

10th Anniversary Issue

Komaba Times

Spring
2021

INERTIA

An English-language magazine made by
students at The University of Tokyo

**TO EVERYONE
WHO CARES,
AND EVERYONE
WHO DOESN'T**

*What it's like to be a woman
in a sea of men at UTokyo*
by Toko Sumiya

CRAZY RICH ASIANS

by Choi Jiwoong

**"THINKING" THE
TODAI STUDENT
RIOTS**

by Prof. Joshua Baxter

With stories from
The New York Times and
The Todai Shimbun
東大新聞コラボ企画



Letter from the editors

THE MOST MEMORABLE

of human endeavors can be summed up within a few words: *man reaches moon. Jackson moonwalks. Komaba Times publishes Issue 10.*

In this special anniversary issue, we capture a collective journey through inertia—a resistance to change. Although we chose this theme before the pandemic, it became all the more apt as we quarantined ourselves, suspending any continuation of normal life. Some inertias affect the entire world, while others are contained within the dormitory rooms and 1K apartments which have become our cells.

Inertia can also describe objects that keep moving after they “stop”. This year, through these unusual times, we’ve grown from a small, dedicated team of 8 to having 30 members and counting. Our first graphics team painstakingly created each lovely spread you’ll see. Our new business team distributed this magazine to schools and organizations all over the world. Our innovative translations department bridged the gap between the English-speaking and Japanese-speaking population at UTokyo.

We are also marking this anniversary issue through a special collaboration with The New York Times. We hope to not only enrich our magazine with the global coverage of the renowned publication, but also to poke our toes in the water and see how we dance with the best of them.

Featured articles from *Todai Shimbun*, our university’s longest-running newspaper, further exhibit our hybrid identity. What better way to represent a thriving but almost-unrepresented bilingual audience than to feature both English and Japanese content in our pages?

We’ve also revamped our magazine sections to reflect our new editorial direction. “Komaba” is the canvas of our collective student experiences within our immediate local communities. “Social” tackles the problems we see in the world head on, sharpening unformed opinions into thought-out plans for change. “Culture” concerns all that we enjoy and consume, reflecting on the essence of our favorite pastimes and media. “Creative” serves as the outlet for artistic, poetic, and photographic expression beyond things grounded in mundane reality.

Combined, they give what we’ve always needed as students at UTokyo. We’re not just a combination of majors and classes—we also represent a critical movement of artistic, irresponsible, optimistic, introspective, and future-changing youth.

We hope you enjoy reading this issue!

Featuring stories from
The New York Times
 &
The Todai Shimbun
 東大新聞

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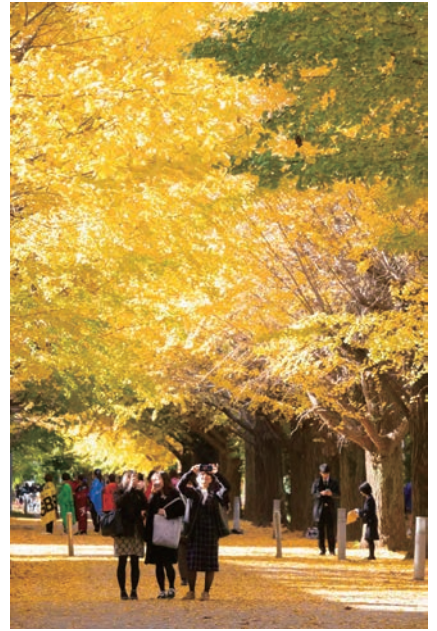
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KOMABA



Photographs by Shun Mizumoto

“HEY, WELCOME TO TODAI! Do you have any circles you’re thinking of joining?” “You look real athletic. What about playing ball with us? Surely you’re interested in our club.”—Loud, eager voices overwhelm freshmen as they timidly make their way through the endlessly long line of white tents. Standing under the lush green ginkgo trees, each tent represents a “club” or a “circle”. Crawling through this “tent line” (tento-retsu) and trying (and usually failing) to deflect passionate, sometimes coercive invitations from clubs and circles is a draining two-hour ritual almost every UTokyo freshman experiences on their first visit to campus. But it’s also an important event that could decide the outcome of one’s campus life and maybe even beyond—a token of the dominance club/circle culture has over university life in Japan.

WHAT EXACTLY ARE “CLUBS” AND “CIRCLES”?

Clubs (“bukatsu”) usually refer to sports teams that represent the university. The 58 clubs at UTokyo form the Athletics Foundation of the University of Tokyo, a high-status community backed by decades of history, and becoming a member requires huge commitment. Circles are basically all other student communities besides clubs. As of 2019, 391 circles are registered in the club/circle search engine managed by the Orientation Committee at UTokyo, and each circle community is uniquely colored depending on what they do, how often they meet, who’s in it, and so on.

Clubs and circles are much more than just convenient pastimes. Joining them is the fastest (and sometimes the only) way to make new friends. “I’m just so happy that my circle of friends expanded,” says a fourth-year of an in-kare acapella circle who writes that she gained “friends, memories, acapella skills, knowledge about music, and opportunities to interact with students from other universities” from joining the circle. Befriending seniors in one’s club/circle is also a campus survival skill—from getting advice on which classes to take and tips for tackling exams to finding rare part-time jobs and internships, meeting the right seniors could give you a boost in your grades and career.

The experience of working together with people in a club/circle towards a shared goal, whether it may be winning a match, staging a play or building an airplane, also teaches members about leadership, teamwork, and other valuable social skills. This is precisely why joining clubs/circles can be a key to smooth job hunting—they are a common topic

“joining clubs/circles can be a key to smooth job hunting—they are a common topic in application forms, and interviews”

in application forms and interviews. Corporations look for those with personalities and skills suited and required for the job, and many students present such qualities based on the experiences they’ve had in clubs/circles. Some corporations even target particular clubs to hold exclusive job information sessions for, in the hope of recruiting physically and mentally trained students who have survived the strict schedule and atmosphere that is characteristic of clubs.

THOUGH A KERNEL OF UNIVERSITY LIFE IN JAPAN, clubs/circles can include downsides. Most clubs and some circles are extremely time and energy consuming that it’s difficult for students to maintain a good balance with their academics. “There were things I couldn’t do because of the club, like studying abroad,” reflects a third-year of the soccer club who spends 6 days a week

on the field and still devotes time to reviewing past games and PR activities. “But I was able to meet friends, seniors, and juniors I could trust and respect, acquire the toughness needed to confront unavoidable hardships and challenge myself, and gain insight on how to effectively manage a group of people.”

The student-governed and closed quality of many clubs/circles can be a source of more serious trouble. Strict

hierarchical relationships between seniors and juniors and peer pressure can lead to moral/sexual harassment or dangerous usage of alcohol and drugs. Clubs/circles are also a potential hotbed of antisocial cults and radical groups, and actual cases have been reported. Although universities are taking preventive measures to protect their students, such as holding seminars and establishing consultation hotlines, the threats remain.

FOR MANY JAPANESE STUDENTS, the best memories of university life are made within the sphere of clubs/circles. They are communities where students can find close friends to stick with and reliable seniors to turn to. Their activities are a treasure box of experiences that enhances one’s abilities and pave the way for a brighter future. Then again, compromises must be made, whether that may be giving up on academics or taking month-long breaks to travel or participating in internships. It’s impossible to talk about Japanese universities without mentioning clubs and circles, but they may be just one of the many options to consider when deciding how to spend—as some students put it—“the summer vacation of your life.”

Century-old Is Shaken

by Philip Shabecoff

[1969] TOKYO, JAN. 10—Another in a series of student riots at Tokyo University broke out this afternoon when a group of helmeted radical students, armed with staves, tried to storm a university meeting being held on a rugby field some distance from the campus.

The meeting, between the school's administration and students belonging to neutral factions and those allied with the established Japan Communist party, was held away from the school because the radicals had blockaded the campus. Policemen using tear gas halted the advance of the radicals before they could reach the field and arrested nearly 150 students.

Last night, the campus was the scene of an even more violent battle as radicals fought pro-Communists in a clash involving a mob of students estimated at 5,000. Policemen were called in to break up the riot, a rare event in Japan where university autonomy is rigidly observed and government intervention a last resort.

Cabinet Meeting Called

The riots and a student strike that has paralyzed the campus since last spring have disintegrated much of the prestige that for generations has kept Tokyo University, 100 years old this year, this country's most powerful institution of higher learning.

A special cabinet meeting was called to discuss the university situation this afternoon and to decide on measures to break the grip of the students.

The school already has canceled entrance examinations for next year and may not graduate the present senior class. A proposal to convert the university into a purely postgraduate school is under consideration by the Government.

FOR THE JAPANESE, Tokyo University—Tokyo Daigaku or, most frequently, Todai for short—is a kind super-Harvard. Virtually all top Government leaders, including Premier Eisaku Sato, graduated from Todai as did most of the higher-level civil servants. Tokyo University also leads the nation in turning out academic and business leaders.

Almost every mother in Japan dreams that her son will be accepted one day by Todai. But of the thousands who apply every year, only the top layer of the cream of secondary school students is skimmed for admission.

But 12 months of turbulence apparently have eroded the once lofty reputation of the university. First disrupted last January by a strike of medical students, Todai has been regarded for nearly a year now as little more than a battlefield for warring factions of Zengakuren, or student government groups.



Tokyo University by Riots

The medical students struck to protest what they considered backward teaching methods. Other purely academic grievances also are involved in the unrest at the university. Japan's system of higher education, modeled during the 19th century on the German system, is considered by many a bastion of autocracy and elitism.

Students Divided

The medical students were joined in their strike by the rest of the university as a sympathy gesture. And, in a pattern that has become worldwide, the educational protest became submerged in a frankly political campaign by the radical students. Some of their goals have been specific—opposition to the security treaty between the United States and Japan, for example—but the ultimate avowed aim is nothing less than the overthrow of the existing form of government.

The radicals are bitter rivals of the pro-Communists in the struggle for control of the universities. The students who support the Japan Communist party have eschewed the use of violence—except in conflict with the radicals. They are seeking to establish a Communist government in Japan by constitutional methods.

The radicals, however, seek violent change and despise the pro-Communists as revisionists. The two groups have some interests in common, such as opposition to the Japanese-American treaty, but they rarely work together.

The radicals reflect almost every shade of Socialist and anarchist thought.

RIOTING HAS BROKEN OUT at other Japanese universities as well as Tokyo. Against the background of turmoil, a public opinion poll conducted by the Premier's office last month indicated that a large majority of the Japanese people are incensed by the actions of the radical students, particularly those at Tokyo University, of whom better things were expected. A recent magazine article about the school ran under the headline, "Paradise of Fools."

It would appear that time is running out for Todai. However, after today's mass meeting with students, Ichiro Kato, the acting president of the University, expressed a cautious optimism.

Mr. Kato, who is acting as president because his predecessor was forced out of office by the student radicals last year, said at a news conference that the meeting had raised his hopes for settling the campus dispute.

He added, however, that nothing particularly new was discussed by the students at the meeting.

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“Fade Into Distant Clamor”: Thinking the Todai Student Riots

A response by Joshua Baxter* to “Century-Old Tokyo University is Shaken By Riots”

“CENTURY-OLD TOKYO UNIVERSITY IS SHAKEN BY RIOTS,” proclaims the title of a New York Times’ article printed on January 11, 1969. It goes on to portray scenes of violence as student factions clashed with each other, as well as the police. By this point, the university’s two campuses had been turned into battlegrounds for almost a full year as students attempted to ‘dismantle the university’. As the article highlights, the reputation and even the idea of the university was being called into question through the actions of the students.

Looking back at these events from Komaba Campus in 2020 proves just how much the past really is foreign to us. Images of helmet-clad students sparing with wooden staves (*gebabō*) still might be a common sight for those belonging to the Todai Kendo Team but, for the rest of us, it is hard to imagine the campus as a warzone. The foreignness of these events is not just because those of us who now walk the halls of Building 1 or stroll down Ginkgo Avenue were not there to witness what happened. In many ways these events belong to a whole different era—in fact, one would have to jump from Reiwa, over the Heisei period, and all the way back to mid-Showa.

DESPITE ITS BREVITY—and perhaps the naivety of the author who had just been relocated to Japan from West Germany in 1968—the New York Times’ article brings one of the main postwar political issues to the forefront, albeit it does so indirectly. Sandwiched in between the columns of the Todai article is a separate story containing the image of the Showa Emperor, Hirohito. This piece describes a *tanka* poem that the emperor wrote on the theme of “Stars” and is translated as:

*In the dark sky of spring
comes out a comet glittering
As the roaring thunders afar
fade into distant clamor*

The image of Hirohito seems to perfectly punctuate the story on the Todai riots. Wearing a fedora hat with



a smile on his face, the rehabilitated postwar figure of the emperor has no comment on the riots that have bled out into his city throughout the 1960s. Here he is portrayed as a jovial poet amid the chaos that surrounds him, both on the newspaper page as well as within the nation. This juxtaposition of Hirohito’s image and the Todai riots offers us a way to understand the meaning of the student movement: by forcing us to think.

THINKING IS A FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPT OF THE UNIVERSITY.

These days every university brochure or mission statement is bound to contain some appeal to ‘critical thinking’. And yet, a lot of education at the university forces you not to think. On some level the university is counter-productive, in that it prefers for students to play by the rules in return for good grades as opposed to having them say something that might matter. Gavin Walker, a professor of Japanese history at the University of McGill, recently published an edited volume, *The Red Years*, on the events of 1968 in Japan. In it he argues that we need to “think with” the student movement, since the problems that they were addressing then have not been solved and they remain our problems today.

The longevity of these problems has left many people to conclude that the political, economic, and social

structures of modern society suffer from inertia. Democratic institutions, despite its ideals of equality, are still dominated by special interests and corruption. Capitalism, despite its productive power, proves to be most adept at producing inequality, along with the exploitation of both people and the environment. Social injustices, whether it is race, gender, or other forms of discrimination, continue to be a structural component of many public institutions.

This inertia has produced numerous moments of conflict, including the rise of populism and political dissatisfaction today. The project that the student movements of the 1960s undertook was to produce a space that challenged this societal inertia, by making politics active. They recognized that the fabric of our everyday life is categorically political but one that requires ‘movement’. Here it is probably best to insert Slavoj Žižek’s advice when he cautions not to simply act like so many pragmatists demand—you must do something to solve world hunger, donate here! Instead of seeing the Todai riots as a foreign past, closed off and fading into a distant clamor, I suggest that students today follow Gavin Walker’s injunction to think with.

* Joshua Baxter is an assistant professor at the University of Tokyo.

教養教育が抱える課題

国内のほとんどの大学では入学試験出願時に学部や学科を決める必要がある中、前期教養課程・進学選択制度は東大の特色の一つといえる。実際、2018年の学生生活実態調査報告書によると「入学後に学部の選択が可能だから」を東大の志望理由として選んだ学生は全体の44.1%にも上る。東大もレイトスペシャライゼーション(遅い専門化)を教育方針に掲げ「広い視野と総合的な基礎力を兼ね備えた上で高度な専門力を身につけた学生を育てるため、駒場キャンパスでの前期課程教育を重視」(教養学部ウェブサイトより引用)するとしている。

しかし幅広い分野を自由に学ぼうと意気込んで入学した学生にとって、必修科目が幅広い履修の足かせとなるかもしれない。科類ごとに必修科目が細かく設定されており、1年次のS Semesterでは時間割が必修科目でほとんど埋まることも。一般的な学生は12~14コマ履修する中、Aさん(理I・2年)は「1S Semesterは12コマが必修だった」と話す。

前期教養課程とセットであるのが後期課程で進む学部・学科を選ぶ進学選択制度だ。後期課程の各学部・学科がどの科類から何人受け入れるかは決まっており、前期教養課程の成績・志望順位を基に内定者が決められる。そのため、志望の学部・学科に進学すべく、興味関心がある授業よりも点数を取りやすいとされる授業を履修する学生は少なくない(図1)。Bさん(文III・2年)は「興味がある科目よりも、点数が取りやすいといううわさの科目を履修しました」と話す。

国内では珍しいレイトスペシャライゼーションの制度だが、米国に目を向けるといわゆるリベラルアーツ大学は数多く存在する。米ハーバード大学も東大と同じくリベラルアーツ教育を謳っており、2年生の途中まで専攻を決める必要がない。一方、1授業が週1コマとは限らないため1学期に4、5授業しか取れず、専攻は点数によらず決められる。

東大に半年通った後、現在はハーバード大学に通うCさんは「授業一つ当たりの負担が重い分軽い気持ちで授業を取るのには少し抵抗を感じる一方、一つの授業のために授業外でも週7~8時間かけて1学期勉強することで、受けた授業の内容や分野についてはかなり自信を持てます」と語る。一方、東大では前期教養課程で後期課程の授業を理解するだけの能力や前提となる知識が身に付かなかったと答えた学生が42.9%(2018年大学教育の達成度調査報告書より)にも上り、必ずしも授業の目標が十分に達成されているとは言えない。

自分の学問領域を築く

さまざまな問題の存在が示唆される駒場のリベラルアーツ教育だが、それを最大限に生かすにはどうすればよいのか。文IIIから教育学部に進学・卒業、現在はフリージャーナリストとして働く中野円佳さんは「入学当初、どのような科目を履修すれば良いのか分からず、授業の学びが何なのか自分でも分からないまま漠然と授業を受けていました」と話す。「先輩もいかに『楽単』を取るかしか教えてくれないし、周りもシケプリ(注:学生の間で流通する試験対策プリントの略)を使っていかに点数を取るかしか考えていない」ことに失望したという中野さんは1年次は学生団体に参加するなど授業外での活動に精を出した。

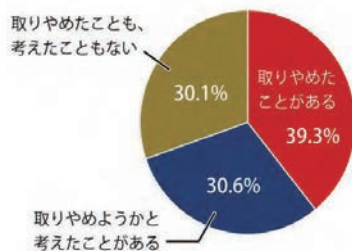
しかし2年生に上がった頃、同じ授業を受けていても単に高い点数を取るためではなく、学びを自分の知識として蓄えて後期課程につなげている人たちがいたことに気付いたという。「授業から多くのことを吸収する」人々を目の当たりにした中野さんは、学内

「教養」、身に付いてますか？ 駒場のリベラルアーツを考える

by 米原有里

東大に入学した学生は1、2年生の間、教養学部前期課程に所属した上で、進学選択を経ておのおの専門の学部や学科などに進む。前期教養課程でのリベラルアーツ教育を謳う東大だが、リベラルアーツ教育は目的通りに機能しているのか。駒場で2年間を最大限に生かすにはどうすればいいのか。現・元東大生や、学生時代東大生の授業態度に問題意識を持ち「面白い授業紹介冊子」を発行したジャーナリストの中野円佳さんに話を聞いた。

Q5. 進学選択時の点数に響きそうという理由で、興味がある授業の履修を取りやめたことはありますか？



(図1) 取材と教養学部学生自治会「学部交渉に関するアンケート(第2回)集計結果」を基に東京大学新聞社が作成

で売られる『逆評定(授業ごとに単位の取りやすさなどを学生が評価する冊子)』が学生による授業に関する唯一の情報源になっていることを問題と感じ、同じ問題意識を持つ仲間と共に「面白い授業紹介冊子」を作成したという。

「面白い授業紹介冊子」は文理各10人弱の学生の興味のある領域や、履修方法、お薦めの授業を紹介したもの。大学側の協力も得て、2年目からは新入生全員に配られた。「私が卒業してからは廃刊になってしまいましたが、それを参考にしてくれたという下級生もいてうれしかったですね」

冊子で紹介された学生に共通する授業への姿勢は「教員側が発信した内容を自分の関心領域や、他の授業と関連付けている」ことだったという。例えば歴史を学ぶにしても「高校までの教科書は確定した事実のように書かれているけれど、大学の授業では教員によって認識が違ってもあり得る。それぞれの教員がどのようにその認識を確定しているのか手法を学ぶこともできるし、内容についても自分なりの理解をする材料にするのです」。法学と宇宙科学のように一見全く違うものを結び付けて宇宙法に関心を広げた同級生もいたという。学生側が意識的に、授業で得た知識を自分の目的意識に沿って結びつけていく姿勢が重要だと強調する中野さん。「一見学生は一方向的に知識を受け取っているように見えるかもしれませんが、そんなことはありません。さまざまな授業で得た知識を、自分の学問領域を築くための材料として利用したらいいと思います」

「点数さえ取れば良いという意識ではなく、学ぶ楽しさを感じてほしいです。点数を取るだけの生き方だと必ずどこかで行き詰まると思います」と語る中野さん。「さまざまな知識領域を組み合わせることで将来の幅が広がりますし、各領域の第一人者の話を何時間も聞けるのはつくづく贅沢ですよ」と前期教養課程の魅力を強調する。駒場で過ごす2年間を無駄にしないためには、受動的に授業を受けるのではなく、学んだ知識同士を学生が自ら組み合わせることで体系化していく姿勢が問われているのかもしれない。

法人化15年 東大の足元は今

各種大学ランキングの結果が発表されるたびに、その低さが話題になる東大の国際性。後押しする国の方針もあり、東大も国際性向上のためにさまざまな策を講じているが、いまだに決定打は打てていない。本記事では大学における国際化の必要性、今後の在り方をさまざまな視点から検証していく。/ タイムズ・ハイアー・エデュケーション (THE) 世界大学ランキング日本版2019を見ると、東大の国際性のスコアは63.8で国内44位。総合順位の2位に比して、大きく低い位置につけた。外国語授業の開講比率は9.8%と旧七帝大で6番目、学生の留学率も7.2%で4番目と決して高くない。/ 大学も全学交換留学プログラム (USTEP) や主に英語話者の留学生を対象にした教養学部英語コース (PEAK)、国際総合力認定制度Go Global Gatewayなどの制度を整備、事務組織の改組も含めて国際化の進展を目指している。その成果もあり、THE世界大学ランキングのInternational Outlook (国際性) の項目はここ10年で倍近くにスコアを伸ばした。/ しかし、留学制度は所属する学部によってはほぼ留年が前提となったり、PEAKではPEAK外部の学生との交流が極端に少なかったりと、抱える課題は多い。

東大生は留学しない？ 海外派遣学生増加への道のり

15年まで国際本部長 (当時) を務めた羽田大学執行役・副学長 (東京カレッジ) はUSTEPの整備により「学部単位で行われていた後期課程進学後の留学サポートを本部でできるようになった」と評価する。学部ごとに結んでいた海外大学との協定を本部が結ぶことで、効率化、学部間の不公平の解消が進んだ。今では東大が結んでいる交換留学協定の数は81に上り、1セメスターに470人が留学できるだけの枠が用意されているという。

しかし、10年から順調に数を伸ばしてきた全学交換留学生はここ数年、100~150人前後で推移しており、交換枠も余っているのが現状だ。国際交流課の紫村次宏特任専門職員は「就活や進学選択への影響、留年の可能性など、さまざまなリスクを勘案したうえで留学を選択するのは、現状だとこのくらいの人数になってしまうのかもしれない」と言う。羽田大学執行役・副学長は、留学先と東

大の単位互換について、部局の独立性が一つの障害になっていると指摘する。「留学先の単位を東大のどの授業の単位として認定するかはそれぞれの学部が決めること。その時に単位互換に積極的な学部と、自分のところでの授業を大事にしたい学部という違いは出てくる」

実際に交換留学した学生の中でも留年のリスクに対する反応はさまざまだ。「将来を考える猶予ができたこと、東大の授業も好きなこと」から「留年は特に気にならなかった」 (工・3年) という学生がいる一方、「留年を避けるため1学期のみの留学を申請したが、短すぎたという後悔があるので、1年留学しても4年間で卒業できるような制度を整えて欲しい」 (経・3年) という声も。

留年のリスクに加え、経済的な負担も大きい交換留学が停滞する中、学生の国際化を進めていく際に重要になるのは短期のサマー・ウィンタープログラムだと紫村特任専門職員は語る。サマー・ウィンタープログラムは学生からの人気も高く、応募が定員の2倍近くなることもあるが、プログラムの拡大を試みるたびに課題になるのが学事暦だ。「

生たちの国際化に関連するさまざまな経験を大学として承認することを宣言したのが国際総合力認定制度だ。「本制度創設にあたって五神真総長を始めとする当時の執行部は国際的な体験を積むことを応援したいという意向が強かったと理解している」と語るのは国際化担当の理事・副学長を務める白波瀬佐和子教授 (人文社会系研究科)。白波瀬教授は「学部生のごく一部は国際化に積極的にかかわろうとする、高いモチベーションがある。一方、残念ながら多数は積極的になれない状況があり、その差は決して小さくない。そのことに対する危機感は執行部で共有されていると思う」とも語る。グローバルキャンパス推進本部国際化支援室長の矢口祐人教授 (総合文化研究科) はGo Global Gatewayを「留学への潜在的な興味を引き出すための最初の一步」と評する。10月末時点では1年生1200人、2年生600人の登録があるが、矢口教授は来年以降、もっと登録者が増えてほしいと語る。「東大にグローバルな人材にならなくていい学生は1人もいない」

課題は、学生のGo Global Gatewayに対する理解が不足していることだ。「国際総合力を認定、と言われてもピンと来ない」学生が多いのではないかと白波瀬教授は危惧する。「学部の4年間をかけて完成するプログラム。制度の基本的枠組みを学生たちに理解してもらうよう、学内広報にも力を入れていきたい」

PEAK運営を通して見える内なる 国際化の課題

学生を外へ送り出すのと同様、国際化の大切な指標となるのが、海外からの学生や研究者の呼び込みだ。学部レベルでのこの動きを代表するのが、2012年に学生の

(表1) THE 世界大学ランキング日本版 2019 における
主要大学の国際性のスコア (網かけは旧帝大)

大学名	総合	国際性	外国人学生比率 (%)	日本人学生の留学比率 (%)	外国語で行われている講義の比率 (%)	海外大との国際交流認定数
国際教養大学	76.7 (10位)	100.0 (1位)	26.2	22.7	80.4	175
国際基督教大学	72.7 (11位)	95.4 (2位)	9.9	15.8	39.5	84
立命館アジア太平洋大学	63.7 (27位)	94.0 (3位)	52.0	8.4	74.4	143
九州大学	79.5 (4位)	73.4 (22位)	12.2	7.5	20.6	139
北海道大学	79.3 (5位)	72.8 (24位)	8.7	7.7	17.7	483
早稲田大学	71.5 (13位)	72.4 (25位)	11.5	5.5	13.7	833
京都大学	82.0 (1位)	69.8 (30位)	10.3	9.9	12.6	850
名古屋大学	79.3 (5位)	67.8 (36位)	10.0	4.7	29.2	603
東京大学	81.9 (2位)	63.8 (44位)	13.4	7.2	9.8	425
東北大学	80.2 (3位)	63.2 (46位)	12.0	4.1	11.1	626
大阪大学	77.9 (8位)	62.4 (47位)	8.1	6.1	7.8	958
慶應義塾大学	70.4 (14位)	58.0 (59位)	7.7	3.6	6.7	286

THE 世界大学ランキング日本版 2019 を基に東京大学新聞社が作成

②国際化 東大では未だ途上 学生も意識改革を

受け入れを開始した教養学部英語コース（PEAK）。元は08年に文部科学省が大学の国際化を推進するため策定したグローバル30の公募に応えて、12年に設置されたもので「当時の秋入学などの議論との絡みの中で始動したものと理解している」とPEAK/GPEAK統括室長の渡邊雄一郎教授（総合文化研究科）は話す。「現状制度としては醸成段階にある」（渡邊教授）PEAKだが、これまで30以上の国籍の優秀な学生を受け入



れてきた。国際化推進学部入試担当室長の森山工大学執行役・副学長は東大の学部生が出自などにおいて均質化している現状に触れた上で、国籍や国外で教育を受けたバックグラウンドを東大の多様性の一部として取り込む意義を強調する。

東大内で多文化共生状態を作るには1学年3000人いるPEAK以外の学生に対して30人しかいないPEAK生が孤立しないことが重要だが「PEAK以外の学生とPEAK生との交流の少なさは現場で痛感している」と渡邊教授は嘆く。進学選択のために高得点を確保したいPEAK以外の学生にPEAKの授業を履修する余裕がないこともその一因ではないか。後期課程進学時にPEAK生が本郷の学部に移ろうとすると、高い日本語能力の証明が必要となる上、英語で行った前期教養課程科目を他学部が要求科目として認定することに消極的といった障壁があるため、進学選択を機にPEAK生が他の学部生と交流する機会も限られる。さらに、PEAK生がサークルなどのコミュニティーに参加する際、言語や9月という入学時期のために難色を示されることもあるという。森山大学執行役・副学長は「日本に留学に来たからと言って、日本語をやって当然という意識を押し付けるのはよくない。多文化共生のためには東大の一般学生、教員、そして職員が変わっていかないといけない」と大学全体の意識改革の必要性を強調した。

大学ランキングはどう活用する？

大学の国際化の意義とは

社会、特に経済の国際化が著しい現在、

大学に「国際化しない」という選択肢は残されていない。政策研究大学院大学政策研究の院のリサーチ・フェローを務め、大学政策の研究を専門にする田中和哉さんは「大学が社会、市民の活動や希望と全く乖離しているようでは社会の基盤として機能しない。国際化は高等教育機関、研究機関として大学が社会に貢献する上で重要になる」と語る。白波瀬教授は学部生の国際交流の重要性を特に強調。「特に東大生にとっては若いうちに自分の生活圈やそこでの常識の枠外に出て、自分が弱者になる経験を持つことが大切。いつかどこかで弱い立場になることがあるのだから、そういう経験は早めにしていただいた方がいい」

東大の国際化を語る上で目につくのが大学ランキングにおける東大の国際性指標の突出した低さだ。THEの場合、国際性の項目のスコアは留学生比率（全体スコアの2・5%）、外国人教員比率（同）、国際共著論文数（同）の3つの項目で構成される。クアアカレリ・シモンズ（QS）では留学生・外国人教員比率それぞれが全体スコアの5%だ。白波瀬教授はこのうち国際共著論文数については「大学として国際共同研究が生まれやすい研究環境の整備に努力をしなければならない」と認める一方、留学生・外国人教員比率については「非常に東大にとって不利な指標」であると語る。

羽田大学執行役・副学長もTHEやQSの大学ランキングの国際化の項目は評価軸が英語圏の大学の基準に偏っていると指摘。「英語圏の大学は英語という武器を持っている。自分たちの言葉を喋る人たちを大学に呼んでも学生、教員の外国人比率が高くなるので、明らかに英語圏の大学に有利にできている」。実際、THE世界大学ランキング2020では、12位まで全てを英米の大学が占めている。「これ以上下げたくはないがランキングを上げることを最終目標にすることははない」という白波瀬教授の言葉通り、東大としては一定の指標にたった東大への評価として適宜活用する程度のもの。あくまで「健康診断のようなもの」で、ランクそのものにこだわることはない」と羽田大学執行役・副学長も説明する。

対して田中さんは、大学ランキング自体の意味は限定的としつつも、本質的な国際化と大学ランキングでのランク向上の両方を

目指すべきというスタンスだ。「社会の国際化が進む中、東大だけ大学ランキングを気にしない、とも言ってられない状況にある。国際化の進展度合いを単純な指標で可視化するのはもちろん不可能だが、ある程度単純化してでもわかりやすい形で評価を得ないと財界や社会からの信用は得られない」。留学生を増やす圧力を力に国際化されていない部局を国際化する、国際共著論文を促進することで、国際化すべき分野の論文の共著を伸ばす、などメディアがランキングを報じることで生まれるプレッシャーを手段として利用して大学を実質的に変えることが必要だという。

大学の国際化の在り方もさまざま。世界大学ランキングで頭角を現している中国の北京大学や清華大学は完全に英語のみで取得できる学位を増やし、欧米からの留学生を中心に取り込みを図っている。だが、白波瀬教授は日本語による教育、研究の重要さも忘れてはならないと強調する。「言語は一つの価値観、文化を具現化するもの。母語による教育を軽んじては、学術の質を保証しつつ、多様性を確保することは難しい」。日本語と英語、両方での教育が必要となる中、羽田大学執行役・副学長は日本語による教育をベースとして、英語による教育も選択できる、二本立ての制度を提案する。選択必修で、英語の授業を用意することで、英語による交流の際に必要な各分野の基礎知識を習得させようという考えだ。しかし、実現しようとする、現状でも過大な教員の負担が課題になるという。

さまざまな取り組みもあり「少しずつ良くなっている」（羽田大学執行役・副学長）東大の国際性。しかし、未だ多くの課題があるのも事実。田中さんは理学部化学科が授業を全て英語で行うようにした結果、進学振り分け（当時）の底点が下がった例を引き「学生にも（英語で授業を受けるなどの）覚悟が足りないのでは」と指摘する。大学が国際化し、国際的な競争の中で勝ち残っていくには部局を超えた大学の取り組みに加え、学生の主体的な取り組みが必要になるだろう。

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The Grand Water Foun

by Mahi

EXCITEDLY WALKING AROUND for the Komaba Campus tour as a new student, I felt very thirsty. Seeing no signs of a water fountain, I asked the senpai tour guide about it. Confused, he looked at me and said, “I usually get bottled water...”, and then showed me the most popular water fountain of Komaba (in the library). Over the next few weeks, I strolled around campus hunting for the hidden water fountains. Oh, and by water fountains, I mean the press-button-water-shoots-up kind. Here’s what I found out:

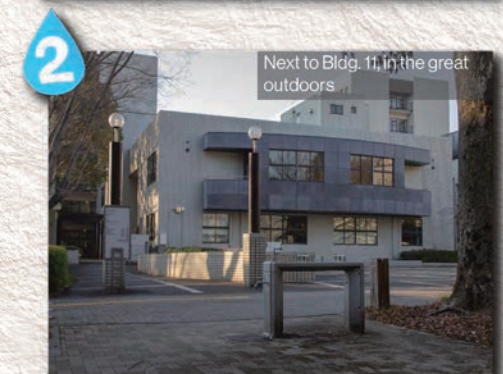
KOMABA I CAMPUS HAS OVER 64 BUILDINGS AND ONLY 9 DRINKING WATER FOUNTAINS.

For a campus of over nine thousand students and staff members, that is abysmal! Personally, I don’t fancy walking halfway across the campus in between lessons to refill my bottle (7/9 water fountains are clustered on the north-east side of campus)—instead, I usually just refill my bottle from the washroom sinks. “Ewww”—you might think! And rightly so, sinks don’t exactly scream high-quality refreshing water.

In July 2020, the “UTokyo Student SDG Awareness Survey” conducted by the Todai Sustainable Campus Project (TSCP) student committee revealed that “40% of students use their own bottles or cups.” The remaining 60%, then, are sucked into the single-use lifestyle of buying bottled drinks from the Co-op every day.

Thanks to the COVID-19 pandemic, most water fountains on campus are dressed in a “shiyoukinshi” (use prohibited) sign. Even then, is it too much to dream that when we return to campus (fingers crossed, soon) a prestigious national university like UTokyo will provide its students with free and convenient access to clean water? We need bottle refilling stations in every building, perhaps with motion sensors that fill up your bottle with minimal human touch required (COVID-friendly!). By doing this, attention would be drawn to the importance of reducing consumption, to then mitigate the broader issues of plastic accumulating in our environment and climate change. Of course, not having to purchase plastic bottles wouldn’t hurt the limited money any student has!

WITHOUT FURTHER ADO, here is a map of all the water fountains



Sustainable Conspiracy of Komaba Campus

Patki

on the desert a.k.a. Komaba Campus I. Jokes aside, I hope for this map to be a step towards a more sustainable campus, where being environmentally friendly is the easier option.

WALKING OUT OF CAMPUS, and into the streets of Tokyo, I wonder if, in an ideal world, it is possible that all convenience stores have a water refill spot? I talked to three NGOs that are already working to tackle plastic waste, and here's what they said.

“mymizu” is an app where you can find maps to access free water refill spots globally. Mariko McTier, co-founder of mymizu, says “We have to make it happen! Economics is always going to get in the way, especially if it's free water. Eventually, there will be more pressure from the consumers, and that's when convenience stores are going to start shifting their business models.”

Greenpeace Japan has submitted a flurry of demand letters to the Japanese government and ran campaigns called “Let's Increase the Number of My Bottle Water Dispensers Campaign” and “Reuse Revolution.” Hiroaki Odachi, plastic campaign leader from Greenpeace Japan, says “It is not only possible to have water refill spots in all convenience stores, but also to have most other products there such as drinks and snacks with reuse/refill options, and in supermarkets as well. It is time for us to envision a single-use packaging-free future and act on it.”

Refill Japan has made a map to navigate the already existing water refill spots and also rents out “temporary refilling stations that can be directly connected to a tap.” I couldn't get a direct answer from the NGO but I find it hard to imagine it disagreeing with the basic yet ultimate convenience of having water fountains at convenience stores.



Map of water fountains at UTokyo's Komaba I campus

- 3** 3F KCP North building
- 4** Outside the Co-op office. Perfect spot to refresh during lunchtime!
- 5** 1F Gym 2
- 6** 2F Gym 2— look behind the wall!
- 7** 1F Campus Plaza Bldg. B
- 8** 1F Komaba Library. Don't forget to take your student ID!

Not water fountains but glasses are provided:

- 1** 1F and 2F of canteen
- 2** Italian Tomato



THE MOMENT IS FINALLY COMING.

As a historian, I've always been interested in how civilizations change and how societies progress. How cultures evolve and how public discourse develops. The brutal murder of George Floyd and the subsequent mass protests against police brutality are changing the narrative about how we discuss racism. I'm one of millions of people feeling the tide changing. The COVID-19 pandemic may have imposed physical isolation on us, but it has been a timely reminder of the need for global connectedness and collective human dialogue.

I've had many conversations on race in class over the last decade. The conversation tends to have two components. The first always addresses how race is a social construct. We discuss how racism manifests itself in media representation, social and cultural institutions, urban landscapes and the economy. We discuss how deeply enmeshed it is in the current systems of society, not just in the U.S., but also in Japan and the dozen other countries in which students have lived.

HOW THEN DO WE DEAL with systemic racism? This is the second topic. We approach this question cognizant of the fact that the majority of us are people of color or with multiple racial heritage. We learn the visual tropes of racist representation and learn to spot them. We also explore how stereotypes can be subverted, so the racist comment is something to be laughed at.

Sometimes we talk about how we maneuver ourselves within systemic racism as people of color. To defend against overt or subtle forms of racism, we acknowledge that we've had to develop a thicker skin, simply because we can't keep getting angry at every single encounter. We learn to tolerate racism to protect ourselves from physical harm or verbal abuse. Some have even learned to become oblivious to racism. Others manipulate racial markers to get a foot in the door, succeed in a chosen career, and secure the black

Amex card. If anyone has made any effort to become an "honorary white" person, it's undoubtedly because of the social capital it carries, and that's another tactical choice for success.

Studying the rules and playing the game to our advantage may have been important for our personal gain. However, by developing these survival tactics, we have also enabled the survival of systemic racism.

In retrospect, what's surprising is that we have never discussed the elimination of this beast called systemic racism. The actions we talked about were acts of resistance, protest perhaps, and a rebellion at best. But there's never been much of an assumption that we'd be able to topple this giant. We talk about how we can spot racism and how we can navigate around it, but we had resigned ourselves to letting this arbitrary power structure dictate our lives. Simply put, we have become complicit in perpetuating systemic racism.

We must say enough now. The orthodoxy of racism can no longer be upheld.

IN THE PREFACE of the University of Tokyo Charter, there is no mention of race. The Charter declares the University "shall guarantee no discrimination based on nationality, gender, age, language, religion, political or other reasons, origin, property, lineage, marital status, position within the household, handicaps, ailments, career, etc." This is rather an extensive list, but race is conspicuous in its absence. It's a denial that race would be considered a source of discrimination.

However, we cannot deny racism exists in the form of xenophobia and other discriminations in Japan.

As members of the UTokyo community, what can we do? Let's start asking questions. Is UTokyo free of systemic racism? Is UTokyo free of discriminatory practice against racial minorities? What does UTokyo do to guarantee no discrimination based on race? Let's point out racism in all its forms. Now is the time to become recalcitrant to the orthodoxy of systemic racism.



To Our Tamed Tongues: A Word on Systemic Racism

by Yuko Itatsu

Yuko Itatsu is an associate professor at the University of Tokyo.

Japan's Elite Universities, Where Women Are a Rarity

by Motoko Rich

Originally published on 08/12/2019



TOKYO—From a young age, Satomi Hayashi studied hard and excelled academically. It seemed only natural that she would follow in her father's footsteps and attend the University of Tokyo, Japan's most prestigious institution.

As soon as she was admitted, her friends warned that she was spoiling her marriage prospects. Men, they said, would be intimidated by a diploma from Todai, as the university is known in Japan. Spooked, she searched Google for "Can Todai women get married?" and discovered that prediction was a well-trod stereotype.

The admonitions didn't stop her. But Hayashi, 21, wondered if other women had been scared off.



WHEN SHE ARRIVED THREE YEARS AGO, fewer than one in five undergraduates at the university were women.

The dearth of women at Todai is a byproduct of deep-seated gender inequality in Japan, where women are still not expected to achieve as much as men and sometimes hold themselves back from educational opportunities.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has promoted an agenda of female empowerment, boasting that Japan's labor force participation rate among women outranks even that of the United States. Yet few women make it to the executive suite or the highest levels of government.

The disconnect starts at school. Although women make up nearly half the nation's undergraduate population, the oldest and most elite universities reflect—and magnify—a lackluster record in elevating women to the most powerful reaches of society.

For nearly two decades, enrollment of women at the University of Tokyo has hovered around 20%, a lack of parity that extends across many top schools. Among seven publicly funded national institutions, women make up just over one-quarter of undergraduates. At the

exclusive private universities Keio and Waseda, a little over one-third of students are women.

Japan's universities lag behind other selective institutions across Asia. Women make up close to half of the student body at Peking University in China, 40% of Seoul National in South Korea and 51% of the National University of Singapore.

At Todai, "you can see right away there is something completely out of balance," said Hayashi, a literature major. "Because women are half of society, there is something strange about a university that is only 20% women."

IN STATUS-CONSCIOUS JAPAN, a diploma from Todai is the ultimate pedigree—the equivalent in the United States of Harvard, Stanford and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology rolled into one. It opens doors in politics, business, law and science.

More prime ministers have graduated from Todai than any other school, and more than half of the country's Supreme Court justices are alumni. The university has the highest number of graduates to go on to Parliament or to win Nobel Prizes.

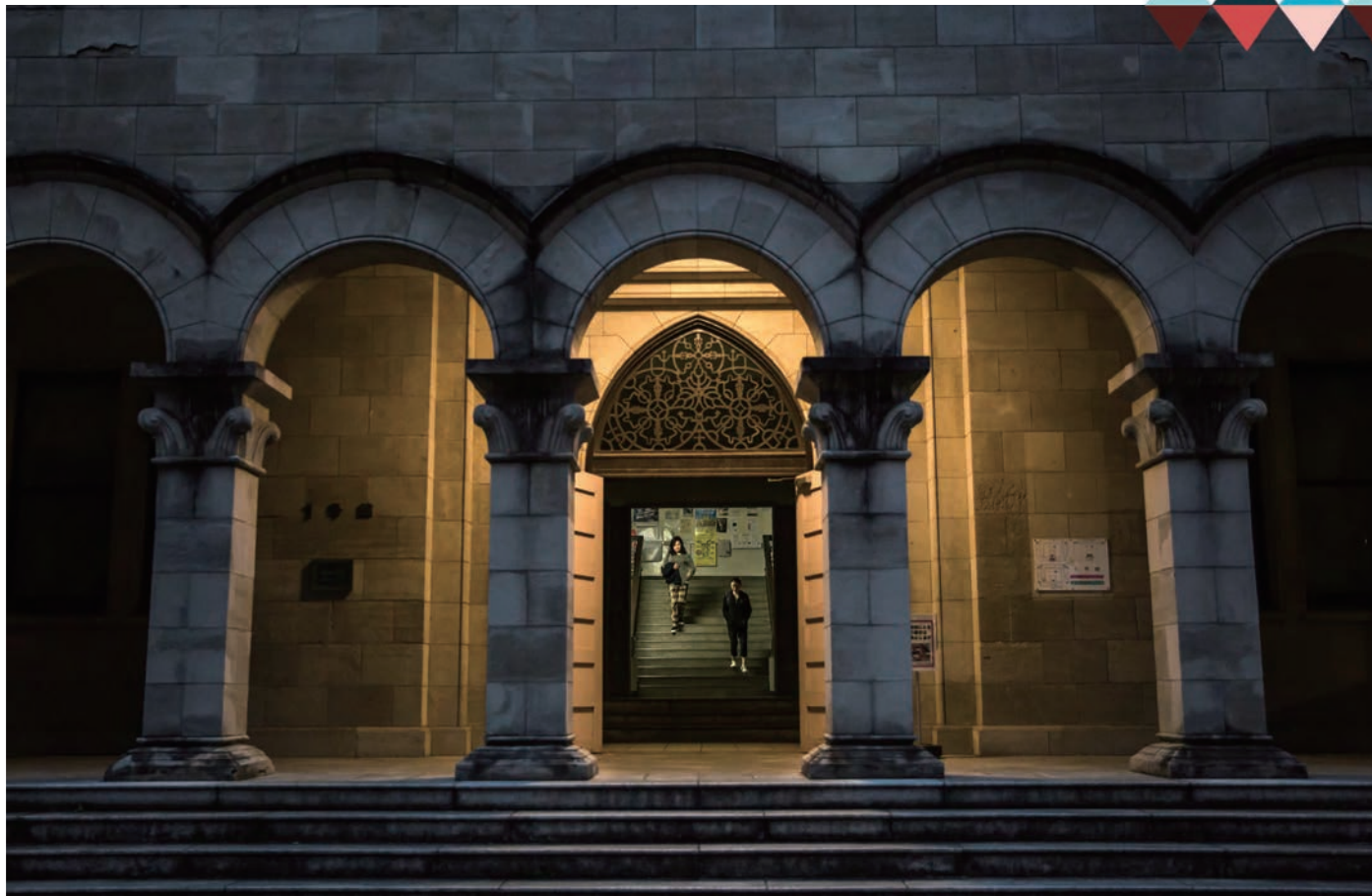
"We have the most powerful education that we can dangle" in front of anyone, said Nobuko Kobayashi, a 1996 Todai graduate and a partner at EY Japan, where fewer than 10% of partners are women.

"We were branded with it," she said. "We almost bask in its glory unconsciously."

SPEAKING THIS YEAR TO FRESHMEN AT TODAI, Chizuko Ueno, a retired professor of gender studies, suggested that the imbalance was a symptom of inequality that extended beyond higher education.

"Even before students enter the university, there is already hidden sexism," Ueno said. "Unfortunately," she added, "the University of Tokyo is an example of this."





Her sentiments touched a nerve in the audience. **On Twitter, male students complained of being harangued. “Why is she not celebrating us, the male students?” one wrote. Another called the remarks “feminist propaganda.”**

In the speech, Ueno referred to a scandal exposing deliberate discrimination at Tokyo Medical University, where officials acknowledged having suppressed the entrance-exam scores of female applicants for years.

ADMINISTRATORS WANTED TO LIMIT THE PROPORTION OF WOMEN TO 30%, claiming that female doctors were likely to stop working after getting married or giving birth. A year after the scandal was revealed, women passed at a higher rate than men.

There is no evidence that the University of Tokyo manipulates exam results. Rather, officials say, women’s admissions are consistent with the applicant pool.

“We are just like stores that don’t have enough customers,” said Akiko Kumada, one of the few female engineering professors at Todai and a member of its gender equality committee. “Right now,” she said, “we are not getting enough female customers.”

Kumada has a few theories. Young girls, she said, are repeatedly fed the idea that academic achievement is not feminine. She cited lyrics by AKB48, a female pop band, like “While I’m still in school/It’s OK to be stupid.”

Some women, she said, might fear that a Todai degree

inevitably leads to a high-powered career in a brutal working culture. One graduate committed suicide after telling friends she had endured harassment and grueling hours at an advertising agency.

TO RECRUIT WOMEN, the university has mostly tried small-bore measures.

Todai sends female students back to their high schools to encourage younger women to take the entrance exam. In a recruitment brochure, “we try to balance the photos we run,” Kumada said, “and make sure we have women in them.”

A more substantial policy provides dormitory subsidies to women from outside Greater Tokyo, an effort to mollify parents who might worry about safety in the big city. The university pays 30,000 yen a month—roughly \$275—for about 100 female students. Critics have attacked the policy as discriminatory against men.

Outright quotas for women have been a nonstarter: Todai administrators reject affirmative action as inequitable.

Staunchly traditional, Todai draws from the same high schools year after year. More than one-quarter of students who enrolled in 2019 came from just 10 high schools, seven of which are all male.

Unconsciously or not, high school and college administrators say, parents are more likely to push sons to achieve.

“With sons, parents really expect a lot and want their boys to perform to the maximum level and aim as high as they can go,” said Hiroshi Ono, principal of Tokyo Gakugei University High School, which sent 45 students to Todai this year, 11 of them women.

Parents, Ono said, “feel bad about pushing girls to work that hard—they think it would be better for them to get married and be a housewife.”

Even at Oin Girls School, which sends more women to Todai than any other high school, administrators said girls may feel ambivalent about pursuing an elite education.

“A woman’s life is much more complicated,” said Yuki-ko Saito, Oin’s principal. “They have to decide who to marry, whether to marry, whether to have children or not.”

FOR A VAST MAJORITY OF STUDENTS, admission to Todai rests solely on one exam for which students spend years studying. High school grades and extracurricular activities carry no weight.

Zkai, a cram school for university entrance exams, has a high acceptance rate to Todai. Wataru Miyahara, a director, said fewer girls study for the exam.

“It’s hard to tell which is the chicken and which is the egg,” he said. “But there are so few girls at Todai, so it’s hard for girls to look at Todai and say ‘I want to go there.’”

Whatever the reason, he said, “they are not as ambitious as boys.”

Three years ago, Todai invited high schools to recommend one male and one female student who could forgo the exam in exchange for an essay or group interview. Fewer than 70 students a year are admitted this way, out of a freshman class of more than 3,000.

Aine Adachi, 20, who came to Todai three years ago through this system, said expanding the criteria to evaluate strengths not captured by one high-stakes test could attract more women.

“Having one criteria to judge a person by doesn’t make it fair,” she said.

ON CAMPUS, Adachi, who is studying law, said she feels scrutinized as a minority. Gender discrimination, she said, comes in subtle forms.

Once she and a male classmate were planning a club trip, huddled over laptops in a cafe near campus. Another male classmate walked up and observed their conversation.

“It looks like the boss and his secretary!” he quipped. “Why do you assume I’m the secretary?”

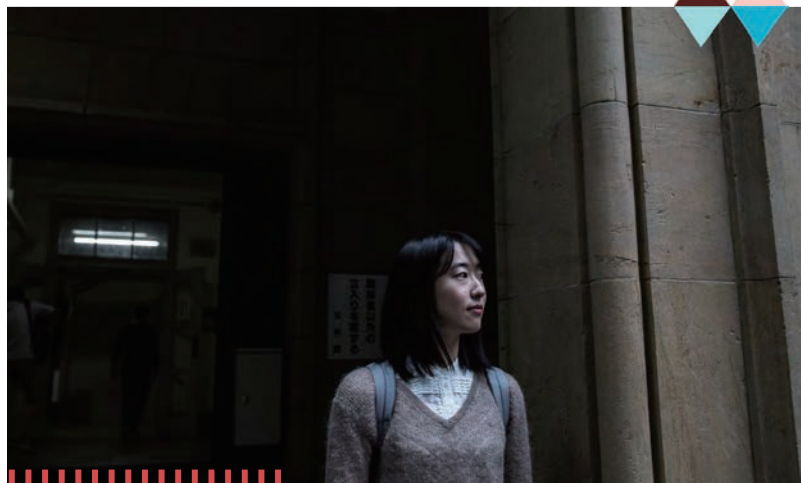
Adachi retorted. “Why can’t I be the boss?”

Women at Todai often feel isolated. When a class gathered for a graduation photo, Kiri Sugimoto, 24, a

law student, was the only woman.

“What irritated me was that the men made remarks like having me in the picture would look great because it wouldn’t look like a boys prep school photo,” she said. “I was treated as the decorative rose among stones. That irritated me to be treated like that.”

Some Todai men avoid socializing with female classmates, favoring activities in which most of the women come from other universities.



At a Todai ballroom-dancing club, Erica Nakayama, 23, a masters student, said she and her classmates were outnumbered by women from other universities.

Todai men, she said, frequently typecast female peers as too serious.

“A boy once said, ‘Todai girls are a little scary,’” Nakayama recalled. “I just kind of laughed and let it go. But in a way it did kind of hurt my feelings.”

Some clubs tacitly bar Todai women, although the university officially discourages outright exclusion. Of more than 30 social clubs focused on tennis, for example, only two actively recruit Todai women.

MEN HAVE LITTLE INCENTIVE to change. Campus advocacy is minimal. Even an investigation by the student newspaper about clubs that exclude Todai women did not identify the exclusive groups.

Women hesitate to speak out. Nakayama said she avoided activism that might be construed as feminist.

“It might have some repercussions for me,” she said. People “might think I’m acting too manly or too strong.”

In and outside class, Hayashi said, women tolerate a culture in which men make jokes filled with sexual innuendo or comment on women’s appearances. “You are expected to understand or communicate with these sexual jokes,” she said. “Otherwise you feel kind of left out.”

“You just have to understand,” she said, “and accept the male view.”

TO
EVERY
ONE
WHO
CARES

A response to "Japan's Elite Universities, Where Women Are a Rarity"

by Toko Sumiya

I NEVER TELL people I meet for the first time that I'm from Todai.

I dread being asked what university I'm from at the hairdressers and almost always resort to staring pointedly at my phone to cut off any conversation.

At movie theaters, I hesitate to show my student ID even when I desperately want the student discount.

After a whole year of studying upwards of 15 hours a day and making it to my dream school, this is the reality I face. Is it because I've become much too Japanese for my own good, and am constantly quivering in fear of other people thinking that I'm arrogant? Or is it because I've been a chronic overthinker ever since the moment I took my first breath?

Most likely, I am guilty of both. Yet most importantly, I don't tell people because as a woman; it isn't always a good thing to be from Todai.

This is one of those dirty truths that everyone knows but no one really talks about, almost as if someone hid a 75-inch television under the carpet and every-

one turned a blind eye. But I grew up in the grand old United States of America, and so naturally my instinct is to be extremely loud about the very obtrusive television under the carpet. And loud I will be—because I know that had I gone to Harvard or MIT, I would have been (more than) completely comfortable letting people know of that fact.

AS A TODAI WOMAN, I am jokingly told that I'm lucky because I certainly must be getting all the guys' attention, and that there certainly must be something wrong with me if I haven't breathtakingly captured

AND
EVERY
ONE WHO
DOESNT

some poor boy's heart. (Ever consider the fact that I might not want to, mister?) Other days, I am effusively praised for being "as smart as all the boys," but also warned not to be a "strong and annoying woman."

At the same time, contestants of the annual "Miss Todai Contest" (an antiquated tradition that for whatever reason all respected universities in Japan still cling to) are praised for being "almost as pretty as girls from other universities," the premise being that there is no way we could possibly be attractive, after having wasted our adolescent years with our noses stuck in books.

THERE IS NO GETTING AROUND the fact that we are extremely privileged to have access to the best education in the whole country. **Yet we are subject to a painfully frustrating form of sexism that exists precisely because we are privileged, and which epitomiz-**

es what Japanese society feels about women—that even if we have the skills to attend the most prestigious university in the country, we cannot be proud of that.

We are, for lack of a better word, not nearly “womanly” enough—but also most definitely women. You cannot be a woman of this university and also be traditionally attractive, yet you cannot be treated as an equal to your male peers. Because this is Japan, and Japanese people are the world's top experts at very obviously telling you something without uttering a single word—no one will ever tell you this upfront. But oh, will you know.

So it makes sense to assume that I would be over the moon, now that I have the means to very noisily air my complaints about this messed-up reality through writing.

MY OLD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS in America who took it upon themselves to remind me that all of my opinions are “special treasures” would be disappointed to know that I am not excited about this at all. I would much rather remain holed up in bed and tweet-rant anonymously into the darkness.

The more we speak out, the more we “outspoken (hint: loud) women” are labelled as outsiders and cut off from the rest of society. **Hell, just publishing this article could have people think of me as a strong-willed, typical Todai woman who speaks out of turn.** I should be thankful for the chances that I get, and yet, I am quite honestly tired of always having to think about what people will think of me tomorrow before I say anything.

Despite all of this, I sit here at 1:15 with a glass of wine on a Saturday night thinking about how I could trick people into believing that this is good writing, so that more people would read it. Not because I want to be Superman at least once in my life (although that doesn't sound too bad), but because thinking about what not doing anything means genuinely frightens me

more than seeing Voldemort's face stuck on the back of Professor Riddle's head.

Not doing anything means that I am complacent with the fact that men could control Japanese politics and society for the foreseeable future. The more men there are at Todai, the more they have to gain from the education and the resources offered here, simply because there are more bodies to reap the benefits. My male classmates today are quite literally going to be the ministers speaking on television in 30 years' time. **Unless we make universities like Todai more attractive and accessible to all the brilliant young girls out there, change is but an illusion.**

Not doing anything means that future Todai women have to be worried, like me, about what it means to interact with anyone outside of the university. My boyfriend is also from Todai; I constantly feel like I am able to be my chaotic self only because I know that he understands. It is alarming that I may not ever be able to have a relationship like this with people outside of Todai.

My purpose here is not to expect Fairy Godmother to

bibbidi-bobbidi-boo us out of this appalling situation, as I have studied enough to know that that isn't what happens in the world of grown-ups. And I remain painfully aware of the fact that writing something like this might end up further jeopardizing our stance.

Regardless, I'm here because I understand both that Todai has given me so much, and that there is something horribly wrong with the status quo. While many of my friends are utterly unbothered by what's happening, I at least know that I am furious. I owe it to myself to be honest about my own emotions, as raw and confused as they may be.

I stand here now to tell you that yeah, there is a very ugly and old television under that carpet, because sometimes it takes just those few words for someone to lift the corner.





I Stand With Tibet

by Mizuki Takahashi



Photograph by Gigion/Unsplash

THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM. That is, Tibet.

All eyes are on Hong Kong and Xinjiang, yet we forget one particular state in an eerily similar situation: Tibet. Tibet's history as an independent state was mostly peaceful until the twentieth century, when in 1951, it was forcibly annexed by the communist regime of Mao Zedong. This prompted the 14th Dalai Lama—the spiritual leader of Tibetan people—to seek refuge in India in 1959, exacerbating the already dire situation.

Today, under Chinese rule, Tibet's independence and cultural autonomy stands eroded at best. President Xi Jinping has introduced measures to eliminate ancient Tibetan traditions such as farming, going as far as to enforce a labor program to assimilate Tibetans into Chinese society. Education remains another issue at stake, wherein China's policy effectively reduces access of ethnic Tibetans to education in their mother tongue. Just recently, China has coerced the last remaining Tibetan-language school to teach in Chinese. If this sounds familiar, that is because it is—similar enforcements and “education camps” for the Muslim Uyghurs exist in Xinjiang.

Another existential thorn in all our sides comes from Tibet's importance to our environment. All of us talk about climate change, but we never realize

Just recently, China has coerced the last remaining Tibetan-language school to teach in Chinese.

its relation to Tibet. As the source of the eight largest river systems in the world, Tibet's environmental state impacts over a billion people in Asia. But Tibet's rivers are facing a brutal attack by China's development policies.

BEHIND THE MASS MEDIA ATTENTION on Hong Kong and Xinjiang, then, is another state that has been subdued into repression by China. Yet there is still some hope. In 2020, the Tibetan Policy and Support Act (TPSA) was signed into law in the United States (US), showing US support for Tibetans. For instance, the US can now impose sanctions on Chinese officials if they decide to appoint the 15th Dalai Lama.

Tibet's environmental importance has also been addressed, albeit only to a limited extent. Under the TPSA, the US recognizes the strategic importance of Tibet's natural resources, and the threat that climate change poses to it. The US therefore will put in efforts to monitor and encourage the preservation of Tibet's environment. Yet this is only a drop in the ocean of what needs to be done.

Another existential thorn in all our sides comes from Tibet's importance to our environment.

IF YOU WANT TO HELP, start by supporting some of the NGOs that are helping Tibet achieve sovereignty. Globally, the International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) is the largest NGO that offers not only programs to assist the Tibetan community, but also regularly produces reports to raise awareness about the political conditions in Tibet. Closer to us, there are NGOs in Japan such as the Tibetan Children's Project (TCP) which helps Tibetan refugee children.

One final note. Tibetan culture may be eroding, but their adoration of the 14th Dalai Lama shows no sign of diminishing. The Tibetans have not given in, and neither will I. Of course, I'm not saying that you should take action. I'm also not saying that you should stand with Tibet. Nonetheless, I will.



Culture Section



CRAZY RICH ASIANS: A TALE OF ONE CITY

TWO YEARS AGO, Hollywood's grand, triumphant answer to its race diversity issues, the little island nation of Singapore's the moment on the global cultural stage, the record-shattering, chart-topping, ground-breaking blockbuster *Crazy Rich Asians* was released to uh, some fanfare.

Uninspired forbidden-love-evil-queen-mother-miraculous-change-of-heart story aside, there really wasn't anything particularly Singaporean, or even Asian for that matter, about the movie. Despite the relentless marketing revolving around its predominantly Asian cast

(*"It's not a movie, it's a movement!"*—the guy who also directed Justin Bieber's 2011 3D concert film), the characters were more wealthy than Asian. Ambiguous Eurasian ethnicities, tiringly familiar Hollywood faces, everybody speaking in some vague Caucasian accent which they thought to salvage with just one single character basically doing yellowface with a painfully overdone rendition of "Singlish", low angle panoramic shots of manufactured, multi-million dollar development spectacles that we've all seen a thousand times (You know the one. The three build-

ings with the ship on the top), all culminated into the ultimate visual expression of Singapore's destiny manifest: a very expensive tourist destination for rich people.

15, directed by Royston Tan and released in 2003, is also set in Singapore, with a slightly different subject matter of gang violence. It too has a predominantly Asian cast. In fact, all five of the main cast merely play semi-fictionalized versions of themselves in the film. The dialogue is set in a healthy mix of English, Mandarin, Malay, Hokkien, and various other local dialects. Quite unexpectedly,

it also features an extensive sequence of Singapore's various tourist attractions and landmarks.

Except in *15*, we are following protagonist Armani as he looks for a building that is "perfect" enough, one that people will read about in the papers, to jump off from. Accompanied by his two "brothers", they hold placards that read "我" "要" "死" ("I want to die") as they travel across the city, stopping to pose in front of temples, museums, parks, and apartment buildings. When they finally pinpoint the perfect spot, the iconic durian-shaped concert



hall Esplanade, Erick and Shaun pat Armani on the back for a job well done, as Armani himself breaks into a satisfied grin. His final solitary journey later is shown through an uncomfortably lengthy and quiet close up on his teary face as he rides the bus to his suicide destination.

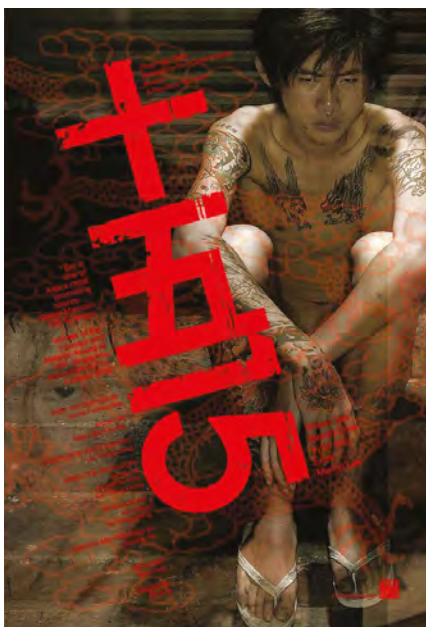
Following this sobering and seemingly final sequence, however, the film carries on with its usual programming of vignettes from the daily lives of the rest of the gang members, fondly referred to in Singapore as “bengs”: filming homemade music videos chanting gang slogans to techno music while topless, doing DIY face piercings in their apartment flats, comparing penis lengths, swallowing condoms filled with ecstasy to smuggle into Malaysia, and skipping school.

Suffice to say, the Singapore that Tan delves into in his debut full-length feature film, which had to be cut 27 times before it could get past the government’s censors, is worlds apart from the one the international audience was offered in *Crazy Rich Asians*. As the camera follows the boys through their lives, they encounter loneliness, pain, and death, which they face with unblinking eyes and indifference. Shaun’s unseen father repeatedly slaps

«AS THE CAMERA FOLLOWS THE BOYS THROUGH THEIR LIVES, THEY ENCOUNTER LONELINESS, PAIN, AND DEATH, WHICH THEY FACE WITH UNBLINKING EYES AND INDIFFERENCE»

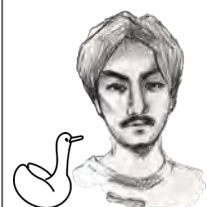
Armani physically assaults an office lady who complains about the boys making noise on the bus. The gang gets into a gruesome altercation with students of an Integrated Programme school, Singapore’s covert way of denominating elitist, near-private schools, who may very well have grown up to be Nick Young’s buddies in *Crazy Rich Asians*. Shaun angrily tells off a middle-aged lady, who could very well be mistaken for his mother, for nervously side-eyeing him in the elevator. And though they win these little physical battles, the nauseating scenes of drug abuse, self-harm, and even the scenes where they sprawl out on their backs doing nothing in particular make clear the desolation and aimlessness behind their stoic faces, and that in the long run, our bengs will be the losers in the rat race.

ON THIS NATION built on breakneck competition



his son in the face, asking his child why he would bother birthing a good-for-nothing “pai kia”. Erick laughs the incident off over a bowl of dumplings. Armani squats in the shower, hacking away at his wrist with a penknife, a bored look on his face. An anonymous schoolgirl jumps to her death from her apartment, landing right behind Melvin and Vynn as they walk to lunch. Her empty eyes fix on our two teenaged gangsters as she bleeds out. They then head home to put on cucumber face masks and talk girls and shoplifting.

Despite their unrelenting refusal to be a part of “normal” society, we see the world at large slowly creeping onto them. The ever-present gaze of the general public, quietly judging them and their antics violate the invisible barrier that both sides had raised between themselves through incongruous edu-



by Jiwoong Choi
Special thanks to Donovan
Graphics by Jules Iida
Stills and poster from
Tan, 15, Zhao Wei Films

and meritocracy, which rose from a third-world country expelled from Malaysia in 1965 to become the hub and playground of the global elite today as we see in *Crazy Rich Asians*, these five restless souls find their place in the world quickly disappearing, with nowhere to run to but to each other.

Crazy Rich Asians tells the story of “defeat” and redemption—that with the magic of *love*, one can rise from a lowly economics professor at NYU to the queen consort of generational wealth hoarded from imperial British colonial times. That in today’s era of rapidly rising income inequality and social unrest, hey, rich people have feelings too! 15 shows us the other side of the coin—just defeat—those left behind in Singapore’s meteoric social and economic progress, who at best will amount to the anonymous background waiters, security guards, and drivers in *Crazy Rich Asians*, or dead at the foot of the



Esplanade like Armani.

In the final scene, the boys sit on the train bathed in the orange of the sunset. Their faces are blank, staring silently ahead as another gang chant echoes over the speakers in Hokkien:

“Please do not reason me with the truth. Or expect to change me with your kindness.”

I can’t offer an explanation for my life.

If something ever happens to you, where can your parents find their sons?”

Slowly, Melvin leans his head on his brother’s shoulder. •

Why Animal Crossing Is the Game for the Coronavirus Moment

by Imad Khan



Originally published on 07/04/2020
Page layout by Alexine Castillo Yap

IMAGINE ESCAPING to an island paradise where bags of money fall out of trees and a talking raccoon can approve you for a mortgage.

With the world in the grip of a pandemic, that's exactly the sort of escape that has captivated so many—not in their fantasies, but in the world of Animal Crossing: New Horizons. It's the latest in a series that's been around since 2001, but New Horizons is the first built-from-the-ground-up console release in 19 years. It's also a conveniently timed piece of whimsy for gamers—and has become a phenomenon.

In Animal Crossing, players take on the role of a lone human on an island filled with pudgy anthropomorphic animals. Players are tasked with building a thriving society, filling it with shops, bridges and other accommodations for its residents. There are no high scores, vampire Nazis or final bosses. The game is played at a relaxed pace, in which the player can do as much or as little as they want on any given day. Upbeat acoustic jams or sultry bossa nova synths play in the background.

"There's no nastiness. There's no violence that exists. They get absorbed into the day-to-day things without the real world consequences," said Romana Ramzan, a lecturer at Glasgow Caledonian University in Scotland who teaches game narrative. "It's like you've been transported to a parallel universe. It's the universe you've always wanted, but can't get."

Ramzan posits that the opportunities Animal Crossing affords players contribute to its wide appeal. For children, being able to engage in adultlike chores, like building and decorating a house, gives them power often out of reach. For adults, especially millennials who have lived through the Great Recession and current coronavirus-induced economic stress, it offers the white picket fence often associated with the American dream that's increasingly elusive. Debt, which can accumulate quickly in Animal Crossing, can also be paid off easily. Goals feel attainable and within reach.

THOUGH THE AESTHETICS of the game might lead some to believe it's geared toward children, it's found a dedicated audience with millennials, some of whom grew up with the franchise, and with younger audiences experiencing it for the first time. It's all the more intensified for those struggling with isolation and addiction.

Joseph Gorordo, 35, is a vice president of outreach for Recovery Unplugged, a chain of music-based alcohol and drug treatment centers. >>

It's the universe you've always wanted, but can't get.

He and his clients have been using Animal Crossing as a way to connect while practicing social distancing.

“On Sunday night, I got onto my island, I opened it up, within an hour I had four friends, two colleagues, and two clients in recovery who were all hanging out on this island and having a mini support meeting,” said Gorordo, a former heroin addict.

He understands intimately many of the anxieties being felt by millennials, especially those who turn to drugs and alcohol. Animal Crossing offers a haven and can give players a feeling of empowerment and community, particularly at a moment when many are being told to stay at home.

“So much of recovery from addiction or mental health issues is connection,” Gorordo said. “With so much of us trapped in our houses right now, meeting up virtually has us support each other in this game in a way we haven’t, being self-isolated and in quarantine.”

ANIMAL CROSSING FOLLOWS a real-time clock and calendar, meaning a minute in the game is a minute in the real world. The game changes day to day, with new fish, bugs and other surprises appearing only during certain seasons or months. Animal Crossing doesn’t have an end and can be played indefinitely—which is especially prescient when there’s no deadline to the current crisis. This pace bestows on the game a level of calmness, one that gives the player total control over progression.

“Animal Crossing makes work feel soothing — we call it gentle progression,” said Jennifer Scheurle, 31, lead game designer at Arena Net in Seattle, the developers behind the Guild Wars franchise. Scheurle said Animal Crossing’s pace—players chop wood or build a bridge at their own

speed, for example—makes it feel both personal and predictable.

The game’s chubby sweater-wearing bears and cardio-obsessed squirrels are upbeat and positive. And the entire warm-hug aesthetic gives the game its universal appeal.

“I don’t want to be stereotypical here, but women don’t mind doing small task-based games,” said Gwen Reilly, 24, a freelance illustrator from Pasadena, California. “They enjoy the process of building stuff up slowly.”

For Reilly, there’s a parallel between hobbies popular among women, like sewing or gardening, and the deliberate pace of the game. “Watching Animal Crossing slowly build up is a part of the cathartic factor, seeing your creation improve day by day.”

Animal Crossing may be a game without a final goal that ends the journey, but users will eventually stop playing it. Years from now, when the coronavirus has passed and the economy has recovered, players can still log back in and see how their island is doing. Sure, it will be covered in weeds, certain residents may have moved, and cockroaches will be hiding under furniture.

But when players do run into another resident, their old animal friends will be happy to see that they are doing OK.

It’s all the more intensified for those struggling with isolation and addiction.



Images by Nintendo via *The New York Times*
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THRIFTING FOR A PERSONALITY TRAIT

by Maho Nambu

WORN DENIM tumbled in cheap detergent, a hip couple in purple cargo pants and twenty dollars in my pocket. Tokyo does not fall short of its thrift life: the back alleys of Harajuku where vintage Chanel competes against straight-off-the-mannequin Chanel, the orphaned pieces of clothing waiting to be re-loved on the streets of Shimokitazawa, and reliving the 80s' retro-punk in Koenji.

Thriftling is a trendy pastime amongst the hipster youths swerving anything remotely related to the word “mainstream”. The reality of thriftling in Tokyo, however, includes thumbing through racks of checkered shirts with obscure stains in a cramped basement with no windows—not to mention you need a little more than 2000 yen in your wallet.

So why does Tokyo's youth engage in thrifting? Does it really stem from a burning passion to reduce textile waste or do we just need to feel unique in a collectivist society?

Photograph by Stephanie Hau [Unsplash]



KILLING TIME down the narrow alleys of Shimokitazawa, you always come across young women decked out in bizarre colors, accessorized by their boyfriends looking just as comical. I cannot help but get a kick out of the juxtaposition of seeing these young experimental couples brushing past JKs in their school uniforms. *It is like an act of rebellion against the six years of secondary education shackled in the monotony of grey skirts and navy blazers, the gleaming school chest-badge serving as a stamped proof of being the property of a collectivist society.*

Clothing is your debut to the public eye: the first layer of you that you are disclosing to the world. After graduating from uniforms, you are given the freedom to choose how you present yourself.

Having spent years of your adolescence accustomed to uniformity, there must be something thrilling about stepping into a thrift store: a wonderland of self-expression not even limited by the realms of time. Going back to the question of why Tokyo's youth thrift, the eco-consciousness buzz, broke student budgets and overly-paid Youtubers' "thrift haul" videos are all valid reasons. But still, I am speculating that these Japanese Gen Zs are also drawn to the musky smell of thrift stores in an attempt to find their individuality exclusive to themselves without a higher authority shaping their identity.



Photograph by Mario Effendy [Unsplash]



Photograph by author

I TOO am brimming the last of my teenage years and am walking around in circles attempting to discover myself. Everyday is like being stuck at a stoplight, looking both ways before attempting to cross the road into adulthood, only to be struck unconscious by an identity crisis going 90 in a 65. Youth is a stubborn child, wanting to belong yet wanting to be deemed exceptional.

I am that stubborn child. I make my visits to the thrift store to spend my allowance on a Nike crew neck and excuse its overly familiar logo because it is "vintage", hence "not mainstream". Thrifting allows a choice for self-expression unrestrained by corporate powers shaping the fashion world today. Perhaps the Japanese youth are seeking a breath of fresh air in these cramped underground thrift hubs. Inhaling the scent of musty parkas and artistic individuality, they have found their ultimate escape from a collectivist quotidian.





How to Pretend You're in Tokyo

by Sebastian Modak

A FEW YEARS AGO, I walked through Tokyo's neon-lit streets for the first time, wide-eyed and jet-lagged. It only took three days to learn some of the city's secrets. If you cannot find the perfect noodle shop for lunch, for example, look up and you will see another dozen options, filling the upper floors of what you thought were office buildings. Or that famous places—like Shibuya Crossing, the intersection you have seen in 100 timelapses—are famous for a reason, but there is so much more to learn by picking a metro stop at random and going for a long walk.

This was supposed to be a big year for tourism for the city—already one of the world's most visited—as it was set to host the now postponed Olympics and Paralympic Games. That, of course, did not happen.

With most of the world still confined to their homes, that Tokyo trip will have to wait for the millions of people who canceled flights and hotel bookings. In the meantime, there are ways to capture the spirit of a sometimes impenetrable, always fascinating city. Perhaps, just for a night, these recommendations might even make you feel like you are there.

Hear the City

I FIRST MET KAZUTO OKAWA, who performs under the name LLLL, outside a convenience store in the quirky neighborhood of Koenji on my first night in Tokyo. He was sitting on a curb in a circle of friends, his face obscured by long, disheveled hair. Over the years since that first encounter, his music—a blend of sugary pop hooks and space-age soundscapes—has become synonymous with the city for me. If those conflicting feelings of disorientation and joy that hit every visitor to Tokyo could be translated to sound, this would be it.

When I asked Okawa what music best captures his home city, he directed me to the classics. Musician Keigo Oyamada, better known as Cornelius, is sometimes reductively called the “Japanese Beck” for the way he swoops between genres with ease. Every album is a journey, but for the most evocative of the city, Okawa suggests his 1995 album “69/96.” “It's forever futuristic,” he said. “A perfect match to Tokyo.”

If Cornelius is too out there for you, Okawa recommends “Kazemachi Roman” by Tokyo folk rock pioneers Happy End: You may recognize a song from the soundtrack to that great tribute to Tokyo, “Lost in Translation.”

To begin understanding the phenomenon that is Tokyo's J-pop scene, Okawa says to start with Sheena Ringo's “Kabukicho no joo.” “It captures the dark side of the city,” he said. “And it happens to be one of the most popular J-pop songs of all time.” For the flip side of the same pop coin—perhaps it is a more lively summer night you are trying to re-create—he recommends Taeko Ohnuki's aptly titled “Sunshower.”



If those conflicting feelings of disorientation and joy that hit every visitor to Tokyo could be translated to sound, this would be it.

Cook at the Dinner Table

NO TRIP TO TOKYO is complete without a whole lot of eating. While it may be hard to accurately re-create a bona fide Tokyo bowl of ramen or plate of sushi, there is plenty that you can do from home.

Quick and easy dishes include yakitori (yes, you really can make it at home) and nori chips (perfect with a cold Japanese lager).

For something more involved, and seasonally appropriate, follow the lead of Motoko Rich, *The New York Times'* Tokyo bureau chief. "With the weather getting cooler, it's time to break out the butane burner for shabu shabu, a classic Japanese dinner that you can make and eat right at the table," she said.

First, make a kombu dashi, a broth flavored with dried kelp, then take beef, tofu, vegetables and mushrooms and dip them into the bubbling liquid, making sure to swirl in the ingredients long enough that they cook through. "Although we can cook shabu shabu at home, it also reminds me of fancier mid-20th-century-era restaurants in Tokyo, where the servers wear kimonos and carry regal platters to the tables."

Expand your Literary Horizon

IF YOU WANT to lose yourself in Tokyo by curling up with a good book, we have plenty of recommendations, whether it is a long work of fiction you are after or more snackable short stories. There is more—a lot more—than Haruki Murakami. Rich recommends "Breasts and Eggs" by Mieko Kawakami. "I love the way Kawakami references real and recognizable, but not exoticized, Tokyo locations," she said. "You feel in the know, reading it, rather than as if you are being introduced to a precious Other World. It is Tokyo as it is lived in, not a film set."

See the City on the Screen

IF AN EVENING of TV and subtitles is what you are after, start with the binge-worthy "Midnight Diner: Tokyo Stories" on Netflix. The show is about the customers who pass through a tiny counter-service restaurant that is only open from midnight to 6. At turns heartwarming, hilarious and melancholic, it is a moving portrait of Tokyo after dark. If the opening title sequence does not make you feel good, check your pulse: it is ASMR (autonomous sensory meridian response) for the soul.

When it comes to movies, as Mike Hale, a *Times'* television critic, said, "Tokyo is simultaneously the most cosmopolitan and the most intensely local city you can imagine, and that's a perfect combination for storytelling, as directors from Kurosawa to Kiarostami to Sofia Coppola have shown."

Where to start then? You cannot skip Akira Kurosawa, the influential filmmaker whose career spanned almost six decades. Hale recommends "Stray Dog" (1949), shot in Tokyo in the aftermath of World War II. He describes it as "a walking tour of the city in sheer survival mode." Next, try "Tokyo Drifter" (1966) by Seijun Suzuki. "Suzuki's stylized yakuza story sets traditional themes of honor and corruption against a jazzy, jagged, surrealist distillation of the rapidly changing city," he said. Finally, for something more contemporary, watch the Cannes Palm d'Or-winning "Shoplifters" (2018) by Hirokazu Kore-eda. In Hale's view, the film, about a family of grifters, "shows both the glittering modern metropolis and the shadow world just beyond the neon."

Get Lost in the Virtual World

WHILE JAPAN'S MOST INTERNATIONALLY FAMOUS video gaming figure may be an Italian plumber with a taste for mushrooms, there

are also plenty of games more grounded in real-life Tokyo than Super Mario Bros. Brian Ashcraft, an Osaka-based senior writer at gaming website Kotaku, recommends the expansive "Yakuza" series, which follows Kazuma Kiryu as he makes his name in the underworld. The Yakuza games are action-packed, but with dance battles, karaoke sessions and laugh-out-loud dialogue, they are also unabashedly silly. "This year has resulted in all events and trips to Tokyo being canned," Ashcraft said. "The Yakuza games do a fantastic job of bringing parts of the city to life. These obsessive, digital recreations mimic the idea of Tokyo. For me, that's good enough."

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Miles Away: Memoirs of One Peninsula

A response to “How to Pretend
You’re in Tokyo”

by Shun Mizumoto

1

“WHERE DOES the three-legged raven sleep?” Out of the blue, this enigmatic song from my childhood drifts into my mind, washing over me in a serene tide of nostalgia. Night was falling in Asakusa, Tokyo, where I worked as a part-time receptionist at a guest house. I was just catching my breath, having finished welcoming most of the day’s guests coming from all over the world. It was about a few years ago, before this global societal shift. Back then, Tokyo was still bustling with foreign visitors.

In hindsight, my sudden remembrance of the song—the “three-legged raven” song—must have been prompted by a very personal question. I could sense this question growing louder within myself as I listened to the visitors happily recounting their eventful stories in Japan: *what is my own story of this country?*

This conundrum brings me back to one particular place—*Kii Hanto*. A vast, wild and mountainous peninsula, the land of my youth. Let me take you there for a little while.

THE KII PENINSULA is seamless—ancient pilgrimage paths traverse the mountainous terrain, connecting four sanctuaries: Ise, Kumano, Koya and Yoshino. Three religions—Shinto, Buddhism and *Shugendō*—effortlessly blend with each other as do the various natural elements—mountains, rocks, rivers, waterfalls and the sea. And they, all wrapped up in the veil of spirituality, seep into people’s life, just as the three-legged raven, a ‘guide bird’ from the ancient myth, swoops in and out of a children’s song I used to sing in a merry tone.



2



3



4



5

6



Amongst the realms of this serene continuity my memories reside. They are a perennial retreat for all five of my senses. The view from the mountain top, the roar of breaking waves, the fragrance of freshly-cut *hinoki* wood, the blazing heat of the fire torch festival, and the mellow sweetness of local *mochi* confectionery—these nostalgic sensations are woven into my life memories. These memories make the most authentic story of Japan that I myself can tell—not about Tokyo’s megacity nor about the iconically traditional Kyoto, but only about *Kii Hanto*.

BACK TO TOKYO. With their vacation plans on hold, people around the globe might be dreaming of this chaotic, weird yet fascinating metropolis. As for myself, being stuck in this very city leads me to think of the remote, rustic yet mesmerizing peninsula. People have so many stories about somewhere they hold dear to their heart, and each of them makes the place even more special. Let’s sit back on a couch at home and savor this long-distance romance for a while, shall we?



7

Photo locations:

- 1 Shichiri-mi-hama Coast, Kumano, Mie
- 2 Niutuhime Shrine, Katsuragi, Wakayama
- 3 Hatnashi Hamlet, Totsukawa, Nara
- 4 Sakura-no-Sato Park, Odai, Mie
- 5 Ise Grand Shrine, Ise, Mie
- 6 Shinsuibaku Waterfall, Kozagawa, Wakayama
- 7 Soni Highland, Uda, Nara



Z:Du

Though I had dabbled in watercolor in high school for art club, I ventured into digital painting and layout designs in my iPad only very recently during all the free time indoors this past year. The apprehensions and uncertainties of being an amateur continue to diminish with every opportunity I take in applying my newfound hobby to various extracurriculars, for instance, designing this very page you are reading our editors' picks on!

- Zoe, art editor

Editors' Picks: Four Komaba Times Members Share the Little Pieces in Their Lives That Have Kept Them Active (and Sane) During This Period of Inertia

I started my own blog, just to write about my naked thoughts. It turned out being mostly about the politics in the depoliticised. I felt a bit uncomfortable making it public, I still do, but I wanted to stay connected and sustain the dialogue, with myself and with others.

- Eriko, translations director



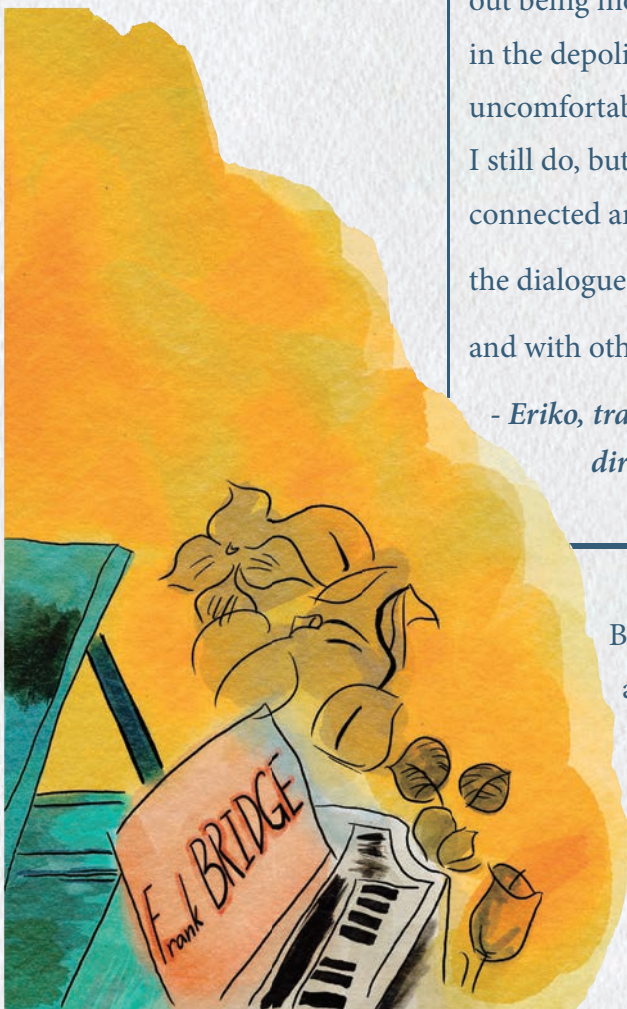
Curling your hair to a cool fro in the summer—the angle at which your hair rises with a tight curl is perfect for optimal airflow. You can feel the breeze sliding between each hair and grazing your scalp. And you get to look cool B)

- Juju, art editor



Bridge is one of my favourite composers, he's so underrated and creates such entrancing music that's a great escape from the repetitive daily life of Covid times. It's great for studying or as a listening enterprise in itself; I'd recommend his 3 Sketches or Piano Quintet in D minor for classical music enthusiasts and novices alike!

- Karen, social media



CREATIVITY

A Year On: One Loveless Tokyo Night

by Alyssa Castillo
Yap

2018 starts:
Tokyo is new,
Tokyo opens my eyes,
Tokyo is not anything we have ever seen,
Tokyo reaches the sky - do you see its skyline? Find red.
Tokyo Tower. Can you see it from where you are now? No. Until now.
Tokyo Tower. I want to show you how it touches the sky.
Tokyo Tower. It glows red, I know it does
Though I cannot see it
From where I am.
Ending 2019.

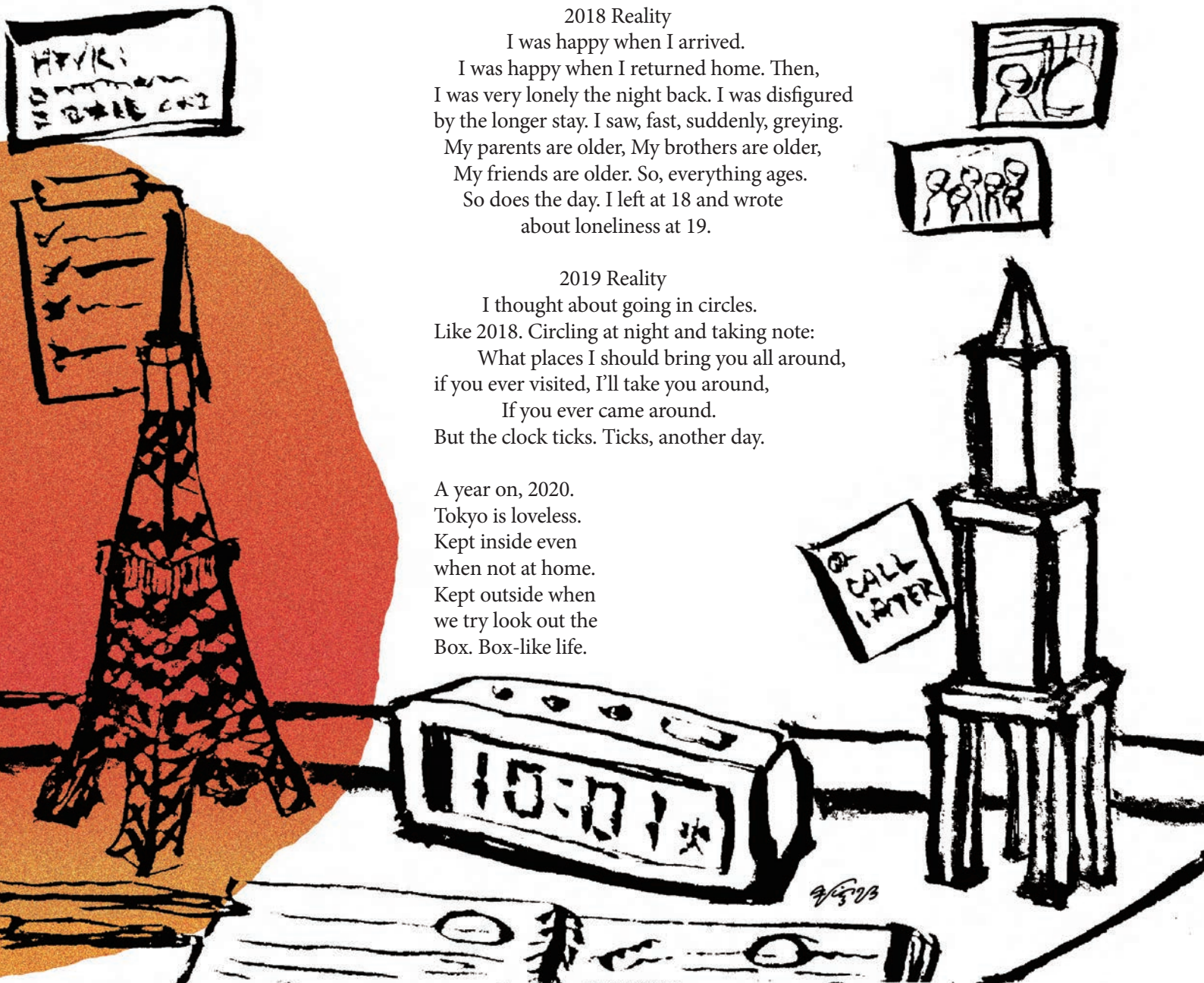
2018 Reality

I was happy when I arrived.
I was happy when I returned home. Then,
I was very lonely the night back. I was disfigured
by the longer stay. I saw, fast, suddenly, greying.
My parents are older, My brothers are older,
My friends are older. So, everything ages.
So does the day. I left at 18 and wrote
about loneliness at 19.

2019 Reality

I thought about going in circles.
Like 2018. Circling at night and taking note:
What places I should bring you all around,
if you ever visited, I'll take you around,
If you ever came around.
But the clock ticks. Ticks, another day.

A year on, 2020.
Tokyo is loveless.
Kept inside even
when not at home.
Kept outside when
we try look out the
Box. Box-like life.



How We Use Our Bodies to Navigate a Pandemic

by Gia Kourlas

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Originally published on 31/03/2020

NEW YORK—One day, before the coronavirus pandemic, a river of pedestrians—half manic, half clueless—was feeding onto the escalator at the West Fourth Street subway station during rush hour. Blocking the escalator entrance were people gazing at their phones. Once they finally stepped on, they planted themselves on the left. It was a mess.

You stand on the right; you pass on the left. This is the choreography of everyday life.

I found myself directing people where to stand and when to move. As the bottom half of the escalator started to organize itself, I noticed that something similar was happening toward the top. I recognized the voice up there: It belonged to Ori Flomin, a dancer, teacher and choreographer. We saw each other and giggled.

“Of course,” he said, “we are the ones arranging people in space.”

I’ve been thinking a lot about choreography lately. Not the kind performed onstage, which we won’t be seeing for the foreseeable future, but the choreography of space: How are we using our bodies to navigate a pandemic?

IN THIS TIME OF CONFINEMENT, we have been given one immeasurable gift—the freedom to go outside. In exchange, we must abide by a simple rule: Stay 6 feet away from others. As choreographic intentions go, that’s not remotely vague. Yet during my runs and walks over the past few days, I’ve noticed that 6 feet doesn’t mean the same thing to everybody.

Spatial awareness, like coordination, isn’t a given. Watching the choices people make when they move in public, much less in this time of social distancing, can be shocking, from the much-bemoaned tourist who comes to a grinding halt in Times Square to the woman with a yoga mat knocking people aside to get her spot on the floor. (It’s OK; she’ll still feel good about bowing her head and saying namaste.)

Now the choreography of the streets has taken on higher stakes. It’s the difference between health and sickness, life and death.

Inside we’re alone. Outside, a new alertness is in order, one that demands a deep connection to the position and movement of the body—or proprioception, sometimes referred to as the sixth sense. Close your eyes and balance on one foot: However much your proprioception, or sensory information kicks in, it will help you to remain upright. Wobbles and falls are normal, but that means it’s time to work on balance.

That feeling and control of where we are in space is important right now; dancers, through years of training and sensorial alertness, grasp this inherently. If this pandemic

is teaching us anything, it is that we need to return to our bodies. Life is precious, and so is movement.

“IT IS APPALLING HOW WE DISUSE THE BODY,” postmodern choreographer and dancer Steve Paxton once said. “Dance reminds us about that. Dance explores some of the physical possibilities; dance refocuses our focusing mind on very basic existence, and time, space, gravity open up to creativity. This seems to me a reminder of nature, of our natures.”

Dance is no longer being shown live on proscenium stages, but its materiality haunts New York City. It might be a friendly ghost. Is the proliferation of dance classes being offered on Instagram a sign that dance might be the kind of medicine our bodies need?

Along with that comes mindfulness, a word that has become too synonymous with self-care. But focusing on the present moment is a necessity. When I’m walking or run-



ning — and I'm about to buy a jump rope—I bear witness to a lot of mindlessness. **Why is it that the person wearing a mask—practically full ninja, as if about to dispose of radioactive waste — is often the one who heads straight at you?** What makes the couple jogging side by side on the Williamsburg Bridge think it's OK to pass an older man by a matter of inches? What are the runners wearing marathon finisher shirts thinking when they spread across a path for a bro chat, their saliva and sweat misting the air?

Either a new entitled breed has revealed itself or people are showing how oblivious they are to their bodies in space.

When you walk outside, you are responsible for more than just yourself. We are in this together, and movement has morals and consequences—its own choreographic score, or set of instructions—in this age of the coronavirus. **Walking or running in the middle of a sidewalk is no longer acceptable. Pick an edge.** If passing someone from either direction, make an arc with 6 feet between you—just as soon after you've made sure the coast is clear behind you. As for running or walking side by side on a narrow path? You have to be joking. Single file.

If you're standing in a line, make some space. Feel the floor. Play with gravity. Get to know your feet. **Start to recognize that even in stillness, there is movement.**

WHEN YOU LOOK WHERE YOU'RE GOING, you see things. It used to be that condoms littered the sidewalks; now, the pavement is littered with used disposable gloves. Both objects of protection are of great importance, it seems,

until it's time to find a garbage can. But what we can't throw away—especially on the street—is the protection and grace of social distancing. The pandemic has created something fascinating: a new way of moving, a new way of dancing in the streets.

It can feel like a game of chicken. Who will be the first to make space? What is the latest swerve or hop to become a step of survival?

One thing seems certain: It will be a while for duets to regain their place in dance culture. (After the world rights itself again, I predict years of solo dances, just as after Sept. 11, choreography was full of dancers gazing upward.) But in real life, duets have cropped up everywhere. Your partner is a stranger; the stage is the sidewalk.

PAXTON WAS RIGHT to say that we need to refocus our minds, to get back to basics. **Social distancing isn't just about honoring space; it's also about celebrating it.** An odd thing happened when I was running the other day—my random playlist went to Bach, the same music used in the first section of Paul Taylor's "Esplanade," his 1975 masterpiece based on the everyday or found movements. There isn't one dance step in it, just as there weren't any in my run. But running, like walking, is moving in time in space. And suddenly it felt like a dance.

In the 1960s, a generation of experimental choreographers was forward-thinking enough to embrace the beauty and wisdom of pedestrian movement: standing, sitting, walking, running. As we find ourselves in a position of cherishing what we've always taken for granted, we need to retrain our minds as well as our bodies because right now we're all dancers, and we need to start acting like it.



“Start to recognize that even in stillness, there is movement.”

PHOTOGRAPH BY: 2020 The New York Times Company

I learned that the more you get to know someone, the more you really don't know them. It's a hodgepodge of confusion that makes you happy regardless.

Fly me to the moon, for that's the only place I can find peace.

To the guy who I fought all those years ago. I forgive you and hopefully you forgive me. Now that you have graduated too, I hope you are doing well in post-University life. Perhaps you are in policy/law or politics now?

Best to you.

"Hey, you there!
Wanna go abroad for fun, to study and to 'broaden your horizon'??
Pack your stuff right away and get on a plane!
That 'Tomorrow' guy is ruddy deceitful."
I'm gonna pick you up and throw you out of the window.

no time
to have
time

No matter how bad things got, I've never had the urge to run away. I do now. A lot of people romanticize the idea of forgetting your past self entirely and creating a new one in a different state or country. That sounds f**king appealing as ever.

I missed you so much all those years. Although I guess the you that I've been obsessed with is more of an imaginary you, an idealized version of you, I still miss you. And frankly, I'm really happy that I do, because it's better to feel the hurt than nothing.

no way i f**king wrote a vent here and my internet had to break when i hit enter and it's gone... this is a f**king joke.

2020 sees me continuing the uphill battle to disentangle myself from these preconceptions of love and desire dominated by a male perspective.

I want to be good at math!

I know I might never be able to love like my parents did, but I guess each generation interacts with love in their own way. Because people don't know what love is, and, let's face it, nobody does, online dating can seem somewhat effortless. Yet isn't this what love is about: a fuzzy, heady psychological phenomenon to be obsessed with?

For National Coming Out Day, I gotta admit I'm pansexual and polyamorous.

Why does my brain hyperfocus on anything BUT the things i actually need to get done?

The guy I used to have a crush on, who was also the bane of my existence, did something quite cruel to me... BUT it's the first time it doesn't hurt. Maybe I'm not ready to move on...well, yet, but I guess I'm starting to let go.

i want to cry but
i can't.
i seriously can't
cry...
i cant even force
myself to do it.
it hurts.

2020 was a year like no other. You constantly had something to shout at, but didn't know how. For this reason, we invited the Komaba Times community and beyond to shout out from their heart, ANONYMOUSLY. This is our 2020, unfiltered.

To focus on classes, I started to re-adjust my eating and sleeping schedule. I eat DURING class and I sleep in fragments. It's strange. I eat facing a bunch of icons and occasionally frames of human faces on a screen.

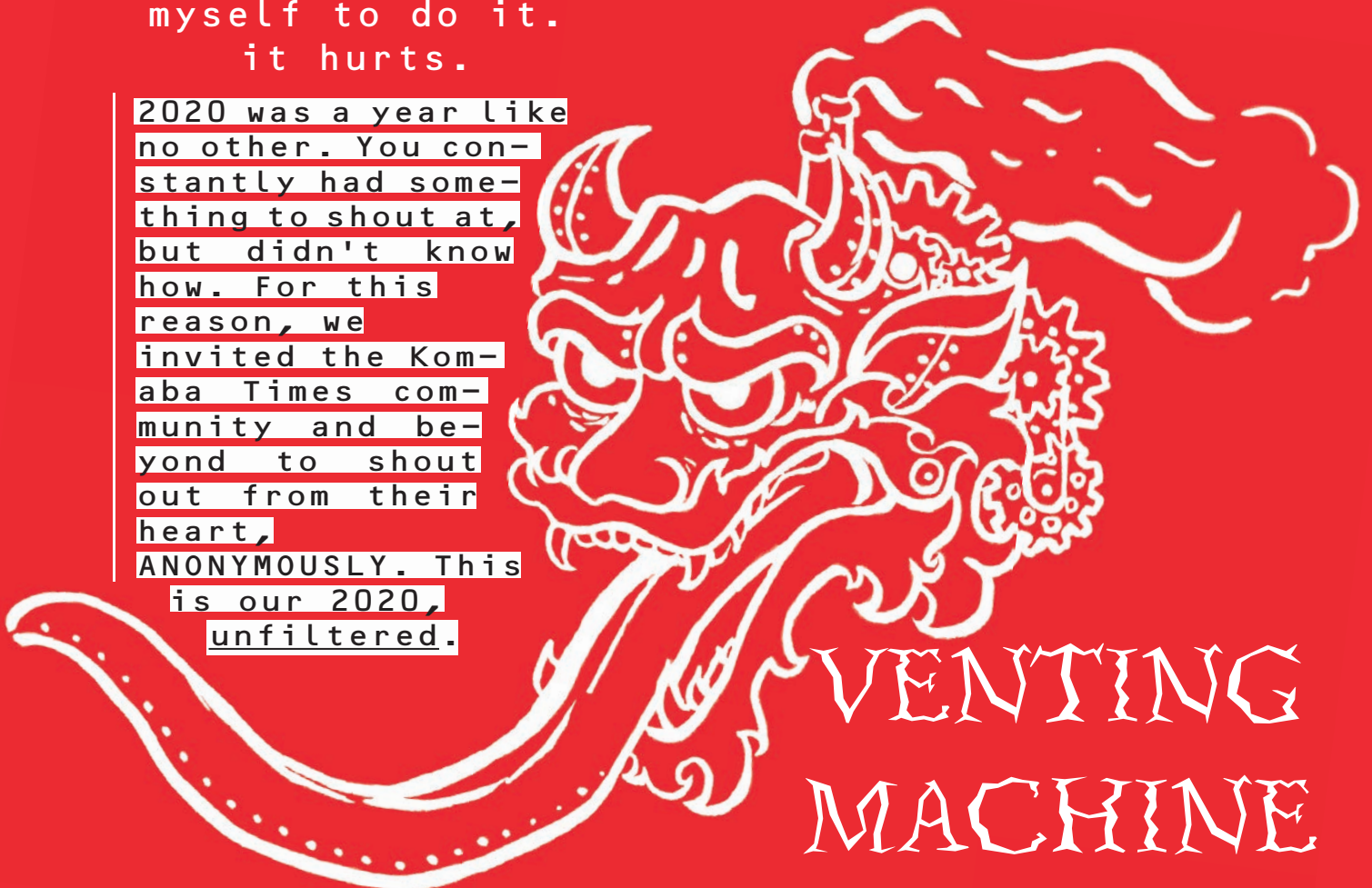
The mediati-
zation of the
other's body. I

try to remind myself that I

HAVE a body while shov-

ing food down my throat in front of a screen. I'm sure I will go blind in the near future if this continues.

I wonder what it would be like to vent to the future. I was a fortunate middle of the first ten years and got to meet many older and younger than me in the first nine years of PEAK. While dorms closed common rooms and professors changed curriculums, first in syllabus and then moving to Zoom (online video) what bothered me the most was how slow the dorm dryers were. Whoever and whenever you are, did that ever improve?



VENTING
MACHINE

(図1)

毎年正月には、題にちなんだ和歌を披露する「歌会始(うたかいはじめ)の儀」が宮中で行われる。三十一文字(みそひともじ)という短い形式で感情や風物を詠む和歌・短歌は奈良時代以前から現代まで受け継がれ、日本文化に欠かせない一部分だ。古典和歌を鑑賞する面白さ、現代短歌を詠む楽しさとは何か。古典和歌研究の第一人者と、東大で研究する傍ら、現代短歌の世界で活躍する歌人の2人に聞いた。

ルールを覚えて解釈深める

和歌の解釈とはどのような作業だろうか。「和歌文学大辞典」の編集委員を務め、和歌入門書も多数執筆する渡部泰明教授(人文社会系研究科)は「和歌が詠まれた時代の言葉の意味を踏まえながら、作者の意図に即して解釈します」と語る。万葉集から古今和歌集、源氏物語と時代が下るにつれ、作者が踏まえる表現の種類は増えていく。渡部教授は「古い作品からの本歌取りはもちろん、漢詩文などから表現を取り入れることもありますね」と説明する。

和歌の解釈には困難が待ち構える。「和歌の解釈はただ作品を現代語に置き換えるだけではありません」と渡部教授。「言葉に出ている部分はあくまで氷山の一角にすぎず、言葉にならない隠れている部分を掘り起こすのが難しい」。そこで解釈の助けになるのが時代の背景知識と、和歌固有の表現のルールである「様式性」だ。

時代の背景知識が解釈の助けとなる和歌に、古今和歌集の冒頭の歌がある(図1)。平安時代に詠まれた正月にちなんだ和歌だ。「これもただ訳しただけでは面白さが分かりませんが、立春の慶(よろこ)びを演技性豊かに表したと理解すれば、面白い歌になるのです」。背景知識が解釈の助けになる興味深い一例だ。

「様式性」が解釈の助けとなる一例として、例えば「恋」がテーマの和歌の場合「恋人とデートできてうれしい」と詠まれることはないという。恋は常につらいもの、片思いのものとして詠まれる。だからといって、恋人との逢瀬(おうせ)を詠むことができないわけではない。「後朝(きぬぎぬ)の別れ」と呼ばれる、「いかに別れがつかったか」ということを詠む手法がそれだ。「つらさの裏に、逢瀬の喜びが含まれているのです」と渡部教授は語る。

解釈の上達のためには、たくさん和歌を読むしかないという。数をこなしていく



図1 (現代語訳) まだ歴の上では年が変わっていないのに、立春が来てしまった。この年を去年と言うべきだろうか、今年と言うべきだろうか。

(解説) 立春と正月とが食い違ったことを詠んでいます。春が到来した慶びを表してるのですが、ずいぶん回りくどい言い方で、現代人からみると面白さを感じないかもしれません。けれど、新年を祝う門付(かどづ)けの芸(人の家の門口で歌などの芸をし、金品をもらい受けること)のような、ゆったりとした所作を想像して味わうと、新たな面白みが発見できないでしょうか。(渡部教授)

(図2)

と、ある和歌を目にしたときに、思い浮かぶ和歌が増え、いくつもの和歌の情景が重なっていくことで、解釈も容易になる。

和歌には多くのルールがあると思われがちだが、渡部教授は否定する。「実は和歌のルールの種類は、それほど多くありません。逆に様式性や背景知識を覚えてしまえば、作品の言外の意味まで読み取れるようになり、作品鑑賞に深みが出てきます」

感覚を頼りに試行錯誤重ねる

坂井修一教授(情報理工学系研究科)は、自身の研究を行いつつ、現代歌人協会の理事も務めるなど短歌の第一線で活躍する異色の歌人だ。

坂井教授が短歌と出会ったのは大学2年生の春。同級生に短歌誌「かりん」の歌会に連れて行かれたことがきっかけだった。「それが運の尽きです。まさか40年も続けることになるとは思っていません」と笑う。研究の傍ら、作歌に取り組み続ける理由としては「何かを表現したいという欲求を満たすのが、自分にとって短歌という形式だった」と話す。全くの未経験者だった坂井教授は「かりん」で多くの会員と交流しながら歌人となった。

科学者であることが作歌に与えた影響は大きい。「理系の学者としての基盤は論理ですが、歌人としての基盤は感情や感覚。例えば文明の進歩が人類の進歩という考えが理系では自然なものです。芸術の分野ではむしろ逆で、野性味など人類の持つ本来の能力は後退していると考えます」と坂井教授。文明の進歩を人類の進歩と捉える考え方を留保することが創作の大きな動機になるという。

坂井教授が挙げた冬の歌は、作歌を始めて1年ほどのころに詠んだ第一歌集の巻頭歌だ(図2)。作歌の際に気を付けた点として坂井教授は言葉のリズムと響きを挙げた。ただ、気を配るべきはこれらの要素だけではない。「例えば、あ行、か行、さ行は音がきれいですが、この音を連ねるとききれいな歌ができるかといえば実はできません。秀歌は理詰めでは生まれません」。言語を感覚的、感情的に出し入れしながら、韻律と意味が合う形を探っていくという。短歌を初めて作る際は、現代歌人の歌集を手にとるとともに「お試し感覚で詠んでみるのが大事」と坂井教授。TwitterなどのSNSで自作を発表するのも一つの手段だ。「一つのツイートでも4首詠めます。そこで人の批評を受けるのが大事です」。ここで大事なのが、うまく詠めないことを厭(いと)わないこと。「絵でも文芸でも、駄目な作品が財産になる。いろんなものを吸収して短歌がうまくなっていきます」

坂井教授は「作歌はすればするほど面白い。短歌は科学技術全盛の時代でも残っている、感情や感覚、本能を含めた人間の全体を味わうきっかけになるでしょう」と魅力を語る。試行錯誤の先に、魅力的な短歌の世界が広がっている。



図2 (解説) 二十歳の頃に詠んだ歌です。思春期に抱いた哲学的な思惟(しい)から離れる、成人する苦さと甘さの混じった気持ちを詠みました。(坂井教授)



年のちと春は来にけりひとせき去年とを言はむ今年とを言はむ

愛てふ恋が思ひの都屋のふとらから伊人は離る

Quarantine collage

Compiled by Akari Takahashi

Alyssa: "I find that making or taking care of things by hand is therapeutic."
Choi: "I like to skateboard because you can do it by yourself. All you need is floor. Sometimes, you don't even need floor."

Dobie: "I used to go to drawing classes and I liked it. Now with the pandemic, I have more time, so I wanted to pick it up again."

Juju: "It's fun, and less tiring than going clubbing and I can still do stuff the next day."

Maho: "It allows me to be a living canvas for someone's work of art."

Masa: "I prefer going out to staying inside, so I was looking for a hobby to kill time at home. It's my biggest hobby now."

Minghao: "It's a lifesaver for people like me who can't draw well but still want to create art." (3D printing)

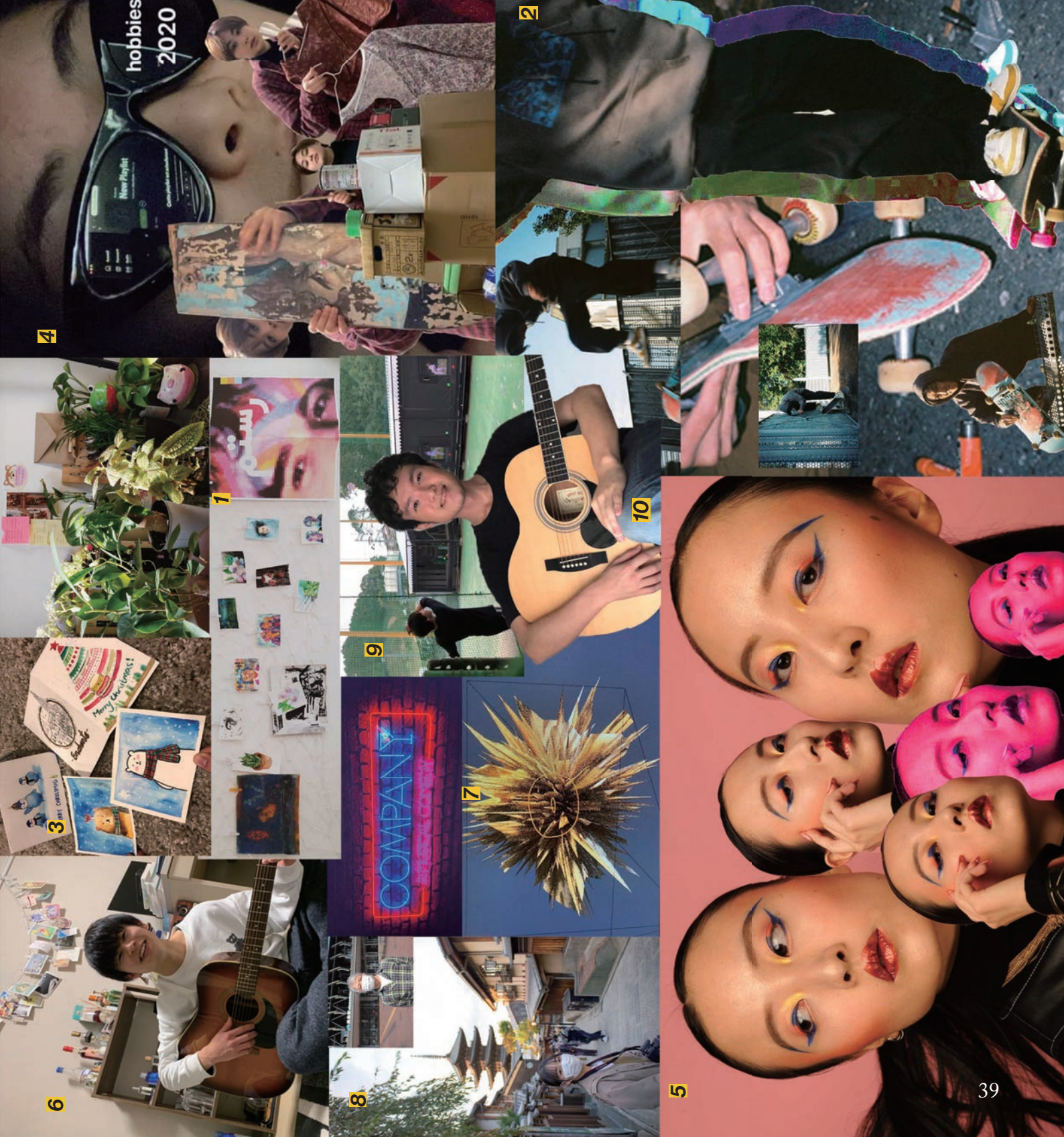
Riko: "I started photography because I was still having unique experiences on exchange here at UTokyo which I wanted to log."

Ryuichi: "I started practicing baseball because I happened to watch a baseball game, which made me feel like playing baseball."

William: "I felt that I was spending too much time on smartphones and computers, and that was getting boring quickly. I already learned a little ukulele, and I figured the guitar could offer more with all of the arrangements available - so I just bought one and fell in love playing it."

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

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