

Autumn Greetings

Fall is here, and may I be the first one to say: *finally*. I am no fan of winter, and I don't particularly enjoy being restricted to my kotatsu to keep warm, but after the record-breaking heat that kept most of Japan in its grip the whole season, my sweat glands are ready for a break. In my home country of the U.S., this would be the time of year of building anticipation for Halloween, Thanksgiving. Though such anticipation is not as prevalent here, the Japanese enthusiasm for autumn itself saves the day.

Many people in Japan say that their favorite season is fall, and there are about as many reasons for this as there are shades of turning leaves. The equinox brings with it the best night of the year to watch the moon, and families across the country point to show their children the rabbit pounding mochi in the distant sky. It's also the season for reading in Japan, and spending a couple hours reading outside in the crisp breeze and fresh air can be a relaxing way to spend the day. It can provide at least the feeling of being out for those hunkering down to study for the looming December JLPT, too (*gambare!*).

It's also the Season of Good Appetites, a time of year for grapes, chestnuts, pumpkins, apples, and sweet potatoes, not to mention fish like cod, salmon, and *sanma* (saury). These are all quite tasty foods, of course, and I'm always a little sad when the day comes that chestnuts and kyoho grapes are no longer on the *yaoya* stands. Perhaps, though, the sudden appearance of everyone's appetite is less from the seasonal foods and more from the simple fact that the relentless heat has stopped pressing it down.

There are plenty of events taking place around the prefecture in the upcoming weeks, so be sure to check out the "Destination: Saitama" section to plan your next weekend with friends. As some of you may recall, this is also the time of the JET year when "re-contracting" becomes an oft-heard word. —Of course, with the new JET Programme terminology, "re-contracting" has been replaced with "reappointment," but the procedures remain basically the same. Forms have been sent to your COs. For everything you ever wanted to know and more about reappointment, be sure to read the following pages.

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The Q&A's of Reappointment

It's that time of year again. The weather will gradually get cooler, the leaves will soon be falling, and some of us may have been asked—or want to ask—about reappointment.* Thus, the Q&A make their familiar comeback! You should receive the packet and forms that explain the procedure from your contracting organization by October 7. If you have not received them by this date, please speak with your supervisor.

The process of reappointment will go smoothly for most Jets, and answers to your questions will likely be found in the aforementioned packet and (naturally) your General Information Handbook. This issue of the MemoRandom will cover some of the less-typical situations Jets may encounter; please note that this information pertains to Jets who from English-speaking countries, France, and Germany.

Again, please keep in mind that participation in the JET Program is only for *one year*, and reappointment requires agreement on *both* sides. Many people come here planning to stay for a certain amount of time, but whether or not that is possible ultimately depends on many factors that can't always be controlled by Jets or their supervisors. Remember to be flexible and remain open to opportunities that come your way!

Deadline Questions

Q) The deadline for the reappointment decision is February 4th, but my CO is already making me decide by November. Is this even allowed? I'm not ready to decide!

A) CO may request that their Jets make a decision earlier than the CLAIR deadline. There could be several reasons for this, but often it is so they can plan the next year's budget. If you find yourself in this situation, you have a couple of options. First, if you haven't already talked about it with your CO, do. If you have applied for a transfer, explain that you can't make your decision until you know whether or not your transfer application has been accepted. You can also ask them to call CLAIR and explain their reasons for the early deadline. CLAIR prefers that Jets have until the beginning of February to think through this decision, so they might be able to explain this to your CO to change their mind. But, in the end, it is still the CO's decision.

Q) Okay...but my CO said they have to tell the International Division by November how many Jets they will have, so I have to decide now. Which is the deadline?

A) In past years, this was the case. However, as of 2010, unless the International Division is directly asked by CLAIR to report estimated numbers of Jets for the 2011 year, COs will not be asked this question. If your supervisor or other CO representative would like more information, please have them contact Reiko Kawanabe in the International Division (contact information is on the last page).

*As of FY 2010, the term "re-contract" has been changed to "reappointment."

It may also be that they want to know your decision before they settle on a number. For example, if you want to stay they will keep you on, but otherwise they want to have fewer Jets. Or it might be that they only want reappointed Jets, so they won't know how many they want until they know how many of their current Jets will stay. In a case like this, it is possible for them to change the number of Jets they are requesting after the November deadline once they have learned your decision, so let them know that they can change later on if they have to. Of course, there can be difficulties especially for those trying to increase the number of Jets they employ (surely such COs must exist...), so it's important to discuss this with your CO early on and have them call the International Division to learn about their options.

Questions About COs Not Reappointing Their Jets

Q) My CO is cutting the number of Jets they'll employ. What are my options for staying on JET?

A) First, talk to your CO about how many Jets they will be keeping and when their decision will be made. If you apply for a transfer because your CO is cutting positions, show evidence of it in your application and have your CO write it clearly in their letter of recommendation.

Q) My CO said they would reappoint me and then took it back! Are they allowed to do this? Can I apply for a transfer after the deadline?

A) Just as you can change your mind until you submit the necessary signed forms, your COs can always change their minds as well. Unfortunately, in this case, you cannot apply for a transfer after the deadline has passed. Another reason to bring the topic up early!

Transfer Questions

Q) Can I apply for both an interprefectural and a transfer within the prefecture?

A) Yes, but please note that the deadlines are different for each!

Transfer to another prefecture: Friday Nov. 5

Transfer within the prefecture: Friday Dec. 3

Deadlines to apply to change job-type is also Friday Dec. 3. Note that interprefectural transfers are handled by CLAIR while transfers within the prefecture handled by either the prefecture (predictably) or your own CO, depending on the situation. This can create differences in how the requests are processed.

However, please note that transferring is not a stamp-and-approve process. Please continue reading for more information.

Q) Can I apply for a transfer and still be reappointed if I don't get it?

A) That depends. You should be informed of the transfer application results in late January, which is before your decision about reappointment at your current CO is due. In most cases you will be able to stay where you are, but there are a couple of things to be careful of:

1. Many Jets have problems receiving JET-related mail or forms on time because they only see their supervisor once a week or a few times a month, or for some other reason. If you have had trouble with this in the past, you'll have to be certain you can receive the decision on time.
2. Sometimes COs require their Jet to make a reappointment decision *before* the CLAIR deadline because they need to draw a budget for the following year (as mentioned earlier). You'll have a problem if you submit an application to transfer and then your CO tells you they need your reappointment decision by the end of December.

The remedy is—yep, communication! The more you find out about what your CO is planning or thinking, the better these problems can be avoided. Check with your CO to ensure you can wait until the CLAIR deadline to make your decision and inform them well in advance of any intentions to apply for a transfer.

Q) And what are my chances?

A) Let's refrain from everybody's favorite acronym and simply say there is no single answer. There are some things that can be definitely said, though:

1. It depends on your reason. Once it's been sent to your COs, review the "Exceptional Cases" section in the 2011-2012 JET Programme Reappointment Procedures packet for more details. Remember to present evidence of your reasons (e.g. a copy of a doctor's note, marriage certificate, etc.) with your application.
2. Your chances are better if you apply for a transfer within Saitama than for an inter-prefectural transfer. You need to have good reasons to transfer (e.g. marriage or health reasons), but the requirements are much stricter for the interprefectural level.
3. Your chances typically do decrease the longer you've been on the JET Programme.

The bottom line of all of this is: **Communication with your contracting organization is the key to a smooth and successful re-contracting process. Even if you have not made a decision about next year, it's never too early to start talking it over with your supervisor and others at work.** Finally, the re-contracting decision itself can be a difficult and stressful one. Give yourself plenty of time for consideration and make a well thought-out choice. If you want to talk your ideas through with someone, your PAs are available. Our contact information is listed on the back of every MemoRandom issue.

Kanji Wrangling

Denise Schlickbernd
International Division CIR

Kanji. "Chinese letters." Everyone who's studied Japanese knows the terror these five simple letters (or two complicated characters, should you prefer to write them as "漢字") can instill. Just when you thought you had conquered hiragana and katakana, you're confronted by thousands and thousands of characters ranging from the deceptively simple (一, 二, 三 for one, two, three!) to infuriatingly tricky (録/*roku*, record; 緑/*midori*, green; 縁/*en*, connection) to downright terrifying (鬱/*utsu*, depression; 龜/*kame*, turtle). "Disheartening" only begins to describe a newcomer's feeling the minute they set foot in the country and suddenly become illiterate, and it can take years of study to return to functional literacy.

In newspapers and other materials written before 1945, you often see margin-to-margin kanji with a number of unusual characters: 國 for 国 (*kuni*, country), 學 for 学 (*gaku*, study/learn), and 藝 for 芸 (*gei*, arts). Katakana was also often used as particles or to conjugate verbs, and on occasion, yes, for foreign loan words. Those MemoRandom readers who are more familiar with kanji may have had no problem recognizing 録, 緑, and 縁, but this may be one of your few (or first) encounters with the likes of 鬱 and 龜. You're more likely to encounter these words written as うつ or 亀, respectively. Somewhere along the way, things were made simpler.

Japanese students were previously required to know 1,945 commonly used characters by the time they graduated high school. Earlier last year, the Japanese Ministry of Education decided to take five kanji off the list and add 196 more, bringing the total to 2,136. This is still a pretty high number for those of us used to an alphabet, but even having a list of Jōyō Kanji (常用漢字) was an innovation in the writing system that came about in post-war 1945. Prior to that, there was great variation between written and spoken Japanese, not to mention a greater number of more complicated kanji used according to rules that varied from author to author, resulting in a number of systems that required even more study to understand than it does now.

During the Meiji Period (1868-1912), plenty of ideas were put forth on how to reform the Japanese writing system, and some were more practical than others. There was the Rōmajikai, i.e. the Society for the Romanization of the Japanese Alphabet (written in Japanese as 羅馬字会), founded in 1885 and still around today. The Rōmajikai suggested that all Japanese script be changed to, predictably, Rōmaji. Though their efforts have made Japanese easier for students beginning their studies, one can't deny that more than one sentence of Rōmaji tends to make the eyes bleed (*kono yō na rōmazi no hō ga motto yōmi durai desyō*). Then you had Meiji heroes such as Mori Arinori, a key player in shaping Japan's modern education system, who advocated that Japanese be abolished and instead replaced with English (later, Shiga Naoya suggested in 1946 that it be replaced with

French). As we know now in the 21st Century, Rōmaji—or perhaps rōmazi?—will never take the place of kana and kanji, and Japanese faces no threat of extinction from English or French. But one other reform-era group is still out there: the Kanamojikai (カナモジカイ). And it is partly in thanks to the efforts of groups like this one that there is a list of Jōyō Kanji, and that it's limited to around 2100 characters.

The Kanamojikai (Kana Character Society, カナモジカイ), founded in 1920, viewed, and still views, kanji as difficult and time-consuming to learn, inconvenient, illogical, and has so many confusing readings that they not only are impractical but also "distort" the original beauty of Japanese. They proposed returning this "heavy, heavy burden" to China and implementing a number of radical changes to the writing system, namely:

- 1) Abolish all usage of kanji in favor of left-to-right horizontally written katakana;
- 2) Choose words carefully to avoid confusion between homonyms;
- 3) Use spacing between words and re-design the form of katakana characters to make them easier to read.

Of course, kanji are still alive and well, and with that addition to the Jōyō Kanji list, the Kanamojikai may sound more quaint than anything else. However, it was groups like this one that pushed for reforms that led to conveniences (and godsend) such as hiragana on station signs and the widespread use of horizontal writing. In the realm of kanji, and as part of the Jōyō standardization, newspapers using non-Jōyō characters are required to write them with furigana.

How a particular reader feels about reading everything in katakana may depend on their own level of comfort with Japanese. Certainly it's easier to learn how to read several dozen katakana than it is several thousand kanji. On the other hand, Japanese has many, *many* synonyms (養成/development; 要請/request, require; 妖精/fairy; 幼生/larva; and 陽性/positivity all being ようせい/yōsei as one example; the phonetic combination "seichō" can be 14 different words), and after learning a certain number of kanji, it can often be easier to understand a word even if you don't know its reading. There are also those that say that a page full of katakana isn't particularly easier to read, either, though kana advocates claim that this is only a result of being used to the more complicated kanji and lack of spacing between characters. Whichever the case may be, as non-native Japanese speakers (especially those not coming from countries that use Chinese characters), it's at least a small bit of comfort to know that somewhere out there are native Japanese speakers who feel at least a little bit of our pain.

One of the Kanamojikai's early entreaties to their countrymen. Notice the design of the katakana; one of their proposed reforms was to redesign katakana so that, instead of each character occupying "boxes" of equal size, they would instead be written to size and to fit lower and upper lines, similar to how alphabetic letters are written.

ニッポンノヒトウイマノセイノセイニモツ
 ヲモツテモカイノヒトトキョウツウ
 ヲツケテイル。
 『セゾノニツテイクラハツテモウノ
 ニモツカシマニツテモウヨウニ
 ハズレナイ。
 ヲノニモツヨクモウヨクノニニッポン
 ノヒトウノニモツヨクモウノヨウ
 ニモウニツテハツカステヨウトク
 ナナイ。

Blast from the Past: The MemoRandom Vaults

Editor's Note: The JET Programme is now in its 24th year, and we have some 50,000 (and counting) sempai across the world who once were in our shoes. The words of our own Saitama sempai have been recorded for posterity, and so, for a glimpse of the JET World of years past, here are the reprints two articles written by of our Jet forebears of yesteryear.

In Defense of a Pedestrian Life

Ellen Hsu
former Kumagaya ALT

The Kumagaya Board of Education has been kind enough to provide me with a bike. I'm sure of that fact because I saw it before. However, I'm really not confident that I could pick it out of a lineup. It's parked outside my apartment building somewhere; I think. I've lent it out to other AETs in my building and they've even let other people ride it.

My mother says that I knew how to ride when I was six. We went camping at the beach in Virginia somewhere and I rode my bike around the campsite, she claims. I remember that trip and other details about that particular vacation but I have no recollection of ever being able to ride a bike. I tried again a couple days before I left for Japan. I am now confident about my ability to wobble in circles. They say you never forget...

So I walk everywhere and everyone seems so upset about it. Everyone and their *obaasan* either offers to teach me or admonishes me for not learning. I prefer to walk for the following reasons:

1. My sense of direction improved immediately. On foot, in the middle of a Kumagaya summer, an unseen detour could be a death sentence. I'm very well acquainted with every crack and bump in the local pavement, thanks to my snail's eye view.
2. On my way home, I investigate the contents of parked cars, window shop, and peer into people's yards to satisfy my voyeuristic tendencies. I think I now have a pretty good idea of how Japanese people live. I do, however, draw the line at peeking around window blinds. Open curtains are fair game.
3. It takes me so long to get where I'm going that I often have to plan far in advance. There is always the risk of being late but I always have time to think things through, digest my experiences, and daydream while I'm shuffling around town. I'm also glad that it *is* socially permissible to mutter to oneself while walking along.
4. My closest school is a brisk thirty minute walk. My other two are a forty-five minute walk with a short train ride along the way. It beats trying to force myself to go running or to the gym.

5. Walking limits the amount of junk food I buy at the store because I know I'll have to schlep it all home. Soda is too heavy. So are most prepared foods, like boil-in-a-bag curry and canned items. Leafy vegetables are easy to carry.
6. Riding a bike is too dangerous. A teacher at one of my schools got hit by a car while riding his bike. He's in his forties and has a lifetime of experience of cycling in Japan. One of my AET neighbors had a bike-related accident in which her fingers were run over by a car. Sure, she got a nice monetary compensation, but *I like* my fingers the way they are. I'll get my thrills some other way, thanks.

I do have one question, though. Since my BOE is compensating me for my travel expenses, do you think they'll buy me a new pair of shoes?

—December 1995

The "C" Files

Claire Sawyer
former Saitama ALT

When I was about 14 years old, I was Michael Jackson's biggest fan. (Some of you may scoff, some of you may lay claim to that title yourself.) Being a fan, I bought a copy of his autobiography, and in the front was his signature. Under his name there was a reference to March 1998. Ten years later am sitting at the computer on the brink of what many people believe to be a significant date.

I am writing this on the 27th of February, although you will be reading it in April—or will you? Therefore any predictions I might make are copyrighted to me. What will happen in March 1998? Will World War III break out? At the moment (in February) things seem to be gearing up that way. Then again maybe not. No one in their right mind wants a war with the kind of weapons in our hands at the moment. Unfortunately the people in charge may not be in their right minds and their hands are getting shaky.

But why should March 1998 be more significant than any other date? Many people believe that it is to do with cycles. Imagine a big wheel revolving through time and the universe. At a certain point on the wheel there is a spike and every so often that spike comes around and digs itself into our world causing mayhem, disaster, miracles, and revelations. However it seems to me that these things happen around the world on a daily basis, therefore anything that happens in March 1998 will be said to have been predicted regardless of whether it happens all the time. Just as any unusual weather automatically gets blamed on El Niño, whether it is the cause or not.

With the exception of World War III or the Second Coming, there is not much that will happen in the coming years that has not been going on for thousands of years. It is just that we are more aware of it, if not obsessed with all kinds of phenomena. Shows like *The X-Files* and *Millennium* seem to tally with that, but again, that seems to fit with some sort of cycle. I like to ponder upon these things. I've seen some inexplicable things in my time,

though nothing that could be called life-changing or revelational. Deep down I am a skeptic that has a longing for good phenomena to be true. I want to see fairies and people's auras, but I don't want to accept that we have no control over our lives.

As a young girl I used to be half-terrified yet strangely obsessed with the predictions in the Book of Revelations. The a few summers ago I saw the moon turn to blood and then fall out of the sky. It was of course a lunar eclipse that any good astronomer could predict, but until relatively recently was used to control and frighten the masses.

Skeptic or believer I don't think we should worry. So planets line up. Will that mean the end of the world as we know it? Or just a higher than normal tide? Well tighten down your moorings and batten the hatches folks, we may have made it through March 1998 but we still have to break into the 21st Century.

—April 1998

Tango Corner

Japanese comedy shows sometimes seem to operate in an entirely different dimension from the comedy we see in our home countries. Perhaps you find yourself laughing at the act, or laughing that it's supposed to be an act. Or if you find yourself puzzled at the whole affair, here's a brief vocab list of some of the basics of Japanese comedy.

だじゃれ (駄洒落)	wordplay similar to puns: アルミ缶の上にある みかん (<i>Arumi-kan no ue ni aru mikan</i>).
漫才 (まんざい)	rehearsed comedy act with two performers, e.g. アンガールズ
ボケ	the comic of a manzai pair, often interprets and misunderstands the <i>tsukkomi</i>
突っ込み (つつこみ)	"butts in" and corrects the <i>boke</i> role, often with a slap to the head
コーナー	not corner, but segment, as in "television seg- ment"
切れ (きれ)	meaning "anger," very short-tempered charac- ter
逆切れ (ぎゃくきれ)	anger in reverse, e.g. a girl cheating on her boyfriend gets angry when he insists it's his fault.
ドッキリ	surprise pranks caught on hidden camera, of- ten involving trapdoors or sneaking into someone's room to wake them up.
ネタ	Joke material, set-up, content
下ネタ (しもねた)	Dirty joke ("shimo" meaning "low" or "down")

Destination: Saitama

Events In and Around the Prefecture

- **Satte Spider Lily Festival** (さって曼珠沙華祭り, *Satte Manjushage Matsuri*) Now through mid-Oct., Gongendō Park. Satte draws plenty of people for sakura in the spring, but the fall is bringing a (slightly delayed) carpet of vermillion as the banks along the Tone River burst into bloom. If you're the kind of visitor that needs more than just flowers, bring a tarp and some bentos, or take a look around the rest of the town and try a local restaurant or the city's onsen. **Access:** From Satte (幸手) station on the Tōbu Nikkō (東武日光) line, take the Asahi Bus to Gokamachi Yakuba (五霞町役場) and get off at Gongendō Teiryūjo (権現堂停留所); you'll see it from there. **More Info** at www.satte-k.com/event/manjyusyage/index.html (Japanese) and 0480.43.1111.
- **Ogano Kabuki** (小鹿野 歌舞伎, *Ogano Kabuki*) Oct. 2 (Sat.) at Myōkengu (妙見宮) Shrine, 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm. Although Kabuki was banned in rural areas outside of Edo (now Tokyo) during the Edo period (1603-1868), Ogawa found ways to skirt this rule. The town now celebrates yearly performances with male as well as female and children actors. This festival is unique in Japan and one of the yearly events that make Saitama the *Sai-no-Kuni*, the colorful land, that it is. **Access:** From the Seibu Chichibu (西武秩父) station on the Seibu Chichibu line, take the sightseeing bus for either Ogano Shako (小鹿野車庫) or Kurio (栗尾). After about 30 min., get off at Izumida (泉田) then a 15-min. walk. **More Info** at www.town.ogano.lg.jp/menyu/kankou/kankou/o_kabuki/kabuki.htm, or call 049.479.1100. For more background on the festival in English, see www.town.ogano.lg.jp/gazou/kabuki.pdf.
※If you can't make it on the 2nd, another Ogano Kabuki performance will be held at Suwa Jinja (諏訪神社) on the 9th; take the Seibu Chichibu line to Mitsumine-guchi (三峰口) station, then the town bus (町営, chō-ei) and get off at Komori (小森); it's a 5-min. walk from there.
- **Kawagoe Matsuri** (川越祭り) Oct. 16-17 (Sat.-Sun.), all day through 9 pm. This 350-year-old festival is one of the Kantō area's three biggest matsuri. Parades make their way through the streets of Kawagoe as multi-storey floats called "dashi" (山車) are pulled along behind them. The energy turns up a notch in the evening when the lanterns are lit and the musicians and dancers on the floats compete to throw the other side off beat. A designated national treasure, this is one of the highlights of Saitama's festival year. **Access:** Kawagoe (川越) station on the JR and Tōbu Tōjo lines, Kawagoe-shi (川越市) on the Tōbu Tōjo (東武東上) line, or Honkawagoe (本川越) on the Seibu Shinjuku (西部新宿) line, and follow the hordes from there. **More Info** at kawagoe-matsuri.jp (Japanese) and kawagoematsuri.jp/English.



- **Tokigawa Sasara Lion Dance** (ささら獅子舞, *Sasara Shishi-mai*) at Hagi Hiyoshi Jinja (萩日吉神社) on Oct. 10 (Sun.); the entire ceremony starts at 8 am with a procession to the shrine, but the dance is at 1 pm. The exact origins of this festival aren't clear, but legends tell of a retainer who fled from the Odawara Hojo clan wearing a lion mask, and one document written in 1839 associated it with prayers for rain. Dancers and musicians perform, and the main attraction dances in costume with a massive lion mask and a mane of *nusa* (幣), specially folded white paper streamers used in Shinto. This festival, which dates back to at least 1788, is one of Tokigawa's cultural treasures. **Access:** Take the Hachikō (八高) line to Myōkaku (明覚) station, then ride the town bus and get off at Tategu Kaikanme (建具会館前) bus stop. From there it's a 15-min. walk. **More Info** at www.hiki-saitama.jp/kankou/guide/event/44.htm (Japanese) and 049.365.1521.
- **Zoo-kon Matchmaking Support** (出会いサポート「Zoo婚」, *Deai Sapōto Zū-kon*) on Oct. 30 (Sat.) at the Tōbu Zoo. Interested in the Japanese dating scene, but don't quite know where to start? Miyashiro and the Tōbu Zoo have made their own match to provide a chance to for eligible singles to meet and get to know each other as they make bentos together, try their own hand at caring for the animals, and spend some 1-on-1 time chatting on the Ferris wheel. You may find that along with the whistles of Malayan tapirs and bugles of North American elk, love will be in the air. **Access:** Tōbu Isesaki (東武伊勢崎) line to Tōbu Dōbutsu Kōen (東武動物公園), then a 10-min. walk from the west exit. **More Info** Call the *tantō* in Miyashiro at 048.034.1111, ext. 323. Registration is required, and there is a fee. Participants limited to 20 women and 20 men each.
- **Nakasendō Bushū Warabi Station Shukuba Festival** (中仙道武州蕨宿場まつり, *Nakasendō Bushū Warabi-juku Shukuba Matsuri*) Nov. 3 (Wed., holiday) 10 am - 7 pm, Warabi. The Nakasendō was one of the main highways people used to travel from Kansai to Kantō during the Edo period (1603-1868), and Warabi was a shukuba, a post station for travelers to rest at. This festival features performances, handmade foods and goods, parades, bazaars, flea markets, jazzbands, and more. **Access:** 10 min. from the west exit of Warabi (蕨) station on the Keihin Tōhoku line. **More Info** at 048.433.7750.
- **Chichibu Night Festival** (秩父夜祭, *Chichibu Yomatsuri*) Dec. 2-3 (Thurs.-Fri.) in Chichibu. This festival makes another list of Threes: it's both one of the biggest float festivals and the most beautiful night festivals in the country. The high point of the festival begins at 7 pm on the 3rd. As you watch the performances held on the giant floats, lit with lanterns and decorated with gilt wood carvings, the city puts on a two-and-a-half-hour long fireworks display. Bring warm clothes and come early, though—this festival is famous, and spots to sit to watch in the evening are taken several hours in advance.

Recipe Corner

Denise Schlickbernd, Saitama CIR/PA

The prefecture showcases regional dishes from around the prefecture during B級グルメ (B-kyū Gurume, B-Class Gourmet) showcases, but alas, it only includes the food, not the recipes. Here are a couple of Saitama dishes, then, that you can try making on your own to tide you over between the official events.

Chichibu Kenchin-jiru (from www.pref.saitama.lg.jp/site/ryori/ryori08.html)

Kenchin-jiru is a miso-based soup packed with vegetables, tofu, konnyaku, and any number of other foods the chef decides to use. It's a dish common to many regions in Japan, but this version is typical of what is traditionally made in the Chichibu area of Saitama.

- 300g. satoimo (taro) (10-15)
- 100g. gobō (burdock root)
- 1/2 block konnyaku (150g.)
- 900ml-1L dashi soup stock
- 1 negi(1.5-2)
- 100g. daikon (ca. 1.5"/3.5cm)
- 2 Tbsp. oil
- 1.5 Tbsp. soy sauce
- 1 carrot
- 1 block tofu, well-drained
- 100g miso

1) Cut negi and peeled satoimo into small chunks; cut carrot and peeled gobō in thin diagonal slices (place gobō in water to preserve taste and color); cut daikon into quarter-rounds ca. 1 cm thick; tear tofu into chunks; and slice konnyaku into thin rectangles, blanch, and drain.

2) Heat oil in a pot and add gobō, satoimo, and konnyaku. When well-coated stir in dashi, then stir miso into the dashi (dissolve in a ladle as you stir it into the pot), then bring to a boil.

3) Then the satoimo are soft, add daikon, carrots, and tofu. When carrots are soft, add soy sauce. Dekiagari!



Taro root, aka satoimo, which have a texture similar to potatoes, only decidedly slimier.



Photo by jetalone

Broccoli Sandwich (from www.ja-saitama.jp/recipe/003_burokkori.html)

Saitama Trivia #74: our prefecture is the third largest producer of broccoli in Japan. Here's a recipe that combines the best of Saitama agriculture with the best of strange Japanese sandwich combinations.

- 1 bunch broccoli
- 250g. potatoes (ca. 1 med. + 1 small)
- 2 Tbsp. mayonnaise
- 1 Tbsp. sushi vinegar
- pinch of pepper

1) Cut broccoli florets into chunks, then peel and cut the rest of the stem into somewhat large chunks. Cut potatoes in half and place with broccoli in a pot with just enough water to cover them, and boil until soft.

2) Drain, and then mash together with a fork while still warm. While potatoes are not yet well-mashed, add mayonnaise, sushi vinegar, and pepper. Use as a sandwich filling.

※ In place of mayonnaise, olive or other flavored oils can be used, as well as salad dressings.

PA NOTES

2010 Saitama Mid-Year Conference

The Saitama ALT Mid-Year Conference, hosted by the Saitama Prefectural Board of Education, will be held this year at Shimin Kaikan Urawa on November 9th and 10th. Our guest speakers will include the highly acclaimed Prof. Don Maybin, who we are welcoming back from last year, as well as CLAIR Programme Coordinator Mary Ring, formerly ALT and CIR/PA in Iwate Prefecture. We also need the support of senior Jets to help facilitate the conference--please consider sharing your classroom experience and presenting a workshop this year. If you are interested, contact Clayton Frederick (address on back page). An official announcement will be sent out to prefectural schools and municipal BoEs in early October.

Visas and Passports and Permits

Oh my! As a reminder, if you exit Japan and wish to re-enter using the visa you received for JET, you must purchase a re-entry permit in advance. It's a simple and somewhat pricey procedure involving a few hours at the Saitama Branch of the Tokyo Regional Immigration Bureau, located on the first floor of the "Arusa" Building just outside of Kita Yono station on the Saikyo line (tel.: 048.851.9671). Hours are weekdays from 9:00-12:00 and 1:00-4:00. Single-use is ¥3000 and multiple use is ¥6000. Be sure to bring your passport and your foreigner registration card.

×Note to all Jets! Your re-entry permit is valid only as long as your current visa. If you decide to stay a fourth year and have your visa extended, you will need to purchase another re-entry permit. There has been news about the new system of foreigner registration eliminating the need for re-entry permits. No decisive progress has been made about this, however, so for the foreseeable future, re-entry permits will be required.

2011 ALT Opinion Exchange

Every year CLAIR holds meetings with Jets like you to share opinions on how the Programme can be improved. ALTs and CIRs meet in alternate years, so this is your chance to apply and help make the Programme better and represent Jets on a national level. Information and forms will be distributed to your COs. Please note that application forms must be faxed to CLAIR by Friday, Oct. 29, so be sure to get started early. If you have any questions, you can ask your CO, PAs, or the PCs on the JETLine (03.5213.1729) for further information.

Privacy and the Internet

The Internet is an awesome place full of such things as win, lolcats, Facebook, and moar. However, it was also the Internet that allowed for such phenomena as Google-stalking and workplace disciplinary action for private information posted in publicly accessible areas. Privacy and work-related information in non-private spaces is tricky, and especially rules here regarding whose face can or cannot be publicly posted where, ALTs are included in the long list of people (around the world) for what they have posted on the tubes, You and otherwise, of the Internet. If you still want to post that photo collage of your students or a video documentary of how awesome your school is, you can try asking your principle (this approach has been met with success by some Jets in other prefectures). Otherwise, though, life can be stressful enough; let your streamed TV shows from back home be the ones to provide you with Internet drama.



Meet Your Saitama PAs

Kaori Fujinami, Saitama International Division Japanese PA

Hi! This is Kaori Fujinami, one of the Japanese PAs for the JET Programme in Saitama prefecture. I was transferred to the International Division earlier this April, and it's a great pleasure to work for better international relationships and understanding. Before coming to this division, I worked for the prefectural government in the Taxation Division and the Social Welfare Division. I also had the experience of working in a trading company importing goods from Asian and African countries and have studied international relations and cultural policy, so I love to know and learn about different societies, cultures and histories from around the world, especially through enjoying food, drink, and music!

The PAs are preparing various opportunities through volunteering and kenshū programs for Jets in the prefecture. One of the events recently held, for example, was the Disaster Preparation Simulation & Cultural Training Workshop which was good fun and a good experience for me as well as JET participants. We have the International Fair and more coming up soon that you can apply for, too. I'm looking forward to working with you at the upcoming JET events!



Saitama AJET Announcements

A couple announcements from Eiko and Bryan, your trusty Saitama AJET tantōs!

SAJET Event: Kawagoe Matsuri

It's Saitama's biggest party of the year in one of the prefecture's best-known cities. Join SAJET and enjoy the floats, the parades, the food, and the company of your fellow Jets. For more information, email SaitamaAJET@gmail.com.

SAJET Event: Chichibu Yomatsuri

The Chichibu Yomatsuri (Night Festival) is one of the biggest festivals in the country, and this year, the climax is conveniently on a Friday night. Come with SAJET as our Chichibu Jets show us how to celebrate. For more information, email SaitamaAJET@gmail.com.



Editor's Note

Autumn is here at last, and there's no way around it—this summer was a brutal one. It was also a busy one; after all the orientations and travels and tra-
vails, peoples' routines are shifting back to normal to become busy with, well,
everything else. There's work, of course, but there's also the autumn foliage,
the International Fair, Mid-Year Conferences, the Kawagoe Festival, and be-
fore we know it, the Chichibu Night Festival in December (which is conven-
iently held on a Friday this year).

The great thing about being busy is that it's usually—hopefully!—interesting
and eventful. The downside to it, though, is that it does seem to make the
year fly by at far too quick a pace; sometimes it seems there isn't enough time
to fit in everything you want to do. But whether you're starting your first year
on JET or your fifth, I hope that everybody finds the time, or takes the time, to
enjoy and *charenji suru* everything that Saitama and Japan have to offer.

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Next Deadline: Dec. 3rd