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Publishing and Media Design Writers

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Family shares bond of service, blood and love

BY JAMES BOLINGER,
STARS AND STRIPES
Published: Dec. 19, 2018

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION IWAKUNI — Lyle Gilbert didn't consider a military career until he felt the pull of patriotism after scores of U.S. troops were killed and injured in the 1986 La Belle discothèque bombing in West Berlin.

Today, he's a Marine Corps major whose example has led four of his children into military service – three as fellow Marines.

"For me there was no other alternative than to join the Marines. I never visited another recruiter," said Gilbert, the director of communication strategy at MCAS Iwakuni, alluding to the toughness, image and ethos embodied by the Corps.

His eldest daughter, Marine Capt. Sarah Rhodes, 29, is a

company commander at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, S.C. She is a communication strategy officer by trade, just like her father. Marines in that field serve as military journalists, broadcasters, photographers and public relations specialists.

Rhodes' younger sister, Marine Sgt. Jordan Gilbert, 25, is also in communication strategy and stationed on Okinawa.

Maurice Murrain, 19, graduated Air Force basic training Sept. 28.

And Tyler Gilbert, 18, who graduated recruit training Nov. 30, was a member of the same recruit company and battalion his father graduated from 32 years ago. He is now headed to Camp Lejeune, N.C., where he will attend combat engineer school.

The Gilberts trace their Marine Corps heritage to Lyle's father, Dominic, who served in the 1950s. He also worked behind a

camera, and today would be considered a communication strategy Marine like his son and granddaughters.

Like dominos

Rhodes was the first of her siblings to sign on the dotted line, in 2012, and said she joined because of the examples set by her parents. Her mother and biological father were both in the Army, and she grew up around the Marine Corps and participated in the Junior



Marine Maj. Lyle Gilbert, bottom right, and his wife Johanna, bottom left, have four children serving on active duty in the U.S. military. Three are in the Marine Corps and one is in the Air Force. Courtesy of The Gilbert Family

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Reserve Officer Training Corps while attending high school on Okinawa.

“I loved everything about the uniform,” Rhodes said. “That feeling of pride started me on the path to joining the Marine Corps.”

Jordan Gilbert was next in April 2013. She was recently selected for promotion to staff sergeant and will sew on her new rocker next year.

“I got super motivated when my older sister graduated” from Officer Candidate School, Jordan said. “The whole plane ride back, I asked my dad a bunch of different questions, and the next month I signed up.”

The Gilberts’ sons graduated from MCAS Iwakuni’s Matthew C. Perry High School together earlier this year, and were best friends growing up. So much so, that the Gilberts adopted then-12-year-old Murrain in 2012 before moving to Okinawa.

Murrain said he wasn’t set on joining the Air Force until his junior year of high school. Today, he is attending technical school for aircraft structural maintenance at Pensacola Naval Air Station, Fla. He hopes to be stationed at Okinawa’s Kadena Air Base after graduation.

Before leaving home for recruit training, his brother, Tyler, said being a Marine has always been his dream.

“Growing up around the Marine Corps made me want to join,” he said. “It’s a pride thing.

[Two of] my sisters had already joined, and I really wanted to make my parents proud. I think the military is the best way to do that.”

Family within a family

Lyle Gilbert met his wife Johanna, then a specialist and finance technician in the Army, while training to become a Marine broadcaster at the Defense Information School at Fort Benjamin Harrison, Ind. Together, the couple has raised a tight-knit family with an emphasis on service. Currently, Johanna is a civilian nurse and lives in North Carolina.

“I think we built it together, although the greater balance was with my wife,” Lyle Gilbert said. “She has always been very nurturing, very loving, very open. She always wanted to have a place where the friends come, not a place our kids wanted to stay away from.”

Their children remember growing up around young Marines from their father’s work who would join the family for holiday parties and other gatherings.

“On Christmas, these corporals and lance corporals would be watching movies in the living room,” Jordan Gilbert said. “Even when dad was deployed, my mom would always have his Marines over.”

That bond carries over even though the family is now spread all over the world.

“As a mom, I couldn’t be more proud, and our family photos are amazing!”

– Johanna Gilbert



Now-Sgt. Jordan Gilbert, right, is congratulated by her older sister, now-Marine Capt. Sarah Rhodes, after completing Marine Corps recruit training in 2013. Courtesy of The Gilbert Family

Amanda Segobiano, 27, lives in California, holds a degree in sociology and plans to work as a counselor for formerly incarcerated adults.

What the future holds

While many of the Gilberts’ children may be on active duty for the next several years, none is committed to making the service a career like their father.

Rhodes will hit her six-year mark in December. She said she wants to see what her next station holds before she commits to the long-term.

Lyle Gilbert is also at a crossroads. January will mark his 33rd year in the Marine Corps. Though retirement has long been an option, he was notified of his selection to lieutenant colonel the day before Tyler completed recruit training. With his tour at MCAS Iwakuni coming to an end next year, he said all options are on the table.

“The first thing we advise our children, with anything in life, is to pray about it,” his wife said. “Then do your homework. Know what you’re getting into and make sure it’s something you want and can to do. The military brings discipline, sacrifice and commitment. They understood this, and it’s not a decision they have taken lightly.”

“As a mom, I couldn’t be more proud,” she added. “And our family photos are amazing!”

bolinger.james@stripes.com
Twitter: @bolingerj2004

“We grew up together,” Rhodes said. “And we go through it in the Marine Corps together as well. We have an extra bond that not everyone has.”

Tradition of service

Lyle said he understands that most of his children will likely be deployed – potentially to combat zones.

“The only thing needed for evil to prevail is for good and capable men and women to stand idly by and do nothing. And I tell [my children] that,” he said. “If not you, then who? Serving your country, protecting your fellow man and your family, putting it all on the line for that, it’s why we are all here.”

He said he was very proud when he heard that Rhodes had decided to join the Marines. Despite his and his wife’s pride in

their own service, Lyle Gilbert said he didn’t push his children to join the military.

Instead, he said, the focus was on serving others and doing things the right way.

“If you are going to do something, do it 100 percent,” said Tyler Gilbert, explaining one of his father’s philosophies. “Even if it’s a mostly meaningless task, do it and do it right. Do it the way it is supposed to be done, not just to get it over with.”

Two Gilbert children chose paths outside the military. Emily Gilbert, 20, is teaching English at a preschool in Iwakuni while seeking a degree in elementary education.

“I had made it very apparent that I wasn’t going to join the military,” she said. “It’s their thing. It’s amazing what they are doing, but I wouldn’t be able to do it.”

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Kinnick looks for repeat

BY DAVE ORNAUER,
STARS AND STRIPES
Published: Dec. 6, 2018

Nile C. Kinnick won a Far East boys basketball title last year. So did Humphreys. This year, at least one of those teams won't. At least not all by themselves.

Kinnick won the Far East Division I tournament and Humphreys took the D-II crown. But Humphreys moved up a division to start the school year.

Fueling the Red Devils' and Blackhawks' drives toward a possible D-I final showdown in February at Humphreys are several players who play all year around, and the coaches of their respective teams say they could be true difference-makers this season.

"It's like we're getting seasoned veteran players who know what to do,"



Senior Ethan Rodriguez is a returning All-Far East Division II player for a rebuilding Daegu boys basketball team. Photo by Ben Sessions, Special To Stripes

Elijah Bembischew, a 6-foot-7 senior, brings height in the paint to a rebuilding Daegu Warriors boys team. Photo by Mary Sarantakes, Special to Stripes

Blackhawks coach Ron Merriwether says of All-Far East senior returners Jalen Hill and two-time Far East MVP Quintin Metcalf.

"He's really stepped up as a leader this year," Red Devils coach Robert Stovall said of junior rising star Kaine Roberts.

Metcalf and Hill spent last summer playing in Philadelphia for the Alexander Basketball Academy Global Squad, along with Kinnick's Davion Roberts and Chris Watson and American School In Japan's Koki Wiley.

"They kind of understand that it's more than scoring points," Merriwether said. "Trying to benefit the team. Makes us as a whole harder to beat. Make the extra pass, get your teammates involved, elevate the level of play of everybody else."

For the last two summers, Roberts (no relation to Davion) has played for Yokohama B Corsairs U-15 to U-18 team in the Tokyo-Yokohama based Reccoss International League for teens.

While all are aiming to play at a higher level next year, it's what they can do to bring their teams success this year

that's in focus now.

"He's a team guy and that's where he's matured the most,"

Stovall said of Roberts. "He can create points for other guys, which is what we hoped he could do."

With the Roberts and Watson in the lineup, Kinnick went 25-4 a year ago, capturing the first Far East D-I title in school history.

Behind Metcalf and Hill, the Blackhawks made it a clean sweep of the Korea Blue titles, then went on to beat Yokota in the D-II final before taking third place in the combined Far East. They went 20-1, including a 5-1 ledger against Division I teams.

Even though it's not new for

Humphreys to face D-I opponents, "we have to prepare for whomever we may see," Merriwether said. "We have to get better each week, have to improve on the little things."

With Humphreys now at D-I and two other recent D-II champions, E.J. King and Yokota, in rebuild mode, the chase for the small-schools title could be a wide-open one.

Among the more promising teams is Osan, which keeps three starters, welcomes two talented newcomers and is hoping to improve in both Korea Blue and Far East finishes.

Matthew C. Perry welcomes a brother tandem from California, Justin and Joseph Andres, along with experienced Kadena transfer Anthony Laney.

And while Robert D. Edgren appears young, the Eagles welcome four players with stateside experience, as well as new-old coach Andre Thibert, who returns to the bench after a five-season hiatus.

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Jalen Hill, a Humphreys senior, spent part of the summer with teammate Quintin Metcalf playing for Alexander Basketball Academy's Global Squad. Photo by Julianna Visico, Special To Stripes

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Bethani Newbold, a sophomore, will once again start at point guard for up-and-coming Daegu girls basketball.



Maria Bruch formerly played for Seoul American, but is now a senior guard at Humphreys; Madelynn Huffman is a sophomore for up-and-coming Daegu's girls basketball team.

Ebony Dykes, who previously played for Seoul American, is now a senior at Humphreys; Dai'Ja Turner returns as a sophomore for up-and-coming Daegu's girls basketball team.
Photos by Mary Sarantakes, Special to Stripes



Girls squads look to dethrone ASB

BY DAVE ORNAUER,
STARS AND STRIPES
Published: Dec. 6, 2018

Johnny Cooper knows what a good team needs to do to accomplish the feat. The question, he says, is there any team in Division I that can step up and take down American School of Bangkok, the two-time defending Far East large-schools girls tournament champion?

It's doubtful that it will be Cooper and his rebuilding Kadena Panthers. For five of the last six years, including the last two, Kadena has played bridesmaid to powerhouse teams that made every Division I tournament since 2012 a chase to see who finishes second. Kadena did win once, in 2016.

For the last two years, ASB's Eagles, with their sister duo of Keisharna Lucas and two-time D-I MVP Shanique Lucas, have dominated all comers, winning two D-I titles and also last year's combined D-I/D-II Far East tournament at Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni.

And it's a fairly sure bet that ASB will be invited back to defend its D-I title. Whether it's in one of the early pool-play

games or if the Eagles make it to the championship game again, Cooper, the Panthers' second-year coach, offers the following:

"You have to limit your mistakes," he said. "They capitalize a great deal on turnovers. You really have to take care of the ball. And you have to bring the game to them. Last year, we did that for three quarters. But you have to play a complete game against them."

Cooper's Panthers should be hard-pressed to make it back to the title game, given that six seniors graduated and two juniors transferred. Only one starter, Atiria Simms, returns.

It could be that Kubasaki, long the Panthers' doormats on Okinawa, could rise up. Eight players return from last year's team.

"This is by far the most talented team we've had top to bottom," said third-year Dragons coach Steven Casner. "They're going to give me everything they've got every day."

Or it could be Humphreys, which moves up from D-II and welcomes Steve

Boyd to the coaching helm. He's coached boys teams at Seoul American and Robert D. Edgren since 2002, but never a girls team. He brings seniors Ebony Dykes and Maria Bruch with him from Seoul to Humphreys.

Nile C. Kinnick also has a new coach, Sherry Dailey, who coached Red Devils junior varsity the last two years.

Kinnick gains a 6-foot-2 center, Madelyn Gallo, from Rota, Spain, and a freshman guard in Jordan Simms.

And while Eagles might again soar to a D-I title, the small-schools title chase could be wide open, now that Yokota's super seniors, Britney and Jamia Bailey, have graduated.

Daegu, with new coach Jay Van, looks promising with super sophomores Bethani Newbold and Dai'Ja Turner still in the lineup. So, too, does Osan, with Brendan Rouse new to the helm but a veteran squad on the floor, featuring seniors Lizzy White and Maja Inthavixay.

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Yokota's cupboard isn't entirely bare; five players return, but second-year coach Byron Wrenn still needs height in the paint.

"We are working hard and excited about the season," Wrenn said. "We look forward to the start of the season and will compete with our opponents."

Among other teams in rebuild mode, Zama looks promising, with four returners, including junior Jessica Atkinson in the middle. "We don't have much depth," new coach Daisy Whitaker-Hayes said, "but we have quality and I'll take quality over quantity any day."

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Senior Chris Mason, dark shirt and shorts, is one of five returning Far East wrestling tournament champions. He won the 215-pound class last year for Division I champion Nile C. Kinnick. Photo by Sheila Suckart, Special to Stripes



Yokota sophomore Chris DeGrella took fourth place at 108 pounds in last year's Far East tournament. Photo by Corrine Nepaial, Special to Stripes

Junior Jacob Berry, top left, and sophomore Gavin Jackson are the two lone returners to a young, thin Daegu wrestling team. Photo by Lisa Lyons, Special to Stripes

Teams look to make leap past St. Mary's, Kinnick

BY DAVE ORNAUER, STARS AND STRIPES
Published: Dec. 6, 2018

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa – After five seasons of dominance by St. Mary's and Nile C. Kinnick on the Far East Division I wrestling scene, it's pretty much starting-over time for the Titans and Red Devils - particularly for the latter.

The reigning Kanto Plain, DODEA-Japan and Far East D-I champion Devils lost 12 of 13 starters, have just one returning champion in senior Chris Mason

and will bring to the mat a youngish lineup looking to develop.

The Titans are in somewhat better shape, sporting a lineup top-heavy in underclassmen, including six seniors, three of whom placed during last year's Far East. But they only return one defending champion in sophomore Eiji Kasahara.

"It's really wide open," ninth-year Kinnick coach Gary Wilson said of the upcoming season and who might be in line for a shot at Division I honors. "It's pretty cyclical here. You have some down years when you have to build again. We have a lot of work to do. We're all rookies."

So who might be in line to bypass St. Mary's and Kinnick, with 28 Far East wrestling titles between them, and seize the Division I crown?

"I liked Kubasaki last year, and American School In Japan, too," Wilson said of the Dragons, who have 25 Far East titles, a Pacific-record in any sport; and the Mustangs, with four Far East mat titles. "They have some things going on."

The Dragons return five wrestlers, three of whom placed at Far East a year ago. Coach Brent Cook, in his third season, says his team is deep at all weight classes, including one, 215, where he's torn regarding which one he'll keep as his No. 1, Clint Reventlow or Haydn Peterson.

"They're focused, concentrating, hard-working; they're pretty impressive," Cook said of his group of wrestlers, which as of Tuesday numbered 30. "I see a different team than I've seen the last couple of years."

Senior Luke Moseley placed second at 148 last year and sophomore Jaylan Mayers fifth at 122. Peterson finished fourth at 215 a year ago, but is getting a strong

challenge from Reventlow.

And there's experience among Cook's cadre of assistants: two-time Far East runner-up Josh Bales, Kubasaki Class of 2010, and two-time champion Bobby Duncan, Kubasaki Class of 2001.

Thanks to a spike in enrollment, due to the transformation from Yongsan Garrison south, Humphreys moves from Division II to Division I, and coach Ben Pak from Seoul American to the Blackhawks' helm.

But Pak and the Blackhawks face the same issue he and Seoul American faced when they were top of the Korea heap. Humphreys can fill just about every weight class, but the same cannot be said for the Falcons, Osan and Daegu, where the ranks are thin. Osan does sport two-time champion Kojiro VanHoose at 122.

"I'll have several wrestlers who will go through the season with no matches and when they get to Far East, they will struggle due to limited competition as well as experience," Pak said.

"With Humphreys' student population getting larger, we're going to be at a disadvantage compared to schools in Japan and Okinawa."

In Japan Division II, Zama's and Edgren's numbers are also down and E.J. King will not field a team.

The two most populous D-II teams in Japan are defending Far East champion Yokota and last year's runner-up Matthew C. Perry. Each has a reigning Far East champion on its roster, Caleb Heino for the Panthers and Marshall China for the Samurai, and can fill almost all weights.

"If you're not contending, you're pretending," Samurai third-year coach Chris Munsell said. "We will always contend as long as I'm coaching here."

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A HOME FOR CRAFT BEER ENTHUSIASTS

STORY AND PHOTOS BY CRAIG ATKINSON, METROPOLIS MAGAZINE

In the narrow side streets around Tokyo's Iidabashi Station, there are numerous bars and eateries for you to choose from. One in particular, Hop-Scotch, is redrawing the traditional boundaries of what a bar offers.

Hop-Scotch is a craft beer and whiskey bar that opened in July 2015, and has since become a home for local beer and whiskey enthusiasts by serving the latest craft beers from here and abroad.

The bar is owned by an Australian husband and wife, Luke and Jules, who are locals themselves. Behind the bar you'll find Yusuke. He has been the manager since the doors opened, and brought with him fifteen years experience dealing

with whiskey. Daily, he adds a new beer to the shortlist on the handwritten menu above the bar.

Beers don't last long here; even the popular ones will be off the menu within a couple of kegs. Hop-Scotch's aim is to keep themselves and their clientele up-to-date with what different breweries are producing by keeping an open menu.

However, the whiskey keys are handled differently. The whiskey menu is set, with a focus on the limited and hard-to-get releases. One on offer, for instance, is from a young distillery located 200 feet below sea level: Milk and Honey in Tel Aviv. There were also many other bottles on the shelves with similar stories, giving Yusuke a chance to flex his knowledge.

I ordered an imperial stout from Seattle, Washington, which was recommended as a pairing for the Reuben sandwich that I'd also ordered. While I sat and looked around, I couldn't help but notice the beer labels stuck on the walls, displayed and earned like the badges on a boy scout's uniform. I was taken aback by how many breweries had been served in the bar in the two years since it had opened, and wondered what the walls might look like in another two.

After I finished my sandwich, I ordered a serving of pulled pork sliders. The menu serves a mix of different pub foods, with offerings such as the chicken



Hop-Scotch Craft Beer & Whisky

LOCATION: Inoue Building 1F, Funimi 2-2-11, Chiyoda-ku
NEAREST STATION: Iidabashi
TEL.: 050-3136-9699
HOURS: Mon - Fri 5 p.m. - 12 a.m., Sat 3 p.m. - 12 a.m. Closed Sun.
WEB: www.hopscotchtokyo.com



or vegetable quesadilla, fish and chips, gyoza and, on Tuesday nights, baby back ribs. Hop-Scotch also holds a number of events including the Cook-Your-Own-Takoyaki night, where everything is supplied. There is also a Showa Kayo night, hosted by a local DJ playing live tunes all night, and a Tap Takeover night, which is one of the few times that you might see a beer run through the taps for a second time. Tap Takeover nights give a brewery an opportunity to show a selection of what they have or a new release. Yusuke and the owners prioritize keeping a close connection with the brewers and distilleries by visiting them regularly.

While I was at the bar, a delivery of two kegs arrived, both no larger than a

gallon of paint, and I finally got the appeal of craft beer — the creativity of the craft of brewing. The beers you drink at Hop-Scotch or similar bars aren't sent out of shipping facilities in twenty- or forty-liter units, but in four, eight, or ten, delivered door to door like a care package from back home.

I might have stepped into Hop-Scotch as a novice about the craft beer scene, but I left as an enthusiast for the craft of brewing.

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Imperial Palace



Things to see o

STORY AND PHOTOS BY NANO BETTS,
TRAVELWITHNANO.COM

Trip to Tokyo is a psychedelic experience and no guidebook, documentary or movie can prepare you for it. Home to more than 13 million people, Tokyo is sprawling, frenetic and endlessly fascinating. The visuals, the smells and the sounds all merge into what I like to call a city of thousand layers and endless contrasts.

Japan's capital has insatiable appetite for modernity, yet never loses the sight of its history and deep-rooted cultural heritage. It's the kind of city where a centuries-old Shinto shrine can be found just next door to the state of the art architectural masterpiece. Or where a kimono-clad woman, poised and elegant in her wooden geta, boards the uber-modern bullet train and shares the seat with Lolita girl. Tokyo will equally dazzle you with its soaring skyscrapers, tranquil landscape gardens, flickering jumbo neon billboards, quirky characters and rickety mom-and-pop shops. In short, whether you are looking for the luxurious, the bizarre, the cute or the quintessential – there is something for everyone.

It took me almost two years of living in Tokyo to finally sit down and write my guides. The truth is, there is so much to explore in the rambling metropolis, it is impossible to list it all in one post. That's why I will be grouping it all thematically in a series of posts: Tokyo for first-timers, off-beat Tokyo and unique experiences in Tokyo. Whether it's your first time in Japan, or you're coming back to explore more, hope you'll find something useful in the upcoming articles.

PLANNING YOUR STAY IN TOKYO

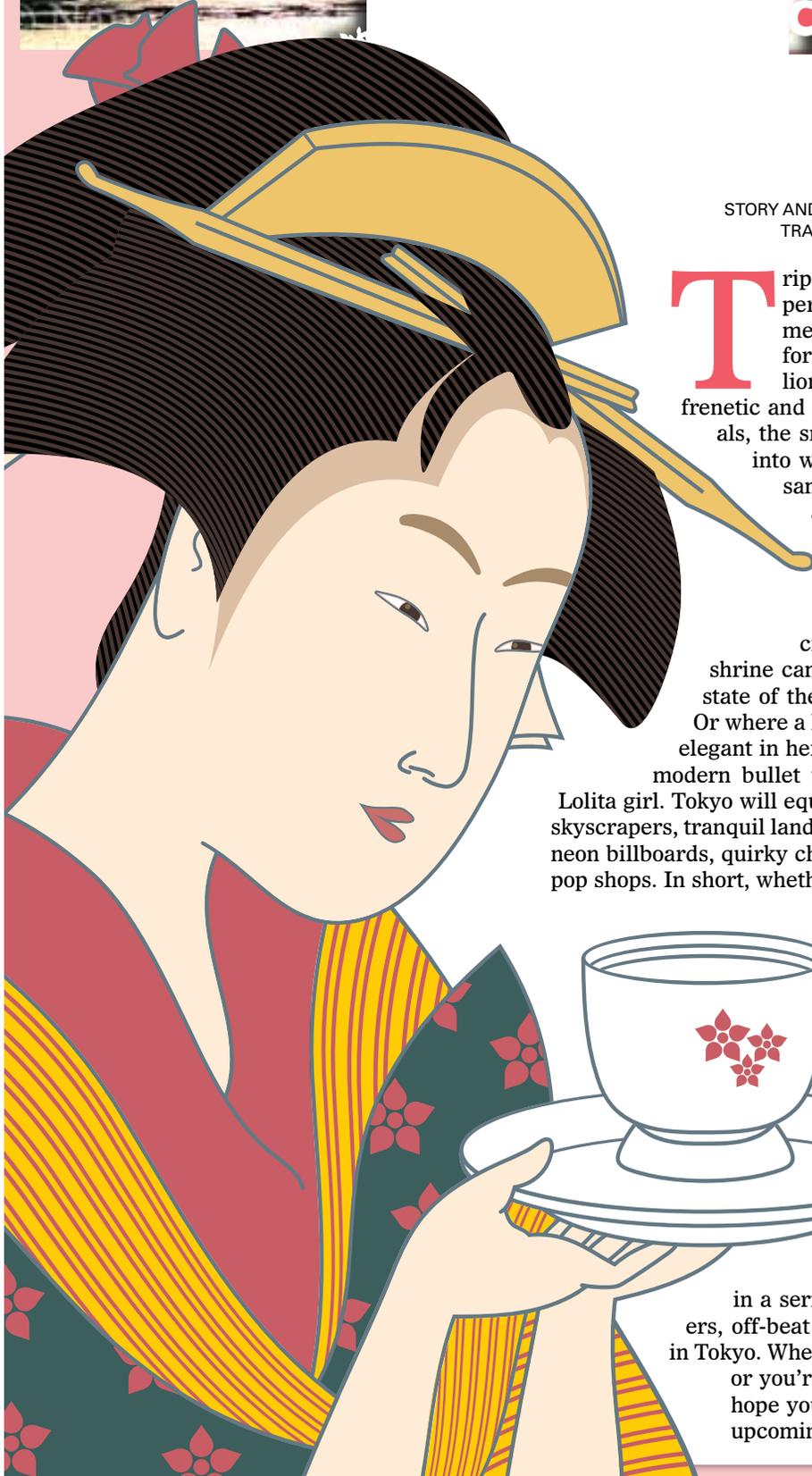
How Long Should I stay in Tokyo? The answer to this question depends on your budget and available time. I'd recommend allocating at least three full days to exploring Tokyo, and couple more days for day trips to Kamakura, Hakone, Nikko or Mt. Fuji to name a few.

Where should I stay in Tokyo? There is no lack of luxury, as well as more budget-friendly hotels in town. You also have a wide array of hostels and capsule hotels to choose from, not to mention Airbnb options. Unlike many other capitals, Tokyo doesn't have a single "downtown" or "city center". Wherever you book your lodging, make sure you are located close to the metro station for easy access to the public transportation. Neighborhoods like Shinjuku, Shibuya, Roppongi, Akasaka and Tokyo Tower area are all good places to stay at.

How do I get from Narita or Haneda Airport to the city center? There are regular shuttle buses going from both airports to different areas of the city (approx. ¥3000, up to 90-minute drive depending on traffic), or limousine bus services taking you directly to your hotel. You can also take train: Narita Express costs ¥2940 and will get you to Tokyo, Shinjuku and Shibuya Stations (among a few others) in about an hour; Narita Skyliner costs ¥2,400 per person and will get you to Ueno station in 45 minutes; Tokyo Monorail from Haneda, costing ¥470 per person, will get you to centrally-located Hamamatsu Station where you can transfer to other mass-transit services. Naturally, you also have an option to take a taxi, but beware of high cost.

Is Tokyo Safe? Absolutely! The crime rate is incredibly low, and I have never felt even a tiny bit unsafe no matter how late it was. The city also has a wonderful lost and found system, so if you happen to leave something behind in the train, or loose an item in the street, there is a big chance to retrieve it at the local Police Station.

Is it easy get by in Tokyo, are there English signs? Yes, you will have no trouble navigating the city as there are English signs almost everywhere, especially in the metro/train stations (this unfortunately doesn't include restaurants, as some have signs only in Japanese). Attendants in the train stations are also very helpful and speak some English, so they will gladly point you to the right direction.

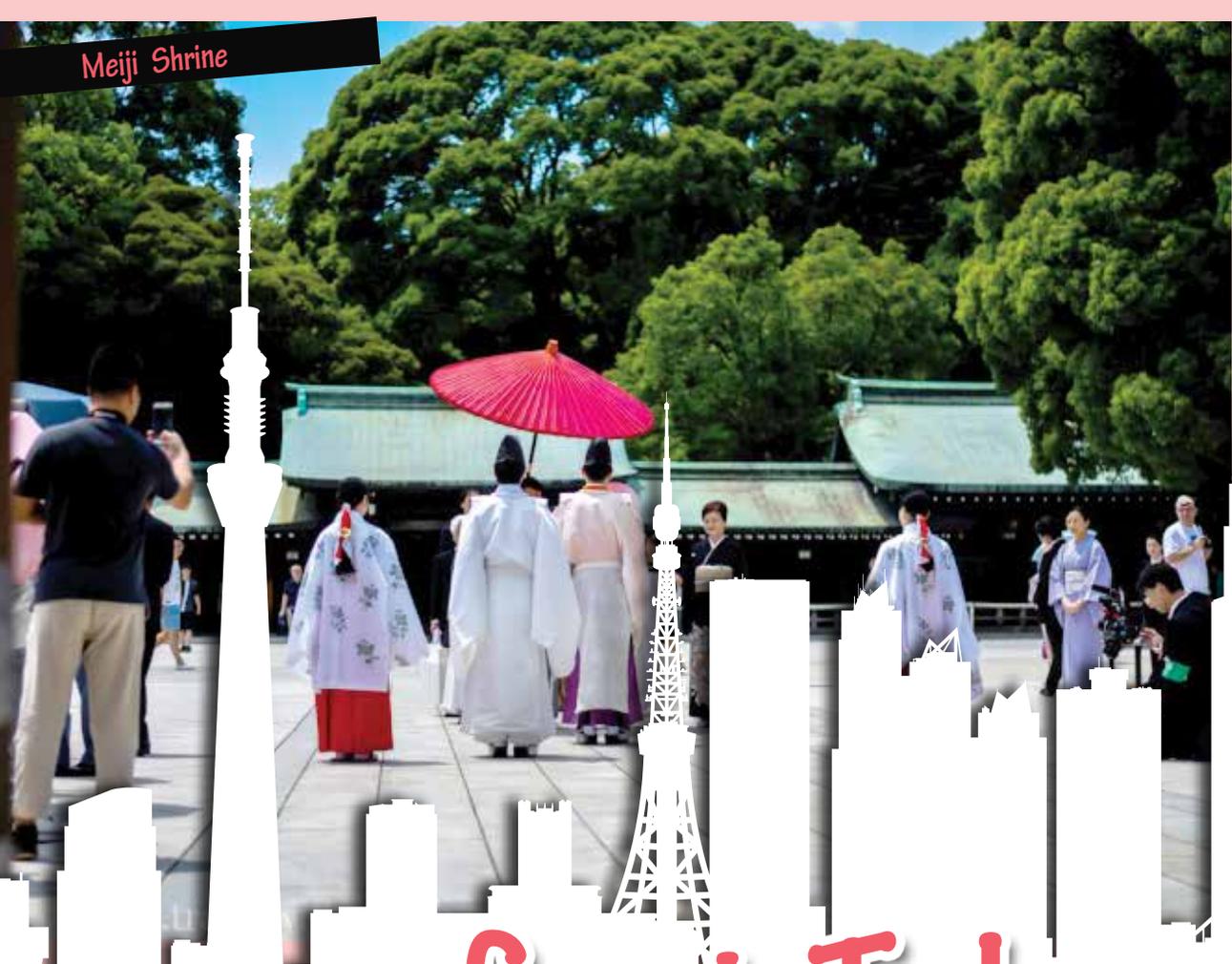


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Meiji Shrine



Scramble Crossing In Shibuya

on your first Tokyo visit

I recommend you download Hyperdia app to easily figure out the train times and routes. I also rely heavily on Google Maps, I think it is the easiest way to find the place and it has never failed me. In general, people here are very friendly and helpful, even if they are too shy to speak English. More than once have I seen strangers go out of their way to assist me to the place I was going. So yes, don't hesitate to ask for an assistance.

Is there free wifi in Tokyo? Only in select places, like airports, certain train stations and cafes. I recommend to rent pocket wifi at the airport, that way you will have internet access everywhere you go. Very important for the Google Maps!

Is language an issue? Yes and no, and it all depends on a situation. You will not have a problem navigating cities and finding information (information centers are particularly helpful!). However, most of the shops and grocery stores, for example, still don't have English signage. Many local restaurants also don't have English menus and staff typically struggle answering your enquiries (especially over the phone). They are also all very shy, which at times complicates things. Having said that, Japanese are generally friendly to foreigners even though English is not well spoken. I *very* rarely am in situations where I cannot figure out a thing and have to turn around and leave. There is always a way to get the message through, just don't feel intimidated, stay patient and polite. Remember, Japan is your host country!



POINTS OF INTEREST IN TOKYO

Each of Tokyo's neighborhoods have a distinct character of their own. The goal of this guide is not to list all the "must-see places in Tokyo", but rather give you options and inspire you to explore the city. Whether you are traveling to Tokyo for the first time, or are a returning visitor, I hope you'll discover something new for yourself here. Don't try to cram as much as possible into your itinerary. Japan is a place to be savored, observed, admired, and pondered. Even in the mad rush of Tokyo, try to go slow, let your curiosity wander, observe and soak it all in. Follow the links in each subsection to get an in-depth information about each place.



Shinjuku

SHINJUKU

City within a city, Shinjuku is a central business and entertainment district of Tokyo. During the daytime, savor the view from the observation deck of monumental Tokyo Metropolitan Government Office and enjoy picnic at Shinjuku Gyoen Garden. For those seeking excitement, the red-light district of Kabukicho (with one of the most impressive neon lights) comes to life after the sun sets. The psychedelic show at Robot Restaurant will certainly leave you positively perplexed and you can always continue the night at one of many karaoke bars nearby, or have shots at a more retro-style bars lined up along Golden Gai.

Starting from October 2017, Shinjuku will also be home to Yayoi Kusama's first permanent museum in Japan.

SCRAMBLE CROSSING IN SHIBUYA

I often call it the Time Square of Tokyo. This place has a verve like no other. It is like a beating heart after a vigorous cardio exercise, filled with energy and crazy pace. Being the world's busiest intersection, there is lots to take in: crowds flood from all directions every time the light goes green, ginormous flashy billboards scream from all directions, shopping malls offering latest trends and smaller shops selling kitschy merchandise, restaurants with enticing signs and plastic food displays. Take Hachiko Exit from the Shibuya Station to see the statue dedicated to the famous dog. L'Occitane Café as well as Starbucks on the opposite side provide great vantage points of the crossing. Another great spot for the aerial view of the Scramble is the 25th floor of the Shibuya Excel Hotel Tokyo. It's a floor that houses the hotel's restaurants and is open to the

public. The elevators of the hotel are also a good spot. The corner two elevators facing the crossing are made of glass and provides a perfect vantage point.

If you're hungry, I recommend either perusing the underground food parlor called Tokyu Food Show to pick up a bento box, or enjoy sushi at Uoriki Kaisen located on the same floor.

MEIJI SHRINE

There are many incredibly pretty temples and shrines in Tokyo, but one that should absolutely make your list of places to see (alongside the Buddhist Senso-ji complex in Asakusa) is a magnificent Meiji Shrine. The complex was built to honor the divine souls of Emperor Meiji, who made significant contribution in the modernization of Japan, and Empress Shoken and to commemorate their virtues and venerate them forever. While the shrine itself is beautiful, it is the path leading to it that leaves me speechless every time I go there. A massive wooden torii gate made of 1,700-year-old cypress greets you at the start of the wide passage into what feels like a massive green forest. The minute you step on the other side of the gate a calm silence replaces the relentless bruit of crowded Harajuku and you seem to be immersed into a bit magical world where an atmosphere of tranquility and austerity takes over. You are in the heart of the huge metropolis, yet detached from the rest of the world and all its worries.

HARAJUKU, OMOTESANDO AND AOYAMA

Once you are done touring Meiji Shrine, head down the street to Harajuku neighborhood for a contrasting experience. Start your tour at the Takeshita Dori, a hub of kawaii culture and Japanese teenagers with their outlandish street fashion that is a source of inspiration to designers around the world. You'll find a mix of psychedelic vintage boutiques, music-filled fashion shops, crepe stalls and cafes, plus photo booths known as purikura, where visitors customize pictures of themselves with kitsch decorations. If you are looking for the famous cosplayers (who nowadays are as elusive as geisha in Kyoto), I recommend to time your visit on a weekend afternoon.

Omotesando Avenue is often referred to as Champs Elysee of Tokyo, with luxury shopping and restaurants. There are also a number of interesting galleries to check out. For a comprehensive guide, refer to my Top 10 Things To

SEE TOKYO ON PAGE 10

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9
TOKYO

Asakusa



Do in Harajuku & Omotesando at www.travelwithnanob.com. The neighborhood harmoniously links to Aoyama, which grants more opportunities to empty your wallet and satiate your appetite. It's also home to Nezu Museum, home to a treasure trove of more than seven thousand examples of pre-modern art from across Japan and East Asia, from calligraphy and metalwork to sculpture and tea ceremony tools, all painstakingly collected by the Japanese industrialist Kaichiro Nezu until his death in 1940.

ASAKUSA, UENO, TOKYO SKYTREE

For a glimpse at Tokyo of yesteryear head to Asakusa. This is one of the oldest and most extensive neighborhoods in the metropolis that brings together cultural sights, dining and entertainment in vibrant surroundings that are historic and modern at the same time. There's plenty to do and see in Asakusa, like visiting the 17th-century Shinto shrine Senso-ji or shopping in Kappabashi Kitchen Town.

It would make sense to end the day at Tokyo SkyTree, the tallest tower in the world, which not only offers wonderful views of the entire city, but houses entertainment complex which includes aquarium, shops, restaurants, etc..

IMPERIAL PALACE, MARUNOCHI DISTRICT AND TOKYO STATION

Marunochi is a super sleek business center of Tokyo that gets a dose of royal zen from the Imperial Palace grounds located nearby. While you cannot access the Imperial Palace (since it is still an active residence of the Emperor and his family), you can tour its stunning garden in the east. Tokyo Station reminds me of the Grand Central Station, it is huge

and has quite a few points of interest including the famous Ramen Street and the Character Street (shops selling merchandise for Hello Kitty, Pokemon, and so much more).

AKIHABARA

Akihabara is a hub for all things quirky, cutting edge and extraordinary. It's a place for geeks to share their gaming passions and indulge in their preoccupations. Home for Japanese contemporary sub-cultures such as manga comics and anime cartoons, Akihabara draws crowds of so-called otaku geeks. As soon as you step outside the train station, your senses are assaulted from all directions – speakers scream out Japanese pop,

billboards blind you with its neon glow and waitresses dressed up in frilly maid costumes are passing out the flyers.

There's certainly a lot to take in, but it's a cultural experience like no other.

ROPPONGI

This district has two faces: during the day time it has a thriving art scene and is bustling with salarymen rushing to work, while at night it turns into the cosmopolitan nightlife center where expats like to party in clubs and karaoke bars. Tokyo Tower, the symbol of the city, is not to be missed (Zojoji Temple nearby has a very good view), while Roppongi Hills houses the Mori Art Museum as well as observation deck.

Roppongi



GINZA

Ginza needs no introduction, it is an uber-luxurious neighborhood with one of the best restaurants and shops seeding its streets. Don't miss the newly opened Ginza Six, if not for its designer boutiques then for the installation by Yayoi Kusama in its main hall. Ginza also boasts with one of the best bars in town – think intimate basement spaces with subtle music, dim lights and artisan cocktails. Tip: on weekends a part of Ginza Avenue turns into a pedestrian street, making it a very pleasant spot to take a stroll.

ODAIBA

Located in Tokyo Bay, this artificial and ultramodern island is one of the most popular sites among locals and tourists alike for a reason: it has it all. From flamboyant and futuristic-looking architecture to an array of amusement spots, shopping malls and restaurants — this destination in Tokyo even has its own Statue of Liberty. Regardless of what season you're visiting, Odaiba is the perfect year-round day trip for geeks, budding architects, families and shopaholics alike.

Ginza



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Nickelback, anyone?

Canadian rock legends head to Tokyo in Feb.

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JANUARY

Slash Featuring Myles Kennedy and The Conspirators
Tokyo, Jan. 17, 7 p.m., Shinkiba Studio Coast, 8,000 yen; Creativeman 03-3499-6669

Taking Back Sunday
Tokyo, Jan. 21, 7 p.m., Daikanyama Space Odd, 6,500 yen; Creativeman 03-3499-6669.

Greta Van Fleet
Tokyo, Jan. 24, 7 p.m., Zepp DiverCity Tokyo, 6,500 - 7,000 yen; Jan. 25, 7 p.m., Shinkiba Studio Coast, 6,500 yen; Creativeman 03-3499-6669.

FEBRUARY

Brandon Coleman
Tokyo, Feb. 2, 4:30 & 7:30 p.m., Billboard Live Tokyo, 6,500-7,500 yen; 03-3405-1133.

Bay City Rollers Starring Leslie Mckewn
Tokyo, Feb. 2 & 3, 4 p.m., duo Music Exchange; Yokohama, Feb. 4, 7 p.m., New Side Beach!!; Fukuoka, Feb. 10, 4 p.m., Gate's 7, 8,000 - 15,000 yen. For more information, visit <http://alive.mu/info/bcr201903-3444-6751>.

Julien Baker
Tokyo, Feb. 9, 4:30 & 7:30 p.m., Billboard Live Tokyo, 6,000-7,000 yen; 03-3405-1133.

Nickelback
Tokyo, Feb. 9, 6 p.m., Nippon Budokan, 10,000 - 12,000 yen; Creativeman 03-3499-6669.

Stryper
Kawasaki, Feb. 9 & 10, 6 p.m., Club Citta Kawasaki, 8,500 yen For more information, visit Ticket Pia (<http://w.pia.jp>), Lawson Ticket (<http://l-tike.com/>) or eplus (<http://eplus.jp/>).

TOTO
Hiroshima, Feb. 14, 7 p.m., Hiroshima Bunka Gakuen HBG Hall, 13,000-14,000 yen; Yumebanchi 082-249-3571; Fukuoka, Feb. 18, 7 p.m., Fukuoka Civic Hall, 13,000-14,000 yen; Tsukusu 092-771-9009; Tokyo, Feb. 20, 7 p.m., Nippon Budokan, 9,000-13,000-14,000 yen; Udo 03-3402-5999 or visit Ticket Pia (<http://w.pia.jp>), Lawson Ticket (<http://l-tike.com/>) or eplus (<http://eplus.jp/>).

Jon Spencer
Tokyo, Feb. 20, 7:30 p.m., Ebisu Liquidroom, 6,500 yen; Creativeman 03-3499-6669.

Story of the Year
Tokyo, Feb. 20, 7 p.m., Shibuya Club Quattro, 6,800 yen; Smash 03-3444-6751.

Chris Botti
Tokyo, Feb. 21, 22 & 25, 6:30 & 9 p.m., Feb. 23 & 24, 5 & 8 p.m., Blue Note Tokyo, 12,800 yen; 03-5485-0088.

Yes
Tokyo, Feb. 22, 7 p.m., Feb. 23 & 24, 5 p.m., Tokyo Dome City Hall, 10,000-11,000 yen; Udo 03-3402-5999 or visit Ticket Pia (<http://w.pia.jp>), Lawson Ticket (<http://l-tike.com/>) or eplus (<http://eplus.jp/>).

Maroon 5
Tokyo, Feb. 25, 7 p.m., Tokyo Dome, 10,000-12,000-15,000-38,000 yen; Udo 03-3402-5999.

Yellowjackets
Tokyo, Feb. 26 & 27, 6:30 & 9 p.m., Cotton Club, 7,800-9,000 yen; 03-3215-1555.

Pale Waves
Tokyo, Feb. 27, 7 p.m., Ebisu Liquidroom, 6,500 yen; Creativeman 03-3499-6669.

Matthew Morrison
Tokyo, Feb. 28, 6:30 & 9:30 p.m., Billboard Live Tokyo, 11,000-12,000 yen; 03-3405-1133.

Chvrches
Tokyo, Feb. 28 & Mar. 1, 7 p.m., Toyosu Pit, 7,500 yen (all standing); Creativeman 03-3499-6669.

MARCH

David T. Walker
Tokyo, Mar. 5 & 6, 6:30 & 9:30 p.m., Billboard Live Tokyo, 8,800-9,800 yen; 03-3405-1133.

Fever333
Tokyo, Mar. 5, 7 p.m., Ebisu Liquidroom, 5,500 yen; Smash 03-3444-6751.

Courtney Barnett
Tokyo, Mar. 8, 7 p.m., Tsutaya O-East, 6,500 yen; Smash 03-3444-6751.

Michael Landau Liquid Quartet
featuring David Frazee, Andy Hess & Ian Thomas, Tokyo, Mar. 9 & 10, 5 & 8 p.m., Mar. 11 & 12, 6:30 & 9 p.m., Cotton Club, 8,500-9,500 yen; 03-3215-1555.

Gang of Four
Tokyo, Mar. 12, 8 p.m., duo Music Exchange, 7,000 yen (standing), 14,000 yen (VIP Ticket) For more information, visit <http://alive.mu/>.

Kodaline
Tokyo, Mar. 13, 7:30 p.m., Shibuya WWW X, 6,800 yen; Creativeman 03-3499-6669.

Bryan Ferry
Tokyo, Mar. 13, 7 p.m., Bunkamura Orhcard Hall, 12,000 yen; Creativeman 03-3499-6669.

Rita Ora
Tokyo, Mar. 14, 7 p.m., Zepp DiverCity Tokyo, 8,000 - 8,500 yen; Creativeman 03-3499-6669.

Dan Penn & Spooner Oldham
Tokyo, Mar. 16 & 17, 4:30 & 7:30 p.m., Billboard Live Tokyo, 8,000-9,000 yen; 03-3405-1133.

Brian Culbertson
Tokyo, Mar. 19, 6:30 & 9:30 p.m., Billboard Live Tokyo, 7,900-8,900 yen; 03-3405-1133.

Uriah Heep
Tokyo, Mar. 20, 6:30 & 9:30 p.m., Mar. 21, 4:30 & 6:30 p.m., Billboard Live Tokyo, 9,800-10,800 yen; 03-3405-1133.

Khrungbin
Tokyo, Mar. 22, 7 p.m., Shibuya Clun Quattro, 5,800 yen; Smash 03-3444-6751.

Bill Evans 30th Anniversary Super Band with special guest Robben Ford
Tokyo, Mar. 24, 5 & 8 p.m., Feb. 25, 26 & 27, 6:30 & 9 p.m., Blue Note Tokyo, 8,500 yen; 03-5485-0088.

Ringo Starr and His All Starr Band
Fukuoka, Mar. 27, 7 p.m., Fukuoka Sunpalace Hotel & Hall, 15,000-16,000 yen; Tsukusu 092-771-9009; Hiroshima, Mar. 29, 7 p.m., Hiroshima Ueno Gakuen Hall, 15,000-16,000 yen; Yumebanchi 082-249-3571; Tokyo, Apr. 3, 7 p.m., Showa Women's University Hitomi Memorial Hall, 15,000-16,000 yen, Apr. 5, 7 p.m., Tokyo Dome City Hall, 15,000-16,000 yen; Udo 03-3402-5999 or visit Ticket Pia (<http://w.pia.jp>), Lawson Ticket (<http://l-tike.com/>) or eplus (<http://eplus.jp/>).

Rufus Wainwright
Tokyo, Mar. 28 & 29, 7 p.m., Tokyo International Forum Hall C, 10,000 yen; Udo 03-3402-5999 or visit Ticket Pia (<http://w.pia.jp>), Lawson Ticket (<http://l-tike.com/>) or eplus (<http://eplus.jp/>).

MAE
Tokyo, Mar. 17, 6 p.m., Shibuya WWW X, 6,000 yen; Smash 03-3444-6751.

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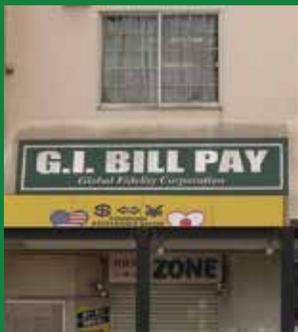
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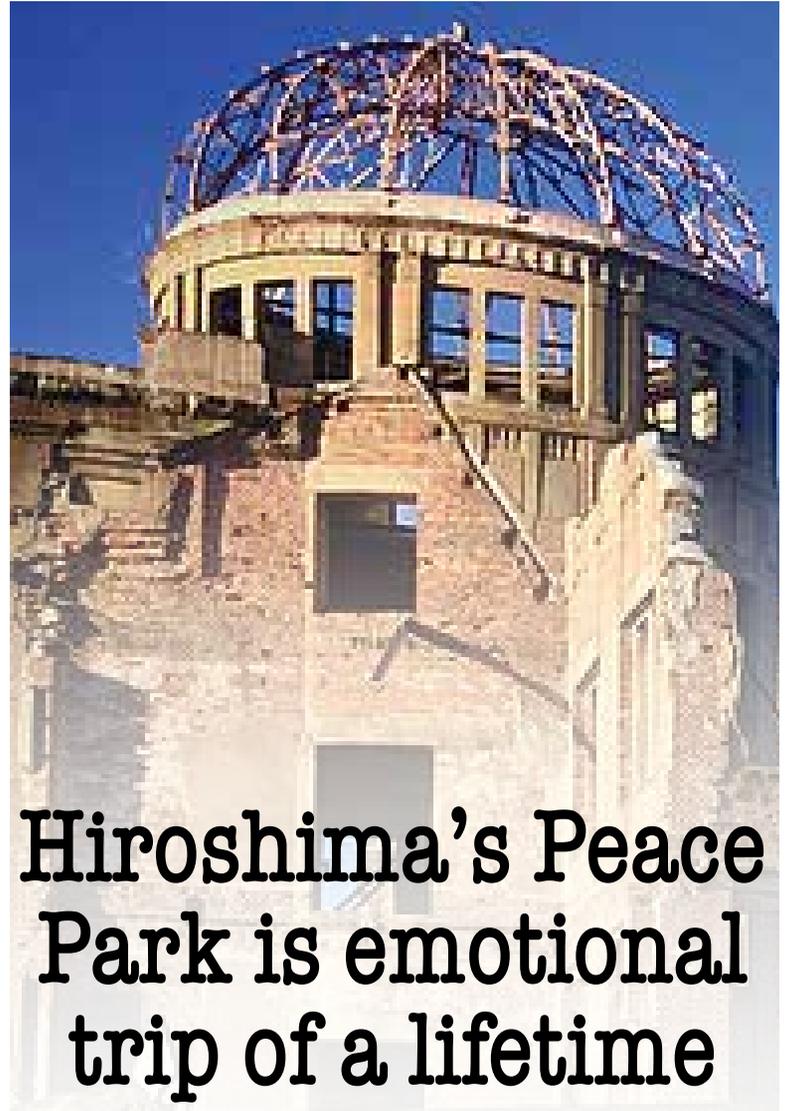
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Hiroshima's Peace Park is emotional trip of a lifetime

BY LANCE PESCO, ECHOES (KINNICK HS NEWSPAPER)

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE – As an American stepping into the Peace Museum in the heart of Hiroshima's Peace Park, I have never felt more like a stranger to this foreign land.

The word "stranger" is almost not enough however, as for the first time, I faced the countless images of innocent people with seared flesh, tear-filled eyes and faces pleading "make the pain stop."

Few survivors of the attack are still alive, and the only things that remain to tell the story of their last moments are the trinkets, toys and scraps of

clothes donated by the victim's families. Each of these exhibits has a tale; each tale has a victim.

Knowing that Americans – my people, my home – dropped a bomb that caused all this devastation as a means to ending World War II in the Pacific makes any American deserving of the title "murderer."

But when I asked a young Japanese man in the park nicknamed Rara-Chan about who was to blame for the tragedy, he said, "This is everybody's fault, I think. Everybody decided to have a war, and this is the consequence."

I visited the Peace Museum during an outing in

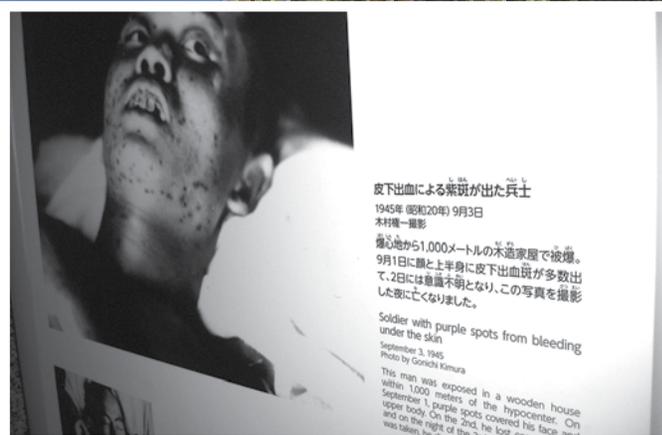
COMMENTARY



Japanese school students visit the Peace Memorial Park in Hiroshima in November. The park is an attractive tourist destination which hosts more than 1 million visitors a year. Photo by Makenzi Schmitz, MC Perry High School



The Peace Memorial Park in Hiroshima is a site dedicated to the eradication of nuclear weapons. Colored streams and the beautiful billboard call for peace. Photo by Rebecca Holladay, Yokota High School



A photo of a Japanese soldier who died three days after the attack shows the horrific injuries suffered by the victims in the blast. Photo by Lance Pescosco, Kinnick High School

The Atomic Bomb Dome is part of the Peace Memorial Park in Hiroshima. The building which is one of few still standing after the attack is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and is a memorial to more than 100,000 people who died. Photo by Rachel McIntosh, Humphreys High School

November as part of the Department of Defense Education Far-East Journalism Conference.

Despite my parents being stationed in Japan at Yokosuka Naval Base, this was my first time to visit the Peace Park, which beckons tourists worldwide who seek the true story behind the horrific event that unfolded Aug. 6, 1945, when the Enola Gay detonated a nuclear weapon in the skies above the city killing at least 126,000 people, mostly civilians.

In 2016, nearly 2-million people visited the park, making it one of the most visited tourist destinations in the world, with many things to see that makes it a one in a lifetime experience.

Right after you exit the Museum, visitors will see a curved stone structure across a field. This houses the flower adorned Cenotaph, a monument etched with the names of all the victims whose lives were claimed by the bomb.

In the eye of the monument rests the Peace Flame which sits in the middle of a square

fountain, awaiting the day when the world will no longer know the threat of atomic annihilation.

A Belgian visitor to the park named Edith claimed that the most impactful monument was the A-Bomb Dome, the only remaining structure near ground zero.

"It is the fact they conserved it, because they were not sure to keep it some years after the bomb," she said.

At the base of the monument, I watched children no older than 10 run and play, completely unaware that just 73 years ago more than 100,000 lives were lost here in an instant.

"They are not so frightened of this time," said Edith, remarking on the children playing.

What I learned in just a few hours in Hiroshima is more than I ever could have learned about the bombing and aftermath in school. These grounds are more than a park. They are the echoes of those lives snuffed out in an instant and the enduring spirit of a people to overcome tragedy.

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Gambino Model. Photo courtesy of Kyle Hedlund

Harbor Circuit Indoor Karting

Feed the need for speed in Chiba

JAPAN TRAVEL

Harbor Circuit in Chiba City is an indoor kart track where you can get your pulse racing and quench your need for speed. The facility is based on similar venues in the UK, the home of indoor karting. First-timers shouldn't worry—all gear is available for rent and you don't even need a driver's license. All you need is a spark of curiosity.

Anyone over 130cm tall (regardless of age) can and manufactured by France's premier kart-maker. Top speeds reach up to 50 km/h! Seats and pedals are adjustable for your comfort, so foreigners need not be too concerned about the fit. There is also a smaller kart tailored for those twelve and under. Mounted with the Honda GX160 engine, the 'FunKid' is chain-driven, meaning it runs quietly enough to keep little eardrums intact.

A real-time ranking system allows groups of friends or family to compete against each other, and for individuals to race against their personal best times. Endurance races and time trials are held periodically at Harbor Circuit and are open to the public.

Enjoy the down time by

drinking non-alcoholic beer and snacks. There are several tables with great window seating of the track so if you prefer to watch you can have just as much fun. There is no liquor served as racers are not permitted to drive after drinking.

Courses and pricing

Prices start at 1,980 yen for a single 6-minute ticket, with significant savings for buying in bulk (i.e. three tickets for 5,200; five for 7,800; 8 for 10,500). Group races of 5 or more people run 4,200 per entrant for the Mini Grand Prix and 5,500 per entrant for the Sprint Grand Prix. You can even reserve the whole course for 47,000 yen per hour on weekdays and 63,000 per hour at weekend and holidays. A trial pack for new admission includes the license fee and 3 minutes for 1,500 yen.

Harbor Circuit is especially designed for families and children with numerous packages. Parents and children (under 19) can buy tickets together at 3,200 yen for two. A child ticket for a six-minute ride can be purchased for 1,480 yen (children must be in elementary school and over 118 cm tall. Newly added is a special "Bambino" type electric kart designed for ages 4 and up. As these carts can hold two people, there are perfect for children who need a



Harbor Circuit

ADDRESS: 2F Harbor Circuit, Chiba Sports Plaza, 13-26 Dezuminato, Chuo-ku, Chiba
TEL: 043-441-3243 (Japanese only)
EMAIL: mail@harbor-circuit.com
URL: http://www.harbor-circuit.com/2014english.asp

set any records the first time round, completing the course will bring satisfaction, relieve stress, and even provide a good workout. Once you try, you'll be hooked.

Hours and specials

Weekdays - 2 p.m. - 11:30 p.m.
 Weekend & Holidays - 10 a.m. - 11:30 p.m. (If weekday after holiday, we close at 9:30 p.m.)
 Sunday - 10 a.m. - 9:30 p.m. (If holiday on Monday, open until 11:30 p.m.)

- Final admission accepted 30 minutes before close. We are normally open every day.
- Every Wednesday is Ladies Day! Girls can enjoy the first session for 1,000 yen!

Driving requirements

- Driver Pass: admission fee for 500 yen. No annual fee.
- Sport shoes (no sandals)
- We recommend wearing long-sleeved shirts and full length pants
- Free rental service of helmet and face mask. You can bring your own helmet with full face and visor
- Customers may also purchase their own face mask for 500 yen (optional)
- Gloves are not necessary but we also have free rental service (or feel free to bring your own)

guardian/parent or for younger age riders renting a kart for the first time.

Course summaries

(6 minute race)

- Bambino (4 years old and up) - 1,000 yen
- Junior Kart - 1,480 yen
- Adult Kart - 1,980 yen
- Group Race - 4,200 yen
- Admission to the facility is just 500 yen, and if you mention Metropolis magazine they will waive that fee!
- Most credit cards are accepted.

Safety

Safety is a top priority, with crash prevention brake lamps and coverings on engines and mufflers to prevent burns. This all makes it easier to fly round Harbor Circuit's pumping course layout, complete with its flying junction and tunnel. Sharp corners and twisty turns test even the most experienced drivers, yet it's beginner-friendly, too. Though first-timers probably won't



The leaderboard. Photo courtesy of Harbor Circuit



Feel the excitement. Photo courtesy of Kyle Hedlund



Colors change as you travel around. Photo courtesy of Kyle Hedlund



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Stripes Sports Trivia

The last 5 NFL teams to lose one game or less in the regular season have all failed to win the Super Bowl. Most notably, of course, is the 2007 Patriots - the 2nd team to ever finish the regular season undefeated. Can you name the most recent team to finish with one loss that failed to win the Big Game?

Answer

Carolina Panthers (2015)

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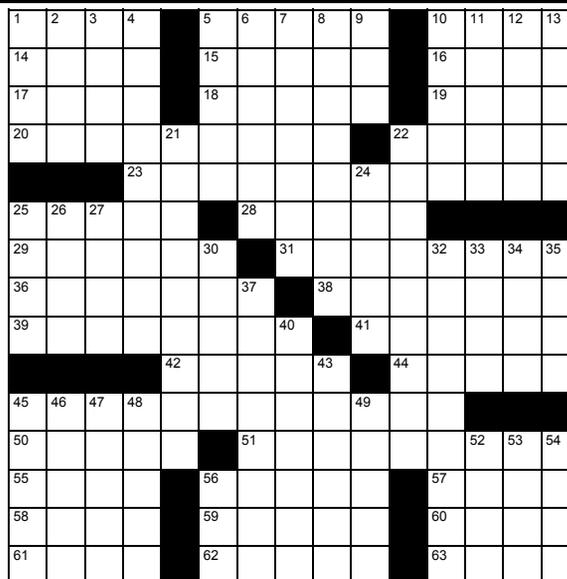
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The Weekly Crossword

by Margie E. Burke

ACROSS

- Conn. neighbor
- Herringlike fishes
- Leave in, to an editor
- Ancient Andean
- "Water Lilies" painter
- Fiesta fare
- Go to great heights
- Itsy-bitsy bits
- How one might run
- Spanish gentleman
- Mac maker
- Wife, jokingly
- Hindu soul
- Aspen aficionado
- Word after pocket or loose
- Deliberate destruction
- They may be pulled
- Dilbert's workspace
- Erotic
- Early English comedy, "Gurton's Needle"
- "Get lost!"
- Minuscule
- Accept responsibility
- Unaccompanied
- Weatherman offerings
- Lose steam
- Parlor piece
- Beat badly
- Clothing line
- Certain exams
- Frank Herbert sci-fi series
- Nothing but
- To the point
- A whole bunch



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- Forest ox
- Wound covering
- Minuet-like dances
- Clothing size
- Monopoly purchases
- Polar parkas
- Possessed one
- Ave. crossers
- Kind of infection
- Buccaneers' home
- Reason for a food recall
- Representative
- Spiny lobster
- Like Cirque du Soleil performers
- Fix, in a way
- Plays a part
- Quaker's "you"
- "Death in Venice" author
- Son of Cain
- They're punched at work
- Top of the heap
- Secluded valley

- Mysterious: Var.
- Guaranteed
- Russian urn
- Diego Rivera creations
- Weighty put-down
- 1979 sci-fi classic
- Snorkeling sight
- Hostile force
- Have a hunch
- Music category
- Spotify selection
- Hearty dish
- URL punctuator

Answers to Last Week's Crossword:

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

DID YOU KNOW?

Okinawa and Hawaii have a strong tie. It dates back to a group of 27 immigrants that left Okinawa in 1899. The number of Okinawans in Hawaii continued growing from there. Today, there are thought to be 45,000 to 50,000 Okinawan descendants living in the state.

市

Kanji of the week

Ichi/Shi (City/Market)

Language Lesson

Can you hear me?

Kikoe masuka?

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SUDOKU

Difficulty: Easy

Edited by Margie E. Burke

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

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 Last Week's Sudoku:

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

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Neat the bottom of the path



Kitayamazaki and Unosu Cliffs offer breathtaking views in national park

STORY AND PHOTOS BY MALCOLM LARCENS, JAPANTRAVEL

The Sanriku Coast stretches from Miyagi Prefecture in the south to Aomori Prefecture in the north. It is renowned for its jagged coastline and its many beautiful bays and vistas. Kitayamazaki and Unosu Cliffs are among the most impressive parts of the coast. Jodogahama Beach is also another great place to visit.

The Sanriku Fukko National Park was created after the Great East Japan Earthquake, the goal is to promote the Sanriku area and help with the rebuilding efforts. It's called a Geopark based on all the diversity of landscape and terrain. The area includes beaches, cliffs, caves and many hot springs. At about the same time, the government started building the Michinoku Coastal trail, it will go from Hachinohe to Fukushima when completed. The general area of the park is from Hachinohe, Aomori Prefecture to Ishinomaki, Miyagi prefecture. The Sanriku area is rich in natural resources, from great seafood, farming and to the start of modern day steel smelting in Kamaishi.

Tanohata is a small village north of Miyako and is home to both Unosu Cliffs and Kitayamazaki. The population of Tanohata is only about 3500 people making it one of the smallest villages in Japan. Don't let the size deter you from visiting it, you will enjoy great seafood and breathtaking vistas.

GETTING THERE

From Morioka, take Route 106 to Miyako or the Yamada Line from Morioka Station, the trains runs only a few times a day. From Miyako, take Route 45 north towards Kuji. Both Unosu Cliffs and Kitayamazaki are accessible from Route 45, the coastal highway. Unosu, is about 30 minutes north of Miyako and Kitayamazaki is about 1 hour north on Route 44 off Route 45. You could also take the Sanriku Railway from Miyako but you would need to walk a lot or take a taxi from the station. I think the Sanriku Railway should be a trip by itself. By car, is definitely the best way to get there



Lunch at Kitayamazaki

Unosu is about 5 kilometers from Route 45, the coastal highway that runs from Sendai to Hachinohe. The turn off is easy to miss since they made some changes to the road. You'll see a couple of steel grain silos near the road, follow that road. From the parking lot, it's a 5-10 minute walk to the cliffs. If you're feeling adventurous, you can take the walking trail that will take you down to water level. It's a 45 minute walk. We didn't have enough time to walk when I was there.

On the other hand, Kitayamazaki is much easier to find. You take Route 44 and follow the coast,

you'll see a big sign on Route 45 to indicate the turn off.

Before or after heading to see the cliffs, I recommend that you sample some of the fresh seafood available at the restaurant near the tourist area. Depending on the season you might be able to enjoy fresh oysters, scallops, sea urchin (uni), sauri (sanma) or salmon. All caught the same day or the day before. I had the scallop set, it was so fresh.

There are 3 spots that you can view Kitayamazaki from, the top, you can see the main rock from a safe distance. Lookout two is about 360 steps down and gives you a nice panoramic view. Lookout three is at sea level, you can feel the waves

crashing on the rocks and feel the power of the ocean. The lowest platform was washed out by the tsunami in March 2011, it's still worth the walk down.

Another option is to take a boat cruise to get a closer look at the rock formations. The tours run from April 11 to November 3. The boat cruise takes about

1 hour and start from Tsukue Fishing port, it costs 3500 yen per person with a minimum of 2 people. If you want to go on your own, you have to pay 7000 yen. You can find more information here; www.tanohata-taiken.jp/inbound/en/cruise.html

About halfway between Unosu and Kitayamazaki is hotel Ragaso, it's built right on the shore of the Pacific Ocean, it commands an incredible view of the sea. It would be a perfect place to watch the sunset from your room or the bath. They have a public bath available to anyone for only 400 yen located on the 4th floor with huge windows looking at the sea. Even though most people have baths in the afternoon or evening, it would be amazing to watch the sunrise soaking in the hot bath.



Kitayamazaki from the second lookout

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