

# GIFU BULLETIN

Vol. III No. III Featuring News, Events, and Updates Around the Ken December 2016

## Jet Travel Insurance

Traveling abroad during the holidays (including back to your home country)? You are covered in the case of an accident by the JET Accident Insurance Policy. If needed, make sure to keep all relevant paperwork and file your insurance claim within 30 days of the accident. For more information, read about the JET Accidental Insurance Policy (<http://jetprogramme.org/en/jpai-outline/>). If you have any questions, contact us at [gifupas@gmail.com](mailto:gifupas@gmail.com). Safe travels!

## Gifu Ben

(Gifu Dialect)

Phrase of the Month

机をつる

つくえをつる

To move desks

## Emergency Preparation

Remember that time at Life Ori when you were sleep deprived and jet lagged, and your PA's told you to get an emergency kit together, but you were too busy concentrating on trying to figure out where to get substance to deal with where to get things like a flashlight? Well, now is the time to make sure you are prepared for a natural disaster.

Emergency Phone Numbers:

Police: Dail 110

Ambulance/Fire: Dail 119

### What to do during an Earthquake

- Stay calm: Cover your head
- **If inside**, stay inside
  - Move close to the center of the building.
  - Get under something stable
  - Avoid windows and things that could fall.
- **If outside**, move away from things that could fall, including power lines, trees, buildings, signs, etc.
- **If in a car**, pull to the side, stop and use the parking break.
- After an earthquake expect tremors.
- Check gas, water and electric lines for damage.
- If you smell gas evacuate immediately and report it to the authorities
- Turn on the radio/check for advisories
- If it is a bad quake, turn off gas, electricity and water then head to your closest emergency evacuation shelter
- Do not use elevators to evacuate

### Recommended Items for a Emergency Kit

(Many can be found at a 100 ¥ store)

- Masks
- Toilet Paper
- Copy of your Bankbook
- Spare clothes (including undergarments)
- First Aid kit (including medicines you take regularly)
- Sanitary Items
- Whistle
- Spare pair of contacts/glasses.
- Wet Tissues
- Flashlight
- Matches/a lighter
- Non-perishable Food (3 days' worth)
- Water (3 days' worth)
- Pen and Paper
- Personal Seal (Inkan)
- A copy of the CLAIR Pocket Guide: [http://jetprogramme.org/wp-content/themes/biz-vektor/pdf/support/JET\\_pocketguide.pdf](http://jetprogramme.org/wp-content/themes/biz-vektor/pdf/support/JET_pocketguide.pdf)

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## What's Catching?!

### Pen Pineapple Apple Pen – By Laura Duvall (Tono RPA)



Perhaps one of the brightest points of 2016 is the rise of Piko Taro and his song PPAP, otherwise known as “Pen Pineapple Apple Pen.” This simple, short song seems to make fun of simple English sentences that students commonly learn in the early stages of their language studies. It became an instant hit with Japanese students when it debuted on Youtube on August 25<sup>th</sup>, 2016. However, the international success of PPAP came after Justin Bieber tweeted his “favorite video on the internet” to all of his fans. The video and song went fully viral, hitting #1 on the Japanese music charts, and even breaking the US charts at #77. Guinness World Records has recognized this achievement, as PPAP is the shortest song ever to break the US Billboard Top 100 chart.

The success of the song has triggered many parodies and spin-offs. YouTube is filled with piano versions, versions imagining PPAP as sung by various pop artists, dubs of the song with characters from Death Note and Dragonball Z singing, and even a slow love song version.



## December Public Holidays

\*information from <http://publicholidays.jp/>

December 23<sup>rd</sup>

### The Emperor's Birthday

天皇誕生日

The Emperor's Birthday. This public holiday changes date depending on the date the reigning emperor was born. In 1989, Emperor Akihito, born on December 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1933, became Japan's 125<sup>th</sup> Emperor. It is one of only two days a year (with the other being January 2<sup>nd</sup>) that they open the Imperial Palace grounds in Tokyo to the general public.

## December Events

\*From your RPA social team

### 1<sup>st</sup> December - Casual English Party

**Where:** co-ba, 3 chome, Honmachi, Takayama City, Hida Region 506-0011

**When:** 7:30pm – 9:30pm

**What:** Casual English Party organized by one of the local bars where everyone can just come together and have a good time chatting to locals and people from around the world! Entry is free for foreigners and alcoholic beverages are available starting from only 400yen!

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## 3<sup>rd</sup> December – Canada Bar Night

*Where :* FabCafe Hida, 6-17 Furukawachō Ninomachi, Hida City, 509-4235  
*When :* 7:00pm  
*What:* Hosted by the lovely ALTs of Furukawa City, we present Canada Bar Night at Fab Cafe in Furukawa! No cost to come, but there'll be some drinks for sale - Canadian Caesars, mulled wine, and so on! AND beer pong!! Maybe even table hockey? Please contact the JETs in the area Shannon (shannonshinoda@yahoo.com), Colby (colby.draney@gmail.com), or Thomas if you'd like to come!

## 3<sup>rd</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> December - Gero Fireworks

*Where:* The Big Red Bridge by Gero Station, Gero City, Hida Region  
*When:* Starting from 8:00pm  
*What:* Come and join in the winter festivities of Gero as they celebrate with fireworks displays throughout December! On Christmas Eve, they will have a special musical fireworks display!

## 10<sup>th</sup> December - Ikenoue Purification Ceremony

*Where:* The Nagara River (near Chusetsu-bashi Bridge), Gifu City  
*When:* 3pm, 7pm, 10pm  
*What:* Men jump into the Nagara river wearing nothing but loincloths for purification and to pray for personal achievement at 3pm, 7pm, and 10pm.

## 16<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> December - Takayama Old Town Winter Illumination

*Where:* Old Town, Kami-sanno machi, Takayama City, Hida Region  
*When:* 6:00pm – 8:30pm  
*What:* Experience a winter lantern-lit wonderland in Takayama's Old Town district! Take photos on the rickshaws, try some local sake, watch a lion dance, and see a jazz concert at the various breweries in town.

## 26<sup>th</sup> December – 28<sup>th</sup> February Taruma Kanekori Illumination

*Where:* Taruma Waterfalls, Shin-Hirayu Onsen  
*When:* 5:00pm – 9:30pm  
*What:* The mineral water flowing from the Taruma Waterfalls freezes between large rock formations, creating stunning icicles that are illuminated in the evening for a super wow effect!

## 24<sup>th</sup> December - Love&Peace Candle Illuminations

*Where:* Gero City, Hida Region  
*When:* 4:00pm – 9:00pm  
*What:* Celebrate a romantic candle-lit Christmas Eve in Gero! The reception desk for candles will be open between 4:00pm – 7:30pm, but you can enjoy the illuminations until 9:00pm!

# GIFU BULLETIN

Vol. III No. III Featuring News, Events, and Updates Around the Ken December 2016

## *JETs Doing Cool Things*

\*Interview by Lauren Godbey (Gifu RPA)



Sarah Pollnow is the ALT for Gifu Commercial and Business High School (Kengisho). She is originally from Seattle, Washington, USA, and has been living in Japan for almost five months. Sarah was recently able to assist her school in obtaining a grant to fund some pretty interesting projects.

***Q: Can you give us some background about the purpose of this grant?***

The USJETAA\* and U.S. Embassy Tokyo provide “Micro-grants” for projects that “promote English language education and encourage future travel and study” in the United States. Since the goal is to “strengthen ties of friendship” between Japan and America, funding can be directed toward projects as diverse as a study abroad fair, English party or event, or international exchange. All American JET participants are eligible. Keep an eye on the [usjetaa.org](http://usjetaa.org) website next August.

***Q: How does your school benefit from this grant?***

Kengisho had almost no English books other than textbooks, so we designed a program called “Let US Read: Building an English Library.” We received enough funding to purchase 26 copies of *One Piece: Romance Dawn*. We could also invest in 15 additional English-language books including reference books, graphic novel adaptations of American classics, and even Disney stories.

We will use these books for several clubs and classes. The crux of the project is a cross-cultural unit on *One Piece*. The central question is, “What do Japanese manga and U.S. history and culture have in common?” This unit will run for five weeks in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade English classes.

These projects have lent nice visibility to English classes. We have enjoyed promoting the books at our School Festival booth, on the ALT bulletin board, in the library newsletter, and—as of November—on the school’s homepage.

***Q: How did you find out about this as an option for your school?***

I learned about this grant at Tokyo Orientation. A representative of the U.S. Embassy explained the grant and gave several examples.

***Q: Are there any other activities you are currently excited about working on with your school?***

The Bulletin Board has also been a fun project so far. Our sister city (Cincinnati) and my college both generously mailed us promotional materials, so the display has been quite lively so far.

***Q: Any advice for JETs who want to become a stronger resource for their placements?***

My advice is to be proactive! I initially thought my school was uninterested in the Micro-Grant, but it turned out that I had just explained the concept poorly. After I raised the subject several times, my coworkers became eager to apply.

# GIFU BULLETIN

Vol. III No. III    Featuring News, Events, and Updates Around the Ken    December 2016

## A JTE's Perspective

\*Interview by Johnny Wilson (Tono RPA)

### *Q: Please introduce yourself*

Hello, I'm Takeuchi Kazushige. Please call me Take-chan or Take-pee. I'm over 50 years old. Iwamura is my hometown, but I currently teach at Akechi Junior High School in Ena city. I have a wife who is strict with me and I also have two sons. One is a teacher and the other is a physical therapist.

### *Q: Why did you become an English teacher?*

Actually, when I was a high school student I hoped to be a math teacher in junior high school. I liked math very much, but I also liked English. I also studied French when I was a university student, but I just really enjoy English. Even though I'm poor at it, I like it.

### *Q: Why do you like working with ALTs.*

I usually have a lot of questions about English that an ALT can answer easily. I can ask them my questions and get an immediate or quick response. I think showing students how context is used with English is important too. So in class we can show a natural situation with a conversation between a JTE and an ALT. I also think that team-teaching by JTEs and ALTs is useful to students to brush up their listening ability and communicative competence. Our ALT always brings original activities for classes that I appreciate. They're very useful and the students are interested in them.

### *Q: What makes working with ALTs difficult?*

In my case, I struggle with communicating with ALTs in great detail because of my poor English. So, I must study English hard. Sometimes there are misunderstandings because of my feeble English listening and speaking skills.

### *Q: What advice would you give ALTs?*

Nothing in particular, but from now on help us JTEs and show us your teaching ideas. We may not always be able to use them but they always offer good insights that can be used in class that we may not think of as JTE's.

## The 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the JET Programme

This year the Japan Exchange and Teaching Program celebrates its 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. In early November a commemorative ceremony was held in Tokyo with JET participants representing every prefecture in Japan. The JET Program the three Ministers from MEXT MOFA, and MIC, as well as the crown Prince of Japan spoke at the ceremony. Today,



there are almost 5,000 of us JETs working in Japan, after which we will be joining the alumni pool of over 60,000 JETs from more than 40 countries.

**Happy birthday, JET Program!**

# GIFU BULLETIN

Vol. III No. III    Featuring News, Events, and Updates Around the Ken    December 2016

## Holiday Spotlight: Celebrating Christmas in Japan

By Sarah Demery, Gifu RPA



Christmas is almost upon us and Japan has some surprising and firmly established Christmas traditions, such as going on dates and eating KFC and strawberry sponge cakes!

The tradition of eating KFC on Christmas dates back to the early 1970s when KFC realized that an overwhelming number of foreigners were resorting to eating KFC due to the lack of turkeys in Japan. They then ran a clever advertising campaign which cemented the tradition of eating fried chicken on Christmas day amongst Japanese families. This year it is expected that nearly 4 million Japanese families will eat KFC as their Christmas meals, so it is essential to pre-order your KFC Christmas bucket months in advance or you'll spend hours waiting in lines that wrap around the stores on Christmas day!



The same need for pre-ordering goes for strawberry sponge cakes. These delicious cakes are covered with whipped cream, perfectly shaped strawberries and a figure of Santa-san. After WWII, sweets were a luxury so being able to afford eggs and butter to make a cake was seen as a sign of wealth and the successfulness of Japan. It has remained a staple amongst Japanese families ever since. Remember to order one early!



On Christmas Eve, instead of preparing yourself for the feast of fried chicken you will devour the following day, you can join all of the Japanese couples who celebrate Christmas Eve like it's Valentine's Day. Restaurants book out and beautiful illumination displays are packed with loved up couples, so remember to steer clear if crowds or happy people are not your cup of Christmas tea! One of the biggest and most impressive illuminations in Japan is at Nabano no Sato, a flower park next to Nagashima Spa Land and just south of Gifu city. It's perfect for a romantic date, especially if you fancy escaping to the less snowy areas of Gifu!



# GIFU BULLETIN

Vol. III No. III Featuring News, Events, and Updates Around the Ken December 2016

## Holiday Spotlight: Celebrating the New Year in Japan

Oshōgatsu (正月), January 1-3, is the most important holiday in Japan and it can be likened to how many of us spend Christmas. It's a time when people go back to their home towns and spend time with their families, share a big meal together, and children get money or presents from their parents and grandparents.

In the lead up to oshōgatsu, people try and complete all of their unfinished tasks for the year and workplaces hold *bōnenkai* (忘年会), literally “year forgetting parties” (you will likely have one with your school, enjoy)! You will also see good luck ornaments out the front of houses and shrines made from either pine, bamboo and plum tree branches (dwelling places for visiting gods), or two mochi cakes and a Japanese bitter orange stacked on top of each other (offerings for the gods).



You may also find your students excitedly asking you “Kohaku or Gaki Tsuka?!” It has become a tradition for families to sit together, eat soba and watch one of these specialty New Year’s Eve TV programs together. Kohaku Uta Gassen (紅白歌合戦) is an NHK program that features Japan’s most popular J-pop and Enka singers battling it out as a female and male team. It’s been running since 1959 and is the most popular program amongst older viewers and those with young families. Gaki no Tsukai (ガキの使い) is a Nippon TV comedy program hosted by 5 popular male comedians. It includes lots of comedy skits, punishment games and vulgar jokes. So unsurprisingly it’s incredibly popular with teenagers and young adults!



At midnight, many people go to Buddhist temples to see the large bell rung 108 times (this represents the purification of people’s souls of the 108 earthly sins in Buddhism) and to pray for the first time in the new year (*Hatsumōde*, 初詣). So if you’re looking for a traditional way to bring in the new year, try visiting a big Buddhist temple and enjoy the festive atmosphere as people listen to the bell, dispose of old charms and buy new ones, line up to pray with friends, and enjoy eating from the numerous food stands surrounding the temples!

Oshōgatsu is a few days to relax at home with your family, so nearly everything around Japan will be shut from January 1-3 (you’ve been warned)! Families generally eat *osechi* (御節料理), a beautifully presented bento box made up of multiple, small servings of food that symbolize prosperity and good health (either in name or in colour). Many mothers will cook these in the lead up to oshōgatsu, but they can also be bought for anywhere from a few hundred to a few ten thousand yen.



What would you like to see in future issues? E-mail us at [gifupas@gmail.com](mailto:gifupas@gmail.com)