho*. 8
- Tabemashou! *Hama Sushi* 9
- Dear Abiko. 10
- What the Bunka?! *Hashi*. 11
- Mogo Mogo Onomatopoeia. . . . 11

Halloween Party 2009

Costumed revelers gather for fright night

By Daniel Mick



There were no ghosts, goblins, or ghouls at the annual JETAA Halloween party. But there were Hogwarts's students, hippies, and hottie cheerleaders. The infamous sumo even made a reappearance from last year!

Costumed revelers gathered in a spooky house in SE to eat, drink, and be merry. The evening naturally consisted mostly of posing for pictures in ever more imaginative combinations and poses. Jenga was brought at one point to much joy, but the tumbling game was abandoned soon after since it's incompatible with tumbling beer bottles. Plenty of drinks and Japanese snacks were on hand to fuel the festivities.

Veronica White and Todd and Hiro Van Horne won Anzen gift certificates for Best Japanese Themed costume (Japanese schoolgirl) and Best Overall Costume (devil & angel) respectively.



Join us for the Annual

Shinnenkai

Saturday, January 30th
Portland City Grill
111 SW 5th Ave #3000
7:00PM

Mark your calendar for one of the biggest JETAA events of the year. Bring in the year in style!

Kaichou's Letter Kimberly Miyake



I can't believe the end of the year is already upon us! The last few months have been busy with our regular monthly events such as J-Kaiwa, Book Club and Tabemashou! On top of that, we just started a new monthly event in Eugene. It's also been great to see so many new returnees at the Consulate reception and the Career Panel. We look forward to our new members getting more involved in JETAA and appreciate everyone who has had the chance to welcome them back.

Portland has been selected to hold a JETAA Regional Conference in January. Not only will many US chapters be attending, but a few Canadian chapters as well. We're busy planning and getting ready, but we will need volunteers to help. If that doesn't interest you, on that same weekend we also have one of our bigger community volunteer events – Mochitsuki. Interested in parties and cultural events? Our Shinnenkai is just around the corner, and we'll be screening a documentary with The International School soon.

We have a busy few months ahead and hope that as many of you can get involved as possible! If at any time you have comments, questions or ideas for new events, please don't hesitate to contact me at:

president@jetaaportland.com

Kim

Technology Regional Conference in Portland JETAA Portland to host 10 chapters for regional conference

It is with great pleasure that JETAA Portland is hosting a regional conference in Portland, Oregon on January 29-31, 2010. The venue will be the Mark Spencer Hotel, located in downtown Portland, OR. The theme for the conference is "Technology and Implementation". The goal is to have a working conference, where great minds can discuss technology and create actionable results to benefit all chapters all over the world.

An International Conference with 10 Chapters Attending

The conference was originally planned with five chapters, however, due to the interest in technology, three Canadian chapters are attending, making this truly an international event. What started out as a technology presentation at the national conference by JETAA Portland webmaster Bob Schnyder, has blossomed into an international conference that will have long-lasting effects on JETAA USA and JETAA International.

Volunteers Needed

Due to the expanded delegate participation, we are looking for JETAA members to help out throughout the weekend. If interested, please contact Bob or Beth

Schnyder at:
regionalconference@jetaaportland.com

Shinnenkai 2009: Portland City Grill

We are combining our yearly Shinnenkai with the Saturday evening regional conference reception hosted by CLAIR. It will be held at the Portland City Grill. Save the date now because you don't want to miss the opportunity to mingle with JETAA members from the US and Canada.

Donations & Prizes

We are looking for donations for the Shinnenkai and the regional conference. Some suggested donations for the regional conference are things locally owned that would show off Portland, reusable tote bags, notebooks, pens, etc. For the Shinnenkai, some suggestions are gift certificates, tickets to local events, free memberships, etc. Sponsors will receive free advertising on the JETAA Website, newsletter and promotion at the regional conference.

If you or your company have items that you feel would be great to donate, please contact Bob or Beth Schnyder at:
regionalconference@jetaaportland.com

JETAA Portland Contacts

Officers:

| | | |
|------------------------|-----------------|--|
| <i>President</i> | Kimberly Miyake | president@jetaaportland.com |
| <i>Vice President</i> | Todd Van Horne | vp@jetaaportland.com |
| <i>Treasurer</i> | Beth Schnyder | treasurer@jetaaportland.com |
| <i>Secretary</i> | Lynette Yasuda | secretary@jetaaportland.com |
| <i>JET Coordinator</i> | Matt Turner | culture@cgjpd.org |

Committee Chairs:

| | | |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| <i>Cultural</i> | Amanda Gray | cultural@jetaaportland.com |
| <i>Community</i> | Stephanie Smith | community@jetaaportland.com |
| <i>J-Kaiwa</i> | Vicki Bridges, Scott Klein | jkaiwa@jetaaportland.com |
| <i>Sports</i> | Britt Sexton | sports@jetaaportland.com |
| <i>Career</i> | Jeff Horn | career@jetaaportland.com |
| <i>Webmaster</i> | Bob Schnyder | webmaster@jetaaportland.com |
| <i>Newsletter</i> | Daniel Mick | newsletter@jetaaportland.com |

The JETAA Portland Newsletter is published by the Portland Chapter of the JET Alumni Association. Information presented and views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect those of the JET Programme, the government of Japan, or any of its entities. For comments and questions please contact the JETAA Portland President. Please direct newsletter comments and submissions to the JETAA Portland Newsletter Editor. Keep up on all current JETAA Portland activities and events by visiting the official website at www.jetaaportland.com

Celebration of the Birthday of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan and the 20th Anniversary of His Accession to the Throne

On Wednesday, December 23rd, 2009 His Majesty Emperor of Japan Akihito will reach his 76th birthday. This year also marks the 20th anniversary of the commencement of his reign. On Thursday, November 12th, the Government of Japan held a commemorative ceremony at the imperial Palace in Tokyo. Over 100 guests including the Prime Minister of Japan, Ambassadors to Japan, and other representatives of foreign nations, attended the ceremony.

On January 7th, 1989, upon the demise of Emperor Hirohito, His Majesty Emperor Akihito acceded to the throne as the 125th Emperor of Japan. Over the past 20-plus years, Emperor Akihito has visited 32 countries, beginning with his international goodwill visit to Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia on invitations from those countries. This July, he visited Canada and Hawaii with Her Majesty Empress Michiko.

As a boy, the Emperor lived with the tribulations of the Second World War; therefore His Majesty has strong feelings on the issue of peace. He is also interested in the public welfare and, in order to understand the difficulties facing vulnerable members of society, is active in supporting and visiting institutions such as elder care facilities and facilities for the disabled every year on Children's Day, Respect-for-Senior-Citizens Day, and during Disabled Persons' Week.

The relationship between His Majesty Emperor Akihito and Portland dates back to 1960 when he was the Crown Prince. He visited Portland as the final destination on his tour of U.S. cities in September and October, 1960, and returned to Japan from here. Furthermore, since childhood the Emperor has had a personal connection with Portland resident Bruce Brenn, former Vice Chairman and CEO of NIKE JAPAN, who was awarded the Japanese Emperor's Decoration, Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Rosette this November. As a boy of 14, Mr. Brenn experienced helping then Crown Prince Akihito practice English conversation in Tokyo. During His and Her Majesties' visit to Canada this July, Mr. Brenn also met with them.

To mark Emperor Akihito's birthday and the 20th Anniversary of his accession to the throne, the Consulate General of Japan in Portland will hold a reception at the Hilton Hotel in downtown Portland on December 14th. A ceremony will also be held at Portland City Hall on December 23rd, the Emperor's birthday. In cooperation with the City of Portland, the flag of Japan will be raised on one of the two flagpoles in front of city hall to commemorate the occasion.

If you are interested in learning more about the Imperial Family, please visit them online at: www.mofa.go.jp/j_info/japan/imperial. If you would like further information, please contact the Consulate General of Japan in Portland at 503-221-1811 or email matthew@cgjpdx.org.

Returnee Reception at Consul-General's residence

Consul-general Mr. Takamichi Okabe and his wife recently welcomed 11 recent JET returnees, along with other consulate employees and a variety of leaders from the Japanese community, to their residence for a casual reception and welcome back to Portland and the US after their terms serving with JET.



Japan Now

The official newsletter of the Consulate-General of Japan in Portland, Oregon



The latest issue of *Japan Now* (November 23, 2009), features coverage of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan's 20th anniversary of accession to the throne, "Beauty and Grace in the Enshu School of Tea", art of Japan's industrial revolution, and noting 2010 applications for the JET programme were recently due. (Remember that whole process? Best of luck to the applicants!)

You're already a subscriber *Japan Now*, right? No...? Head over to the Consulate-General of Japan in Portland website and sign up for their monthly e-newsletter through the link in the lower right-hand corner. It's an easy way to stay up to date on Japanese news!

<http://www.portland.us.emb-japan.go.jp/>

On Paper Wings

Local filmmaker creates documentary of Bly, OR WWII Japanese Balloon Bombing

—JETAA Portland will be screening *On Paper Wings* Thursday February 18th at The International School. Please join us! More details to come.

During WWII, the Japanese military developed a new weapon intended to strike directly at the American continent - the balloon bomb. High school girls across Japan were conscripted into factories, where they worked long days making paper to be assembled into giant balloons. These young students lived difficult lives as the war worsened for Japan. Most had no idea that the balloons they were making would be attached to bombs and then launched into the jet stream to drift toward North America. The idea sounded ludicrous; but thousands of balloon bombs were launched by the Japanese military, and hundreds did arrive after being carried by the wind across the Pacific.

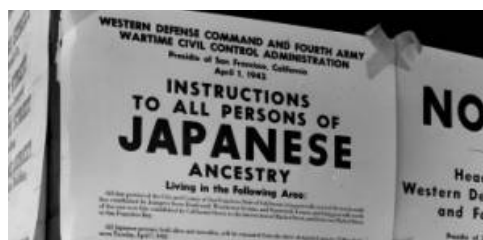
became the only people killed on the continental U.S. as the result of enemy action during WWII.



As families in Bly struggled to cope with the balloon bomb explosion, a young Japanese American man was living in an internment camp just sixty miles away. The Tule Lake Segregation Center in northern California was one of ten war relocation camps established by the U.S. after the bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1942. As thousands of people of Japanese ancestry were forced to leave their homes and take up residence in the isolated camps, Yuzuru "John" Takeshita was a young American citizen who suddenly found himself living behind barbed wire in his own country.



On May 5th, 1945, a pastor, his pregnant wife, and five children departed for a picnic just outside of Bly, Oregon. When they found an undetonated balloon bomb in the forest, the device exploded, killing the pastor's wife and all five children. They



While in the camp, he heard rumors of balloon bombs flying over the Pacific from Japan, but he never saw one. It would be forty years before he ever heard of them again.

In 1985, a series of events led John Takeshita, now a university professor, to find out about the balloon bomb project and the incident in Bly. He met several Japanese women who as young girls were forced to make paper for the balloon bomb project. When he sent them the names and ages of those killed in Oregon, they were shocked and saddened. These women had experienced first-hand the total devastation that WWII brought to their own country, and now they saw an opportunity to reach out for peace.



These women decided to fold a thousand origami paper cranes to offer to the families of those killed in Bly. It was a decision that would heal wounds on both sides of the Pacific as friendships were formed, and the groups eventually all met face to face.

"On Paper Wings" is a documentary film about the lives of the Japanese and American civilians who were affected by the balloon bomb project, and how they all came together forty years after the end of the war.

Room to Read Charity

Help support charity by donating books and/or money at bounenkai and shinnenkai

By Beth Schnyder

A few years ago, JETAA International voted to adopt Room to Read as our official charity. Room to Read was founded by a former Microsoft employee after a trek through rural villages in Nepal. Shocked at the lack of resources, this senior level executive quit his job to start the Room to Read program to help these rural villages overcome their educational challenges. The program has since expanded to Vietnam, Cambodia, In-

dia, Sri Lanka, Laos, South Africa, Zambia, and Bangladesh. Room to Read is helping to build schools and libraries and provide support for girls to pursue secondary education.

This year at our Bounenkai, we are collecting books for the Room to Read program. The books must be new, hardcover, simple English or picture books. More information about what types of books they accept can be found here:

<http://www.roomtoread.org/Page.aspx?pid=368>

We are encouraging all who attend to please bring a book to donate. Don't have a book? We will be collecting monetary donations at the Bounenkai. Our officers will use any money collected to purchase more books. This is optional but we're hoping to collect as many books as possible. Thanks for your support!

Career Panel 2009

By Todd Van Horne

Recent JET Returnees, Career Experts, and Business Leaders Gather

It's a difficult time to look for work, but JETAA Portland's annual career panel lent support to members with presentations and networking opportunities on Thursday, November 12th. Recent JET returnees, long-time JETAA members, and professionals from various industries comprised the 25 or so participants.

The evening began with three informational presentations. Steven Joiner of Idealist.org shared his ideas on a career as a continuum rather than the traditional path, and gave examples of specific steps to take to get ready for a job search. Beth Schnyder, JETAA treasurer, said, "The way he spoke made me want to read his book. I liked how he gave concrete examples of things to do." You can read his book too—download the free PDF at Idealist.org, under Resources for Job Seekers.

Jung Fitzpatrick, also of Idealist.org, followed with information on gradu-

ate education for the nonprofit sector, and Zoa Woodward of Knight Financial finished with a primer on professional networking.

After a business card raffle for door prizes, the attendees put Zoa's instruction to quick use in an hour of networking. Thanks to the professionals who attended, many job seekers were able to make new contacts in the fields they hope to find work in.

Among those attending were the CFO of an environmentally friendly construction company, a translator and writer, the head of Asia sales for Travel Portland, educators, logistics managers, and more. "There were a variety of people from a variety of different backgrounds. I noticed a lot of the alumni talking to each other a lot, and I thought it was really good that they got to network with each other. It kind of gives the recent returnees a sense of what JETAA can do," said Beth Schnyder.

Participant Red Gillen said, "I've been to networking events where you suck in your gut, put on your game face, and approach a big group. But here you already have a common background. A common connection with Japan opens up a lot of conversations."

Steven Joiner got a similar impression: "Knowing a bit of the nature of JETAA events, I was not surprised that the networking session seemed relaxed and jovial."

Part of JETAA Portland's mission is "to provide a social/professional network and peer support for JET alumni," and "to serve as a resource for alumni seeking Japan-related education and employment opportunities." We hope the annual career panel and other resources and events help both recent returnees and past alumni connect with others in the business community to find and expand professional opportunities.



First Ever Eugene Event

By Kimberly Miyake

With three new returnees in the Eugene area looking to get more involved in JETAA we felt this was the perfect opportunity to get everyone together. It hasn't always been easy to locate our friends down south, but eight members along with a few spouses and kids and three Portland members made it out for our first ever Eugene area event.

We met at Toshi's Ramen—what better excuse to eat ramen than a JETAA event! If you haven't been, they offer shio, shoyu and miso based ramen with multiple choices of toppings. But beware of the ninniku ramen – it's potent stuff! Everyone orders at the counter and takes a seat. With our large group we had to scout out who was leaving so we could get enough tables in the small space, but it worked out great and everyone had a good time reminiscing about Japan.

Starting in January we intend to have a regular monthly Eugene event. If you are interested in being a part of this group, email Kim at president@jetaaportland.com



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Notes from the Field

Current JETs from Portland share their stories and thoughts of Japan

—In August, 36 people left from Portland to begin their terms in Japan with JET. The wonders of technology allow us to convey their impressions to you quickly. Enjoy these notes from the field, and remember your own early first impression!

Jigoku Matsuri

Kelly & Nat Andreini-Sapporo

Back in September, we hopped on the train for an hour's ride to Noboribetsu onsen, home of the famous *jigoku matsuri* [hell festival]. There we hiked through "Hell Valley" - a desolate landscape of red and white rock nestled among the mountains, replete with sulfurous rivers and steam rising from hot pits. After an hours walk through the forest, we arrived at the *ashiyu*, a cascading stream of hot mineral water, where we stopped to soak our feet.



As we arrived back in Noboribetsu town, the festivities were ramping up. The streets were crowded with food stalls serving all manner of treats on sticks - grilled corn, whole fried ribbon-cut potatoes, fresh squid and octopus, and chocolate covered bananas - as well as dumplings, yakisoba noodles, and *okononiyake* [savory cabbage pancakes]. Food heaven! We opted for two beers and two bowls of crab *nabe*, a hot stew of potato, crab legs, corn, and scallions in a miso broth. To our delight, chopsticks proved the perfect tool for fishing crab meat out of its shell!

Downing our last sips of beer, we were called out to the street by the sound of *taiko* drumming. There the entire village, buoyed by a throng of tourists, gathered to watch as the *oni mikoshi* [portable shrines containing demons] were paraded through the streets.



These demons are said to be the keepers of the hot springs in the valley, released during the *jigoku matsuri* for a night of celebration. Following the ceremony and a *taiko* performance by drummers from far-reaching Japanese prefectures, the *oni odori* commenced - villagers dressed as geisha, samurai, butoh dancers, animé, french maids, pumpkins, sea algae, the evil eye and more, danced in traditional procession through the streets. We donned our paper demon masks and joined them until the last train left for Sapporo.



The NHK Man

Cassie Lealamanua — Fukuoka-ken

It is amusing to watch an NHK collector drive up to a large apartment complex. All of the lights go out, curtains close, and everyone suddenly decides to take the building's back exit to go grocery shopping.

Every two months, a person from NHK (Nippon Hōsō Kyōkai, Japan's National Broadcasting Corporation) goes from door to door trying to get everyone to pay their NHK public television bill. Though payment is required by law, many Japanese people avoid it by pretending to be away from home, or by having their young children answer the door to say their parents are asleep.

I was warned about these NHK bill collectors - the tricks they have adapted to catch people off guard, the unmarked vehicles they drive - but when one showed up on my doorstep, I think it is safe to say he was just as surprised to see me as I was to see him.

"Good evening, I am Harada with NHK and I ---- Uwaaa! Gaikokujin!"

I live in an old teachers' housing complex in the middle of a little neighborhood. Aside from one other JET Program ALT that lives in the same building, I am the only non-Japanese person around. This tends to catch people a little off guard.

After a whole lot of 'ee, to...'s and nervous shuffling, I saved the NHK man by

greeting him in my limited Japanese. The look of relief that washed over his features was classic. He did his NHK spiel, collected my 2,000 yen, then bowed as he began to leave. I smiled and warned him that there was another gaikokujin in the building and that it did not speak Japanese. He laughed and thanked me, but I could see that there was real worry behind his eyes. He descended the staircase, and it became obvious that he did not intend to venture any further into the depths of my building. I suppose my neighbors owe me one.

Later that evening while listening to the drone of a Noh play on my NHK station, I watched with delight as all of the lights in the apartment complex two buildings down went dark.

Notes from the Field

Recently departed JETs from Portland share their stories and thoughts

Life in Ohma

Ellie Bolas—Aomori-ken

Hi my name is Ellie Bolas, and I am a first year JET living in Aomori Ken. I am the ALT in the small fishing town of Ohma, 大間, famous for its location as the northern tip of Honshu and for its delicious maguro. Ohma, like so many places in Japan, truly embodies the inaka. It is one of four towns located in Shimokita, the "Axe Handle" of Aomori. Shimokita is comprised of either mountains or coast line, so while we do have a lot of hiba (cedar) and fresh fish, we don't have a lot of rice fields or civilization. I'd like to think it's a special part of Japan, just like all those other special small towns in remote areas! Here are a couple pictures from life in "The Big Gate." Enjoy!



On the fishing theme, the Maguro Matsuri in October brings people from all over Japan (and world!) who want a bite of the most delicious tuna fresh at the source. When I attended the festival, I got make fun of my students wearing tuna costumes and try tuna brains for the first time!

That's Kamezawa with a Z!

Cameron Hogin—Hokkaidou

My students laughed as I said "Kametawa" I wrote it down convinced that is what he said his name was. Now in my fourth month in Iwamizawa, I am still enjoying the simple pleasures of being the new ALT. However, it has worn off at the workplace almost like defrosting a car, having gradually vaporized with exposure to the warmth they have accepted me with. Some difficulties I am facing though, is committing to memory the names of my students. One might think it's a never-ending endeavor not worthy to pursue, but I really don't like calling people, "YOU!" I thought after being in class for a few months and hearing the names a few times, I would have it licked. Yet, I might be able to name 50 of the roughly 690 students that I have. That's a little more than 1/16th. Horrible I know, but part of the problem is I am not the principle teacher who calls on students. I don't take role. Most of the time, when my JTE says their names, I get it confused with parts of speech. So what can I do? Make my own seating charts! It's very important that "I" make them and "not" my JTE. Yes, I actually go up to each student and ask them his or her name and write it down in the box on the classroom scheme that I've quickly doodled. I go during a break between classes. If there's time I turn my classroom map over and see how many I can remember. It's been quite fun. The students get a kick out of it and before I know it, I am calling everyone by name, laughing and closing the distance between them and me.

Did They Replace Me?!

Beth Crow—Nagasaki-ken

I live on a tiny island in the East China Sea, in the Goto Island chain by the name of Narujima, or simply Naru to those who are here. It is by far one of the most beautiful places that I have ever seen or had the opportunity to live (the NW is soo hard

to beat, but you know this already!). There are approximately 3,000 people that live on this island oasis and they all live peaceful, happy and simple lives. Each and every school aged child that resides on this island is my student. I buy my groceries from their grandparents, I get my packages at school because my mailwoman knows where I work and when I am here, I eat the fish for dinner that their fathers caught at breakfast and I walk past my student's homes every time I step outside. Walking or biking anywhere here, day or night, is a constant stream of "hello's" and "see you's". I am the only gaijin on this island and I know all of the people who live here and they all know me. On a good day I am "Bess", but to most people here I am "Besu". It is more wonderful being here for me than I ever could have dreamed my JET experience would be.

This being said will explain why this morning as I walked down the hall of my elementary school I felt a pang of jealousy as I heard another native English voice coming from my first grader's homeroom. I was being cheated on! Who had they shipped in? How did someone get on the island without me knowing about it? Why was someone else leading my six year olds in their morning English exercises? I marched down there to have a closer look and find out, but as I got closer I realized something very interesting. There was a native voice in there leading my students that wasn't mine and I was offended it wasn't me. More importantly I had said it in my head and felt it in my heart. "Those are my students. This is my school. This is my island. Japan is my home." I relaxed and smiled at realizing this and feeling the comfort in knowing that it was true. They wouldn't cheat on me, they were watching a video.

Tabemashou! 食べましょう! October '09

By Daniel Mick

JETAA Portland's restaurant review group gets their fill at Miho Izakaya

Since beginning in July, Tabemashou! has been on an izakaya streak. We've visited Biwa, Tanuki, and Yakuza. But not until Miho did we find izakaya fulfillment in Portland.

Not only does Miho nail the simple izakaya formula of cheap drinks + cheap food, they have done fantastically with all the other things that determine your favorite izakaya: enthusiastic staff, cozy environs, and several killer dishes. We were both shocked that Miho wasn't packed considering all this and happy that we can keep this treasure to ourselves, but worried about their survival if others haven't recognized what an excellent spot it is.

(I returned on a recent Saturday night and again felt this mix of emotions since they had steady but not booming business).

Miho lies in NoPo between Fire on the Mountain and Alibi, further developing that section of North Interstate into a nice entertainment, dining, and drinking destination. Miho can be easily spotted by the akachouchin red paper lanterns.

The repurposed bungalow gives the izakaya that great 'where everybody knows your name' vibe; it's a place to relax with friends. The interior is well laid out considering the space. Some may not like having to order food from the counter, but it's near in the small space. The back 'tatami room' in a converted bedroom is removed enough to feel private; they should add a noren curtain and small karaoke machine! Wood and bamboo accents, collaged Japanese newspapers and magazines, and small art items complete the interior.

The menu is grouped by price points from two to ten dollars. The options and preparation styles are extensive.



Stand-out items were the pork belly and sweet egg (fatty and yummy); tonkatsudon and ramen (meal-sized and six and eight dollars respectively); the spareribs and potato croquette (both sublimely prepared and only four dollars); hurricane popcorn (a huge portion of nori and soy sauce tossed popcorn for only two dollars, the perfect drinking snack).

The shochu and sake selection is respectable, and the beer selection includes several nice microbrew options, all for fair prices.

Michael behind the bar is an enthusiastic host glad to describe and recommend any item. He gets big bonus points for learning and responding to 'sumimasen!' requests for drinks!

Menu Selection

Small and large portion options, wide price range, most representative menu we've seen yet. Bring friends to help!



Food Quality

Many dishes impressed, a couple were okay, nothing disappointed.



Service

Order from the counter. Quick food in the intimate space. They even respond to a 'sumimasen!' if you need a drink!



Ambience

Cozy converted bungalow. Bar, table, and 'tatami' seating. Japanese design influence is subtle and warm.



Value

Great quality for price. Some items are a steal. Stuffed ourselves for cheap!



Tabemashou! Overall Rating:

おいしいiiiiiii!



Tabemashou! 食べましょう! November '09

JETAA Portland's restaurant review group relaxes at Hama Sushi

By Daniel Mick

Look no further than Hama Sushi for some of the best sushi in town. This unassuming restaurant tucked away in a strip-retail location in Hollywood humbly serves up excellent traditional sushi and meals at reasonable prices.

Hama Sushi was Japanese owned and staffed for a long time but has apparently recently switched ownership. None of us had been there before, but the food couldn't have suffered from the change. Besides, most Americans need to accept that Japanese ownership alone does not make a good restaurant, and vice versa.

The restaurant is small, consisting of a



sushi bar and a handful of tables along the length of the long space. Not much money or effort was put into design or decoration, but the restaurant is crisp and spotless. The food makes up for anything the atmosphere lacks. We were, however, all taken by the woodblock prints of a local artist displayed on the walls. We hope they make it a point to rotate local artists of Japanese styles.

Hama's focus is clearly on the food. The menu, while unimaginative, is filled with every traditional sushi restaurant fare: sushi, sashimi, fried stuff, noodles, baked fish, tempura, etc. Everything we ordered was done simply, and done well. Both our JET and Japanese diners were well pleased with all the food. It felt just like dining in Japan!



We started our meal with a few comfy favorites. The agedashi tofu was the perfect texture. Each fried item had the subtle texture and density differences most Japanese restaurants in the US can't master; the chefs are obviously well trained: the kareage were dense but juicy chunks of chicken with just the right soft but flaky fry; the kaki fry were a welcome treat served piping hot with a dense crunchy fry; and the shrimp in the nabeyaki udon were fluffy with a delicate crispiness. Hama's udon is possibly the best udon in Portland. (how come so many other restaurants get such a simple dish so wrong?!).



The hamachi kama was a touch underdone, the only disappointment of the night. Relative to most other restaurants it would have been excellent though!



We received our sushi last. It was fantastic. The rice was oh-so perfect! True "sushi" hint of sour and sweet, and sticky enough to hold, but pressed just right to melt in the mouth around the fish. (Again, how can so many other restaurants fail at such a simple, and necessary(!) item?!) Every cut was of the utmost freshness, and while a bit smaller compared to the US portions we're accustomed to, were precisely sized. The wasabi, shiso, and negi garnishes were perfectly balanced. Hama offers plenty of rolls since most diners expect them now, but they didn't push them at the expense of their excellent nigiri.

Hama is my now my first choice for inexpensive quality sushi.



Menu Selection

Extensive but typical sushi restaurant selection. No unique or uncommon items or new variations.



Food Quality

Excellent ingredients. Excellent preparation. Excellently traditional.



Service

Few diners meant quick service. Our food came in nice waves. Kinda slow considering it was not busy.



Ambience

Stuck in a strip-retail location on Sandy. Local artist's work made up for otherwise average interior.



Value

Arguably the best approachably-priced traditional sushi in Portland.



Tabemashou! Overall Rating:



Dear Abiko, Dear Abby's Long Lost Japanese Twin



Dear Abiko,
Why do so many Japanese shops have those ceramic cats with one paw raised in their windows?
- Rucky Rab

The ceramic cats you are asking about are called Maneki-neko, which means 'beckoning cat'. They are thought to bring good luck or attract customers to the shop. There is a famous story about an extremely poor temple whose cat beckoned to a traveller who was sitting under a tree outside its gates. He decided to come in and just as he moved away from the tree, it was struck by lightning. The stranger turned out to be extremely rich and he became the temple's patron, making it extremely wealthy. There are several different varieties of Maneki-neko and they all have different meanings. Cats with the right paw raised are beckoning in money or good fortune and cats with the left paw raised are beckoning in customers. Most Maneki-neko are white, but if you see a black one, it is warding off evil, and the even rarer red ones are to prevent sickness.

広島

Dear Abiko,
Why does Hiroshima have the character for 'island' in it, when it's on the mainland.
- Kanji Kid

The word Hiroshima means 'wide island'. Although it is not an island per se, the city is built on a river delta, and is made up of many small islands (none of which are particularly large). It was known as Gokamura (Five Villages) until Motonari Terutomo built a castle there in the late 1400s.



Dear Abiko,
Why are Chrysanthemums important in Japan?
- Hana Mikai

The chrysanthemum is the symbol of the emperor. It became associated with the royal family because of its resemblance to the sun. In Japanese mythology the sun goddess Amaterasu gave birth to the first emperor, Jimmu. The Chinese associations with longevity and perfection were also imported to Japan. The imperial crest shows a golden chrysanthemum with sixteen petals known as an "Ichimonjiginu" and the flower also appears on crests of important families, and police stations. Contrary to popular belief, the chrysanthemum is not the national flower. The cherry blossom is considered Japan's unofficial national flower, but it has never been formally recognized as such.



Dear Abiko,
How come there are always so many cats around Buddhist temples?
- Neko Chan

Cats have always been kept at Buddhist temples. They were originally used to keep rats away from the temple and the precious Buddhist manuscripts inside.

Dear Abiko,
I have long wondered how Japanese people look words up in the dictionary. They can't alphabetize their words, so how do they find them? I assume they must have dictionaries, but I can't imagine how they are organized.

- Jissho Impaired

Japanese has two kinds of dictionaries, regular ones, where the words are organized by sound, based on the hiragana phonetic writing system, and kanji dictionaries. To look up a word in a kanji dictionary, you have to count how many strokes the character has. Kanji are not written smoothly, the way the English alphabet is. Instead, they are written with a series of brush (or pen) strokes. Kanji can have anywhere from one to 30 strokes. Also, kanji are made up of smaller kanji called radicals. Kanji are first arranged by how many strokes they contain, and are further subdivided by the radicals that they are made up of.



えと。。。あの。。。ええ。。。
Japanese Getting Rusty...?

Join us at the next
J-Kaiwa!

The first Friday of every month
@Hawthorne Lucky Lab
1900-2100

Jan 8th / Feb 5th
Nijikai at Hollywood Bowl

Come eat, drink, and brush up on that 'ol Nihongo you used to be so good at.
Bring a friend!

“What the Bunka?!” Japanese Culture in Detail

By Daniel Mick

What horrible, offensive, repulsive things are you doing with your...*hashi!*

Which chopstick bad manners can you just not break?

Rank / 日本語 / Explanation Score

- 1 渡し箸 *watashi bashi*: Resting chopsticks sideways across the top of dishes 100
- 2 探り箸 *saguri bashi*: Stirring soup trying to find that last chunk of tofu, etc 83.1
- 3 突き箸・刺し箸 *tsuki bashi, sashi bashi*: Spearing food then eating it 79.1
- 4 直箸 *choku bashi*: Not using the serving chopsticks, but your own sticks to get food from shared plates 71.2
- 5 もぎ箸 *mogi bashi*: Sucking off grains of rice, etc, stuck to the chopsticks 65.4
- 6 重ね箸 *kasane bashi*: Eating just one dish continuously 61.9
- 7 持ち箸 *mochi bashi*: Grabbing a dish, glass, etc whilst holding chopsticks in the same hand 61.6
- 8 迷い箸 *mayoi bashi*: Hovering chopsticks over the dishes while humming and hawing about what to eat 54.4
- 9 受け箸 *uke bashi*: Holding chopsticks when asking for more rice 44.8
- 10 掻き箸 *kaki bashi*: Holding a bowl to your mouth and shovelling food in 43.0
- 11 舐り箸 *neburu bashi*: Licking your chopsticks 27.6
- 12 撥ね箸 *hane bashi*: Pushing away disliked food with chopsticks 23.8
- 13 寄せ箸 *yose bashi*: Pulling dishes closer with chopsticks 23.5
- 14 洗い箸 *arai bashi*: Washing chopsticks in soup 16.3
- 15 指し箸 *sashi bashi*: Pointing at people or things with chopsticks 15.7
- 16 すかし箸 *sukashi bashi*: Rather than turning over a fish, picking away the meat from under the bones 14.8
- 17 揃え箸 *soroe bashi*: Suddenly lunging at dishes with chopsticks ready 13.1
- 18 空箸 *kara bashi*: Picking up food but not eating it 8.7
- 19 移り箸・渡り箸 *utsuri bashi, watari bashi*: Aiming to pick up one dish, but then suddenly switching to another 8.7
- 20 涙箸 *namida bashi*: Allowing tears of soup to drip from your chopsticks 7.8

Which chopstick bad manners in others can you not help noting?

Rank 日本語 Explanation Score

- 1 仏箸 *hotoke bashi*: The gaijin etiquette book favourite, standing your chopsticks up in a bowl of rice 100
- 2 指し箸 *sashi bashi*: Pointing at people or things with chopsticks 91.9
- 3 叩き箸 *tataki bashi*: Making a noise by striking dishes with chopsticks 90.1
- 4 寄せ箸 *yose bashi*: Pulling dishes closer with chopsticks 84.8
- 5 舐り箸 *neburu bashi*: Licking your chopsticks 73.4
- 6 合わせ箸 *awase bashi*: Passing food from chopstick to chopstick - another foreigner etiquette book favourite 71.0
- 7 噛み箸 *kami bashi*: Chewing chopsticks 68.2
- 8 涙箸 *namida bashi*: Allowing tears of soup to drip from your chopsticks 67.4
- 9 突き箸・刺し箸 *tsuki bashi, sashi bashi*: Spearing food then eating it 62.6
- 10 せせり箸 *seseri bashi*: Poking or playing with your food using chopsticks 62.1
- 11 迷い箸 *mayoi bashi*: Hovering chopsticks over the dishes while humming and hawing about what to eat 56.1
- 12 移り箸・渡り箸 *utsuri bashi, watari bashi*: Aiming to pick up one dish, but then suddenly switching to another 49.9
- 13 空箸 *kara bashi*: Picking up food but not eating it 49.5
- 14 違い箸 *chigai bashi*: Using a mis-matched pair of chopsticks 48.0
- 15 洗い箸 *arai bashi*: Washing chopsticks in soup 46.2
- 16 撥ね箸 *hane bashi*: Pushing away disliked food with chopsticks 36.0
- 17 揃え箸 *soroe bashi*: Suddenly lunging at dishes with chopsticks ready 35.0
- 18 掻き箸 *kaki bashi*: Holding a bowl to your mouth and shovelling food in 33.1
- 19 持ち箸 *mochi bashi*: Grabbing a dish, glass, etc whilst holding chopsticks in the same hand 29.8
- 20 込み箸 *komi bashi*: Stuffing too much food into your mouth 28.0

—Surveys taken from Goo Ranking, a Japanese survey website. Translation and explanations done by What Japan Thinks.

“Mogo Mogo” モゴモゴ

By Daniel Mick

Japanese Onomatopoeia/Phenomime/Pyschomime

The Japanese language has a unique feature of symbolic words that represent more than just sounds, as English onomatopoeia does, like, whizz, bang, pop, etc. Wikipedia classifies these as:

***Phenomime** or onomatopoeia (擬声語 *giseigo* or 擬音語 *giongo*); words that mimic actual sounds.

***Phenomime** (擬態語 *gitaigo*); words that mimic non-auditory senses

***Psychomime** (擬態語 *gitaigo* or 擬情語 *gijōgo*); words that represent psychological states or bodily feelings. While onomatopoeic words abound in every language, phenomimes and psychomimes are much rarer.

<http://www.nihongoresources.com/dictionaries/onomatopoeia.html>

へろへろ / へろへろ - spineless, limp

くしゃくしゃ / クシャクシャ - wrinkle, crumple / murmur under one's breath

なみなみ / ナミナミ - filled to the top

らんらん / ランラン - intense, fiery eyes

そろそろ / ソロソロ - slowly, leisurely

ちゃぽん / チャポン - “kerplunk”

もりもり / モリモリ - vigorously, energetic, with ambition / eat vigorously

えい / エイ - yelled when getting down to serious (physical) business

ぬるぬる / ヌルヌル - slimy, slippery / greasing, soaping, making slippery

やれやれ / ヤレヤレ - “oh dear, oh dear”

もしやもしや / モシヤモシヤ - unkempt and thickly grown hair or whiskers

いじいじ / イジイジ - paranoid / timid



JETAA Portland
P.O. Box 8772
Portland, OR 97207

Let's Japanese cuisine eating!

Tabemashou! @ Syun **Thursday, December 10th, 1830**

RSVP to Daniel by Mon the 7th.
Or just show up and join us for food and drinks!

Join the cool kids.
Get the JETAA Portland Newsletter
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Got amazing content
to contribute?

Send stories, art, essays, pic-
tures, ideas, comments,
opinions, etc.

to Daniel at
newsletter@jetaaportland.com



Upcoming Events:

Visit www.jetaaportland.com for event details

- Sun 12/6 Origami Workshop, 1-3PM, World Trade Cntr
- Sun 12/6 Movie Night, Japanese Currents film series
Achilles and the Tortoise, 1830, nwfilm.org
- Thu 12/10 Tabemashou!, 1830 @ Syun
RSVP by Mon Dec 7th to Daniel
- Mon 12/23 天皇誕生日, *Tennō Tanjōbi*, Emperor's birthday
- Fri 01/01 元日, *Ganjitsu*, New Year's Day
- Fri 01/08 J-Kaiwa, 1900 @ Hawthorne Lucky Lab
Nijikai at Hollywood Bowl
- Mon 01/11 成人の日, *Seijin no Hi*, Coming of Age Day
- Thu 01/14 Tabemashou!, 1830 @ Bamboo Sushi
RSVP by Mon Jan 11th to Daniel
- 01/29-31 Regional Conference, PDX hosts other chapters
- Sat 01/30 *Snow Falling on Cedars* play and reception, ONLC
- Sat 01/30 Shinnenkai, 1900, Portland City Grill
- Sun 01/31 Mochitsuki, Scottish Rite Center
- Wed 02/03 節分, *Setsubun*, Beginning of Spring, throw beans!
- Fri 02/05 J-Kaiwa, 1900 @ Hawthorne Lucky Lab
- Thu 02/11 建国記念日, *Kenkoku Kinen no Hi*, Natl Fndtn Day
- Sun 02/14 Valentine's Day, women give chocolate to men
- Thu 02/18 Movie Night, *On Paper Wings*, 1830
@ The International School
- Sun 03/03 雛祭, *Hina matsuri*, Doll's Festival
- Sun 03/14 White Day, men sometimes reciprocate for V-day