

DISCOVER JAPAN

AT
UEA
University of East Anglia

DISCOVER JAPAN



Welcome to 'Discover Japan'!

『ディスカバー・ジャパン』 ようこそ!

The 'Discover Japan' event started in 2015, as a part of the University's outreach activities for school pupils in Norfolk and Suffolk to experience Japanese language and culture and since 2016, the event has been supported by the Japan Foundation Sakura Network. Since the very first event, over 200 primary and secondary school pupils visited the UEA campus every year and they have been inspired by taking part in various intercultural activities, including Japanese language lesson, origami, Japanese calligraphy, and playing taiko drums. Secondary students have also had a glimpse of what the university life is like during their visit.

I was very touched that some pupils brought their *Pokémon* collection cards or other Japanese items to show us on the day and some enthusiastically shared their personal stories about Japan and their Japanese friends.

Of course, there are also many pupils who are new to Japan. My favourite moment of the event is when they say 'Arigatō!' and 'Sayōnara!' when they leave campus with a fox mask or origami hat that they created on the day.

Many of our students had been 'hooked' by a particular anime, game or song etc. at young age and their interest led them to study Japanese at UEA, following the path of their *sempai* who are now achieving success all over the world, including in Japan. This 'Discover Japan' brochure introduces some of our students' Japan related journeys and showcases some of their achievements at UEA. I hope you "Discover Japan" through this brochure!

Mika Brown

**ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF
JAPANESE LANGUAGE AT UEA**

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cosplaying with fire コスプレイヤー



"I watched YouTube videos of how they made it and I was like 'that's exactly what I want to do'"

TORI WATERHOUSE

SINCE THE 1990S, THE COSPLAY PHENOMENON HAS RAPIDLY LIT A FIRE IN THE HEARTS AND MINDS OF THE WEST. COSPLAYER TORI OF PEACH TREE ROSE COSPLAY JOINS US TO DISCUSS BLACKSMITHING, BLENDER, AND BREATH OF THE WILD

What got you into cosplay?

Mainly through anime and artwork really - I've always been more of a creative person. I did art and media at school so I've always been very creative. And then, when I got myself on to this website called DeviantArt and I was uploading my own artwork, I saw people cosplaying as characters from the game **Kingdom Hearts**, and from there I watched their YouTube videos of how they made it and I was like 'that's exactly what I want to do'.

What made you interested in Japanese?

Similar thing really - I've watched anime since I was really young, maybe from about five or six. I started watching **Sailor Moon** in English, and when I got older I started watching it in Japanese and fell in love with the language. It turned my life around. I fell in love with it and it was amazing.

Do you think having knowledge of Japanese helped with the cosplay and vice versa?

I'm not sure it necessarily helped with the cosplay. But I think, because I'm studying Japanese, it's got me more involved in looking at different types of culture and the culture of Japan. Sort of like, looking at how cosplay is in Japan and how it is in the UK. And I'm looking forward to going over to Japan and being able to speak the language and experience it in a different way, if that make sense?

"Japanese turned my life around"



**"the more you like the character,
the more passion goes into
the outfit"**

Are you planning on doing any cosplay in Japan?

I don't think I'll make anything, but I'm really looking forward to seeing if you can buy cosplay over there and see if it's different quality. It's quite hard to buy cosplay in the UK and I'd say it's a lot bigger in Japan, so I'm looking forward to buying it if you can out there, and maybe I'll cosplay when I'm there.

What's some of your favourite cosplay that you've done?

I cosplayed as Torbjörn from **Overwatch**, which is probably a very random thing because he's like a little dwarf in armour. I found it really interesting to use materials that I've never used before. A lot of my cosplays I sew and I'm self-taught at sewing. And then, getting to use this material

called **worbla**, which is like a plastic that you heat up, and making it look like armour. It was really fun to do something I'd never done before. Then I made his hook out of the foam you would get in seats. It was fun to come up with ways to make it and all the painting to make it look like it was from the game. It was really fun to do. I like that one!

The melting of the metal almost sounds like blacksmithing! Like a completely different skillset. What's your favorite anime or manga character you've cosplayed as?

Favorite anime character... Oh! Definitely Raphtalia from **Rising of the Shield Hero**. Yeah, I really liked making her outfit. There were some parts of it that we're really difficult, but I feel like I learned a lot from that one and I really like her character design so it was really nice to be able to make that. Plus, she's a character I really like as well. I think the more you like the character, the more passion goes into the outfit. Sometimes you make the outfits because they look really cool and you just like what it's from, but when you like the character as well that has a big difference.



Is there anyone you're still looking forward to cosplaying who you've not done yet?

I'm currently making Zelda from ***Breath of the Wild***. I've done her white dress and the blue top with the long sleeves. I actually got a 3D printer for Christmas - developing another new skill there. I made her crown on Blender. I've never done that before, never looked into creating stuff in 3D before. I designed it and printed it and that's probably one of the most fun things I've done through cosplay. And, who else am I doing... I'm hoping to do Seraphine as well from ***League of Legends***. I started playing that a few months ago and I really, really like her, I think she's really cool.

What's your advice for someone who wants to start out doing cosplay?

I'd say you're better off starting with a character who has a simple outfit because sometimes you can get clothes similar - say

"always use a sewing pattern if you're going to start from scratch"

you go to a shop and you find a dress that looks similar to an anime character, it's easier to adjust that dress than to start completely from scratch. For some of my cosplays I've used stuff that I've already had before, and you can either use it as your pattern or you can use it as the cosplay. I'd say that's probably the easiest way to start and then gradually get in. My number one tip would be to always use a sewing pattern if you're going to start from scratch.

Is there anything you'd want to say to somebody who has an interest in cosplay and Japanese to encourage them to try one of the two out or both of them?

I'd say a lot of people who like anime have a bit of an interest in the language as well. A couple of my friends who also like anime have been to Japan, and they started learning some of it but got put off by how difficult it is. But I would 100% advise to just go for it, and doing the degree has really, really helped. It is quite daunting, but when you're with people that enjoy the same thing as you so like - anime and games - and you're doing it with those people together, it's such a really nice friendship group. So it makes you feel better if you've had a tough lesson and someone else is like, "Oh don't worry, I feel the same". I think it's a really nice group of people who want to study the language. I feel that's a really nice thing about it.

IF TORI'S COSPLAY HAS SPARKED YOUR INTEREST, FOLLOW HER @PEACHTREEROSPLAY ON INSTAGRAM FOR FUTURE UPDATES!





MUSIC TO MY EARS

音楽

CHARLOTTE GOOCH
DIVES INTO THE WORLD OF
IDOLS AND SEIYUU

Music was one of the big things that got me into Japanese. There's all the gateways like games and *Pokémon* and anime, but because I have more of a background in music, I was automatically drawn to music and anime, and anime based on music.

I play keyboard. Keyboard doesn't seem to be such a big part of bands in the UK, but in Japan it seems to be a staple - which is nice for me! It's nice to go into an anime that's based around music, not expecting much, and then you see keyboard players in every band!



THE IDOL'S VOICE ACTORS HAVE TO PORTRAY A CHARACTER

IDOLS

Idol culture in Japan is very different. A lot of idol groups stem from anime - they're the ones that I like. Some examples are: Aqua, μ 's (Muse), and Nijigasaki School Idol Doukokuai from **Love Live**. The idol's voice actors have to portray a character. Although some of them may have singing careers outside of their "idol" job, they still have to portray a character, so it's sort of acting, as well.

VTUBERS

This is a pretty new concept - Vtubers are "Virtual YouTubers" and are usually characterised by a little anime character in the corner of a screen which is animated as they move. They talk to the viewers, play games, that sort of stuff. Because Vtuber identities are so hidden, no one really knows the line between what they're actually like and the role they're trying to portray.

"A LOT OF IDOL GROUPS STEM FROM ANIME"

頑張ります!
GAMBARIMASU!

**IT MEANS
TO TRY YOUR
BEST**



SEIYUU

Seiyuu are voice actors and actresses, and they provide voices for all the anime characters and creatures that are on-screen. In Japan, there a lot of famous people who you find cropping up in the same roles, more so than in the west. There seem to be these big names that appear on most (English) dubs of anime, but in Japan it's a viable career path. There are vocational schools for voice acting. It's a very serious profession, taken very seriously. I feel like with voice acting, you have to act more, in a way. You're not there to show the physical representation of what the character is doing - you have to convey that through your voice. They do tend to use more dramatic phrases and terms to refer to each other, because you can't see the person and voice acting is such an important part of the animation process. If someone was to go to Japan and speak as dramatically as they do in anime, it would be seen as a little bit odd.

I'd love to be a **seiyuu**! Depending on the role they're playing or the company they're with, there's little variety programs they can participate in. A lot of **seiyuu** are also singers and go on to have singing careers. Depending on the role, they also have to learn new things. For example, in an anime I like called **Bang Dream**, some of the voice actors had to learn instruments - drums, bass, guitar - when they have no prior experience. It's about bringing those characters to life on stage. It's very admirable seeing the effort they go to in order to please the fans.

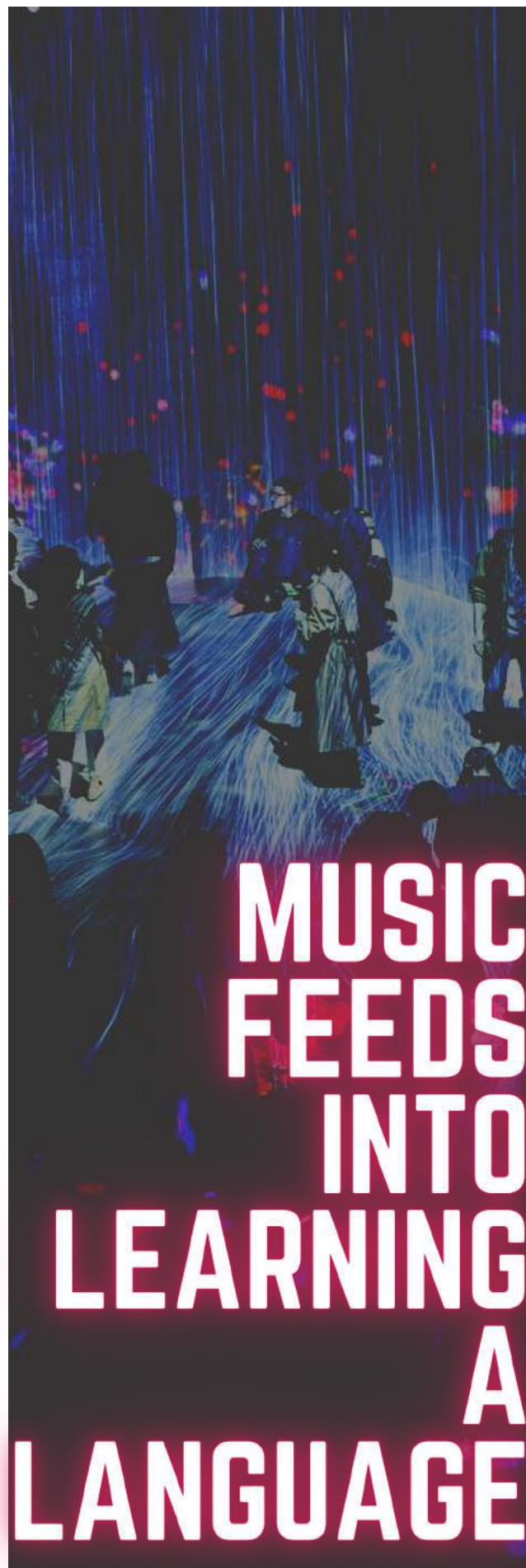
When I was about 13 or 14, I got this microphone that plugged into the computer, and I was like, “I could be like all those cool people I see uploading their singing onto YouTube”! I did that and then did nothing for seven years, and then started doing it again. It’s a nice way to express yourself.

Music feeds into learning languages. I’ve learned songs by just learning the sounds - I had no idea what the words were. **Now that I’ve come to university and actually learned some Japanese, I go back to listening to those songs and think, “Woah, I actually know what that means”. It’s a really cool feeling.** I think it’s what got me into wanting to learn it more. I think it was the ending theme of the *Melancholy of Haruhi Suzumiya* that was my gateway into vocaloid and anisong and all of this stuff.

I remember I was watching a vocaloid music video of a certain song and it had the Japanese writing of the lyrics at the side and I was like, “Ah, that one says の (no) - I’m going to remember that one!” I still remember that was the first Japanese letter I ever learned. There are resources online you can use, too. I personally used one online textbook called *Japanese from Zero* and that was great because it wasn’t just “learn the alphabet” - it added more letters as you went on. It’s just good that the first step in being interested has been taken, good job! やったー!



**IF YOU'D LIKE TO FOLLOW
CHARLOTTE'S MUSIC,
CHECK OUT HER YOUTUBE
CHANNEL, KONO, AT THIS
QR CODE!**





FACE THE MUSIC

**SAM PRIDIGE
JUMPS BACK
IN TIME TO
EXPLORE
TRADITIONAL
JAPANESE
MUSIC**



The song that I recorded is called **Takeda No Komoriuta** (竹田の子守唄), which means “The Lullaby of Takeda”, a region in the city of Kyoto in Japan. It is a traditional song from that region, but the version that I performed is a more modern version. I say more modern - it’s from the early 1970s, performed by Japanese folk band called **Akai Tori** (赤い鳥). Their version is quite different from the traditional folk version and is a lot more western. The reason I choose it is primarily because I like the song and I’ve spent time in Kyoto.

I first found this song shortly after I’d been to Japan for the first time, about five years ago now. I was putting together a slideshow of all the pictures I’d taken so that I could show my family and I was looking for some Japanese style music to put over the video. I came across that on YouTube and I liked it!

"JAPANESE MUSIC COMBINES WESTERN IDEAS WITH TRADITIONAL JAPANESE VALUES"

One of the most interesting things about Japanese music, especially modern Japanese music from the 1900s onwards as opposed to ancient Japanese music, is the way it combines Western ideas with traditional Japanese ideas. With the song that I performed, for example, the melody is fairly traditional, but the harmony, chord progression and the style of playing is more Western and inspired primarily by American folk music. That combination of the two is something I really like and find compelling about a lot of Japanese music.

歌 song



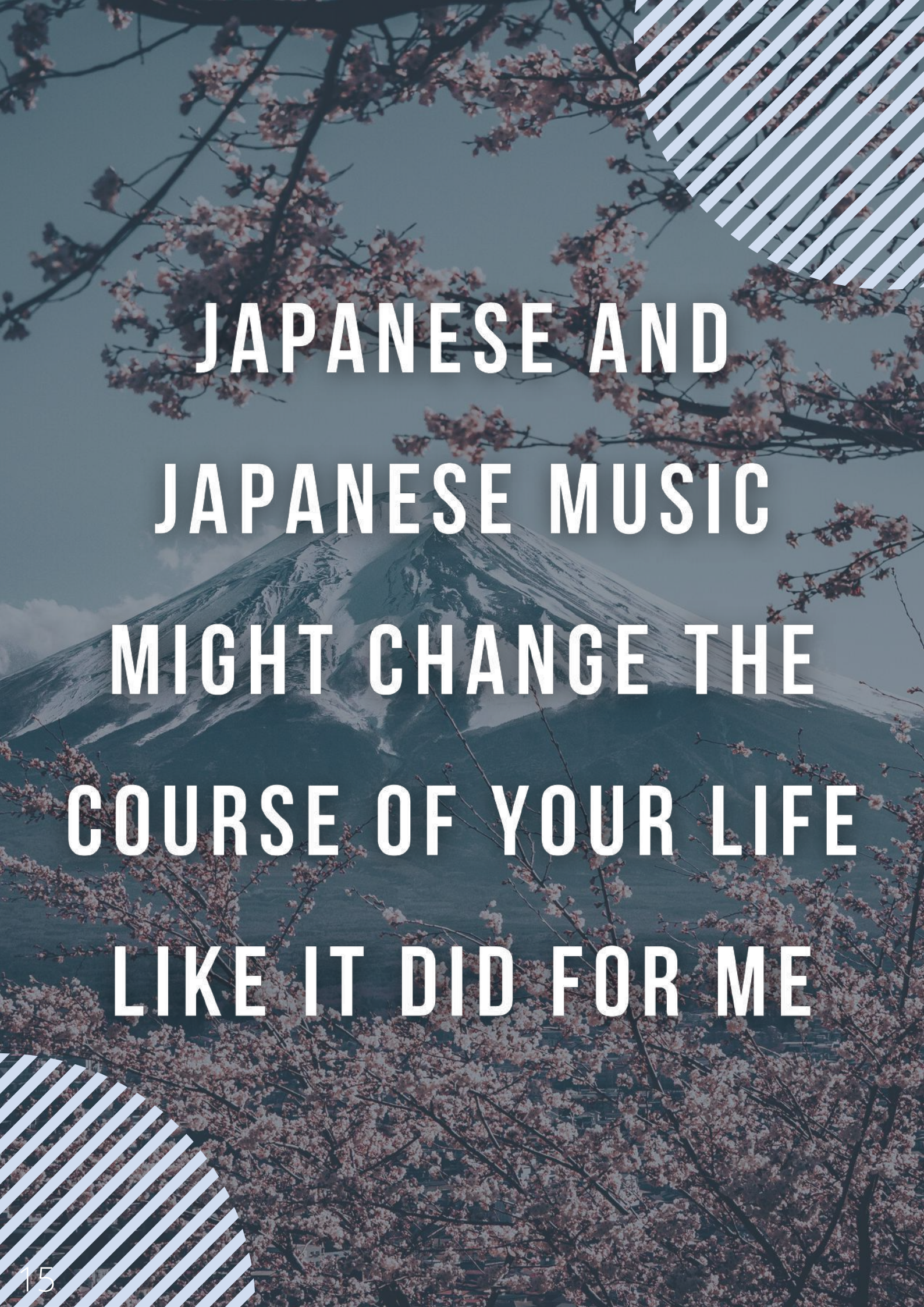
I learned that development of Western music in Japan started as early as the late 1800s, when Japan was looking to take the best bits from the rest of the world in its attempts to modernise. One of those things was music. A lot of the music that they studied and taught was western music, which inspired people as children and then later when they were composing. Since then, different styles of western music have had an influence, particularly during the post-war period. When Japan was occupied, American music became very popular; jazz and then rock-and-roll grew. But, in the same way that Japan has taken elements from western culture in other areas, it kept a Japanese core to what it was doing. It generated something new from these ideas of Western and Japanese ideas put together. Jazz cafes – essentially a cafe where you can listen to jazz – were really popular in the 50s, especially among students and younger people.

"JAPANESE MUSIC GENERATED SOMETHING NEW FROM WESTERN AND JAPANESE IDEAS PUT TOGETHER."

In terms of instruments, the **shamisen** (三味線) - a string instrument with a long neck, kind of like a guitar or a banjo – interests me. When I lived in Kyoto, there was a busker who used to play in the city centre, and he played the **shamisen**. I always thought he was really cool and thought, "I would love to learn to play that". Hopefully when I do get on my year abroad later this year, I might be able to have a go at learning that.

There's also the **koto** (琴). It's associated with the sound of Japanese music - I think anyone would recognise the sound of it, even if they didn't recognise what it looked like. It's a long wooden board with a lot of strings on it and it's played sitting down.

I guess one of the most important things with Japanese and Japanese music is to give things a go. It's all well and good looking at something and thinking, "Oh, maybe I'll be interested in that, not sure". **If you get the opportunity or get the time, just give it a go. It might not work out, but it might change the course of your life like it did for me. If you've got any sort of interest, give it a try!**



**JAPANESE AND
JAPANESE MUSIC
MIGHT CHANGE THE
COURSE OF YOUR LIFE
LIKE IT DID FOR ME**

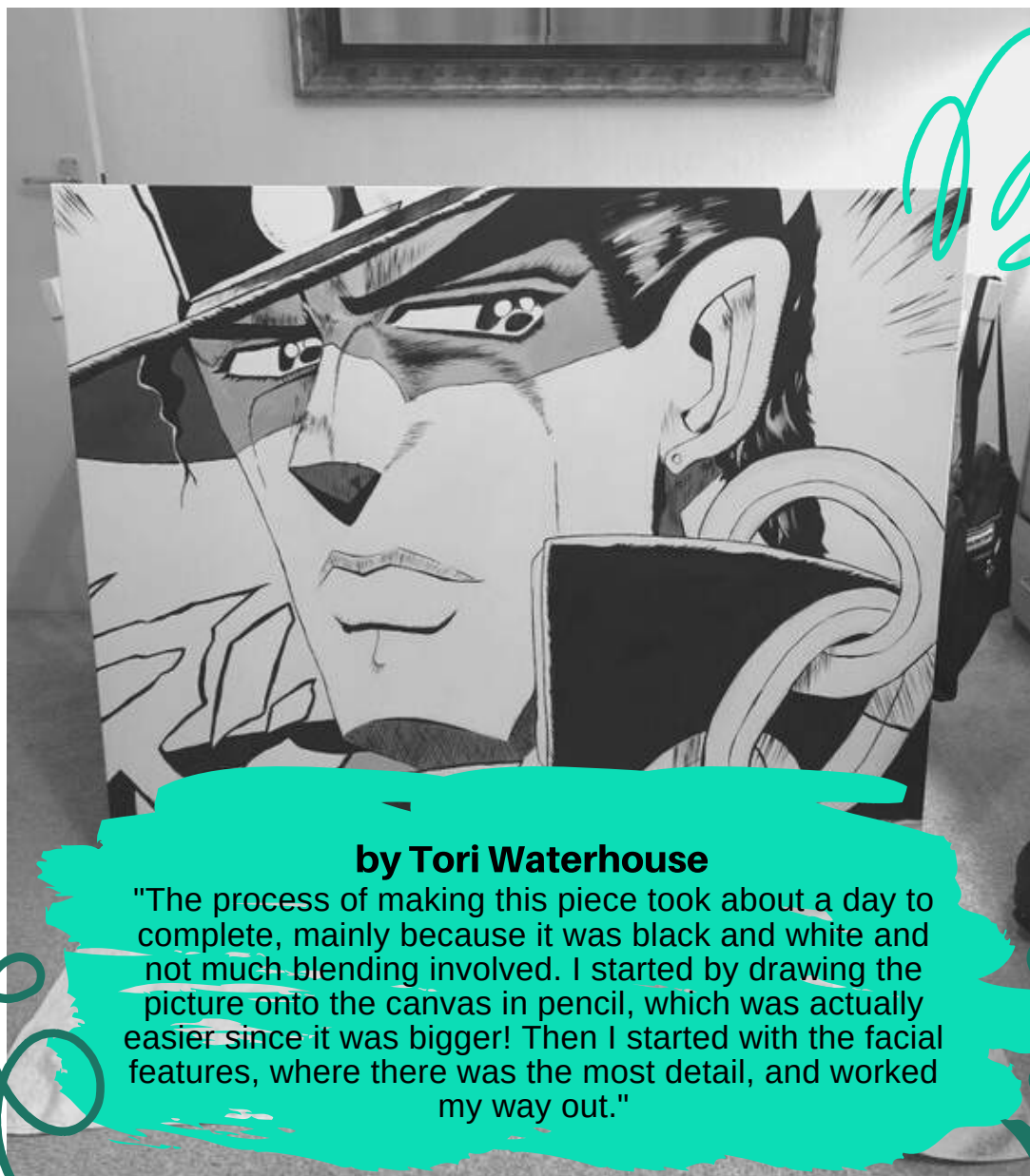
speaking manganese



Anna guides us
through her massive
manga collection

inspired by *JoJo's Bizarre Adventure* by Hirohiko Araki

STARDUST CRUSADERS



by **Tori Waterhouse**

"The process of making this piece took about a day to complete, mainly because it was black and white and not much blending involved. I started by drawing the picture onto the canvas in pencil, which was actually easier since it was bigger! Then I started with the facial features, where there was the most detail, and worked my way out."

Anna Rawcliffe

Originally, manga was published in black and white as it made the products cheaper. In Japan, the weekly chapter publishing magazines are printed on very cheap and flimsy paper – sometimes recycled. Sometimes they want to create a nicer, solid book version for the copies that people actually keep, because people tend to throw away the magazines. The problem is, series like *Naruto* and *One Piece* span over 60 volumes, and the price would skyrocket if every book had an ink colouring. Sometimes publishers will make a limited collection of hardcover versions of manga.

Other features that make manga unique are the prevalence of large eyes and the expressiveness of characters. Although similar styles can be found in French comics, manga has a unique style made from cutting out sheets of shading with all kinds of patterns on them and sticking them onto the page, called **screeentone**. This style is sometimes used in anime, as well, to give it a certain “mangaesque” style.



It used to be very difficult to obtain manga, but now places like Waterstones generally have at least a shelf - if not two shelves - full of manga. You should also remember that you can order books in a bookstore; you can go up to the counter and ask them, "Hello, can I order this?" Otherwise, the internet is your best friend for buying manga. Bookstores often have online websites where you can find them, and online legal streaming services like Crunchyroll have free anime. In Japan, they have a second-hand chain of bookstores. As the books are second-hand, you can get them for very low prices. There are also places like Animate, which sell not only the books, but also items and collectibles. Often, there are bonuses for newer purchases!

A friend of mine in my first year of middle school introduced me to manga and taught me that a cartoon I was watching was an anime. When you first watch cartoons, you don't really care about what country it comes from, but **then I discovered, "Oh, this is from Japan!" and then I realised that other things I liked were also from Japan.** In the 1990s, it was common in France to have anime on TV. Over time, it began to appear on normal cartoon networks. Through reading manga, I discovered Japanese culture.


I wouldn't say that manga is really that different from Western comic books, but you can generally recognise them when you see them sold in a comic book store alongside French and American comics. The reading direction - from right to left - is very confusing for people at first. They're also a different size and they're usually only in black and white, which means you have to invent the colour for yourself.

You can find stories for absolutely everything in manga: if you like volleyball, you've got one about volleyball; if you want one about horse racing, you've got one about horse racing. You can have all the sports, all the niche and specific hobbies. Then there's also the huge variety of romance, adventure, action. I have a goal of keeping myself very open to all genres, as I want to experience the diversity of manga.

Sometimes it's not a good idea to use manga and anime to learn which situation each Japanese word and grammar point are useful in, but there are a lot of free resources online, like videos and study book advice, to get you started. Watching anime and reading manga is definitely a way to start motivating your Japanese learning: you watch and read it and think, "Oh, I've learned this word, but I'd like to learn more!" They give you a good feel for the language.

Anna's real manga collection!



The background is a blurred image of a manga store. Shelves filled with manga books are visible, with some titles like 'New Kanji Favorites' partially legible. A teal-colored rounded rectangle is centered on the page, containing white text. There are also teal-colored splatter effects on the left and right sides of the teal box.

**YOU CAN FIND
STORIES FOR
ABSOLUTELY
EVERYTHING
IN MANGA**



UEA IN JAPAN

EX-UEA STUDENTS
DAYNA AND LUCY CHAT
WITH HARRY ABOUT
JAPAN, JET, AND
LIVING IN INAKA

DAYNA

"THERE IS SOMETHING DIFFERENT ABOUT READING SOMETHING IN ITS ORIGINAL LANGUAGE"

Did you do a year abroad in Japan?

I did a year abroad in Japan and studied in Tokyo. It was a really great experience, but because I'm from London, I didn't find Tokyo to be particularly different.

They're both quite metropolitan cities, right?

Oh, definitely. The only difference is that Tokyo's weather is nicer than London - less grey!

What university did you go to?

I went to 学習院大学 (Gakushuin University). It's the one affiliated with the emperor and his family, so it was quite a conservative university in comparison with other universities. It was a really great experience.

What were some of the things you studied?

At my university, exchange students only studied Japanese language. Because of the university being so small, they didn't have a lot of additional courses that you could take. You were kind of stuck with Japanese language, but you could take it at beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels. If your level was good enough, you could take other classes, too, so I ended up taking a theatre class!



Did you put on any shows?

No I didn't, but they brought in a traditional Japanese instrument called a **shakuhachi** (尺八) and I fell asleep during the performance! A **shakuhachi** is a traditional woodwind Japanese instrument. Coincidentally, when I lived in Hokkaido, I ended up doing a translation about the **shakuhachi** - I just can't escape this instrument!

What was Hokkaido like? Did you go up to visit there?

I lived in Hokkaido from 2018 to 2020. I was on the JET (Japan Exchange and Teaching) programme as an Assistant Language Teacher. I loved the JET programme and would recommend it to anyone looking to get some real life experience living in Japan outside of being a student, because I think student life and working life are really different. I lived in a really small town - a place on the coast with less than 10,000 people called Yoichi. It was a fantastic experience. Hokkaido is a very special place.

What are some of the key differences between Tokyo and Hokkaido?

One of the biggest differences is that Hokkaido is huge. It's a big slab of land right at the top of Japan.

It's not even connected to Honshuu by land - it's a separate island. There are lots of untouched areas: you get this really beautiful lush forestry, as well as mountainous areas that look like you've gone into a fairy tale. It's a really beautiful place. The population is a lot smaller, as well, which makes the relationships you make much more personalised. People who are from the countryside are very welcoming.

Do you have a preference between the two? I'm detecting Hokkaido.

I think my preference for Hokkaido comes from the fact that I actually lived in Hokkaido. In Tokyo, I just did a year abroad, which is not necessarily the same as living, working, paying taxes, using the city hall, xyz. Also, you can't beat Hokkaido food!

Can you give a brief explanation of the JET programme?

The JET programme is an opportunity for students - you don't have to study Japanese at all. I met other JETs who had no affiliation with Japan - they were just interested in the country. The objective is to foster intercultural exchange between the UK and Japan.



**"HOKKAIDO LOOKS
LIKE YOU'VE GONE
INTO A FAIRY TALE"**

There are two roles you can take: ALT (Assistant Language Teacher), which is what I was. It's where you get put in to a school and you teach English. Or you can be a CIR, which is a Coordinator for International Relations. As a CIR, you're expected to have a working proficiency in Japanese. The reason why people tend not to go for it straight out of university is that they don't have a lot of confidence. The route that people sometimes take is to become an ALT and then transfer to CIR when they're already in Japan and once they've built up their confidence with daily life. I think being in a classroom vs. actually being out and about and using a language is quite different. It's a really fantastic opportunity. I stayed for 2 years and came back in August. I miss it terribly!

Back on being abroad in Japan, what were a couple of unique experiences?


Going to karaoke in Hokkaido - this small karaoke place. It was so narrow, it was like a crooked house. This is in my small town of Yoichi, so this is a local spot. We would all be singing all night long - it was such a unique experience. Sometimes, when I'm feeling particularly nostalgic, I look back at videos I've taken. There was one song in particular by Morning Musume called "Love Revolution 21".

We took a group trip to Hakone, which is just outside of Tokyo. It's known for its **onsen** (hot spring), which is really beautiful. We climbed up to this shrine and it was one of the most interesting experiences I had, because it was the first time I had actually gone to a shrine. It was really breath-taking to see how beautiful and big they are, and also how many steps you have to climb to get to the top of them. Goodness me! I was at the top and thought, "you know what - if someone pushes me I'm gonna fall all the way back down these stairs." One of the great things about shrines is that they're often tucked away, so you get this most amazing greenery and beautiful environment around you, and quite a quaint, almost melancholic feeling.

What got you into studying Japanese?

Can't deny my roots: I was obsessed with **Sailor Moon** as a child. As I got older, I became interested in Japanese literature, especially Yoshimoto Banana. She is fantastic! That prompted me to want to read texts as they were written rather than a translated version. I can appreciate the skill of translation now having gone through the process of learning a second language at university, but there is something different about reading something in its original language. The nuances and everything are really quite beautiful. It's really lovely when you when you're at the level to be able to do that.





**"THERE'S SO
MUCH YOU
CAN UNLOCK
FROM BEING
ABLE TO
SPEAK A
LANGUAGE"**



LUCY

"THERE'S MORE OF A CULTURE FOR FESTIVALS HERE IN JAPAN"

How did you get onto the JET programme?

I wanted to continue my Japanese studies and I thought it would be good to get some experience working in Japan. I asked some of the teachers and they recommended the JET programme. It's very prestigious, so I thought it would be a good idea.

Did you go on a year abroad?

Yeah, I did. I went to Akita International University. It's very rural - lots of rice fields and forests, which is a complete contrast to where I live now in Osaka. Akita was completely surreal. I can't really compare it to anywhere in the UK because it was literally just forests for miles and not much else. It's nothing like I've experienced in the UK.

What's Osaka been like?

I really love being here! I can't drive, which is a problem I had in Akita because I wanted to go places and I couldn't drive there. In Osaka, there are trains everywhere, so I can go anywhere within Osaka and also to Kyoto and Nara because I live close. I love it; I like living in the city. Compared to Tokyo, people say that Osaka is rougher, maybe less polished? I can kind of see that - you can tell that Osaka developed from a market city and has expanded. There are lots of small shops and small places to visit, which feels a bit more local. Compared to the UK, I think Osaka is more urban - in particular, compared to the very historical European feel of London, this has a very historical Japanese feel.



Are there any festivals that you'd like to go to or have been to?

My favourite so far that I've been to is called **Danjiri Festival**, celebrated in Kansai and mostly in Osaka. It involves lots of people pulling this giant wooden cart with ropes, which is a shrine. On this shrine, there are maybe four or five people, dancing or playing the drums. That was really amazing: about a month or two before the festival, we'd been practicing playing the drums. On the day, I was pulling this cart for hours, so I was very sore the next day!

Japan's festivals seem quite different to the UK's festivals.

I think Japanese festivals tend to have a particular feel to them: there are certain foods to eat and they happen at certain times of the year. There are more seasonal events than we have in the UK. I tended to come across festivals somewhat randomly and take part in them. Like, some stalls set up across the streets and people dancing with music playing. I think there's more of a culture for festivals here, both small and huge ones, with lots of food and dancing and having fun.

I don't know if those reading are aware of the idea of regional dialects in Japanese, the Kansai dialect in particular. What's different about them in comparison to standard Japanese?

When I first got here, I did not understand **Kansai-ben**. People around me would be

talking and I'd think, "Do I just not understand Japanese?" I understand it a little better now, especially the intonation of words. For example, in Japanese thank you is **arigatou**, but in Kansai they tend to say **arigaTOU**, with the emphasis on the **tou**. People from outside of Kansai can see the dialect as kind of rough, friendly, and very casual. It's quite different to standard Japanese.

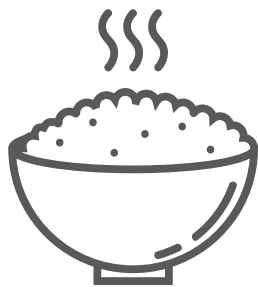
Is your plan to continue living in Japan for the foreseeable future or do you have goals to come back to England for a bit?

I'm actually coming back to the UK this summer. I spent one year in Akita, and by the end of this summer, I will have spent two years in Osaka. I would like to stay here longer, but I also really want to go back and see my family. I can always come back and enjoy things I wanted to more, like festivals.

For someone reading the brochure who potentially has an interest in Japanese but isn't sure, do you have anything you would say to encourage them?

Studying a language is really rewarding and there's so much you can unlock from being able to speak the language, so much culture you can get in to. I think Japanese culture is so different from our own in that you're constantly learning new things. If you have an interest in studying the Japanese language and culture, then I would highly recommend it. I think it's extremely rewarding.

ITADAKIMASU!



**TOM
SHARES HIS
EXPERIENCE
AS A VEGAN
IN JAPAN**



"THERE ARE VEGAN-SPECIFIC RESTAURANTS THAT LIST HOW TO SAY 'NO EGGS PLEASE' OR 'NO MILK PLEASE'"



食
food

I've been vegan for about five years now and when I went to Japan, to the best of my knowledge, I stuck to being vegan. To start off with, finding food to eat in shops, places like コンビニ (conbini - convenience stores) goes one of two ways. If I see an apple, I know it's an apple and I can eat it, but when it comes to processed food and trying to figure out the ingredients of products, it can be a little bit trickier. I used the Google Translate app: you can use the camera to look over the text, basically like augmented reality, and it shows you the translation - though at the time, it was semi-reliable.

When I went to Japan, I looked up restaurants that I knew were completely vegan-specific restaurants. I was already aware that veganism is not a very popular dietary choice in Japan. I made a list on Google Maps and I had the locations of restaurants that I'd like to visit. We didn't completely plan our day around the restaurants: we were happy to just travel

around, knowing that there were places to eat as security. That being said, this was in 2017. Even worldwide, veganism has grown a lot; if I do a quick search online, I've found over forty vegan-specific restaurants in Kyoto alone. There's plenty of choice - in Tokyo, I found nearly thirty. It's not on every street corner, but you're not going to have to travel for hours.

There are vegan specific restaurants that list how to say "no eggs please" or "no milk please". You can try and read it to the person or just show them the image - just point at it and be like "ビーガンです" (beegan desu).

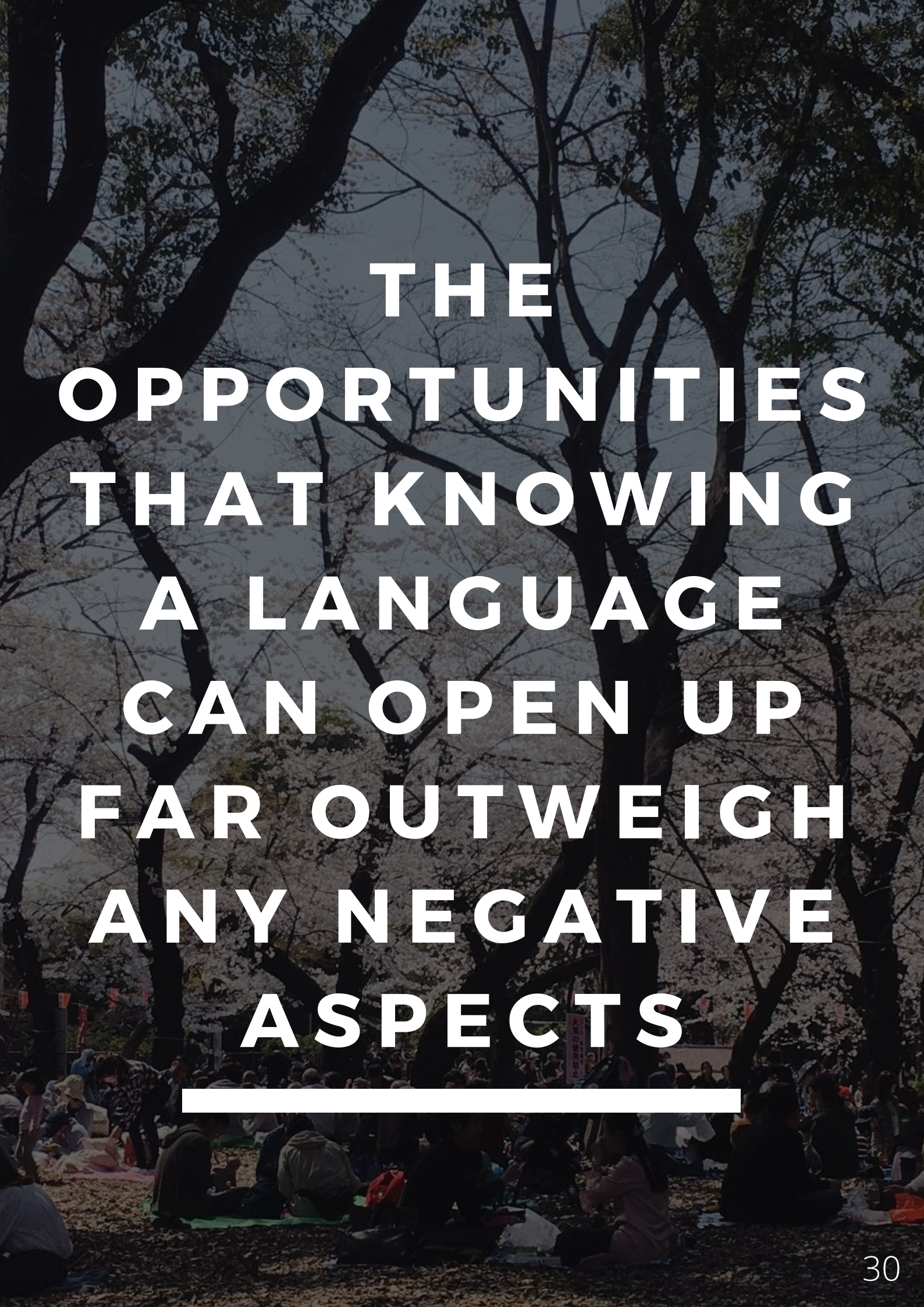
There's apps you can use, not just for Japanese, that have multiple languages for all over the world. If you're going to a restaurant that's not vegan specific, it's going to be hard. A lot of Japanese food traditionally uses animal products. However, there's a website called "Happy Cow", which is basically like a Google search engine. You can search for vegan and vegetarian restaurants, and ones that have options even if they're not vegan or vegetarian.

They're colour-coded and there are also convenience and health food shops. You can use it to search where you are, and even download the app which allows you to use directions like Google Maps. You can also use it to get photos of the food and reviews.

There's a restaurant chain that I went to called "Ripple". The one I went to was in Kabukicho in Tokyo. They did vegan burgers, chips - the usual stuff you'd get in a vegan restaurant in the West. I would absolutely recommend that brand to people. The only reason I wouldn't recommend the actual Kabukicho one is because - breaking news - I looked it up today and it's closed now! The good news is that they have other chains in Ginza and Kyoto.

In terms of Japanese cuisine, in Tokyo Station there's a vegan ramen shop called "Veggie Ramen". They do some of the best ramen I've ever had in my life. I went back three times on the whole trip. It was so, so good! They also sell stuff to takeaway: you can buy cup noodles there which are vegan. I can tell you from experience, that's a rarity. You would think that a basic miso soup from a conbini would be vegan, but it's not. It's got dashi (stock, often fish) in it. There's also a burger chain called "Mos Burger" which does a soya-based burger - at least, they probably did when I went, but I wasn't confident enough to ask about ingredients.





**THE
OPPORTUNITIES
THAT KNOWING
A LANGUAGE
CAN OPEN UP
FAR OUTWEIGH
ANY NEGATIVE
ASPECTS**

Now that I understand Japanese a bit better, I think I'd find ordering vegan food a lot easier. If you're thinking about picking up Japanese, stop thinking about it and do it! Learning a language is fantastic. **The opportunities that knowing a language can open up to someone far outweigh any negative aspects.** I would suggest getting a couple of textbooks and starting there. Learn grammar, as well as learn hiragana and katakana. Don't try and do all the kanji straight away! Finally, absorb material: watch TV programmes with Japanese audio and English subtitles. Immerse yourself in the content and, when you get a bit more comfortable, change the subtitles to Japanese. **You may only understand about 10%, but that 10% is the building block for going further.**

**"IF YOU'RE THINKING
ABOUT PICKING UP
JAPANESE, STOP
THINKING ABOUT IT
AND DO IT!"**



Tom's vegan burger!



JAPAN UNFOLDED

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
STUDENT BEN HARRIS
SHARES HIS KNOWLEDGE OF
JAPANESE POLITICS AND
HISTORY

DID YOU KNOW?
JAPAN IS MADE UP OF OVER 6000
ISLANDS, WITH THE LARGEST
BEING HOKKAIDO, HONSHU,
SHIKOKU, AND KYUSHU

In my first semester of this year, I managed to do a module called ***Japan in Modern Times***, which looked at Japan in a historical context from 1600 to 1867. As a passionate lover of history, I love Japanese history because it is so interesting; there are so many twists and turns and nation-building.

The period system in Japan is akin to that of the era system in England, for example the Elizabethan period and Victorian period. Instead of monarchy, however, it's more generalised: you have the ***Tokugawa Jidai*** (徳川時代), the ***Edo Jidai*** (江戸時代), the ***Sengoku Jidai*** (戦国時代). Eras give a more general idea of what was happening in the country at the time.

**"I LOVE JAPANESE HISTORY BECAUSE IT IS SO
INTERESTING; THERE ARE SO MANY TWISTS AND
TURNS AND NATION-BUILDING"**



EARLY JAPAN
(UNTIL 710)

KAMAKURA
PERIOD
(1192-1333)

AZUCHI-MOMOYAMA
PERIOD
(1573-1603)

NARA &
HEIAN PERIODS
(710-1192)

MUROMACHI
PERIOD
(1338-1573)



Japan's current era is **Reiwa** (令和), which means lasting peace or new peace. The current emperor is Emperor Naruhito. The previous emperor, Emperor Akihito, abdicated in 2019. As he couldn't do his duties anymore, he passed it on to his son. Emperor Akihito had previously succeeded his father, the well-known Emperor Hirohito, who was the emperor during World War II.

It's unusual for the emperor to step down. Japan is similar to the UK in that they usually die rather than abdicate their duties. Emperor Akihito stepping down was a change in tradition.

As for areas of Japanese history that interest me, I don't know where to start! Something I find interesting is that the imperial family of Japan has had an uninterrupted bloodline since 550 B.C. - which is, give or take, 1500 years more than the current royal family of the UK. In terms of history, it puts it in perspective.

Another thing is that Japanese history is very characterised by periods. For example in the Edo Jidai, Tokugawa, who was the **shogun** at the time, shut the country in a self-imposed exile of foreign policy known as **sakoku** (鎖国), the closed edict. Japan was very isolated in that period: there were some foreign influences, but it's very interesting to see an unusual foreign policy that was so anti-outsiders.

You may have heard of the terms **samurai** and **ninja**. The best way to describe **samurai** is that they were military retainers of feudal lords. In the feudal system, you have a service to your lord and you serve him. By retainer, I mean that they held land for their feudal lord and they looked after it for them. The key image that comes to mind when you think samurai is that of a warrior, which they eventually did become once conflict became more widespread in Japan. They would defend their lords and their land out of loyalty to their clan or their lord.





EDO
PERIOD
(1603-1868)

TAISHO
PERIOD
(1912-1926)

HEISEI
PERIOD
(1989-2019)

MEIJI
PERIOD
(1868-1912)

SHOWA
PERIOD
(1926-1989)

REIWA
PERIOD
(2019-)



In terms of ninja, contrary to popular belief, they didn't wear black! They were more akin to wear a dark blue to blend into the night sky. They were very common during **Sengoku Jidai** and in areas with political turmoil in Japan. You had lots of Machiavellian politics going about and a power vacuum emerged, with various clans vying for control. There's a really good Netflix show at the moment called **Age of Samurai**. It's got multiple academic sources with drama in the background. I would really recommend that.

On my year abroad in Japan, I'm going to Tohoku University in Sendai in east Japan. The city is known for the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake (東日本大震災). It's a very beautiful and interesting area historically, and it's different to Tokyo. I've been to Tokyo and it's a lovely city - very big and metropolitan - but I just wanted something different. Sendai was the domain of Date Masamune. In **Sengoku Jidai**, he was a very cool samurai with an eye-patch.

I chose to study Japanese history from my own interest and by no means did I take a course outside of school on it. The library UEA has to offer has been really useful - even if you're not taking a subject, you can still have access to those resources and fill your own interest in a subject. Before I took the Japanese history module in second year, I picked up a few books recommended by the module leader and my interest grew from there.

For history, particularly Japanese history, if you type in "history of Japan books online", more than enough results come up. There are different ones, different accounts. I quite like historical fiction - history books can be quite heavy, so if you do it through a fictionalised setting in a historical background, it can be less heavy than a textbook, for example the book called, **Shogun**. Also, try searching through YouTube. There's plenty of historical, short, fun ways to learn Japanese history there.

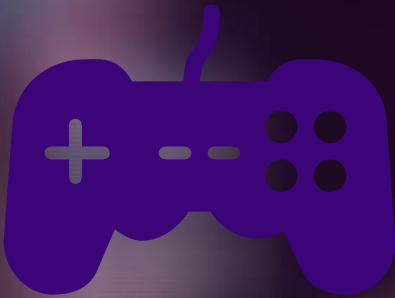


HOW TO STUDY JAPANESE

(ACCORDING TO US)

1

Apps are the best for someone starting fresh. **Memrise**, **Duolingo**, and **Kanji Tree** are free to use. They help you to gain a solid foothold in the language.



2

Pick up a **textbook**! **Japanese for Young People** and **Marugoto** are great places to start, as they guide you into the grammar, writing style, and vocabulary.

3

If you know anyone else who's interested in Japanese, **study with them**. Being able to practice, even just basic conversations, can be a huge boost to your confidence.



4

Watching **anime** and listening to Japanese **music** can be a great way to stay motivated and pick up on pronunciation. Sometimes you'll even start to recognise words!

JAPONISME

The background image shows two geishas in a traditional Japanese garden. They are wearing elaborate, colorful kimonos with floral patterns. One geisha is holding a large, patterned parasol. The scene is set outdoors with trees and a building in the background. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent purple filter.

UEA STUDENT
LYDIA WOODING
DISCUSSES THEIR
ORIGINAL JAPANESE
ART TRIBUTE
TO GEISHA

REBORN

季節 SEASONS



LYDIA WOODING

I've never really named any of my artwork before, but in this case I went for something simple: the Japanese word 季節 (kisetsu), which means seasons. I created four separate pieces of artwork meant to be displayed together, each representing different seasons. The thinking for that came from the knowledge that Japanese culture really loves nature, particularly the seasons, how they change, and how Japanese people really appreciate the beauty in the world around them. Every season I feel shows itself in such an extreme way.

I used a lot of references for materials, poses, all from Pinterest. One of my favourite things to research was the Geisha hairstyles because they change over time. I had a load of different Geisha hairstyles that I enjoyed looking at. I looked at other previous artworks and how they were posed, things they were holding, and based it off of that. The hairstyles changed quite a lot actually, always going backward or to the side, but it was always really intricate. It must weigh so much and be really heavy to carry around on your head all day. But it looks good!

春 (HARU)

I have a big interest in Geishas. There's a lot of misconceptions from outsiders about what role they played in society. You get media that portrays them a bit differently as well, like the *Memoirs of a Geisha* film, and that put some negativity on the role as well. They were performers, they learned hosting skills, and they were basically the embodiment of what Japanese culture considered femininity, elegance, and poise to be. They represented something so much bigger than themselves, and they were skilled! They were really good at talking and they were hired to help conversations go smoothly and to host really well.

SPRING

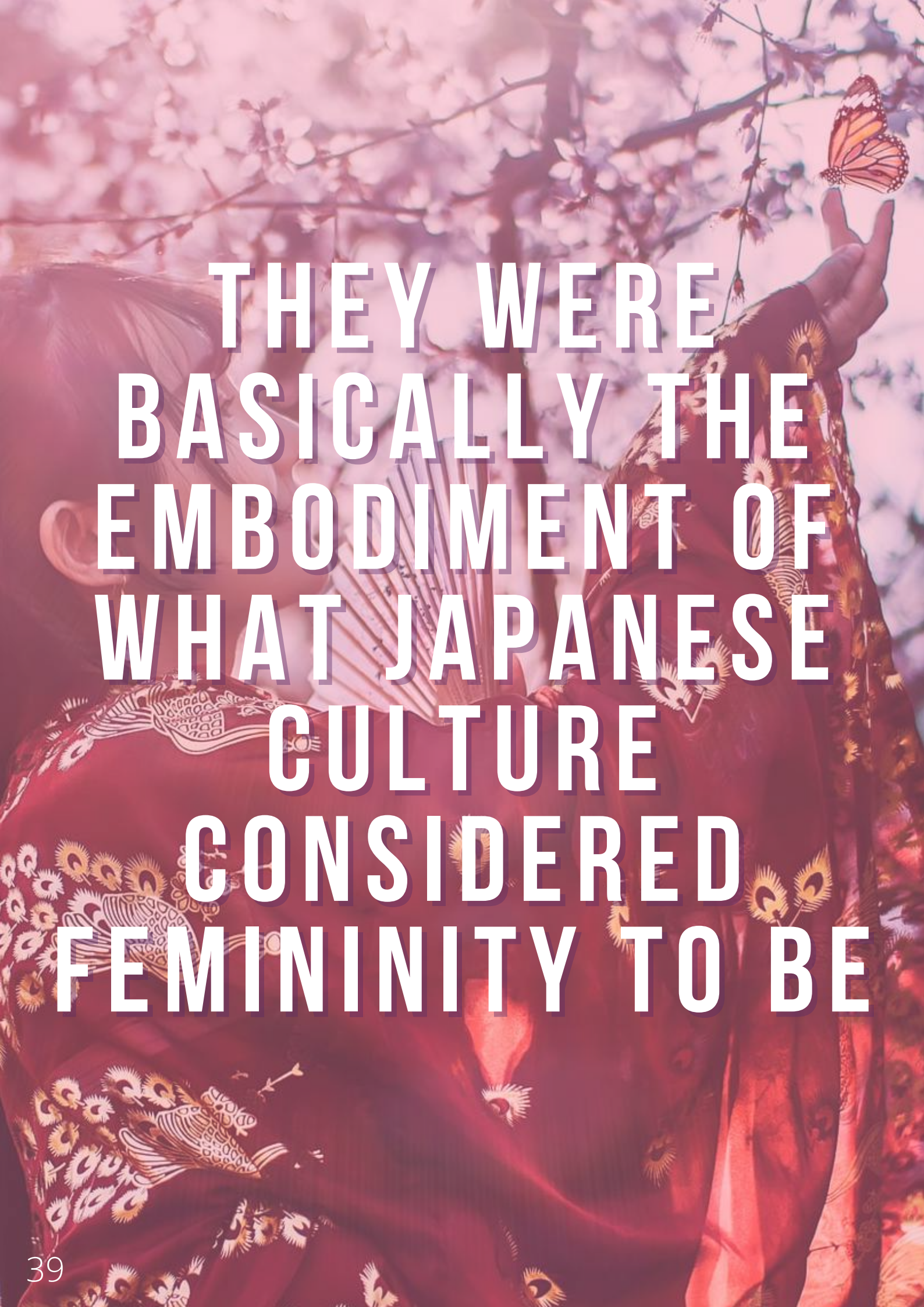


夏 (SUMMER)

I wanted to show them doing those skills that they learned, so each one is doing something different in each picture. I wanted to show them doing the skills that they train their whole lives doing. I would love to try on a kimono, but I'm not sure I have the hair or the capacity to pull off a Geisha hairstyle. I think the best place to do that would probably be Kyoto, just because they're so traditional and they're really big on tourists coming and experiencing their culture. You can rent a kimono for a day and just go around in it then return it at the end of the day.

SUMMER





**THEY WERE
BASICALLY THE
EMBODIMENT OF
WHAT JAPANESE
CULTURE
CONSIDERED
FEMININITY TO BE**



AUTUMN

秋 (AUTUMN)

I've been drawing for as long as I can remember. Japanese art is quite specific. I attended a few guest lecturers that came to the UEA, specifically on Okinawan art – which, again, is almost a whole different kettle of fish. “Kettle of fish”, is that good? I've said it now. Japan gets such great landscapes and I'm not actually that good at landscapes, so maybe it'd be good to practice on my year abroad! Calligraphy might also be something very interesting to do.

冬 (WINTER)

What is calligraphy? If you look at the old scrolls of English writing, they've got this really fancy lettering. I think it's quite similar to Japanese. There's a really specific art style in the way they do lettering with a special brush and ink. It's just really focused: “Stroke order, this is a flick, this is a swoosh, that's the dot.” It's very difficult and it takes a lot of practice to get it looking properly done.

WINTER



In terms of inspiration for the art, there are a lot of patterns in Japanese art. It comes up on their kimonos, as well. That was really difficult to replicate at times. When you're researching Japanese patterns, it really quickly goes into Chinese patterns, and you have to be really careful to make sure you're not looking at the wrong country's artwork. They can be quite similar at times, but you have to be like, "That's a Japanese dragon, that's a Chinese dragon. Don't want to mix those up."

At first, what got me in to Japanese was anime.

Then I got to a point where I thought, "I don't actually know what Japan's like, or it's just my misconception of what the culture is like from what I've seen". So I went out there to see and I just fell in love with the country. I was in a whole other world. It was incredible; I was in my element. I just loved everything about the country and the people and I thought, "I need to be out here, so I'm going to learn the language to help me better understand this place." Understanding the language will help you understand the culture, because you get to interact with the people and understand where they're coming from.



KANJI QUIZ

TEST YOUR
KNOWLEDGE!

CAN YOU FIND THE MEANING
FOR THE FOLLOWING KANJI
HIDDEN THROUGHOUT THE
BROCHURE?

火 学 光

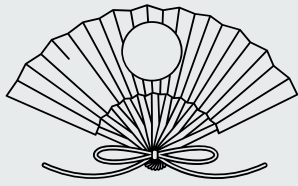
歌 食 国

黑 白 花

DOUGHNUTS OR RICE BALLS?

HARRY AND SOPHIE DEBATE
THIS AGE-OLD QUESTION
AS THEY LOOK BACK ON
CREATING THE BROCHURE





MAKING THE BROCHURE

Harry: Are there any highlights so far from the brochure? Anything anyone's said that stood out to you?

Sophie: Charlotte's squash fact about it being really expensive in Japan. I remember in the study abroad talks, they talked about it being really hard to get roll-on deodorant, things like that.

Harry: They were like, "Make sure you take loads of tea and biscuits, because you're not going to get any while you're there!" I think mine's probably talking to Ben about history. I'm always really impressed by how much he knows. That and Sam's music video!

Sophie: I had that on repeat that morning. Had you heard it before, the Takeda Lullaby?

Harry: That was the first time I heard it.

Sophie: It's in *Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt*. That's how I know it.

Harry: I've asked everyone I talked to what got them in to Japanese. What was that for you?

Sophie: It's probably got to be anime, like most people. I loved anime in primary school, I loved it in lower high school. It kind of became a stigma when I was in about Year 9, when a lot of people learned about it. Until then it had been quite niche. When I got to university, I started getting back into the games and the music especially. What about you?

Harry: It's unfortunate because there's that stigma of, if you like Japanese culture in a lot of ways you're a "weeb". **What I like about doing a university course for Japanese is that I'm among people who don't think that way. Just enjoy - you don't have to feel bad for it.**

In high school, I liked anime then moved on to sixth form and college. I got into a lot of Japanese video games and got quite interested in translation. **I remember reading up about why certain things are translated the way they are, why words are brought over.** In Japanese, there are a lot of words that don't have an English equivalent, so the subtitles aren't a literal translation. The translators had to come up with something to fit. I got really interested in that and why they make those decisions. I've seen people on the internet get mad because a certain word isn't translated literally, even though it doesn't fit! **It's just the nature of the language.**

Sophie: Video games aren't just translation, it's localisation as well. **You have to match the culture.** We study that quite a lot at the UEA.

Harry: Yeah, the classic *Pokémon* one where they're eating a rice ball and they're calling it doughnuts.

Sophie: If they translated that now, would they still call it a doughnut? Or do you think enough people know what onigiri is or rice balls are that they could just say "rice ball"?

Harry: That's one of the benefits of how prevalent the internet has become is. If I was watching a show and they went, "let's eat some rice balls", I might not know what they are and might look it up because I can.

STUDYING JAPANESE

Harry: Lots of people are going to be reading the brochure who might not have even thought about doing Japanese. Do you have anything you'd want to say to someone who's interested?

Sophie: A lot of the time in school you study French, Spanish, or German. **Many people don't have any grounding in languages like Chinese or Japanese. I think it's a stigma as well that Japanese is seen as quite difficult as a language with different characters.** I found Japanese a lot easier than Chinese to learn. If you are thinking of starting a unique language that's different to French/Spanish/German then I would recommend Japanese because of that. It's easier to pick up. Also, there are a lot of resources online because of the popularity of Japanese and anime. **They say it's a stigma, that you shouldn't learn Japanese because of anime, but just ignore that. That's part of what gets you liking a language.**

Harry: My academic background is not language. I did not particularly enjoy French or Spanish in school. A common thread that I've found when talking to people is that the **UEA offers a unique experience. They offer Japanese at a level where you can come in** and not have necessarily learnt it. I did some self-study prior to joining but it wasn't much, and I was able to come on and do the degree and it's at a level where I can keep up with everyone else.

Sophie: Yeah, you don't necessarily have to have done any work before. I know I said I did Chinese but really, that only translated a little bit into Japanese. When I started at the UEA, I was a week late and I had no practice whatsoever. I didn't even know there were three alphabets! But I went back to my room, I studied those alphabets, and I received a lot of support in catching up from Mika-sensei. **By the end of first year I felt like I'd always been there.**

Harry: Thankfully there's a lot of really good support at the UEA for it. Our lecturers have been excellent at helping us out.

Sophie: You did a foundation year, didn't you?

Harry: Yeah, I did a foundation year. I'd been doing an apprenticeship in social media and so I hadn't been in academia for a while. They offered me the foundation course, which gave me a year of learning to get me prepared to go on to do the rest of the degree. Foundation year feels like it's described as "not university", but it is. I was living in dorms, doing university modules, stuff like that. Even then, a lot of people came onto our course who hadn't studied any Japanese at all. You are being built up to learn Japanese: it's not like you have to come in and know every single word and 1500 kanji and all the alphabets and pitch accent perfectly. **The idea of a Japanese degree sounds intimidating, but it's actually not! There's a lot of support.**



ALL-YOU-CAN-EAT

Harry: What are you most looking forward to on your year abroad?

Sophie: This is probably going to sound really cheesy, but I am looking forward to the modules offered at the university. It was my main reason for picking it. I really liked the university because the cultural stuff is optional, so if I wanted to do ikebana I could go along to a session and try it out rather than having to do it week in, week out. I'm really interested in the history of samurai and the history of kimono, and how the structure of Japanese language. What about you?

Harry: You're a better student than me, I was just going to say food! I've never been to an East Asian country. I think it's going to be a really interesting experience. I've been elsewhere - European countries and America once - but Japan is so different that I'm just looking forward to getting off the plane and being like, "Gee, I'm in a different country!"

Sophie: You're going to get off the plane and go straight into a restaurant.

Harry: "Sir, please stop eating our food." "No!"

Sophie: That'll be your whole year abroad: in one restaurant, never leaving.



WEATHER FORECAST

Sophie: How are you feeling about the weather?

Harry: We're meant to be going around September. Someone I spoke to mentioned that Japan has the four seasons, unlike the UK. I think it'll be quite nice because Japan's a really beautiful country, and you've got the cherry blossoms in spring and snowy winters in places like Hokkaido. I'd love to go up to up to Hokkaido in the winter. I know that'd be freezing but I'd love to have a look.

Sophie: Go in February for the snow festival in Sapporo.

Harry: Ah that'd be nice. I'm interested in the weather. There's also some concern because Japan often gets earthquakes and tsunamis, but they have a lot of systems in place. I know Ben was talking about an app you can get that gives you warnings. What are your thoughts on the weather? This is a very British conversation!

Sophie: Oh yeah, very! That was a big thing when I was choosing my university. I was the opposite of you - I didn't want to go anywhere too hot. At the end of the day, my university module choices won out so I chose Kyoto, which is probably the hottest on the list! I was looking up north because it's supposed to be colder. Kyoto has cold winters and hot summers. I'll just head up north for summer, no one will see me, and in the cold of winter I'll head to Okinawa or something.

Harry: "I move with the seasons." That feels very Japanese.

Sophie: I'll follow the cherry blossoms up north.

Harry: Like you're migrating?

Sophie: Yeah, wherever the cherry blossoms are will be decent spring weather, so I'll just follow them around the country.

DISCOVER JAPAN



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