

メ ト ロ ポ リ ス
METROPOLIS

Japan's No.1 English Magazine
www.metropolisjapan.com
Winter 2021

PRICELESS
無料



ADVANCED RECOVERY THERAPY IN TOKYO

WHOLE BODY CRYOTHERAPY



WEIGHT LOSS
減量



BLOOD FLOW
血流



RECOVERY
疲労



STRESS RELIEF
ストレス

CRYO SKIN®

CRYO SKIN® is a state-of-the-art treatment that uses sub-zero temperatures to condition fat and skin. The procedure is non-invasive, painless and more reliable than Botox.

Slimming

Skin Rejuvenation

Toning

Non-Invasive • Targeted Slimming • Topical Therapy



CRYO TOKYO®

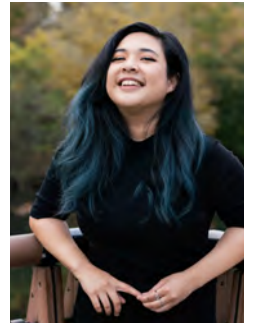
Our salon uses cutting-edge technology from the U.S. to deliver Whole Body Cryotherapy (WBC). This high-quality therapeutic treatment has many health benefits and involves exposing your body to extremely cold temperatures within a cryogenic chamber for up to 3 minutes. CRYO TOKYO® brings to Japan this increasingly popular treatment among the world's top athletes and Hollywood stars to the heart of Tokyo, in Minato-ku's Azabujuban district.

RESERVATIONS AND INQUIRIES
ご予約・お問い合わせ

☎ 03-5439-9969

www.cryo.tokyo

WINTER 2021



COVER

PHOTO Mike Smith

sumisusama

MODEL Aki

akidearest

Welcome to our Winter Issue, in which we highlight the astounding diversity and talent of Japan's creators. From YouTubers to pro-gamers, artists, musicians, chefs and activists, we take a look at how these influencers are shaping Japan's creative landscape and inspiring their global communities.

METROPOLISJAPAN.COM



MetropolisTokyo



@MetropolisTokyo



Metropolis Magazine



Metropolis Japan



Metropolis Magazine



editor@metropolisjapan.com

METROPOLIS

Metropolis is Japan's No.1 English magazine, founded in 1994 and published for Japan's international community



Neil Butler Publisher & CEO

EDITORIAL TEAM

EDITORS Jessie Carbutt, Mike Smith
ASST. EDITOR Patrick Balfe
SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER Jessie Carbutt
INTERNS Aurora Tinio, Rene Arata, Rui Kobori
PROOFREADING Kimberly Hughes

DESIGN & DIGITAL

ART DIRECTOR Jose Valdivieso
DEVELOPER/DESIGNER Fernando Goya
WEB DESIGNER Natsuki Araki

CONTRIBUTORS

WRITERS Angelyn Labadan
 Camilla Chandra, Cathryn Moe, Eric Margolis,
 Joshua Harvey, Takahiro Kanazawa

SALES

Nick Nakazawa,
 Xintong Ying,
 Shucheng Zhou,
 Mayu Hashimoto

Reach over 50,000 Metropolis readers.

Contact us to advertise:
sales@metropolisjapan.com
metropolisjapan.com/advertise

メトロポリスは20年以上に渡り、訪日・関東在住の外国人へ無料で配布している英字総合情報誌です。英語圏の方々に向けた情報発信や宣伝広告の機会を行政機関や日本企業に提供しております。お問い合わせ: 03-4588-2277 metropolisinfo.net

8F Nishi-Azabu Sonic Bldg,
 3-2-12 Nishi-Azabu, Minato-ku,
 Tokyo 106-0031

TEL 03-4588-2277 FAX 03-4588-2278
metropolisjapan.com

© Copyright 2021 Japan Partnership Holdings Inc. The views expressed herein are not necessarily those of the publisher. The publisher reserves the right to edit or delete any advertisement without notice.

ABOUT TOWN

What's your New Year's resolution? If it's to get more involved in your local community and to give something back, then look no further. We've compiled a list of community groups that are welcoming the support of international volunteers.

*Already part of a group and have an upcoming event? Share it with us at:
metropolisjapan.com/submit-an-event/*



TOKYO RIVER FRIENDS

Tokyo River Friends was founded in early 2017 by members of the NPO Jambo International to plan regular cleanup events around Tokyo's river areas. Part of the organization's wider environmental activities, the river group aims to do more than preserve the natural beauty of the environment. It's also an opportunity to meet like-minded people, and spend some time relaxing with picnics or barbecues by the riverside or Tokyo Bay waterfronts after the events.

tokyoriverfriends.org

Check their website for details on the next clean up event



SECOND HARVEST JAPAN

"So everyone can eat." Four simple words anyone can agree on. Since 2002, Second Harvest Japan has been working to make this possible. In 2019, they opened marugohan market as an innovative approach to give people access to food. As users "shop" for what they need, they "pay" through good deeds. This taps into a deep Japanese value, *ongaeshi* (repaying a kindness). They are expanding their hours, and need volunteers between 4pm - 7pm. Staff are bilingual and Japanese is not a requirement.

2hj.org

Check their website for event updates and email volunteer@2hj.org for more information on how to join



HANDS ON TOKYO

Hands On Tokyo provides meaningful bilingual volunteer opportunities to foster volunteerism and develop leaders to serve the needs of our community here in the capital. With a range of community partners, including children's homes, care homes for the elderly and special needs schools, the NPO provides volunteer opportunities for English and Japanese speakers alike. One of its latest projects you can help with is the creation of "Thank You Baskets" for partner hospitals, local hospitals and welfare facilities to support their efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic.

handsontokyo.org

Check their website for details on how to join



SWAP STORIES

Swap Stories is a Tokyo-based, globally-minded initiative that aims to bring people together through a collective exchange of clothes and collectibles. The group began organizing clothing swaps in 2020 as an effort to make people in Japan feel a little less isolated by finding home in the kindness of strangers, sharing stories and finding preloved treasures. Its ethos is that sustainability needs to be accessible, shareable and fun to truly become a part of all our lives. Upcoming events include swap markets and mail-based swaps that anyone in Japan can participate in.

swapstories.jp

Check their website and Instagram [@swapstories.jp](https://www.instagram.com/swapstories.jp) for upcoming events and news

GRAMA SEVA JAPAN

When Siva Kannan was jogging around Yoyogi Park, a homeless person asked him if he had any money for food – they hadn't eaten in days. Unfortunately, Kannan hadn't brought his wallet on his jog, but the event stuck in his mind, sparking the creation of Grama Seva Japan. The volunteer group, named after a Sanskrit-based word meaning "Village Service," provides hot meals to homeless people and those in need in and around Yoyogi Park, with the kind help of Boudoir Day Spa. All are welcome to join every Sunday from 11am, finishing up before noon.

gramasevajapan.org
090-4171-4543

Check website for upcoming events



YOUMEWE

More than 80% of children in Japan who are abused, neglected or unable to live with their parents or family live in residential-care facilities rather than foster homes. Providing everything from tutoring support to guidance on university/technical school options, YouMeWe have made it their mission to help these children thrive and to prepare them for adulthood, career success and financial independence. Becoming a career mentor, language tutor or IT digital literacy tutor are just some of the ways you can get involved.

youmewenpo.org

Check website for the latest volunteer opportunities



TOKYO SPRING HOMELESS PATROL

Founded in 2016 by five members, Tokyo Spring Homeless Patrol has now grown to over 60 volunteers who patrol and distribute basic daily necessities and food to homeless people around Tokyo. Serving people in need around West Shinjuku on Sunday nights, and Ueno on Wednesday nights, the group also frequently cycles along a stretch of the Kanagawa side of the Tama River to aid some of Tokyo's most vulnerable. In addition, the group also launched a Yokohama Spring Homeless Patrol on November 6. Volunteers are always welcome to join a patrol to help with anything from food donation to cooking and distribution.

Tokyo group: facebook.com/TSHpatrol

Yokohama group: facebook.com/mutualaidsolidarity/

Check website for details or enquire via directactionddd@gmail.com



PLACE TO GROW

Place to Grow (PTG) was first formed in 2011 to provide emergency aid to communities struck by the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami. In the decade since, its efforts have evolved into providing long-term community support, inspiring the next generation of Tohoku to grow into strong leaders. This year, PTG is carrying on its much-loved Santa Soul Train tradition to connect Tohoku with international communities and other children in Japan. PTG is also organizing an illumination event in Tohoku and a remote Christmas stocking exchange, the second in the NPO's history.

placetogrow-ngo.org

Follow on facebook.com/placetogrowngo, linkedin.com/company/o-g-a-for-aid or on Instagram [@placetogrowngo](https://instagram.com/placetogrowngo) to learn more



THEATRE MANGEKYO (THEATRE PROJECT)

Mangekyo is Japanese for kaleidoscope. Representing a union of complex patterns in a constant flux, the founders chose this word for its group as it represents the diversity of its members perfectly. Currently, the ensemble is working on performance for next year. Inspired in part by Japanese mythology and in part from the lived experiences of the group members, the production's story is a window into the real lives of people in Japan. Whether you're interested in performing, set design, translation, social media, playwriting or more, anyone is welcome to join.

theatremangekyo.com

Enquire at theatremangekyo@gmail.com or Instagram [@theatremangekyo](https://instagram.com/theatremangekyo) or Facebook Theatre Mangekyo to join



FOOD for the SOUL

BY
JOSHUA
HARVEY

Whether you're looking for a full feast, filling sides or festive drinks, these local restaurants will warm your body & heart in no time.



KYOJIN STEWHOUSE \$

Kyojin Stewhouse fills the quiet, cozy alleys behind Togoshi Ginza with the unmistakable scents of the holiday season: slowly simmered lamb, seared sausages, freshly baked bread. It's enough to make anywhere, even this Irish pub's outpost on Tokyo's most eclectic shopping street, feel like home. Alan Fisher, an Irish immigrant, opened Kyojin Stewhouse in 2015 as a love letter to his native country. Pictures of rolling green hills line the walls, Guinness Stew is practically married to the menu, and Alan even imports Irish ales from the Mourne Mountains. He has also taken a liking to winter feasts. From Thanksgiving to Christmas, reservations are open each year for a ballistic winter banquet of turkey, ham, mashed potatoes, and all the classic sides you can imagine. To top it off, a *nomihodai* (all you can drink) dispenses two hours of free-flowing craft beers, wines and Irish gin cocktails to make the holiday all the merrier. Holiday meal reservations required.

1-3-11 Yutakacho, Shinagawa-ku
10 min. walk from Togoshi Station
@kyojin.company



OTAFUKU \$\$\$

As the chill of winter swallows the city, Tokyo's 38 million residents begin to collectively crave one thing: oden. This traditional dish of simple ingredients simmered in a subtly seasoned dashi begs to be paired with cloudy skies and freezing temperatures. While oden can be found around nearly every corner at this time of year, few iterations are as storied and inspired as Otafuku's. For over one hundred years, Otafuku has been serving oden in an intimate countertop setting. All the tasty morsels that inhabit the house dashi are displayed before you. Just point at what you want and it quickly arrives in your personal oden bowl. The sheer range of edible options here is dazzling, from comforting carrots and tofu to the unexpected and outlandish whale's tongue. Luckily for those easily overwhelmed by such an epic array, there are *omakase* (chef's choice) meals available for both omnivores and vegetarians.

1-6-2 Senzoku, Taito-ku
10 min. walk from Iriya Station
@asakusa_otafuku

THE BELLWOOD \$\$\$

Considering the way the antiquated interior jostles with rowdy crowds at all hours of the evening, you'd never suspect The Bellwood is barely a year old. This conceptual cocktail bar, a sister lounge to the world-renowned SG Club, combines the aesthetic of a Taisho-era *kissaten* with prohibition-era libations. Two worlds plucked from the same time period. It's this inspired idea that allows The Bellwood's cocktail menu to crescendo into a caffeine-fueled euphoria. True to its classic cafe roots, house drinks are built on bases of tea, coffee and *shochu*. The espresso martini cleverly incorporates clarified milk and miso, while the Sazerac is reborn as a barley *shochu* drink infused with truffle and browned butter. December sees the arrival of "Jingle Bellwood," the bar's incredibly popular holiday celebration. Expect radical riffs on eggnog, mulled wine and hot toddies, along with exclusive seasonal dishes and an extended happy hour.

41-31 Udagawacho, Shibuya-ku
9 min. walk from Shibuya Station
@the_bellwood



SOUL FOOD HOUSE \$\$

There's something magical in good service, when the meal you're presented is just as comforting and flush with substance as the people preparing it. LaTonya and David Whitaker, owners of Soul Food House in Azabujuban, are humble wizards of this arcane art, and we simply couldn't talk about comfort food in Tokyo without featuring Soul Food House. Dining here is like dining with family; the flavors that leap from the plate feel like old friends. Their transcendental chicken and waffles have made them a darling among the expat community, and their mac'n'cheese has become a holy grail. The Whitakers also make a habit of putting their signature soul food spin on annual holiday dinners. On Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, Soul Food House serves a massive meal replete with roast turkey, pumpkin dressing, pomegranate and beet salad, garlicky green beans and more. If you can't be with family on Christmas, this is the next best thing. Holiday meal reservations required.

2-8-10 Azabujuban, Minato-ku
7 min. walk from Azabujuban Station
@soulfoodhouse



TANABE \$\$

When the biting wintertide currents sweep through the Sea of Japan, they carry with them the ocean's most intimidating luxury: monkfish. Tanabe-san, who, along with his wife, entertains throngs of regular customers at their 10-seat izakaya, maintains a profound obsession with this wicked bottom-dwelling predator. As service begins, Tanabe hoists a massive 10-kilo monkfish up to a hook fastened above the bar. There it remains for the entirety of the evening, leering at diners with its menacing maw while Tanabe lops off fresh hunks. Every dish derived from the mucus-coated alien creature is a triumph: steamed liver, fried spare ribs doused with house ponzu, and the monumental monkfish nabe — the price of which has not changed since the store opened 43 years ago.

1-37-6 Higashiikebukuro, Toshima-ku
7 min. walk from Ikebukuro Station
@taishukapotanabe

Harbor Circuit
GO KARTING JAPAN

Licence Fee: **¥500**
Free if you mention Metropolis

RACERS OF JAPAN ASSEMBLE!

Harbor Circuit has expanded its tracks outdoors — as well as Chiba's indoor circuit, you can now race your friends at Kisarazu's outdoor circuit. With a maximum speed of 50km/h, your safety is guaranteed. Racing karts for children are also available. Bring your friends and see who's fastest!

TICKET PRICES	CHIBA KIDS	¥1,000	6 min	JUNIOR/LADIES	¥1,800	6 min
	KISARAZU KIDS	¥800	4 min	ADULTS	¥2,200	6 min

INDOOR CHIBA	OUTDOOR KISARAZU
☎ 043-441-3243 ✉ info@harbor-circuit.com 2F Chiba Sports Plaza 13-26 Dezuminato, Chuo-ku, Chiba	☎ 0438-53-8055 ✉ kisarazu@harbor-circuit.com Aeon Mall Kisarazu 1-4 Tsukiji, Kisarazu City, Chiba

www.harbor-circuit.com

¥2000 OFF!
DISCOUNT COUPON
limited to one ticket per person

TOKYO 2021
#1 NIGHTLIFE EXPERIENCE IN TOKYO

TANTRA TOKYO

Come and see Tokyo's best nightlife experience!

RSVP: 03-3560-9020
www.tantra-tokyo.com

Zechem Baum B2 F Roppongi 3-9-5 Minato-ku, Tokyo
Show this ad and receive your discount!

FOLLOW US

2021 Travelers' Choice
Tripadvisor



POP CULTURE CALCULATED IN CARDBOARD

BY ERIC MARGOLIS

*Blurring the lines between fan art
and fine art with Monami Ohno*



Monomi Ohno dreamed of being an animator. Like so many other teenagers, the masterpiece anime Neon Genesis Evangelion changed her life. Ever since watching it, she dreamed of joining the team that made Evangelion at Tatsunoko Productions. She focused on her art and doing what she could to achieve these dreams, enrolling as a student at Osaka University of Arts.

For a stop-motion animation homework assignment, Ohno decided to use cardboard as a material in order to save money. She took discarded cardboard, cut it up with scissors and pieced it together to create the materials for her project. At first, she didn't think anything of it.

"When I made my animations, I received a lot of praise from people for the cardboard models instead of the animation," Ohno says. "So I started to think that maybe it was best to focus on the creations themselves."

"I've begun to see many contradictions in it."

Flash forward 10 years later, and Ohno is still making cardboard models. She's made hundreds and hundreds of them — these elaborate, fantastically detailed cardboard statues that remain unpainted and unadorned. Looking at her work, it's almost as if all the excess cardboard in the world had a hidden heart, and came to life in Ohno's studio.

At first, she had to stay small. Cardboard is a fragile, flimsy material. But over the years, her work has grown up and up, reinforced with sturdy wooden or Styrofoam interiors. She's made cars, tanks, trucks, guns, shoes, robots, turtles, spaceships, saxophones, soccer gear, chocolate bars, guitars — anything you can imagine. Each creation is rendered in extensive detail to mimic the original with scales, textures and shadows that are indented, carved, crimped and cut into the same brown, ordinary cardboard.

"I grow more attached to cardboard the more I use it," Ohno says. "Its cuteness, its fragility. I've begun to see many contradictions in it."

Ohno is quiet and polite, with a short haircut and thoughtful personality. She readily admits she wasn't comfortable promoting her work on social

"Nowadays, cardboard is the material for Amazon packages. When you take out the object inside, it becomes trash."

media at first. But her passion for cardboard art comes through, as does her love and fascination with all things pop culture.

A Charizard billowing out a Fire Blast. A Laputian Robot from *Castle in the Sky*, nuts and bolts in its oversized arms included. A Lego Joker with skulls etched into his mini cardboard tie. The Millennium Falcon. Classic cars and watches. Even a full-sized, wearable sailor school uniform. A large majority of Ohno's creations come from some corner of pop culture, whether it's movies, TV shows, video games or any other sort of hobbyist obsession. Ohno's love for these pop culture franchises come through in the intimacy of her works' details, although she herself has too many pop-culture interests to count.

"I usually choose items from my own interests," Ohno says. "If I don't like something, it's hard to get the project done. But I do get commissions, so I can't always just make the things that I like. I try to challenge myself to make all sorts of things, even projects that I'm not at first interested in."

Ohno moved away from animation into her world of cardboard during college, and it has been the majority of her work ever since. Being an artist in Japan is as ruthless as it is in any other country, so she's made ends meet with a variety of part-time work, at first in the service industry, but pivoting over the years into companies that produce models for businesses, and other work more closely related to her main focus. Still, she focuses on cardboard above all else, taking on requests from clients in Japan and all over the world. She slowly built up her platform over the years, rising to over 22,000 followers on Instagram, 12,000 on Twitter, and 7,000 on Facebook.

"Nowadays, cardboard is the material for Amazon packages. When you take out the object inside, it becomes trash."

Her creation process begins with choosing what she wants to make and its size. From there, she begins cutting the cardboard and using adhesive to piece her 3D puzzles together. The process is as simple as that on the surface. But with the degree of intricacy that goes into a jumbo-sized Godzilla with a fully-textured body of scales, it's hard to even imagine where she begins.

"At first, making objects in 3D was very difficult," says Ohno, "so I made flatter projects. I focused mainly on rectangular projects, but now I've gradually become able to make more rounded designs. I've also become able to make bigger sizes — at first, I could hardly make my works bigger than [a fist], but now I can make things much larger than that."

Over the years, she's added more elements to her cardboard game — new sizes, new shapes and new elements of engineering to keep her lightweight cardboard creations intact.

"Nowadays, cardboard is the material for Amazon packages. When you take out the object inside, it becomes trash," says Ohno. "But now





“I started doing this as fan art, but now that I’m a pro, I can’t quite differentiate the two.”

I feel like, why is this considered trash? It’s not trash — it’s much more interesting to turn this into something with value.”

Other artists might peel off to experiment with new materials, but Ohno’s love for cardboard is just as devoted as her love for Marvel and Pokémon. And with each passing year, she discovers a new appeal. Lately, Ohno has started to feel more connected to the causes associated with recyclable art movements, which she admits she didn’t even consider at first.

“I started doing this as fan art, but now that I’m a pro, I can’t quite differentiate the two.”

“Back in the day, you had one object and you kept using it — that was the way of life. But now we buy and throw away. My interests might change at any time, but right now, I’m hooked on cardboard.”

Ohno’s new elements of her approach also filter over into her material. Lately, she’s become more interested in trying to build architecture and human bodies with cardboard — two areas that she has never tried before. While a part of her will always stick to her guns — cardboard and beloved pop culture — Ohno expresses a steady determination to keep growing. “I started doing this as fan art, but now that I’m a pro, I can’t quite differentiate the two,” says Ohno. “Doing fan art for fun was good, but it didn’t lead to enough growth. I thought it was better to try hard to make a lot of projects and take on risks and challenges.”

“I keep both sides: a fan at heart but a professional approach. If I don’t take my work seriously, I won’t like it, because that means I didn’t give it my all.”

Ohno has been surprised at how far her work has spread. Due to the copyrighted nature of much of the material, most of her commissions are to make the object, rather than to sell it. And the coronavirus has provided a surprising challenge, cutting off a large amount of commissions that had previously been a steady source of Ohno’s income.

Plenty of artists have gone viral with their fan art, but Ohno has made a whole career out of it. COVID-19 and internet comments have become taxing challenges (she tries not to look at comments), but 10 years into her cardboard creations, her enthusiasm and determination make it sound like this is only the beginning.

“I don’t want to give up because of the small things,” Ohno says. It’s a noble approach to pursuing a creative passion, and it comes through in the steampunk precision — equal parts magic and engineering — of her nerdy, spunky, cardboard world. 08

FREE TRIAL LESSON

ENGLISH & JAPANESE CLASSES

**Business, private & corporate classes
+ daily conversation**

Diverse student body from over 76 countries

High university and postgraduate school acceptance

Experience Japanese culture through calligraphy, ikebana, katana & tea ceremony

Student Visa Course:
October 2022
Registration Deadline
Apr. 10, '22

Summer Course:
Japanese language learning
+ 1 cultural experience workshop

Tel. 03-3713-4958
www.evergreen-ls-jp.com
1-21-18 Yutenji,
Meguro-ku, Tokyo 153-0052



Learn the art of koto

Koto Classes
Kanon, Katsushika School

Master the basic techniques of this exquisite and tranquil musical instrument and learn how to play various tunes

Course start dates
08 Jan (Sat) 1:30pm - 2:30pm

3 month course (Jan-Mar) - 6 lessons
¥8,000 per month (2 lessons)
including koto rental

Online lessons and trial lessons are also available

Our relaxed school uses a small and light koto with 17 strings / 120cm, 4kg

Please head to the website to inquire for more details:

Horikiri Chiku Center: 3-8-5 Horikiri, Katsushika-ku
1-min. walk from Horikiri Shobuen Station, Keisei line

YOKOHAMA COUNTRY & ATHLETIC CLUB



“The welcoming community you’ve been longing for.”

EST. 1868



The ending of the honeymoon phase for life in the Greater Tokyo Area hits hard and fast, especially as a foreigner.

As you cross off the last few destinations on your tourist bucket list, you may realize that those spontaneous trips to Shibuya don't excite you anymore. You now yearn for a place where you fit in, somewhere that reminds you of back home, a community. That place is the Yokohama Country & Athletic Club (YC&AC).

Located in the heart of Yokohama's Naka-ku, the YC&AC is Japan's oldest sports and social club, with its origin going back to 1868. However, don't let its age and name confuse you. Despite the typical country club stereotypes of luxury, exclusivity and middle-aged men sporting khaki shorts and polos, the focus for YC&AC is and always has been on sports and building communities. Arriving months after the Great

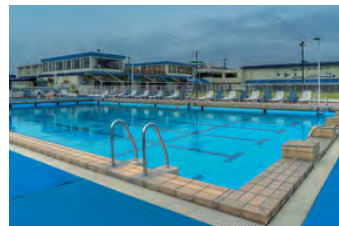
Yokohama Fire of 1866, Scotland native and devout cricketer James Mollison was greeted to a Japan that was less than inviting and in ruins. Witnessing the already existing sport clubs where foreigners played on any patch of land they could get their hands on, Mollison had much higher standards for his beloved sport. With the help of a few friends, he established the Yokohama Cricket Club.

As time went on their simple, clubhouse-less organization grew, absorbed other local sport clubs, moved three times and evolved into the YC&AC that we now know. From baseball and rugby to tennis and cricket, almost every western sport played in Japan today can trace its roots back to the small foreigner community in Yokohama and the YC&AC.

Now, the YC&AC exemplifies the type of community the founders sought as one of the primary hubs for family friends, international relationships and true

sportsmanship. Whether you're signing up for English-friendly sport clubs or just looking to take advantage of the amazing programs and events, members can enjoy a plethora of benefits and facilities.

Whether it's to take advantage of the facilities, relax in an English-speaking environment, or find your home away from home, visit the YC&AC to become a member of a place that welcomes people from all countries and walks of life. Reach out now to schedule your free tour and witness first hand all that YC&AC has to offer.

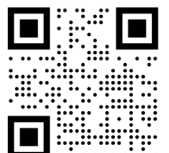


- OPEN AIR SWIMMING POOL
- FIFA-CERTIFIED PITCH
- KIDS & YOUTH SPORTS
- TENNIS, BASKETBALL, BADMINTON & SQUASH COURTS

- TABLE TENNIS
- BILLIARDS ROOM & DARTS
- BOWLING ALLEY
- INTERNATIONAL DINING AT THE MOLLISON'S RESTAURANT

- DANCE, YOGA & MASSAGE STUDIO
- FITNESS CENTER
- MEMBER'S AREA & SPORTS BAR
- FITNESS INSTRUCTORS, TRAINERS, PHYSIOTHERAPIST AND MORE...

concierge@yac.jp
(045) 623-8121
11-1 Yaguchidai, Naka-ku, Yokohama
SCHEDULE YOUR TOUR & MEET THE CLUB HERE!



*“Social media shouldn’t dictate your happiness
and you should never take things for granted.
When you realize that, you’ll be surprised how well
your mental health will improve.”*

Off-camera, it takes only a few exchanges to forget that Agnes, better known as Aki, is also *the* Aki, a YouTube personality who has amassed 3 million subscribers (2.9, she humbly corrects). And counting.

In 2014, she started the channel “Akidearest,” which was backed by a year-long promise to her parents that she could make YouTube a full-time job. The Filipino-American was born in California but soon relocated to Virginia. Her family eventually settled down in Las Vegas, and she set out for Japan in 2019. No matter where she was, her love for Japanese culture remained, proliferated by anime until it eventually coincided with her entrance into YouTube.

It’s early afternoon on a quiet Monday in a local cafe in Kichijoji. Dressed plainly in all black, the individual sitting in front of me is a far cry from what I initially had in mind. Diego exhibits the rare combination of palpable humility and contentment, nothing like the star in anime-convention-worthy cosplay (or, at the very least in a graphic tee) I had pictured.

“I’m shy as hell,” she readily admits. “It’s stressful to try and hide the fact that I’m an introvert. I have very little confidence outside the camera. A lot of YouTubers are like me, to be honest. If you think about it, they started in their room with a camera playing video games.”

As with almost everything we think we know about Akidearest, whose life is pushed to the front line of online entertainment, the reality is altogether different.

“When you’re a YouTube personality, everyone wants to know your personal life. There was a time where it was really overwhelming,” she says. “Sometimes the internet likes to look at things a little too deep — and a little too close, too.”

TAKING A REALITY CHECK

Aki started making videos when YouTube was in its infancy in the early 2000s. Her first few attempts featured anime music covers, recorded in her Las Vegas bedroom, which she kept private on her own account. It was only after she posted publicly about VOCALOID and the anime character Hatsune Miku that her channel took off. Within a month, she had reached 150,000 subscribers.

Yet beyond her lighthearted, anime-centric videos, there is a darker side to her job that fans tend to overlook. As anime and the video platform have

come to define her, there is a certain mental fatigue that also cannot be alienated from her life. She recalls her past obsession with social media: “There were times when I couldn’t go somewhere without having to post it on Instagram or Twitter.”

In a world where your career is dictated by ever-fickle public opinions, how do you draw the line between real connection and the digital? For Aki, it’s by embracing both; to dismantle the idea that to accept one is to reject the other.

“A lot of YouTubers say that numbers don’t matter to them, and I think that’s humbling to hear. At the same time, I think it’s important to care about numbers — just in a different light. I view it as something to motivate me, to push me to create better content. What I think is the problem is when views matter so much that it changes you as a person. I don’t want to be someone who picks their friendship group based on the number of subscribers they have.”

The content creator might have built her career around viral videos on anime and Asian culture (her most recent one features a recreation of Netflix’s hit series *Squid Game*), but she has found a way to break away from the stoic confines of the internet.

“I choose my days,” she says. “For me, I always make time for myself and my friends. Social media shouldn’t dictate your happiness and you should never take things for granted. When you realize that, you’ll be surprised how well your mental health will improve.”

LIVING UNDER A MAGNIFYING GLASS

It was an unassuming day in the U.S. for Aki and her long-term partner, another popular YouTuber known as “The Anime Man”, when a fan spotted them at a mall from four or five floors above. Almost immediately, the couple found their relationship under intense scrutiny; the observer had zoomed in on their camera, snapped a photo of the couple and spread it across the internet.

“I found out about that on Twitter,” she says. “Back then, we were keeping our relationship a secret. When it leaked, people were trying to break it down. As weird as it is, they are your fans. In a way, they love you so much that they want to get to know you.”

It’s not the first time Aki’s personal life has involuntarily come under the spotlight, nor will it be the last. The life of an influencer is synonymous with having your life out in the open.

*YouTuber
Akidearest
on mental health
and cancel culture*

BEYOND THE VIEW COUNTER

BY CAMILLA CHANDRA

“It’s very easy for you to get blurred out when you share your entire life on the internet.”



“Once you find what makes you happy, life becomes a little bit easier to handle.”

“It never stops hurting. As long as you’re in this job, the comments are just going to keep coming in.”

“We’re not Hollywood stars. For those people, there’s a veil of mystery about them that makes it seem as if they’re not a person. Social media is different. Our fans want someone who is personable,” she explains. “They want to get to know me more and be part of my life. And it sounds unfair, but sometimes it does come with the job.”

With the borders between personal and public blurred, frenzied negativity on social media can be a slippery slope for artists trapped in hate comments. “It never stops hurting. As long as you’re in this job, the comments are just going to keep coming in.”

What about criticism? “My dad used to tell me that you know bad intent when you see it, and you can tell if this person just wants to hurt you,” she says. “These things — it’s something that everyone has to battle and come to terms with.”

Even during turbulent moments, Aki has enough faith to view things in a positive light. Instead of making them a heavy anchor to the past, she sees them as a bridge to grow. “Internet culture, in a way, has helped me be mindful about the things I say. It’s dangerous when we get too comfortable here and forget the responsibility we hold to our fans,” she says. “Sometimes people don’t give second chances.”

This is not to say that these things signify a loss in Aki’s creative buzz. At the center of it all stands her genuine passion for making videos. “I’ve always wanted to share my experiences with my fans, and I still do now. I know it sounds cliché, but once you find what makes you happy, life becomes a little bit easier to handle. Everything else will follow after.”

Ultimately, she believes in a balance between making creative sacrifices,

straying away from the media and building opportunities. “When you’re someone who turns your hobby into a job, it’s important to have the mind of a businessman and the heart of an artist. If all you care about is the art without listening to anyone, you’re not going to grow. If you are about the numbers, you’ll lose that genuineness.”

WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS

We’ve now strolled into Inokashira Park and are sitting on a bench. As we wait for the city’s afternoon chime to stop, silence nestles between us. I get the distinct feeling that Aki is still bubbling with opinions. We acknowledge that there’s a general uncertainty surrounding the long-term prospect of YouTube careers.

“YouTube has given me a lot of opportunities to challenge myself. I’ve had the chance to face my fears,” she explains. “At the end of the day, it is a very good stepping stone to introduce you to so many opportunities. While I don’t know what the future holds for me, I’m taking things one day at a time — whatever that means.”

Perhaps it’s Aki’s pacific attitude towards the whole ordeal that signifies her true perseverance, or perhaps it’s her humble disposition, but my curiosity only grows. I can’t help but sneak in one last question: Would she want her kids to be on the internet, too?

“Like, an imaginary kid?” she half-laughs, but she’s choosing her words well. She settles on this: “I would tell them to wait. The internet’s a pretty cruel place. I want them to experience the things they love without the need of having someone to see it all the time.” And don’t we all?





Kakurinbo Temple Lodging & Ebisuya Rental Villa

As recommended by the Washington Post



For over 550 years, Kakurinbo has welcomed pilgrims and weary travelers to its tranquil setting in the forested foothills of Mount Fuji.

As a *shukubo*, or temple lodging, Kakurinbo offers a harmonious balance of hospitality and spirituality. Its clean and simple aesthetic, with warm wood, tatami-matted floors and *shoji* doors through which light softly filters, exudes tranquility and comfort. The centerpiece of Kakurinbo's celebrated garden, designed by the great poet, priest and gardener Muso Soseki, is a *shinji ike* pond in which koi lazily drift.

Kakurinbo is one of some 20 operating *shukubo* in Minobusan,

located in southern Yamanashi Prefecture. As home of Kuonji, the head temple of Nichiren Buddhism, Minobusan has traditionally attracted pilgrims. Today, visitors come to relax and explore the many highlights of the local area, such as Shichimenzan, another sacred mountain.




Kakurinbo offers a warm welcome, exquisite cuisine and a variety of activities linked to Buddhist culture. Bilingual staffers are usually on hand to explain and help with workshops. Bicycles are available to rent for those who are ambitious to explore the hilly terrain, or take on the challenge of a trip to Lake Motosu.

Kakurinbo has recently opened Ebisuya, a lovingly restored merchant's villa dating from the early Showa period. Ebisuya, which can comfortably sleep six guests, is now available as a self-contained, single-property accommodation.

The adjoining Farm Café Zencho is popular for light lunches, coffee and cakes. Dotted with wicker chairs, the café's spacious terrace is the perfect place to share a bottle of Kakurinbo Temple Beer, Minobusan's first craft ale. The beer, which comes in three styles, also makes a great gift for friends back home. The adjacent hot spring, the only one in Minobusan, is currently under renovation and will open in 2022.

Fascinating, authentic and off the beaten track, Minobusan is only a bus ride away from Shinjuku Busta or two hours by car from Tokyo. Kakurinbo and Ebisuya welcome guests all year round.

3510 Minobu,
Minamikoma-gun
Yamanashi 409-2524
Tel 0556-62-0014
kakurinbo.jp

 facebook.com/kakurinbo
 @kakurinbo_temple
 行学院覚林坊

For the LOVE of ~~MONEY~~ GAMING

“Some people may feel like what I’m doing is bad or a waste of time, but they can think whatever they want. I believe that I should have fun, no matter what I decide to do in life.”

BY MIKE SMITH



For anyone who has ever woken up on Christmas morning hoping to have the newest console beautifully wrapped under the tree, it’s probably safe to assume that at least at one point in your life, you also hoped you could play video games for a living. Finally you’d be justifying all those times you begged your mother for one last game before bedtime. With the rise of YouTube, live streaming platforms like Twitch and professional esports, your dream of making the big bucks from home has never been closer to coming true (yes, we know many high-paying professions are working from home these days, but that’s beside the point).

As big industries feverishly attempt to get a slice of the lucrative 130-billion-dollar gaming pie — like the U.S. Army creating an esports team — it’s no wonder that the Japanese government is looking at esports as a way to boost the lagging economy. With that said, is Japan truly ready to embrace a society boosted by gamers?

To learn more about what it means to be a professional gamer, Metropolis spoke with professional streamer, esports champion and YouTuber, Chikara Kawakami — better known as SHAKA — for his insights on live streaming, esports and gaming culture in Japan.

How did you get your start into gaming?

SHAKA: My dad. He bought our first [gaming] console when I was little — maybe around three years old — so I’ve been playing for as long as I can remember. However, I didn’t get my first taste of PC gaming until junior high school, when my dad bought a computer. It was for his work, but my brother and I would play on it when we had the chance.

In the past few years, gaming has become more and more accessible through mobile devices, TVs, etc. Almost everyone plays some kind of game. How do you feel about this?

I personally feel pretty envious. When I was a kid, it was so much harder to play any type of video game. On the other hand, it’s really wonderful for everyone to get the chance to play.

When it comes to gaming professionally in Japan, what are the biggest differences between streaming and esports?

With competing professionally, it’s just like other sports. As a player, you play in tournaments, you win, you get some cash. For streaming, it’s maybe closer to being a celebrity. You get sponsors, and you get a lot of money to stream. Compared to what esports players make, it’s not very balanced. With esports, it all depends on whether you win the tournaments or not.

This not only applies to playing video games, but everything in life. If you focus all your skills and time on doing one thing professionally, it can carry a lot of risk.

Do you think that's why a lot of esports players are also streamers?

When you have an online gaming competition, the star players are the best of the best. They gain their popularity and money by showing great performances. That's how they make their living.

What about the other players, who are not that good?

Well, what's left for them is to try to show that they're unique by doing something outside of esports, like streaming. Here they can show off their character to earn popularity and money.

Do you feel that what you do for a living is respected in Japan?

Gamers who know about me and watch my streams respect what I do. But not everyone is going to be into gaming. There are people who play video games on their smartphones or just got into gaming who don't know about me well, and think I'm not all that proper. Of course, because of that they don't respect me. But yeah, at least for the gamers, the true gamers, I guess that I am respected.

What do you wish was more well known about playing video games competitively?

It doesn't matter if the game is 1 vs. 1 or 5 vs. 5, it's a team game with real people. It's pretty close to the actual sports. Actually, I think it's the same. If you're a fan of football or basketball, you know how fun it is to watch a competition. Both normal sports players and esports players have been training their whole lives for this, and are giving it all they have.

The only reason why many people think that esports is a waste of time is because they don't understand the rules or the game. But at its core, it is still a competition.

With so many international fans, do you feel like you're representing Japan?

To be honest, I really don't have the notion that I'm a representative of Japan or anything like that. Maybe it's because a lot fewer people watch me compared to famous professional athletes. However, I am careful about what I say, and try not to take things over the limits of what's allowed.

How do you feel about the sudden rise of esports in Japan?

When I used to compete, there weren't so many awards or so much money involved. At that time, there were players who couldn't make a living with just gaming.

Now, if you and your team win a competition, there are loads of prizes and perks for your team. It's a great change, and I think it's better compared to before. It's also good for me, because I like to watch the tournaments.

Do you foresee any problems with the growing popularity of playing video games professionally?

This not only applies to playing video games, but everything in life. If you focus all your skills and time on doing one thing professionally, it can carry a lot of risk. What happens if you wake up and you're not able to do this anymore? It would be awful.

Many kids now start playing games at a young age, and as they get older, they suddenly realize they have to start thinking about their future. There will come a time when they need to choose between going to university or

becoming a professional gamer. Not many people continue as professional gamers into their 40s, 50s and 60s, so it's something you have to keep in mind. It's one of the things I'm concerned about for my own career.

What made you decide to go all in to become a professional gamer/streamer?

When I first started to join competitions, there weren't any rewards involved. I just did it because it was fun. I wanted to be the best at whatever game I was playing. I wanted to win. It wasn't until I participated in the Taiwanese pro league that I got my first reward, and thought that this could become something I could make money from.

As for streaming, it was also a hobby at first. I couldn't imagine making money from it, let alone a career. However, before I knew it, I was earning an income. Actually, before I was doing this full time, I had an office job. Once I began showing my face on stream, I started getting recognized and the news eventually reached my boss. Since it was a company that required employees to have a professional image, my boss made me choose between keeping my job or to continue streaming. It was a tough decision, so I discussed things with my wife and she said she would support me either way. Of course, I decided to go with streaming.

As someone with a family, how do you balance gaming/work with spending time with your family?

To be honest, I don't think I'm balancing the two well. Unfortunately, I kind of put more time into gaming than being a family man. Thankfully, I started dating my wife when I was competing professionally, so she is a little used to it. She still gets angry, but she understands. I believe she is a lot more understanding than the average person, so I'm very grateful.

As a rule, I do try to have a few days a week where we go out somewhere or do something that we both like — I feel like that at least is a must.

After all this time gaming as a career, are you still able to enjoy playing for playing's sake?

Definitely. When I choose a game I'm going to stream, I always pick one I want to play or that makes me feel happy while I'm playing it. I'm not one of those people who plays a game just because it's popular or because their viewers are expecting them to stream it. I don't do this just for the show. I do it because I enjoy it. It has always been, and will be, my hobby.

When someone asks me 'What are you going to do on your day off?' It's always the same answer: I'm going to be at home playing games.

One unique thing about streaming is that viewers can communicate with you in real time as you play. Do you feel that this is a positive or negative?

When we talk about someone like Keisuke Honda or other star Japanese athletes, there are people who support him a lot and others who don't like him at all, but his fans will always be with him. However, there is a kind of metaphorical wall that separates the audience from the players.

With streaming, it's different. You don't see it as an audience, but as people you play with. They see you as a pal or a buddy; it's much more intimate. They get to know a lot about you and start to see you less as a celebrity.

When it comes to streaming, what are your goals for the future?

Whether I would like to be a streamer for the rest of my life, I don't know. At the moment, I'm enjoying what I do and want to continue for as long as I can. I believe I can earn money from streaming to support my family well into the future, but then again, you never know what the future holds. For now, I'll take it one step at a time and see how things go.

Some people may feel like what I'm doing is bad or a waste of time, but they can think whatever they want. I believe that I should have fun, no matter what I decide to do in life. It's crucial. It's how I got into streaming in the first place.



Regardless of the medium, self-expression is central to creativity. For Kanagawa-native xiangyu, her personal style of expression is constantly evolving. Since jump-starting her career in the music industry three years ago, after departing from the fashion industry, the energetic, almost restless artist has experimented with a variety of sounds. As she continues to define her style, she holds herself to relentlessly high standards and, refusing to repeat herself, she has managed to carve out a niche in the industry in which she now operates.

FINDING NEW LIFE

At the age of 20, studying fashion design at Bunka Fashion College Tokyo, music was never an industry that xiangyu expected to find herself in, until she was approached by Wednesday Campanella manager, Yasutomo Fukunaga.

“She was creative and unique already,” says Fukunaga. “I thought she had unique ideas, and I wanted her to know that fashion is not the only outlet in which to express them.”

xiangyu refers to the next five years as “the dark years.” She continued to work alone in fashion design, as well as a brief stint trying her hand at office work, before getting back in touch with Fukunaga, who connected her with producer Kenmochi Hidefumi. “From there, I found a new life,” the artist says. She went on to experiment in the more collaborative medium of music, subsequently releasing 12 singles and an LP under the xiangyu moniker, while playing with genre and songwriting approaches.

EXPERIMENTATION AND CONNECTIONS

While testing a variety of styles has been key to her growth over the past three years, xiangyu says that her recent time with producer Gimigam has helped her realize new potential.

“I had the idea for ‘MANHOLE’ for a long time, but didn’t know how to put it into a song until I got the beat from Gimigam. All my previous lyrics were made with Kenmochi, but this was the first time for me to work with a new sound maker. It helped me come up with new types of delivery that I hadn’t come across when working with Kenmochi.”

Constant experimentation and reinvention play a large role in xiangyu’s daily life, too. Self-described as easily bored, she doesn’t like to stay in one place for too long. She changes neighborhoods

Finding Her Rhythm



WORDS BY PATRICK BALFE
TRANSLATION BY
TAKAHIRO KANAZAWA



Tokyo rapper xiangyu on constant reinvention

every two years, and prior to working in music, regularly changed part-time jobs too. Music acted as a way for her to alter her environment and lifestyle, and this shift has enabled her to spark connections and experiences that would have been impossible in the fashion industry or corporate world.

“For me, it’s boring to not change.”

Collaborative relationships aren’t the only ones that xiangyu has found value in since leaving the fashion industry. “I forgot why I decided to sing or enter this industry. But because of the pandemic, all the feelings I used to feel came back to me during real, offline communication at actual gigs or venues. This is very important to me. I do feel a larger sense of enjoyment in meeting new people and really getting out there compared to three years ago. Being able to meet new people has been one of the best aspects of stepping into this industry.”

THE OBSTACLE IS THE WAY

With limited external stimuli — as the majority of xiangyu’s music career has been during the pandemic — she has found it difficult to write, but managed to use those challenges as an opportunity for growth. “When something is missing or lacking, that’s when I can be creative. New goals or motivations come out in an imperfect situation. I reflect on my own thoughts and think about who I am or what I am, then create something.”

“Although I’ve said before that I like putting ridiculous lyrics to cool music, how I feel about lyrics has changed a bit.” Recently, she has taken to reading modern haiku and senryu to help inform her songwriting and word selection, among other techniques. “I’m at this phase now where I’m experimenting with the flow of words, and selecting and composing lyrics in a way that sounds smooth to the audience.”

GROWTH

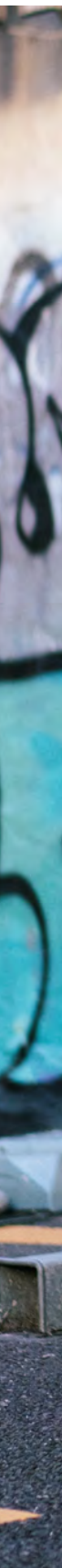
In addition to lyrical structure, xiangyu’s approach to lyrical content has developed in the past few years. Her recent focus has been using broad themes to write about thoughts and experiences that she hopes will resonate with her audience on a subjective level.

This style of songwriting has helped her maintain creative freedom as an artist, and avoid being pigeonholed by the industry. “For me, songs are part of my life and everything is on the same plate, but Japan doesn’t see it that way. If I talk about politics even just a bit, it will be labelled as a political song. I’ve been trying to find a way of hinting at messages in songs rather than having the messages I intend to deliver at the forefront. In the beginning, I was putting emphasis on writing music with messages I wanted to spread, but at the moment, I’d rather make songs that make listeners think: I love this! I want to dance.”

It’s clear that the past three years have been a period of steep growth. “What I think is good now is not the same as what I thought was good three years ago. I’m aiming higher than ever. I feel the level of expectation for myself is always changing. With that said, I don’t think I can say I’ve gotten used to it, and I still feel nervous. I’m absorbing a lot of things and reinventing myself really fast, so I think I’ll be able to produce new and better material. I don’t know where I will be next year, but I’m excited to see what I will be doing and what I will create.”

“When something is missing or lacking, that’s when I can be creative.”

“What I think is good now is not





the same as what I thought was good three years ago.”



The TRASH TASTE PODCAST

*Turning memes, arguments
and garbage opinions into success*

BY MIKE SMITH

Now before we even get started, no this isn't a podcast hosted by raccoons discussing the intricacies of discarded food. However, in a way that's not too far off from describing this weird amalgamation of childhood trauma, comedic anecdotes and gloves-off, cross cultural banter. Where, instead of trash pandas foaming at the mouth over leftover pizza, you get three men frenziedly arguing about whether you should eat pizza crust or not. It's somehow the perfect combination of what it's like eavesdropping on a good conversation and a blanket of reassurance for foreigners experiencing life in Japan.

In early 2020, talent agency GeeXPlus reached out to anime-focused YouTubers Connor Colquhoun (CDawgVA) and Garnt Manetapho (Gigguk) with an offer to bring them to Japan and join their longtime friend Joey Bizinger (The Anime Man) to create content under their management. They had no idea that this would be the catalyst for the creation of the very successful Trash Taste podcast.

Now, nearing their 80th episode, and with millions of subscribers, followers and listeners, "the boys" sit down with *Metropolis* to discuss working in Japan as professional content creators.

Connor: Yeah, I think we have all learned to despise the term Influencer, but even so, the term YouTuber has negative connotations too, due to past YouTubers who have visited Japan.

*[The three of them glance at each other and laugh uneasily] *For the uninitiated, YouTuber Logan Paul came to Japan in 2017 and posted videos of himself doing distasteful and culturally inappropriate things.*

J: My grandma just says I'm a comedian whenever she introduces me, so I guess that works too.

How do you feel about the popularity of kids wanting to become a professional content creator when they grow up, over the more traditional careers like firefighter or astronaut?

J: It's definitely pretty odd, especially because it's still so new.

C: I think it's pretty cool, though, that it can actually be viewed as a career.

G: The popularity is understandable, it's probably all that they watch. It will be interesting to see what happens in the future, though.

J: But it also makes me think 'ah shit, more competition!'

Speaking of careers, is there a point where reading manga, watching anime or playing video games stops becoming a past-time and is just work?



Each of you may have started your rise to fame on YouTube, but now have branched out and found success on other platforms and professions. What would you consider your job title to be now?

Joey: That's tough, because the term YouTuber has become a little ambiguous these days, but I much prefer it over the term influencer.

Garnt: Definitely. Even though we do other things, it keeps things simple to just say YouTuber.

J: For sure, it's impossible for me to read or watch something as a hobby and not be thinking at the same time, how can I make a video on this?

G: At the same time, it also forces us to watch or read something we normally wouldn't, because it has become so popular.

C: Those are the pros and cons. As an 'influential person' you may come across something you really like that gets you excited to share, whether it be a new manga or video game, and you want to share it with your community. You have to decide if it's worth just keeping it to yourself. ▶▶



J: It's kinda weird how it all works out. Your hobbies become work, so you then have to find new hobbies to enjoy.

Looking back at your own careers, at what point did you start thinking, "I made it?" Or do you still believe that you have some ways to go?

[The three of them once again give off a few uneasy chuckles]

C: I guess I did when I made the majority of my income from YouTube and lived comfortably, but it really depends on how each person measures their success. For some, it's when they first get a million views on a video.

J: That's where people mess up. It's not just about having one successful video or [live]stream, it's about being able to consistently create videos that get a million views.

C: Yeah, I've seen it so many times. A YouTuber gets one popular video and thinks they made it, but can never do it again and gives up.

G: I don't like thinking 'I made it.' I'm just the type of person who is always thinking I'm one mistake away from losing it all. But I think that's partially just the way I was raised.

With the success of Trash Taste and your own individual careers, also comes the success of the "leeches," [i.e. Twitch clippers who take snippets of live streams and post on their own YouTube Channel, reactors that just rewatch content in its entirety and unofficial merch sellers]. What's your own personal take on this issue, and at what point is the line crossed into the theft category?

J: It honestly depends. I'm perfectly fine with someone reacting or clipping something from my videos, but once you monetize it and try to make

money off of my hard work, then I have a problem. It's tough because it's so unregulated and there are no clear rules.

G: If you add something of your own to it, I think that's a little different.

J: Yeah, there's one channel who started doing a Russian dub of our entire podcast without asking any of us. Now that is something that takes a lot of effort to do for an over-two-hour video, every week.

G: If we have Russian fans out there who have found us through that dub, that's great that they're able to connect through that.

C: That's always the argument. Is their video really transformative or are they just posting themselves reacting to our video in its entirety? At that point it's just like, come on. Then again I feel like it also depends on the platform. Reacting to videos on YouTube is often looked down upon, but Twitch is OK. It really just depends.

With YouTube's less than stellar copyright strike system, and Twitch's questionable admins ending careers overnight, what fears do you have for your own careers? Do you have any precautions in place?

C: There's been a lot of people who feel like they are in a safe place on YouTube, and when things go wrong they just disappear. When you get money, invest it!

J: That's the thing, don't put all your eggs in one basket. It can be scary when you think about a company with all that power, but that's when it's important to expand, whether it's other platforms, Patreon or selling merch. You gotta have back up plans.

G: You can never be too prepared. You may be thinking 'I'm followin

all the rules, I should be fine', but it can truly happen to anyone. Whichever platform it may be, they probably don't have your best interests at heart. It's up to you to look out for your own career.

With Garnt and Joey being in relationships with people of the same profession, from different countries, what type of tax/visa nightmares did you have to deal with?

G: It really was a nightmare, but we are really lucky we have such great management. They took care of most of the tough parts.

J: Luckily I didn't have to deal with the visa stuff, but it was a really weird transition for me. Prior to doing Trash Taste, I was always considered a freelancer — which was a totally different beast — but now as an “employee,” things have become easier in some ways.

G: As far as having a partner with the same profession, it's all about boundaries. If I'm helping Sydney with a video I consider it work, but at the same time, making sure to separate it from off time.

J: Drawing that line is definitely important, Aki and I set certain times for work, anything outside of that can wait. I think when you don't find that balance is when things go wrong. It's especially hard in our line of work where part of our lives is so public.


As for Connor, does the thought of having a partner with the same profession, dealing with the same things as you daily, entice or scare you away?

C: Yeah, I have no intention of ever being in a relationship with another YouTuber. I'm already way too self absorbed, there is no way I can be with someone that is as well.

It's not uncommon for friendships to turn sour once money or fame is involved. What's the secret to maintaining healthy friendships when business is involved?

J: They Paypal me money every week, so there is no problem. In all honesty though, I think it's because we have been friends for a long time, way before we thought about doing a podcast.

C: For us this originally felt like a side project, friends sitting around talking about whatever, and waiting to see if it would work or not.

G: I think that's definitely what made it successful. We're not stuck sitting around being told what to talk about, we're lucky to be able to choose what we want to talk about. 



Train for strength, flexibility and balance in an international atmosphere.

Full-service bilingual pilates studio now open in Omotesando

- Private Classes
- Private Duet Classes
- Group lessons

Interested to find out more?
Our trial classes are 1:1 or 1:2, so you have the full attention of your instructor.



re-juvenatepilates.com

03-6384-5829

info@re-juvenatepilates.com

Kuwajima Building 2F, 3-15-7
Minamiaoyama, Minato-ku, Tokyo



ONE-STOP SERVICES IN ENGLISH

✓ Accounting

- Auditing
- IPO Consulting
- Due Diligence

✓ Tax

- Tax Preparation
- Tax Consulting
- Accounting Services
- Payroll Services

✓ Visa Attorney

- Establishing a Company & Branch Office
- Corporate Services
- Immigration Services

More Than
Twenty Years
Experience

KASAI CPA

 042-401-0342

Takashi Kasai CPA Firm
4-1-2-403 Honcho, Kokubunji-shi, Tokyo
support@kasaicpa.com
www.kasaicpa.com



RYOYA TAKASHIMA'S PEACEFUL CUISINE

BY JESSIE CARBUTT

The wisdom of saying no



Bizarrely, the height of our achievements is all-too-often equated to how good we are as individuals. We're inclined to think that an award-winning brain surgeon with multiple pharmaceutical companies and a busy social life is surely *better* than their part-time cleaning staff with a perpetually empty calendar. Worse, we've come to believe that only a fool, a slacker or some kind of bohemian college dropout would actually *choose* to reject a chance for growth in our career, income and social prestige — all things we've come to equate as “success.” Yet founder of the YouTube channel Peaceful Cuisine, Ryoya Takashima, has found wisdom in saying no to opportunity.

“Though YouTube has become one of the world’s most popular platforms, I don’t want to stick to it,” he tells *Metropolis*. “I still think I have had enough.” Tallying over 166 million views, 446 videos and over 10 years executing some of the most beautifully meticulous vegan recipes on the internet, it’s not surprising that the culinary creator’s enthusiasm for the platform has dimmed. New business opportunities, income stream avenues, and the entrepreneurial dangling carrot of further fame through channel growth all in front of him. Still, he explains in an interview for the YouTube channel TOKYO VEG LIFE, “I’m pretty satisfied with the level I’m at now.”

Slowing down doesn't mean backing away from a challenge, or giving up. It simply means shifting our idea of what the challenge might be.

When he launched the channel back in 2010, his ambition was to share the vegan lifestyle with viewers across the globe — deciding to make the channel bilingual to tap into the widest audience reach. Over time, he added more personal aims to his list, like learning the art of pottery so that he could complement his recipes with handmade ceramics, and mastering the cello so he could compose his own music. Viewers praised him not only for his skillful recipes, but for the sheer quality of his video production and their calming aesthetic. Comments along the lines of “I’m not even vegan but these recipes are amazing,” “Your orderly minimalism helps my anxiety,” and “Perfect ASMR to watch before bed” flooded the comments section.

It seemed like Takashima was aiming for the absolute top, but by 2020 he came to a realization, and he decided to wind the channel down. This choice coincided with the development and subsequent closure of his exclusive members-only online community, and a debut into the skincare market that he halted even before its full fruition. Though both were logical business steps that the YouTuber had mapped out on the horizon, he soon chose to end both.

Massive flops? Missed opportunities for profit, potentially huge extra income streams and further prestige? A sign that the creator had become lazy or lacked further ambition? Takashima thinks they are none of these, and instead sees them as revelations. Slowing down doesn’t mean backing away from a challenge, or giving up. It simply means shifting our idea of what the challenge might be.

For Takashima, the urges for improvement and channel growth just stopped making sense, and the notion of more wealth and renown simply didn’t drive him. His idea of success has now evolved into two new avenues: actively choosing to live a life in which he has the freedom of time and flexibility, and health.

“It’s not like I don’t want to work,” he explains. “I’m spending my time hanging out with friends or doing what I want to do, and things I want to create or focus on become my work — and recently that means health. It’s a much more complicated thing than I anticipated, and that complexity fascinates me.”

This fascination loops back to his skincare project. “I gave up on the skincare brand because I realized that it was a temporary solution. It’s like how we simply take medicine that a doctor prescribes us to reduce symptoms of a cold, rather than working on our health from the inside of our body, and learning more deeply about the true cause and how to prevent it.” If profit wasn’t the drive, how could he follow through with the launch of a brand that he didn’t believe in?

The struggle for health is a personal one. When Takashima returned to Japan after time working abroad in the car industry, he was diagnosed with the skin condition cholinergic urticaria — a kind of hives. He suffered for over a year, taking various medicines but still unable to go outside without his skin reacting badly. Over time, he discovered that stress was the culprit. Once he focused his energy and time on improving his mental state rather than finding pills and creams, his condition improved.

“What we need to do is think,” he explains, panning our discussion out to a wider topic: that of today’s current trend to hyper-consume media. “We shouldn’t consume and accept information without questioning it. Not all the information on the internet works for you, like how turning solely to medicine is not always the best way to take care of your body.”

In a world where media is increasingly condensing itself, entire books and movies summarized into short videos (Google “Titanic in 10 Seconds”), Takashima is becoming concerned — especially when it comes to medicine






and health. “Videos like ‘10 minute yoga to cure X illness’ or ‘X helps reduce headache symptoms’ — they might aid you in the short-term, but they’re still not fundamentally solving the problem. This kind of shortform content has an incredible number of views but, ironically, it’s actually making it harder and harder for people to reach the real, deeper information they truly need to know about. They’re not helping people to think, to look at what underlying long-term causes they can address. There’s a demand for quick content that comes from those who want to catch up with all kinds of information and trends by spending the absolute minimum amount of time possible.”

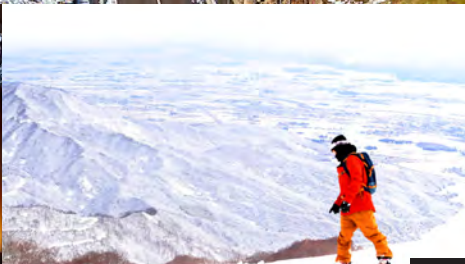
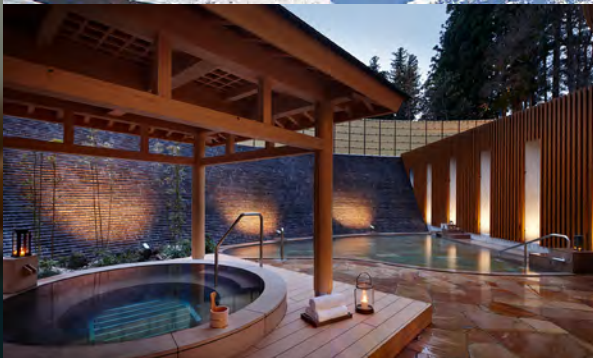
Looking at Takashima’s channel in this light, we start to see more than just culinary genius and an exquisite looking vegan mocha fudge ice cream. His content isn’t only for teaching people recipes (Takashima knows his dishes call for ingredients and tools that are too tough to source for daily cooking at home anyway), and it isn’t for the necessity of a vegan lifestyle (he says he isn’t vegan for any kind of belief, and has never tried to force the idea onto anyone). Instead, it is a reflection of his philosophy that the important things around us like our health, culture and diets are surely more complex and worthy of our focus than a two-minute video summing-up *Paradise Lost*.

When it comes to food, Takashima encourages us to consider where each ingredient comes from, and to take the time to understand and appreciate each step. That mocha fudge ice cream started its life out not as a packet of fudge and a spoonful of instant Nescafe, but right from its origins: organic raw coffee beans, which Takashima dutifully starts from and goes on to painstakingly hand-roast, grind and brew in careful stages.

The challenge for us now as viewers is to take a little of Peaceful Cuisine’s wisdom off the screen and into our own lives by asking some hard-reaching questions. What is truly important to us, and what should be our sense of success? Where are we allocating too much time and stress that could be better spent elsewhere? Perhaps Takashima can show us how to find wisdom in sometimes saying no, and ultimately, to shape a lifestyle that is healthier for us and — true to his channel’s name — also more peaceful. 



PARADISE AWAITS



The resort has 11 skiing slopes, an onsen, a swimming pool and 11 restaurants and bars.

The Crown Jewel of Niigata

Beautiful coastlines, premium quality rice and the birthplace of skiing in Japan, Niigata Prefecture has a lot to offer. As the temperature drops and winter descends, it's time to begin planning your trip into a winter wonderland. With ideal powder conditions, 11 ski slopes and just a two-hour shinkansen ride away from Tokyo, Lotte Arai Resort is the perfect mountain resort to experience winter sports in Japan.

Located on the southern tip of the prefecture in Myoko, the resort stands on Mt. Oken-sahi. Covering over 1.5 million square meters — with beginner, intermediate and expert courses — the resort boasts Japan's largest in-bounds free-ride terrain. Off the main slopes, there are nearly 212 hectares of ground patrolled by the mountain's top-notch avalanche monitoring staff. When open to visitors, it creates a massive ungroomed freeride area. The main slopes also offer night skiing for resort guests, ensuring you get in all the runs you want during your stay.

Even those who have to mentally repeat pizza and French fries, or families with varying

levels of skill can enjoy what the mountain has to offer. Ski schools run throughout the week, which are great for skiers of any age to enroll and improve their skills, whether you are still on beginner slopes or gliding down black diamond runs.

Alongside superior ski conditions, Lotte Arai Resort's appeal also comes from its luxury amenities. Standing out as the resort's pride and joy is the Hoshizora onsen. The natural hot spring water allows guests to comfortably relax outdoors with a spectacular backdrop of snow-capped mountains and star-filled nights. The onsen's gentle, low-alkaline waters are said to improve skin health, and will help with muscle soreness after a long day of skiing.

After your onsen excursion, you can enjoy karaoke with plenty of sake and beer on hand, or sit down to a meal at one of three hotel gourmet restaurants: Japanese, Italian or Western fare. If you're looking for something unique to Niigata, be sure to try some snow-aged pork or hand-dripped coffee made from beans stored in snow.

The resort also has everything from rock climbing to snow rafting, romantic gondola rides and adventurous snowmobile tours. If

your children are too young to join on your excursions, daycare options are available, allowing partners to get some valuable time away from the little ones.

As the first mountain operated by a foreign-owned global hotel brand, with English-friendly customer service, Lotte Arai Resort has it all. Witness for yourself the beauty of Niigata's Myoko region, and what makes this resort the perfect embodiment of winter paradise.



LOTTE
HOTELS & RESORTS

ARAII RESORT

PLAN YOUR TRIP NOW!  

**LOTTEHOTEL.COM/
ARAII-RESORT**

0255-75-1100

**1966 Ryozenji, Myoko
City, Niigata** 



It was November 1996. The renowned club Milk in Ebisu was hosting Love Piece Night, a festival for artists in pursuit of eroticism. The club highlighted erotic art, hosted a show by Amsterdam performer Art Porno and partied to music by queer artist Demi Seck Quaver. The guests and the event's organizer, 26-year-old feminist activist Minori Kitahara, were having the time of their lives in the name of sexuality and fun.

The following year, Kitahara had another idea: to create an original vibrator inspired by the book *“Oyayubi P—no Shugyou Jidai”* (*“Big Toe P’s Training Time”*), in which a woman's big toe turns into a penis which she uses for her own pleasure. She figured that if she reached out to companies about the product idea, they would be willing to help her bring it to life. And they did. She was able to create P-labia, a small vibrator that could fit onto the finger, and opened the first official Love Piece Club (LPC) shop in Hanzomon, Tokyo.

“At the time there were a lot more sex goods for men than for women,” says Kitahara. “I wanted to create something that would reflect the idea that women didn’t need a man to feel pleasure. I wanted to create something that would change the image of sex.”

The launch of LPC, Japan’s first and only sex store for women, was a huge step for Kitahara, but an even larger one for women in Japan. It became another catalyst further pushing their sexual revolution.

Twenty five years on, Kitahara still runs LPC and has opened more branches across Japan, with two shops in Tokyo (Hongo and Harajuku) and one in Umeda, Osaka. LPC has grown to be more than just another sex toy shop and into a full-fledged feminist community that hosts events like webinars, workshops and movie nights.

The community’s strength can be attributed to its foundational values of femtech, sex positivity and sisterhood, which also serve as its solutions to overcome the idea of sex as a taboo subject among women, empowering them to their own sexuality.

Kitahara believes promoting femtech— technology that supports women’s health— through LPC would not only lead to a more diverse sex toy market, but also contribute to decreasing sex taboos such as women openly discussing masturbation.

“When I was designing P-Labia, I thought that it was important to have a design that would fit into women’s lifestyles and make it easier for them to talk about sex with each other,” explains Kitahara. “Since femtech products are made by and for women, it helps them start conversations that can help dissolve current sex taboos. I’d like to see these conversations lead into other important ones about sexual health and reproductive rights too.”

Alongside LPC’s femtech conversations come those on sex positivity. LPC believes that women should be able to enjoy sex in a positive and proactive way, and encourages this by hosting femtech products and multiple sex positivity related events.

“I think to be able to have a place where people can feel safe and laugh while choosing [a sex toy] is really important. Sex positivity should be a fun, safe and rewarding experience.”

Last but not least, the most important value to LPC is sisterhood.

“There’s still a large gender gap here in Japan, so some women still have trouble letting go of patriarchal points of view that they still uphold. They have trouble believing in other women; even in themselves. We need to believe and trust in each other so that we can be allies,” says Kitahara.

Strengthening Sisterhood with Femtech

BY
ANGELYN
LABADAN

LPC's sisterhood boasts a wide demographic in terms of both staff and audiences, ranging from women in their early 20s to those in their 50s. They often come in excited to buy their first sex toy or to buy one as a gift for one of their friends. She recalls one woman in her 70s who bravely walked into the shop and announced that she wanted to buy a vibrator, which goes to show how LPC has become a space where women can voice their wants free from judgment or shame. Lately, she's noticed how LPC has encouraged discussions on periods, too.

"I've seen some mothers bring their daughters in to choose period products. I think many of them find it difficult to have that conversation, so our products serve as an introduction to that."

While LPC has seen an exceptional amount of success, it wasn't without its share of difficulties. Kitahara opened up shop in the 90s, a time she felt women could and should express themselves and their sexuality. But in the early 2000s, she faced antifeminism backlash and even jail time for her store's "lewd" displays. In more recent years, Japan's stagnation in the sex toy industry has also posed problems.


"Having worked with various sex toy companies from abroad, I've always felt that Japan's sex toy industry was being left behind" says Kitahara. "For example, in other countries there are so many kinds of sex toys for couples, but those kinds of products aren't available here. Instead, there continues to be a large presence of sex toys that men *think* women want, which don't accommodate women's needs and are unnecessarily masculine. Sometimes, I can't help feeling frustrated and impatient because it's as if Japan has been stagnant this whole time."

However, Kitahara is happy to see that feminism has progressed in the past 25 years thanks to an increase in feminist movements, protests against sexual violence and a stronger awareness of feminism among the younger generation. In fact, it's often LPC's younger customer base that is more vocal in expressing its appreciation and hopes for LPC to continue.

"I often get women in their 20s telling me that they would love to work for LPC. These women weren't even born when I founded the company, so it amazes me to think about how far we've come."

In the future, she hopes that LPC will continue and spread awareness through Ajuma Books, a publishing company she established earlier this year. She aims to publish books about sex education and sexual violence prevention, and to introduce more books by international feminist writers to Japan. Ajuma Book's latest publication on abortion rights was released on November 17, 2021.

Finally, Kitahara gives a reassuring message for those struggling to explore their sexuality. "I think there will always be people who will struggle with this. But ultimately, it's a conversation to have with your own body. This process of discovering what feels good is something to enjoy, and is as fun as you make it."

"It may be difficult to have this conversation at first, but if you don't, you lose the chance to discover what works best for you — not just in terms of sexuaity, but other things that can affect your body like your period or feminine product preferences. The good news is you can have this conversation with your body at any age, and you can continue to do so as your body changes." 



Creating Business Partnerships Between Japan and the World.

We are a multimedia marketing and communications company dedicated to providing our clients with marketing solutions through creativity, technology and strategy.

Get in touch



japanpartnershipholdings.com



Elana Jade



Nails | Facials | Eyelash Extensions | Spray Tanning | Waxing | Massage

Special

60min Conditioning Facial
¥13,000 ⇒ ¥10,500
Valid until the end of February 2022.

NS Azabu Juban Building 4F
3-6-2 Azabu Juban, Minato-ku
Nearest Station: Azabujuban

Tel: 03-6453-9319

salon@elanajade.com

www.elanajade.com

Elana Jade



Pet + Life
動物病院
Veterinary Clinic

PetLife is a welcoming, caring pet clinic that offers generalist, emergency and diagnostic services in both English and Japanese.

We have many years experience, using the latest technology, to care for your very important furry family member.

We also offer hotel services and can assist with pet import and export documentation.



Special health check package now available.

Please inquire about vaccinations, heartworm prevention and flea/tick prevention.

www.petlife.co.jp



PetLife Veterinary Clinic
1F Daiichi Bldg.
2-3-5 Higashi-Azabu
Minato-ku, Tokyo
Tel: 03-6807-4058
info@petlife.co.jp
www.petlife.co.jp



広尾パーク法律事務所
Hiroo Park Law Firm

NEED LEGAL ADVICE?

Hiroo Park Law Firm specializes in the practice areas of civil dispute, family law, employment, criminal defense, immigration, real estate and international cases.

A multilingual team of experienced lawyers that can assist you with your legal needs in English, Japanese, French, Korean and Spanish.



Hiroo Park Law Firm

3F Esq Hiroo, 5-10-37 Minami-Azabu, Minato-ku, Tokyo 106-0047

Fax: 03-5422-6714 Tel: 03-5422-6713 Email: info@hp-lf.jp

hp-lf.jp

IT'S IN THE STARS

Your Horoscope for December 2021 – February 2022

BY CATHRYN MOE

♥ Love ¥ Money ♣ Luck

ARIES

Mar 20–Apr 18 ♥♥♥ ¥¥¥ ♣♣♣



The Solar Eclipse early December gets your creativity flowing. Romance starts a new cycle. Expect changes during the holidays. You're high on the party list. New Year's Eve may be light and lovely. Mercury moves retrograde mid-January. Slowdowns don't mean full stops. Blessings return as Venus goes direct to get her glow on. Valentine's Day is one to watch.

GEMINI

May 20–Jun 20 ♥♥♥ ¥¥¥ ♣♣♣



The Solar Eclipse early December is in your partnership sector. You may be busy, but you'll find time behind the scenes. Ceres and Venus go retrograde at the holidays. Homemade gifts and peppermint treats bring light to evening shadows. The sparkle is all yours this New Year's Eve. Mercury goes retrograde mid-January. Valentine's Day is a bonus for your sweet-natured self.

LEO

Jul 22–Aug 22 ♥♥♥♥ ¥¥¥ ♣♣♣



The Solar Eclipse in early December brings you romantic breezes. Winter winds sparkle breezes your way. The holidays may request changes not of your making. New Year's Eve promises a lighter year to welcome. Mercury goes retrograde mid-January. Ceres brings a cozy form of abundance. Valentine's Day is ready for a big splash. Of gold and chocolate glitter!

LIBRA

Sep 22–Oct 22 ♥♥¥¥ ♣♣♣♣



Mars transits to Libra mid-September. Ambition rises. Then the Sun enters your sign. Happy Birthday! The Equinox is perfectly balanced to make your autumn beautiful. It's a Libran New Moon in early October. Pluto, Saturn, Jupiter and Mercury all go direct. Have a fashionista fabulous Halloween. The lunar eclipse in November puts the focus on partnership.

SAGITTARIUS

Nov 22–Dec 20 ♥♥♥¥¥¥ ♣♣♣



Early December's Solar Eclipse is in Sagittarius. You're intuitive, sensing shifts before they occur. You'll never be bored with your superpower. The universe sends blessings as the stars align. Happy Birthday to You! The holidays are pure sparkle. New Year's Eve reflects your wishes. Mercury goes retrograde mid-January. Valentine's Day is a waiting game. Party on!

AQUARIUS

Jan 19–Feb 17 ♥♥♥ ¥¥¥ ♣♣♣♣



Early December's Solar Eclipse intensifies friendships. The holidays spice things up, adding a festive mood. New Year's Eve is a mind-meld with those who match your spirit. Then Mercury goes retrograde in mid-January. Luckily Ceres, the goddess of abundance, goes direct at the same time. Happy Birthday! Valentine's Day offers a special place to enjoy your chocolate heart.

TAURUS

Apr 19–May 19 ♥♥♥ ¥¥¥ ♣♣



The stars add support to December's Solar Eclipse. A partner may need your attention. What you give is rewarded as the holidays spark. New Year's Eve is a turning point. Mercury moves retrograde mid-January. Ceres brings back abundance. Ruler Venus goes direct to offer comfort with a touch of glitter. You'll make your own kind of magic this Valentine's Day.

CANCER

Jun 21–Jul 21 ♥♥♥ ¥¥ ♣♣♣♣



The Solar Eclipse early December may make you feel like running – from work. Hang in there. Rewards arrive with the holidays. New Year's Eve is electric as surprises pop. When it comes to being on a mission, you have a few of your own. Mercury moves retrograde mid-January. Venus goes direct to restore tattered nerves. Valentine's Day warms your heart with an elegant focus.

VIRGO

Aug 23–Sep 21 ♥♥♥ ¥¥¥ ♣♣♣



If winter is frigid, your heart is calient. The Solar Eclipse in early December accentuates the warmth you share. These holidays are a puzzle of surprises. Whatever arrangements are required, you're up for treasured memories. New Year's Eve has a natural feel. It's balanced to welcome new light. Ruler Mercury goes retrograde mid-January. Valentine's Day is sweetly delicious.

SCORPIO

Oct 23–Nov 21 ♥♥♥♥ ¥¥¥ ♣♣



The Solar Eclipse in early December has nothing on you. You make the holidays happen. Changes around festivities simply serve to amuse. New Year's Eve offers smoldering sparks to warm a Scorpio's heart. In mid-January, Mercury goes retrograde. Ceres moves direct. Your nurturing and abundance await. Valentine's Day is stealthy with a luscious chocolate kiss.

CAPRICORN

Dec 21–Jan 18 ♥♥♥♥ ¥¥ ♣♣♣♣



The Solar Eclipse in early December lands in your house of dreams. You're not one who needs to see your name in lights. You'd rather own the production. The holidays are a steadying force, though changes keep you spellbound. Happy Birthday Capricorn! New Year's Eve melds with promises of excitement. Mercury goes retrograde mid-January. Valentine's Day holds romance.

PISCES

Feb 18–Mar 19 ♥♥♥ ¥¥¥ ♣♣♣♣



There's a Solar Eclipse in early December. It may shift your focus on career. This is the time of year when you may be able to choose. The holidays bring what's real and true. New Year's Eve is your own starlight production. Your options hold an extra dose of glitter. Then mid-January, Mercury goes retrograde. You can create a subtle yet effective Valentine's Day. Happy Birthday!

RETREAT TO COMFORT
IN TOKYO'S PRIME
DISTRICT, AZABU.



GRAND OPENING
14 January, 2022



Contemporary design with quality fittings, plush Serta beds, as well as multilingual guest services make Oakwood Hotel & Apartments Azabu an easy accommodation choice for a night or an extended stay in Tokyo.

For details and reservations,
please visit our website.




Oakwood
HOTEL & APARTMENTS
AZABU TOKYO

For weekly insights on love, money and luck, check
metropolisjapan.com/living/horoscope

Club 360's Ski Injury Emergency Hotline



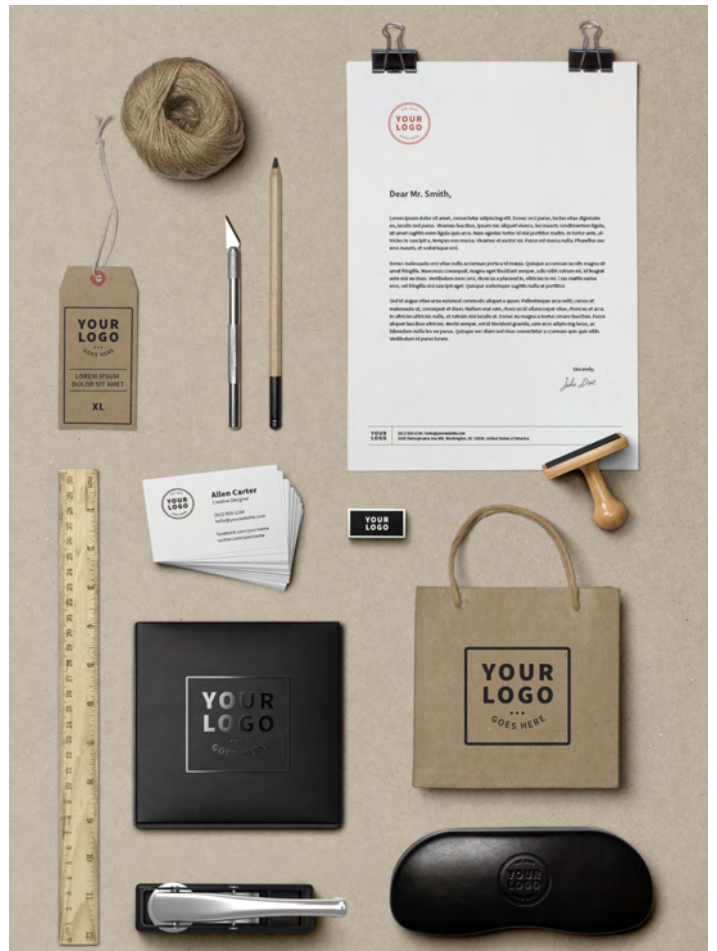
**Injured on the
slopes and not
sure what to do?**

Call Club 360 and we will have one of our experienced physiotherapists call you back, discuss your injury and advise you on an appropriate management plan.



03-6434-9667

info@club360.jp



Need quality English printing services?

Metroprint offers comprehensive service online at metroprint.jp and by the phone.

Services include: business cards, posters and flyers as well as T-shirts and merchandise.

Order online at metroprint.jp or contact us at:

8F Nishi-Azabu Sonic Bldg.
3-2-12 Nishi-Azabu, Minato-Ku
Tokyo 106-0031

T 03-4588-2277
print@metropolisjapan.com
www.metroprint.jp



TRANSPORTATION & LOGISTICAL SERVICES!

30 years of experience delivering for major companies in Japan. With accurate and on-time deliveries, Saitama Iwane Transport guarantees your products & packages will be delivered safely, at the lowest rate around

NOW HIRING 2 - 4 TONS DRIVERS!
We are currently looking for properly licensed drivers, with excellent skills and driving record, to join our team.

CALL NOW TO LEARN HOW WE CAN HELP
kawaguchi@saiwane.com

048-259-1242

saiwanet.com



www.metroprint.jp

APA HOTEL UENO EKIMAE



421 Rooms
Restaurant
Large Spa & Open Air Bath
Smoke-free building
Opened Oct. 1st 2021



You'll be back.

APA's global strategy
679 hotels at home and abroad

JAPAN

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| APA Villa Hotel (Akasaka Mitsuke) | APA Hotel (Asakusa Ekimae) | APA Hotel PRIDE (Kokkaijijodome) |
| APA Hotel (Roppongi Ekimae) | APA Hotel (Asakusa Kaminarimon) | National Diet Bldg. |
| APA Hotel (Roppongi SIX) | APA Hotel (Asakusa Kaminarimon Minami) | APA Hotel & Resort |
| APA Hotel (Shinagawa Sengakuji Ekimae) | APA Hotel (Asakusa Kuramae) | (Ryogoku Eki Tower) |
| APA Hotel (Omori Ekimae) | APA Hotel (Asakusabashi Eki Kita) | APA Hotel & Resort |
| APA Hotel & Resort (Nishishinjuku Gochome Eki Tower) | APA Hotel (Yamanote Otsuka Eki Tower) | (Yokohama Bay Tower) |
| APA Hotel (Shibuya Dogenzakau) | APA Hotel (Sugamo Ekimae) | APA Hotel & Resort |
| APA Hotel (Shinjuku Gyoemmae) | APA Hotel (Nihombashi Bakurocho Ekimae) | (Tokyo Bay Makuhari) |
| APA Hotel (Shinjuku Kabukicho Tower) | APA Hotel (Nihombashi Bakurocho Eki Kita) | APA Hotel (Chiba Ekimae) |
| APA Hotel (Shinjuku Kabukicho Chuo) | APA Hotel (Higashi Nihombashi Ekimae) | APA Hotel (Shinosaka Ekimae) |
| APA Hotel (Higashi Shinjuku Kabukicho Tower) | APA Hotel (Ginza Kyobashi) | APA Hotel & Resort (Midotsuji Hommachi Eki Tower) |
| APA Hotel (Higashi Shinjuku Kabukicho) | APA Hotel (Ginza Takaracho) | APA Hotel (Kyoto Eki Higashi) |
| APA Hotel (Higashi Shinjuku Kabukicho Higashi) | APA Hotel (Hatchobori Shintomicho) | APA Hotel (Nagoya Ekimae) |
| APA Hotel (Higashi Shinjuku Ekimae) | APA Hotel (Shintomicho Eki Kita) | APA Villa Hotel (Sendai Eki Itsutsubashi) |
| APA Hotel (Keiseiueno Ekimae) | APA Hotel (Shintomicho Ekimae) | APA Resorts (Joetsu Myoko) |
| APA Hotel (Ueno Ekikita) | APA Hotel (Akihabara Ekimae) | APA Hotel (Hiroshima Ekimae Ohashi) |
| | APA Hotel (Akihabara Ekikita) | APA Hotel & Resort (Hakata Ekihigashi) |
| | APA Hotel (Akihabara Ekihigashi) | APA Hotel (Kanazawa Ekimae) |

CANADA

- | | | |
|---|--|-----------------------------------|
| COAST coal harbour vancouver hotel by APA | Coast Sundance Lodge | COAST edmonton plaza hotel by APA |
| COAST victoria hotel & marina by APA | Coast Bastian Hotel | Coast Swift Current Hotel |
| COAST prince george hotel by APA | Coast Kamloops Hotel & Conference Centre | Campus Tower Suite Hotel |
| COAST chilliwack hotel by APA | Coast Capri Hotel | Coast Oliver Hotel |
| | Coast Parksville Hotel | Coast Tsawwassen Inn |

USA

- | | | | |
|----------------------|------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| APA HOTEL WOODBRIDGE | Coast Inn at Lake Hood | Coast Gateway Hotel | Hotel 116, A Coast Hotel |
|----------------------|------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|

Get the Best Rates at apahotel.com

APA HOTEL

Search



Laser Hair Removal
50% off - One time offer
(Some restrictions apply. Ask for details)

(Insurance accepted)

The only clinic by
U.S. Board-Certified Plastic Surgeon in Japan

- Laser Hair Removal (Diode & YAG)
- Botox (wrinkles, hyperhidrosis)
- Restylane, Juvederm
- Retin-A, Obagi, Sunspot Treatment
- Liposuction, Mole / Scar Removal, Breast, Facelift, Tummy Tuck
- Laser (Ultherapy, Titan, Genesis, IPL)
- Tattoo Removal (Laser)
- Migraine Headaches (Botox)



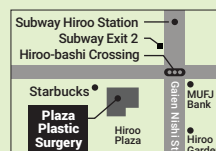
Dr. Robert K Kure

Member



UCLA Plastic Surgery Graduate
Certified by American Board
of Plastic Surgery

American Society of
Plastic Surgeons



Tel. 03-5475-2345

English is spoken • Open on Saturday
4F Hiroo 5-5-1, Shibuya-ku

www.plazaclinic.net



Japan's Best Ski Resort

2020 SKI ASIA

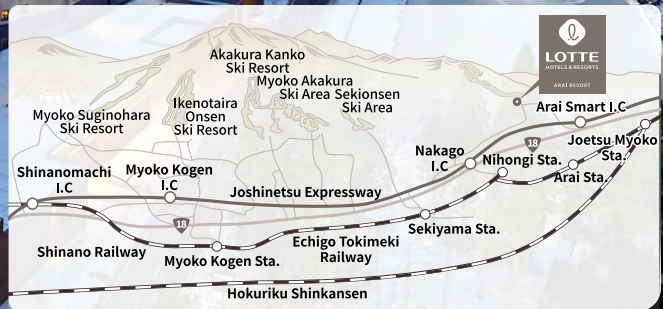


JAPAN'S BEST SKI RESORT
JAPAN'S BEST SKI RESORT FOR POWDER
JAPAN'S BEST FAMILY SKI RESORT
JAPAN'S BEST SNOWSPORTS SCHOOL



©MICHELIN

True Luxury Mountain Resort



LOTTE ARAI RESORT

Tel.0255-75-1100 <https://www.lottehotel.com/arai-resort/en.html/>

