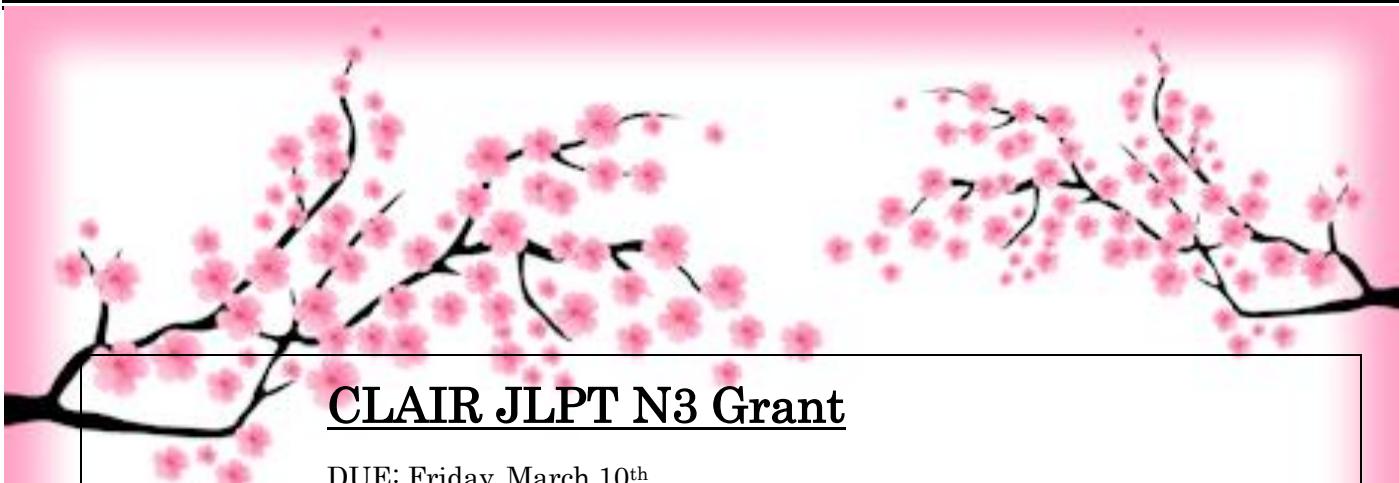


GIFU BULLETIN

Vol. III No. VI

Featuring News, Events, and Updates Around the Ken

March 2017



CLAIR JLPT N3 Grant

DUE: Friday, March 10th

If you took the JLPT this December, *congratulations!* Whether or not you passed, simply studying and taking the exam is something that deserves major props in our opinion!



If you passed the JLPT N3 exam, you qualify for CLAIR's N3 Grant, which refunds you the test fee! (Please note there are a few exceptions – for example, if you have already passed N2 or N1, you no longer qualify.) For details check out CLAIR's page: <http://jetprogramme.org/en/jlpt/>

Beyond receiving your money back, having grants is always a nice accomplishment to put on your resume when you are seeking employment after JET!

Get Involved:

AJET Peer Support Group is now recruiting volunteers!



PSG is a confidential and anonymous resource provided by JETs, for JETs. Volunteers are trained to listen and support callers through a wide spectrum of challenges, and put them in touch with the appropriate

resources. Sound like something you are interested in? Find more information and the application on their website! Applications close March 13.

<http://www.ajetpsg.com/volunteer>

Gifu-Ben Of the Month

みえる

Meaning

いらっしゃる (to be) in standard Japanese

Example: (On the telephone)

“コリンズ先生はみえますか？”
Korinzu-sensei wa miemasu ka?

Is Collins-sensei there?

* March Public Holidays *

March 20th (Mon 月) – Vernal Equinox Day (*Shunbun no Hi* / 春分の日)

Shunbun no Hi celebrates the vernal equinox which is the day when night and day are the same length of time. There's an old Japanese saying that after this day, the chill of winter finally disappears and it indicates the beginning of spring. In Japan, spring signifies new beginnings. Schools will hold their graduation and closing ceremonies around this time before beginning the new school year, companies hire new recruits, Japan's fiscal year begins, people clean and place flowers on their ancestor's graves, and of course it's also the beginning of the fleeting, two-week period when the sakura trees are in bloom!

Shunbun no Hi is a day to appreciate nature and show your love for all living things, so get outside and enjoy the sakura and the beginning of your spring vacation!



Japanese Cultural Note:

Don't Forget about White Day (ホワイトデイ) on March 14th

Hopefully you had a chocolate-filled Valentine's Day this year. However, Japan also celebrates White Day. Originally started by the National Confectionary Industry Association in 1978 and marketed as a chance to "give back". Instead of Valentine's Day being about the exchange of chocolates and presents, here it is a chance for women to give their partners, potential interests, or friends chocolate. White Day is then about the reciprocation of the gesture, sometimes in a romantic way, sometimes in a platonic way. That's right, gentlemen, if your coworker gave you some friendly chocolates on Feb 14th, be ready to hand some back!

* March & Early April Events *

March 2nd (Thu 木): Casual English Party

What: A casual English party organised 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 ¥400!

When: 7:30pm to 9:30pm

Where: Co-ba, Honmachi 3-chome, Takayama 506-0011

March 4-5th (Sat 土 and Sun 日): Bairin Park Plum Blossom Matsuri

What: Bairin Park has over 1,300 plum trees and is a fantastic place to view them in full bloom. You can also check out the photography contests, Japanese harp concerts, and a plum bonsai exhibition on the weekend of March 4-5th.

Where: Bairin Park, at the southern base of Mt Kinka. From Gifu station it's a 30 minute walk or a 10 minute bus (catch one of the buses bound for Seki Higashi-yama or Obora Midori Danchi and get off at Bairin-Koen-mae).



March 5th (Sun 日): Nakatsugawa Kabuki Performance

What: Come check out some fantastic regional kabuki for only ¥800!

Bento boxes and other items will also be available for sale at the venue.

When: Doors open at 9am and the performance begins at 10am.

Where: The Higashi Mino Fureai Centre. Buses will run there from JR Mino-Sakamoto station (9:40am) and JR Nakatsugawa station (9:20am). There will also be return buses running after the performance.



March 6th: Seki Sword Forging Demonstration

What: Watch the master swordsmiths of Seki forge traditional Japanese swords with a technique that's been passed down over 700 years. Held 5 times a year, this is the first demonstration of the year.

When: 1pm – 5:30pm

Where: Traditional Swordsmith Museum, Seki-shi (admission to the museum will be free on this day)!

February 1st – March 21st: Sekigahara Smartphone Stamp Rally!

What: Run around Seino to select locations, and collect special stamps on your iPhone in order to win prizes at the Sekigahara Station-front Center of Sightseeing & Tourism! The first 300 people to collect two stamps within Sekigahara win a present from the Center, the first 300 to collect all 10 win a special pin patch, and out of these participants 30 will be selected by lottery to win an *onsen* ticket from one of seven select locations! To scan the QR Code and enter your e-mail address, see the website here www.ogakikanko.jp/mitsunari_stamprally/#wonderGO (only in Japanese, but ask an RPA if you need assistance!).

When: The competition runs from February 1st – March 21st.

Where: There are 10 select locations, including Ogaki Castle, Sone Castle Remains, Kaizu History Museum, Tarui Castle Remains, Takenaka Jinya, Matsuoyama, Fukushima Masanori's Campsite, Matsudaira Tadayoshi and Naomasa Ii's Positions, Sekigahara Station-front Centre of Sightseeing & Tourism, and the Sekigahara History Museum (check out the website for the Japanese names and addresses).

April 1st and 2nd (Sat 土 and Sun 日): Dosan Matsuri

What: On both Saturday and Sunday there will be parades of floats through the main streets of downtown Gifu-shi honoring Dosan Saito, a famous warlord. There will also be marching bands (down Nagara bridge street), markets (in Wakamiya-cho pedestrian precinct mall and Kogane park) and lots of food stalls!

When: 10am – 5pm on both Saturday and Sunday.

Where: 10 minute walk north of Gifu station.



April 1st (Sat 土): Gifu Matsuri

What: On Saturday night, following the Dosan Matsuri, the Gifu Matsuri involves another parade, but this time it's a more moving vigil where paper lanterns are attached to beautiful floats, which are carried from Inaba shrine to Kogane and Kashimori shrine. After they reach the shrines, a wind-up doll show is performed and is then followed by a fireworks display!

When: 6-11pm

Where: 10 minute walk north of Gifu station.



April 1st (Sat 土): AJET Hanami in Kakamigahara

What: AJET's annual hanami event! Come enjoy the cherry blossoms hanging over the river, the food stands, and of course the good company! We'll have a picnic spot reserved by the river.

When: 11am – 5pm

Where: Shinsakae-unga river, Kakamigahara. We'll be as close as possible to the red bridge. Check out the AJET Facebook event page for a location pin.

If you're catching the train here, get off at Kakamigahara Shimin Kouen Mae (各務原市民公園前) on the Meitetsu line, or Naka (那加) on the JR line. Then just follow the crowds to the red bridge!



April 2nd (Sun 日): Ogaki Basho Genroku Kimono Garden Party

What: Wear your favorite kimono and show up to a garden party just in time for the start of spring weather! Drink tea, have your picture taken, and/or take part in a lottery for a bus tour of Kyoto! Neither age nor gender matters, but be sure to sign up by Friday, March 17, 2017! The form is in Japanese, so please ask a JTE or RPA for assistance if you need it!
www.ginet.or.jp/ogakikanko/event/kimono/oubou/#form

The reception desk on the day-of will be open from 10:00am-12:00pm, and general participation is free. Just be sure to sign up beforehand and happy hanami!
www.ogakikanko.jp/event/kimono/

When: 10am – 3pm

Where: Ogaki castle (in front of the castle tower), Ogaki-shi

Bonus spring travel tip:

For anyone traveling between Mar 1st and Apr 10th, look into the JR rail pass 青春18きっぷ (Seishun 18 Kippu). It allows 5 days of unlimited travel around the country on any local or rapid service local trains for only ¥11,850!



* Sakura Season *

It's nearly sakura season! The blossoms are predicted to bloom down south from Mar 27–Apr 10 and up north from Apr 5–20. You can find a list of cherry blossom sites in Gifu on our website <http://gifujets.weebly.com/resources.html>. Here are some popular places by regions for hanami:

Seino region

- **Yoro Park**, famous for Yoro Waterfall, also boasts an incredible 3000 cherry trees in the area! Take the Yoro Railway from Ogaki to Yoro station and then it's a 10 minute walk to the park.
- The walkway up to **Kegon-ji temple** on Mt Tanigumi is lined with 350 cherry trees, fearsome guardian statues and a range of yatai and shops. Take the Tarumi railway from Ogaki to Tanigumi-guchi, then catch the Ibigawa-cho Community Bus towards Tanigumi-san bus stop.
- **Ogaki Castle** is surrounded by cherry trees and provides a beautiful back drop for hanami. It's a 10 minute walk south of Ogaki station.
- **Sunomata Castle** is built beside the **Sai River** which is lined with 1000 cherry trees. Don't miss the scene at night when the castle and surrounding sakura are illuminated! Catch a bus headed to "Sunamata" from Gifu or Ogaki station. It's a 10 minute walk from Sunamata bus stop.



Gifu region

- **Shinsakai River** in Kakamigahara is said to be one of the best places for hanami in Gifu-ken! The river is lined 1200 cherry trees as well as hordes of people having picnics and plenty of yatai stands! See the Gifu AJET event above for details on how to get there.



- **Gifu Park**, home to 400 cherry trees, is the most popular place in Gifu city for hanami during both the day and night. Catch any bus heading towards "Gifu Koen" from Gifu JR or Meitetsu station.
- **Usuzumi-zakura** in Neo-cho is the 3rd oldest cherry tree in Japan! Get there by taking the Tarumi railway from Ogaki and then following the crowds towards Usuzumi Park.

Chuno region

- The **Kitta River** is lined with 250 cherry trees and flows through the centre of Seki-shi. Take the Nagaragawa railway to Seki-guchi and walk 15 minutes to Asahigaoka.
- **Oyada shrine** in Mino is mainly famous for its autumn leaf viewing, but it is also a recommended hanami spot. Google can't find any directions for public transport so you'll probably have to drive to get there.
- **Gujo Hachiman Castle** and the surrounding grounds are a popular hanami spot. You can catch a bus towards the castle and then walk about 20 minutes to get there.



Tono region

- The **Tsukechi River bridge and the walking paths** around it are surrounded by cherry trees. It's near the Fukuoka Fureai Centre and you can catch a bus there from Nakatsugawa station.
- **Naegi Castle Cherry Blossom Park**. The name says it all really, but head here to relax and enjoy the old ruins surrounded by sakura! It's near the castle and museum in Naegi, Nakatsugawa.
- **Ehō-ji Temple** in Tajimi is renowned for its beautiful gardens, so it's a lovely place to visit during sakura season. It's a 30 minute walk from Tajimi station.

Hida region

- **Nawashiro-zakura** consists of two beautiful cherry trees that you can gaze at in awe as they're illuminated and reflected in the still waters of the flooded rice paddy in front of them. They are in Wasa, Gero and require either a car or a 20 minute taxi from Gero station.
- **The Kokufu riverside**, especially the riverbank opposite the Apita Shopping Centre, is a popular hanami recommendation. It's a 15 minute walk south of Hida-Kokufu station.
- **Garyu Park** is renowned for its Garyu-zakura, the second oldest cherry tree in Gifu and over 1000 years old! If you want to see the old tree that supposedly resembles a dragon lying down, or if you just want to check out a beautiful park, head to Garyu Park, a 1 minute walk from Hida Ichinomiya station.
- **Sakurano Koen** along the river opposite the Kokufu Bypass in Takayama is full of cherry trees, and is a very beautiful spot during sakura season. On weekends it's also very crowded, so if you're looking for a secluded or peaceful place, look elsewhere.
- **Nakabashi bridge** in Takayama is a very popular photo spot on a normal day, but imagine how beautiful that bright red bridge would be surrounded by sakura!





National AJET Council

❖ Applications Due: March 17th

Interested in being a leader on the national level or becoming a representative of your community? National AJET Council applications are now live: <http://ajet.net/national-council/ajet-elections>

For the past four+ years Gifu JETs have held National Council positions! If you are interested, ask Mitchell Dehnel, Tim Saar, or Meryl Jordan about their experiences!

Mitchell Dehnel –National AJET Council, Director of Social Media – Motosu ALT



Hi, I'm Mitch. I always dreamed of being an Appalachian goat herder but rather than sending me into the wilds to learn how to herd goats my parents sent me to school where I learned how to waste time.

I lived in England until I was 5 and then moved to Perth, Australia until I was 23. I used my talent of wasting time to finish a university degree in broadcasting and advertising. I then used this degree to get a job at a radio station selling and occasionally voicing ads.

I threw all that aside though to move to Japan one and a half years ago.

Q: What are you involved with?

An underground fight club, uhh, I mean National AJET. Definitely National AJET.

Q: How did you get involved?

I saw they were asking for people to join on the National AJET facebook page so I had a look at the positions available. One of the positions was the national director of social media which I thought looked great. I'd done some social media training at the radio station I used to work for so I told them all about that. They said "you would have made a great goat herder but you'll make an even better social media director" and the rest is history.

Q: Why did you get involved?

Three reasons; I had some experience with social media, I thought it would look good on my resume and, unfortunately, there's no national director of goat herding (yet, it's an initiative I'm working on).

Q: How much time do you spend?

A couple of hours a week. I talk to the other members of the comms team about stuff that's coming up, what we need to post, and any unruly people who might need to be hidden so they can keep shouting, but into the abyss unbeknownst to everyone else.

Q: Why is it rewarding/Any other thoughts?

I get to have a closer look at how JET is run and all the different special interest groups available. JETs are a resourceful bunch. Current JETs and alumni all have a variety of things to offer the wider JET community. I get to have a firsthand look at new initiatives and share them with others.

Timothy Saar – National AJET Council, Director of Online Publications – Gero ALT



I'm Timothy John Saar, or just Tim. This year I served as the Director of Online Publications on the AJET National Council, as well as Head Editor for AJET Connect Magazine.

Q: What are you involved in?

As the name implies, I'm in charge of the AJET Council's online publications! The largest part of my responsibilities is acting as Head Editor for AJET Connect Magazine, the monthly magazine released by AJET. I run a team of two dozen talented folk, all of whom I interviewed and hired, ranging from editors to social media gurus. I also work with the other members of the AJET Council in discussing and voting on various issues necessary to AJET.

Q: How did you get involved?

I got involved with AJET for the first time last year, when I was hired onto Connect by the previous Director of Online Publications to be one of the Editors for the Entertainment Section. At first it acted as a way for me to use my journalism undergrad degree in Japan -- and it's certainly still that, to a degree. After a while, I realized that Connect is very important to JETs as a creative outlet. It can sometimes be hard to find an outlet for many of us in Japan. Some people find dance, or taiko, or calligraphy, or sports; but others struggle. For the small portion of JETs that contribute articles, photos, designs, or just opinions to Connect -- a little less than a thousand people -- it's a voice. Even more so, perhaps, for those of us on the Connect team.

Q: How much time do you spend?

It comes in bursts and avalanches! There will be a week where I'm not doing much at all. An email here or there, making sure things are running smooth. Then suddenly everything comes crashing down and I'm spending every free period on the computer trying to sort it out! At those times, frantic as they are, I'm grateful to have something to do.

Q: Why is it rewarding/Any other thoughts?

Being a part of AJET on any level connects you to the whole network of JETs. I think for many JETs, AJET is this sort of amorphous blob that exists on the periphery, and doesn't really affect their day-to-day lives. But there are some JETs who embrace the community aspect of it, who regularly get involved, and so I've been able to connect (haha) with a huge range of interesting people I would have never met before. There are also those JETs who may only seek out the AJET webpage one time for some information. As a member of AJET, you are part of a huge, often complicated, web of support: all messy and with some strands going in strange directions, being dropped by one and picked up by another, sometimes forgotten in a corner for a while until a curious new volunteer goes looking for it, but somehow working together more-or-less seamlessly. It's a big, very human endeavor that leaves you feeling like you've made a difference.

It's also great resume padding.

Recipe of the Month: Villain's Spaghetti

Cooking time: 20-30 minutes

Serves 3-6

Say “さようなら、Saizeriya” with this simple recipe that can be easily tweaked to your liking. Can't find parsley? Throw in some oregano instead! Don't want to use wine? Rice vinegar works fine!

I'll assume you all can read the directions on how to boil pasta, so I'll spare the instructions - but adding salt to make the water boil faster is a filthy lie - there's plenty of salt in the sauce, so no need to add to the water.



Just a few fixin's that can be found at most supermarkets.

(I often make the full portions, even just for myself, and put the extra sauce in the fridge or freezer)

- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 1 whole head of garlic (finely chopped)
- 1/4 cup parsley (freshly chopped is recommended)
- 1 tsp hot pepper flakes (can add more to your liking)
- 1/2 - 1 cup white wine
- 2 14.5oz cans of tomatoes (whole will break up just fine)
- salt (lots)

Add olive oil, garlic, hot pepper flakes, and a generous amount of salt in a pan. Turn to medium heat and stir until fragrant, about 3-5 minutes. Do not let it stick or brown. Add parsley, continue stirring and add more salt.

After everything smells rich and garlicky, add the wine. Continue cooking for another 3-5 minutes until liquid is cooked down.

Add tomatoes and their juice to the pan. Whole tomatoes can be broken up with the spoon once warm. Continue cooking for about 15 minutes. (Drinking the rest of the wine is strongly recommended.) Sauce should taste noticeably salty as it will spread over the pasta, if not add a bit more salt. After the taste is to your liking, turn the heat off and let cool.

If you have not yet cooked the pasta, do so, then reheat the sauce as you serve (allegedly tastes better this way.)

Purists will say parmesan is blasphemy, but I won't tell anyone if you won't...

What's Catching?

Kimi No Na Wa

By Kristen Elrod, Chuno RPA



Kimi no Na wa (Your Name) became a nationwide hit when it was released in theaters last summer. It became the fourth largest grossing movie ever at the Japanese box office – only trailing behind Spirited Away, Frozen, and Titanic. The secret to its success, you ask? It's because the movie is largely set in Gifu Prefecture's very own picturesque Hida region!

The story centers on two high school students who live very different lives. Living in the Hida region is a young woman named Mitsuha, who dreams of living the life of a boy in Tokyo and escaping the countryside. Meanwhile, Taki, our male protagonist, lives in the sprawling metropolis of Tokyo and is busy juggling school and his part-time job. One day, Mitsuha and Taki wake up to realize they've switched bodies. When this becomes a regular occurrence, their lives soon become entangled with each other's, weaving a story through time and fate.

As Mitsuha would have lamented, movie theaters are hard to come by in the Hida region. So, with the DVD release upon us, many students will finally be able to see the movie for the first time, causing renewed interest. Students will be excited to see familiar places and their own hometowns in vibrant animation. Below are just a few of the places you can spot in the movie.



Hida City Library



Hida-Furukawa Station



Keta Wakamiya Shrine



The Hida City Library has also set up a *Kimi no Na wa* section, where you can look through various books related to the movie and see messages from *Kimi no Na wa* fans who have visited the library from all over Japan. Check it out and add your own message!