

JUDY IN JAPAN



CANDY  
CRIMINAL  
LARD

① - DUB  
② - ~~SOUL GRUB~~

~~FRIENDS  
FEET~~

~~SWARM  
NOTHING  
GOODTIME~~

DOG

✓ CYCLOPS

SWEET  
OUTER

① RUMPS

② MISCHIEF

BISCUIT

MAPS

~~CALIFORNIA  
SCORPION~~

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# Secrets

from the

# ONSEN

A JUDY AND THE JERKS  
TOUR DIARY

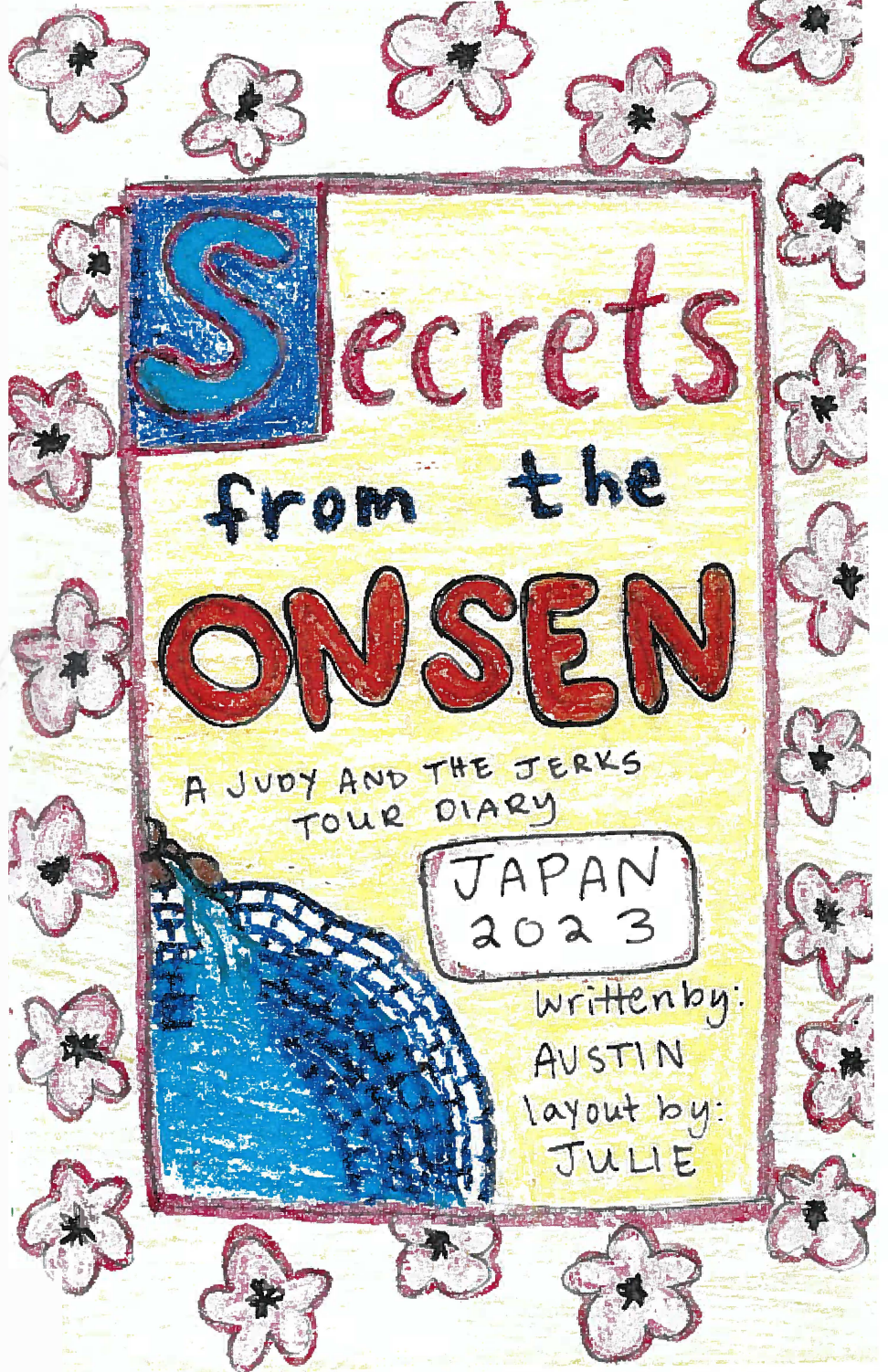
JAPAN  
2023

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AUSTIN

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JULIE





# DAY ONE : ASHIKAGA AT ASHIKAGA TAISHIKAN



CLASS: STANDARD SEAT: 28G

GRIFFITH/JULIA  
2G 023 04MAR  
FROM: LOS ANGELES  
TO: TOKYO NARITA  
DEPARTURE TIME: 0940  
SEQUENCE NO: 010







Photos by Teppei Miki



Photo by Yukiko Ono

Flew out of LAX at 9:40am to Narita airport. Everything went smoothly with our flight and we had no issues getting into Japan whatsoever. We were all very exhausted from the travel, including the prior full day spent in LA, but excitement carried us through. Met with Tatsuya, Tanji, and Chiba at the terminal and exchanged our currency before we were on our way to Tatsuya and Eriko's place in Tatebayashi. Eriko's parents made us egg salad sandwiches and french fries served with the sweetest and most tasty strawberries I've ever had. I've heard that fruit in Japan is better than in America, but wow, they were truly incredible! As someone who doesn't usually like fruit, that says a lot. The meal was just what we needed to get our energy up for the first gig in Ashikaga. The local bands were Marvelous and Suueat. Everyone at the venue was so nice and already started buying merch when we got set up. A few locals wanted to get pictures with us which is always silly and fun. Marvelous opened the show with some truly insane fastcore punk that my mind could barely keep up with. They played with incredible ferocity and stage presence that you just have to love. I wish I could remember the names of the members, because they were super nice and explained to us how excited they were to see us play. Suueat played next and their set reminded me of some 70s roots rock- very American sounding. It was a total vibe shift from Marvelous but everyone seemed to enjoy it and the good energy stayed in the room. Next up was MAZE playing their first set back in 3 years! They did not miss a beat and played their signature weirdo punk no wave with ease, and the room quickly broke out into a groovy dance party. When it was time for us to play I felt weirdly at ease about the whole thing despite the insane fact that I

was about to play a show in Japan. The crowd was extremely receptive and seemed to enjoy every song despite my trouble keeping Tatsuya's sick Flying V guitar in tune. I thought we played pretty well despite how exhausted we were, and the pressure we may have felt after watching 3 great Japanese bands perform. We played Cyclops Baby as an encore and took our leave. I ran back to the merch table and saw Ryan panicked over trying to do some math while selling merch (in Yen of course). Understandable, because it's very tricky to deal with a currency you aren't familiar with at all! Anyway I jumped in to help and Tatsuya came over to help with making change and all that. Sold a lot more merch and took more photos before it was time to head back to Eriko and Tatsuya's place. Tatsuya made us some tasty veggie tacos which were a perfect end to the day. Finally we were able to lay down and sleep for more than 3 hours. Tomorrow we'll head to Tokyo!







# DAY TWO: TOKYO

@STUDIO DOM



I woke up a little earlier than the rest of the crew, most likely due to still being off my sleep rhythm, but the sun was beginning to rise (it was around 5:45am I believe) so I figured I may as well accept it and hop out of bed. Went downstairs to get well hydrated and read some Demon Slayer on my kindle until Julie started to wake up. We decided to take a walk around the neighborhood since everyone else was still asleep. First stop was a vending machine for the first a.m. coffees (Mmmm) We turned the first corner and encountered a kind older woman who we exchanged good morning greetings with before she began speaking to us in Japanese and (of course) we could not understand 99.9% of what she was saying so we frantically pulled out a phone and began attempting to translate what she was trying to tell us. Turns out she wanted to offer us a present! One of the translations said "I will give you a bat that catches a cold when it rains" which we were able to decipher as an umbrella when she added some gestures for cold weather and rain. We thanked her profusely and she went into her home to bring us the umbrella. We accepted her gift and said our goodbyes feeling very giddy about what just happened. We continued our walk just happy to be taking in our surroundings and everyone's unique homes. We especially loved the tanuki statues outside of people's doors. We began noticing school children in their insanely cute school uniforms making their ways

to class as we made our way back to the house. Julie was cool guyed by a couple of junior high girls on bikes when she



said good morning, haha. Everyone had risen by the time we got home and we were served pomelo (a gift from Tatsuya's parents), onigiri, miso soup, and some leftover egg salad for breakfast. Julie and Sarah got in some good Emma time and Tatsuya even screen printed a MAZE design on my black Levi's jacket! We all talked for a little while before it was time to pile in the van and head into Tokyo! Eriko drove us this time as Tatsuya was on daddy duty apparently. We made a stop at a big rest stop which had a bunch of storefronts selling all sorts of baked goods and snacks. I grabbed some daifuku and custard filled cakes of some kind for the ride. We made our way into Tokyo after an hour or two and caught

Photo by Kenta

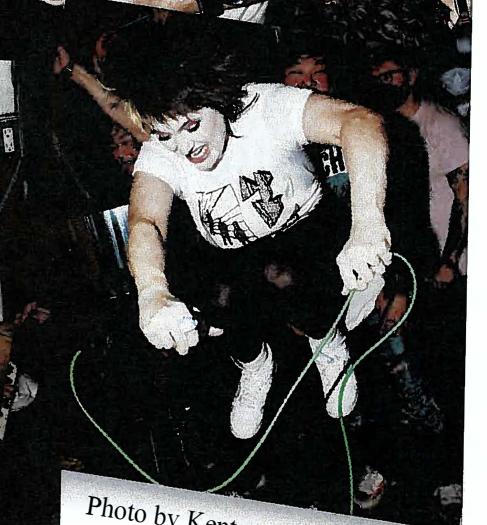


Photo by Naoshi

Photo by Kenta



Photo by Kenta



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Eriko, Tanji and Chiba.



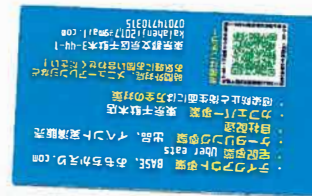


and walked over to the apartment we'd be crashing at which I believe was being used as an office space by Miyapon (drums for My Society Pissed.) Before we would retire for the night, we hit up a late night public bathhouse in the neighborhood just around the corner. Getting naked together didn't feel at all out of the ordinary this time. Once in the spa room, we tried a section of the hottest tub that also shoots electric current through your body which wasn't for me and Ryan, but Hampton seemed to enjoy for some reason. Ryan yelped out loud when the electricity hit him and I felt like it was going to kill me if I stayed too long so I promptly exited. Once I'd had enough of the hot tub I doused my head in some cold water and toweled off. Once we were all dressed and clean, it was back to Miyapon's place where we were served up some delicious vegan eats that I'm not entirely sure the contents of were, but it was appreciated and devoured nevertheless. We also filmed a quick interview with Kohei which was our final task for the tour. We were dead tired by this point so I hope the interview isn't too lackluster, as we may have spent most of our energy for the day by this point. I failed to thank everyone who made this tour a huge success for us at the end so I will do it here. I want to send all of my love and thanks to Tatsuya and the entire MAZE crew for taking time out of their busy schedules to host us. Tatsuya made this entire tour possible for us and put in an incredible amount of work to make sure we had the best time we possibly could've, and to that effect he did an amazing job. Eriko, despite having a beautiful one year girl to care for, came out and played every gig as promised. I wish we could've spent more time together but I have immense respect for her for making this tour happen despite the challenges it must have involved. Tanji and Chiba were our

guides when Tatsuya was not able to be, and they were also our best buddies who'd go along with any dumb thing we wanted to do. Thank you guys so much for putting up with our nonsense on the road and not complaining once! Secondly I want to thank everyone who put us up in their homes, fed us, and entertained us, so thank you Tatsuya/Eriko, Bisco, Tanji/Umechang, Teru/Teru's mom, Jin, Kohei/Takashi/Shoki, and Miyapon/anyone else I am forgetting or did not get the name of. I want to thank all of the bands who played with us: MAZE, My Society Pissed, Wetnap, P-iple, Suuate, Marvelous, Nic-Fit, MILK, Sibafü, Ananas, Meshia to Ninjin, Klonns, Cryuff, The Breath, Kagami, and Unarm. Without local bands, there is no scene, and without a scene we are without a community, so thank you all for playing at the gigs! Lastly I just want to thank anyone who booked or promoted the shows, and the Japanese punk community in general, for welcoming us with your warm smiles and open arms. We may have had a language barrier between us, but the love I felt from all of you was as palpable as any I've experienced playing shows anywhere else in the world, if not more so than usual. It was an absolute honor and privilege to be a guest in your community and we hope to return as soon as we possibly can. Japan- stay punk and we will see you again soon!!!



Thanks  
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Thanks  
Love  
M.A  
Tatsuya



where Eriko's friend, Yanesen was prepared to receive us at his vegan restaurant, Vespera. He served us up some delicious and healthy plates with falafel being the center of most dishes. We really appreciate that he



took special care to ensure not to serve Julie any soy since she's allergic. Thoroughly satisfied, we took a walk to the train station and rode it to Akihabara where the destination was Super Potato, a famous retro video game store. Hampton really wanted to go there, and the MAZE crew has continued to accommodate our every want and need, so of

our first glimpses of the mega city! We parked the van and walked around the corner

course we had to go. After perusing all the cool wares, Hampton got a copy of Pokémon Green and it was time to get back to the van so we could get to the venue, Studio Dom. Eriko drove us through the narrow Tokyo streets to an alleyway parking spot near the venue. We especially loved her sound effect for close quarters driving situations - "tss tss tss tss." We loaded in and I installed some new strings on Tatsuya's sweet Flying V guitar so it would hopefully stay in tune better for me. There was still an hour or so before the gig started so we took another walk around the shopping/entertainment street that the venue is located on. We popped into a claw machine arcade and Sarah won a glittery keychain. On the upper floors there were guys smoking and drinking and having a virtual horse race. We got Julie some french fries since she felt snacky and needed some energy before the show started. Back at the venue Wetnap opened up the show and played a sort of post hardcore with hints of punk and maybe emo. They were a really tight trio





and I enjoyed their set a lot. I made my way over to the merch table where business was booming.

I finally got comfortable dealing in Yen and exchanging niceties with

Japanese folks, so I stayed put there a while. More people piled into the venue, and due to how tiny the room was, I wasn't able to make it in to see the next two locals P-iple and My Society Pissed, much to my dismay. But I was able to hear them playing from the merch table and they both sounded great! We met Soya, who we interviewed with over email prior to the tour, and Sarah and Julie chatted with him a while. All of the locals at the show were so nice and welcoming and seemed genuinely interested in meeting us. I wish I could remember everyone's name who I spoke with, but I appreciate everyone who came up to chat! Again due to the size of the crowd vs the size of the room, we were asked to play two sets on this night so the crowd could shuffle around and more people would be able to see us. I knew it would be tiring for us but I thought that was so considerate and very Japanese in that way. In America I don't think anyone would've thought to do something like that. We got up and played our set and the crowd went absolutely nuts. It was so insanely fun and it is always great to have the crowd reciprocating the energy you're putting into the performance. I got knocked into the drums a few times but we never stopped a song and were



always able to get back on amidst the chaos. I didn't know or expect anyone in Japan to mosh, so it was a nice surprise! MAZE closed out the gig and the crowd ate them up as well. It was an all out pogo dance party when Spread the Gericide was played :-). After MAZE, I went back out to run the merch table a little longer before it was time to pack up. It was a truly amazing show, a dream come true to say the least to be so far from home and be made to feel so welcome. We love you Tokyo! We walked back to the van with Tatsuya and his friend (our new friend!) Bisco and parted ways with Tatsuya since we'd be staying at Bisco's place. We hit a Family Mart for a late night snack (I got egg and inari sushi) and went up to Bisco's apartment. Hung out with Bisco for a minute before we hit the showers and he graciously offered up his bed for us to sleep in. Good night Tokyo! Tomorrow we'll have a day off in the city and be able to run around doing whatever we want, I can't wait.



Photos by Kenta



Photo by Yukiko Ono

beer with Tanji and Umechang (kanpai!!) I used Google Translate to tell them just how much this whole trip as meant to us and that I hope that all of these newfound friendships can last a lifetime. I told them again we would get better at Japanese and learn to play mahjong so we can shoot the shit more casually next time we meet (which can't be too long from now!) Tanji damn near made me cry when he showed his phone to me and it read that he wasn't able to tell me earlier because it'd make him too sad, but that he would be going home and he had to work the next day. I was truly going to miss him so much, he is my buddy! We had to say goodbye to a few people before heading to the train station including Teru and Deathro, but promises were made that this was not "goodbye" and only "see you later." We boarded our final train back over to where we'd be staying our last night, and it was really hard to deal with Tanji and Umechang getting off at their stop, but so it goes. We got off at our stop at Kōenji station









# DAY THREE: DAY OFF! TOKYO

Clearly the time difference and nonstop running around is beginning to catch up with us because we managed to sleep soundly till 10:00am. I stepped out on Bisco's balcony and was greeted by a beautiful sunny cityscape, which I promptly snapped a few panoramas of while I took in the insanity of the situation. Seriously, it still feels unreal just to be in Japan having so many wonderful experiences every day. Anyway, it was time to start our day off in Tokyo so we headed out the door and strolled down the street to the Family Mart for some

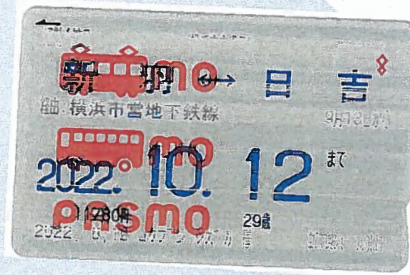
fuel for the day. I had some more inari sushi, daifuku, and slammed two coffees to put some pep in my step. We told Bisco and Tatsuya we'd like to do some shopping firstly, so we strolled to a shopping district that seemed to gradually turn into an indoor mall the further we walked. Once we found ourselves fully indoors, we were surrounded by storefront after storefront of cool vintage and retro Japanese toys and collectible stuff. Maybe most of it was actually worthless in Japan, because the prices all seemed very reasonable, but to us it all



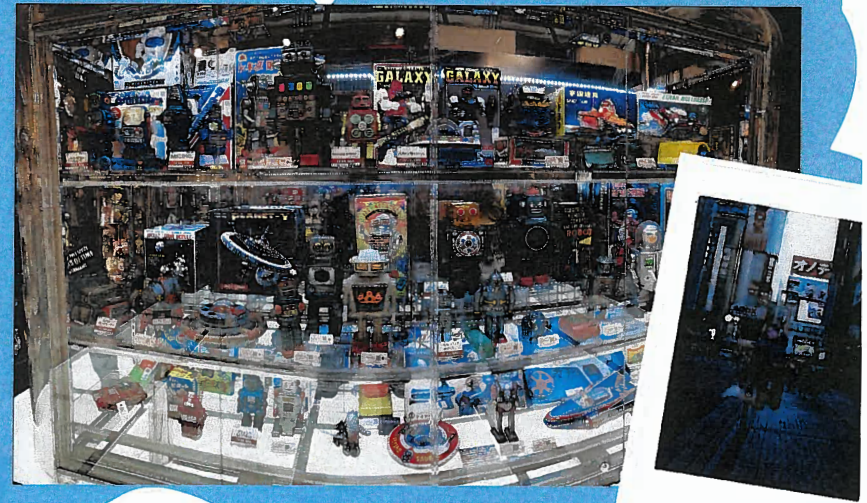
ripped and I slammed with all of the crew. Deathro was out there too, and I was told by Takashi that he would sing later if we wanted (of course we wanted!!) Us Americans pulled out the combat rolls and army crawls which I hope didn't disgust anyone since it does appear that the ground is (rightfully) thought of as a dirty place (it is) that you want to keep your hands and body off of, but I couldn't resist to urge to go off for my new friends on our last night in Japan. I think the locals got a kick out of our moves, however disgusted that may or may not have been. Next up was the almighty Unarm! They have been a band for many years and in my eyes it demands respect when a band can stay together for so many years while keeping the same speed and excitement they've always had. Seeing bands like Unarm really inspired me to stay punk forever no matter what, and that it is not lame or a bad thing to keep a punk band going for years and years as long as you're still having fun doing what you're doing. Unarm absolutely crushed it, unsurprisingly, and the crowd continued to get more and more revved up. MAZE was up next, and this time the crowd was the most fired up I've seen them. Kohei and Deathro danced wild and free and we made mosh parts out of MAZE's grooves even though they're not playing hardcore punk at all. We didn't care, we just had so much fun and all let loose together and it was beautiful. I think I even saw Tatsuya crack a smile at us and it made me want to tear up, but no time for that now as we are about to have to play our last set in Japan. We got on stage and got all set up, and the crowd had already begun to pack in. I knew this was going to be a special show and I couldn't contain my excitement. I may have been grinning the entire time



spinning a plane on a string around his head while also juggling flaming objects. Truly a man of many talents, very impressive. It was getting to be time to catch the train into Tokyo, so we made our way to the nearest station and rode it to Shibuya because we also wanted to be dumb tourists and cross at the iconic Shibuya crossing and take a walk through Harajuku. It was actually really cool to see the crossing in person. We met back up with Chiba and Tanji there and I snapped an instax photo of Kohei looking super cool in the crosswalk and gave it to him. We kept on walking but eventually we needed to take a break, so we decided to hit up a matcha cafe. I got a matcha ice cream and an iced matcha oat milk latte, and they were made properly strong with that nice grassy/earthy taste. At some point during our matcha break, Takashi showed up out of nowhere looking super cool in a black corduroy trench coat like the fashion icon he is, and proclaimed that he was "steak horny" and invited Ryan to go have a steak with him since Ryan was



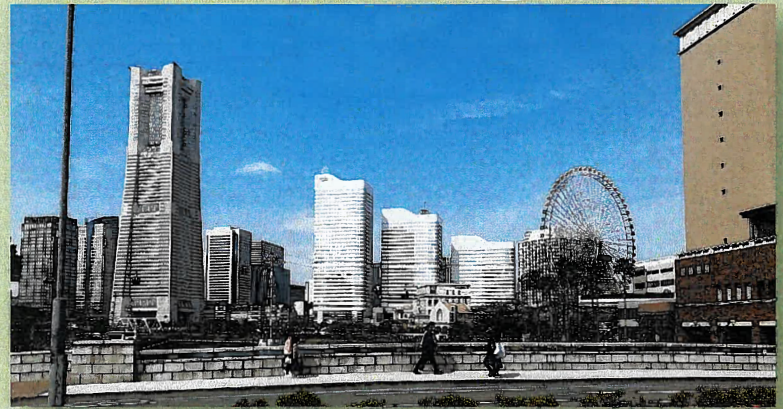
the only fully unrestricted eater on this tour. With Ryan now in Takashi's care, Tanji and Chiba whisked us over to a vintage clothing store where I was really hoping to find a retro Japanese baseball team cap. Unfortunately the vintage clothing stores in the touristy parts of Tokyo seem to mostly deal in Americana and stuff that is all too common back home, so no lucky finds for me on this trip in that regard. I'll just have to find one on mercari or something to help stave off the post Japan blues. Tanji clearly did not want to be in Harajuku any longer so we were cool with getting on a couple more trains and getting to Koiwa. I can't remember if I've mentioned it before but damn, I love being able to cross a massive city completely on foot and on rail like that. It's so quick and convenient and the US really needs to get up to speed on this! We made it to Bushbash and took a little chill break on the couches in there before our tummies were rumbling once again and it was time for another convenience store run. I grabbed some inari pouches and chips as well as a coffee that I thought would be a stronger brew but turned out to be just sickeningly sweet. I had some swigs and let Kohei finish it, who was looking a bit in need of a pick me up himself. A short while later, the gig was beginning, and Kagami was opening things up. Kagami is fronted by our buddy Teru and also features Kohei on guitar. They absolutely



looked like treasure. We split up and regrouped several times popping into all the stores and buying little bits and bobs to take home to our friends. I got a little Dragon Ball Z SSJ Trunks figurine for my friend Tommy so I could show my thanks for the coffee he mailed us recently. I also picked up some vintage looking postcards to include with any other random mailouts we'll be making. Julie got a carebare snow globe (we can't wait to see which bear she got when we get home), a deck of random Japanese Pokémon cards, and a Tokyo Disney Gashapon. After the cool vintage goods mall, we went out and around the corner and up some narrow stairs to record shop. Tatsuya kindly went to digging and sourced us a Masayoshi Takanaka record that was only like ¥800 so that was an instant buy. I'm lame and not a huge collector of records but in a Japanese record shop even I was inspired to dig through and see if there was anything that might pop out at me. At the very least, everything was neat to look at. I found another Takanaka record, this one being only like ¥300, so I assume that Masayoshi Takanaka isn't necessarily a

hot commodity in Japan.. maybe he's like the Neil Diamond of Japan? Anyway, everyone was beginning to get a little hungry again so we headed to a California themed taco shop where we munched on some decent meat free tacos and fries. Sarah had a matcha soft serve and let me have a bite, yummy! I asked Tatsuya if we could go play some video games in an arcade, so he said we would head back to Akihabara where there was a 4 story arcade filled with any game we could want to play. We took a train across the city and popped out in Akihabara, greeted by the insane sights and sounds once again. We made our way over to the arcade and I bee lined for the racing games while Sarah and Hampton checked out some rhythm and puzzles games. Ryan tried a drumming game but his real life skills did not translate, sadly. Julie went downstairs and spent ¥1500 attempting to win an Aires themed Kirby and walked away unsuccessful. I came down from playing the racing games and even gave it a couple tries myself but I also walked away feeling scammed, haha. We decided our time was up in the arcade





see-through plexi glass gondola and paid our yen for the somewhat terrifying ride. Going up was much scarier than I

rants. I figured since it was our last full day in Japan I may as well eat some good quality sushi, so we popped into a standing sushi bar and I had some delicious tuna and salmon varieties and Julie enjoyed some broiled shrimp. Ryan and Kohei got full platters of all types of sushi. Sarah and Hampton didn't have quite as much of an appetite and hit up another convenience store for their meal. We reconvened outside and watched an incredible street performer riding a super tall unicycle back and forth while



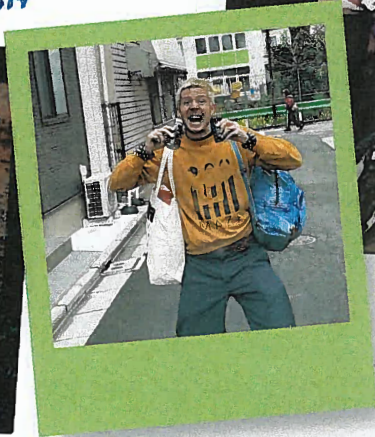
thought it might be but once we reached the top we had such an incredible view that I wasn't as freaked out. Hampton rocked the gondola a little bit which put the unease back in me for a moment but everyone made him stop. Once we were back on earth, we all had an appetite for a proper lunch so Kohei walked us over to a shopping mall with some restau-





# DAY EIGHT: TOKYO

@KOIWA BUSHBASH



We rose with the sunrise once again as well as the alarm I'd set, because we had a few plans for a Yokohama day before we were to catch the train over to Koiwa. Kohei wanted to take us to ride a massive ferris wheel and to grab a good coffee at one of his favorite coffee spots, so we planned on getting out around 10:00am. Everyone else had mostly woken up too, and I was feeling a convenience store run, so we trudged up the hill and grabbed our coffees and a.m. sweets and snacks we'd come to love so much over the past week. We downed all of our coffees and foods and headed out the door, saying our goodbyes to Shoki who was heading to work and wouldn't be at the gig later. Takashi slipped us a few more records that we'd have to get home with somehow (our collection of Japan pick-ups was growing enormous.) Julie and I actually decided to just toss out a lot of the clothes we arrived with (socks, underwear, etc.) because I'd picked up band shirts from at least 4 or 5 Japanese

bands and wouldn't be needing my blank tees that I flew in with, and we needed to make souvenir room. Takashi graciously offered to dispose of our stinky tour clothes and we were out the door heading down for another coffee and to the amusement park a brisk 30-45 minute walk away. A nice strong cup of joe and a few more Gashapon machines later, we'd arrived at the amusement park and took in the sight of the behemoth ferris wheel we'd be taking around for a spin. Hampton informed me that this ferris wheel was also destroyed by Mothra in a Godzilla film at some point. We chose a



and had to round everyone up to decide our next move, which was a visit to Tokyo Tower for a top deck tour. It involved hopping on a few trains to get back over to Bisco's place where we busted a quick chill while Tatuya ran to get the van. After a well earned rest, Tatsuya arrived to drive us over to Tokyo Tower. Apparently, it wasn't easily reached by train and we'd need to drive up. We made our way across town again in the van and got parked near the tower. We got inside the base of the tower and paid up ¥3000 each for our tickets. Kinda pricey, but we thought it'd be worth it to splurge for a night time view of the massive city we'd been scooting around the past couple of days. After a quick history tour of the tower, we got on the elevator to the top. The view from up there was jaw dropping to say the least! Hampton got to looking for and pointing out landmarks that Godzilla has destroyed, and told me the tower itself was actually destroyed by Mothra. I snapped the best photos and videos I could, but it was one of those sights you just have to see in person to get the full experience. Once our time was up, we got back in the elevator and stopped by the gift shop (fridge magnets for mom.) Also down one of the roped off hallways near some Gashapon machines, we saw a weird suit costume of a blue guy with a massive bald head and had a good laugh. Everyone was feeling pretty hungry at this point but we were heading to Tanji's place now where he and his wife Umechang were hosting us for the night and we were told we'd be receiving a meal of boiled eggs, pasta, and french fries (sign me up!) so we tightened our belts and relaxed for the drive which seemed to be on the other side of the entire Tokyo region. I really hope we weren't burdening our gracious hosts with all our dumb requests! We made a stop at a supermarket near Tanji's and I picked up some coffees for the next

day as well as a strawberry and whipped cream sandwich, a peanut butter sandwich, some strawberry pocky, and some of those chocolate mushroom cookie things that I can't remember the name of. The supermarket was playing some really fun music that sounded straight out of a Sonic game. We arrived at Tanji and Umechang's and had a seat around the dinner table where we were promptly served the promised dishes as well as a salad and some delicious cheesy cooked vegetables. After devouring as much as we could, we busted out the sweets and shared them with Tanji and Micchan. Tanji, Tatsuya, and Chiba were bro-ing down over some Sapporos and I felt a little jealous so I made a mental note to have a beer with one of them at some point on this trip (I was too meek to ask for one and join them.) Needless to say, we'd crammed a lot into this "day off" and we were all feeling the sleepies by this point. Our amazing, sweet hosts brought out a ton of futon mats and cozy comforters and made a huge sleep pallet for us on the floor, and offered the shower and laundry facilities up to everyone. We also had a silly time trying to understand Tanji as he tried to offer us clean clothes to sleep in, thinking at first he wanted to borrow our shirts due to the language barrier, but good ol translation apps got us there and we all had a laugh together. I think by this point everyone began to feel more comfortable around each other and trying to tackle the language barrier and actually attempt to have some longer conversations, which I really enjoyed. Tomorrow we'd be heading to Nagoya where we'd notably be playing with MILK - their first gig in 3 years. This trip just keeps getting better and better. Good night once again Tokyo, see you in the morning!



DAY FOUR:  
NAGOYA  
@ HUCK FINN



Day 4: Nagoya at Huck Finn

We woke up after another cozy night of great sleep and exchanged good mornings with Tanji and Umechang. They began cooking up some grilled vegetable sandwiches for us and we tore into the coffees we got at the supermarket the night before. We were then invited downstairs where Tanji and Umechang had a top of the line looking mahjong table they wanted to show us. Apparently, Umechang is a professional mahjong player, and she wanted us to all have a seat around the table to play a quick round together. None of us had any experience with mahjong so they had to hold our hands the entire time. We had a silly goofy time as the round progressed and Julie began to kick our collective asses. I still don't know exactly what was going on, but it seemed luck would not be on my side during this game so I resigned myself to losing badly. Umechang took a photo of us and shared it with the world on Twitter where I hope it will live until the world ends and the internet ceases to exist. After our quick round of mahjong, we stepped outside to load up the van and also run around the corner for more vending machine coffees. We snapped some very cute photos together and I snapped one of Tanji and Umechang in front of their home. Though our time with everyone in Japan is short, I could feel my fondness growing and had to fight the urge to hug everyone all the time because I don't think they're quite as touchy-feely as we

are, haha. We piled into the van to head to Nagoya, and made a quick pit stop to pick up our friend Kohei, who we know from playing gigs with his band Rashomon in Texas back in 2019. He'd also been at our first gig in Tokyo but wanted to catch the show in Nagoya/get some video and audio recordings of all the bands. We made our way south and Mt. Fuji came into view which got me very giddy because I love seeing iconic sights like that when I'm out on tour. We stopped at a rest stop that had a little observation point for the mountain so we could stretch our legs and have a better look at the massive snow capped volcano in all its glory. It was a beautiful sunny day out, so thankfully it was a pretty nice view even though we weren't technically that close to it. I was craving pizza so I got a margarita pizza from the fast food pizza joint, and it ended up actually being pretty damn good! I got to chat with Kohei a good bit at this stop about his experiences living in the US and Japan at different times and all the differences between them. It was great having him along to also be our fully bilingual translator, thanks Kohei! Another short stint on the highway later we'd arrived in Nagoya, which Kohei described as "the Detroit of Japan" since Toyota HQ is located nearby and apparently most of the city seems to work for Toyota. It definitely seemed more car friendly and less centered around taking transit everywhere, but I wouldn't say it is actually anything like Detroit, or any

urge to run and Hampton joined me so it became an all out foot race. We were fully winded after about 20-30 yards and Hampton jokingly crawled on the asphalt, which Tanji and Chiba were mortified by, haha. Once we had our treats and such in hand, it was back down that same hill to the cookout. We kicked it on the stoop while we watched Takashi, Chiba, and Tanji attempt to light a grill which was a hilariously familiar looking situation being all from the southern US where cookouts and people trying to light grills are as much a part of the culture as anything. Takashi really wanted us to try to grilled squid so we had to break veg for a moment to oblige his request. At some point we were also saying "Chiba squid" for some reason to which Tanji said "Chiba is not squid, Chiba is my buddy!" Honestly it was quite tasty, so nice job grill master Takashi! We chilled about for many more hours at the Japanese BBQ, filling up on some delicious yakisoba and tofu as well. The hour was getting late and Sarah and Julie decided to call it a night, but Hampton and I stayed up a bit later to hang out with the guys who were still up. We ended up gathering around a TV on the kitchen table and watching Sasuke clips and recounting memories of watching the show and similar shows back home at various stages in our lives. We all had a good laugh as the hours melted away. When it was time for bed, we needed to squeeze Tanji onto our sleeping pad so it was a cuddle puddle of Julie, Tanji, and I. Sweet dreams! Final gig in Tokyo tomorrow.

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横浜霞ヶ丘店  
神奈川県横浜市西区霞ヶ丘1-0-4  
電話: 045-250-0830 店コード: 291440  
2023年 3月12日(日) 09:07  
店#: #1 86078 賞: 浅川

UC157 レッソ	158 軽
遊谷食品 スイトボト	129 軽
富富富 塩にぎり	113 軽
UC餅テ マイ子食感ロ-ル仔コ	397 軽
合計	¥797
(内消費税等)	¥59
(8%対象)	¥797
点数	4個
上記正に領収いたしました	
お預り合計	¥1,000
お金の	¥203
緑印は軽減税率対象商品です。	





Hampton (for some reason shirtless) climbed a structure atop the roof and stuck a heroic pose. Soon it was time to stop fooling about and head down to catch the first band Klonns who played some good ol' ripping hardcore punk you can't be mad at. Cryuff played next and broke up the hardcore punk with a 90s indie-shoegaze inspired sound. They had cool samples going in between songs and included a funny outro in a microsoft Sam sounding voice. The Breath followed them up and served up much the same of the good stuff that Klonns did. Klonns and The Breath probably sounded the closest to American hardcore punk as I know it, though once again they played with ferocity and tightness not always seen in American bands. Next up we had MAZE who gave us as tight a set as ever, and I loved every minute of it per usual. Judy played last at this show and the attendees packed in tightly to catch our set. Kohei showed up at the last minute and promptly got to slamming, even though he said his ribs were killing him from a pit injury in Nagoya already. I saw Deathro out there as well, slamming and dancing to anything that could be slammed and/or danced to. Deathro is the #1 moshers in my book, wild and free as he should be. We did Bloodstains for the encore and thanked the crowd profusely for sharing their energy with us. I hopped up on the drum throne and took a photo of the crowd on my instax before we filed out of the room. I spoke with a few nice folks outside and caught some air on the roof because this gig was a particular sweaty affair. Once it was time to leave the venue we got the gang together and took a short taxi ride back to Kohei's where we'd be having a cookout on their front porch. Before fully settling back in at the house we hiked it up to a Lawson's convenience store for some drinks and treats. For some reason on the walk up a very steep hill I got the



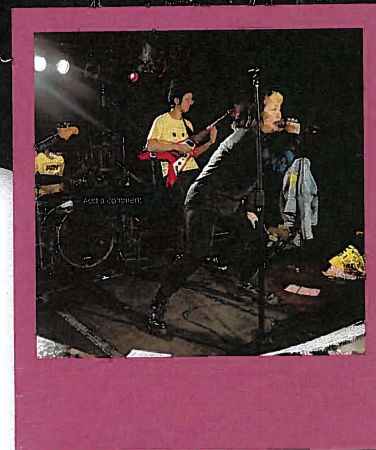
Photo by Naoshi



Photo by Teppei Miki



Photo by Teppei Miki





other American city for that matter haha. We popped into a punk record store called A - Z Records which was around the corner from the venue, and all the record collectors had a good time perusing all the goods and chatting with the owner, Kazuki. The store doubled as Kazuki's home, so it was a shoes off affair even to just come in and browse records. We briefly met Bara (vocals for MILK) and I confessed how much I love his band. Some of us were feeling snacky so Julie, Sarah, Tanji, and I walked around until we found a 7-11. I had a yummy rice ball and we made our way back over to the record store to reconvene. Soon enough it was time to get back over to Huck Finn because Japan does not do punk time. We sat down inside and shared a chocolate cream sandwich on chocolate bread which was the softest thing I've ever put in my mouth. Downstairs where the show was happening, it was MAZE who'd soon be starting this one off. I'll never get tired of watching them! I think by this point they were getting used to the stage again after their 3 year hiatus. Next up was Nic Fit, who are a band that MAZE released a split tape with a while back. They played a sort of psych tinged no wave kind of punk that was really cool but I had trouble pinning down the exact sound of. I've noticed a lot of bands in Japan tend to defy genre conventions or at least genre conventions as I know them. Maybe I am just bad at describing music, but anyhow, they were great and you should check them out. They notably had an American guy that looked like Les Claypool playing an aluminum guitar. Next up was MILK who the whole crew was very amped up to see play. Even their sound check was getting the crowd excited and I could tell the energy was about to shift in the room when they began playing. They tore into their set like they never took 3 years off and the crowd went absolutely nuts, including myself. It was really cool to experience

their first show back in person, and I hope they continue to perform and release new music. In my head MILK is a band that needs no introduction but if you're not familiar, they play a scorching and catchy version of hardcore punk that uses essentially no distortion on the guitar which makes for a really unique sound that not many bands are doing. They play so well and with such ferocity that I think they'd still be revered even if they didn't have the clean guitar tone quirk, but it definitely adds. Thoroughly drenched in sweat now, we were asked to take the stage after MILK since someone in the last band, Sibafü, was going to be late to the gig. We took the stage and everyone had already pushed up to the front as we got all set up. We got started and the crowd kept the same energy up as they did for MILK, for which I'm externally grateful. I saw so many joyous faces in the crowd and people losing their minds while we played. Thus far, Nagoya was probably my favorite show we played even though I don't usually enjoy playing on a stage, the crowd's energy was just overwhelmingly kind and energetic. If anyone in Nagoya reads this, thank you from the bottom of my heart, seriously! After a quick break to get some air upstairs it was time for Sibafü. They absolutely ripped through their set of fastcore songs with unmatched precision that seriously blew my mind. The switch ups and goofy parts that happen before you've even had time to think about what's going on had me fully entertained and the crowd was just as revved up for them as any other band that played on this night. Thanks to all the local bands that have played with us and made us feel welcome in your cities, we really appreciate it! I went upstairs after the show concluded and gave one of my instax shots to Bara which he accepted graciously and we snapped some pics together. I took photos with a few other locals and even got asked to

## DAY SEVEN: YOKOHAMA AT STUDIO OLIVE

We were woken up earlier than usual by the morning sun pouring through the large translucent windows of Kohei's camera storage room. It'd gotten fairly toasty so we hopped up and headed downstairs to down some coffees and eat some convenience store sweets. Kohei had headed off to work but Shoki entered the kitchen and cooked us up some delicious vegetable soup and served it with salad and bread. Probably better to eat this nutritious breakfast than to continue filling up on heavenly Japanese breads and candies. We kicked it around a bit longer and Takashi appeared with a cool looking fella by the name of Deathro -who we'd later learn is a J-rock sensation within the punk community. They brought in some Sri Lankan breads and other snacks that I was too full to sample unfortunately. Someone was playing Deathro's music in



the other room and it was already getting stuck in my head. Soon enough it was time to make our way over to Studio Olive because this show would be a matinee starting around 2:00pm. We walked down through the winding neighborhood streets to a Main Street where we were loaded into taxis and dropped off at Studio Olive. It was a venue that also doubled as a practice space and recording studio, as was the case with many other live houses in Japan. There were some young children who'd drawn us a colorful welcome sign that is the cutest thing I've ever seen. Eriko and her friend were here in one of the other soundproofed rooms with Emma which made for a nice escape when the place got bumpin'. Sarah and Julie soaked up some Emma time and we also all spent some time hanging out on the roof and goofing off as we all had the zoomies for some reason. I did the longest handstand I've ever done and



explaining what he was doing up here with 5 American dummies. After we relaxed in the common area for a bit it was time to split up the guys and gals, so Sarah and Julie would have to go the rest alone while Tanji took us to our side. We timidly followed Tanji's lead to the locker room area and waited for him to get stripped down to his birthday suit before doing the same. We knew this moment was coming but it was no less hilarious to be in the nude together because it just is not something we do in the US. I highly recommend it though, and I wish we weren't so weird about it back home. Bathing together in the public bath was a silly and fun experience that I'm so glad we got to have. I'll never lose the mental image of Tanji hosing Hampton down or Hampton getting out of the tub to do a meat spin for us all. Us 4 guys had the tub to ourselves so we felt a little free to cut up, but admittedly we probably should have kept it down because we later learned that every sound we made could be heard on the women's side which apparently shared a wall with ours, oops. Once our time was up at the onsen it was time to reconvene back in the common area and have a bit more relaxation time where Julie told me the aforementioned loudness of the boys



crew was easily heard on her side and I felt the urge to apologize to the woman who was hosting us, but Tanji told me it wouldn't be necessary. The kindly woman walked us out with a sweet goodbye and we were back to the van, feeling closer than ever, of course. We had a long drive ahead which I will not bore the readers here with the details of but it involves many snack stops and Chiba showing us his rapper alter ego "Onnen." I loved getting to see more and more of the MAZE crew's personalities come out in moments such as these. After many hours of driving, we pulled into Yokohama sometime around 11:00pm. We made a stop at a convenience store for some final snacks and coffees for tomorrow before scooting over to Kohei's place, which was an older (though but quite large by Japanese standards) hillside house tightly nestled into a compact neighborhood which I found to be quite picturesque. We were received by Kohei as well his housemates, Takashi and Shoki, and hung out a little while just getting to know each other a bit before Julie and I grabbed a spare room upstairs where Kohei keeps his rare old cameras in a humidity resistant case. He and Hampton stayed up nerding out over analog video

equipment while we got cozy and quickly drifted off to sleep after another successful day off. It was hard to believe we were so close to the end of tour already. It felt as if we'd lived a lifetime of experiences in Japan already.

sign a record or two as I made my way over to where the rest of the crew was chilling out and still selling merch. We ran out of records at this show unfortunately, but hey, we shipped as many over as we reasonably could. Tatsuya graciously offered to make shirts to order if we should run out for anyone who may still want one if that happens. Love you Tatsuya! I bumped into Kohei and he wanted to film me skating around the block a little before it was time to leave. Another fellow wanted to snap some photos too so I did my best to skate around the street outside the venue and do anything worth documenting, but I wasn't all that successful haha. I hadn't really been skating much in Japan as I'd liked since I was hesitant to start skating without the approval of locals. I wasn't trying to annoy anyone with the loud noises or have to encounter any security or police while in Japan, so the board only comes out with explicit approval from locals or if I see another local skating. It was time now to head to a Chinese restaurant around the corner that locals seemed to have a high regard for. We got inside and were greeted by a

Japanese style table that you kneel or sit on the floor at, so we popped our shoes off and had a seat. Kohei made sure that we weren't served anything too meaty and Julie wasn't served any soy. Dish after dish of delectable vegetables and fried rice came out and we enjoyed all of them. We had a few other locals with us, including Teru (who'd be putting us up in him home this night) at the table and everyone was cuttin' up together which I loved. Haven't seen a lot of that in Japan. Seems like most people stay reserved and quiet until the situation calls for a little silliness (are we annoying the shit out of everyone?) I was bro-ing down with Tanji (finally!) and decided this would be a good opportunity to share a beer with my new friend. Apparently he was really impressed by my ability to flag down the server and order a beer in Japanese, because he said it made him very glad. I felt like I'd put in minimal effort and could've done much more to learn some basic Japanese phrases, but whatever, I'll take all the praise from Tanji I can get. I already love everyone in the MAZE crew, but I definitely feel Tanji is the most outgoing and he's always trying





to communicate and ask us questions which I am happy to do with him. It's funny how on tour, you can spend 2-3 days with someone who comes from a completely different background and start feeling warm fuzzy feelings about them so quickly. That's easily my favorite part about being involved in the international DIY punk circuit- the friendships and memories you can make with those new-found friends. We wrapped up our meal and the group split up into a few different cars so we could make our way to Teru's house. Teru drove Julie, Sarah, and I over and showed us some of his favorite bands while also explaining his preference for 7-11 over Family Mart (Family Mart = sad mood.) Everyone else had arrived before us, although Ryan was taken to stay with Kazuki at A - Z Records for whatever reason. We got inside and were received by Teru's kind mother and his sweet senior cat, Mickey. Teru showed us his cool nerdy stuff upstairs in his room, and played some tapes for Hampton and Kohei, but my energy was fading fast so I went downstairs to have a shower and get snuggled up under another Japanese style pallet bed of futon mattresses on tatami mats (so comfy!) I was blessed with the presence of Mickey on my section of the cuddle puddle and it was quickly lights out for me as the music still softly played upstairs.



I ♥ TERU!



lunch. We got to the cafe and were treated to some delicious and healthy goods as well as some fresh coffees and teas which, along with the shrine walk, had me feeling well rejuvenated. We'd requested to hit a traditional Japanese onsen on our day off here, so the next stop would be Kyoto Kitashirakawa Natural Radium Hot Spring Eisen Kyo. Side note here that Tatsuya and the whole MAZE gang truly went above and beyond to give us the best possible experience and we really can never repay their kindness. I'm sure I'll harp on this again later in these writings, but it bears repeating, so sorry in advance. Tatsuya (who at this point we started lovingly referring to as Tat-Daddy) drove us up half a mountain to reach the hot spring and we hopped out. Sadly, Japan locals who have tattoos would not be allowed in the baths so Tatsuya and Chiba would have to wait outside while we had our baths, but we had Tanji to guide us through the unfamiliar experience. Eriko was off caring for Emma as she was for the majority of the trip - we missed you Eriko! Once inside, we were served some fresh bottles of spring water and Tanji carried on a conversation with the woman running the place, probably





# DAY SIX: KYOTO DAY OFF!

Having had a fairly late night, we slept until about 10:00am and got a message on WhatsApp that Tatsuya would be pulling up with the van soon - he'd slipped away to a hotel room last night to stay with Eriko and Emma. We had a funny panicked moment when Tanji told us to relax a while and there was no rush but also Tatsuya said in the WhatsApp message "OK let's go! Hurry up!" It's always funny when translations fail us like that. Anyway we got our stuff together and got down to the van where we'd have to part ways with Jin, much too soon. We said our goodbyes, and Tatsuya drove us to a popular mountain-side shrine known as Fushimi Inari Taisha. It is known for its paths of closely packed traditional red gates and forested setting. We took a lovely walk through the shrine together and took some group photos, and I snapped some candids as we walked. We took a short detour off the beaten path to a collapsed structure where some friendly cats had made their home. We got some good pets in before deciding the cat we were petting must be our elder or some sort of protective spirit to be revered and respected, so naturally we took some bows to show our respect for him. The MAZE crew thought that was pretty funny, or maybe they think we are absolute idiots. Perhaps some things are better left to the unknown. We walked out of the shrine and back to the van, and Tatsuya said he'd take us to a nice vegan cafe for



# DAY FIVE: KYOTO AT SOCRATES

We awoke to sun pouring into the windows of the room and Hampton popped in to let us know there's some breakfast on the table in the kitchen. Once I got the sand out of my eyes I walked in and enjoyed a boiled egg, fruit, yoghurt, and some sweet Pokémon themed buns with some OJ. I had another convenience store coffee too, having learned to always keep them on me since we hadn't had anyone offer us coffee at their house yet. Before we were to hit the road to Kyoto, we would be paying a visit to the newly opened Ghibli Park. Once everyone had their breakfast and loaded out of Teru's house, we snapped a few more photos out front and Teru gifted Julie a Totoro figurine. This wasn't goodbye though, because Teru would be joining us for the visit to Ghibli Warehouse at the park. Hampton began lovingly referring to Teru as our "little bro" which was very cute. Tatsuya pulled the van up and took us straight to a Japanese Denny's for what was essentially our brunch. Japanese Denny's was absolutely nothing like an American Denny's. I attempted to order a kids rice omelette, but was denied, so I settled for some rice and miso soup (classic) and some french toast washed down with a latte from the self serve coffee machine

in the middle of the restaurant. Fully satisfied with another meal, we piled back into the van and headed to Ghibli Park. We pulled up to the serene park and got in line to enter the Ghibli Warehouse which is what we actually had tickets for. Once we were inside, we nerded out on all the props and original drawings from the films and snapped tons of photos. I slammed some ice cold glass bottles of Coca-Cola with the boys and we also got to watch a short film in a theater that has only been released at Ghibli Park. It was in Japanese, of course, and with no subtitles so we had to infer



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14:00 入場開始時間

入場券 大人  
¥2,000 (税込)



what it was about. I think the gist was some kids used their imaginations to go on a seafaring adventure where they befriended a whale, whom they wanted to bring home with them back on dry land, but the whale declined and returned to the ocean (the end) I wanted to clap but it seems like clapping is rare in Japan as everyone exited silently. After one more exhibit centered around food in Ghibli films, it was getting time to go, so we snapped our last few pics by the Cat Bus and Totoros and hit the gift shop where Julie prompted dropped about ¥30,000 on gifts and fun things to take home. We got back in the van and hit the road to Kyoto. A few hours later (which I spent writing entries for this zine and reading manga on my kindle), we arrived in Kyoto. We were all about to pee ourselves so we scrambled around to find toilets when Tatsuya pulled us up to the venue. I relieved myself at the Mister Donut and when the shopkeepers gave me a warm greeting I had to buy some donut holes to show my appreciation. More snacks from the corner store were also needed to fuel up for the gig. On this night we'd be playing with Ananas and Meshia to Ninjin - I hope that is the correct name, since their band name is usually written in Japanese characters. Ananas blew the doors off the place with a blend of psychotic fastcore with some fun funky bits tossed in throughout. Everyone was captivated by their performance. I was beginning to wonder if every band in Japan is just amazing. The guitarist told me their biggest influence was Wrangler Brutes so I made a note to check them out, too. Next up was Meshia to Ninjin who were a duo of guitars and drums with duet vocals as well. They played a sort of 90s indie rock that was both incredibly energetic and catchy. Their songs were immediately stuck in my head afterwards, and I regret not taking a moment to remember their

names, but I just want them to know we enjoyed their performance and we appreciate them playing with us. We took the stage and played our set, feeling a bit more settled into the slightly longer set than we play back home, and having a blast together as usual. We had a fellow American (Willie) from New Orleans front and center cheering us on, thanks Willie! MAZE closed out the gig as enjoyably as ever and there was a funny goof moment where either one of Tatsuya's strings was very out of tune or he plum forgot how to play the opening lick of "Spread the Germicide" which got some chuckles going in the crowd (all in good fun of course.) We got in our nightly dancing, and another gig had come to a close. We packed up and walked down the street where there was an American expat



running a NY style pizza joint. It seemed like many folks from this gig had the same thought because I saw many familiar faces inside. I spied a lovely looking couple wearing Judy and the Jerks shirts taking a photo of us eating pizza and wanted to tell them we'd gladly pose for pics with them but I'm also prone to shyness myself. Tanji grabbed a seat next to us while Chiba shifted around the place schmoozing with locals and stopping by our table periodically. We were served a delicious pie like you'd have at any good American pizzeria, and I shared another couple of Sapporos with Tanji. We had a good time working with Google translate to talk about life in general such as our work and other things we like to get into besides punk. He was especially tickled by Julie and I's Dragon Ball Super cosplay from DragonCon 2021. Somehow we ended up discussing our love for Dragon Ball with Tanji and a few other locals which led to some hilarious moments such as re-enactments of fusion dances and epic final finishing moves that every DBZ fan remembers. One Kyoto local (Jin, who would be putting us up in his apartment this night) was especially well versed in the choreography of these scenes. I could tell his energy was on another level and his silliness was rather infectious. I wish we could have spent more time with Jin because I have no doubt we would have had so much fun together, but I know we will see each other again. Anyway, the hour had gotten late and it was about time to get over to Jin's for some shut eye so we were loaded up into taxis that Tanji refused to let us pay for, and were shuttled to the apartment. We chatted a little while longer and took some showers before lights out and sleep took us.

STAY PUNK

