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Mental Notes with Hilary Valdez

Increasing emotional intelligence

BY HILARY VALDEZ,
STRIPES JAPAN

Being aware of your emotions is called emotional intelligence. You don't need a therapist or long-term therapy to gain self-understanding. Just pay attention to yourself. Your thinking is attached to your values. Your values are attached to your beliefs. How you behave in the world is determined by your beliefs.



Sometimes our beliefs can get us into trouble. Like being on a diet but justifying eating a few slices of pizza. Beliefs and values are like tires, they wear out. Accepting your beliefs at face value can prevent you from seeing situations as they really are. I have always struggled with my weight. But struggling in my mind about how much junk food I can eat and still lose weight is an endless battle unless I commit to a specific health plan. The decision to get healthy was clear-cut. To achieve it was tough.

Transform yourself, transform your thoughts into action, and your ideas into reality. It took a long time for me to realize this, when I did, I started jogging. Lucky for me, I was in Alaska at the time, and jogging in pristine nature, with crisp, clean air, was wonderful. I just wanted to keep running. While in Alaska, I lost 100 pounds in one

year. My mom did not recognize me when I rang the doorbell. She asked for my ID; shocked, she wanted to cook dinner and fatten me up. I knew my fate was altered. The art of life is trial and error. The pain of life is the tax paid for participating in life.

To manage your inner journey of self-discovery, remember the three Rs: Recover, refocus, regenerate. Recover - Take small breaks; Refocus - Look at the big picture: look at the doughnut, not the hole; Regenerate: Rest, talk with friends. Ask yourself: What am I telling myself? What am I not doing? Life is about practicing being a humane human being. Practice, but be nice to yourself.

The three main stabilizing factors in life are: Hobby, work, and relationships. Relationships were my biggest challenge. I spent a lot of time alone. Then I had to ask myself, "Am I happy, or do I just have moments of happiness?" Peace of mind comes from within us, it is not determined by people, places or things.

If you are able to get out of bed and feed yourself, it's a good day. I spent months in a hospital, and when I finished weeks of rehab and feebly walked outdoors into the fresh air, happy and grateful to be alive. I don't complain any more, I truly hunt for the good stuff in life. Life is filled with challenges. Fight back.

Keep a positive frame of mind. Keep track of what thoughts are racing through your head. Write down your stress or tension breeding factors. Next to each write down

how you deal with it. Mark what doesn't work well and come up new ways to respond. It takes strength to deal with difficulties.

When I was lying in the hospital bed, immobilized, staring at the ceiling with five tubes in me; I was just beside myself, alone, filled with self-pity and anger. I was trying to figure out what was the meaning of my situation. What was I supposed to be learning from this horrible experience?

Your choices determine your development. We cannot choose not to choose. Indecision is a decision. Good decisions come from experience, and experience comes from life. If you can control the process of choosing, you can take control of your life. Growth choices mean you have to change.

What's required from us is the H.O.W. method. Honesty with our feelings; Openness to feedback; a Willingness to change. Life is a challenge. Yet, you actually end up achieving your dreams by conquering your greatest fears. Remember, one step, one moment, then the next step and its moment. Never lose H.O.P.E. aka Hold On, Pain Ends.

Hilary Valdez is a retiree living in Japan. He is an experienced Mental Health professional and Resiliency Trainer. Valdez is a former Marine and has worked with the military most of his career and most recently worked at Camp Zama as a Master Resiliency Trainer. Valdez now has a private practice and publishes books on social and psychological issues. His books are available on Amazon and for Kindle. Learn more about Valdez and contact him at www.hilaryvaldez.com or at InstantInsights@hotmail.com



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FROM THE ARCHIVES

On May 14, 1945, Stars and Stripes published its first newspaper in the Pacific. To commemorate 75 years serving the military community in the theater, we're taking a look back at Stripes history through the writing and photography of a dedicated staff spanning generations. Stars and Stripes has proudly supported the Pacific military community since the beginning and will continue to serve the troops and families at the heart of our work.

— Pueblo crew of 82 freed by N. Korea —

BY CRAIG GARNER,
STARS AND STRIPES
Published: December 24, 1968

PANMUNJOM — The 82 crewmen of the USS Pueblo began their trek to freedom Monday at 11:30 a.m. Korean standard time across a small footbridge nicknamed “the bridge of no return” leading from North Korea to the truce site at Panmunjom.

The march from Communist captivity came exactly 11 months after North Korean patrol boats seized the U.S. Navy intelligence ship off the port of Wonsan last Jan. 23.

Cmdr. Lloyd M. Bucher, the captain of the Pueblo who came under much fire for not putting up a struggle at the time of the seizure, was first across the bridge as a steady snow fell.

He identified the six officers, 74 enlisted men and two civilians who filed into the Panmunjom Joint Security Council after him.

The body of Seaman Duane D. Hodges, of Creswell, Ore., who was seriously injured when the ship was captured and died later, was also returned.

The formal signing of the document which handed the crew over to the U.S. was conducted at Panmunjom at 9 a.m. Monday between senior United Nations command delegate Maj. Gen. Gilbert H. Woodward and North Korean spokesman Maj. Gen. Pak Chung Kook.

In the document prepared by the North Koreans and read by Gen. Woodward said that the

Pueblo had illegally intruded into North Korean territorial waters and conducted espionage activities.

Immediately after reading the statement Gen. Woodward followed up with a repudiation in which he said U.S. authorities have found “no convincing evidence that the ship at any time intruded into the territorial waters claimed by North Korea.”

Woodward made it expressly clear that he signed the Communist document “to free the crew and only to free the crew.”

He explained at a press conference after the signing that he did not think it meant “a humiliation” for the U.S. government.

The U.S. never did “apologize” for the alleged intrusion as the North Koreans had insisted in countless propaganda broadcasts.

However, a U.S. Defense Department spokesman said the U.S. concurred to sign the “purported agreement” since the North Koreans had taken a firm stance in the 28 secret meetings held at Panmunjom since the seizure that “the crew would be held indefinitely if the statement was not signed.”

In Woodward’s repudiation he firmly asserted that “the ship was not engaged in illegal activities” and that “he could not apologize for action which he did not believe took place.”

At the brief 9 a.m. meeting across the Panmunjom conference table North Korea’s Gen.



Cmdr. Lloyd Bucher talks to the press. Photo by Pete Vegell, Stars and Stripes

Pak told Woodward that “the crew was in normal condition.” Woodward said in Pak’s terms this means the 83 crewmen were in good health.

North Korea’s delegate Gen. Pak during the meeting threatened to delay the release since he said the U.S. State Department had violated the

agreement between the two nations about publicizing the time of the release. However, he later reneged and delayed the return only a half-hour.

Woodward said he was certain there was no compensation paid to the North Koreans by the U.S. for the men’s freedom.

After the Pueblo crew was

exchanged at Panmunjom’s joint security area they were scheduled to be taken to the UNC advance camp, four miles south of the truce area.

At the advance camp they were to clean up and be given a meal in private. Then they were to be transported to the 121st evacuation hospital at ASCOM near Seoul where each crew member was to receive a physical examination.

A Defense Department spokesman said plans called for the crew members to be taken to a U.S. naval hospital in San Diego upon leaving Korea.

Their scheduled departure time from Korea is still tentative, but the spokesman said naturally everyone hoped the crew would be able to be home for Christmas.

The Pueblo was seized last January and precipitated a crisis in the U.S. which saw President Lyndon Johnson activate over 14,000 Air Force reservists and dispatch the nuclear aircraft carrier Enterprise off the coast of North Korea.

Many U.S. congressmen branded it an act of war and a speedy military buildup in South Korea was carried out.

Since then the U.S. and North Korean negotiators have been locked in verbal combat over how and when the surviving crew members would be returned. It appears that the major breakthrough took place at the 26th Pueblo meeting at Panmunjom on Dec. 17.

EXCLUSIVE NEWS FROM:
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Sgt. 1st Class Charles E. Ashton, at work at Camp Drake, Japan, in March, 1953.

SFC, wounded 9 Times, wants 3rd Korean tour

STARS AND STRIPES
Published: March 15, 1953

CAMP DRAKE, Japan — Fifteen years of Army service and a chestful of decorations, including the nation’s second highest award, hasn’t satisfied SFC Charles E. Ashton’s appetite for a good scrap. The Camp Drake military policeman from Colton, Cal., has asked to go back to Korea for the third time.

From the North African shores where he first saw enemy action during the second World War, up through Europe, and in the Korean campaign, Ashton has collected among his other decorations, the Distinguished Service Cross, the Silver Star with three Oak Leaf Clusters, the Soldier’s Medal, the Bronze Star with four clusters,

and the Purple Heart with eight clusters.

THE DSC, his most recent decoration, was awarded him after his ingenious escape from a Communist PW camp in January, 1951, in which he plotted and carried out a rescue plan for 159 other American prisoners. He had been interned near Pyongyang for 42 days.

Much of his combat experience has been with patrols, and the Silver Star, Bronze Star, and Purple Heart awards all resulted from his feats while engaged in patrol and scouting activity. One of the Silver Stars, which he received simultaneously with the Bronze Star and

Purple Heart, was awarded during action near Kaesong when he led a platoon that annihilated 235 Communists.

Ashton received the Soldier’s Medal the year before Pearl Harbor while he was assigned to basic cadre at Camp Polk, La., when he assisted in evacuating troops from a burning barrack.

Following his escape from the Reds and his ultimate hospitalization, Ashton returned to the States in September, 1951, and again volunteered for Korean service. He was sent to the Far East in November, 1952, and assigned to the MP detachment at Camp Drake.



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File photo

The benefits of self-reflection

Editor's note: At Stripes Japan, we love to share your stories and share this space with our community members. Here is an article written by Jennifer Brown, a hospital corpsman at U.S. Naval Hospital Okinawa. If you have a story or photos to share, let us know at atjapan@stripes.com.

BY JENNIFER BROWN,
STRIPES JAPAN

While it is a common practice to vent to our friends about our day or our troubles, reflecting on everyday experiences is also another practice that is beneficial. As humans, we constantly try to make sense of the world around us, why things happened the way they did and also what we want to do in the future. In doing so, we have naturally developed a practice of self-reflection of our everyday experiences.

Not surprisingly, I have found that this way of coping with daily life has major benefits including stress relief, promoting new problem-solving skills, and providing a new point of view and compassion for myself and others.

As a stress reliever, self-reflection has helped me in similar ways a venting session with a friend does. My anxiety about the situation decreases significantly when I've given myself the opportunity to think it through or talk with someone about it. Another benefit from this strategy is that it also helps me create a game plan on what my next move will be.

Whether you decide to reflect alone or through speaking with someone, do so in moderation. That is, let yourself reflect on an experience for a short period of time, but not for too long that you're then dwelling on it. For example,

I allow myself to think through whatever my mind goes to during short 15- to 30-minute walks. For me, this is just the right amount of time, as I know that too much time in my own head does more harm than good. The "right amount of time" is different for everyone, so the key will be in finding what works best for you.

Time to reflect also increases my problem-solving skills. Perhaps the best way I can explain this is the feeling when you complete a difficult task and receive all that feedback from your audience. Whether it is friends and family, or your coworkers or employers, you receive both positive and negative feedback from sharing your experiences with others. For me, this feedback has sparked new ideas I would not have normally considered. For instance, talking with someone at work about the lack of volunteer options during quarantine led to me seek online or virtual volunteering opportunities. I would not have even considered that unless someone would have mentioned it.

Another benefit is that self-reflection provides a new point of view. While new experiences in general can also do this, I have noticed that when we intentionally reflect on prior or current experiences it can help us see the bigger picture. I remember after running my first marathon, someone said I looked disappointed with my overall finish time. Though I hadn't said anything, my nonverbal cues gave me away. At the time, I felt confident and satisfied with my performance, but others could tell that I wasn't happy about it. I had trained for months to run the race under five hours, but my time was over, and I was in fact, ultimately disappointed. Reflecting on my first marathon has given me the insight to foster

new and accomplishable goals, but also not to be so hard on myself if I don't at first succeed.

This draws me to the next benefit of self-reflection: self-compassion. The practice of reflecting on past and potential outcomes of future experiences offers the opportunity to consider multiple viewpoints and the opportunity to grow towards being kinder to ourselves. Stopping to think about a situation allows me to better understand why things are the way they are and the next steps moving forward. From this, I have learned to have more compassion towards myself and especially in regard to my past decisions while looking forward to how I will make future ones.

While these are just a few reasons why self-reflection can be an important part of your daily life, it certainly is not a comprehensive list. In fact, there are probably so many benefits to reflection that they cannot even be listed! Taking the time to journal about your day, post a reflective and meaningful post on social media, or have a heart-to-heart conversation with a loved one can also do the trick. However you do it, I hope you can benefit from reflecting on situations more often.

About the writer: Jennifer Brown is a hospital corpsman at U.S. Naval Hospital Okinawa. Originally from Florida, she joined the Navy in 2018, and has been on island for over a year. During her free time Brown enjoys spending time with animals, running, rock climbing, and hiking. She is an alumni of the University of Central Florida, and holds a Bachelor of Science in Psychology. Her professional interests include social work, animal welfare, and children.

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STORY AND PHOTOS BY MEAGAN HENRY,
STRIPES JAPAN

If you've taken a walk around Yokota Air Base in the last two months, you may have been lucky enough to find a work of art in the form of a painted rock. To the casual passerby it might seem like nothing more than a fun moment in an otherwise uneventful day, but to the Yokota community living through this strange time of COVID-19, these rocks represent so much more. Look closely, because the rock you find could actually be a personalized birthday greeting, a school assignment, or a chance to request your favorite song on the radio. It might have your child's favorite character or storybook on it, but could also be carrying a message to bring awareness to an important cause, or even win you a free bottle of wine!

Yokota Rock Hunters is the group responsible, and after only 2 months and a lot of excitement, they are currently over 700 members strong. Anyone can join in the fun, as the premise is incredibly simple. Participants paint, hide, find, share on Facebook and re-hide rocks in public spaces around base while following social distancing guidelines.

The group's main goal is for everyone to have fun and stay active, yet with so much participation, co-founder Melissa Bauman says, "the group has taken on a fascinating life of its own." In an otherwise stressful time, Yokota Rock Hunters members have spread positivity and creativity that Bauman adds, "highlights all the kindness within our community."

After hearing about similar groups in other parts of the world, Melissa Bauman and Nicole Sofe started Yokota Rock Hunters at the beginning of April. At the time, schools on base and many non-essential services had recently been closed due to the pandemic, and safety measures including social distancing were in effect. Both women were individually thinking about a group like it as "an outlet for creative energy" as well as a way to keep themselves and their children busy and active outside during a time of social restrictions.

"At first I was thinking it was mostly for kids," shared Nicole Sofe, a mother of 3 children. Sofe was living in a tower unit when the group started, so found that "daily rock hunts were the perfect excuse to get outside explore. It gave our walks a purpose, which was helpful for our kids."

However that need for purpose in the day to day, and a creative outlet during a time of social restrictions and uncertainty of the situation back home was overwhelmingly shared among people of all ages.

"Never in a million years would I have thought it would be this popular," Melissa Bauman said when asked about the momentum that Yokota Rock Hunters has seen.

"The group is huge now," added Nicole Sofe, "and it is amazing to see everyone



Yokota Rock Hunters paint a perfect picture

come together to do something so wholesome and fun. It is bringing together members of the base from all demographics, single airmen, families, spouses, base organizations, and more."

Speaking about the adults that make up many of the amazing artists painting rocks, Sofe shared, "I love to see how this hobby is helping people to relax and find joy in the small things during a very unusual time in the world."

One such artist is Megan Webb, who paints with the hashtag #mawrocks and has made and hidden over 50 rocks so far. She says, "rock painting has honestly awoken my passion for art again. After having two kids and living the military life my drive to produce art came to a lull.

I'm excited to keep making art in any form that speaks to me again." Webb was one of the first artists to use a hashtag to sign her art, something that is now a common practice among Yokota Rock Hunters and when the hashtags are used in photos shared on the Facebook page, it helps artists see the gratitude and joy that their efforts are spreading around base.

Whitney Richard is another artist, who is making birthdays special for kids on base during a difficult time, one rock at a time. Richard, "saw a mom post on Facebook whose son had a birthday coming up. He was sad because he couldn't have a party due to social distancing restrictions, so I decided to do something special for kids whose birthdays were in the month of May."

She has already made over 20 birthday rocks, fulfilling personal requests with everything from dinosaurs to Dragon Ball Z, and even made a special rock for one Class of 2020 Grad to take along to college. When parents share videos and photos with her of their kids getting their birthday rocks, she says she's the one who feels grateful.

Now, if you've read this far, I'm guessing you want to know about winning that bottle of wine, right? Among the challenges the group has created, one member's "find this rock and I'll bring you a bottle of wine" challenge was no doubt a

popular one, but unfortunately that generous artist has run out of prizes. However, other challenges created by the organizers have involved base organizations such as the American Red Cross, USO, AFN, and teachers at Yokota West Elementary.

The very first challenge allowed one organization on base to creatively deliver an important message despite the inability to talk to groups in person. It was designed to bring awareness to National Child Abuse Prevention Month when the Violence Prevention team was unable to bring activities out into the community and to schools due to COVID-19. Blue rocks with ribbons on them were hidden around base, and prizes were awarded to those who found them. "It gave us the opportunity to share prevention efforts in a fun way while also heeding to guidance on social distancing," shared Thoman Flores, Violence Prevention Coordinator/Suicide Prevention Program Manager for the installation, and mother of 7 rock hunters.

Challenges to celebrate Memorial Day, "Make a Face," or most currently, to make a rock answering the question "Where Are You From?", have showcased the talents and personalities of the group, while keeping things fun. The group's Sesame Street Challenge was even recognized through Sesame Street for Military Families on Facebook, where Yokota's very own muppet rocks and preschool rock hunters were featured globally. And judging by the excitement of people finding rocks all over base and empty shelves of acrylic paint at the Arts and Crafts Center, this group is just getting started!

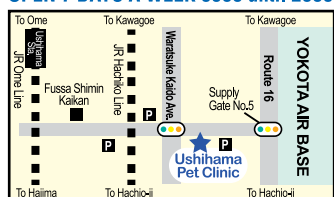
As we head into the summer and continue to follow precautionary measures to keep ourselves and our host nation safe and healthy, it's a comfort to know that groups of people are thriving on kindness, positivity and fun. As artist Whitney Richard put it, "I think this rock hunting group has been a way for the community to come together even though we can't actually be together." So keep looking for those rocks! We may



feel ready to go exploring farther than our little corner of the world again soon, but for now we can have a little something new to discover or create everyday with these wonderful rocks. Whether finding one gives you a happy moment in your day or a greater purpose during this uncertain time, you can thank the Yokota Rock Hunters.

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Hold on to good habits formed during lockdown

Editor's note: At Stripes Japan, we love to share your stories and share this space with our community members. Here is an article written by Cpl. Kyle Daly, a Marine stationed at MCAS Futenma. If you have a story or photos to share, let us know at japan@stripes.com.

BY VV,
STRIPES JAPAN

A white, dry erase board, about the size of a school notebook, sticks to the side of my wall locker.

For any visitor to my barracks room, the writing on the board is hard to miss. In black marker, at the top of the board, there are three words written in capitalized letters: JUNE RUNNING MILES. Underneath these words is a number.

Almost every day, in clothes drenched with sweat, I walk toward the board, erase the previous number, and write down a new number. On Monday, June 15, I wrote: "91.23."

These are my miles.

In the first half of this humid, summer month, I have run more than 90 miles. The simple joy of logging these miles via a white board began in April, when the COVID-19 pandemic prompted the military to place restrictions on the liberty of servicemembers in Japan. Gyms were closed, and the world outside

the base gates became off-limits. Base trails began to fill with joggers. At the same time, my unit, VMM-262 on MCAS

Futenma, began a running competition that challenged unit members to log as many miles as possible during the month. I had already been an avid runner, but the habit of logging miles and tracking progress became a new obsession.

As restrictions begin to ease on Okinawa, and the old ways of life begin to return, let us not forget the lessons we learned and the good habits we created during the lockdown.

At the end of April, a University of Southern California study reported "large percentages of Americans said they want to maintain the lasting effects of changes in their lives that began during the pandemic." This included increased time with family, more work at home, and increased online purchasing, according to the study, titled "The Coronavirus Disruption Project: How We are Living and Coping During the Pandemic."

The worldwide lockdown caused me to reflect on the nature of my own personal habits – both good and bad – and how they are formed. I don't need to be a scientist to understand that many habits are situationally dependent, that is, a reaction to my environment. The lockdown – a situation no one expected or wanted -- might have broken a few bad habits: spending money on cab

rides (habit broken), filling up on that chai tea latte from Starbucks (habit broken). It may also have formed some: Netflix



Cpl. Kyle Daly, left, stands with 1st Lt. Sam LaPorte from his unit, Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 262, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing. In April, the unit participated in a running challenge in which Daly logged over 200 miles. Daly, a southern California native, is a crew chief for VMM-262. U.S. Marine Corps. Photo by Lance Cpl. Ryan Persinger

binge watching (habit created), beer in the fridge (habit created).

For enlisted servicemembers, we all experienced the power of breaking bad habits and forming good ones during boot camp. Do you recall that week after boot camp when you reentered the slow-paced civilian populace? I remember it well. I woke at 5 a.m. without an alarm. I walked faster than anyone in my family. The first thing I did, every day, was make my bed. Perhaps that was just me. But I had a great desire to maintain the good habits that had been beaten into my head by my drill instructors.

Four years later, some habits remain. Many have, unfortunately, escaped my grasp. That is what happens when you are given options – when you can choose between pleasures and needs. The Marine Corps has taught me – through basic training and deployments – that

I can survive without my cell phone, without alcohol, and without Netflix. The Marine Corps also has taught me that I need exercise, clean food, and to stay hydrated.

While this pandemic might not trigger that boot camp or deployment mindset, it might help remind you what you need versus what you want – and that the needs should become habits.

For me, this moment in history has again placed exercise – particularly running – at the top of my "needs list."

For weeks, during this pandemic, I shared the same anxieties that other Marines, sailors and soldiers shared. We all asked ourselves, and continue to ask ourselves, what will our future look like? Will tomorrow bring us relief or more restrictions? Boot camp had a graduation date. That deployment had an end date. But when will this end?

Running helped me, and continues to help me, relieve those anxieties. That "runner's high" people often talk about, keeps me sane.

According to a 2015 study published by researchers at the University of Montreal, the runner's high feeling is caused by having lower leptin levels. Leptin is a hormone that helps us control the feeling of being full after we eat, according to the study. When the levels are low, we are driven to physical activity – instinctively, the desire to find food.

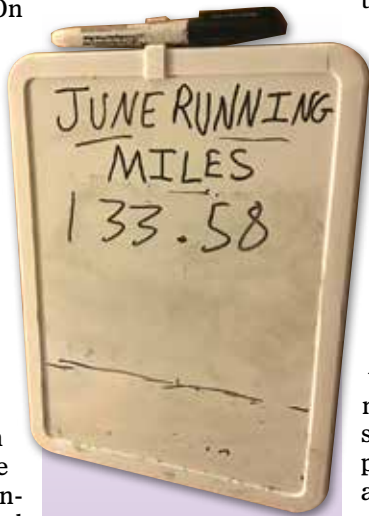
In April, my unit started a run challenge, seeing who could accumulate the most miles during the 30 days of the month. Many of the restrictions that went into place because of the virus outbreak didn't exist at the start of this challenge. Gyms were still open. Weightlifters were still getting their gains in. But as the layers of restrictions started to build, I'm certain many of us needed that runner's high to relieve the anxieties that came with them.

The run challenge my unit put on was an additional motivating factor for getting me out the door and on to the trail that circles the outer edges of MCAS Futenma. At the end of the challenge, I accumulated 250 miles.

What was even more rewarding was my obsession to continue to log each distance in the days and weeks that followed, via my white board, a new Garmin watch, and a running app.

A good habit – logging miles – was formed.

About the writer: Cpl. Kyle Daly is a Marine stationed at MCAS Futenma and a crew chief on the MV-22 Osprey. He holds a degree in journalism from Arizona State University and worked for several publications before joining the Marines in 2016, including the Pacific Daily News in Guam.



Cpl. Kyle Daly logs his overall miles for the month on a whiteboard in his room on MCAS Futenma. Photo by Cpl. Kyle Daly

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VIRUS-ERA JAPAN

Karaoke in masks, roller coasters but no screaming

BY SHOKO ODA AND NAO SANNO,
BLOOMBERG

Singing your heart out at karaoke boxes may never feel the same in Japan in the coronavirus era. To encourage customers to return following the lifting of the state of emergency, the Japan Karaoke Box Association has drafted a set of guidelines detailing recommendations on how the industry can safely resume. They call for a limit on how many people can be in one box — typically a small booth smaller than a motel room — and for people to wear masks “and/or other protective gear that covers the eyes and face” while belting out the latest hits.

A national pastime and cultural export, karaoke unfortunately ticks every box in the government’s guidelines of environments to avoid: crowded, cramped and potentially laden with virus-carrying droplets. But that didn’t stop customers from lining up outside outlets of Manekineko, Japan’s largest karaoke chain, as they reopened for business on Wednesday in Kanagawa, south of Tokyo.

“We’re asking for everyone except the person singing to wear masks,” said Hitomi Baba, a spokeswoman for chain operator Koshidaka Holdings Co. “We’re also giving out a mask to each customer where possible, and where we can’t, giving disinfectant sheets instead.” About half of the chain’s 527 outlets across the country have resumed business.

Japan lifted its state of emergency nationwide on Monday, as new infections and overall hospitalizations dropped to fractions of the peak. The government has warned people they must adjust to a “new lifestyle,” with recommendations covering everything from how to commute and shop to the right way to enjoy leisure and hobbies.

Some recommendations may be easier to obey than others, however. An organization representing theme parks, including the operators of Tokyo Disney Resort and Universal Studios Japan, unveiled a set of measures to reduce risk at the parks. Among the recommendations was one calling on customers to refrain from screaming on roller coasters and attractions and, of course, to wear masks while on the rides.

Countries around the world are cautiously reopening their economies as people try to resume a sense of normality while mindful that the virus could return in second waves until there is a vaccine for widespread use.

People in Japan have begun to speak of the “With Corona” era, meaning a time in which people live with the virus as part of their everyday lives and try to reduce risk of infection, instead of sheltering at home to avoid it. Japan’s approach to the pandemic has assumed that the virus won’t be wiped out, with small clusters already spreading days after the emergency was declared over.

Amid lingering questions over why Japan hasn’t seen anywhere near the level of cases and deaths from the virus as other countries, the nation’s experts have credited advice given early in the pandemic to avoid what they term the “Three Cs” — closed spaces, crowded places and close-contact settings where the virus is thought to spread most easily.

The seven-week loose lockdown — which requested some firms to

close and urged residents to stay home, albeit no penalties for disobedience — has pushed many businesses to the brink, and left industries scrambling to create environments where customers will feel safe spending.

“Companies that don’t take care of their customers will be subject to fierce criticism if it comes to light,” said Tomoki Inoue, chief analyst at NLI Research Institute. “That’s a risk, so everyone will be looking to turn behavior into daily habits.”

Japanese TV shows will begin filming again, with one widely reported book of guidelines from Nippon TV calling for kissing and action scenes to be avoided to the extent possible, no meetings over lunch, and for actors to dress and microphone themselves.

“Japanese organizations like to create rules,” said Rochelle Kopp of Japan Intercultural Consulting, who advises and trains Japanese firms. “And Japanese individuals like to have rules so they know what’s appropriate or not. Going along with what the rule is, what has been determined, is very important.”

In Tokyo, the metropolitan government has laid out a three-stage reopening road map for when businesses can resume operations. While the government can’t force businesses to close during the pandemic, a name-and-shame campaign against outlets that defied calls to voluntarily close, such as pachinko parlors, was highly successful in securing cooperation. Karaoke booths can resume in stage three, while gyms may be reopened in stage two of the plan, which is reported to begin as early as Saturday.

High-end fitness gym operator Rizap Group Inc., which saw its shares drop as much as 59% this year during the pandemic as it closed outlets, has gone as far as announcing that it will provide coronavirus antibody tests to more than 6,000 employees and trainers, and in principle test all new clients.

“We have established our own safety and security standard protocol, ‘Rizap Standard With Corona,’ as a new normal, developed under the guidance of infectious disease control doctors,” the company said in a statement.

One sector that has yet to get guidance from the authorities is Japan’s nighttime entertainment sector, known as “mizu shobai,” meaning “the water trade,” which spans everything from casual bars where young women chat to customers to prostitution, which is in large parts legal.

Hostess bars, where female escorts pour drinks and chat with multiple tables of men throughout an evening, have been particularly singled out as a source of multiple infection clusters. The government has continued to urge people to avoid them, with several of the recent cases identified in Tokyo linked to such outlets, according to an NTV report.

With no end to the situation in sight, some have resorted to opening hostess bars online to alleviate the financial hit. Customers can choose a bar of their choice, and chat and virtually drink with a hostess or other customers in an webcam “nomikai” or drinking session.

Whether it’s a small bar or a fairly large one, you can’t avoid close-contact settings with these places as hostesses need to socialize with customers, said Mayuko Igarashi, who started an online bar. “We launched it May 14 and it’s been full house the past four, five days.”



The Shibuya shopping street district in Tokyo, Japan, will likely have to make some COVID 19-related changes now that the public is starting to venture out and nightlife is starting up once again. Photo courtesy of Getty Images



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HEY, TAKE A BOW

BY MAMI SUZUKI,
TOFUGU.COM

Japanese bowing is something that comes up a lot here at Tofugu. It seems that people, whether they're preparing for an upcoming trip or living in Japan as a foreigner, are often at a loss regarding what exactly they're supposed to do when a bow is required. They have a vague, physical understanding of how Japanese bowing works, of course, but worry about missing the subtle nuance and offending their hosts or colleagues.

These questions always give me pause since bowing is so deeply-ingrained in Japanese culture that I don't give it much conscious thought. To be honest, another thing I take for granted is the fact that not many foreigners will even think to bow in the situations where a Japanese person normally would—right or wrong, this assumption does give you something of a free pass.

That being said, a well-timed, correctly-executed bow will definitely earn you brownie points while you're in Japan, and that's where this guide comes in! Here, we'll introduce the main types of bows you should know and explain step-by-step how to perform them.

Why bow at all?

It's believed that bowing in Japan started sometime during the Asuka and Nara periods (538-794 AD) with the introduction of Chinese buddhism. According to those teachings, bowing was a direct reflection of status—if you met a person of higher social standing, you would put yourself in the more “vulnerable” position of a bow, much like a friendly dog rolling over on its back, to prove that you didn't harbor any ill will toward them.

In modern Japanese society, bowing serves a variety of functions that go beyond this original intent. Generally speaking, you will bow when doing the following:

- Saying hello or goodbye to someone
- Starting or ending a class, meeting, or ceremony
- Thanking someone
- Apologizing to someone
- Congratulating someone
- Asking someone for a favor or their goodwill
- Worshipping someone or something

More than just focusing on these occasions, though, it's important to remember that bowing conveys different emotions, such as appreciation, respect, or remorsefulness. As you learn

the physical aspects of a good bow, keep in mind what you're trying to communicate through your posture, as this will inform how deeply you bow and for what length of time more naturally.

Sitting vs. standing bows

Before we begin talking about the different types of bows you might perform, let's touch briefly on the two positions from which you can begin a bow in the first place.

The first is a seated position called seiza 正座せいざ. Seiza is the way you will be expected to sit in



Photo courtesy of Wikipedia

almost all formal situations, ranging from participating in a tea ceremony to mourning at a funeral. To get into seiza from a standing position, start by kneeling. Men should kneel one leg at a time, while women should put both knees on the ground at the same time, if possible. With the tops of your feet flat on the floor and your toes pointed straight back behind you, rest your hindquarters on your calves or heels. Keep your arms at your sides and put your hands palm-down on top of your thighs. Try to sit up as straight as possible. If you've never sat this way for any significant length of time, I would strongly recommend practicing at home, as it takes some getting used to.

You can also initiate a bow from a standing position called seiritsu 正立せいりつ. To get into seiritsu, stand and look straight ahead to a spot about 5m 40cm (almost 18ft) in front of you. If you're a man, position your feet about 3cm apart. If you're a woman, make sure your feet are touching. Place your hands lightly on your thighs at a diagonal, keeping a fist-worth of space between your body and your elbows. Finally, remember to breathe with your diaphragm to give a more centered appearance.



The basics of Japanese bowing

Now that we've covered the two “starting positions” of seiza and seiritsu, there are three points to remember for every bow.

First, remember that the slope of your back and the back of your head should form a straight line, rather than a curve. Another way of thinking about this is that you should try to hold yourself in a way that doesn't allow for any gaps between the collar of your shirt and the skin of your upper back.

A straight backed bow and a curved back bow

Second, when bowing from seiritsu, be sure to keep your legs and hips in the same position throughout the entire bow. In other words, don't stick your butt out! To help accomplish this, it may help to image that you're standing with your legs flush against a wall when you begin your bend.

Third, as a rule of thumb, inhale while moving into a bow, exhale while holding the bow, and inhale again while straightening back up.

I bet you didn't think there was so much setup for such a simple-looking gesture, did you? Well, never fear—we've reached the part where I begin telling you about some actual bows!

THE NOD-BOW AND MOKUREI:

Non-bows

...or is it? You see, when you're interacting with people you know very well, such as a friends or relatives, a full-blown bow isn't usually required. Instead, you can incline your head just slightly, as seen below.

In very casual situations, you can even get away with simply casting out a sort of “respectful beam” from your eyes, bowing only in your mind. This is called mokurei 目礼もくれい*, which combines the kanji 目 (eye) and 礼 (bow).

*Confusingly, this word has a homophone, mokurei 黙礼もくれい, which refers to a “silent bow”. Be careful not to get the two confused.

ESHAKU:

The 15° “greeting” bow

When you see an acquaintance of a similar rank, such as a coworker or friend, you should perform an eshaku 会釈えしゃく.

STANDING

1. Stand in seiritsu
2. Bend forward 15° at a natural speed, lower your hands 30cm down the front of your legs
3. At the same time and at the same speed, lower your hands 30cm down the front of your legs
4. Keep your gaze in line with the tips of your fingers, which are in-line with your body and look at a spot about 180cm (6ft) in front of you
5. Return to seiritsu at a natural speed

SEATED

1. Sit in seiza
2. Bend forward 15° at a natural speed, lower your hands 30cm down the front of your legs
3. At the same time and at the same speed, lower your hands 30cm toward the outside of your legs
4. Place the tips of your fingers in-line with your body.
5. Keep your gaze down at a natural speed
6. Return to seiza at a natural speed

As you can see, you don't have to perform this bow—just don't appear rushed.



NOTE: This bow can only be done from seiza.

1. Sit in seiza
2. Bend forward 30° over a one-breath period
3. At the same time and at the same speed, lower your hands 30cm toward your knees
4. Men, place your palms on the tips of your fingers on top of your knees, thumbs touching
5. Direct your gaze to the floor in front of you, which is twice your seated height
6. Hold this position for one second
7. Return to seiza over a one-breath period

Be sure to take your time with this bow. It should appear graceful and sincere.

FUTSUREI OR KEIREI:

The 30 to 45° “respect” bow

When you're interacting with someone who has some sort of power over you, such as your boss or your in-laws, you should perform a futsurei 普通礼ふつふしれい or keirei 敬礼けいれい. Futsurei means “ordinary” and kei 敬 means “respect”, so think of this as a “respect” bow appropriate for most situations.

STANDING

1. Stand in seiritsu
2. Bend forward 45° over the span of one complete breath



'I bet you didn't think there was so much setup for such a simple-looking gesture, did you?'

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SENREI: The 30° "polite" bow

When you're sitting in a semi-formal situation and want to show a moderate level of gratitude or respect, you will perform a senrei 浅礼せんれい, the most common type of sitting bow in your day-to-day life.

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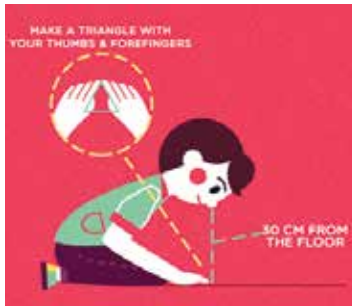


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3. At the same time and at the same speed, lower your hands down the front of your legs
4. Stop your hands 7 to 10cm above your knees
5. Return to seiritsu over the span of a slow inhalation

SEATED

1. Sit in seiza
2. Bend forward until your head is 30cm from the floor over a period of 2.5 seconds
3. At the same time, place your hands flat on the floor, making a triangle with your thumbs and forefingers
4. Hold your upper arms close to your body and leave your elbows slightly off the floor
5. Direct your gaze toward your index fingers with your face parallel to the floor
6. Hold this position for 3 seconds
7. Return to seiza over a period of 4 seconds



SAIKEIREI: The 45 to 70° "deeply reverent" bow

Tourists and foreigners living in Japan will rarely have to perform a saikeirei 最敬礼さいけいれい as it conveys profound respect or regret. Outside of religious uses, which we'll get to in a minute, it's almost entirely reserved for dramatic apologies or audiences with the emperor. In other words, don't break it out for just anyone.

STANDING

1. Stand in seiritsu
2. Bend forward 70° over a period of 2.5 seconds
3. At the same time and at the same speed, lower your hands down the front of your legs
4. Stop your hands when they touch the tops your knees
5. Direct your gaze toward the ground at a spot about 80cm in front of you
6. Hold this position for 3 seconds
7. Return to seiritsu over a period of 4 seconds



SEATED

1. Sit in seiza
2. Bend forward until your face is 5cm from the floor over a period of 3 seconds
3. At the same time, slide your hands toward your knees, leading with your right hand
4. Cup your hands slightly and put them on the ground about 7cm in front of you
5. Form a narrow wedge in the negative space between your hands with the tips of your forefingers touching
6. Direct your gaze straight down—your face should be parallel to the floor
7. Keep your body compact, with your chest lightly touching your thighs, your upper arms close to your body, and the inside of your forearms touching the outside of your knees
8. Hold this position for 3 seconds
9. Return to seiza over a period of 4 seconds, moving your left hand slightly faster than your right
10. Look into the middle distance between you and the person you have just bowed to

When you're practicing this bow in the seated position, pay special attention to step #9, which is the return to seiza. Do so deliberately and wholeheartedly, pausing slightly before you're completely upright. This helps extend the moment and, thus, the amount of respect you're conveying.

Additionally, because this bow lasts ten seconds, there are

Speakin' Japanese

Take a bow

In Japan, bowing is usually used during daily greetings. But be careful, it is sometimes used to show appreciation, sympathies and apologies. So, remember the following Japanese expressions that can be used when bowing.

"Yoroshiku onegai shimasu." = I look forward to getting to know you. (when you meet someone for the first time or ask someone for something)

"Itsumo osewa ni natte imasu." = Thank you always for your help/kindness.

"Arigato gozaimashita." = Thank you so much.

"Mooshiwake arimasen." = Let me express my apologies.

"Okuyami mooshi agemasu." = Let me express my deepest sympathy. (used during funeral/memorial services)

"Shitsurei itashimasu." = I have to leave now.

"Ogenki de." = Please take care of yourself.

—Takahiro Takiguchi, Stripes Japan

Pronunciation key: "A" is short (like "ah"); "E" is short (like "get"); "I" is short (like "it"); "O" is long (like "old"); "U" is long (like "tube"); and "AI" is a long "I" (like "hike"). Most words are pronounced with equal emphasis on each syllable, but "OU" is a long "O" with emphasis on that syllable.

some special rules for breathing. You will inhale while bending forward, then exhale when you begin holding the bow. After exhaling, wait for a moment—typically measured as "two blinks"—then inhale again as you straighten back up.

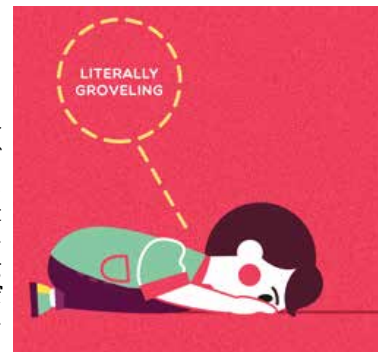
NIREI-NIHAKUSHU: The "worship" bow

When visiting a Shinto shrine, you will be able to make an offering and ring the suzu. After doing so, you will want to perform a nirei-nihakushu 二礼二拍手にわいにはくしゅ.

1. Do 2 keirei bows
2. Clap twice in the air in front of your chest, hands pointed upward
3. Do a single saikeirei bow

DOGEZA: The "begging for your life" bow

Nowadays, you'll probably only see the dogeza 土下座どげざ in samurai or yakuza movies. Someone who is getting yelled at for doing something really disgraceful might do this, pressing their face into the ground out of shame or fear, but I hope you never find yourself in that position, as it is, essentially, groveling.



Special circumstances

- If you are working in Japan, you may find that your company has its own rules about bowing that differ from what I described above. For example, your boss may tell you to place your hands a certain way or to bow to a certain degree. In that case, just do as you're instructed, using your coworkers as examples.
- If you are bowing while seated on a chair, leave some space between you and the backrest and sit up straight. Women should put both knees and feet together, while men should keep their knees and feet separated by about 15 or 20cm. The bowing angles are the same as the standing ones.

BOWING: EVERYBODY'S DOING IT

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

Too many rules?

If you're still confused about when, how deeply, and how long to bow, here are some quick guidelines that will save you some brain space if you don't want to remember specifics.

First, bow when someone bows to you. This excludes the people who greet you in shops and hand out fliers on the street, but should be pretty fool-proof otherwise.

Second, when in doubt, bow to 30°. This will be acceptable in nearly every situation, as it shows a good balance of respect and familiarity.

Third, use age and titles to determine how long you bow. You can definitely get by on guessing ages, and if you need to figure out someone's title, try getting your hands on their business card. People hand out business cards like candy in Japan, so it shouldn't be too hard!

If all else fails, simply hold your bow a beat longer than the person you're bowing to or, if you're in a group situation, than the person who is your closest superior.



you should be standing, too.

- Don't bow while speaking. If you have something you need or want to say, say it first and then bow. This is called gosengorei 語先後礼ごせんごれい. One notable exception to this is during an apology.

Bowing while saying sorry can make you seem more earnest, though this could backfire if the person you're speaking to is a stickler for form. Err on the side of caution.

- When bowing on stairs, don't bow from a higher step than the person you're bowing to. Instead, wait until the person you're greeting is on the same step as you, then bow.

- Don't bow when you're visibly angry or frustrated at someone. Bowing is a way of showing respect, so all aspects of your body should reflect that.

- Some men put their hands on the sides of their butt while bowing, but this isn't correct unless your company prefers that style for some reason. As we discussed earlier, your hands should be on the front your thighs.



- Some women put their hands together (side-by-side or one over the other) when they bow, letting them hang in front of their legs. This is not a proper bow, though it has become popular among young people, possibly because it appears more delicate and feminine. I won't call it "wrong," since ideas of what is culturally-appropriate change all the time—just keep in mind that this is not a traditional way of bowing.



Common Japanese bowing mistakes

- Don't do the palms-together, hands-in-front-of-chest bow. While this is a form of the "original" bow that came from China with buddhism, it's no longer standard in Japan outside of worship situations.



- Never bow while walking in business or formal situations, even as a greeting. Stop moving, bow, then



- Proceed on to your destination.
- Bowing while sitting on a chair is often too casual for formal situations. A good rule of thumb is that, if the person you're bowing to is standing,

Other fun tidbits

I should warn you—once you start bowing, it's hard to stop! Here are some examples you'll see pretty frequently in Japan.

JAPANESE BOWING ON THE TELEPHONE: Japanese people are so naturally-inclined to bow that they'll often do it



during telephone conversations, even though the person they're speaking to can't see them. Usually this behavior is limited to the "nod-bow," but there are some people who will take it even further. Once you've started bowing on the telephone, you'll know you've spent a good amount of time in Japan.

JAPANESE BOWING A TRAIN AWAY: If you're hanging around a station, waiting for your shinkansen 1, you may notice men and women bowing to departing trains as they leave the platform. These people typically work for the train company, either as stewardesses or as cleaning crew, and their bows show gratitude for their customers. You will sometimes see people doing this for elevators in department stores, as well. Now that's devotion!



THE BOW-OFF: As you can tell, politeness is something of an art form in Japan. Sometimes it can also be a competition, especially between two people with the same social or business rank. When two such people are bowing to each other, they will often feel compelled to return every bow the other person makes. "Hey, he bowed," Person A will think, "so I'd better bow again!" Person B, seeing this, will say to themselves, "Oh no, she bowed again, so I have to bow, too!" This leads to both



parties bowing over and over, with each bow getting more and more shallow. Finally, when the bows are so small that they can't even be discerned as bows, they can both stop and get on with their lives. The point is, nobody wants to be "out-bowed" and perceived as lacking humility or respect.



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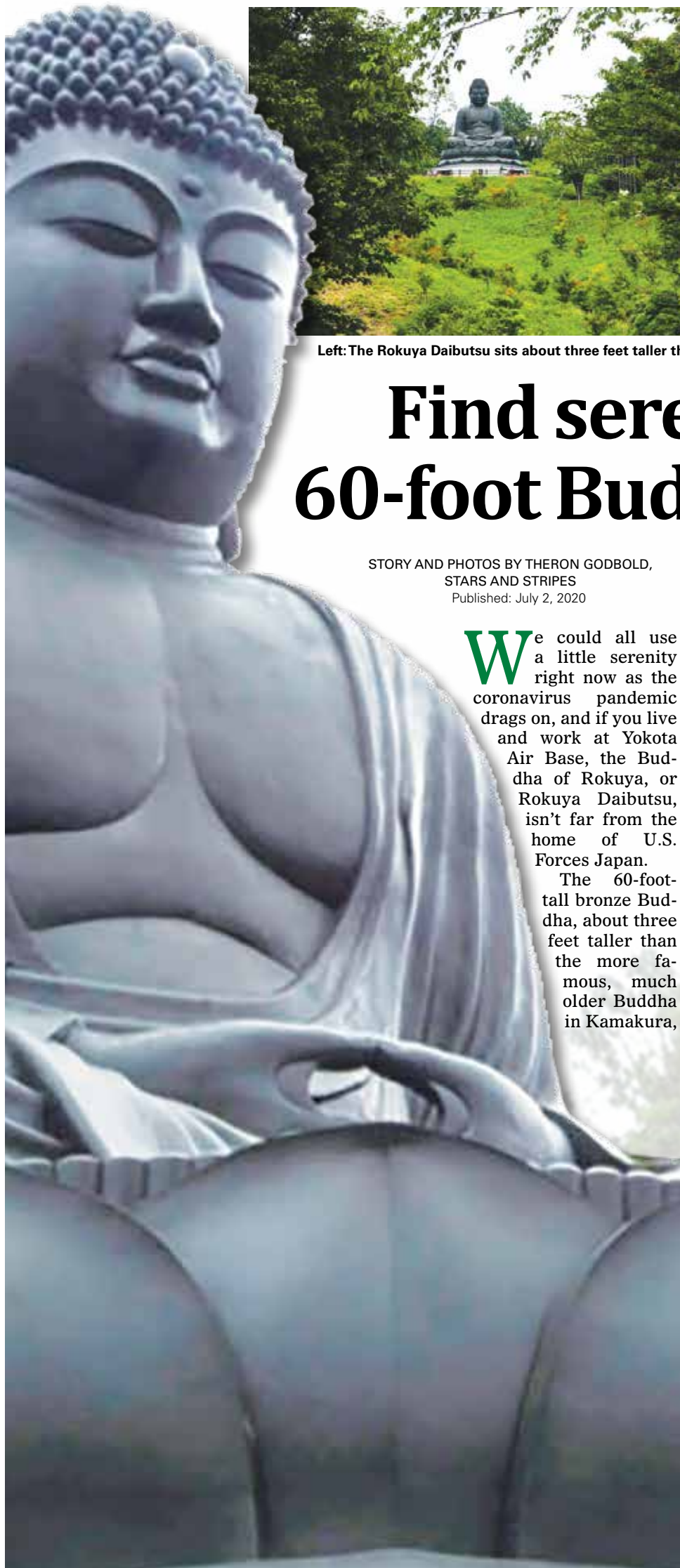
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STARS AND STRIPES



Left: The Rokuya Daibutsu sits about three feet taller than its counterpart in Kamakura. Right: A hiker admires the scenery.

DIRECTIONS: Hokoji is a 20-minute drive from the main gate of Yokota Air Base; the Google GPS code is P7W7+Q4 Hinode, Tokyo

TIMES: The grounds are open daily, from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

COSTS: Admission to the Buddha is 300 yen for adults and 100 yen for children.

FOOD: There are vending machines for snacks and drinks on the grounds.

INFORMATION: entakuzan-houkouji.or.jp

Find serenity at the base of 60-foot Buddha at Hokoji Shrine

STORY AND PHOTOS BY THERON GODBOLD, STARS AND STRIPES
Published: July 2, 2020

We could all use a little serenity right now as the coronavirus pandemic drags on, and if you live and work at Yokota Air Base, the Buddha of Rokuya, or Rokuya Daibutsu, isn't far from the home of U.S. Forces Japan.

The 60-foot-tall bronze Buddha, about three feet taller than the more famous, much older Buddha in Kamakura,

is a 20-minute drive from Yokota's main gate. A leisurely bike ride gets you there in about 45 minutes.

Located on the grounds of Hokoji, a Buddhist temple in Hinode, the Buddha was unveiled in 2018, partly with hopes of bringing more tourists to the area.

Built on a mountainside, the approach to this giant Buddha is through a bare landscape, with acres of newly planted trees still attached to supporting stakes. Several paths, steep in places, lead from the admission office to the top.

Arriving visitors will turn from the street along the Hirai River onto the street heading uphill along the temple complex. On the right is a parking lot. From here, visitors may backtrack to the entrance of a paved, forested path along which statues point the way to a large gate before the temple.

Built in 1478, Hokoji was erected to convert a Tendai sect temple to the Soto sect of Zen Buddhism, according to the temple's website.

Continuing along the path leads to Akigawa cemetery, a vast, traditional Japanese burial ground on the bowl-like hillside above. Cresting the steep hill, you'll see the Buddha across the ravine, looking over the valley.

To reach the Buddha, pay a fee at the admission booth — 300 yen, or about \$2.87 for adults, and 100 yen for a child. The helpful staff speaks minimal English.

Winding your way uphill through a small forest of Japanese cedars brings you to Rokuya Daibutsu. Here you will find benches and a modern, motion-sensor fountain for the ritual hand-cleansing upon arrival.

Inside the base of the Buddha, visitors may purchase incense to leave at the 1/10th scale gold-plated version of the bronze monolith sitting above you. Also, prayer ornaments and fortune papers are available for suggested donations of 300 yen.

Vending machines can be found at the rest area near the admission building. Ample free parking and public restrooms are also available.

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Fry bitter melon and beat the heat

STORY AND PHOTOS BY SHOJI KUDAKA, STRIPES JAPAN

If you live on Okinawa, you might have heard about goya, a local cucumber-like vegetable also known as bitter melon. As the name suggests, this green, bumpy veggie has a bitter taste but is a favorite in the summer season. Goya is also considered an Okinawan superfood as it is rich in vitamin-C, iron, and fiber, which are thought to be ideal for good health especially in the summer heat.

Goya is great raw in a salad, but the most popular way to consume this treat is fried up in goya champuru, a stir fry. Cooking it with other foods such as tofu, bacon, and eggs, you can lighten up the bitter taste.

Why don't you try some goya champuru and beat the summer heat?

kudaka.shoji@stripes.com



INGREDIENTS (for two people)

- One Goya bitter melon (approx. 300g)
- Bacon (50g)
- Tofu (200g)
- Two eggs
- Pepper and salt (small amount)
- Dried Bonito flakes (as much as you want)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Wash goya, tofu, and eggs with water.
2. Cut goya into thin slices of about 5mm (approx. 0.2 inch) thickness.
3. Dice tofu into small cubes of about 2cm (approx. 0.8 inch) sides.
4. Cut bacon into small slices of 1cm (approx. 0.4 inch) width.
5. Beat eggs in a bowl.
6. Pour olive oil in a frying pan over medium heat, and add tofu.
7. Add bacon and continue frying.
8. Add in sliced goya.
9. After the ingredients start to soften and brown, stir in

beaten eggs and a pinch of salt.

10. Cook through until the eggs are done.

11. Plate your stir-fry and sprinkle with pepper and dried bonito flakes.

*Add olive oil if necessary when frying
*The amount of each ingredient mentioned above is just for reference. Please add or reduce them to cater to your taste.



Relive summertime memories with a
Coca-Cola Orange Vanilla

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
 THERON GODBOLD,
 STARS AND STRIPES
 Published: June 25, 2020

Remember the summer sound of an ice cream truck, a crumbled dollar exchanged for a Creamsicle and the refreshing, mellow flavors of orange and vanilla hitting your taste buds?

That's the memory triggered by my first sip of Coca-Cola's Orange Vanilla soda.

First released in Canada in 2018, Orange Vanilla Coke made its way to the United States and became available June 15 in Japan. It's available for a limited time only, although Coke in a press release left the end date open, as it typically does when it brings a special flavor to market.

"Coca-Cola Orange Vanilla combines the delicious flavors of Coca-Cola with the flavors of orange and vanilla, which are popular with Japanese people," the company said on its Japanese website. "You can enjoy a refreshing feeling perfect for the coming season."

Like its predecessor Strawberry Coke, which arrived early this year, Orange Vanilla Coke is available at base commissaries. At Yokota Air Base in western Tokyo, a 12-ounce bottle sells for 84 cents, a discount on the \$1.30 equivalent



price in Japanese retail outlets.

"It's been selling well," grocery manager Andre Reid said June 19. "About as well as other new items they [Coca-Cola] introduce."

Jerome Ray, a military spouse at Yokota, is a Coke aficionado.

"In the four years I've been here I've tried everything from Peach Coke, Coke Clear, Vanilla Float, and even Coke Coffee," the Houston native wrote June 19 on Facebook. "This newest iteration is easily one of the best!"

Americans downed massive quantities of all brands of cola and cherry cola last year, according to the Beverage Industry online magazine. Overall, all U.S. retailers, including military commissaries, sold \$11.5 billion worth of colas of all brands last year, according to the magazine's April 6 edition.

Coke CEO James Quincey last year told MarketWatch that special flavors like Coke Zero and Orange Vanilla can pump up retail sales by 6% in some markets.

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The \$5 gyoza bento from Lunch House Turtle, a takeout eatery near Yokota Air Base in western Tokyo, includes five deep-fried pot stickers, sliced fried chicken breast and a large portion of rice.

LUNCH HOUSE TURTLE

Take-out near Yokota has tasty, wallet-friendly options

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
 THERON GODBOLD,
 STARS AND STRIPES
 Published: June 18, 2020

With dine-in options still off-limits for many folks in the U.S. military thanks to coronavirus restrictions, now's the time for Lunch House Turtle, a walk-up, take-away shop near Yokota Air Base, to shine.

The one-story, bright yellow building with a counter and sliding windows facing the sidewalk is a five-minute drive from Yokota's main gate. Park along the street. In fact, a line of cars with flashing hazard lights may signal you've arrived.

The Turtle serves a tasty selection of bento boxes at great prices. The Turtle Special, for one, at just under \$10 (1,000 yen), is hard to beat.

For lunch recently, I opted for the gyoza bento: five pot stickers; a breaded, fried and sliced chicken breast; a small bed of noodles; and a generous portion of rice and Japanese ginger. All that for just under \$5.

Back at my desk, I opened the plastic foam box and dug in. The rice was still steaming as I

Lunch House Turtle, a takeout restaurant just outside Yokota Air Base in western Tokyo, is known for its generous portions and affordable prices.

ADDRESS: 1 Chome-21-10 Musashinodai, Fussa, Tokyo
HOURS: Turtle is open six days a week, 10:30 a.m. to 9 p.m.; it's closed Wednesday.
PRICES: Everything is under \$10, sides are under \$1
DIRECTIONS: Five-minute drive from Yokota's main gate; Google GPS code is P8XM+MM Fussa, Tokyo
PHONE: 042-553-4896
WEBSITE: turtlebento.html.xdomain.jp/english/eindex.html

plucked a deep-fried dumpling and crunched into it. A very light hint of ginger spiced up the flavor as I devoured the dumpling's smooth filling. I prefer a pan-fried dumpling, but Turtle's sensational flavor surprised me.

While I waited 10 minutes back at the shack for my order, I watched as locals pulled up and picked up their lunch orders. I recalled what my uncle once told me about good dining options: "Always look for the locals," and "The more run-down the place, the better it

probably is." In this case, "run-down" may not apply to the Turtle as much as "humble," and "locals" includes personnel from nearby Yokota who are frequent customers. And yes, English menus are available.

My uncle's advice played through my head as the sizzling sounds of frying chicken perked my ears and the wafting smells of fried food teased my nostrils.

The wait was worth it.
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RAEESAAUTOJAPAN



Through July 10, NPB officials said games would be played in empty stadiums, a first in the 85-year history of the league. Instead, LED screens displayed images of fans to "fill" the stands.

BASES FULL, STADIUMS EMPTY

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
TAKAHIRO TAKIGUCHI,
STRIPES JAPAN

To many Japanese, summer means hitting a ballpark to cheer on their favorite Nippon Professional Baseball, or NPB, league team.

While I may not be a baseball enthusiast, I did always look forward to the season opener in late March, either to watch on TV or to go check out in person.

In Japan, baseball is a little different than what you might be used to watching in the States. Here, each team has a unique cheer and atmosphere. Diehard fans go wild cheering on their teams from the stands, and since every player at bat has their own theme song, the fans memorize their favorite's song and sing along.

In the stadium, "Beer girls" walk up and down serving up ice cold brews to the spectators – another feature only seen in Japan.

The atmosphere that the fans, teams and beer girls create in stadiums have made it a favorite pastime in the summer.

COVID-19 affected this year's season—no surprise there.

This year, the first pitch was delayed three months and the season officially launched June 19. Aside from starting the season late, don't expect the same atmosphere I described above. Through July 10, NPB officials said games will be played in empty stadiums, a first in the 85-year history of the league.

Officials said they anticipate beginning to allow a reduced capacity of fans into each of the country's stadiums and scale up as number of coronavirus infections decrease.

Another prevention measure is to reduce the number of games

down to 120 from the usual 143. And, if score is tied at the end of a game, only one inning can be extended to decide a winner.

You also won't see the open displays of comradery from yesteryear—players cannot high-five each other, shake hands or welcome each other with a hug after a homerun or great play. Players, coaches and benchwarmers in the dugout will practice social distancing and umpires will have to shout their calls from behind a mask.

The baseball we have grown to know and love is different this year. Quieter. The stands empty and only the sound of the bat hitting the ball, mitts catching the ball and the cheers from masked teammates in the dugouts.

For lovers of the game, this is a great way to concentrate on the moves and plays of the teams and players while watching on TV. For others, like me, it's a bit boring.

No fans, no beer girls, no fun cheers in a quiet stadium only make the game seem like a practice we're allowed to watch live. The games in vacant stadiums make you realize how important spectators and cheering are for a ballgame, regardless of what team I'm watching or which part of the stands I'm sitting.

And while it's a bit boring, our safety and that of the NPB players and staff is important. So, for many who have been staying home, watching their favorite team on the television is still better than not watching at all. At least for now. In the meantime, we're cheering from home and waiting until the day we can return to the stands and cheer on the teams and grab a cold one with our friends.

takiguchi.takahiro@stripes.com

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Stripes Sports Trivia

On July 4, 1939, this Major League Baseball player was the first to have his number retired. It was also on the same day as he announced his retirement from The Yankees. Who is the Iron Horse?

Answer

Lou Gehrig

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Crossword

by Margie E. Burke

ACROSS

- Whale groups
- They may be loaded
- Razor sharpener
- Grand tale
- Corner pieces
- TV teaser
- Disney's Willie
- Varnish ingredient
- Horse handler
- Nearly wipe out
- Picked up the tab
- For that reason
- Wheelchair-friendly
- Indian dignitary
- Carpentry tool
- Web address punctuation
- Napkin's place
- Fizzled firecracker
- Champion, as a cause
- Little devil
- Suffix with legal
- Home addition?
- Record company
- "Nebraska" actor Bruce
- Kirk's ship
- Big galoots
- Motel offering
- Scottish castle
- Shelled slow-mover
- First sign of spring
- Two-sided
- Path to the altar
- Unwanted look
- Virus in 2003 news
- Mythical goat-man
- Nervous
- Sitter's charge

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
14				15				16					
17			18					19					
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			23		24		25						
26	27	28			29			30	31	32	33		
34					35			36		37			
38				39	40					41			
42				43				44	45				
46		47		48				49					
			50	51				52					
53	54	55				56		57			58	59	60
61						62		63					
64						65				66			
67						68				69			

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- ### DOWN
- Coin in Cancún
 - Chooses, with "for"
 - South Beach, for one
 - Surgeon's blade
 - Remains of a wreck
 - U.N. workers' grp.
 - Outfitted
 - Big name in beauty products
 - Bit of parsley
 - Shake
 - Santa ____, Calif.
 - Skip over
 - Southern side?
 - Childhood illness
 - Mustard family plant
 - Non-essential
 - Stated further
 - Small jar
 - Autumn drink
 - Swell up
 - Suspect's out
 - Bond-Bond link?
 - Eden fruit
 - Lend a hand
 - Take the helm
 - Recliner part
 - That is to say
 - Old-school phone
 - Phony
 - Pastoral sounds
 - Soprano solo
 - Lean to one side
 - Served up a whopper
 - Carhop's load
 - Carefree adventure
 - Ultimatum ender
 - Journey segment

Answers to Previous Crossword:

R	O	S	A		O	T	T	E	R		S	L	A	W
O	P	U	S		P	R	O	S	E		A	O	N	E
D	E	B	T		P	E	R	P	E	T	R	A	T	E
E	N	T	H	R	O	N	E		F	R	A	M	E	D
				E	M	E	N	D		P	E	E	N	
P	A	R	A	D	E		P	A	R	A	D	I	S	E
E	L	F		O	N	S	E	T		T	O	N	N	E
S	L	U	R		T	H	E	I	R		N	E	A	R
C	A	G	E	D		A	V	O	I	D		V	I	I
I	N	E	D	I	B	L	E		V	I	R	I	L	E
				O	V	A	L		B	E	S	E	T	
O	M	E	L	E	T		M	O	T	H	B	A	L	L
R	E	P	E	R	T	O	I	R	E		O	B	E	Y
E	R	I	N		E	N	T	E	R		O	L	A	F
S	E	C	T		N	E	E	D	S		T	E	N	T

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Next time you go on an island adventure make sure to check the map!

Kanji of the week

海

umi/kai (Sea)

Language Lesson

How are you?

Genki desuka?

SUDOKU

Difficulty: Easy

Edited by Margie E. Burke

HOW TO SOLVE:
Each row must contain the numbers 1 to 9; each column must contain the numbers 1 to 9; and each set of 3 by 3 boxes must contain the numbers 1 to 9.

Answers to Previous Sudoku:

1	2	6	8	9	4	7	5	3
7	5	4	1	6	3	2	9	8
8	9	3	5	7	2	1	6	4
3	8	2	7	5	9	4	1	6
4	6	5	3	1	8	9	7	2
9	7	1	4	2	6	3	8	5
6	1	7	2	3	5	8	4	9
2	4	9	6	8	7	5	3	1
5	3	8	9	4	1	6	2	7

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Kamakura Pasta
[Pasta made from scratch]



Chegoya
[Homemade Korean cuisine]




Grill Topo
[Hamburg, Steak & Salad Bar]



Shabu Shabu - Gyuta
[All-you-can-eat Beef Shabu Shabu and Sukiyaki]



Daitou
[Chinese Restaurant]



DuckyDuck
[Casual Dining Restaurant]



Tsukiji Shokudo Genchan
[Seafood and Japanese Cuisine]



Tonkatsu Wako
[Japanese Pork Cutlet Specialty Restaurant]



BAQET
[Western Cuisine with all you can eat bread]



Marugen Ramen
[Ramen]



Seaside Restaurant & Cafe

Gyu-kaku
[Japanese BBQ Restaurant]



Sushiro
[Conveyor-belt sushi]



Starbucks Coffee
[Specialty Coffee Shop]




SKA-1 Kitchen

Ohitsu Gohan SHIROKUJICHU
[Japanese Restaurant]



AMARA
[CURRY&NAN]



Kentucky Fried Chicken
[Fried Chicken]



Koushin Farm
[Meat Dining]



Baskin Robbins
[Ice Cream]



Tapioca Sweets Buru Puru
[Bubble Tea Drink]



Dipper Dan
[Crepes]



McDonalds
[Hamburger Restaurant]



Marugame Udon
[Udon noodle shop]



Mister Donuts
[Donuts & Dim sum]



Ringer Hut
[Nagasaki Champon]



SKA-1 Grocery Stores

Aeon Style
[Super Market]



Nagai Suisan
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Yokosuka Koushin
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