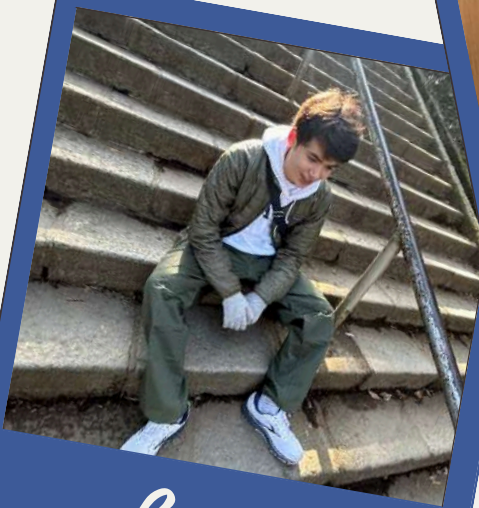


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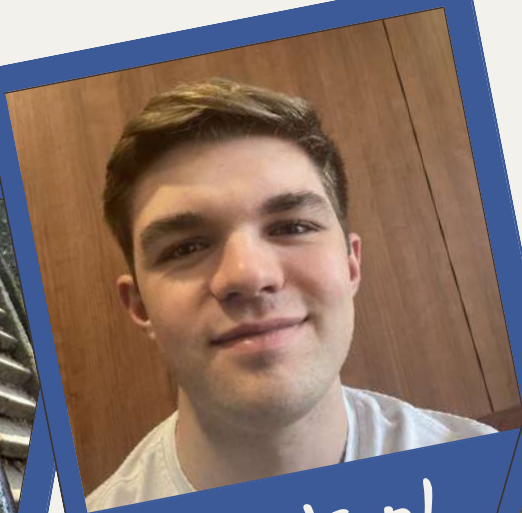
ZINE PROJECT



JAPAN-U.S. RELATIONS IN EAST ASIA



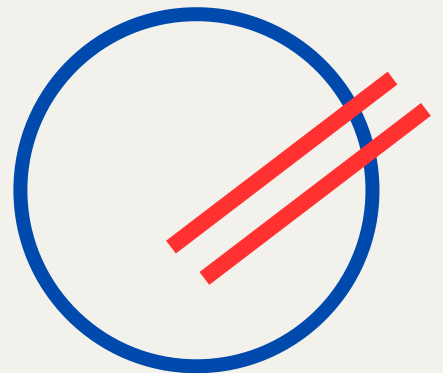
Ryne!



Hudson!

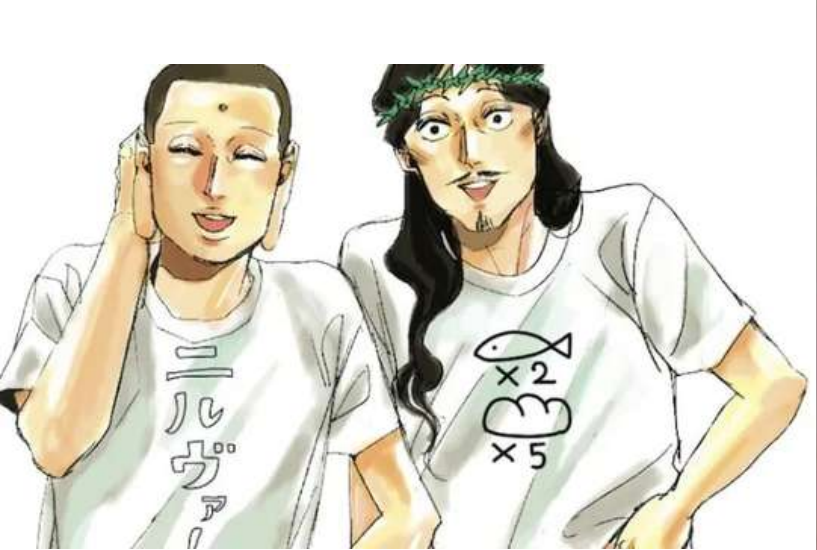


Ria!





Christianity in Japan



Historic and Modern Significance of Christianity in Japan

Hudson Pitchford

Christianity has played various important roles in Japan over the last five centuries. Understanding its influences cannot be overlooked in studying the evolution of Japanese international relations and culture through time.

First arriving with Portuguese traders and missionaries in the 1540's, Christianity spread relatively quickly, as missionaries integrated its spread with the fulfillment of trade interests. It soon met resistance from government officials, and Christians were banned and persecuted, some becoming martyrs of the faith. The Portuguese lost their trading rights entirely, as only the Dutch and Chinese were allowed to continue trade.



For the next two centuries, some Japanese Christians, known as Kakure Kirishitans, maintained their faiths in secret. It was not until twenty years after the United States forced Japan to open up to trade, that mounting international pressure pushed the Japanese government to allow Christian missionaries to proselytize again. Many Kakure Kirishitans then rejoined the Catholic Church.

Approximately 1% of Japanese people are Christian today. Christianity has become prevalent in mainstream culture. Many Japanese observe Christmas and Valentine's day, although in ways unique to Japan. Japanese wedding traditions have also seen major Christian/western influences. Interpretations of Christianity are also prevalent in Japanese media. The way in which Japanese people interact with Christianity is very reflective of their interactions with Buddhism and Shintoism: it has strong influence on cultural practices and tradition, even if most people don't really adhere to the religion.



What is the Five Eyes and is it something that Japan should join?

By: Ria Eda

The Five Eyes Alliance is an international intelligence alliance between Australia, Canada, United Kingdom, New Zealand, and the United States.

It started as an alliance between the United Kingdom and the United States during World War II when the two countries needed to share tactics for making advances in the war. The official agreement that solidified their alliance after the war was the 1946 UKUSA agreement.

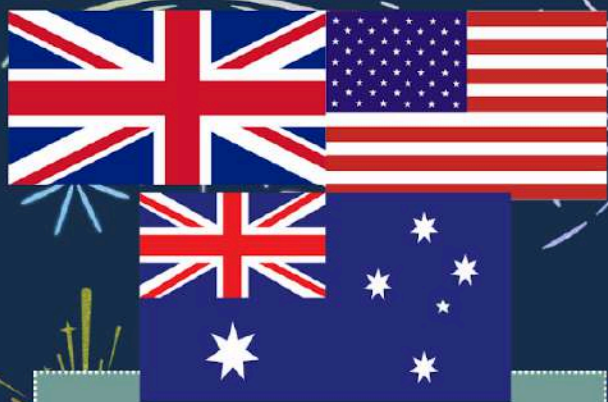
There are also extended intelligence alliances including the Nine Eyes and the Fourteen Eyes that include other European countries.

The Five Eyes intelligence alliance exists to share information to protect one another from terrorism and other disasters. The alliance also comes together in times of crisis such as war so that the alliance can band together and better further their agenda on the world stage (especially since they all share relatively the same values).

In the last couple of years, the topic of Japan joining the Five Eyes Alliance has been brought up because of the increasing tension in U.S. - China relations.

The debate of Japan joining the Five Eyes first came to light around 2020 when Japan's defence minister brought it up.

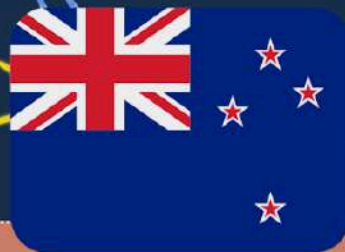
The Opinions of Some Countries Surrounding the Debate



Japan should join the Five Eyes because Japan could share valuable intelligence regarding China and their political/economic strategies that could give us a lot of advantage over China as our relationship continues to tense up. Also, Japan has lots of technological capabilities, and the Five Eyes could potentially use these capabilities to increase the security of the information shared in the alliance.



Japan should not join the Five Eyes because Japan might give out some sensitive information about our politics and economy that the Five Eyes' members don't know about yet. I would really not like it if Japan provided information that could give the United States some information that could give the US an advantage in our relationship.



Japan should not join the Five Eyes because it could interfere with my own relationship with China. China is our largest export market, so if they stopped liking us, it could mean a lot of trouble for our economy.

The debate is one that has lost steam in the last couple of years, and Japan has never joined the Five Eyes Alliance. Some other reasons such as Japan's lack of an antiespionage law may have been a contributing factor of Japan not joining yet. While there has not been recent talks, this does not mean that the discussion is over forever. What do you think about Japan joining?

Work Cited

Tanaka, Jun, et al. "Why Japan Should Join Five Eyes Intel-Alliance." WORLD INSIGHT, 12 July 2022, worldinsight.com/news/security/why-japan-should-join-five-eyes-intel-alliance/#toc-3.

The defining feature of Okinawan politics is the “base issue,” referring to the dominant presence of American military forces since WWII. It’s difficult to overstate its political salience. The constituency of a high-profile candidate running for public office can be shaped by the extent to which they disapprove of U.S.-base hegemony; in 2018, challenger Denny Tamaki ran in the gubernatorial race on a broadly anti-base platform—he has since remained the incumbent. Beyond elections, the two most popular dailies—The Okinawa Times and The Ryukyu Shimpo—have sections either explicitly or effectively dedicated to base-related incidents, accidents, and controversies. As one Marine interpreter puts it, the papers are “something like the enemy of U.S. bases.” Historically, American foreign policy has pressured the Japanese government into maintaining (and, since 1972, funding) its bases in Okinawa, in turn, engendering periods of heightened discontent. In June, it was revealed that the Japanese government had hidden a sexual assault case committed by a Marine until after the commemoration of the end of the Battle of Okinawa. Incidents like these, accompanied by an increasingly worrying “Taiwan Contingency,” forebode the thickening of discontent in Okinawa.

While the “base issue” is fundamentally political, perhaps its most conspicuous—though not immediately obvious—presence lies in its integration into Okinawan culture. Okinawan businesses have transformed the surge of American culture onto the islands into something of a tourist attraction. Blue Seal ice cream: “Born in America, and raised in Okinawa”; the famous taco rice: an invention by an Okinawan chef who lived near taco-hungry U.S. soldiers; the American Village: is exactly what it sounds like. Jazz shares a similar history. The genre was introduced and popularized at the demand of American soldiers stationed on the island chain after WWII. As the music’s popularity peaked, so did the number of jazz clubs on base, and the military began hiring Filipino and local Okinawan musicians. (The Philippines was one of the first Asian nations exposed to jazz, due in part to a period of American occupation.) By the Vietnam War, Okinawan musicians had gained a firm standing in their jazz culture, enough to instill, among some, pride in a distinct Uchina (meaning Okinawan) jazz, which was/is somehow culturally and musically different from American or Japanese jazz. As discontent among Okinawans toward U.S. bases thickened, protests and political movements calling for the reversion of Okinawa to Japan exploded, all under the assumption that the U.S. would leave with their bases. In response, jazz musicians who relied on base clubs for their livelihoods formed a political bloc that was at once fervently anti-reversion and shamefully silent. Indeed, it is a telling historical phenomenon that the anti-war free jazz movement, which took by storm the U.S. and mainland Japan, never gained a footing in Okinawa: it was an economic impossibility to be both anti-war and a jazz musician. In 1972, when Okinawa was again obtained by Japan, the number of bases sharply declined (though many remained), and most jazz musicians lost their jobs. The few who stuck with the profession talk of better times and are now regarded as legends of historical concurrence in Okinawa’s jazz community.

This brief political history of Okinawan jazz is distinct from that of Japanese jazz. And yet it has been consistently overlooked by American historians of Japan. One supposedly comprehensive book on the history of Japanese jazz written by Professor Taylor Atkins—a figurehead in the study of Japanese jazz—fails to mention even the presence of jazz in Okinawa. A somewhat facetious rebuttal of this phenomenon would be to claim that the history of Okinawan jazz does not fall under the jurisdiction of Japanese jazz: this is a fine distinction, but surely the study of Okinawa falls under Japan studies. That Okinawa has been so far removed from the realm of Japaneseness that its jazz has not only been excluded from Japanese jazz but also from the history of Japan, is a striking thought.

But where American historians have failed to attempt a characterization of Okinawan jazz, Japanese and Okinawan journalists have seen, at best, varying degrees of success. If the “base issue” really is a fundamentally political one, and Okinawa’s jazz has its roots in the dominant presence of American bases, the history of Okinawan jazz should be, at least partly, a *political* history. Yet there is a tendency among Japanese and Okinawan journalists to render Okinawan jazz as a purely cultural phenomenon—even to erase its necessarily controversial position as an anti-reversion coalition. Journalists frequently mention the premium salaries earned by jazz musicians under American occupation—sometimes, ten times that of a public servant—but stop short of acknowledging the domestic strife that accompanied the elevated status. Interviews with jazz legends discuss befriending American soldiers but avoid touching on how reversion protesters punctured their tires. One drummer told me that he was called names, the worst of which: that he wasn’t truly Okinawan. “But I am Okinawan,” he told me in an interview, “I am Okinawan, and I needed to feed my family.” Japanese and Okinawan journalists have thus far failed to explore these intricate conflicts of interest.

Perhaps the history of Okinawan jazz includes this absence of political lore: they, too, are part of its legacy.

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND HUMAN BEHAVIOR



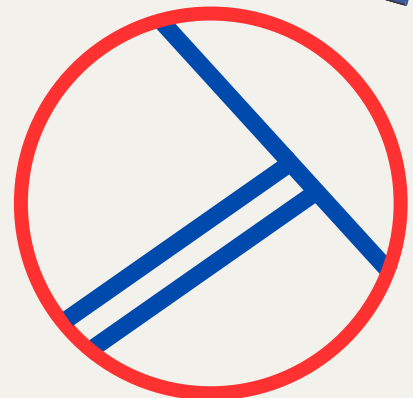
Leyra!



Sam!



Taylor!



Accessibility in Japan

INTRODUCTION



Despite one in four American adults having a disability, a staggering 42.5 million individuals, accessibility remains woefully incomplete throughout the U.S., leaving many disabled people unable to enjoy full access. Since the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was passed in 1990, access has steadily improved.

However, in terms of voices in the government, Japan leads where the U.S. lags, and vice-versa, where the U.S. outpaces Japan in social inclusion. Japan's Basic Law for Persons with Disabilities was passed in **1970**, but its anti-discrimination laws weren't passed until the 21st century. Through this policy brief, I will be discussing what Japan and the United States can learn from each other in the hopes of building a better future for all.

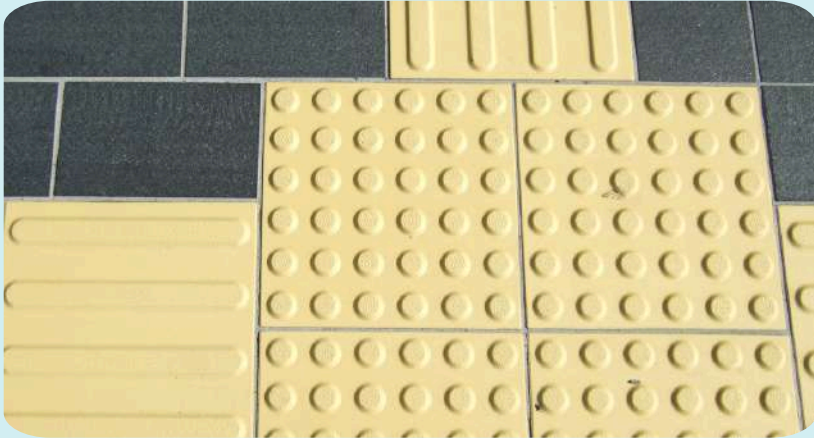
CATEGORIES & NEEDS OF DISABLED PEOPLE

Those who use mobility aids, such as wheelchairs, walkers, crutches, or canes, cannot easily access certain types of architecture, such as stairs. I have chosen this category in particular as there is an array of access needs within this category, as well as a wide spectrum of people who fall into this category, including the temporarily disabled, invisibly disabled, and those with dynamic disabilities. For visually impaired people, accommodations can vary. However, these often include having access to a guide or "seeing-eye" animals, and to white canes and clear roadways, allowing them to live independently. I have chosen this category as an example because many people fit within these categories, but there is also a large overlap and differences.

Globally, there are over 1 billion disabled people, making them the largest minority in the world but often one of the most under-protected and undervalued. Disabled people often report higher rates of unemployment (for example, only 22.5% of disabled Americans are employed), as well as higher rates of discrimination. By understanding the needs of disabled individuals and where the law has and has not been able to help them, we can identify ways in which the disabled community needs to be assisted and ways in which they do not need assistance.

Accessibility in Japan

CURRENT ACCOMODATIONS AND POLICIES



In Japan, **tenji blocks**, or tactical paving, are extremely common. There are two main types. *Tenji* blocks without dots are just guidelines for visually impaired people to use when walking along pathways. Then, at intersections and other changes in terrain, regular patterns of dots demarcate where to be careful. Gates around subways and other trains have a similar accessibility effect. On public transportation, both visual and verbal announcements aid travelers who are unfamiliar with new locations to situate themselves, and ensure travelers are always aware of the next stop.



Currency is also accessible. Japanese *yen* have had Braille printed on them since 2004 using **intaglio printing** (see insets above).



Some services make accessing public transit in and of itself easier for disabled individuals as well, particularly those that use mobility aids. Japan's similar taxi scheme is accessible on the surface, but issues remain. So-called "universal design taxis" that are approved by Japan's Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT) must have, "at least one entry point which can be accessed by a wheelchair user" without needing to transfer, and these taxis number over 20,000 nationwide. However, drivers are often ill-trained to accommodate those with mobility aids, and often fail to ensure passenger safety, which has pushed many disabled individuals away from these services.





Accessibility in Japan



WHAT THE U.S. CAN LEARN

Some of these efforts, like **tenji** blocks at crosswalks, already exist in the U.S.

However, things like taxis for the disabled or legislation making it easier to hire disabled workers lag behind.

One factor that could drastically improve employment opportunities for the disabled is already enforceable.

The ADA already mandates that all public transportation is accessible for disabled people. If public transportation is *expanded* then preexisting accessibility requirements will also help. Disabled people and non-disabled people have the same right to access public facilities and services.

Another measure is to make currency automatically accessible for the visually impaired. All U.S. currency is the same color and length, and in addition, low-contrast, making it impossible to distinguish on its own, requiring the aid of a device or sighted person.

As a consequence, visually impaired individuals are not able to independently use paper currency. To alleviate this, currency can be in different colors, the length of bills can also vary, or perhaps most simply, Braille can be added in the U.S. Mint offices directly.

Additionally, laws mandating the hiring of disabled people in the first place would further alleviate economic inequality, and already succeed in Japan. The Act for Promotion of Employment of Persons with Disabilities (2012), mandates that 1.8% of all employees be disabled at Japanese firms, where those firms that do not follow this law subjected to fines.

I would suggest that similar to Japan, the U.S. enact federal and state advisory councils by and for disabled people. Japan's councils serve as official channels through which the disabled communities can share their concerns with government leadership and advise on legislation and policies, particularly those aimed to help the disabled community, allowing disabled people a voice in legislation and policy impacting them most directly. Issues such as the lack of access on U.S. currency, and the "grandfathering in" of historical buildings built prior to ADA standards, among others, can be discussed, as well as expansions to social services and employment access and equity to Americans.

Disability councils in Japan at the city, prefectural, and national level incorporate a variety of organizations as members, such as the Japanese Society for Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities and Japan Council on Disability. In the U.S., such a council may be made of divisions of the American Heart Association (AHA), American Foundation for the Blind (AFB), National Association of the Deaf (NAD), and other organizations dedicated to helping disabled people.

Accessibility in Japan

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U.S.-JAPAN SISTER-CITIES

Relations Forged Locally

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Many people view international relations as monumental connections seen by millions, but meaningful relationships often occur at the local level. The concept of a "sister city" exemplifies this, where cities from different countries form partnerships for cultural, artistic, educational, and economic exchanges. These local ties allow communities to connect directly without the complexities of political structures. The United States and Japan have a rich history of sister cities, where communities thrive on shared stories and knowledge, fostering connections beyond conflict and global issues. My goal within this project is to share the benefits of these relationships, explain how we can observe them at our sites, and to explore the future prosperities that U.S.-Japan sister-city partnerships could mutually benefit local communities.



PURPOSE & EXCHANGE

The main form of exchange that occurs between U.S.-and community leaders. Formal site visits take place, and once they come to the conclusion that they are compatible, they will sign an agreement. Japan sister cities is often cultural and artistic. The long-standing mutual interest in respective culture between the United States and Japan enables opportunities for locals to immerse themselves in new experiences. Festivals, art exhibitions, school pen pals, and the formation of city-based Japan societies in American cities. With activities like these, it ensures that all communities within a specific city have the ability to enjoy the partnership, rather than just the initial investors. An example of this is the Mardi Gras festival in Matsue, Japan. It's hosted annually, and it's a now permanent tradition of the city that exemplifies how two different cultures come together to celebrate a shared interest. Although it's not something that's going to change the world or either country, it is one part of a defining characteristic of the two cities. Exploring local, but impactful relationships like these at our JASC sites will be crucial to understanding how regular citizens in these cities are able to connect and understand Japanese culture, while being able to share their own.

DEVELOPMENT

The formation of a U.S.-Japan sister city can happen in many ways. It can be tied to shared history, a mutual interest of an exchange of some kind, or even citizens from one city being interested in the other. What the most important concept to factor in with sister-cities, is that the effort to establish the relationship is being driven locally. It could be a student, a local organization, or perhaps the city council who desire the relationship. Keeping the processes local ensure that the relationship with the other city will also be local. As far as how the formal partnership occurs, it usually involves mayors communicating with one another, and coming to an agreement on why they wish to be involved with one another. Of course this is the simplified version; this process often undergoes communications with Japan-America societies, consulates,



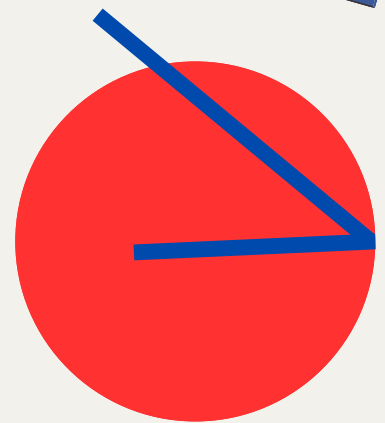
QUESTIONS TO ADDRESS:

OPPORTUNITY & DISCUSSION

For those seeking to connect with Japan, the sister-city route simplifies what seems like a daunting challenge into a local, approachable way to connect. If a sister-city partnership does not exist in a specific city where it could prosper, it can still be created. Such a partnership can bring together American and Japanese cultures, introducing them to one another and fostering new connections. The accessibility is what makes this concept important, and we will be able to see this in our sites, especially in New Orleans.

How does local involvement, like in sister cities, translate to large-scale relations? What examples of exchange is important to bring forward in U.S.-Japan relations? How have you seen sister-cities appear in your city? What is their involvement like?

CULTURE, ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY



JASC 76 ZINE

Vol. 76

Issue 01

The VIRTUAL IDOL



By Sadie Peltz

TRIPLES
2024



INTRODUCING

TripleS

TripleS (stylized "tripleS) is a 24-member girl group consisting of members from South Korea, Japan, China, Taiwan and Thailand under Modhaus, their agency. While tripleS is a larger group than most, they mostly promote in smaller subunits voted on by fans (called "WAV"). Part of what makes tripleS unique, intriguing to research and write about is that their group is based around an NFT system that allows for heavy fan interaction.



Modhaus is not only an entertainment agency, but it's also a "Web3 project aiming to promote Korean Pop culture via blockchain technology." (Modhaus, 2023) TripleS began introducing members one-by-one in May 2022, with all members living together among various dorms. Modhaus releases daily vlogs following the members' lives in the dorms. As TripleS slowly formed over the course of two years, the members performed in several subunits. Fans (called WAVs) voted TripleS members into these subunits using an app called "Cosmo: The Origin." Because TripleS mainly functions with different subunits consisting of different member groupings, they are known as the "idol of all possibilities."

What is Cosmo?

"Objekts" are NFT photo cards that can be either purchased in the Cosmo app or earned through other means, "como" is a digital currency that is earned when a user obtains a new Objekt that is used to participate in Gravities, and Gravities are blockchain voting events in the Cosmo app. This platform allows for a new kind of fan interaction. Gravities can range from voting for members to add to subunits to choosing a song for a special dance video. Objekts are stored on a Polygon blockchain platform, which is also used for voting during Gravities (Sinclair, 2023). This type of blockchain platform is preferred because it allows for transparency during voting.

When TripleS was first announced, many were concerned. NFTs are a contentious topic amongst many, mainly due to their negative impact on the environment. Because they're stored on a constantly-running blockchain that is using energy, "NFTs can contribute to greenhouse gas emissions and climate change through their production, exchange, and storage" (Garnett). However, Modhaus found a more environmentally-friendly solution.

The Virtual Idol



Why Polygon?

Modhaus utilizes Polygon, an eco-friendly blockchain system. Polygon is currently carbon neutral and is working towards becoming "carbon negative and climate positive" according to their website. They use less energy than other blockchain platforms because they utilize a Proof-of-Stake (PoS) system rather than a Proof-of-Work (PoW) system. The PoW system "relies on complex computations to validate transactions, and energy consumption continues to increase as the network grows" (Kalnoki). The PoS system is more efficient in many different ways — it uses less energy because it doesn't use complex computations. "By avoiding the computational puzzle, the proof of stake mechanism reduces energy consumption significantly and speeds up the transaction verification process.

Importantly, validators do not need to operate high-powered computer equipment to collect rewards" (Kalnoki). They instead "rely on an algorithmic selection process based on the amount of native coin a validator holds" (Kalnoki)

Modhaus decided to go with this innovative system to enhance fan participation to a whole new level. Their main intention was "to encourage fans' direct contribution in the decision making process" (Modhaus). While this system does allow for complete transparency through voting and more access for fans, it is also a slippery slope. Sometimes allowing fans so much access can breed unhealthy parasocial relationships and entitlement. As long as Modhaus is careful, I think that they can truly create lasting change to the entertainment industry as a whole.



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MEET NE-KO



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CREATION OF NEI-KO



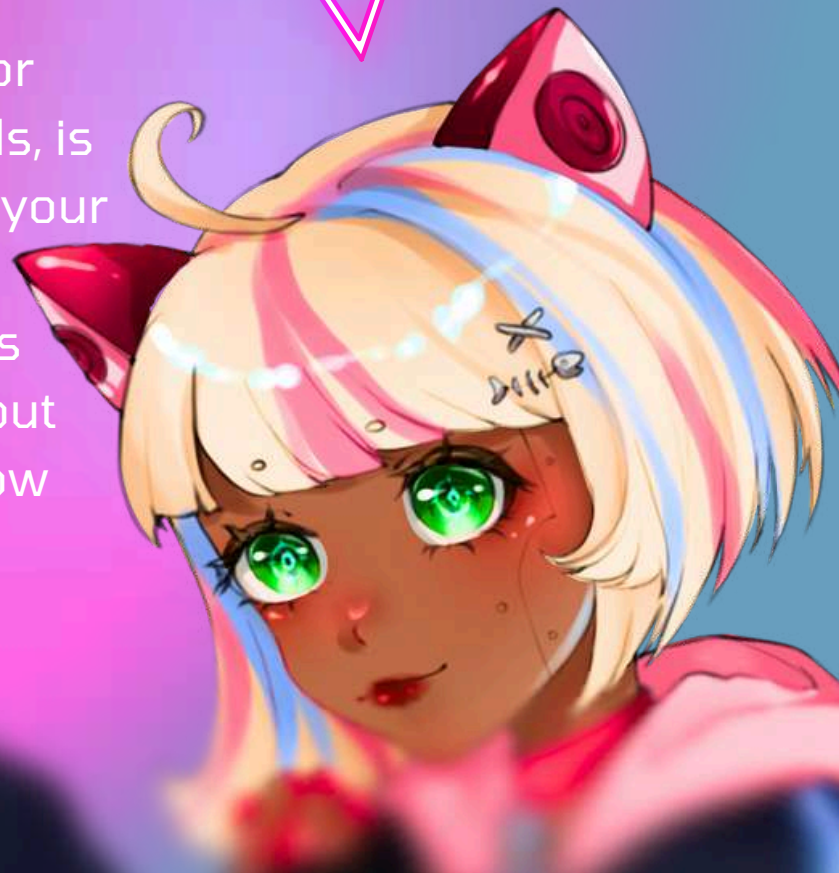
Being a part of the Culture, Arts, and Technology roundtable, I wanted to include cat-like elements in this design. I chose a pseudo-cyborg style, with a lean on futuristic or techwear influences. I also included a lot of my favorite colors, as I wanted this design to reflect what I found cute or interesting. Please feel free to zoom in and peek at the smaller details.





As we move further and further into our digital age, it is not surprising that digital entertainers would take the main stage. Vtubers and their subsequent popularity are proof of this need for digital entertainers. They create an exciting opportunity for creators, a way to stay completely anonymous online behind a cute, creepy, or otherwise interesting persona and character.

This anonymity is lucrative for people who seek to obscure their identity to protect their careers or to simply be their most confident self. An unfortunate truth of content creation, especially for femme-presenting individuals, is being judged or harassed for your appearance. Vtubing allows people to express themselves through a digital model, without the fear of being judged by how they look.





Tech Tips For Learning Japanese

- Duolingo
- Vocab Learning System
- Jisho
- DeepL
- Anki
- Yomitan
- Akebi
- Content Discovery
- NHK WEB EASY
- Podcasts
- Books (online)
- Conversation Practice
- HelloTalk
- AI Conversations
- Thoughts on Effectiveness and Time Spent

Hello! There are many helpful tools that exist to help you learn Japanese - I hope you can learn about some of them here. I will present them roughly in the order that I found them.

For me, the Japanese language skills ranked by their importance are: **listening, speaking, reading, writing.**

Physically writing (by hand + with stroke order) is much less important in the era of tech and smart keyboard software - even Japanese people forget stroke orders and difficult kanji!

Duolingo

I began my journey with [Duolingo](#), which is a great place to start. Duolingo is a free app that provides low-friction lessons to start learning languages (but you won't become fluent through it).



Vocab Learning System

When I began studying Japanese in college, I stopped using Duolingo because our class met every day. We used the Nakama textbook series.

Jisho

I came across [Jisho](#) and it was especially useful for learning the meaning of individual kanji and their stroke order. (Jisho means dictionary in Japanese). Also, to tell the difference between two words with the same dictionary meaning (like あの vs その), Google is your friend.



DeepL

To translate more than a few words, I've found [DeepL](#) to be the best.



Anki

Now, once I look up a word, I add it to [Anki](#). Anki is a spaced repetition app that helps people memorize user-created flashcards. Anki is the closest thing to a download-to-brain technology.



- There are 3 categories the cards can be in: New, Learning, and Review. The first time you see a card is when it moves from New to Learning. Then, after you get it right a couple times, it moves to Review. Once in Review, if you keep getting the card correct, Anki will only show it to you after longer and longer spaces of time (so for example: one day later, five days later, twelve days later). If you get the card wrong it goes back to Learning.
- Anki can sync with a phone app (which is free if you're on Android but \$25 if you're on Apple). The phone app is where I do all of my studying because

I can use it while commuting.

- The software also allows users to change how their cards are rendered - for example making the font much bigger, adding colors, and even showing or not showing the furigana (readings of kanji) of cards with custom HTML.

At first I would create the cards myself and it would take a lot of time.

Yomitan

Then, a friend showed me the browser extension [Yomitan](#), a really handy tool that allows me to hold my shift key and hover my mouse over Japanese words to make dictionary entries (with example sentences) pop up.

- Once configured (and the desktop Anki app is open), a button that automatically creates an Anki card from the dictionary entry appears. Instead of making Anki cards by hand, I can now make them at the click of a button.



One privacy tip for chrome extensions is to click on "Manage Extensions" in the three dots settings for each individual extension and change "This can read and change site data" to "On all sites" to "When you click the extension". This also fixes some issues where everywhere-enabled extensions can mess up sites in weird ways.

Akebi

But how can I automatically create Anki cards on my phone like I can on my laptop with Yomitan? The way I've been using has relied on [Akebi](#). Sorry

iPhone users.



- Akebi has draw-to-search functionality for kanji that is way better than Jisho's (it actually works).
- Example sentences like Yomitan
- Pitch markings

Content Discovery

The key here is to read things that actually interest me - then I have a true desire to understand what I'm reading. And when I inevitably come across words I don't know, adding them to Anki with Yomitan or Akebi gets me on track to learning them.

NHK WEB EASY

[NHK WEB EASY](#) contains news stories written by NHK (Japan's public broadcaster) intended for people learning Japanese. Sometimes the stories have an associated TV video clip too.



After I read the article, I use a Notion database to save the link and write a super short description of the article in my own words (usually less than a sentence).

Podcasts

I don't have much experience listening to Japanese podcasts, but I have found this one to be good: [LingQ](#). During the podcast, when words I don't know are said, I search them up on Jisho in another window. If I get overwhelmed, I can always pause and go back - or not!



Books (online)

I also haven't read many books in Japanese. My professor did share with us a huge online library of free Japanese books/famous writings called [Aozora Bunko](#). Manga is always an option too, although I've found it difficult (but possible) to get Japanese versions online.

I've also found new words through trying to communicate ideas. This happens much more frequently and naturally when in Japan of course, but it can be simulated. Setting a timer and writing a mini-speech (or **real speech**) about a subject I'm interested in forces me to find words to express myself - then I record the speech to practice speaking as well. For bonus points, I can ask ChatGPT for feedback and constructive criticism, and it does a pretty good job.

Conversation Practice

Being able to listen and understand is great, but in order to do things SPEAKING is important.

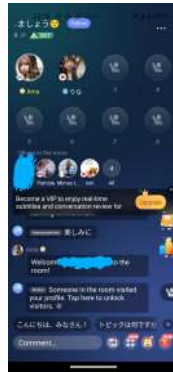
HelloTalk

Language exchange apps like [HelloTalk](#) let you speak with people around the world that are trying to learn new languages. I have used two different formats inside the HelloTalk app.

- The first is a one-on-one where I DM people suggested to me by the app. If they are available and accept, we talk. A typical exchange is 5 minutes in English and 5 minutes in Japanese.



- For conversation with less overhead, HelloTalk also has voice rooms where users can listen in to conversations and host can accept listeners' requests to be unmuted. These are interesting as people can pop in and out and there is always someone new to talk to.



AI Conversations

Using AI as a conversation partner is an exciting - and quite unexplored - area of research. If done well, this enables low-cost, super-accessible language learning to everyone.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mckd-FhJlp0&t=64s>

I can access it for free using the ChatGPT app by clicking the headphones icon to activate conversation mode (where I talk to it and it talks back). I've found that telling it to talk slowly is important, otherwise it talks in rapid Japanese I can't understand. In the system customization prompts, and when I begin the conversation, I say something like:

I'm learning Japanese so please talk slowly so I can understand you. Also, please use natural-sounding Japanese.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-1SjG13CpTZB6zWGx8c2Hoz1oa6EL1f3/view?usp=sharing>

When it says a word I don't know, I ask it to explain. Sometimes I understand the explanation, but other times I don't. More prompt experimentation is necessary. But this is so so cool - talking with an AI that is helping me learn Japanese.

Thoughts on Effectiveness and Time Spent

Ratings

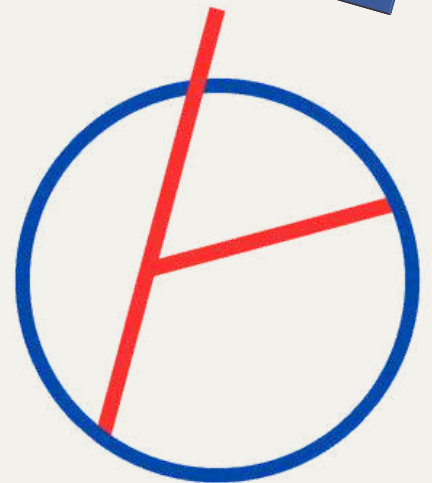
App Name	Tags	Effectiveness	# Setup Time (mins)	notes
Writing (mini speech / essay)	grammar speaking vocab	★★★★	15	best but hardest way to learn - forces opinion formulation
Anki	grammar vocab	★★★★	30	Best wrote memorization tool. Make an ankiweb account to sync cards across device. ~15 minutes a day of reviews
Language Exchange Apps	listening speaking	★★★★	25	good conversation practice.
Podcast	listening	★★★★	0	good learning opportunities and listening practice
Akebi	vocab	★★★★	7	(an android-only app) another great dictionary
Jisho	vocab	★★★★	0	great dictionary

App Name	Tags	Effectiveness	# Setup Time (mins)	notes
NHK Easy	vocab	★★★★	0	interesting news and good learning opportunities
Duolingo	grammar listening speaking vocab	★★★★	10	good for basics, ~3 minutes a day.
DeepL	vocab	★★★★	0	not good for learning because it just translates for you
Talking with AI	grammar listening speaking vocab	★★★	5	currently feels like a gimmick than a useful tool, but hopefully that changes.

OK, best of luck on your journey! If you have suggestions for other tools, or advice on how to make this article better, please reach out!

<https://tinyurl.com/japanesetechtips>

SOCIAL ENTRE- PRENEURSHIP



Founder Diversity

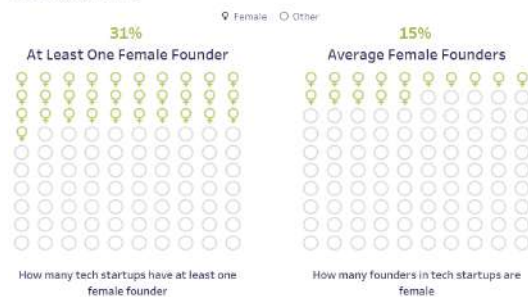
by Emile Shah

Global inequality

The corporate world reflects global inequality. Women hold [17% of board seats](#) in the United States and around [13% in Japan](#). In 2023, [Startup Genome](#) reported that the average number of female founders in a startup ecosystem is just 15%. Misled social perceptions of female founders in everything from [venture pitches](#) to networking and relationships affect their likelihood of success.

31% Of Startups Have at Least One Female Founder, but the Average Number of Female Founders in an Ecosystem Is Just 15%.

Source: Startup Genome

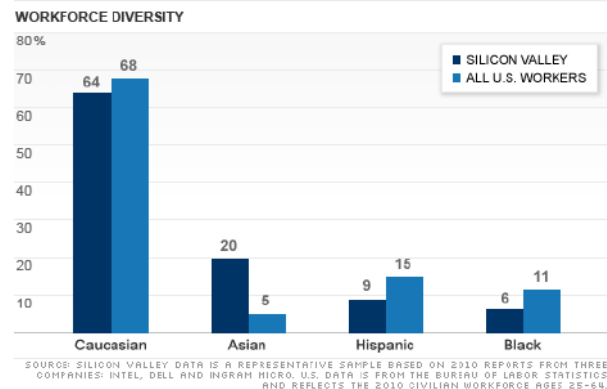


Data from [Startup Genome](#)

The problem extends to racial and ethnic diversity. In the United States, Black founders [comprised](#) around 5% of new business founders. Hispanic founders make up a slightly larger percentage but [struggle to receive](#) VC funding. In Japan, minority founders are rare; these small businesses often [started out of necessity](#) for a niche market within their community.

Innovation hotspots

Silicon Valley, the United States' core of technology and innovation, struggles with a lack of diversity. In 2015, the largest tech companies in America comprised [only around](#) 7-8% of Hispanic and Black employees. And these disparities can have future consequences. When considering a startup investment, venture capitalists often examine the background of the core business team. Experience with large, established tech companies like Silicon Valley-based Google or Apple is a big plus. Other considerations often rely on similar concerns about experience and knowledge, which can contribute to the low percentage of investments in Hispanic and Black-founded startups.



Tokyo is the center of the Japanese startup ecosystem. Although racial and ethnic diversity data is limited, research reveals that men [dominate the entrepreneurship ecosystem](#).

Women, including new small businesses and startups, [accounted for](#) 34% of new founders in Japan in 2017. However, in 2021, only 2% of funding from the top 50 venture firms was [raised by female founders](#).

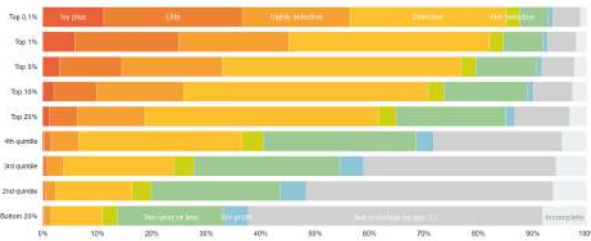
Accelerators and Venture

In 2023, the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) established several new partnerships with American accelerators, ranging from [university-backed programs](#) like Berkeley SkyDeck to [tech-focused accelerators](#) like Plug and Play Tech Center. These expansions signal Japan's commitment to boosting startup and tech industries by promoting programs abroad for Japanese founders.

The SkyDeck partnership highlights a focus on bringing talent [from Japan's top universities](#) with a proven track record for developing startups. The United States is no different—schools like Stanford, Penn, MIT, and Harvard [consistently rank high](#) in churning out the largest number of venture-backed startups.

Where today's 25-year-olds went to college, grouped by their parents' income

About four in 10 students from the top 0.1 percent attend an Ivy League or elite university, roughly equivalent to the share of students from poor families who attend any two- or four-year college.



Data from the [New York Times](#)

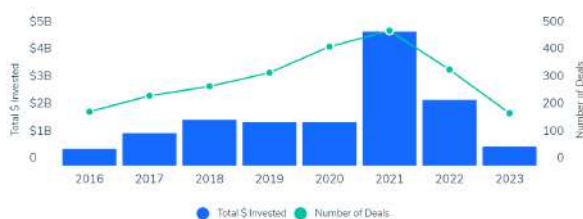
However, these elite schools reflect wealth and privilege. The New York Times reported many top US universities [enroll more students](#) from the top 1% than the bottom 60%. Japan's more meritocratic college entrance exam may result in a more even spread, but wealthier students benefit from the stability and variety of resources to prepare for the exam. Although top universities produce more startups globally, this may partially reflect privilege rather than the university's resources.

Future changes

Venture Capital Journal [recently reported](#) that women-led venture funds' share of funding increased to about 3% of the global total raised in 2023. Many women-led firms emphasize a willingness to invest in female-led startups, which likely contributed to a quarter of total US venture funding going to [startups with at least](#) one female founder. The Japanese government's plan to [introduce support programs](#) is a step in the right direction, aiming to boost the percentage of female venture capitalists and founders to 20% in five years. However, more such initiatives are urgently needed to address the disparities in venture funding.

Unfortunately, the US is facing a [sharp decline](#) in the percentage of funding to Black-founded startups, with funding dropping 71% from the previous year.

Funding To Black-Founded Startups In The US



crunchbase

Hispanic founders saw a [similar decrease](#) in venture funding. Across the board, these drops have had a disproportionate impact on minority groups within the US. Although certain venture firms still [prioritize minority founders](#), the drop in funding share highlights the historical barriers and lack of representation in the social entrepreneurship space.

Biased Perceptions

A study by Harvard Business Review [found that](#) venture capitalists perceived female-led ventures as "less viable" than male-led ventures. Female founders were less likely to receive the necessary funding to grow and scale their business ventures. Similar studies have found that investors' [unconscious racial biases](#) affect their judgments.

In addition, historical injustices have affected the way Black professionals work. Limited family wealth dramatically [reduces the risk](#) they may take on early in their careers and have comparatively limited access to professional networks. In a field where [90% of ventures fail](#), the lack of a safety net severely limits professional risk-taking.

Conclusion

The landscape of the corporate world starkly reflects global inequality. Women and minority founders face significant challenges, from misled social perceptions to systemic barriers in venture capital funding. Substantial disparities persist despite some progress, such as the increase in women-led venture funds and partnerships to boost startup ecosystems.

Founders' experiences in the US and Japan highlight the need for more inclusive firms and support systems. As the US and Japan work towards fostering a more diverse entrepreneurial environment, it is crucial to continue addressing these inequalities to pave the way for a genuinely inclusive global economy. These initiatives must provide equitable opportunities and resources for underrepresented groups to ensure that the benefits of innovation and entrepreneurship are accessible to all.

Calmatcha

Problems

1. Lack of appeal of Japanese culture and sister city activity

We have some opportunities for introducing them but **no continuous events** there even if Japanese culture becomes popular.

2. The benefits of matcha and green tea are not being fully conveyed

Souldrink in Japan has especially become popular worldwide but still not well. Matcha is our city's special product

Motohiro Tsuchiya

Business Plan

1. To **sell** sweets or drinks of matcha in my university café experimentally. Advertise by making a website and events (Projected Profit: around 7000\$)



2. If many people like them and the business works well, **expand** the area and other Japanese foods or other Japanese culture (Sushi, Kimono, Anime which American like it)

What did I do

1. Taking survey

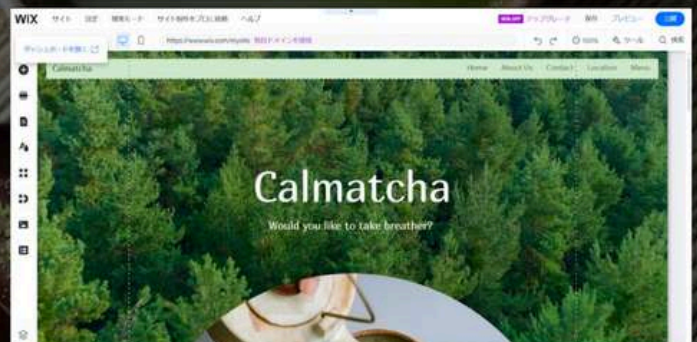
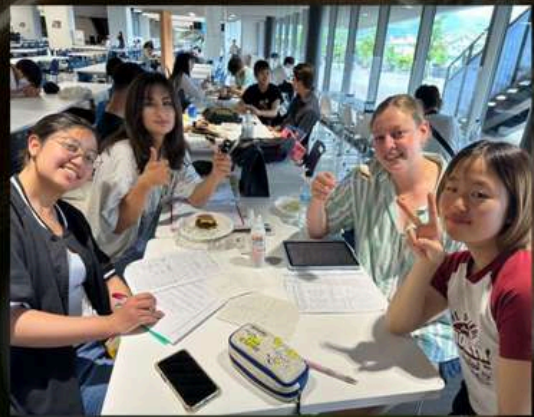
To know the demand I took surveys not only my university students in Omaha but also JASC76 students

2. Make sweets and share

Making sweets and drinks that I would sell and share with American students who study in Japan and took surveys

3. Preparing

Preparing a business plan and making a website. For advertising, I am making them I will release them soon.



L L

J J

開催 決定

大阪BIGBAND
JAZZFESTIVAL
2024

2024 6.8 sat — 6.9 sun

服部緑地野外音楽堂



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WELFARE AND ETHICS



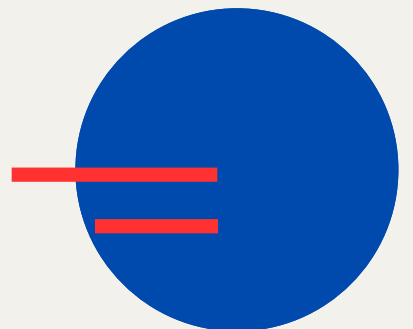
Ashton!



Brandon!



Rachel!



Analysis of Disability Accommodations in Japan and the United States

By: Ashton Evans



Statement of Purpose

During my short stay in Chiba, I would walk to my host family's house on top of the yellow Lego-looking tactile blocks on the sidewalk. I was struck by the number of sidewalks that had the blocks, even in residential areas. I was inspired by the inclusivity of Chiba for people with visual impairments, regardless of the number of people affected by this disability. Kim Samuel's book *On Belonging* argues that place and the way a space is designed are integral for a person to feel less isolated and like they belong in a society, creating a thriving community. Through this project, I wanted to explore the differences in each country's approach to implementing accommodations and building inclusive societies by analyzing urban planning, policies, and cultural attitudes in order to examine attitudes toward people who are disabled. Through this

project, I hope to bring awareness to shortfalls in the social inclusion of people with disabilities by looking at current practices and highlighting ways in which Universal Design could help create more inclusive societies in the United States and Japan.

Project Planning, Implementation, and Execution

I was inspired by the various news articles I came across while researching ways that people in the United States and Japan have implemented creative disability accommodations in society. Through my research, I have learned that there are a lot of similarities in the implementation of accommodations through the government and that cultural differences did make a difference in the inclusivity of people with disabilities. I have seen the impacts of a disability diagnosis first-hand that is

sudden and radically changes one's life and the needs one now may have. It is an issue that affects your family, friends, and neighbors, and I hope to promote awareness of the benefits of universal design through this project. The word disability encompasses a lot of physical, mental, and invisible disabilities, making it impossible to address all of the challenges. If I could do this project again, I would narrow my focus to certain types of disability, for example, physical or mental health, and the way both countries address these challenges as well as how they can improve.



Analysis of Disability Accommodations in Japan and the United States

“In a social model [of disability], the interaction between the conditions of the body and the shapes of the world that makes disability into a lived experience, and therefore a matter not only for individuals but also for societies.”

— Sara Hendren, *“What Can a Body Do?: How We Meet the Built World”*

Civil rights for people with disabilities emerged in the United States through the adoption of the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990, and in Japan with similar workplace anti-discrimination legislation embodied in the Act for Promotion of Employment of Persons with Disabilities in 2012 and shortly after The Act for Eliminating Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities in 2016. The two countries have come a long way in creating a society that is more accessible and accepting of people with disabilities. Workplaces in America now must accommodate any employee with a disability as long as it is a reasonable accommodation. In Japan, there is now more of a push to include people with disabilities in the workforce by raising the targeted employment rate for disabled workers. There are still many shortcomings. In the United States, the term ‘reasonable accommodation’ is tricky, and most cities do not offer sufficient accessible accommodations. A survey in Japan found that 90% of people with disabilities felt discrimination or prejudice in Tokyo and that the targeted employment rate is not enough to prevent discrimination in the hiring process. Current barriers involve the variation of communities’ adherence to the Americans with Disabilities Act, which is perpetuated by a lack of enforcement and stigma. Japan’s conformist society creates barriers to the inclusivity of individuals who do not fit the mold and need extra resources and care.

This leaves us with the question: how can we overcome these shortfalls in order to respect the human rights of each person with a disability? Sara Hendren, author of the book *What Can a Body Do?: How We Meet the Built World*, argues that by

creating more accessible places, both online and physically, you are able to appeal to the most amount of people and therefore gain money from the widest demographic field. She also said that creating more accessibility reveals that there are no people with a societal definition of a disability; it was just that society was not built for everybody.

With the emergence of new technology, we are now, more than ever, able to create new ways to create more inclusive societies. Two students from MIT invented gloves that interpreted American Sign Language and transforms hand movements into speech. New robot cafes have emerged in Japan that enable people with disabilities to serve drinks and food from home and interact with customers through the robot.



The idea of universal design speaks to this mission of creating more inclusive societies. Typically, most products and urban planning are designed for the ‘average user.’ Making them more inclusive, however, can benefit society as a whole. Tactile or *tenji* blocks were invented in Japan to help those who are visually impaired and now act as a helpful barrier to all for train platforms and sidewalks. Closed captioning not only benefits the deaf and hard-of-hearing community but also individuals who are watching TV in a noisy environment.

Analysis of Disability Accommodations in Japan and the United States

Maria Town, President and CEO of the American Association for Disabilities, stated,

“Everyone will become disabled if they are lucky.”

Although this quote is jarring, it offers some truth. We hope to live long lives, and with that usually comes some health changes. It speaks to the unpredictable nature of a disability diagnosis and the life-altering effects it can have. With Japan’s aging population, the need for inclusive societies is critical. People with physical disabilities struggle to navigate cities with the lack of sufficient ramps and working elevators, and those with invisible disabilities face stigma. Disability is a word that encompasses so many physical, mental, and emotional limitations, and creating inclusive spaces is difficult. As a society, in order to respect the human rights of those with disabilities, we must move forward. The United States and Japan can create more creative accommodations that benefit society as a whole. The countries can benefit from more awareness and education on disabilities. Both countries could advocate for the implementation of universal design. Although both countries have enacted civil rights for people with disabilities, they both have different limitations to their effectiveness in implementing them relating to the different cultures and government structures. Moving forward, we must remember that we must make society more inclusive by creating more accessible accommodations.

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The Impact of Cat Cafes

RACHEL COLLINS

Have you ever wanted to experience the joys of interacting with animals without committing to full-time care? If you have, animal cafes may be of interest to you. Animal cafes are a newer tourism spot, with the first cat cafe opening in 1998 in Taiwan. These cafes are often associated with East Asian countries and are most often home to domesticated animals, such as cats and dogs. However, these hotspots have grown in their range, homing more exotic animals, such as owls, snakes, and pigs. This, along with the welfare of the animals and the ethics of using animals for tourism, worries many.



CATTY CORNER CAFE [HTTPS://WWW.CATTYCORNERCAFE.COM/](https://www.cattycornercafe.com/)

As an avid animal lover myself, I understand the thrill behind visiting such a plethora of animals. When considering this research, I was reminded of a local cat cafe close to me and was interested in how my local cafe in the United States would compare to one in Japan. Additionally, I will be analyzing each company, and using that information to understand how ethical these cafes are and demonstrate why these specific examples of animal cafes are a part of responsible tourism. The USA cafe I chose was Catty Corner Cafe, due to my familiarity with the business. The Japan cafe I chose was Cat Cafe Mocha, due to the immediate similarities and differences compared to Catty Corner Cafe that I noticed when scrolling initially through the website. These two cafes would be an interesting comparison and highlight differences between cultures.

Tourism constantly tests the lines of ethics. Deciding how to weigh the value of tourists and locals has been a long-term issue, and adding animals to that mix creates a whole new set of problems. So, one of the first pieces of these cafes I decided to address was animal treatment.



First, what is the purpose of these cafes? Catty Corner Cafe is a space that allows others to spend time with the cats, it is a foster location that homes adoptable cats and a portion of their proceeds go towards the cats' care ("Catty Corner Cafe").

RACHEL COLLINS

This indicates that, while the cats are there partially for the benefit of the visitors, the cats also benefit from living in this cafe. They have the opportunity to find a permanent home and are being well cared for and socialized with other cats and humans in the process. As for Cat Cafe Mocha, the purpose is also to allow people to come and interact and enjoy the company of cats but it is also a space for working and reading. While it is unclear if the cats are adoptable, Cat Cafe Mocha does explain that the cats spend a certain period in the cafe until they "graduate," and live outside the cafe under the care of the staff. A cultural difference between these two purposes is that Catty Corner Cafe is meant for purely relaxation and spending time with the cats, while Cat Cafe Mocha also promotes the use of the space for working. This highlights the emphasis on working in Japanese culture and shows that the USA places more importance on work-life balance.

Tourism typically prioritizes the wellbeing of the tourists, with less regard towards the locals. Both Catty Corner Cafe's and Cat Cafe Mocha's first purposes listed mention allowing people to interact with the cats. However, that is not to say that these companies do not care for their cats. I was happy to learn that each of these cafes has its unique ways of guaranteeing cat wellbeing. Both cafes allow for the release of the cats from the cafe in the long term, and they both have ways for the cats to have their breaks.

Catty Corner Cafe has spaces in which the public is not allowed to enter for the cats to rest, and Cat Cafe Mocha rotates the cats in the cafe, another method for allowing the cats to relax. Giving the cats autonomy to decide whether or not they interact with the public helps to ensure that they are not forced into being entertainers, rather they benefit from the socialization as well. While Cat Cafe Mocha doesn't mention these safe spaces, rotating the cats manually still has the same impact, as the cats are not forced to entertain the guests all the time. Attractions like these often also have waivers, detailing risks like the cats may scratch or bite, which further protects the cats' abilities to act as they naturally would.

In addition to understanding cat wellbeing and treatment, understanding the cost of attending each cafe is valuable information. While both cafes treat their animals well, overcharging or undercharging for the cafe entrance could contradict the information the companies had provided earlier. If the cafe undercharges, it might be more difficult to make a profit for the cafe, meaning less money to support the cats. If the cafe overcharges, it might mean the cats are treated well, but it could also indicate that the company has greed for profit, which can be examined on a case-by-case basis.

In the USA, cat cafe entrance fees typically range from \$10-\$40 an hour, depending on location and amenities, however, I found it most common that fees were on the lower end of that scale, generally in the \$10-\$15 range ("FAQs – DeLand Cat Cafe")("Georgetown's cat cafe Crumbs & Whiskers is purrfect fun"). Catty Corner Cafe costs \$24 to attend for an hour and includes a complimentary cookie and drink. While this cost is higher than the more common fees, it still is in the middle of the range, which is reassuring for not over or undercharging. This cafe is also located in the suburbs about 45 minutes outside of Washington, D.C., which makes the slightly higher cost more understandable. Overall, the price is reasonable compared to other cafes, which indicates more accuracy in information previously discussed regarding cat welfare.



CAT CAFE MOCHA [HTTPS://CATMOCHA.JP/EN/SHOP/SHIBUYA/](https://catmocha.jp/en/shop/shibuya/)

According to Japan Guide, cat cafes generally charge 200 yen per 10 minutes, or \$1.27, which would be about 1,200 yen per hour ("Cat Cafes (Neko Cafes) in Japan").

Cat Cafe Mocha is slightly more expensive, with the first 30 minutes costing 980 yen, or \$6.24, and each additional 10 minutes costing 200 yen, meaning the first hour would cost 1,580 yen, or \$9.82. However, because of the rate for each additional ten minutes, and because the maximum charge is the cost of 2 hours, the longer that a guest stays at the cafe, the lower the average hourly rate. This fee system is unique and benefits both the cats in the cafe and the tourists. Because the entrance fee starts at a higher rate, the cafe guarantees a profit from most guests. While guests staying past the 2-hour maximum does not guarantee more profit, there is an element of customer satisfaction that encourages guests to return, which benefits both parties. Overall, because this system guarantees profit for the cafe, yet not at a rate much higher than average, the information regarding animal welfare can also be supported. Each cafe respects the wellbeing of the cats, but the next question would be to determine if attending these cafes would be a part of ethical, or responsible, tourism.



CATTY CORNER CAFE [HTTPS://WWW.CATTYCORNERCAFE.COM/](https://www.cattycornercafe.com/)

In making this determination, I used parts of a chart provided by Lisa Garcia from Practical Wanderlust (Garcia). This chart highlights social, economic, and environmental factors. In the social category, responsible tourism would “increase cultural understanding between travelers and local communities.” This is achieved by Catty Corner Cafe because the business is locally owned and allows customers to interact with adoptable cats, and by proxy, animal shelters, in the local community. While Cat Cafe Mocha is a larger company with more locations, each location has a unique set of cats, also allowing the tourist to interact with local animals. In the economic category, responsible tourism would “create jobs and new business opportunities, especially in rural communities.” Again, Catty Corner Cafe meets this category’s expectation, because the cafe creates a fusion of animal care and customer service that allows employees from differing fields to become hired, and gain a diverse skill set. Additionally, Catty Corner Cafe is one of the only cat cafes in the area, giving more rural communities a shorter commute to this location. Cat Cafe Mocha has numerous locations across Japan and overseas, creating plenty of job opportunities for a diverse group of workers. This indicates that this cafe also meets the economics category’s expectations. Finally, in the environmental category, responsible tourism “Creates alternative sources of employment for those previously employed in industries with a large carbon footprint.”

This is the category where both cafes fail, but not because of their animals. According to Kraken Coffee, cafes leave a large carbon footprint in various ways, including energy usage, milk usage, and food waste (“The Carbon Footprint of A Café & How to Reduce It). It is important to acknowledge the overall environmental impact of cafes and for cafe owners to consider more economical practices in their business. While these cafes fail in one of the categories, their overall effect is positive, and with advancements in the cafe industry overall, both cafes may soon be able to pass all three categories.

The basis of ethical tourism lies in intention and impact. When being a tourist in a new area, it is important to educate oneself on the customs and culture of the area and find experiences that benefit the locals rather than harm them. While attending popular tourist locations may be exciting, exchanging some of those adventures for lesser-known ones will help in decreasing over-tourism, and can provide a unique experience separate from other tourists. These cat cafes benefit both the animals and the tourists, however, their rising popularity and environmental impacts are important to consider before promoting these cafes blindly.

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Japan's Welfare and Ethics Within the Workplace

By: Brandon Rivera De Leon



The work environment in Japan is commonly known to be strict and has long hours of work for its employees, this work ethic is part of the culture of Japan. With many citizens having grown accustomed to this lifestyle, there is even a word for the death of being overworked called Karoshi. The lifestyle of being overworked and the negative consequences of being overworked are also treated as non-extreme issues. The issue not being dealt with in the right way leads to many people facing Karoshi or developing other illnesses because of this work culture. Putting overworking aside, the work culture also faces discrimination towards disabled employees and women. In this article, I want to spread awareness of these issues to help promote change since I believe if the issue at hand is seen as the detrimental issue that it is, then hopefully the right modifications and measures can be placed to potentially change the work culture in the future, where instead of the work culture being seen as detrimental and negative, workers can say they are glad and are healthy with the work-culture they have.

The problems that come from overworking conditions are mainly the hours of work that many employees face that surpass their usual working hours marked as overtime. For example, one citizen who faced the issue of being overworked Matsuri Takahashi, committed suicide in her company dormitory “An investigation by Tokyo’s Labour Standard’s Bureau found that Takahashi consistently worked more than 100 hours of overtime in a single month, as instructed by her superiors.” (Santillanes, et al., 2023). This type of condition is commonly seen in different companies that employees report on, leading to many similar situations that resemble Matsuri Takahashi’s case. The conditions of being overworked start dealing damage to the employee's physical and mental health which both cause either suicide attempts as seen with Takahashi or can also develop mental health problems.

“When the first cases of karoshi were reported in the late 20th century, workers' causes of death mainly included heart attacks or strokes. However, in the early 21st century, Kawahito said, karoshi workers primarily died by suicide in incidents related to stress and workplace harassment.” (Santillanes, et al., 2023). This information shows that the issue of being overworked has worsened over time. Now, there are more factors at play than just being overworked such as harassment that workers face due to the culture developed in the workplace. All these factors being accustomed at the workplace reflect why the term Karoshi was developed since so many employees go through these harsh conditions.

These working conditions fell more heavily on women and disabled employees early on due to stereotypes and misinformed facts that prevented these groups of people from entering the workforce. Currently, Japan has made efforts to combat the discrimination against these groups by promoting these groups to get jobs and changing laws that increase the percentage of these workers needed for the company's hiring quotas. Also, women entering the workforce has increased during recent years, “Since 2020, women have comprised nearly half of each entering class of diplomats, and many women continue their careers after they marry. These advances, in a country where women were predominantly hired only for clerical positions into the 1980s, show how the simple power of numbers can, however slowly, begin to remake workplace cultures and create a pipeline for leadership.” (Rich, et al., 2024).

As for disabled workers, different companies have made efforts to be more inclusive to these groups of workers by making comfortable and manageable positions for their employees. For example in a cafe in Tokyo, technology is being used to have handicapped employees be a part of the workforce. This allows the whole disabled community to be able to make a living. “At a Tokyo cafe, Michio Imai greets a customer, but not in person. He's hundreds of kilometres away, operating a robot waiter as part of an experiment in inclusive employment.” (France 24, 2021).

In conclusion, as Japan's society evolves, the issues at hand slowly diminish as more awareness of these issues is being seen. One solution I see to combat the issues within the workplace is for the community to stand up for their health and well-being. If the community were to stand up together on these issues then change can happen and the government can take the right actions towards a healthier and welcoming workforce.

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ENVIRONMENTAL ECONOMICS AND ENERGY POLICY



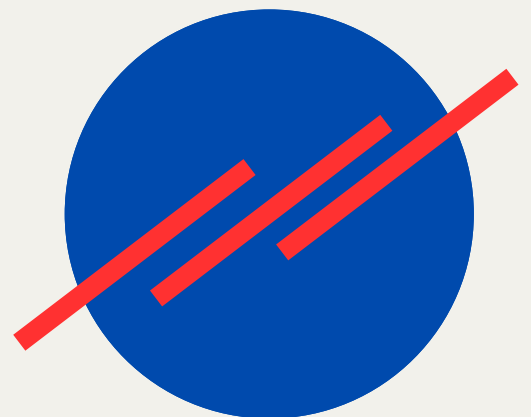
Alexandra!



Mao!



Carlos!



How We Waste: An Analysis of Garbage Sorting Practices In America and Japan

By: Alex Scott

Proper recycling and waste management are essential to protecting our environment for the future. However, how we recycle is highly dependent on where we are located. Using the case studies of Kyoto and Phoenix, Arizona, let's investigate how garbage disposal and recycling practices differed in Japan and the United States.



Why Phoenix and Kyoto? About The Author

Hello! My name is Alexandra (Alex) Scott, and I am one of the American Delegates for JASC76's 3EP Roundtable.

I selected these two locations for analysis because they are both of personal significance to me. I was born and raised in Phoenix and studied abroad in Kyoto in the fall of 2023. Having been a resident in both locations, I have a basic understanding of how to properly dispose of and recycle waste. However, I also understand that these vastly different systems can be confusing, and I was thoroughly overwhelmed when I began to navigate recycling as an exchange student. I wanted to draw attention to these differences, gain a better understanding of why such variations exist, and emphasize how different countries can learn from one another's practices in pushing toward a greener future.



Waste Management: System Overview

Before delving into the differences, it is important to provide a brief overview of the two systems. In Phoenix, waste is separated into two categories: garbage and recycling. Plastics, metals, glass, and paper materials are placed in the same bin and picked up every week by the city. In Kyoto, the system is much more complex with three major categories: combustible garbage, recyclables, and small metal objects. Recyclables are further divided into cans, glasses, PET bottles, plastic containers and packaging, and recyclable paper.

The complexity of the system is the first and most noticeable difference between Phoenix and Kyoto. Both the complexity of the waste management system and the importance of recycling in Japan are emphasized by a long-standing value of conserving resources, as limited natural resources and space have been persistent issues in Japan. In the United States, however, a report published in January of 2024 stated that only 21% of U.S. residential recyclables are truly captured (*Report shows*). Not only does this explain the simple nature of Phoenix recycling, but an alarming number of households throughout the United States do not participate in recycling at all.

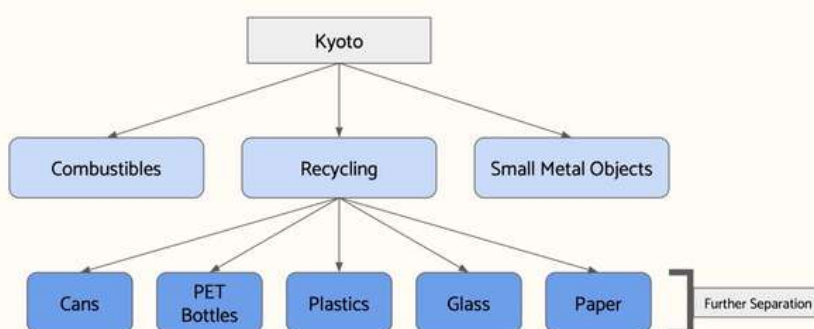
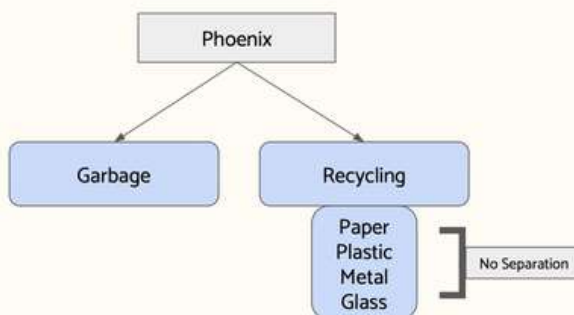
**Should I Leave The Bottle Cap On The PET Bottle?
The Answer Lies In The Location...**

Phoenix:

According to the Phoenix government, since multiple types of plastic fall under the recycling category, recycling facilities request that bottle caps be left on the bottles. This is because objects smaller than 2.5 inches in diameter can fall through cracks in the recycling machinery. However, when it comes to glass bottles or jars, the bottles themselves can be recycled, but any lids or caps must be removed.

Kyoto:

Unlike in Phoenix and most other American cities, caps and labels on plastic bottles in Kyoto cannot be recycled together with the PET bottle itself. The PET bottle should be placed in the bin labeled “Cans, Glass Bottles, and PET Bottles.” If the cap is plastic, it is classified as “Plastic Containers and Packaging” along with the label. If the cap is metal, it goes in combustible garbage.



“It’s The Law” ... Or Is It?

This brings us to the second major difference: the legal aspects of waste management. Since the 1960s, the Congress of Japan has passed various laws that facilitate recycling activities and impose penalties for improper garbage disposal (Yes-Sun). The absence of public garbage bins also means that individuals must take responsibility for their own waste. In the U.S., however, only six states have mandatory recycling laws, and Arizona is not one of them. Despite the city of Phoenix having a recycling program, many communities in the larger Arizona state unfortunately do not have recycling services. When China decided to limit the amount of reusable materials it would accept from the U.S. in 2018, several Arizona cities had to limit their recycling capabilities because they no longer profited from them (Terrill). Furthermore, while Phoenix has a recycling program, it is not always accessible outside of the residential areas, and many businesses are unable to receive regular recycling pickups from the city (Gardiner). In some cases, employees will bring the recycling from their workplace to be disposed of in their recycling containers at home (Gardiner). The lack of services and motivation to recycle has led to a sharp decrease in Phoenix’s and other U.S. cities’ recycling capabilities, which is a huge contrast to Kyoto’s multi-tiered system and legal regulations.



Looking Toward The Future

Having examined the waste disposal systems in Kyoto and Phoenix, I would like to consider some ideas for the future. For Phoenix and other American cities, it is important that businesses and households have access to recycling collection and facilities, and finding ways to incentivize cities to implement recycling programs would be beneficial. Regarding both the U.S. and Japan, the prominence of convenience stores, vending machines, and plastic packaging means that both countries struggle with their plastic waste emissions. In particular, *omiyage* often uses “deceptive packaging,” or packaging that is meant to make it look as if there is more product inside than there truly is (Rogers). Finding ways to reduce these practices would be a step toward a more sustainable future. Finally, both countries should prioritize educating the next generation about the importance of recycling to instill and maintain good practices that will protect our planet. Environmental concerns are only growing more dire, and the actions we take today will have lasting impacts for the future. By looking inward at their own policies and learning from one another, America and Japan can take steps toward a more sustainable future.



Educating The Youth: Oike Ashita

During my time in Kyoto, I had the privilege of visiting the Oike Ashita Nursery School (おいけあした保育園), a hoikuen which promotes environmental awareness and sustainable practices for children ages 0-5. The children are taught to build their own toys and musical instruments from wood, they learn to grow various seasonal fruits and vegetables in the facility’s garden, and their plastic sandbox tools are replaced with bamboo ones. In other words, they are taught to live a life which values the environment and understands humanity’s role in protecting it. Not only that, but the children simultaneously learn skills that foster a spirit of tenacity and self-confidence in themselves. Oike Ashita is a beautiful example of how communities are prioritizing environmental education for the next generation, and perhaps similar measures can be taken to encourage sustainable practices in a variety of age groups and demographics across the world.

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Japan-US Partnership in Environment Protection

By Mao Kobayashi

Significant Events in History

1975: Agreement on Cooperation in Environmental Protection

- First international bilateral partnership aimed toward cooperative environmental protection
- Agreed to exchange information and data, to implement cooperative projects
- Established a political framework for cooperation

2001: Joint Statement between President Bush and Prime Minister Koizumi

- Agreed to cooperate on joint advancement efforts for climate change science and technology research
- Collectively identified 30 joint research projects
- Acknowledged the need for promoting research in private sectors
- Identified more specific issues and solutions, integrated private-sector

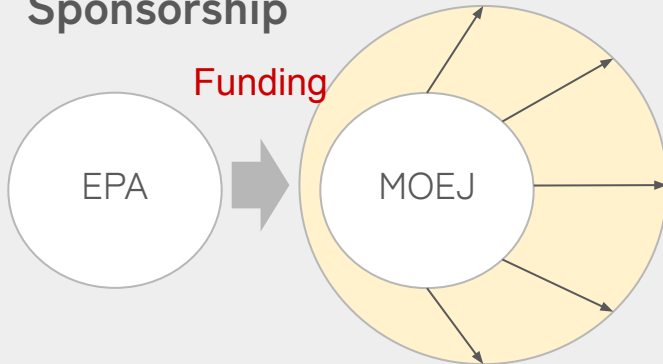
2022: US-Japan Environmental Policy Dialogue between EPA and MOEJ

- Stated intent on achieving domestic netzero goals for 2050 (Paris Agreement)
- Shared priorities on decarbonization, marine litter, circular economy, chemical management, and environmental education
- Continued international, regional, and bilateral cooperation

Different Partnerships

Government-to-Government

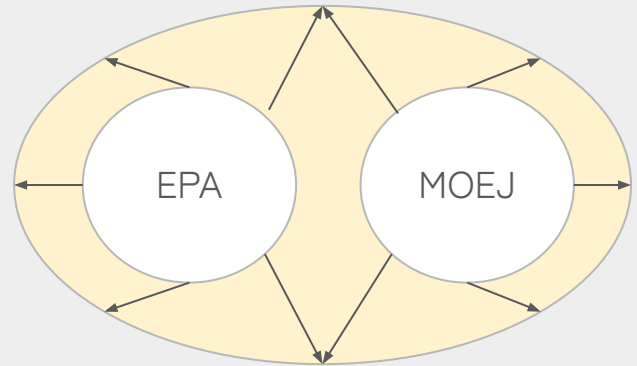
Sponsorship



: EPA and MOEJ sponsors activities of the other

Ex. EPA sponsorship
- International E-Waste Management Network, Asia Pacific Mercury Monitoring Network, Asia Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate, etc.

Collaborative Initiatives

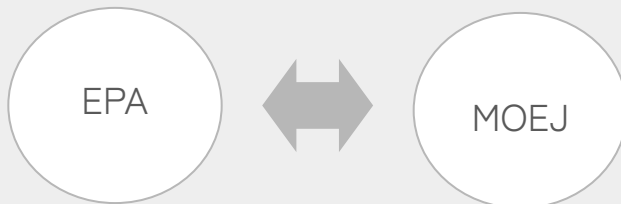


: EPA and MOEJ organize a global initiative together

Ex. **Global Subnational Zero Carbon Promotion Initiative at COP26**

- Recognize, support, and accelerate subnational climate action in developing countries
Ex. Global Methane Pledge, GMP Energy Pathway

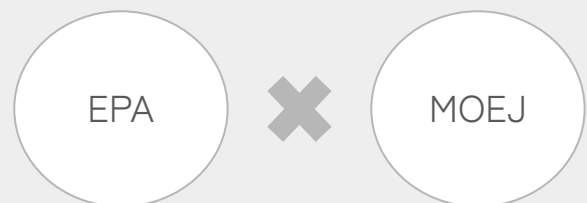
Bilateral Commission



: EPA and MOEJ propose and commission solutions for shared causes

Ex. US-Japan Bilateral Commission on Nuclear Decontamination

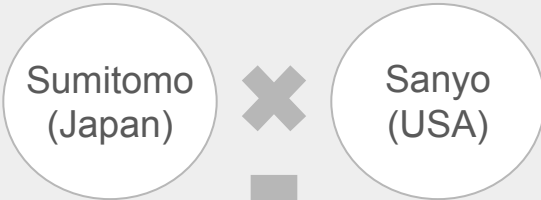
Joint Publication



: EPA and MOEJ declare their intent for cooperation and support for specific causes together

Private Sector Partnerships

Renewable Energy



Solec

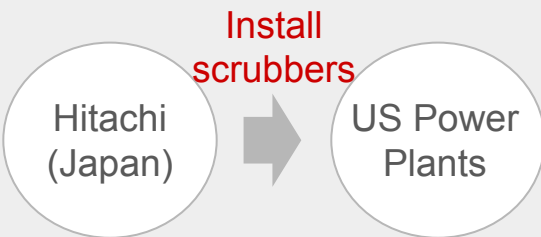
: Joint company, **developed PV with 20% efficiency**

Waste Management



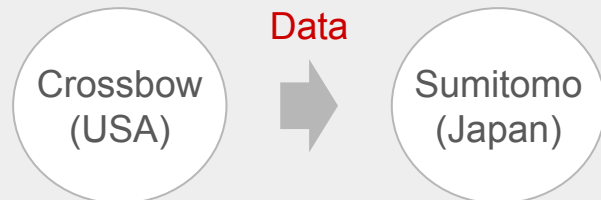
Constructed incineration plant in Japan, efficiency ↑

Emissions Reduction



Control emissions

Environmental Monitoring



Improve agricultural efficiency, monitor safety, etc.

Public-Private Partnerships

Facilitation of Technology Integration into Markets

Ex. Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO)
- Formed an independent advisory panel with US experts to preview and recognize influential technologies

Licensing Agreement for Greater Implementation

Ex. USDE's Argonne National Laboratory and Toda Kogyo
- Established an agreement for the commercial production and sales of Argonne's patented materials

Examining Effectiveness

The climate technologies and actions stemming from these partnerships have markedly bolstered global environmental protection endeavors. Facilitated by bilateral government-to-government commissions, the exchange of research data and technologies has enhanced operational efficiency and effectiveness. The successful implementation of these technologies has not only strengthened bilateral relations but also fostered ongoing collaboration. Over recent years, these partnerships have increasingly addressed specific and diverse challenges, aligned with the Paris Agreement and gaining broader international recognition. Spanning continents, these collaborations have enabled the two countries to bridge regional divides and propagate awareness and climate initiatives on a global scale.

For the Future

Previous partnerships predominantly centered on domestic issues within one or both countries, encompassing topics like nuclear safety and mercury monitoring. The imperative for cooperation to advance climate initiatives beyond their borders, particularly in developing nations, was only acknowledged in 2021. Leveraging existing frameworks and their influence at international forums, these nations should endeavor to pioneer innovations in climate technologies and foster climate action globally. Further, other forms of partnerships as well as their combinations should be explored.



WILL CAPITALISM SAVE THE ENVIRONMENT?

BY: CARLOS RUEDA



The Paris Agreement



Suggests that Developed countries should reach their Global peak for carbon dioxide in 2025 and reduce their carbon emissions by 40% by 2030 . This demand is more lenient with developing countries who will reach their peak GHG emissions much later.

Additionally, countries must provide NDC (Nationally Determined Contributions) (every five years.

The Paris agreement further emphasizes (Art 8) Averting, minimizing and addressing climate events caused by rising global temperatures

Main Goals

The United States alongside Japan, South Korea, The United Kingdom and 170 other states signed an international convention to reduce the increase in global temperature to well below two degrees, (1.5 if possible), and carbon neutrality by 2050.

How the US is doing...

LARGEST HISTORIC
EMITTER AND
SECOND LARGEST
CURRENT EMITTER

NDC 2015

26-28% REDUCTION
COMPARED TO 2005
BY 2025.

NDC 2021

50-52% REDUCTION IN
GHG BY 2030
COMPARED TO 2005

When Trump withdrew America from the Paris Agreement, he also barred the EPA from pursuing, implementing and developing climate conscious rules such as Affordable Clean Energy Rule and The SAFE vehicle Rule which prevents states such as California from implementing their own more rigorous vehicle emission and fuel use standards.

The Biden EPA was expected to soon publish a proposed replacement rule after sending the proposal to the White House regulations office (Office of Management and Budget, or OMB) for review on April 8.



An Irreversible Act

Air pollution

Transportation generates the largest percentage of GHG emissions in the US (29%) from cars and light duty trucks. This is a problem because this amount of GHG emissions is causing two significant negative effects that are costing the US billions a year. Firstly, smog from automobiles release PM (Particulate Matter) that can be as small as 1/100 of the diameter of a hair follicle. According to NASA, reducing GHG emissions can prevent

- 1.4 million hospitalizations and emergency room visits
- 300 million lost workdays
- 1.7 million incidences of dementia
- 440 million tons of crop losses in the United States

According to the EPA, black carbon or CO₂ is a fine particle of particulate matter that traps heat effectively in the ozone layer. This indirectly contributes to extreme global temperatures and heat which cause other natural disasters such as forest fires, drought, heat waves etc.

2070, heat exposure is expected to cause twice as many deaths as air pollution, so addressing it now is a worthwhile endeavor, said Shindell
Duke Climate Scientist

A projection study carried out by NASA found that if the US reduced GHG emissions, the effect of projected improvements from lowering global temperature on Premature deaths from ground-level ozone and microscopic airborne pollutants known as (PM) declined in nearly all regions of the country by 2030

THE UNITED STATES HAS PLEDGED TO REDUCE BY 50% OF EMISSIONS BY 2030 WITH SUPPORTING LEGISLATION FROM CONGRESS

BY INVESTING 370 BILLION ON LOW-CARBON TECHNOLOGIES, ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE INITIATIVES FOR DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES, AND TAX CREDITS TO PROMOTE ELECTRIC VEHICLE SALES

The legislation passed focuses on reducing emissions but not on alleviating the effects of climate change disasters.

- I.E. Makes buildings more energy efficient, but does not make them resilient to heat
- Lost 150 billion in damages in 2021
- Rebuilding structures that will inevitably fail in the next catastrophe
- Would reduce emissions by 41% instead of 27% but not enough to reach Paris agreement goals of 50-52%.

Health costs



820B

Structural Costs



150B



As studied by NASA, by reducing green house gasses through electrification of vehicles, transition to renewable energy and energy efficient buildings, the US can realize immediate benefits by 2030 (Particulate Matter) and long term benefits by 2070 (Excessive Heat Related Conditions).

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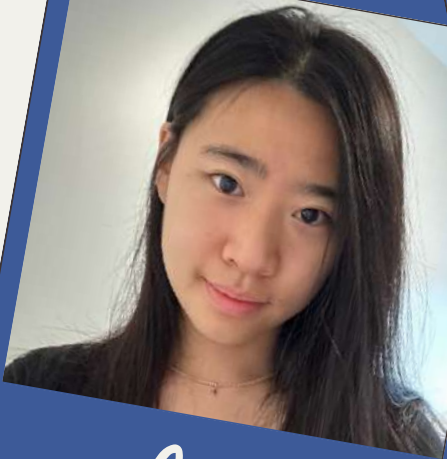
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EXPRESSION AND LIMITATION



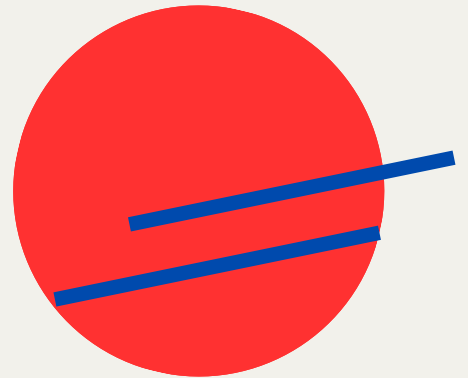
Amy!



Salma!



Bailey!



Representing Foreign Cultures in Japan's Gaming Dark Age

Bailey Meyer

It wouldn't be inaccurate to describe the history of the Video Games industry as a continuing Pong match between America and Japan; not necessarily in the sense of competing with each other, but rather a back-and-forth series of responses to previous innovations. This is not to undermine the output of other countries, but to showcase just how dominant these two countries specifically have been in shaping the landscape of the medium. Games have been a valuable export since the beginning, and the attempt to emulate foreign cultures in order to better appeal to them has always been present.

There was a time, however, when the Japanese games industry, as a whole, struggled. This was bigger than Japanese studios simply not being as popular; certain styles of games, interpretations of genres, and entire genres themselves were basically nonexistent for roughly a decade. This time period, known colloquially as "Japan's Dark Age", occurred from the mid-2000s to the mid-2010s, during the bulk of the transitioning years between the Sixth (GameCube, PlayStation 2, XBox) and Seventh (Wii, PlayStation 3, XBox 360) Home Console Generations.

An entire book could be written on the cultural and economic elements that culminated to create this "era", but for the sake of brevity, only a few major factors will be mentioned here.

- Japanese studios' typical style of leaner development (Middle-market or "AA" Games) had trouble competing in an era of rapidly ballooning budgets. The shift to HD development only exacerbated these problems
- Japanese studios' bearishness on adopting third-party Middleware (Engines to run and program games, Lighting systems, etc) instead of developing proprietary engines increased dev time and cost. In particular, Unreal Engine 3, one of the most popular game engines at the time, was not available in Japanese
- First-Person Shooters, a niche genre in Japan, had become the dominant genre in Western markets
- Being a smaller country with better transportation access to metropolitan areas, Japan was less equipped to design for Online Play, a vital emerging aspect
- The consumer base for home consoles in Japan was migrating to handheld (Gameboy, Nintendo DS, etc) and mobile phones
- There was a lack of a dominant home console to develop for (Wii is underpowered and different, PlayStation 3's Cell Processor is notoriously difficult to use, XBox 360 has virtually no presence in Japanese market)

This "Japanese Gaming Dark Age" created anxiety within developers in Japan and fans worldwide. Given how critically large the US market is for games compared to Japan, there was serious worry that styles, genres, and IPs might ultimately cease to be. There were many attempts to combat Japan's Gaming Dark Age, such as Japanese parent companies acquiring Western studios, setting up Western satellite branches, and, in particular, trying to create

“Western-style” games. Making games catered specifically to foreign markets is nothing new (*Startropics* (1990) was developed in Japan only for NTSC and PAL regions), but this new era of export-games was seen by many in both countries as trying to scrub out all Japanese identity to find anything that Western consumers would like.

Keiji Inafune, character designer of *Mega Man* and important icon at Capcom, has a very messy legacy, and part of that includes his outspoken criticism of Japan’s games industry during this time. He used his executive position in the company to push for “Western-style” games, to mixed results. One of the most infamous was *Bionic Commando* (2009), based on the original *Bionic Commando* (1987) and outsourced to Swedish developer Grin. This 80’s action adventure platformer where the protagonist uses a grappling hook-esque arm became an overly serious, story-focused game with a “gritty” (read:colorless) artstyle where Nathan Spencer swings around a destroyed city using a prosthetic bionic arm made from the body of his deceased wife. Similar to the critically and commercially lambasted *Bombberman: Act Zero* (2006) by Hudson Soft, there were cancelled plans to “adapt” (read:devolve) the *Mega Man* character into a “realistic” hero for *Maverick Hunter* (Unreleased).

But for Capcom, *DmC* cannot go unmentioned. Often seen as the prime example of this movement as a whole, *DmC: Devil May Cry* (2013) was less a new take on *Devil May Cry* (2001) and more so an unmitigated disaster. Developed by English team Ninja Theory and published by Capcom, fans did not see an attempt from Japanese companies to appeal to a Western audience, but rather a Western studio trampling all over their favorite franchise. On the surface, both games are action titles where charismatic demon hunter Dante fights the spawn of the underworld, but in execution, they are very different. The original Dante is cool. The new Dante, or “Don’t-e” as described by fans, tries to be cool... and boy, does he try. The whole game tries, constantly, to convince the player it is charming in a way that comes off as being made by a middle-schooler. Gratuitous violence and cursing, ambiguous political commentary, and constant derogatory references to the original series reek of insecurity from characters that are similar in name only.

The infamously poor reception of this game wasn’t due to xenophobia; in fact, it was quite the opposite. Western fans genuinely loved the original Dante and hated being told that this shallow impersonator was the same thing, or even close. In a similar vein, an infamous video where American indie developer Phil Fish tells a Japanese fan that Japanese games “suck” and “you guys need to get with the times” was lambasted by game fans worldwide, especially in America. This wasn’t a happy time for anyone, and Western fans in particular were worried about entire genres, like platformers, on-rails arcade shooters, and racing games, being gone for good. In response, popular Western games that through no fault of their own helped start the Japanese Gaming Dark Age, such as *Halo* and *Gears of War* were dismissed in some circles as “grey and brown shooting simulators”, though they have been reassessed more fairly in years since.

Nintendo, some could say, had the heaviest burden to bear. As a console manufacturer as well as the leading developer for their console, they had much more at stake. An already floundering GameCube was developed years prior with the idea that great software alone would be enough to keep audiences engaged, and with the entirety of Japan’s development viability now in question, the company that brought games back from extinction in the US market now had the most to lose. Behind the scenes, Nintendo Software Technology, their American

development branch mostly dedicated to niche side games, had plans to make a large-scale gritty action game, *Project HAMMER* (Unreleased), which gradually faded due to problems with siloed development and international communication issues. Near the same time, American / German studio Factor 5, Inc. proposed a gritty, realistic new interpretation of the *Kid Icarus* franchise, which was also rejected. Most notable of these projects was the “Halo killer” *Geist* (2005), a unique shooter where the player can possess others and inhabit their bodies, though it was met with apathetic reception.

Square Enix would release *Mindjack* (2011), a unique shooter where the player can possess others and inhabit their bodies, though it was met with apathetic reception. The resemblance to *Geist* is so uncanny that one could accuse it of plagiarism, assuming that anyone remembered *Geist* long enough to plagiarize it. Iconic game developer / publisher Square Enix was, on paper, better equipped to handle Japan’s Gaming Dark Age because of their long history with big budget projects, but in reality, this ironically made them more timid when it came to the topic, since they were all the more aware of the colossal cost of even one failure. To supplement this, Square Enix acquired Western developer Eidos in 2009, and with it, they could profit from new titles from IPs already established in Western markets, like *Tomb Raider*, *Hitman*, and *Deus Ex*, while the studio also made successful new titles such as *Sleeping Dogs* (2012) and *Life is Strange* (2015). However, when Square Enix later sold its Western studios to Embracer Group in 2022, it wasn’t a surprise to many. There was always an element of passive aggressive resentment toward Eidos during their time together. Coupled with the fact that Square Enix was the creator of the most iconic JRPG (Japanese Role-Playing Game) franchises including *Dragon Quest* and *Final Fantasy*, this only added to the paranoia that their way of life would “go extinct”.

But the Japanese games industry didn’t go extinct. These series still carry the same reverence as they always have; some have even grown in recent years. What exactly is it that changed? Well, much like the start of Japan’s Gaming Dark Age, its end came about thanks to a confluence of different factors, largely set in motion by one growing snowball. At the time, most of the discussion was framed as an “East vs West” story, and while that isn’t necessarily wrong, one can also view it from another angle, which is where everything begins to come together.

In the video “Reggie Fils-Aimé - True State of Gaming”, the soon-to-be President of Nintendo of America showcases in 2005 that the games industry as a whole is in decline, both in Japan and America. The games industry is not finding new audiences and is relying only on teen boys; a market that is showing less interest in games altogether. This dwindling of the industry is due to the single-minded focus on more complex games with better graphics and better technical specs. He brings up the concept of Blue Ocean Strategy and the Innovators’ Dilemma, where companies with the largest market share spend so much time iterating on existing successes that they are blindsided by small startups with disruptive technologies. He ends by stating Nintendo will not simply create an “evolution” of its games, but a “revolution”.

Nintendo, of course, would release both the DS and the Wii, which would become incredibly successful and change the industry forever. Titles like *Nintendogs* (2005), *Brain Age: Train Your Brain in Minutes a Day!* (2005), and *Wii Sports* (2006) would go on to become best-sellers capturing new audiences like more women and the elderly. There was a redefining of who games could be for and where you could find them: family living rooms, college dorms, office parties, and more. Though the Wii’s sales momentum would drop after the first few years,

the seed had been planted for more consumers to become game fans. In time, previously niche series like *Animal Crossing* and *Fire Emblem* would go on to become major sellers. Even those who didn't fit into these new demographics benefitted; boys and young men who were losing interest in games not only had more variety, but a greater availability of games in general. This expanded beyond Nintendo; this network effect benefitted rivals PlayStation and Xbox as well with a larger consumer base more open to new types of games. Today, many Western indie developers will even mimic Japanese styles in homage to the games from their youth.

A number of problems in the Japanese Gaming Dark Age were inevitable growing pains. Japan's developers eventually did get better at using middleware, designing for online play, and more. The middle-market games that Japan excelled in now had a place, and genres and IPs previously thought unviable were able to shine once again. In particular, *Super Smash Bros. Brawl* (2008) put a spotlight on how beloved these IPs and characters were that was seen throughout the world. Ultimately, Japan didn't "go back" to focusing on what they did best, but focused on bringing what they did best to new audiences. Not regressing, not transforming, but adapting.

Expressions of Love:

BEYOND THE 5 LOVE LANGUAGES

By Salma Battisha

Thoughts are abstract forms of the potentiality of expression. Due to their fluid nature, it is common for people to attempt to group feelings and emotions into categories. Universal experiences like love, expressions of personality, and methods of learning make way for pseudo-psychological systems to take their place in society.

The 5 Love Languages Theory

One relevant example of this phenomenon is the emergence of the 5 Love Languages Theory. This is a framework that categorizes expressions of love as falling into one of the following categories: words of affirmation, quality time, acts of service, physical touch, and receiving gifts. This theory, formulated by Gary Chapman, provides a simple explanation for incompatibility between partners, lending the issue to the assumption that partners may not be speaking one another's love language and providing them love in the way that they prefer.



The theory of the 5 Love Languages is initially an attractive one, for it simplifies complex relationships into a trackable checklist that one can try to go through. The issue, however, is in this very simplification. To start out, the five categories are highly subjective and may be condensed or expanded to an individual's preference. For example, *Listening*, a substantial part of communication and building a relationship, is omitted. Furthermore, receiving gifts and acts of service may overlap in many scenarios, making it unclear whether they need to inhabit two separate categories.

While Western culture places a focus on defining methodologies of expressing love and oneself, Japanese ideals pay more attention to describing and categorizing the types of love that may exist, however they might be expressed. Observing the Japanese language yields a plethora of words equivalent to "Love", each with different connotations or specified audiences. While the distinction between familial and romantic love is clear in majority of cultures, Japanese terminology breaks down abstract perceptions of love into distinct but often overlapping ideas.

Ai, Koi, and Ren'ai

The terms Ai (愛), Koi (恋), and Ren'ai (恋愛), are interesting examples of words that all refer to love in its different forms. Ai often refers to an unconditional and enduring love and is used to describe love in a broader sense, including familial love, spiritual love, and long-term romantic love. The character stems from Middle Chinese and is used as a female given name. Nested within Ai (愛) is the character for heart (心). Koi holds a greater association with passionate and romantic love, often in the initial stages of a relationship, sometimes even referring to one-sided or unfulfilled longing. It is the type of love referred to in the phrase "Love is blind", or in Japanese 「恋は盲目」.



The combination of the two Kanji yields Ren'ai (恋愛), romantic love in the modern context as explored by Japanese media from film to literature. Usually, this term equates to "falling in love". It is notable that none of these terms attempt to explicitly state behaviors or actions committed by parties inhibiting this emotional connection. Instead of categorizing the set of actionable steps to attain or maintain "love", the Japanese language gives categories to the different sets of situations or feelings associated with love.

Amae (甘え) comes closest to matching one of the 5 love languages: acts of service. It is a term that expresses the expectation of indulgence and dependency in a relationship, often seen in close familial and romantic bonds. It describes a kind of affectionate dependence where one person trusts that their needs will be met by their loved ones.

Anime Archetypes

While the theory of the 5 Love Languages is prescriptive, gently nudging people to express themselves by providing a list of simple, kind actions, Japanese models of love are more descriptive, giving way for a wider range of expression without addressing incompatibility directly. However, Anime archetypes in romantic settings reflect a much more humorous approach to the expressions of love. The famous archetypes are as follows:

- Tsundere (ツンデレ): Initially cold and hostile, but gradually shows a warmer side.
- Yandere (ヤンデレ): Appears sweet and loving but can become obsessively violent.
- Kuudere (クーデレ): Cool and unemotional on the outside but has a caring side.
- Dandere (ダンデレ): Shy and quiet but opens up to someone they trust.
- Genki (元気): Energetic, cheerful, and always positive.

The charm in these archetypes is that they are often portrayed in a highly exaggerated manner, separate from reality. Characters that fall into each category may seem one dimensional and unrealistic due to following a single pattern of behavior. Whether they are overly shy or boisterous, they all share the common denominator of being capable of love. Each of these archetypes can express their love in each of the 5 Love Languages at different capacities. Yet, if they are so different, wouldn't they each find more ways to express their sincerity? There is tremendous overlapping in the 5 Love Languages along with a multitude of gaps that can be filled depending on the situation and the types of people involved.

The Spectrum of Love in Arabic

Delving into another perspective, classical Arabic offers a spectrum of terms for different stages of love, starting from (الهوى) *hawa*, meaning attraction and infatuation, to (التوق) *tawq*, referring to longing love that involves an internal struggle leading to personal sacrifice. The concept of inseparable love is expressed through (العشق) *Ishq*, which is still commonly used colloquially in songs and daily speech. This term is also embraced by Sufi Muslims to exclusively express Divine love for their creator. *Ishq* made its way to other languages such as Persian, Hindi, Urdu, Turkish, Bengali, and others to represent love both towards a deity or otherwise.



The 5 Love Languages Theory incites people to reflect on the ways in which their loved ones might prefer to be approached and can serve as a fun discussion. Yet, picking from a pre-made list separate of one's unique situation tends to cause people to overlook things that matter most. Love is both complicated and simple in that it is difficult to describe but not necessarily hard to express. Whether platonic, familial, or romantic, love can take on various forms and watering it down for ease of mind can compromise relationships in the long run. By embracing the rich and varied expressions of love seen in different cultures and languages, we can gain a deeper understanding of how to truly connect with others, appreciating the fluidity and complexity of human emotions beyond simplistic categorization.

How Do We Translate “Frog Haiku” ? — Expression & Limitation in Translation

Amy Wu: awu@smith.edu

The 76th Japanese-American Student Conference
Expression & Limitation_XL

In his article “The Task of the Translator,” Walter Benjamin discusses how good translations demonstrate the “innermost relations” between languages through the process of signifying (Benjamin 255). Not to blindly pursue a fidelity to the original, in translations, a translator seeks freedom to convey the poetic significance of meaning. Their task is to collect individual parts that suit the original wording in a targeted language, like finding the once-lost puzzles. Furthermore, to translate is to create, to regain, to give birth to a “pure *language*” from literary expressions (Benjamin 257). It is remarkable that “*language*” here means a universal method for humans to express mental thoughts, instead of the various ways of referring to certain concepts. In other words, a translation creates a new work of art which has its own freedom. It should echo with the original through striving toward harmony instead of similarity.

“Frog Haiku,” as one of the most famous works of Matsuo Bashō, has been translated into English in many ways. Among them, I selected four distinct translations as subjects of discussion, trying to demonstrate how and why a translator, as Benjamin argues, makes certain choices to carry out their “task,” balancing their own expressive needs while bearing possible limitations.



古池や蛙飛びこむ水の音（ふるいけやかわずとびこむみずのおと）
(Bashō 59)

Furu ike ya / kawazu tobikomu/ mizu no oto
Old pond <> / frog jump into / water's sound
(Reichhold 262)

By R.H. Blyth (Translator & Writer)

The old pond;
A frog jumps in –
The sound of the water.

By Nobuyuki Yuasa 湯浅信之 (Professor Emeritus, Hiroshima Uni., translator)

Breaking the silence,
Of an ancient pond,
A frog jumped into water –
A deep resonance.

By Ross Figgins (Professor of English and Communication Arts, writer)

old pond
a frog leaps in –
a moment after, silence

By James Kirkup (English poet, translator, travel writer)

pond
frog
plop!

The first one by R.H. Blyth is a faithful translation of the haiku. Blyth was an English writer, but he also published critiques and translations on Japanese literary culture, especially Zen and haiku (Sembokuya 161). In this one, Blyth follows Bashō's lines, rhythm, and even his concise formality, adding no extra content. This piece of translation can be used as a model to compare with the following three, since fidelity is still one of the most important standards when most contemporary translations take place. The majority of the translators, especially those working for serious literature and publications like Blyth, use similar methods to frame their basic works. However, Benjamin argues that the overemphasis on fidelity, or similarity, is usually accompanied by a failure to convey aesthetic and meaning. In Bashō's "Frog Haiku," the idea of *kigo* 季語 which indicates seasonal change does not exist in English poetic tradition. However, in the Japanese context, one can easily understand how "frog" is the *kigo* that indicates the coming of spring. Therefore, direct translations like Blyth's might fail to express this change. Blyth's translation keeps everything in a mannered way, making safe choices facing the cultural and linguistic differences. Nevertheless, Benjamin warns that the price of pursuing a standardized safety is to make the translation a mediocre one. A translation lacks the "poetic significance," by avoiding to be wrong. Nevertheless, one has to admit that Blyth's use of punctuation, like dash, are his creations that lacks in the original and shows at least a try on blending the haiku style with common poetic formats in English.

The second translation, done by Nobuyuki Yuasa, a Japanese scholar and translator with an expertise on English literature and translation studies, follows a similar pattern to the first, but maintains a unique style (Researchmap). Yuasa is a native speaker of Japanese. Unlike most of the translators who have a native tone in the targeted language, here, Yuasa translates into his second language. This special attention to his background does not mean to disqualify him as a translator, but only to emphasize how it might contribute to the uniqueness of his work. His translation tries to present not only the literalness of the poem but also the culture and tradition of haiku. In the case above, he explains the underlying logic of the poem. "Breaking the silence" is an implicit effect of the frog's jump, while he explicitly states it in the first sentence. This sentence is to make the meaning of the poem very clear—the frog's action marks a change. As for the last sentence, if "the sound of water" in Blyth's seems coming out of nowhere, Yuasa explains how the water sound is "a deep resonance," a result caused by a frog who "breaks the silence." He reinforces that the frog brings life back to the pond. As Yuasa's career is deeply associated with English literature and translation, he seems to be fully aware of how his targeted audiences might be distant from the traditional Japanese literary tradition. Therefore, through adding explanations, he tries to

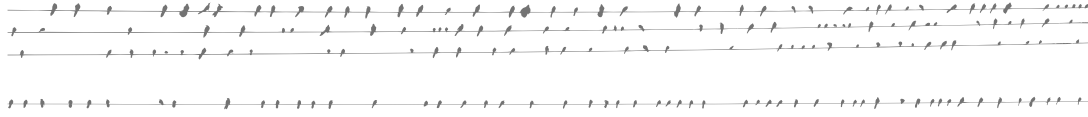
draw the Japanese culture closer to his audiences. This corresponds with Benjamin's expectation of how a translator should manage to express the meaning of a the original text. Meanwhile, Yuasa's translation does not deviate from the original too much, except for adding the first sentence and slightly changing the last. He manages to balance his need of adding additional information with the limitations given by Bashō's language and format. To Benjamin, this process is necessary, since a translation, although does not need to be exactly the same with the original, needs to reach a "harmony" with it. This harmony, explained by his argument on the interconnectedness of languages, means a balance between meaning and form.

Ross Figgins was a multi-talent, who had a profession in English, communication arts, but also had published on both food recipes and written 2000 haikus for various journals (Claremont Courier). As a translator, in this case, he allows more artistic creation and freedom than being limited by the original wording. Here, "a moment after, silence" is a complete revision of Bashō's "水の音" (water's sound). In this case, Figgins points out the silence to emphasize the volume of water's sound that has come before. To him, the importance of expressing the artistic meaning and the art of English language overweighs the necessity to go strictly hand in hand with the original Japanese. Benjamin would not oppose this choice, since he grants translators rights to pursue their own expressive freedom when they feel necessary to sacrifice the original way of speaking for a greater meaning. This meaning is the "pure *language*" that Benjamin remarks as the ultimate goal of translation, which relies on the translator's deep respect and understanding toward the targeted language. Thus, to him, to translate is to create, to find the correct puzzle that suits the other piece, but not in its same shape, since the existence of different languages ensures systematic differences to express a certain meaning. In conclusion, Figgins' translation symbols a breakthrough by which a translator chooses to use their imagination to explore the artistic potential of the original in a completely different language context. However, since the last sentence is Figgins' complete rewriting, even more so than Yuasa's, in both cases, one might be cautious on whether a good translation needs to take certain steps away from the original.

As a poet and travel writer himself, James Kirkup takes translating Bashō's work as an experimentation in which he plays with creativity and ingenuity (The Guardian). Kirkup's case is completely different from the first three. Instead of saying it's a translation, it is better to conclude that he uses Bashō's work as a test field to water his own flowers. While Benjamin's theory encourages translators to explore the possibilities of expression through translation, Kirkup's case becomes an extreme demonstration of it. His translation is witty, maverick...but one can't say it's wrong. It omits a lot, indeed, but the remaining parts—pond, frog, the "plop"—are the core contents of the poem. Benjamin believes that no matter how far from the original a translation might seem to be, the two should "echo" with each other, since languages are interconnected. Surprisingly, Kirkup's translation works. As Benjamin defines inferior translations that unnecessarily pursue fidelity while failing to express the "poetic significance" as "the inaccurate transmission of an inessential content," Kirkup's case lies on the opposite polar: it is the very accurate translation of the most important content (Benjamin 253). With only three words, Kirkup renders the art of language, literary creation, and translation. The three-word format does not hinder the expression of meaning. On the other hand, it demonstrates the concise, precise, limited nature of haiku's format. In this way, the translation even seems very faithful, since it not only keeps the original sentence structure but also subtly maintains the main elements in Bashō's poem. In a word, Kirkup's version demonstrates how one translator can, to a fairly large extent, express themselves in their work without being limited by the original, while not departing from it too much.

In the four translations, Blyth provides standard, Yuasa gives explanation, Figgins brings imagination, and Kirkup renders creativity. Comparing and contrasting the translations provides a ground to utilize Walter Benjamin's thoughts, which give freedom to translators to present the beauty of not only the original but also the targeted language. This process, like every work of translation studies, generates insights on the variety of ways of expression based on cultural, personal understanding of the meaning of translation. Blyth, probably with a need for publication, provides one classic way of translating the text. It might lack creativity, but it ensures fidelity and preciseness. Yuasa, who translates into his second language, also as a scholar of English literature and translation studies, tries to bring in the culture of haiku through providing details in his work. Figgins explores the possibilities of the art of communication—part of his profession as a scholar and professor—through imagining the underlying silence after the water drop. Finally, Kirkup, best known as a poet and travel writer, fully demonstrates his capability of stretching a translator's freedom to an extremely creative realm. However, in the end, it is notable that even though Benjamin grants translation freedom, it still stays within the limitations of the original language.

This idea sets a boundary between the translator's task and the poet's, and is also reflected through the four translations, especially in Yuasa and Kirkup's cases. If a poet or a writer's task is to compose a melody, a translator's task is to compose another one, but only as the former's companion piece. In other words, every note in the second needs to have a reason, to echo with the first, but meanwhile, a translator drafts its own melody.



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*The painting in the article is retrieved from [this link](#).



Being inspired, I translated my own version of the haiku for fun. Check them out if you are interested!

Ver.1

Ancient pond

that a frog leaps into:

"Kerplunk!"

Ver.2

Pond:

Frog: Jump!

Pond: Plop!