

Sapporo Snow Festival Returns!

By Fumiya Motomura

The Sapporo Snow Festival is known as Yuki Matsuri in Japan. It is a festival of snow and ice held in early February every year at multiple venues in Sapporo, including Odori Park.

Large and small snow sculptures are on display, but ice sculptures are also on display, mainly at the Susukino venue.

In recent years, it was held online due to the influence of COVID-19. However, it was decided that the 2023 event will be held normally for the first time in three years.

Everyone was glad to hear the news. This time it will be held for 8 days from February 4th to 11th.

The Sapporo Snow Festival began in 1950 when local junior high and high school students installed six snow sculptures in Odori Park.

A snowball fight, an exhibition of snow

sculptures, and a carnival were all held together, attracting more than 50,000 people.

Since then, it has become established among citizens as a winter event in Sapporo.

More recently, projection mapping, which have been used on the large snow sculptures of the Odori venue, has become popular.

The festival also has ice sculptures, giant ice slides, snow rafting, hot street food and live events. Also, you can eat the famous food of Sapporo such as ramen, seafood, and soup curry.

The average temperature in Sapporo in February for a typical day ranges from a high of -3°C to a low of -9°C. Some would describe it as freezing cold and breezy.



A thick coat, down jacket, hat, muffler, and gloves are a must.

Wear warm under wear to protect yourself from the cold.

It is also recommended to purchase non-slip shoes at convenience stores.

Please do go and see it if you have a chance.

Japanese End of Year Customs

By Kyohei Fukayama

The end of the year is December 31, and people around the world hold events on that day. Japanese people call that day "Nenmatsu" in Japanese and have a custom of doing various things before the New Year. Here are some of them.

The most famous Japanese year-end cultural event is the New Year's greeting card (nengajo).

People send postcards saying "Happy New Year" to those who have helped them during the year, including relatives and business associates.

Basically, one week before the end of the year, people decide whom they will write to, and if they receive a New

Year's greeting card from someone they did not expect, they send one back immediately after receiving it.

However, as a matter of etiquette, one should not send a New Year's greeting card to a bereaved family member who lost a relative that year.

In the unlikely event that you do send one, you will receive a postcard back called a mourning postcard.

This is not something that all Japanese look forward to, but it's the custom to clean more carefully than usual before the New Year.

Rooms that are usually only vacuumed are wiped with water and re-waxed, and some people

use this time to declutter.

The year-end jumbo lottery is the last test of luck for the year and attracts a large number of people waiting in line.

The lottery awards hundreds of millions of yen in prizes to a select few, but instead of giving nothing in return to those who miss the lottery, the money they pay goes to fund lottery operations as well as to support volunteers who protect the earth.

Some people play the lottery out of a desire for money, while others buy the lottery solely to raise money and hope to receive a prize if they happen to win.

The "Kohaku Uta Gassen"

is a historic annual year-end singing program broadcast by NHK featuring artists of a wide range of ages and genres, from those who became famous in that year to the greats who have long been and still are popular today.

The audience votes on which performance is the best, and the show is divided into two groups, the red group and the white group.

In this way, Japanese people cherish events that conclude the year, which have been handed down from generation to generation.

These events will continue to be ingrained in Japanese culture into the future.

New Year's Day in Japan

By Hiroto Ishii

New Year's Day is the first day of the year and is celebrated by people all over the world.

The Japanese call it "Shogatsu," and a variety of events and customs are held to celebrate the New Year.

Here are a few of the events celebrated at the New Year in Japan.

The New Year's gift is a custom in which money is given to children by adults, and in Japan this has remained a deeply rooted cultural practice to this day.

However, it was not always the custom. In the past, rice cakes were a scarce commodity.

As the number of families and households increased during Japan's rapid economic growth period, the custom changed from giving rice cakes to giving money, as money was more affordable than preparing rice cakes.

Osechi refers to a feast-like

dish eaten on New Year's Day, with a variety of ingredients inside.

And Osechi is placed in a three-tiered box called Jyubako, which means "stacked box" in Japanese, because it is meant to be a layer of congratulations.

The dishes placed in each tier are determined, and each tier has its own meaning.

The first tier contains a sweet mouthful like chestnut kuri kinton (candied chestnuts and sweet potatoes) and a celebratory snack that can be used as a snack for sake. Kuromame (black soybeans) is for health and strength.

Because of this, black soybeans are used to wish for diligence and hard work.

Kombu Maki (kelp roll) is considered a good luck charm because of the word "yorokobo" (to be happy).

Kurikinton (chestnut dumpings) were made by samurai warriors to bring good luck

in battle using chestnuts they had gathered after winning a battle, along with kelp.

The second tier contains seafood and grilled dishes for good luck, as well as vinegared and dressed dishes.

Buri is a fish known as a "success fish," a wish for success in the future. The meaning of the prawn is to wish for a long life until one's back becomes round like the prawn.

The third tier is a stew made with many ingredients from the mountains.

The lotus root has a hole in it, which means to pray for good prospects in the future.

Taro root has a meaning of wishing for the prosperity of one's offspring, as many taro offspring are produced from the parent taro.

One event at the beginning of the year in Japan is the buying of a lucky bag (fukubukuro) at department stores.

One of the interesting features of this is that you do not



know what is in the bag until you buy it.

It is usually sold for less than the total price of the combined items, and buyers expect useful and luxurious contents.

However, some stores may have unsold or unpopular items in their bags.

It is down to luck whether you get the luxurious and meaningful contents or the contents full of unpopular products.

Incidentally, bags filled with only unpopular products are sometimes called "garbage bags" on the Internet.

German Christmas Market in Sapporo

By Ayari Oe

The German Christmas Market in Sapporo was held at Odori Park for the first time in three years.

This event was canceled the year before last, and held online last year due to the coronavirus, so a lot of people were looking forward to it.

This event has been held since 2002 to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the sister city partnership with Munich, Germany.

Christmas goods, Christmas tree ornaments and German cuisine was sold at the event.

It was held in Odori Park for about one month from November 22nd to December 25th.

Also, you could see beautiful illuminations from November 22nd.



There were very beautiful illuminations everywhere. The venues were Odori Park, Sapporo Station North Exit, Sapporo Station South Exit Plaza, Minami Ichijo Dori, and Kita 3-Jo Square.

This year, the Odori venue was held from November 22nd to December 25th, the Sapporo Station venue from November 22nd to February 11th, and the others

This was the first illumination in Japan and it started in 1981.

Those who visited before December 25 were able to see an unusual dreamlike world that is not often seen in Japan.

My first visit to The German Christmas Market in Sapporo was when I was in the first grade. I still remember that time

The hot cocoa was sweet, warm, and very tasty. Red and green ornaments that cannot usually be seen in Odori Park were for sale, and the food was exceptional under the cold sky.

My friend buys one Christmas tree ornament every year! This is the first time in three years that they have held this event, so this year they bought three Christmas tree ornaments and decorated their house. Maybe you can find a great ornament too!

The Annual Hakone Ekiden Race

By Reona Nagae

When Japanese people think about New Year's events, Hakone Ekiden comes to mind.

The event is held annually on January 2 and January 3, and it is televised live on NTV. It is a 217.1 km round-trip race divided into five legs between Tokyo and Hakone.

University and graduate school students located in Tokyo, Kanagawa, Chiba, Saitama, Ibaraki, Tochigi, Gunma, and Yamanashi and who are members of The Inter-University Athletic Union of Kanto can participate in the event.

This event dates back to 1920. It was the suggestion of

Shiso Kanaguri, one of the Japanese marathon runners who participated in the 1912 Stockholm Olympics.

Kanaguri default during the meet and returned home in despair.

He made good use of his experience to aim for the training of world-class runners.

On February 14, 1920, the first meet was held by runners from Waseda University, Keio University, Meiji University, and Tsukuba University.

As of 2022, it has been held 98 times with the exception of during World War II. There are many points worthy of note in the event.

The first is the second leg,

called "Hana no Ni-ku" in Japanese.

The second leg is the longest distance covered compared to other legs and is commonly run by the team's ace to give an impetus.

There is an expression in Japanese saying "Gobounuki," which means to pass more than one competitor. In 2009, Daniel Gitau at Nihon University achieved the record for most overtakes by passing 20 runners on this leg.

The second is for the best uphill runners, called "Yama no Kami" in Japanese.

The "Yama no Kami" is a title given to a runner who

runs through the fifth leg which has the highest elevation differences with amazing speed.

Masato Imai was the first runner to be called "Yama no Kami" by an announcer during the live broadcast in 2007.

Every year, the audience hopes that a new "Yama no Kami" will appear. The record has been updated through time.

One way to enjoy the event is to look at the friendship among the runners and the history of the universities.

If you are relaxing at home at the beginning of the year, you should watch the Hakone Ekiden.

Hakodate in Winter

By Himari Sato

Hakodate is popular as a tourist spot not only among Japanese, but also among foreigners.

The night view from Mt. Hakodate is very famous. It's not official, but Japanese people call it one of the three major night views in Japan or the third best night view in the world.

You can enjoy seeing the night view from Mt. Hakodate in any season, but the night view in winter has a different beauty from other seasons. In addition, you can also enjoy other sightseeing spots in winter.

In Hakodate, some events are held in winter. One of them is the Hakodate illumination. The event is held from December to February, and Hachiman-Zaka Slope is illuminated by many lights.

Moreover, Kaiko-Dori Street and Nijukken-Zaka Street slope is also illuminated, so you can take a walk along these beautiful streets.

The night view during Hakodate illumination is full of light and snow, so it is very beautiful. This is the reason that the night view in winter has a different beauty

from other seasons.

If you visit Hakodate Bay area in December, you can see a big Christmas tree and Santa Claus climbing the wall of the Kanamori Red Brick Warehouse. This is the Hakodate Christmas fantasy, which attracts many people.

One of the reasons many people visit the event is to see the moment the tree is lit up. You can see the moment twice a day, but you might want to go at 6:00 p.m., because you can see fireworks as well as the illuminated tree.

The time to see the fireworks is short, but it's worth seeing.

If you stay in Hakodate for more than two nights, you might want to see the fireworks from Mt. Hakodate, because you can see the fireworks from above.

Moreover, you can see fireworks not only at this event but also at the Hakodate Winter Fireworks. The event's fireworks are set off on the sea. It will be held four times in February this year.

The fireworks are set off about 10 minutes from 8 p.m., so you can see fireworks longer than the Hakodate Christ-



mas fantasy.

If you want to enjoy seeing the night view for a long time, you should see it from inside a restaurant on Mt. Hakodate or a hotel around the Hakodate Bay area.

At the restaurant is called Genova, you can have lunch as well as dinner, and you can eat seafood or seasonal food there.

Hakodate is also famous for seafood, so you can eat delicious seafood.

If you want to sit at a window seat, you might want to make a booking in advance.

As you can see, Hakodate has a lot of attractions. In addition to these, Hakodate also has a lot of attractions that are not fully introduced here.

If you have a chance to visit Hakodate, please find your favorite spot or event.

The Shima Enaga Bird of Hokkaido

By Naoka Kawakami

The Shima Enaga is a bird of the sparrow family, which only lives in Hokkaido.

The body length is about 10 to 14 cm, the weight is about 10 g, and it is smaller than a typical sparrow.

It is the smallest bird in Japan. In winter, air accumulates on the feathers to withstand the cold, so it looks round like a pure white snowman.

The nickname "Snow Fairy" comes from this figure.

However, in the summer when the temperature is high, there is no need to puff up its body, so the body line is slim.

The feathers are slightly brownish and smaller than in winter.

The Shima Enaga can be observed throughout Hokkaido. If you want to observe the Shima Enaga, it is recommended to look during the middle of winter from Decem-

ber to February.

However, you can't see them often in winter in frigid places like Abashiri.

The staple foods of the Shima Enaga are sap, small tree nuts, and insects.

Therefore, from early spring to autumn, they are often found in forests where nuts and insects are abundant.

On the other hand, during the winter when nuts and insects are not available, they often frequent villages for sap from trees that line the streets.

Contrary to its cute appearance, it has an aggressive side.

It forms a group of about 5 to 10 birds, and always fights with adjacent birds to expand their territory.

This behavior becomes particularly intense during the breeding season.

The style of attack is by striking the body of other birds



while flying in the air.

When there is an intruder, they may chase it persistently and attack it with their feet while flying.

Since the Shima Enaga is a bird that only lives in Hokkaido, it is used as a motif at various shops and shrines.

The image of the Shima Enaga bird is also popular in other prefectures, and there are hotels with the motif of

the Shima Enaga.

For example, you can buy fortunes and amulets in the shape of the Shima Enaga at Obihiro Shrine.

In addition, there is a cafe in New Chitose where you can watch birds, including the Shima Enaga.

There is Shima Enaga ice cream on the menu of the cafe, and it's so popular that people line up every day.

Eniwa, Hokkaido

By Yuma Nakata

The City of Eniwa, Hokkaido is located midway between Sapporo, the prefectural capital, and the New Chitose Airport.

The city is also a place of beauty, with abundant water from limpid streams that flow from the mountains and forests in the adjacent Shikotsu-Toya National Park.

The city has a population of 70,332 and is surrounded by nature, so it feels very cozy.

There are many events related to nature like the Eniwa Garden Festa. Therefore, it is called The Garden City.

It is also famous for books, so it is called The Town of Books.

It especially promotes plants such as



flowers, and holds a large-scale event called Garden Festa every year.

Based in Eniwa City, the main purpose is to convey the splendor of nature through 32 parks and gardens in Hokkaido using various flowers. It also grows flowers in school education.

In addition, many flowers are blooming on the side of the road, which were planted by many citizens.

Many citizens grow flowers because they agree with and sympathize with the philosophy of Eniwa City.

It often has flower events. Garden Festa is the largest event, but there are many other events in the city like the Flower Bed Competition, the Eniwa Flower and Life Exhibition.

At this year's Garden Festa, there was an opportunity to feel the possibility of flowers by exhibiting flower bed creations from a lot of prefectures, including hanging baskets, container gardens, and so on.

Eniwa City promotes reading, and res-



taurants such as cafes, soba restaurants, flower shops, beauty salons, post offices, banks, and community spaces have micro libraries.

In addition, the book events are actively held in elementary schools, junior high schools and high schools.

There is a culture of morning reading throughout the country, but other events related to books are held inside and outside the schools in Eniwa City.

There are three libraries in Eniwa City with many books.

If you are ever in Eniwa, please drop by one of the libraries if you have time.

Niseko Village Pure

By Nazuna Takahashi

You can experience some adventures during summer at Niseko Village Pure. Niseko Village Pure is located in the center of Niseko United. Niseko United has four ski areas which spread to the base of the Niseko Annupuri Resort.

There are many things to do in Niseko. For example, there are hot springs, restaurants, shops, a ski resort and a golf course.



At Niseko Village Pure, you can play until you're exhausted. You can make your original wood craft for 2,000 yen.

You can do a dog run with your dogs for 500 yen. Your dogs might also be able to run to their heart's content in a large dog park.

You can also ride a mountain bike on an unpaved road for 2,500 yen. The course has various obstacles, such as jumps, bumps, bridges and a seesaw.



You can relax by taking a walk in nature, and it costs you nothing. It's recommended to bring your camera.

Moreover, you can ride in a hot air balloon. It costs 2,750 yen for adults, 1,980 yen for children, and 550 yen for infants.

Don't forget to book in advance at Hokkaido Lion Adventure website if you want to ride it.

When you buy a Pure Super Passport, you can participate in 11 different activities all day, such as tree trekking and a race slider. It costs 4,500 yen for adults and 3,500 yen for children.

There are many Pure Activities which you can use with a Pure Super Passport.

You can ride a rail slider for 2,000 yen for adults and 1,500 yen for children.

You can experience a Pure Quickjump, which is a free fall attraction and costs 1,500 yen for adults and 1,000 yen for children.

You can ride in a big balloon which costs 1,500 yen for adults and 1,000 yen for children.

The Pure Adventure includes a big Huwa Huwa Slider which is the biggest slide in Japan.

Moreover, you can play badminton, golf, disc golf, SNAG (a simplified version of golf played with a plastic club and a tennis-ball-like ball), and park golf at a low price.

However, if you have a Pure Super Passport, you can do all of these for free.

To get there, take the Niseko Village shuttle bus from Kutchan Station for free.

There are five hotels, KASARA Niseko Village Townhouse, Hilton Niseko Village, The Greenleaf Niseko Village,

The Ritz-Carlton Higashiyama Niseko Village, and Hinode Hills Niseko Village.

You will most certainly have a luxurious time there. Why don't you go to Niseko Village Pure this summer?



Hokkaido Craft Beer

By Miu Shoji

In Hokkaido, there are various brands of beer depending on the region.

Experience the charm of beer along with the history of craft beer.

Craft beer is likened to handicrafts and is beer made by small breweries.

In Japan, there is no clear standard or definition of craft beer, and it is considered a handicraft.

For this reason, the image of beer that is carefully handcrafted by craftsmen and has a personality that is not found in mass-produced products has



become popular.

The revision of the Liquor Tax Law in 1994 brought about a major change in Japanese beer brewing.

At that time, the minimum brewing volume required to obtain a beer brewing license was drastically reduced from 2,000 kiloliters to 60 kiloliters.

As a result, it became possible for small breweries to pro-

duce beer, which until then could only be done in large factories.

Craft beer can be brewed in a smaller amount than regular beer, so you can be particular about ingredients, sub-ingredients, and brewing methods.

There is a wide variety of products, including those from overseas, so it's fun to try and compare the ones that suit your tastes, new flavors, and breweries you like.

There are many craft beers in Hokkaido, but Otaru Beer is particularly recommended.

There are mainly three types of Otaru Beer. First, "Otaru Beer Pilsner" is a beer that is characterized by a unique and refreshing feeling in the throat that bursts over

time.

It's made with fresh aromatic hops and the traditional bottom-fermenting method invented in 1842 in Pilsen, the home of beer in the Czech Republic.

There is another beer called "Otaru Beer Dunkel" with a long history.

It is made with a traditional brewing method called double decoction, using plenty of caramel malt.

Finally, "Otaru Beer Weiss" is characterized by increasing the ratio of wheat in the raw malt to over 50 percent.

Top fermentation with homemade yeast creates a unique fruity aroma. Please try Otaru beer at least once!

SU Women's Soccer Club VISTA

By Chie Takeyama

In recent years, the popularity of women's soccer has increased worldwide. Sapporo University has a Women's Soccer Club named VISTA, which belongs to the 1st division of the Hokkaido Women's Soccer League.

VISTA is currently active six days a week with 24 club members and 7 staff including the head coach, 4 training coaches, a trainer and an advisor.

VISTA's emblem has the following meanings: The main red fox is howling towards the top crown of the emblem and there is a sapling under the emblem.

The sapling of this tree means that we will grow as a team, as individuals, and continue to make team history.

Also, the sapling of this tree grows towards the crown, which means "aiming for the throne."

VISTA started as a club in 2009 and officially started as a club activity at Sapporo University in 2011.

This year (2022), the team slogan is "Aggressive, speedy and unconventional soccer."

In addition, VISTA aims to develop human resources who can think for themselves, act independently, and play an active role in society in the future through the wonderful sport of soccer.

The competitions that Vista participates in are mainly the Hokkaido Women's Soccer League, the Empress's Cup, and the All-Japan University Women's Soccer Championship



In the past three years, the team has won the Hokkaido League and the Empress's Cup Hokkaido Preliminaries in the 2020 season, finished second in the Hokkaido League and the Empress's Cup Hokkaido Preliminaries in the 2021 season, and won the Hokkaido League's Empress's Cup Hokkaido Preliminaries in the 2022 season.

However, VISTA was unable to go to the finals at this year's Empress's Cup National tournament.

The All Japan University Women's Soccer Championship was held from December 24 to January 6. SU VISTA was eliminated in the first round, but the team will continue to practice hard and fight again another day.

Japanese Culture, Souvenirs Popular Among Foreign Tourists

By Honoko Aizawa

Japanese products are very popular among foreigners. Do you know which ones are popular?

Some examples include stationery, body warmers, umbrellas, and other items we use frequently in our daily lives.

Grocery items such as cup noodles, frozen foods, and snacks are also popular.

Why are Japanese products so popular with foreigners?

This is because of their high quality,



safety, and the fact that many of their products are rare and not seen in other countries.

Many foreigners buy figurines and other goods inspired by anime, manga and other cultural items originating in Japan.

Japanese home appliances and knives are also popular because of their high quality.

The reasons for the popularity of these daily necessities are that they are not mainstream in other countries and are easily available at convenience stores.

Japanese culture is also popular among foreigners. For example, eating Japanese food, bathing in hot springs, and wearing kimono are very popular.

Due in part to the popularity of hot springs among foreigners, there are more than 20,000 hot spring facilities in Japan.

Wearing kimono, which is unfamiliar to foreigners, is also popular, and there



are many kimono rental stores in Japan.

Japan's spirit of hospitality and the etiquette unique to Japan are also highly valued by foreigners.

Martial arts, tea ceremony, and Japan's national sport sumo, also seem to be of interest to foreigners.

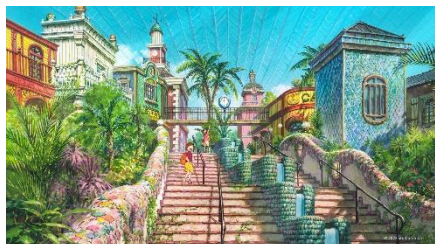
Thus, Japanese products and culture remain very popular among foreigners.

Recently, the restrictions on entry into Japan have been eased and there are more foreign tourists, but it is hoped that a return to a more vibrant Japan filled with foreign tourists will continue.

Newly Opened Ghibli Park

By Kota Takeda

Ghibli is an animation company founded in 1985 and released the movie *Nausicaa of the Valley of the Wind*.



The movie *My Neighbor Totoro* is their most famous creation. *My Neighbor Totoro* was a huge hit not only in Japan but also internationally, and a large number of plush toys and other items have been sold.

Ghibli Park does not have any attractions, but visitors can see buildings and other structures that appeared in the movies.

Whisper of the Heart, *The Cat Returns*, Ghibli Park opened on November 1, 2022.

The park is located in Aichi Prefecture and is a facility where visitors can experience the world of Ghibli's masterpieces.

Ghibli Park consists of five locations

filled with the world of each film. Three locations are currently open, with the remaining two scheduled to open next spring.

The three that opened in November were *Whisper of the Heart*, *The Cat Returns*, and *My Neighbor Totoro*.

At Ghibli Park, visitors can actually see the buildings that appeared in the movies. One of the most famous is the house of Satsuki and Mei from *My Neighbor Totoro*.

Visitors can actually enter the house and see the lifestyle of 50 years ago. The house is also located at the foot of the mountain, and further up the mountain, there is a store where you can buy drinks and goods from *My Neighbor Totoro*.



In other areas, visitors can enjoy many meals at the dining area that appears in *Spirited Away*.

In the movie, the food looked very tasty, with huge portions of noodles, rice, and barbecued meat on the plates, so everyone is looking forward to seeing what kind of menu they can expect to find.

The park will also include a playground and a restaurant and will be an area where visitors can experience a complex of exhibits, play, and rest, making it an area that can be enjoyed by all, from children to adults.

There are many facilities yet to be completed, and when all are finished, it will be one of the best tourist facilities in Japan.

Disney on Ice

By Noa Tanaka

Disney On Ice is the musical show of Disney stories on ice with world-class figure skaters along with Mickey, Minnie and many other popular Disney characters.

Since its world premiere in 1981, it has been performed in more than 75 countries around the world.

This year, projection mapping was used on the stage set for the first time at *Disney On Ice*, and the World of Disney is expressed more realistically than ever before.

This year was a special one commemorating the 35th performance in Japan, and it was

held for the first time in three years.

It was held from July 7 to September 25, 2022, in 10 cities across Japan, in Akita, Tokyo, Nagoya, Osaka, Yokohama, Fukuoka, Kobe, Hiroshima, Saitama, and Makuhari.

Ticket prices varied depending on the type of seats, and the highest priced ticket was ¥11,000 and the lowest priced ticket was ¥4,000.

The performance lasted about 2 hours with a 20-minute intermission.

The audience were permitted to take photos and videos on site, and they could share them



as memories on SNS.

It gets very cold inside there, so it might be a good idea to dress warmly.

The story was about trying to find Tinker Bell, who has been captured by pirates, Mickey, Minnie, Donald and Goofy travel to the worlds of "Beauty and the Beast," "The Little Mermaid," "Frozen," "Aladdin," "Moana," "Toy Story," "Coco," and many other Disney stories using a map.

You could enjoy the performances that represented each world.

If you know the story of them, it will be more fun for you.

Some characters performed spectacular acrobatics, hanging high and twirling around, jumping over large platforms.

It was enjoyable for both children and adults.

Before the show, during intermission and after the show, original goods such as plush toys and penlights were available for purchase at the venue, and there was also popcorn or shaved ice with souvenirs.

Audience members were given priority in booking for next year's show.

My Hair Is Bad

By Rio Oyanagi

My Hair is Bad is a three-piece rock band from Joetsu City, Niigata Prefecture, formed in 2008. In 2008, vocalist Tomomi Shiiki invited drummer Jun Yamada and bassist Hiroki Yamamoto, who were classmates at the same high school, to form the band in Joetsu City, Niigata.

Although they were only high school students at the time. The band's ability and reputation grew as they performed with various bands at live houses in their hometown of Niigata.

Tomomi Shiiki was born on March 19, 1992. He was a member of the baseball team in high school but started playing in a band because he hated having a shaved head and wanted to be popular with girls.

dinner!

He is also a big fan of the rock band CreepHyp and used to go to live houses to see them when he was in high school. Shiiki also appeared in the short film *Oni* for CreepHyp's album which was released in September 2016.

Daiki Yamamoto was born on August 21, 1991. He is also known as "Bayareese" or "Baya." The band name My Hair is Bad was named after Yamamoto's comment when the band was formed.

He is fair-skinned and muscular and is well known for his physical exertion during live performances.

He also pays attention to his diet. He also loves cooking and shares his recipes on his Instagram.



Hair is Bad's official T-shirt.

He found a job after graduating from high school and played in a band on weekends, but Shiiki told him that he really wanted to continue playing in a band, so he quit his job and devoted himself to the band.

He gave it a try, thinking that he would give his all to the band until he was 25 years old, and if that didn't work, he would give up.

My Hair is Bad's career was started in July 2009 with the independent project *Konnya Mo Hakanaight!* in July 2009.

In February 2013, they debuted with the mini-album *Kinou Ni Naritakute*.

On May 11, 2016, they released the single *Jidai wo Atsumete* and made their major label debut with EMI Records.

On December 23, 2020, the CD single *life* and the digital single *love* were released simultaneously.

At that time, there were no subscriptions for songs other than *love*.

On April 1, 2022, the band appeared live on TV Asahi's Music Station and performed *Makka* and *Kannsei Wo Sagashite*. This was the band's first TV performance.

On the same day, subscriptions to all songs from the band's major label debut

except for *love* were released.

The public reaction to the release of the songs was divided into two camps.

Hard-core fans opposed to the release were afraid the songs would be used on TikTok by people who weren't familiar with the music and would misuse it, and they were surprised that the group suddenly changed course after having taken a stance of releasing their music on CD only.

Those in favor of the release said it made them feel nostalgic for the days when they used to listen to My Hair Is Bad and they were happy they could listen to it anytime.

Shiiki responded on Twitter, saying, "I'm sorry if I surprised you at such short notice. I think I surprised you with my suddenness, and I received many questions and opinions."

I can't express what I want to say in words, so I will try to express myself through my music and live performances. I can only say "Leave it to me. I will do my best."

The group members turned 30 this year, and we look forward to their future activities.

Fans hope they will take good care of themselves and do their best in their activities in the future.



He is a really straight person and writes the best lyrics that are very honest.

He is a genius with a beautiful face, sweet voice, and good fashion sense.

Although he is very slender, he eats a hamburger steak weighing nearly 1 kg for

He is a very kind-hearted person who responds to comments from his followers as if he were a friend.

Jun Yamada is the drummer.

He was born on December 18, 1991 and is known as Yamajun.

He loves his cat named Milk, which is also the design of My

All Night-NIPPON

By Kouki Watanabe

Do you know the most famous radio program in Japan? It is called "All Night-NIPPON."

It is a very long-running program with a history of more than 50 years since its first broadcast.

It has undergone various changes and continues to this day.

Everyone has heard the program's theme song, "BITTER-SWEET SAMBA," at least once. Anyone can listen to "All Night-Nippon" for free using an application called radiko.

You can also listen anytime within a week after the broadcast.

However, it costs money if you subscribe to radiko premium to listen to the broadcasts nation-wide.

This program is basically a live broadcast and begins at 1:00 a.m.

In recent years, the programs "All Night-NIPPON X" and "All Night-NIPPON 0" were derived from "All Night-NIPPON" and have been broadcast before and after "All Night-NIPPON" broadcast time.

"All Night-NIPPON X" in particular is very popular, using popular teenagers as personalities.

The current personalities are "Creepy Nuts," Gen Hoshino, Nogizaka46, Ninety-Nine, Shimohuri Myojo and Audrey.

They are very popular with a wide range of people.

Currently, "Audrey's All Night-NIPPON" is especially popular. It is the second longest-running program on "All Night Nippon" after Ninety-Nine.

In the Metropolitan Area

Radio Listening Rate Survey (for men and women aged 12-69) by Video Research, it had the single highest listening rate in the same time slot for 38 consecutive times since the February 2016 survey.

The program's listeners are called "Little Twoos." What makes their radio program unique is that it consists mostly of talk.

A typical radio station might play music and read emails sent by listeners, but they rarely do such things.

Every two months, there is a period of time called "Special Week." For radio stations, "Special Week" is a period during which to measure listening rates.

We call them "Special Weeks" to make them easier for listeners to understand.

Basically, guests come to that period.

Each year, from mid-February to early March, information on ANN's reorganization is announced.

Programs end or new programs begin due to reorganization.

Radio listeners dread this announcement every year to see if their favorite personalities will end up on the radio.

It is very sad that the radio program is ending, but it means that a new radio program is starting. It is very exciting to listen to a new radio program.

"All Night-NIPPON" is an indispensable source of entertainment for listeners in their daily lives.

If you find a personality that interests you in any way, I recommend you give them a listen. You will be captivated.

Veganism at Japanese Schools

By Yuki Yoshiike

In recent years, the vegan boom has been expanding under the influence of Hollywood stars and health awareness in Japan.



The biggest event where vegan cuisine was served was at the Academy Awards ceremony in 2021. In Japan, vegan cuisine was first served as a school lunch in December 2021.

Given this fact, let's take a look at veganism in Japanese schools. But before going into that, what is veganism? Some people tend to confuse vegetarianism with veganism. However, this is a serious mistake.

Vegetarians absolutely cannot eat meat or fish, but they can have eggs and dairy products. Also, there are various types of Vegetarians.

Fruitarians, for example, are said to be stricter vegetarians than vegans. Fruitarians refers to people who eat fruits (fruits = apples and oranges) and nuts that are not related to the life of the plant itself even if harvested.

Lacto vegetarians can consume milk and dairy products, but they don't eat meat or fish.

It is often practiced for religious reasons and is a diet that is mainly widespread in India. As you can see, this means that Veganism is included in vegetarianism.

On December 20, 2021, Asahi Shimbun GLOBE+ published an article titled "Vegan School Lunches" and it became a hot topic.

Some Public Elementary Schools adopted vegan school

lunches regularly as an extension of school lunches corresponding to allergies."

However, it was criticized by a lot of doctors for two significant reasons. The first is the issue related to nutrition for growing children.

They claim that vegan school lunches, which are poorly planned, tend to lack the necessary nutrients, and also there is no evidence that a vegan diet is better for your health, but that, nutrients from meat are important for growing children, especially iron, vitamin D, calcium, and protein.

What's more during the important growth period when the body is being built, it is necessary to take sufficient amounts of calcium and protein, which are the basis of bones and muscles. For those reasons the school attempt was criticized by a lot of experts.

In conclusion, most Japanese people claim that veganism should not be incorporated into schools in Japan.

And some people tend to strongly assume that veganism has a religious connection in Japan, so they think they are forcing religion onto children.

In any case, it is still impossible to distribute veganism meals to school organizations, and almost all Japanese tend to be skeptical towards vegetarianism.

Japan's World Heritage Sites

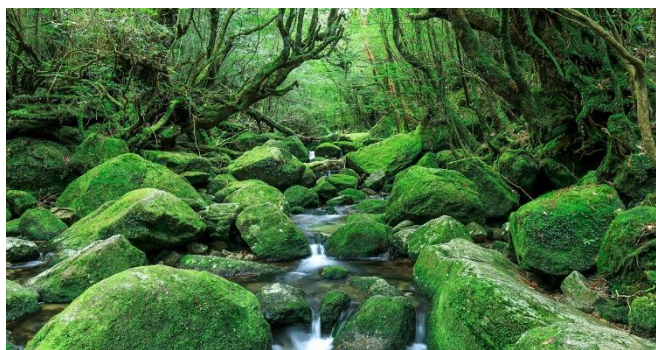
By Yuji Hashiba

As of August in 2022, UNESCO has registered a total of 1,154 World Heritage sites in the world, including 876 cultural sites, 218 natural sites and 39 combination sites.



Twenty-five of these are Japan's World Heritage sites. Traditional Japanese culture, historic buildings and nature are loved by people around the world, so many tourists, both domestic and foreign visit Japanese World Heritage sites every year.

To begin with, Japan's cultural sites are popular with foreign tourists. One popular site is the Buddhist structures in the Horyu-ji Temple in Nara Prefecture.



It is the first World Heritage site in Japan and was registered by UNESCO in 1993. Horyu-ji Temple is the oldest wooden structure in the world, and also known as the place associated with Prince Shoutoku, the person who built it.

In addition, there are many other national treasures and nationally designated important cultural properties in this area,

such as Todai-ji Temple, a five-story pagoda, and many more.

One of the most popular natural sites that is popular among both Japanese and foreigners is the island of Yakushima in Kagoshima Prefecture.

Yakushima, known as an ancient forest, has many plants that have grown over a long period of time. The island's most famous plant is the Japanese cedar tree, which is over 3,000 years old.

All the stones and trees here are covered with green moss, creating a fantastic sight.

In fact, this place is the setting for the Ghibli film *Princess Mononoke*, which is visited not only by ordinary tourists, but also by many people who love that movie.

Finally, we must not forget the existence of Intangible Cultural Heritage. In recent years, many kinds of cultural heritage are in danger of disappearing due to social transformation caused by globalization.

In particular, many traditional performing arts, which are handed down from person to person, have already disappeared.

Therefore, UNESCO adopted the Convention on the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2003, which covered performing arts, folklore, social customs, rituals, festivals, and traditional craft techniques.

As of December 2020, 530 Intangible Cultural Heritage items have been selected, 22 of which are from Japan.

Kabuki, in particular, is attracting people from overseas. *Kabuki* is one of Japan's representative traditional performing arts and is said to have originated in Kyoto in 1603.

The main features are that the female roles are played by men, and that tradi-

tional and unique costumes, makeup, hand props, stage props, stage mechanisms, and music are performed in harmony.

Kabuki reflects the sensibilities of the Japanese people, so it has gained the support of many people and continues to influence artists and cultural activities.



The Local Food of Yamaguchi Prefecture

By Koko Okuyama

Japan has 47 prefectures. There are local dishes that are widely passed down in each region, using local ingredients and cooking methods that are unique to the region.

This time, we will introduce the local food of Yamaguchi Prefecture, which is located at the southernmost tip of Honshu.

Surrounded by rich nature, Yamaguchi Prefecture has sea, rivers, mountains, and villages, and is a land where the culture of gastronomy has flourished since ancient times.

Nationally, many of the dishes that are regarded as luxury and high-class items are at restaurants and ordinary household dining tables.

At the same time, local cuisine with a rustic flavor has also been handed down, allowing you to experience the lifestyle and warmth of the local people.

The first is Kawara Soba. This dish was inspired by Satsuma cuisine, which uses



roof tiles instead of pots to cook meat and vegetables.

On a well-heated roof tile, green tea noodles, beef, thinly sliced omelet, nori seaweed, small green onions, etc., are served, and dipped in a sauce containing grated maple leaves to enjoy.

It is often served at restaurants and inns, but it is also made in Yamaguchi prefecture as a home-cooked dish.

The second is blowfish sashimi. Blowfish, a luxury fish, is a representative food of Yamaguchi Prefecture.

It is famous for its blowfish, but once a soldier who ate blowfish died of poison, it was banned.

However, in 1899, the ban was lifted only in Yamaguchi Prefecture.

The blowfish is sliced thinly and arranged like a chrysanthemum flower or arranged to resemble a crane. It is common to eat blowfish sashimi by dipping it in ponzu sauce.

Because it is a high-grade fish, it is often eaten on special occasions such as celebrations, but it is also sold at fresh fish stores and supermarkets and can be eaten at home by adding it to miso soup or deep-frying it.

The third is hanakkori, a vegetable born in Yamaguchi Prefecture made by combining saishin and broccoli.

The burden of cultivation is relatively low, and it is spreading not only in the prefecture but also outside the prefecture as a green and yellow vegetable in winter, which tends to be in short supply.

It has an elegant appearance that resembles a rapeseed flower and is characterized by a slightly sweet taste and a mild taste.

Furthermore, since the leaves, flowers, and stems are all edible, there is no waste. It's a vegetable with many good points.

It is delicious boiled and used in salads, stir-fried in oil, and can also be used for tempura. Hanakkori is a vegetable that has

just been born, so new menu items are still being devised.

There are many other attractive local foods that can only be eaten in Yamaguchi Prefecture. There are also many delicious local foods in other prefectures.

It is very exciting to travel to various prefectures in order to learn the history of the cuisine and the secrets that have been loved by the locals since ancient times.

Your Lie in April

By Yuno Kasahara

Your Lie in April is a manga written by Naoshi Arakawa from 2011 to 2015. After that it was made into a movie in 2016, starring Suzu Hirose, along with Kento Yamazaki and Taishi Nakagawa.



In 2020, it was decided to be made into a musical, but it was canceled because of COVID-19. Finally, it was performed this year!

The main cast of the musical starred Yuta Koseki, Tatsunari Kimura, Erika Ikuta, Fuka Yudoku, Kouki Mizuta and Takuto Teranishi. The New Musical *Your Lie in April* played at Nissay Theater from May 7 to 29.

This nationwide tour included Tokyo, Gunma, Aichi, Hyogo, Toyama and Fukuoka for a total of 51 performances.

They finished all performances during the coronavirus pandemic.

Your Lie in April is a popular manga with young people.

The main character, Kousei Arima, is a pianist, but he stopped playing the piano because of his mother's death.

A few years later in April he meets violinist Kawori Miyazono through his childhood friend Tsubaki Sawabe.

He listens to her overwhelming and free performance and his world begins to be colorful again.

Kawori has a secret affection for Ryota Watari, who is friends with Kousei and Tsubaki. Tsubaki acts as a go-between, and Kawori becomes a member of their group.

Kawori calls Kousei "my friend A," and she pretends that she doesn't like him, but in truth she likes him very much.

Therefore, she makes him provide piano accompaniment in her piano competition, and she tries to bring him back into the world of music. Kousei loves her more and more.

However, he knows that she has a secret.

The actors who played the role of Kousei Arima are Yuta Koseki and Tatsunari Kimura. They play the same role and appear on the stage on different days.

Koseki joined Amuse Inc. in 2003, and he has continued to perform in movies, television and stage. Kimura joined Alpha Agency in 2020, and he's doing well in the musical world now.

The actress who played the role of Kawori Miyazono is Erika Ikuta.

She was a member of Nogizaka46, but she left the group in 2021. In 2022, she transferred to Ohta Production Inc., and she's doing well in movies, television and stage.





Tsubaki Sawabe, the actress who played the role of Fuka Yudoku, is from Hokkaido. She originally belonged to Stardust Promotion, Inc. but she transferred to Horipro Inc. in 2012.

She moved to Tokyo to appear in the musical *Peter Pan* in 2013 and she's doing well in the musical world now.

Ryota Watari, the actors who played the role are Kouki Mizuta and Takuto Teranishi. They also play the same role and appear on the stage on different days.

Mizuta joined Amuse Inc. in 2007, and he's doing well in the musical world now. Teranishi joined Johnny & Associates, Inc. in 2008, and he has continued to perform in movies, television, and stage.

Mass Produced vs Self-Expression Clothing

By Erika Ishida

In Japan, there are two types of clothing fashion: popular mass-produced clothing and Self-Expression clothing called Jirai-Kei. They are liked by young people, especially young women.

The Mass-Production Fashion type of young women coordinate their clothing and make-up with the latest trends.

But the Jirai-Kei type of young women's fashion and makeup is based on cute, dark-colored clothing and make-up. Generally speaking, young women who buy mass produced clothing want to impress other people, while those who wear Jirai-Kei clothing do it for themselves.

Mass-Production Fashion clothing and makeup incorporates trends that are considered cute at the time. They are constantly checking fashion magazines and

stores listed on the Internet in order to keep up with the latest trends.

Many women who wear these clothes are concerned about the eyes of those around them and want to be considered cute or nice.

However, the people around them are also wearing fashionable clothes, so the streets are filled with women wearing similar fashions.



There is a point where people think they have no individuality because they wear fashions that are similar to the clothes of the people around them.

Self-Expression clothing incorporates a lot of black items, mainly monotone, and a lot of frills and ribbons.



The clothes are very cute, but there is an atmosphere of darkness in these fashions. Many women who prefer these fashions think they look cute when they look at themselves.

Mass-Production Fashion is favored by people who are concerned about what others around them think, whereas Jirai-Kei fashion is favored by people who wear clothes that they themselves think are cute without regard to what others around them think.

It is also the fashion favored by people with mental instability and is sometimes referred to as "Menhera Fashion" in Japan.

Mass-Production Fashion is often favored by young women, especially college students. Mass-Production Fashion began in 2007.

At that time, young women in Japan were united by wearing matching clothes with their friends.

This was called the twin-code or similar look, and there was a tendency to think it was cool to wear the same clothes.

The following year, the fashion brand UNIQLO was voted "the number one brand bought by fashion students," and the streets were filled with people wearing similar clothes.

Two years later, in 2010, buying clothes on the Internet became the norm, and more and more people looked up the reputation of the clothes on the Internet before deciding on the "right" answer and buying what is considered to be the right choice.

This is how Mass-Production Fashion was born.



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