# KOMABA TIMES



# issue 12/ April 2023

#### KOMABA TIMES ISSUE 12: "EMERGENCE"

Exactly a hundred years prior to 2023, a devastating earthquake which we now refer to as the Great Kantō earthquake (関東大地震, *Kantō dai-jishin*) shook the main landmass of Japan. As cities were swept up in flames and millions were rendered homeless, martial law was declared by the Home Ministry (内務 省, *Naimu-shō*). Perhaps, however, there was more tragedy to be found in the murderous human tendencies that ensued quickly after the 1st of September 1923 when the earthquake hit: ethnically minoritized workers were blamed for causing fires and executed alongside other suspected dissidents. The magnitude of the earthquake was a shattering 7.9 Mw and was caused by the plates of the earth colliding deep in the sea—one plate emerging above another that slid calamitously below.

Thinking of "emergence" evokes our human-centered thinking. How could the shifting of plates beneath planetary waters be about people? Of many life-shattering changes we experienced or heard about in the past year, "emergence" is especially reminiscent of our anthropocentric gravitation towards reflecting on life through the chasms within and among us in society. We are not exactly like Itō Noe at the time of the earthquake 100 years ago; she was an activist, writer, and translator born in 1895 who fought for women's liberation, love, and anarchy and one of those murdered by the secret military police for alleged-ly inciting disorder not just during a time of disaster, but against imperial rule.<sup>1</sup> As students in 2023, how do we express our emergence from what people before us have experienced?

The French philosopher Jean-François Lyotard once said in an essay that "the spirit of the times is surely not that of the merely pleasant: its mission remains that of the immanent sublime, that of alluding to the non-demonstrable."<sup>2</sup> You will find that the writers, illustrators, photographers, artists and editors of Komaba Times' Issue 12 "EMERGENCE" echo the deep-seated grumblings of the Earth in our own uniquely stimulating demonstrations. We are University of Tokyo students who have hailed from around the world and have excitedly spent opportune months to compile this magazine. After collective years of introspection under COVID-19-induced quarantine and beyond, we hope that you enjoy the exploration of our shared desires for positive change, as well as the unraveling of each of our own intertwined networks built with others, the city, our memories, and with the wider world at large.

No cheer can be loud enough to represent the seismic gratitude, love, and acknowledgement owed to the work by the contributors, the student team, and our faculty advisor, for the ever-evolving, student-oriented, cross-campus, and interdisciplinary collaboration underway for Komaba Times. May our readers find something they resonate with in this issue.

<sup>1</sup> Hiratsuka, Raichō. In the beginning, Woman was the sun: The autobiography of a Japanese feminist. Columbia University Press, 2010.

<sup>2</sup> Jean-Francois Lyotard, "Presenting the Unpresentable: The Sublime." *Artforum*, 1982.

#### CONTENTS

4

Be like Alice; come out of the campus sanctuary! Alyssa Castillo Yap

6

Anti-Emergence: The Forgotten History of Student Autonomy in Komaba-Ryō Chiu Chien-Cheng (James)

# 9

Quenching our thirst for change: Transforming Komaba Campus into an oasis Mahi Patki

## 12

Cruising the Carnivorous Waters: Chronicles from a Plant-Based Voyager in the Land of the Rising Sun Vedant Agrawal

#### 14

Something Old, But Something New MAX

## **16**

Packed like Sardines—the whole city on one train line Noah Brelage

#### 20

make a pot Yasha Lai

## 22

**Bye For Now** *Hiroka Sakurai* 

#### 24

**Tumultuous Tumbles and a Renewed Respect** *William Patrick Guzman* 

#### 26

**God's In The Details** *Priya Mu* 

#### 28

集力フェ (Shuu Cafe) Alyssa Castillo Yap

#### 30

I Cut My Nails at Night: The Burden We Bear as Daughters Misha Cade

#### 52

Where Do We Go When We Fall Asleep? William Patrick Guzman

#### 34

**The Spring, here** Suyog Garg

#### $\overline{36}$

Reflection Kouka

#### $\overline{38}$

What does "Emergence" mean to you? Komaba Times Issue 12 Team

#### Be like Alice; come out of

From a four-year Komaba I Campus student who graduated in the summer of 2022

Alyssa Castillo Yap

The Year of the Rabbit has begun. You're sitting on the green chairs of Building 1 at the Komaba I Campus next to your best friend quietly dozing off. The sky starts to turn a pinkish hue and your professor simply will not



let you go until they read you the lengthy scroll of final instructions for your Period 5 class. You heave a deep and wary sigh. Every Todai student who has spent even one day on campus



Visit the cozy stores, cafes and bakeries close to campus! Photo by Alyssa

Don't tell on me, but I have always thought of my senpai as my personal Hookah-Smoking Caterpillars. Each of my seniors has a personal space they have claimed as their favorite place to study or to escape reality after classes. Competing for my love of books and our institution's library, I think a common PEAK favorite must be the Kono Bookstore which is right next to the Komaba-Todaimae konbini. Also, being so close to the Chiyoda line stations of Yoyogi-Koen and Yoyogi-Uehara, one should absolutely take the opportunity to try out new local shops scattered along the big streets on sunny days! In honor of the Red Queen, I always visited the bakery that now sits right next to Sakashita Gate of Komaba I Campus for my royal earl gray-flavored bread. (Practicing Japanese while interviewing bakers is also a fun pastime.)

must have felt this urge to hop away from a long day of classes and fall into their very own rabbit hole of wonderment and discovery. What nearby wonderland can a Komaba student explore like Alice?



Try not to use the online maps and wander the parks near campus! Photo by Alyssa

The Disney version of Alice in Wonderland starts off with a cozy reading session between sisters. If you're not really the type to spend money after a long week of studies and you just want to enjoy a quiet day with nature, head to Yoyogi Park which is only a 15-minute walk from the Komaba I Campus through the back gates. Alternatively, you can enjoy the breeze while reading a book or having a picnic with friends at Komaba-koen between Komaba I and II campuses. Here you can also take a peek into the 1929 Western-style mansion of the family of Marquis Maeda. Of course, Komabano Park by the International Lodge (which looks best in autumn) is always open too!



Scour the streets of Shibuya! Photo by Pedro



Indulge in the music scene and the fading homeliness of Shimokitazawa while you can! Photo by Alyssa

It goes without saying that Komaba I and II Campuses are blessed with the proximity to Shibuya Crossing, one of the busiest and most photographed Tokyo attractions. If you're looking for constant stimulation (and do not mind being shoved a few times like Alice down the dining table at the Hatter's mad tea party), the 5-minute train ride or 25-minute walk to Shibuya from Komaba I Campus is always worth it. Even after years of living near Shibuya, you'll never run out of museums, theaters, clothes and novelty shops, Michelin star restaurants, or old kissaten to discover.

What other way could one shake off the unfortunate creepiness of Alice's authorship than to scavenge for quirky secondhand items likely carrying the darkest secrets of their previous owners? It is especially well suited for music-lovers as live music resounds everywhere from the Odakyu line buskers to basement concerts. Shimokita reeks of nostalgia for me; I used to hang out with my friends here the most, and now I mostly talk to owners of shops I frequented as they share their lamentations about new machi-zukuri developments. While I find it unfortunate that the town is undergoing extreme gentrification, Shimokita is still home to some of my favorite secondhand clothing shops, vinyl stores, restaurant-cum-bars, and antique finds.

When I graduated from Komaba I Campus in the summer of 2022, I was left with

 haunting , Shinjuku Nithoughts of "spaces" and "orientations." As I was writing my final thesis about chome, famously known as the queer district of Tokyo, I found myself peeking into the dynamism of Tokyo's diverse spaces and interviewing the varied array of people who occupied 👌 these vibrant areas. The juxtaposition between my academic inquiry, Ni-chome, with my campus 🖌 at Komaba undoubtedly swept me off my feet at break-neck speed. In the summer, I did not a vet know if I was going to continue my studies in Japan, so I had to believe that my dream f project of "queering" spaces could happen anywhere. Somewhat inwardly looking into my status 🥤 as a Komaba student, I noticed that our school's campuses, Komaba itself, and its neighboring / spaces, needed much

I hope this article has

more work to become inclusive.

There is no way for me to *i* individually get to know each reader who picks up this magazine, but given you a taste of Komaba and its vicinity's familiar aura. It is a place where one can experience ` a global city's abrupt change of pace within a condensed 4-kilometer radius. With or without the i magic of size-altering biscuits reminiscent of Alice's first crisis in Wonderland, I hope that we i can go beyond the bounds of arbitrary and institutionalized walls!

# Anti-Emergence: The Forgotten History of Student Autonomy in *Komaba-Ryō*

#### Chiu Chien-Cheng (James)

Back when I lived in the Komaba International Lodge and the rent was still a benevolent 42,200 yen, I always referred to the dormitory as koma*ba-no-ryō* or *komaba-rojji* rather than the more natural-sounding komaba-ryō. Komaba-ryō translates to "Komaba dorm" in English. Kom*aba-no-ryō*, on the other hand, translates to the rather convoluted expression "the dorm in Komaba," and komaba-rojji to the somewhat eccentric official name "Komaba Lodge." I avoid referring to the Komaba International Lodge as komaba-ryō because komaba-ryō was a dorm nestled within the Komaba Campus until the 2000s. The splendid and profound history of komaba-ryō remains unknown to many, buried deep under the skeletons of futile resistance.

In the Komaba Campus, the area consisting of the cafeteria, co-op shop, and library appears much newer and more modern. Its facilities are advanced and its designs are simplistic especially compared to the rather shabby ("historic," some might argue) Building 1. If you observe carefully though, you will notice a relic of an arch standing alone in the shadows of the trees. This Gothic-style arch, surrounded by the modern minimalist buildings, looks rather uncanny, as if trying to assert its own existence amid the hectic, whimsical stories of a long-forgotten past.

This arch-like ruin was part of the *komaba-ryō*, built in 1935. At that time, the Komaba Campus was still the First High School (daiichi-kōtō-gakkō), but *komaba-ryō* was demolished in 2001 after the Komaba Campus had become the College of Arts and Sciences. If you are courageous enough to step into the tall grasses and read the introduction written on the monument, you will notice that the *komaba-ryō* does not quite fit into modern expectations of a "dorm." The introduction tells you that back in the years of the First High School, the *komaba-ryō* was an autonomous dorm governed by students with independent executive and legislative systems. Indeed, the political system of *komaba-ryō* paralleled the political system of Japan, and the debates that took place during its meetings were said to be as intellectual as those that took place in the Diet. However, the text on the monument ends abruptly, explaining that after the First High School was abolished in 1949, the Komaba Campus became the University of Tokyo's College of Arts and Sciences, and "the autonomous governing by the students persists in the *komaba-ryō* as part of the University of Tokyo." You do not have to be a professional historian to sense the oddness in this abrupt conclusion. The written story ends in 1949, but the history of *komaba-ryō* obviously does not end there.

What happened after 1949? Why was the komaba-ryō  $\underline{D}_{\underline{E}}$  <u>O</u>  $\underline{L}_{\underline{I}}$  <u>S</u> <u>H</u>  $\underline{E}$  <u>D</u>, and by whom? Most importantly, what happened to the "student autonomy" (gakusei jichi) when its inevitable death was decided?

Put simply, the *komaba-ryō* was full of vitality and charged with intellectualism even after 1949.<sup>1</sup> The stories of *komaba-ryō* demonstrate to me a group of college students who did not treat studying as simply a task to fulfill, nor were they single-minded in the pursuit of internships or jobs. They possessed a sincere curiosity to learn, an energetic mind to critique, and a persistent concern for values rather than wealth or social status. They served as an antithesis – for me, an ideal one – to the university students today. In the 1990s, however, the university decided to demolish the *komaba-ryō*, a decision which the students heavily resisted.



Modern building after the demolition of the *komaba-ryō*. Photo by Ohyun

Unfortunately, the university was determined in its decision. In 1996, the university cut off the power and water, hired security guards to shatter the windows, and destroyed the furniture of the remaining students. Eventually, the university sent in excavators to tear down the buildings altogether. The Gothic architecture, built two years after the construction of Building 1 (which is now designated as a cultural heritage site), vanished from the Komaba Campus along with the dormitory's culture of student autonomy.

I cannot help but feel a sense of insincerity in the introduction written by the university. The text affirms the student autonomy represented by the pre-1949 *komaba-ryō* while simultaneously evading the university's own violence against the post-1949 *komaba-ryō*. In doing so, the university confines the notion of student autonomy to a distant past that we can only treat as a spectacle.



A lone arch stands in the middle of the library-cafeteria area, one of the last remnants of *komaba-ryō*. Photo by James



このコミュニケーションプラザの敷地にはかって旧射第一高等学校寄宿寮が存在した。 旧射第一高等学校(一高)は明治7年(1874)東京実語学校どして所校し、東京大学予備門 (明治10年-1877)、第一高等中学校(明治19年-1886)を経て明治27年(1894)第一高等 学校となり太平洋戦争敗戦後の学校射度改革昭和25年(1950)により廃止されるまで約2万 クチス余の人材を送り出しほか頃の登録に多大の首称をした。

明治23年(1890)木下校長により本輝キャンパス(現在農学師)の寄宿家での寮生による自治 が認められ、その後第一高等学校展社まで自治家の対応は多くの困躁を充履して、守られた。 昭和10年(1935)間東大震災を提進しとた男子部との敷地交換によりこの駒場の地に移転 したが、本輝の著宿寮(8条)は、新たな仏秘の客官等(南宗・宇永北奈,明寮[昭和14平均段]) となり寮生約1千2百名による自治寮運営は認続された。

ー高書宿業の特徴は入学生全員が家の生活を込ること(所謂全系的)にあった。生徒は全員入 家し、立法(総代会)行政(害宿家委員会)をすべて生徒の自主運営によったのである。家生に よる器質委員会による追求の決定は学校からの追尽とされた。駅の規模は高・中・北票が答問 自習室・寝室10室(3日)、明察のみ自習室・寝室5室(3冊)であり 京の間を結ぶ没り単下からは 本館(現1号館)、図書館(現駒場美術博物館)及び特高館(現101号館)への地下道が設けられた。 この中庭にあるアーチは、地下道入口上屋の外髪の一部である。昭和24年(1940)学動改革 により東京大学教養学部発足に伴い全家割は廃止されたが、その後も東京大学駒場家として 家生による自治は続けられた。





A written plaque introducing the history of the *komaba-ryō*. Photo by James

This notion is not limited to the case of the *komaba-ryō*. The demolition of buildings and the transformation of space are often intertwined with our memories and evaluations of the past. The renewed, stylish Miyashita Park in Shibuya puts a veil on the relocation of homeless people who had lived in its previous form. The construction of the large road, Subsidiary Route 54 (*ho-jyo-gojyūyon-gō-sen*) in Shimokitazawa is likely to one day conceal the memories of the protest movements against its realization.

As Milan Kundera puts it, "The struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting." Remembering is not easy. Memory is, itself, a form of resistance and can entail rediscovery of the past. To remind myself of this, I will continue to refer to where I had lived as the convoluted *komaba-no-ryō* or the eccentric *komaba-rojji*.

One thing is new because something else has disappeared, been replaced, or been demolished.

Edited by Sherrene | Layout by Ohyun

## Quenching our thirst for change: Transforming Komaba Campus into an oasis

#### Mahi Patki

Have vou ever wondered where to refill your water bottle on campus? In Issue 10 of Komaba Times, I painted a pretty dismal picture of the state of water servers on Komaba I Campus, which stood firm with over 64 buildings but only 10 drinking water fountains1 for over 9 thousand students and staff members. Today, persistent student-led activism is changing this reality. Like a couple of recent triumphant campaigns such as the trimming of lesson times from 105 to 90 minutes and the provision of free period products in some washrooms on campus, a small group of students has managed to achieve what seemed impossible just a few years ago: 12 new water servers have been approved and installed on Komaba I Campus!

So, how did we get here? We must go back to 2021, when my team in "Phase I" of the university-wide Global Education for Innovation and Leadership (GEfIL) program began looking into the issue of plastic waste on University of Tokyo campuses. What we found with our primary research in Komaba was not surprising: student usage of water bottles was low, and awareness of refill locations was nearly non-existent. Our surveys revealed that many students were unsure about whether water from these refill locations was safe to consume. Respondents were also unsatisfied with the water's taste, and the unhygienic appearance of the servers themselves. Coupled with a pandemic that only amplified hygiene-related concerns, which led to shiyoukinshi ("Use Prohibited") signs being plastered on the few servers that did exist, what you've got is a perfect recipe for an exacerbated single-use culture on campus.

Targeting this issue, my GEfIL team proposed the idea of installing bottle-refill-type water servers on campus to reduce plastic waste. Our hypothesis was simple: encouraging students to use their own bottles through these servers could reduce plastic waste, and may be a gateway into the wider adoption of a more environmentally conscious lifestyle.

Incidentally, Akari Nomura from the Todai Sustainable Campus Project (TSCP) student committee also proposed the same idea, and Leah Han, part of the TSCP student committee and a teaching assistant in GEfIL, connected Daiki Yamaguchi from my GEfIL team and I with Akari. Members of the two environmental circles at the University of Tokyo, namely ECHO and Kankyo Sanshiro, also joined our small but burgeoning initiative, thus leading to the launch of "P0001 Water Server" as the pioneer project for the UTokyo Sustainable Network (UTSN).

To begin implementation, however, our newly formed team of students needed to gather more information. Who was or would be responsible for installing and maintaining the existing and new water servers on campus? We emailed anybody and everybody who seemed mildly related, yet to no avail – as it turns out, management of the servers did not quite fit into anyone's job description. How do we obtain the statistics to make our proposal convincing? The Co-op store provided us with data on the sales of bottled beverages in 2019, and we continued by gathering student opinions and preferences on the project. We scavenged every floor of every building on campus to identify potential refill locations, and wrote a research-based 45-page proposal in Japanese. Unfortunately, the TSCP team, with its focus on greenhouse gas emissions reduction, decided not to fund us because the emission reduction impact of the project was not significant enough.

We then presented at student dialogues held by the various interrelated UTokyo initiatives,

Portal Q

9

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>For those who are interested in more history about the *komaba-ryō*, refer to the 2015 book Tōdai *Komaba-ryō* Monogatari (The Stories of the Komaba-ryō in the University of Tokyo) by Hirofumi Matsumoto, or the 2016 article "Memories of Komaba Dormitory" written by Naoki Mizutani on the Komaba Times blog.

such as the Center for Global Commons and Race to Zero in 2021. An opportunity eventually arose to deliver a 4-minute pre-recorded presentation at the Future Society Initiative (FSI) Advisory Board meeting in November. where the President of UTokvo himself praised our project. Our spirits were at an all-time high after this meeting, yet no action followed from the university's side. So, we decided to change strategies and approached the Komaba Jichikai (Student Union) to request funds for a trial installation. However, the proposed trial exceeded the Jichikai's budget, and so they were only able to appeal for it in the student negotiations agenda.

Almost a year later in October 2022, UTSN (somewhat miraculously) received an email from Professor Masahiro Sugiyama, who was an active member of Kankyo Sanshiro in his student days and has continued his related advocacies with the university ever since. He notified us that the university was moving forward with the project and the newly launched Green Transformations (GX) Student Initiative team would like to have an informal meeting with the UTSN water server team. Apparently, UTokyo Executive Vice President Tatsuva Okubo really pushed to realize this project. In this meeting with GX and administrative staff, held in November 2022, we discussed the list of potential water server installation locations. In January 2023, we met with Mr. Kazuvuki Akita from GX and a representative from a company called "Water Stand" to discuss the makeup and the UTSN-led design of the cabinet in which the new water servers would be placed. After what seemed to be glacial progress, finally, a dozen water servers were installed at locations 1 to 12 (see map) by mid-February 2023!

P0001 lent insight into the challenges of making concrete change within such a big institution. For one, it is still a mystery what happened behind closed doors in the decision to fund the project. This reflects broader issues like the lack of transparency and student inclusion in UTokyo's decision-making processes – issues that UTSN has been highlighting since its establishment. Further, some things are simply out of our capacity to negotiate as students - we never advocated for the previous

servers to be replaced, only for new bottle-refill spots to be installed in additional locations. Yet, the university was adamant about prohibiting the indoor drinking-type servers due to hygiene concerns and replaced all of them. So. if students find themselves thirsty and without a bottle, they now have to buy a beverage or go to the *shokudo* (cafeteria) or use outdoor water servers at locations 13 and 14 (see map).

I still ask myself: is this initiative the most sustainable solution? Water servers, after all, have their own carbon footprint. However, to compete with vending machines and konbinis (convenience stores), we need water servers that provide cold filtered water. Also, when it comes to technological fixes like this, it is easy for us to fall into the trap of assuming that complex problems can be solved by techno-scientific interventions alone. 北門

North Gate

Komabatake

With this project, we are really trying to change the culture of superfluously buying sugary and caffeinated beverages in single-use plastics. which is detrimental to both human and environmental health. Some critical next steps include raising awareness about the locations of water servers, promoting the use of water bottles, and educating about plastic pollution. I look forward to finding out what methods will be most effective and discovering what it takes to spark behavioral change.

To ensure that the university will continue to fund the project and expand it to other UTokyo campuses, the impact of the servers must be monitored. This includes quantifying water consumption through the attached water meters, analyzing the change in beverage sales at the Co-op store and vending machines, and

gathering student feedback. In my (somewhat controversial) opinion, once there are sufficient water servers across all campuses we could even nudge the university to reduce the number of

beverage vending machines. Maybe then, everyone will be less tempted to buy into the lure created by the most polluting, unethical, and profitable corporations in the world such as Coca-Cola et al.

Today I urge you to join the reusable revolution (if you haven't already). Sip delicious water from vour reusable bottle to reduce waste, save money, and improve your health! You probably already have water bottles neglected at home that you could befriend. Of course, if you don't have one, please invest in a good quality bottle that suits your preferences for color, size, and material, and use it for as long as possible. A hot tip to make water taste even better is to clean your bottle regularly!

The time is ripe at UTokyo for change. Hope for campus sustainability is rising with the emergence of UTSN and the GX student initiative. But, there still is a lot to do, and we need a student team with the same recognition as Jichikai that is entirely dedicated to sustainability-related projects for the university to streamline the implementation of such initiatives.

I invite you to be a catalyst and take action for anything that you feel passionate about!

<sup>1</sup> While writing the article for Komaba Times Issue 10, I had initially only found 9 servers. It turns out there was actually one more-a discovery that affirmed just how tricky they are to find even for a water server enthusiast like myself.

Acknowledgments:

Words cannot express my gratitude to UTSN members, especially, Leah Han, Akari Nomura, and Daiki Yamaguchi; and the professors and admin staff that contributed to the realization of this project. I am also grateful to Eriko Yamada for designing the fabulous water server map. Special thanks to Chris Clayton and the editors and designers of Komaba Times for bolstering the *quality of this article.* 

> Edited by Alyssa, Will & Zihan Layout by Ohyun





Cruising the Carnivorous Waters: Chronicles from a Plant-Based Voyager in the Land of the Rising Sun

Vedant Agrawal

I have always been a vegetarian and therefore conscious of my food choices. However, I decided to become even more of a conscious consumer after coming to Japan, a haven for fish and meat enthusiasts. I was well aware that a new lifestyle of veganism was going to be put to the test, but I was eager to embark on this adventure awaiting unexpected experiences, challenges, and triumphs.

One of the first experiences that surprised me was the prevalence of non-vegan ingredients in even the most common dishes. I learnt that many restaurants in Japan add chicken bouillon to dishes like pasta arrabiata, which I had never encountered in any other part of the world. This was just the beginning of my journey to discovering the difficulties of being vegan in Japan.

Navigating social situations when deciding on a restaurant with non-vegan friends if we were eating out was another challenge. Most restaurants in Japan do not offer vegan options, and even when they do, they are generally more expensive. Moreover, vegan restaurants are not something that non-vegans are excited about due to stereotypes. This made it difficult for me to join friends for dinner and created awkward moments when I had nothing to eat at restaurants. In weathering through these challenges, I found myself becoming more versatile and flexible in my eating habits. I learned to be content with whatever vegan options were available, and stopped complaining about the lack of options. Becoming vegan was a choice I made, and one that only a small percentage of the population makes. This choice meant that in many situations and events, there may be no food to eat for me unless I brought it myself. As a result, I now always come prepared, either by bringing my own food or eating before I go out.

On a visit to a Buddhist temple in Kyoto, I had an unexpected discovery. I learnt that in ancient Japan a vegan diet was practised by Buddhist monks as a form of asceticism. This culture of a plant-based diet is known as "shojin ryori," which translates to "devotion cuisine," and was passed down through generations. This traditional vegan cuisine is centred around seasonal ingredients and is considered a form of spiritual nourishment. However, with the modernization of Japan, the focus shifted towards meat and seafood-based diets. While some traditional vegan restaurants still serve *shojin ryori*, veganism is not as widely understood or practised in modern Japanese culture.

Veganism in Japan connected me to the philosophy of "*wabi-sabi*," which embraces the beauty of imperfection, impermanence, and the passing of time. In a world where fast food and heavily processed ingredients are readily available, the appreciation of the simplicity and naturalness of foods devoid of animal products is my rebellion against perfectionism in food. I started to recognize that imperfections in locally sourced and seasonal ingredients bring depth and richness to food. Similarly, veganism celebrates the idea of using whole foods that are grown and produced without harming animals or the environment. Japan taught me to reject the preference for perfect, polished food over nourishing, honest meals that are in harmony with nature.

As I continue to deepen my understanding of food, I have come to re-conceptualise veganism to be a celebration of the cyclical, changing, and impermanent aspects of life, rather than a strict set of dietary rules. Until now, being vegan in a non-vegan world has taught me to be more adaptable, patient, and appreciative of the simple things in life. I am still on this learning journey in Japan, where I am discovering new things about myself, life, and the culture and people around me.



ĥ. E  $\bigcirc$ N  $\overline{\mathcal{M}}$ F 4 F A R E R A S Ŧ В 0 Η ] FI N L R I E Ν F N  $\mathbb{D}$ F  $\bigcirc$ Η V R W O R I S H A J N  $\mathbb{D}$ F  $\mathbb{N}$ CD A N Ν 1 N ズ S M G H Г 8 ב S М H Ċ  $\mathbb{S}$  $\overline{V}$ ナ H F E M H

# Something Old, But Something New

When you hear the word "Cyber", what do you imagine? A community space like Twitter, or Facebook? Something related to security or war? Or an "upgraded" space alien from the planet Mondas? Nowadays, we hear things with "Cyber" all the time, along with other high-tech terminology.

For someone who is currently in their early twenties, Cyberspace is something you grew up with, and based on my (limited) experience, I'd like to share what Cyberspace means to me and how it became part of my life.

When I was a little kid living in Japan, I recall watching my father use the computer as a tool for his work. Although he sometimes let me play with it, he only allowed me to do so on a limited basis. So, when he was away, I'd often jump onto his computer to make up for his "stinginess".

At that time, I didn't understand the concepts of Internet or Cyberspace, but thanks to the phone and annoying email notifications announcing, "You've got mail", I probably recognized it as a "mysterious machine" which could send and receive information.

About 5 to 10 years later, people started to actively use apps like Skype and YouTube, with only YouTube remaining popular until this day. There was a famous video streamer on YouTube (now referred to as YouTubers): Chinese Backstreet Boys (aka The Back Dorm Boys). The YouTube videos that launched their fame were performance videos with them lip-synching to the Backstreet Boys' "I Want It That Way" as well as the cover version of "Da Da Da", which was later used as promotion for Pepsi during the 2006 World Cup.

Their videos went viral around the world, and Japan was no exception. One famous Japanese TV show, featuring well-known Japanese idol "V6", invented a new term for lip-syncing, "Air-Vo ( $\mathbf{IP}\pi$ )", short for "Air Vocal ( $\mathbf{IP}-\pi-\pi \mathcal{H}\mathcal{W}$ )", and solicited lip-syncing videos from their television audience and fanbase. Although I never sent videos to the show, I was one of many Japanese influenced by them, and ended up making a few "Air-Vo" performances of my own at the time. I should also note that this was all before the debut of the iPhone, and people were still using flip phones.

In the early 2010s, my friends at school started to use smartphones and Social Network Services (SNS) such as Twitter and LINE. Back then, you could even access the Internet from game consoles such as Sony's PlayStation Vita, Nintendo's 3DS, and Wii. Some kids used it to tweet, to play online games, or to watch some "artistic" images. By that time, I had come to more fully understand the concepts of Cyberspace and Internet... with how we used the Internet virtually the same as how we use it today.

These days, we see some digital content on Instagram and TikTok featuring beautiful scenic views as well as music performances. The interesting fact is that the fundamental content itself has never really changed, basically repeating the same things that people did in the early 2000s. But we are not just rehashing the past, we are improving on it by changing the platform or sometimes the user interface. In other words, from my point of view, cyberspace or the Internet is something old, but something new.

> Illustrations by MAX Edited by Vedant | Layout by Priya



I always wanted to live in as big a city as possible. When I first arrived in Tokyo, however, I did not know what to expect. I had barely ever stayed in a city bigger than 500,000 people, so living in a metropolis like Tokyo was certainly an experience I've never had before. I didn't even have ways of fully understanding what it meant.

> What struck me most when I first arrived was an overwhelming complexity and sheer diversity of life. Every area of Tokyo was a whole new world by itself. Even within the small radius of my regular commute along the Inokashira Line, I

got to see so much more than what my hometown could ever provide. I couldn't stop looking out of the train windows. The metro system in particular was fascinating to me—which is only natural I suppose—since life in the entire city relies on and revolves around its intricate network of train lines. Whenever I had time after my classes, I would go out and try to understand Tokyo through the method I knew best: photography.

It was like a cross-section of Tokyo was presenting itself every time the doors of the trains opened before me. I saw people from all walks of life, sharing moments of slightly uncomfortable to extremely cramped social interactions. Everyone trying to accommodate each other—everyone just wanting a little bit of space for themselves.





The train lines of Tokyo are infamous for being densely packed and often overcrowded, especially during rush hour. Yet despite the close physical contact with everyone else, the people in the trains are all trying to keep to themselves, with most passengers wrapped in their own protective bubbles, checking their phone, staring vacantly out of the windows, or simply being fast asleep. Nobody notices the miracle of the moments.

After photographing these people in the metro cars, packed like sardines in cans, I headed home. Stepping into the train bound for my local station, I became one of them.

What I saw when I took photos there was the life of the city emerging from the subway cars.

Pretty soon, I began to focus on one particular time Pretty soon, I began to focus on one particular time and place as the subject of my pictures: Inokashiand place as the subject of my pictures in hourra Line's Shibuya Station during the rush hour-







# Yasha Lai make a pot

a. connect the steps with a line b. find the pot and circle it









ร.เอการนษ (pə4รəठิธิกร)



## Bye For Now

I drew this illustration to represent my brain when I feel like I have been separated by two or more personalities. I became aware of this feeling after entering university, and wondered whether other students in Komaba felt the same way. To me, this piece portrays "emergence" from oneself, which in turn is formed by other elements. This emergence can be from the stereotypes that people attach to you – for example, being a smart straight-A student, and so on. However, being conscious of your inner self is not always easy and safe, and you might suffer from an identity crisis. You may even lose something that you always had in mind. Through this piece, I wish to show others the importance of breaking self-imposed limitations and how it is vital to use your time as a student to be a better version of yourself.

Hiroka Sakurai



William Patrick Guzman

I woke up on June 16th with one goal: climb Excelsior Falls. Long story short, I failed. I fell 5 meters down a waterfall, tore a 20 centimeter gash in my butt, and caused a small landslide.

It had started out as a normal Tuesday: a the creek. weekday off that I typically used for hiking waterfalls with friends. I had selected June 16th to meter hike was beautiful. conquer a particularly adventurous waterfall, Excelsior Falls. I woke up, packed my backpack, picked up my girlfriend, Moe, and started the allowing us to easily hike up-45-minute trek to Excelsior Glen near Watkins Glen, NY where the waterfalls were.

It was my second summer hiking waterfalls the cool water, and insects in the Finger Lakes, and I was confident enough to consider myself an advanced hiker. My presumed skill level in mind, I was unfazed when my waterfall guide, NYfalls.org, listed Excelsior Glen as "Very Difficult." The drive there was serene, and after 45 minutes, we spotted the trail entrance just off NY Route 414

and parked down the road.

The walk to the trail was straightforward, and after whacking through some tall grass, we found ourselves on a creek, where we heard the first waterfall in the glen, Emerald Falls. Emerald Falls is a 10-meter waterfall with a weak flow and shallow basin. According to NYfalls.org, experienced hikers have a reasonable chance of ascending the waterfall. Seeing the falls up close, however, I realized that I may have already bitten off more than I could chew. Emerald Falls was, in fact, not a series of cascades as the blog indicated. It was a cliff. I knew that neither Moe nor I could ascend safely, so we begrudgingly exited the creek and managed to find a steep yet hike-able alternative path to the top of the waterfall. In retrospect, Emerald Falls was a clear sign that this hike was not going to be as straightforward as we had anticipated. Emerald falls called for an all-out expedition for which we were clearly not pre-

pared, as we had little more than a backpack, swimsuits, and water shoes. Nevertheless, we continued hiking up

The following 2-kilo-The water maintained a brisk pace but was relatively low, stream. The heat of the summer morning balanced with hummed all around us. Moe and I kept high spirits with jovial conversation throughout the hike. These conversations,

Watkins Glen, NY. Me enjoying Hector Falls – a waterfall on ▼ the same stream as Excelsior Falls. Photo by Moe Wakai





▲ Lansing, NY. A few friends hanging out in front of the magnificent Ludlowville Falls. Photo by Moe Wakai.

Watkins Glen, NY. Moe standing in front of Excelsior Falls six months after my fall. Photo by Will Guzman

however, came to an abrupt end when we reached the base of our day's goal, Excelsior Falls. As it turns out, it was not one, but three separate waterfalls stacked on top of each other: Excelsior Falls, High Falls, and Sullivan Falls. Each was 10 to 15 meters high, and the entire rock formation was roughly 37 meters tall. We knew that these falls were not going to be small, but we were admittedly surprised by the steep, slimy cascades that lay before us.

We pushed forward in spite

of our hesitation and made it up the first tier of approximately 13 meters with relative ease. The second tier was about 17 meters, very steep, and far less inviting. There were two possible ways to get up: one, climb straight up the mossy, slippery waterfall, or two, go around the left side of the falls and scramble up a dry, crumbly incline. Neither option seemed ideal, but we decided to explore the first option: the waterfall. I took the lead in aiming for a small ledge 3 meters up, which would serve as a good stepping stone. I made it up alright but was unsure of how to approach the remaining 14 meters ahead. I de-

cided to press on from the ledge, finding small foot holds where possible. After only a few meters of progress, one of my feet gave out. I slid 5 meters back down to the top of the first tier where Moe was fortunately able to help me stop before I unwillingly went cliff jumping.

The slide had left my butt seriously bruised, but I was determined to conquer this waterfall, so I decided to try the dirt

hill to the left of the falls. Unsurprisingly, I fell again, this time carrying a couple fallen trees with me. It was at this point with a sore butt and a terrified Moe that I decided it was time to turn back.

After negotiating our way down the first 14 meters of the falls (first tier), I asked Moe to take a look at my "bruise" only to find a bloody, dirt-filled, 20-centimeter open gash. We used most of our clean water to debride my mangled butt cheek, and I used my shirt as an impromptu bandage.

Over the 2-kilometer hike back to my car, the 45-minute drive home, and the following weeks (during which I could neither stand up nor sit down without wincing in pain), I wondered where I had gone wrong. Maybe I hadn't done my research, or maybe I didn't have good enough gear. I realized, however, that I had spent so much time hiking waterfalls that I had forgotten how much respect they deserve. Waterfalls are not goals over which a person can triumph. They are moving, breathing, and living. I approached Excelsior Falls with arrogance, and it showed me that it was a creature worthy of admiration and observation. I bear the scar from that June morning, carrying with it a newfound appreciation for the natural world and renewed intent to explore nature thoughtfully and respectfully.

Edited by Sunwoo | Layout by Priya

Quite a while back I went to a second-hand furniture shop in Hongo to get a chair for my study desk. I came across an antique wooden cabinet with a lot of drawers and text on each compartment written using outdated kanji characters. I got curious and asked the shopkeeper what this cabinet was.

*"People used this to store herbs and medicines in old times,"* he said.

"Ooooh... Like in Sen to Chihiro no Kamikakushi (Spirited Away)?" I asked him.

*"Ah! sou sou sou,"* he agreed with a nodding smile. As I stood there taking a closer look at the cabinet, I forgot about the chair and momentarily teleported to Kamaji's boiler room. The excitement that I felt exploring the cabinet lingered for a long time even after I left the place.



The phrase "God's in the details," is often attributed to the German Architect Mies van der Rohe, but the origin of the phrase is still debated. I'm more concerned about what it means than the origin here. The phrase manifests the idea that whatever one does should be done thoroughly and that the details are of paramount importance. While this applies to anything and everything, an average human being comes across only a few things in life that can have the level of detail intensive enough to invoke something within oneself. Some might find this in the writings of Charles Dickens, and some might find it in the

GOD'S

IN

THE DETAILS

Priya Mu

cogs and gears of a vintage Swiss watch. For me, I find it in the strokes and hues of Japanese anime drawings, particularly the backgrounds.

When it comes to imbuing life in anime, there are so many crucial elements such as the character design, voice acting, screenplay, etc., but I believe the *pièce de résistance* lies in the details of the drawings. Anime series with abstract backgrounds can also make me feel like I am part of those fictional worlds, possibly because of their long duration, but I don't think they have that transcending effect where random everyday moments can feel almost magical, like my experience at the second-hand furniture shop.

Realistic backgrounds are a trademark of Japanese animation and can be found in almost all anime, but I am particularly drawn to the realism portrayed in the ethereal drawings of Kazuo Oga (Studio Ghibli), Mamoru Hosoda (Wolf Children), Satoshi Kon (Tokyo Godfathers), Hiroyuki Okiura (A Letter to Momo) and sometimes Makoto Shinkai (Your Name.), Shinkai uses a little too much light flare for my taste. All these movies are masterpieces in their own way, but the movie that has a special place in my heart is Okiura's A Letter to Momo (Momo e no Tegami). It is a simple story of a young girl (Momo) and her recently widowed mother (Ikuko) moving from Tokyo to Ikuko's hometown, an island Southeast of Hiroshima. Every single frame, including the animation, was completely hand-drawn taking the movie seven years to complete. The details, such as the wall clock that stopped working and how Ikuko looks at it, the shrine in the mountains where Momo always goes to hide from the rest of the world, the streets, the shops, what the shops sell, the clouds, the rain, and just everything, everything is part of the story portraying the grief, regrets, love, and hope the characters experience. The subdued watercolor backgrounds, so detailed and so delicate, manage to effortlessly teleport me to the islands of the Seto-inland Sea every single time I watch the movie. I haven't yet traveled to these islands, but when I do, I bet it won't feel like it's the first time.

One common aspect about the animators and their works mentioned here (except for *Tokyo Godfathers*) is that they bridge the real world to a world of fantasy. The interweaving of fantastical elements with everyday life makes these earthly objects and places transcend into a magical





world, and whenever I come across these places or objects in real life, the magic spills out into the real world, making me want to believe in Yōkai, forest spirits, and Suzuwatari (aka Makkuro Kurosuke - Miyazaki's dust bunnies). While the possibility of an alternative universe filled with these mystical elements gets me thrilled every time, the drawings that make my heart clench are the ones that portray the mundane and quotidian aspects of Life in the city or the countryside. Tokyo-Sunsets from the windows of Yamanote Line, empty trains on Sunday afternoons, the bridge to Enoshima, futons hanging on the balcony, hidden shrine in the middle of the city, the long stairs that lead to the shrine, the flickering lights of vending machines, old Japanese houses, particularly in the countryside, and more. When I come across them, I often experience a momentary glitch. A glitch that seems to have in it a placebo for the illnesses that come as the side effects of contemplating Life. Though life in Japan is not just endless anime backgrounds or magical encounters, and there are countless moments where I feel insecure or plainly empty, these glitches, woven into the fabric of reality, often help me take a deep breath and remember how to talk about my dreams without adding sentences that start with a "but."

Edited by Vedant | Photos & Layout by Priya



Alyssa Castillo Yap

—もうちょっと。 今から、 もうちょっと動きたい。 "A little more. Just a little more. I want to move."

ーなんで今になって言うの、ばあちゃん? "Why do you only tell me this now?"

---私が乗りたかった車はね、じいちゃんが好きそうなものではなかったんだよ。 "You know, the car that I wanted to ride is not something your grandfather would like."

---どうしてダメだったの? "Why not?"

#### ---寒くなるし、雨の日は実用的じゃないだろうし。それに、とにかく自分のことは話さなかったの。だから寂しかったんだ。 今になってわかったのは、こういう風に男の人と話をしないといけないこと。若いうちはそうやって心のバランスをとっていく ものなんだよ。でもね、これからは自分の好きなようにして生きようと思う。

"It would have gotten cold and it would actually be impractical in the rain. Plus, I never talked about myself anyway. That's why I was lonely. You have to talk to men like this. This is how one finds their heart's balance when young. At last, I want to break away and do what I want."

#### ―なにがあった?

"So, what happened?"

#### ---ある日、じいちゃんは羽田の近くで道に迷ったんだ。あのバス停を覚えているかい?二度と見つからなかったんだよ。 だって、もう死んじゃったんだもん。でも、ばあちゃんから去ったときは迷子じゃなかったんだよ。みんなが言うけれど、記 憶を失ってはないと思うよ。そんなことはない。

"Just one day he got lost near Haneda. Don't you remember the bus stop? Then, we never found him again. He's dead now, but when he left he wasn't lost per se. I don't think he lost any memories like people say he did. Nothing like that."

—なるほど。 "I see."

# —今、働きたいんだよ。この話を口に出すのは初めてだよ。最近はね、マッチングアプリを使ってるんだよ。知ってる?でもね、マスクを取ったら、じいちゃんにそっくりだった!

"I want to work now. I never said that out loud. I use a matching application now. Do you know about them? He took his mask off and looked just like your grandpa!"

Listening to conversations that you are not a part of feels more intimate than speaking with someone directly. Japanese may not be a language I know by heart, yet it fueled thousands of explosions that reverberated clearly into me one-by-one; it seemed to amplify the weary sighs of a good listener, the dry gulps of a fast-talker, and all the inflections of a shaken woman's voice telling her thirty-something granddaughter how to love and live. I have new er tried harder to fill in blanks. Are we always listening to each other?

This might be that Beat-inspired lust for life Iggy Pop sang about long before I was born. This grandma who had never spoken about herself was finally rising from her personal flood. As she did, I heard imaginary waters fill my lungs I felt an apocalyptic and revelatory urge to abandon my pile of library books, storm out of the overpriced coffee shop, and maniacally wander Shinjuku and all its chomes to splurge on my underdeveloped emotions. I thought I had transcended many forms of violence and indulged in the most luxurious freedom I may ever know, but these streets never stop nipping you in the bud and shooting you as if you were a kid<sup>1</sup>. I fell for the promise of a city beaming with infinite space and orientations.

Who's afraid of wallowing in commodified gloom! Why, misplaced affections are a shame, grandma. I know that those gifts that crawled back to me, minty, unused, and forgotten, had disfigured me into a materialistic contradiction. Grandma's confessions about grandpa's neglect reminded me of the oxymoronic and sweltering months of the 2000s, when my Catholic skirt and girlish benediction encouraged only a slow, grumbling descent into godlessness. Her confessions reeked of the rusty, poorly maintained swings I once joblessly swayed away on while

reflecting on age-inappropriate books (i.e., my bootlegged Bible): it is like talking about your childhood memories to someone who has never felt the grains of playground sand you once screamed in. Surely grandma knows better now than to believe in perfect exchanges.

(ばあちゃん<sup>2</sup> I'll be that modern girl too! New friends communicate with me simply by looking like a film I have seen many times before, speechlessly setting my path into orgastic novelty ablaze. No boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past in Kabukicho. Walk one street and find tens of mysterious Ferraris, hundreds of green lights, thousands of parties, and the buzzing whisper of grandma's million-yen handheld matching game. In Tokyo, one can forget the dangers of recklessly satisfying desires. Would T.J. Eckleberg ever stand a chance against Godzilla's cinematic anti-nuclear bust?

It was only January, just before the official start of the Year of the Rabbit. I had my palms read once when I first came here four years ago. The predictions ended in 2022, and I am now a Master's student facing an unknowable abyss. I

blissfully dream of hopping away, forgetting estranged friends, and ridding myself of unread texts. It is a youthful privilege, the desire to experience familiar corners, signs, and words completely anew, but it is expiring. Unlike grandma however, I cannot stay silent about all the things I want to fight for besides myself. Even nameless and without value, I hope I will always know ways to emerge full of love.

<sup>1</sup> Like Kenzaburo Oe's first novel 芽むしり仔撃ち *Memushiri Kouchi*, which he wrote at 23. <sup>2</sup> "Grandma" in Japanese.

> Edited by Zihan | Layout by Pedro Illustrations by Sherrene



I Cut My Nails at Night: The Burden We Bear as Daughters

Misha Cade

I cut my nails at night. To do so is largely considered bad luck, a harbinger of death perhaps, in East Asian culture. Our superstitious mother is always quick to warn us against it: "Be mindful of when you cut your nails," she would exclaim, "or you won't live long enough to visit me at my deathbed."

But as daughters, we are not as naive as she would like to believe. What she does not realize is that we have already attended her wake, twice: once in the delivery room where we let out our first cry to mourn the potential of whom she could have been; and once as grieving, parentified teenagers, laying the mother we thought we had to rest. As daughters across the world, we all have different backgrounds but come from the same mother.

When she held me tight in her arms to look down at me for the first time, I wonder if she loathed the fact I inherited my father's eyes. It was our mother who made room, leaving her career and shifting her organs, for a child. It was she who split into two to deliver us safely, usually without the luxury of an epidural. And yet it is his name that we are ascribed: we become his legacy and his property. Who was she before "daughter" and "wife"?... was calling her "mother" the final nail in the coffin? I don't doubt that she loves us, but our shoulders carried the weight of her resentment before our fragile bodies could even hold up its own neck. We entered this world through a veil of her screams and I sometimes wonder if that is also how some of us may have been conceived. If her walls could talk, what would they say? Would they testify against the countless acts of trespassing and forcible entry? The reality is that it only takes one push: one push from a man with a broken ego for her to be bound eternally to domesticity, to a household she may not have necessarily prayed for. It is difficult to celebrate the miracle of birth when it is all too easy to weaponize her reproductive capacity against her. What if I was the life she had to be convinced to want?

She bears a child, but we bear her burdens. As children, we bear the burden of never being good enough because she wasn't. We are raised in a purgatory where we are somehow too little and too much, invisible yet conspicuous. She looks the other way but notices the weight we gain; we speak in whispers and she complains about the noise. Our mistakes are tallied on the wall where our certificates should have been hanged. My mother loves me but I'm not sure she likes me very much. Everyday I promise to be better and yet all I see when I look in the mirror are remnants of her. I am her and she is me — we cannot escape the destiny that the patriarchy has written for us.

> And that is why I cut my nails at night, in fear they will grow so long that I will finally reach you, only to grasp an echo of you. So I will store the burden of being your daughter next to the place where you put your resentment in me. I will cut my nails at night in hopes of cutting myself off from you, from the longing that leaves such a bitter aftertaste. All we ever wanted was to be your concern. But until then, we will cut our nails at night, finding ways to emerge as a woman who can forgive you for the burden your mother made you carry, too.

> > Edited by Jihyun | Illustrations & Layout by Joanna

## Where Do We Go When We Fall Asleep?

William Patrick Guzman

Nitrogen erupts around dead leaves.

Dirt exhumed buzzes louder than the freeway.

Roots, rocks, leaves, and acorns – woven tighter than capillary beds.

The swing hangs on green limbs over a child's grave.

The graveyard is assaulted by trees, grass, and squirrels.

> "Formaldehyde is a ubiquitous, naturally occurring substance produced by every living organism."

- The American Chemistry Council

Leaking fuel from my car poisons sacred soil.

Leaves fall in the cemetery Let's take a picnic! :D

# The Spring, here

Suyog Garg

The traveller sits there Admiring the view vast Stretches before him The special spring cast

Imminent like a daydream is The novel view of the seasons' king As if seated on sakura stems

Are colourful mirrors of celestial origin

There at horizon near the sea The water kisses the heaven's gate Yonder in pond's shallow waters The fish is also eager to mate

Greenish are the yellow autumnal leaves Spread now are the dwarfed lotus leaves Clambering, come clouds combined Dip dip drip the raindrops blind

Whoosh pass gushes of willowy wind Hither-thither fly passengers primed Slowly creeps the twilight's hue Closely fly birds homeward due

Stranger stands startled suddenly A wish has popped inside presently Must be a reason that nature adores All this won't it else abhor

Perhaps, points the sky's blue Your name would be written someday anew Thus walks disguised in Earth's patience The triumphant traveller who admired the view



Photos by Suyog | Edited by Sherrenee | Layout by Joanna

# **REFLECTIONS**

Kouka

2019 Ambition Dreams big, expectations high The excitement of new beginnings What will next year bring?

2020

*Despair* Ambition gone People, businesses, dreams killed The survivors bound by restrictions and fear

2021 *Fatigue* Alas, will it ever end? Keep your guard up but remember to be kind And stay inside

#### 2022

Hope

New conflicts yet new opportunities Movement, activity slowly resuming Cautious but optimistic



2023 ??? What awaits us now? A light at the end of the tunnel? Are we there yet? Oh well! After this long journey At least, now I know Where there is a will There is a way

I took these two photos at Enoshima during sunset.

Both were snapped seconds within each other, but the focus of the camera changed the look of the lighting, thus making the brighter version look like sunrise (the "emergence" of day) and the darker one sunset (the "emergence" of night). "I think 'emergence' to me mutual respect between every- students moving between is what this experience one on the team."—Sherrene classrooms and the train to working on the Koma-

# ba Times team has been. What does Alongside the emergence of campus life, it has been the team has been a series of "EMERGENCE" a pleasure to be a part of the emergence of this isfar which have allowed me to grow in new ways. And for mean to you? cess of allowing the cre-that. I am grateful to b been given the chance < Notes from the team> by many."-Hannah to be here!"—Samantha

many mistakes and I'm not sure the maximum degree of freedom

from the challenges of the

"My first significant encounter of diverse thoughts and ideas "I arrived in Tokyo in Septem- with the word 'Emergence' was in coming to life while influencing ber and went on a month-long, a systems theory class. To partly each other, but still remaining life-ruining, reputation-destroy- quote Brian Goodwin, eminent independent and unique in their ing, Harry DuBois (from the mathematician and biologist, own way. Emergence occurs at hit video game Disco Elysium 'Each tree has several leaves that the metamorphosis of a new by ZA/UM) style adventure. I look similar but on looking deep- paradigm, with evolving societal hit the ground not running but ly each leaf is unique and has it's systems. I've learnt to be patient completely collapsing on the own freedom of expression. What while collaborating."-Vedant floor and breaking my legs. That's we see here is a phenomenon that what emerging means for me - I is an expression of maximum free- "I tend to interpret 'emergence' was expelled at supersonic speed dom to the parts and maximum positively. For me, it often imfrom the womb of high school, coherence to the whole. We have a plies a rise to a higher or imspat out unceremoniously, and kind of paradox that each part is proved level of being or conit came upon me (finally) to free to do as it pleases but it keeps sciousness. Working with the KT grow up, and that's how I came up its relationship with the whole Team on Issue 12 has provided across Komaba Times. This is- ( ... ) And that's emergence.' Read- me with valuable experience sue was the first time I had ever ing this affected my world views while prompting me to conworked on something like this in quite a lot, particularly how I saw sider ways to further improve such a capacity, and I was defi- myself in this world. Everything my leadership and teamwork nitely not ready. I made many, I think, feel, and do, I do it with skills for the future."-Maddy which ones to apologize for, I could afford while trying to "Emergence can mean the ap-

all kinds of trials and challeng- compasses these threshold moes. I think this concept is espe- ments where I contemplate my cially relevant now as we emerge role in this universe."-Priya

pandemic to lead our lives. "For me, 'emergence' signifies a it rep-As a team member for time of coming into life and be- resents a this issue of the Komaba ing. This year my life as a univer- sort of 'break-Times, I experienced first sity student has taken shape, now ing out of my hand the hard work that that lessons and university activ- shell'-emergence is put into such a project: ities are conducted in person. in its best sense. Work-A steady workflow enabled Almost overnight, the roads of ing on this issue was incredibly by communication and Komaba campus were filled with stimulating as I inter-

school packed to the brim.

# "Emergence is the unfolding

but I clawed my way through it, stay in coherence with the world pearance of something from Isn't that what matters?"—Zihan around me, oftentimes struggling nothing, but to me it also means at the thresholds. To me, Emer- the re-appearance of something "Emergence' for me evokes the gence becomes an emotional new from something existing. concept of growth, overcoming phenomenon, a feeling that en- For me, this was the first UTokyo

extracurricular I participated in as a student. and

"For me 'emergence' mal in the blink contains multiple mean- of an eye. Workings. First the word sig- ing on this year's nifies our emerging out Komaba Times has of the COVID-19 pan- been an opportudemic chaos. Second, it nity to reflect on all the emergence of Japan as a

the interactions with the amaz-

ed. While working as EIC, I it is the past-or the roots-that challenged my tendency to love allows for our new selves to "To me, 'emergence' is about anything to a static and imag- emerge and Grow. Even when facing challenges head-on, perinary brim. I enjoyed working planted in a New flowerbed, the severing through them, and with ideas and people bursting flowers will Continue to bloom emerging strong at the end out of their bubbles with the from thEir roots."-Jihyun of the long and dark tunnel. promise of renewed meaning upon each encounter."-Alyssa "Being a part of the Komaba Komaba Times gave me an op-

blooms in snow, blue sky that sion for writing in a new envi- ple-somethingpeeks between rain clouds or a ronment with amazing people to I am very gratestream of water that flows along ultimately discover more about ful for!"—Aditya

from some of the univer- doesn't need to go away for the sity's brightest and most positive to appear. This is why I fies the discovery of oneself in unique minds, with feel emergence is such a strong the face of trials and tribulations. visions that I couldn't word now: when 'after' Covid In the midst of hardship, it is easy ever have imagined still becomes 'during' Covid on my own."-Sunwoo and 'new' normal still becomes 'ab'nor-

Gravitational-Wave Astronomy, enforced hibernation, I feel the with the first KAGRA observa- emergence of a renewed de- "For me, emergence implies a

Times team has been a delightful portunity to express these "Emergence is like a flower that experience of planting my pas- ideas and meet new peo-

acted with pieces straight the desert. It means the negative myself emerging from it."—Will

"Emergence,' to me, signito lose your sense of self and direction — your very essence reduced to ashes. But, it is from those ashes that a newer being is born. Emergence is coming alive as a stronger, more resilient person. Working on this issue

refers to the coming of the emerging and submerg- has allowed me to get a glimpse Spring when the whole sur- ing we have been doing to- of the world from the viewpoint roundings take on a new co- gether, and how everyone feels of others, in turn providing me lour. And third, it points to it in a different way."-Pedro with the opportunity to enrich my own perspective. For that, global contender in the field of "As the world comes out of its I am forever grateful."-Joanna

tions and a possible detection termination to seek tangible sudden change or appearance commencing this year. My best happiness. To make our ex- that has a great impact on the take away from working on this periences count. To make our whole. Though it includes the ad-Komaba Times issue has been time count."—Professor Itatsu aptation efforts and processes to better blend into the new change. ing team, with whom I would "Emergence to me means The last year was thus a year of love to work with again."-Suyog growth. To emerge is to develop emergence as I started living in into something new or previous- Tokyo as a university student. It "If 'emergence' could be physi- ly unseen. I have never viewed completely changed my lifestyle, ologically felt, it would be sim- emergence as positive or nega- habits, and surroundings but ilar to the cold I once felt from tive, but simply a necessity of life. I still am well after the changone hemolytic facial flush when We will always emerge whether es. Being a member of Komaba a conversational sparring part- we like it or not, but hopeful- Times Issue 12 was one of the ner confessed: 'I could get used ly for the best. 'Emergence' re- best decisions I ever made; it was to this? Whatever 'this' was had minds Me of a flowerbed: flowers amazingly motivating to interact the stench of romanticised per- always bloom from their roots with others with creative ideas fection, as if I myself were an covEred beneath the soil. Rather and to read and visualize their unmoving chamber to be haunt- than moving away from the past, values to be published."—Ohyun

Working on this edition of the

by Alyssa

Komaba Times Issue 12 "Emergence" Team

Alyssa Castillo Yap, ITASIA M1, Hongo, Editor-in-Chief William Patrick Guzman, ITASIA M1, Hongo, Head of Editing Priva Mu, ITASIA M2, Hongo, Head of Design Madeleine Kouka Newman, ITASIA M1, Hongo, Head of Marketing & PR Suyog Garg, Physics M2, Kashiwa, Editing, Website, Marketing & PR Vedant Agrawal, PEAK ES Y3, Komaba, Editing Sunwoo Kim, PEAK ES Y3, Komaba, Editing Sherrene Chua, PEAK ES Y2, Komaba, Editing, Illustrations Jihyun Lee, PEAK JEA Y2, Komaba, Editing Aditya Mathur, PEAK ES Y2, Komaba, Editing Zihan (Martin) Huang, PEAK JEA Y1, Komaba, Editing Pedro Marinho, Chinese Literature Y2, Komaba, Design, Marketing & PR Ohyun Kwon, PEAK ES Y2, Komaba, Design Joanna Marie Dodson Ang, PEAK JEA Y2, Komaba, Design Samantha Chow, PEAK ES Y3, Komaba, *Marketing & PR* Hannah Payne, PEAK JEA Y2, Komaba, Marketing & PR

#### Contributors

Chiu Chien-Cheng (James), PEAK JEA Y3, Komaba Mahi Patki, PEAK ES Y4, Komaba Vedant Agrawal, PEAK ES Y3, Komaba MAX, Cultural and Human Information Studies M1, Hongo Noah Brelage, Exchange Student at Komaba Yasha Lai, ITASIA M2, Hongo Hiroka Sakurai, PEAK ES Y1, Komaba William Patrick Guzman, ITASIA M1, Hongo Priya Mu, ITASIA M2, Hongo Alyssa Castillo Yap, ITASIA M1, Hongo Misha Cade, Global Society Program PhD Candidate, Komaba Suyog Garg, Physics M2, Kashiwa Madeleine Kouka Newman, ITASIA M1, Hongo

#### **Faculty Advisor**

**Professor Yuko Itatsu,** Graduate School of Interdisciplinary Information Studies, Hongo

Thank you to everyone who worked on Emergence!



#### **KOMABA TIMES**

3-8-1 Komaba, Meguro-ku, Tokyo, 153-8902, Japan

http://komabatimes.com

Email: thekomabatimes@gmail.com

Instagram/Twitter/Facebook: @komabatimes

