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VOICES From THE NEW YORKERS

Osechi Ryori by Masuo Ichida

Of all the annual holidays celebrated in Japan, Oshogatsu, or New Year's is Day, arguably the most important and honored.



The Japanese have a long history of celebrating Oshogatsu dating back more than a thousand years and it has always been rich with customs, symbolism and tradtions. In particular, osechi ryori has played a vital part in the New Year's celebration. Osechi ryori is traditional Japanese food presented in special boxes called jubako (similar to bento boxes) and specifically eaten on New Year's Day. The prepared food is a wide variety of smaller, bite-sized portions which are compartmentalized and beautifully arranged and presented in a lacquer

This custom started during the Heian period (794-1185) and continues in many Japanese households today. Originally, osechi ryori was a way for households to survive the first few days of the new year because stores throughout Japan were closed for the holiday. Osechi ryori was prepared days in advance and could sit in a cool area without spoiling.

Depending on different regions of Japan, osechi ryori can be vastly different. However, most osechi ryori have some common ingredients such as kazunoko (herring roe), kuromame (black bean), kombumaki (seaweed), kamaboko (fish cake), shrimp, and gomame (sardines). These foods all represent prosperity, good health, long life and good fortune. Just as important as the symbolism of the food is the presentation. The food colors, ornate designs and intricate cuts are just as important as taste. Seasonal and regional ingredients also play a huge part in what food is a part of the osechi ryori. You can find boxed osechi ryori for sale in many Japanese restaurants in New York for takeout although orders are usually filled weeks before New Year's Day. If you haven't had a chance to order your osechi, you can go to one of the many Japanese supermarkets like Sunrise Mart in Manhattan where the workers there will happily show you the ingredients you need to make your own osechi ryori. (Masuo Ichida is an educator, writer and illustrator for Seiko Oshima's column, "NY SAIJIKI.")

NYクラル

COOL JAPAN from New Yorkers' Viewpoints



Kakehashi Project The Bridge for Tomorrow

Japanese University students Visit New York from Saga and Tokushima

From Nov. 17 to 23, about 50 students visited New York from Saga University and Tokushima University under the Kakehashi Project backed by the Japanese government to promote international understanding of Japanese

On Nov. 19, they visited LaGuardia



Community College, a New York City college, and presented their schools. They introduced Japanese culture and had group discussions with LaGuardia

Saga University students introduced Japanese traditional culture, including brush calligraphy and Aritayaki ceramics. The students performed brush writing and showed samples of Aritayaki pottery. Tokushima University introduced Japanese pop culture and "Hyakunin Isshu," an anthology of 100

poems by 100 ancient Japanese poets. The students played a "Hyakunin Isshu" poem card game and performed a traditional Awaodori festival dance. More than 70 students participated from LaGuardia Community College, mutually deepening cultural understanding. When Tokushima University students performed the dance at the end, LaGuardia students joined in the dancing circle with Japanese students.

On Nov. 20, Japanese students from both universities visited Columbia University. They also enjoyed a city tour together with LaGuardia students.

Under the Kakehashi Project that started in 2013, there have been three visits organized to New York City colleges. Kobe University students visited Queens College, and Chuo University and Hosei Univeristy students both visited LaGuardia Community College. (Written by Tomonori Nagano/ Translated by Kunio Shimura)

Ametora:

How Japan Saved American Style in Men's Fashion

It is wrong to believe the widely held view that the Japanese fell in love with American fashion after World War II when visiting Americans brought it with them. The truth is, says W. David Marx, a 12-year resident of Tokyo who studied East Asian cultures at Harvard University and a master's degree at Keio University, that it was Japanese companies like Van Jacket and Big John who successfully marketed American style in Japan in the 1960s. In his book "Ametora: How Japan Saved American Style," published on Dec. 1 from Basic Books, the 37-year-old journalist describes in great academic details the evolution of young men's fashion in post-war Japan, particularly how the classic Ivy Style was introduced and became known as ametora, short for American traditional, popular in the late 1950s and 1960s.

At a book launch in Manhattan on Dec. 1, Mr. Marx said that he had decided to write a book on Japan's fashion, a subject he had such keen interest in that he had completed a college thesis on it, when he got acquainted with Mr. Shosuke Ishizu, a son of the founder of Van Jacket, in 2010.

Under Kensuke Ishizu, the founder, Van Jacket commissioned a 1965 photo book, "Take Ivy," published from Fujingaho (now Hearst Fujingaho), showing young Americans on Ivy League campuses. Its English edition came out in 2010 from Powerhouse Books, and was already selling well in the United States when



Marx met the younger Ishizu, stoking the former's interest in writing about how the Japanese had created "Take Ivy" in the first place.



Author W. David Marx

The author hoped that the book would also serve as a good source of reference that depicts the original "American styles," as those in America have long been influenced by Japanese versions. No meaningful archives of traditional fashion are kept here. Fashion connoisseurs today heavily rely on contemporary Japanese archives and resources, which are based on the fossil-like preservation of the original American styles to this date, he said. (Ryoichi Miura/Translated by Kenji Nakano)

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Japanese Fashion Designers

Keisuke Imazaki: Fashioning Bright New Designs



by Vanessa Marsh

Imazaki is a Japanese designer the brand 'Plastictokyo', which he launched in 2012. Named

Keisuke

after one of his favorite bands, "The Plastics", a Japanese band of the 70's and 80's with an international cult following, Keisuke Imazaki's designs are also generating many fans of his unique label. "Plastictokyo" made its runway collection debut the Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week Tokyo Spring/Summer 2016 collections.

Keisuke Imazaki graduated from the world-renowned Bunka Fashion College of Tokyo (a fashion college established in 1919) and

worked on the production side of the apparel business to further his knowledge of the industry for four years after graduation.

Bright, colorful prints on technologically advanced textiles are the signature of the "Plastictokyo" label. Keisuke Imazaki's runway presentation displayed a punk-vibe with models fitted in clear plastic head-coverings adorned with safety pins and graphic labels. The tailoring and cut on the clothing, however, remained mostly "traditional" with sportswear styles like athletic suits and shorts with button down shirts. This concept, as interspersed into Keisuke Imazaki's designs, allows for highly wearable "streetwear" styles that make their statement through vivid colors and bold print.