

Samei

The Teenage Goddess

2003 Columns

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"The Invisible" is Now "Visible"

I guess I should start at the beginning though I am not always sure where the beginning is. So let me just start. I'm a second child. More like an only child for most of my years, but I *do* have the second child syndrome. I remember asking my Mom why there were a lot more baby pictures of my older brother than of me. She said, "I guess the novelty wore off by then." I thought I was a pretty cute baby, but my Mom would gush over my brother's curly brown hair and big brown doe eyes, and say he was so pretty, that he almost looked like a girl. I am sure you understand how it feels to be the second child. I got this treatment despite the fact that I was a girl and a bright and pretty one too. One of my Mom's friends was a teacher; so for fun she administered an IQ test to my brother and me. I was 5, and he was 10. I scored higher than him. And my photos say it all about my looks.

I got to travel a lot as a child. My parents were a lounge act. My Mom sang, and my dad was a keyboard/bass player. My mother's first husband and father of my brother was her drummer. They usually didn't go farther than they could drive from Northeast Philadelphia or Philly on gigs. My brother rarely went on trips, because I was always more willing to go, and he lived with his father a lot, in South Philly. A few times, we got to travel to a Caribbean island called St. Maarten, and they would work in a resort there. When I was 6, we went with the intention of staying for a while. It was a tropical paradise. I went to a private school, because the schools on the island were for the natives, and some schools were half taught in Dutch, because the island was half Dutch territory, and half French. I was given an entrance exam upon entering, and they decided to put me in the 3rd grade for the rest of the year, instead of keeping me in 2nd. I grew accustomed to the hot sun, and being able to swim any time I wanted, and I also got a best friend.

After living in the islands for about 3 years (and enduring a hurricane), we came back to Northeast Philly. I was in the middle school there for 6th grade. It was a shock going from a private school in the tropics to an inner-city public school. I met a couple people I called "friends", but I learned that they were not to be trusted. That summer, we moved to the suburbs so I could begin 7th grade in a better school. This was the time in my life I wanted to be "popular". I bought the "right" clothes, makeup, and music, but I couldn't fit in, at all. I eventually sought out a small group of friendly people and embraced my true fate--becoming a "nerd". Entering high school, I tried to seek out boyfriends, but that ended with some trust issues as well.

By 10th grade, I tried to accept myself for who I was, and decided to try going into the school plays. I didn't get into the Fall Drama, but I got into the Spring Musical. I was a chorus member in South Pacific. I was also a background, non-speaking role in the spring plays. I thought "Hey, I'll get better roles next year". Next year came. We had separate schools for freshmen and sophomores, and juniors and seniors. So this year was another new experience. New play director too. But same story as last year. Chorus member in The Music Man. That summer? Chorus in Godspell. Chorus in Pinocchio. And the next year? Chorus in Our Town. Chorus in Camelot. But hey, I was in the show anyway, so I

had a lot of fun making my own character and such. I was always "the person in the red dress". I did all sorts of things to try and be noticed. I cross-dressed, and my favorite color? Red, because everyone was wearing blue. My closet gradually changed from a rainbow of colors to a spectrum of black, white, red, orange, and yellow. I stopped following the trends. Why buy new clothes when the ones from last year still fit and look good? I stopped wearing makeup altogether for a while, then I started wearing concealer and lipstick. Red lipstick. I stayed inside on the computer a lot, due to my lack of popularity. I had a small group of friends who knew me, but sometimes even they would not notice if I was talking to them.

I ushered at the Bucks County Playhouse last year. I'd come to the theater almost every weekend, and see the same show maybe 4-8 times. They sort of knew me there. I was the constant presence in the background. I did my job very well. I gave people programs, took them to their seats, and I'd occasionally do an odd job like sweeping the stage, folding programs, and a couple times I was even called on to operate a spotlight. I tried to befriend the actors. They would sometimes acknowledge me, but most of the time I would just stand there and watch them smoke, occasionally dropping a joking comment about lung cancer. The last show I saw at the Bucks County Playhouse was "Chicago". And there was a song in it called "Mr. Cellophane." "Cellophane, Mr. Cellophane, shoulda been my name, 'cause you can look right through me, walk right by me, and never know I'm there.." I really loved this song, because I identified with it a lot, it seemed. But things changed completely when I met a nice Japanese friend who heard my story and explained how easy it is to become invisible in Japan. He told me that the Japanese word for invisible was 'mei mei' He even started calling me "Samei" by combining two letters of my name with 'mei' So here I am the invisible girl Samei.

I started my senior year of high school. As I already mentioned, I was just chorus in plays. My family was used to it, although my Mom would always tell me to be more assertive in getting roles. I shrugged. I was happy just to be there on the stage. I was in a production number of "Masquerade" from Phantom of the Opera. I had to be a man, because there weren't enough guys, and they had to make one girl into a guy. I volunteered. During a rehearsal, Lara was singing with the boys, and so was I. They started making a fuss over her low voice, meanwhile I'm sitting there also with the guys, and someone asks, "Hey Samei, you're singing tenor, too?" and I lift my head and quietly say, "Yes." "Mr. Cellophane" starts to play in my head. My Mom's reaction was funny. She said "Why can't you be a normal girl and wear a dress?" Well, this year in Camelot, I was also Greek Chorus. A selected a group of 12 good singers who got to sing "Gueneviere", the most climactic number in the show, on a stage filled with red light.

But setting my theatre endeavors aside, I had to pick a college! I thought I was going to go into theatre at first, but the more I thought about it, the more I disliked the idea. I was way too passive to ever get a role somewhere professional, and theatre wasn't a very stable career field either. So I tried to find something else to go into. My other passion, almost more than theatre, was Japanese. The language, the culture, the people, everything. So I looked into majoring in the Japanese language. There are always jobs for bilingual people. I found the University of Hawaii, with the biggest Asian Studies

department in the country, perhaps the world. I applied, and got in. I was rejected from every other college I applied to, but I didn' t care. This was my first choice. I was going to study to try and become an English teacher in Japan. And maybe even become a model, or actress, or singer.

My brother is 22 years old. He barely graduated from high school, didn' t go to college, and is now pursuing a career as a rap artist. He doesn' t know the value of a dollar. But my Mom says he has a great personality. I think I have a good personality. I might not light up a room, but I light up a corner of it, even more if someone decides to talk to me. So here I am about to go to Hawaii to study Japanese, and eventually going to move to Japan. And I' m starting to think...or overthink. Maybe there was another reason for my wanting to go to Japan. Me, in a sea of Japanese people? I would be a *gaijin*. I would be noticed. I wouldn' t be a "Mr. Cellophane" anymore. And maybe I would get rewarded for being different. I would get to be in pictures, or on stage. Or maybe it would end up the same as before. I would leave a room, and someone would go "Hey, was there a *gaijin* just in here?" I don' t know; we' ll just have to see, won' t we?

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Chihiro - my prom date

I met her at the beginning of the year this time. I wasn' t going to let this one "get away". Her name was Chihiro. And she was our Japanese exchange student this year. As a fan of everything Japanese, I had a mission to become her friend. Don' t get me wrong. I had nothing malicious planned. I didn' t want to use her or make her give me Japanese lessons or anything. I simply wanted to be her friend. She sat on the bleachers in our gym class. It was those few days in the beginning of the year when we didn' t do anything except get our uniforms and lockers. I sat down next to her and said "Hi." She looked at me, a bit startled, but friendly. She smiled back and said the same. She asked me my name and handed me a piece of paper. I wrote it down in both English and Katakana. She looked at it and was surprised and a bit impressed. I broke the ice and established my interest with some simple characters. We got talking, I told her I was a big fan of anime and such, and showed her a *manga* I had in my backpack, and other miscellaneous things. I introduced her to some of my other friends, and we sat there and exchanged some words every now and then. Her accent was very thick, but I tried very hard to understand everything, as to not offend her. We saw each other every morning in Gym and Chorus, and we started our first unit in Gym. We got to go Powerwalking. Chihiro and me were always at the back of the group, walking the most slowly.

She told me about a movie called Spirited Away, and said that the heroine had the name Chihiro. Recently, I borrowed a DVD of this movie, which is one of Miyazaki' s greatest. It was hard for me to understand some of her English, although I thought I was good at deciphering "Engrish". But I think it' s safe to say that I probably understood the most out of her. I was working on my Graduation Project at the time, this being my senior year, and I decided to do it on one of my many obsessions - Sailor Moon Stage Musicals. It combined theatre, Japan, and anime in one brightly colored package. Mr. Man, the head

of the English department and also our theatre director at school mentored it, and he really thought it was interesting. I won't get into those details now, maybe that will be another article. Anyway, I wanted some testimony on these musicals, so I could flesh out my essay (little did I know that I would write almost 5 pages about them already!) and so I, of course, showed them to my friends who were into anime or theatre, or both, and sorta got their thoughts on it indirectly, and I wanted to show them to Chihiro. She watched the new anime on TV, and she watched Sailor Moon every day after school when it was on TV over 5 years ago. She wasn't a huge Sailor Moon fan (especially because she didn't know about the musicals that started when the anime was on TV) so it was a bit of a flashback for her talking about Sailor Moon. So I invited her over for a Saturday. I showed her what I started of the essay and multimedia presentation, then we went downstairs to my family's bigscreen TV and we watched some VCDs of the musicals, some subtitled, some raw. I was so psyched that someone who understood every word of what I was watching was sitting there with me. She was so shy though, she hardly spoke. I would feel bad trying to ask her questions, I wouldn't want to use her for her Japanese abilities. I didn't want her to think that her ethnicity was the only reason I was friends with her. We also watched a VCD of X-Japan's Last Live concert. She liked X-Japan, I had already asked in Chorus class, and took her to a practice room with a piano and played "Forever Love" and sang for her. She was very impressed that I could play and sing, and in Japanese. She complimented my Japanese. The thing is, I don't have an extensive vocabulary, but I listen and absorb so much through watching stuff and listening to music, that I have a believable accent and talk slightly faster than a lot of Americans first learning Japanese.

After we watched the VCDs, her host mom came to pick her up. I did not know they were Orthodox Jews. I'm Jewish myself, my family isn't really religious though. We just celebrate Christmas because, well, it's fun. Sometimes we light a menorah. But the idea of a Japanese girl living with an Orthodox Jew family just makes me laugh. It's just so...ethnically mismatched. But they say they like hosting Japanese girls, because they're very polite and clean.

Chihiro came over a few more times, and I started inviting her out with the rest of our friends. My friends are all very accepting and nice, because well, we're different ourselves; we're nerds, we don't hang with the "in" crowd, whatever that is. So ~~thit~~ fit her into our group right away. By now, it was December, and we were on winter break. We didn't really do much over the break, except for New Year's Eve, when we had a blast in our friend Jeremy's basement. Jeremy's basement was sort of our "hangout" much like a lot of teens, except we didn't drink or do drugs or anything, we just played video games and talked nerd. Another reason we were good friends for Chihiro's experience in America. If she was with us, we would make sure she wouldn't get hurt. Her exchange program prohibited drinking, among a lot of other things probably. And since we didn't do any of that stuff, it was good. On New Year's Eve, we had about 9 people packed in that basement. It was tight, but we managed. By 2, the number had diminished to 7 since 2 went home. We stayed up till about 4 in the morning, talking, eating Pocky, playing video games, and asking Chihiro little questions about Japan to make her come out and talk. Unfortunately, everyone got sick after that party. Jeremy still had a lingering

stomach virus from the past week. I probably got the lightest of it; I'm just strong that way. Either way, it was worth it. It was a lot of fun.

Unfortunately, after that bad experience, Chihiro didn't sleep over for a while. But we still tried to include her in things, when she wasn't busy on some trip that her host parents were taking her on, or with other things, we took her out to dinner, to the mall, etc. In March, Chihiro's host mom called me and asked if I would be able to take Chihiro for a weekend, because she had to go on a trip and wanted her to stay with me because she felt Chihiro would have fun. Luckily for us, Meesh's birthday party was that weekend also. So Chihiro, being my little accessory, came along by default. It was a lot of fun. There were also about 9-10 people there, although instead of Jeremy's basement, where our usual parties were, it was in her house in New Jersey. We kind of endured a small flash flood/hailstorm on the way there, but we survived. We had fun. We played a trick on one of Meesh's classmates who was really boycrazy, and so we invited them over, and we had our two cute boys be gay, and the huskier boy be "Nick" who was in reality one of the cute boys. And just for fun, we had Chihiro pretend not to know English at all, and I was her host family. It went over very well, and after they went home, we stayed up a bit more, teaching Chihiro to play Grand Theft Auto 3, a game where one can steal cars and shoot things (the closest we ever came to a criminal act), and at one point I went on the computer and found a site with pick up lines and sayings in Japanese. I said things to Chihiro like "You are as pretty as the *sakura* blossoms" and "What is the meaning of your bellybutton?" I said it intelligibly enough that she understood and reacted appropriately.

This is the part of the story where I feel a bit guilty. Meesh's parents weren't home. Not that we did anything bad, it was just this tradition we started at my house a couple parties ago (incidentally, in my house when my parents weren't home.). We told Chihiro way in advance. Our "tradition" was when it got very late, maybe 1 or 2 in the morning, we would set up our blankets and such to go to sleep, turn out the lights so it was pitch black (In Jeremy's basement, you couldn't even see your own hands it was so dark) and get nude under our blankets. At my house, we did it in the light, with blankets on always. But in the dark, it was even more secure that we wouldn't see any more of each other than we wanted to. And we would play Truth or Dare and such. It's not like we're having sex or anything, but I feel pretty guilty sometimes. Especially when Chihiro was there. Hours before we did anything, I definitely made sure to tell her about it, and stress that she didn't have to, at all, and that it was o.k. to be a bit nervous hearing this. We did it, and one person slept in another room, and Chihiro decided to keep her clothes on. We stressed that it was a good thing that she didn't give in. We played Truth or Dare, and I asked Chihiro how far she'd gone with a guy. Then I moved it down a notch and just asked her if she kissed a guy, and she said "Yes." Eventually, Truth or Dare just branched off into asking "circle questions" or questions that everyone in the room had to answer. One of the questions was "Have you masturbated today at all?" and of course, we all answered, and we went to pass it to Chihiro. Chihiro really didn't understand the question, and Meesh asked me to explain it in Japanese to her, and I thought for about 10 seconds, and just simply said "*Hitori no ecchi.*" and she got it, and said "No." I found it funny that I thought of the perfect way to explain it, so quickly.

Later that night, after games and such had ended, I had a bit of an encounter with a male friend. Again, no sex. Just...an interesting encounter. Very odd relationship we have. It's not romantic at all. That's enough about that. We spent the next day playing more video games, and watching web cartoons and such (Strong Bad Emails!), and we went to our respective homes.

As you all know, we've been having some trouble with the rest of the world. I'm very anti-war. The night the war started, I had a very hard time getting to sleep. I was in a very black mood the next day, so I wore black. Chihiro didn't know anything about it. I was really scared for her that she might have to go home. Our school's Chamber Choir was set to go to Ireland in April to May, but it was cancelled for fear of war. I had to tell Chihiro about the distressing news. She was shocked, and a bit scared. Luckily, she and the rest of the exchange students didn't have to go home. I was very glad.

Through the year, I always had chorus with her. I had a few gym units with her also. We played Tennis, and now we're in Achery together. In Chorus, she would write letters home, and me being the curious person I am, would try to read them. I generally wouldn't get very far, but I sounded out a few words on one, and comprehended them. Chihiro was very impressed. I smiled and went "Look! I can read!!"

On the way to gym class a few weeks ago, she said very shyly "Can I ask you question?" and I said "OK." and she said "Will you go to Prom with me? My friend---my friend doesn't want to go.." and I smiled and said "Sure!" I was supposed to go with a male friend who didn't go to this school. Ironically, the same male friend I kept having encounters with. But he got a love interest and went to her and Meesh's prom (different school) and didn't have the money for our prom. But now I had another date. My parents were a little freaked out, that I was going to prom with a cute Japanese girl, especially given my history of cross-dressing, but I just laughed it off. I had a red dress I was going to wear; I wouldn't crossdress to my prom.

Prom was great. Our prom is a huge deal in the community. People from the neighborhood gathered around the school to watch our entrances. There were limos, antique cars, a dogsled, a fire truck, an RV, a trolley, a float, and a whole bunch of other crazy things. We went in our friend's van that we decorated with glass paint, ribbons, garlands, and we had balloons that floated out when we opened the back. I asked Chihiro to write "Dance" in Kanji on one of the windows, and she did. She also wrote the Kanji for "Love". We drew our web-comic characters, random things; we had "DANGER BROKEN BRAKES" written on the windshield. On the way there, cars were honking at us and the drivers were waving, because they knew we were going to prom. When we came out, we threw candy into the crowd. I loved it. Me, being a bit of a ham when I want to be, hogged my little corner of the spotlight and constantly waved to people, smiled, and had a great time. And that was just my entrance. The dance itself was good, too. The decorations were spectacular. We had a Hollywood theme, which fit my movie-star attitude well. When we got inside, there was a band, and then a DJ. There was also dinner. They crowned the Prom King and Queen in the beginning of the evening, and they played this sad song, and the Prom King was even tearing up a bit, along with a lot

of the other seniors, including myself. They had four big TV screens with video cameras, so you could see different people in the crowd up close. And they showed them dancing on the screen, and I turned to Chihiro and said, "Look, he' s crying a little bit*Naitteru*." And she said "Crying?" and I thought about it, and asked "Was I right? *Naitteru* is crying?" and she nodded. That was kind of creepy, because I don' t remember ever consciously using that word or looking it up before. I just sorta knew it. And for a lot of the night, me and Chihiro sort of danced and the slow songs came up, and Meesh looked at the two of us expectantly, and I sort of shrugged and went "I' m not going to ask." so Meesh told Chihiro to ask me and she just said "Dance?" and I went "OK" and practically jumped into her arms. We slow-danced almost all of the songs, and did some of the fast ones too, more next to each other than with each other, however. The prom ended around 3 in the morning, and we went back to our respective houses and slept. (How nerd-like!) It was just an amazing night for everyone. It made me think of how close it' s getting to the end of the year now, and graduation. It' s going to be hard to say goodbye, even to the people in my senior class that I hate, and it' s going to be just unbearable to say goodbye to my friends in August when I leave for college. And I don' t want to even think of saying goodbye to Chihiro when she leaves for Japan. One word...*Naitteru*.

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Dance Dance Revolution

Dance Dance Revolution is a game made by Konami. It is part of a line of games called "Bemani" which is a line of simulators, mostly dance type. There' s DDR, Pump It Up, Beatmania and others focused on using the feet to dance, by following patterns of arrows or other symbols on the screen and coordinating it with the feet on a dance pad. There are other types too, like Para Paradise, which uses the hands in parapara dances, and Keyboardmania and Drummania, which I haven' t played.

I first heard about DDR last year, at a school event. I got to play a song or two, and I thought it was really fun. I didn' t get to play it again until the next year, when our friends in the grade below us brought it to our school. We have two separate high schools, one for 9th and 10th grade, and one for 11th and 12th. Emi was already known to us all as a DDR goddess, but I didn' t know about the whole group of people that were amazing at playing this. I only knew Emi because she was also involved in theatre. I got to waltz with her in "South Pacific" (I wasn' t crossdressed). This year, we were in "Our Town" together, as townspeople. I got to comfort her in the funeral scene and give her a tissue. Emi was into DDR before anyone, because she' s half-Japanese and has gone to Japan often throughout her childhood. So her father introduced it to her when it was first gaining popularity in Japan. And she introduced it to her friends, and so on. Well, at the "Our Town " cast party, she and Ken (another actor who was into DDR) brought their pads and games and such, and set it up right in the living room of the house we were having the party at, and we spent the whole party playing and teaching others. Some people got into it, others were just confused. By this time, me and a few other people had gotten our own Playstations, games, and dance pads and had practiced. I could do moderately easy songs, mostly on Basic though. I also found my favorite song on one of

the Japanese mixes we played. "Dam Dariram." I played and practiced a lot. Then Emi and the rest of the group started bringing pads and games into school and playing during EOP, or our "Educational Opportunity Period". We already had an anime club, but not a DDR club yet. That's when I met Shannon, and started to become part of this little DDR playing group. Thanks to Shannon's amazing initiative, she made us an official club in school, we have pictures in the yearbook, and we're also working on having DDR as part of our Physical Education curriculum next year. I'll be in college, but I hope the best for all of them. We're trying to raise money and get sponsors to support DDR as a Physical Education activity, and we need all the help we can get. We have a website with our club pictures, donation information, and other information.

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Serofanu (or cellophane)

"My name? It isn't important. If it was, people would remember it more. Do you know how hard it is to be noticed where I am? Where everyone has the same hair color, same eye color, and even dress the same? I don't need to tell you my name. It doesn't matter. What matters is me."

It was a typical day in Japan. She walked out of her family's small house and to the Shibuya train station, where thousands upon thousands of people who looked like her gathered. She saw a group of girls from her school, huddled together in their matching uniforms. They were talking excitedly. She walked up to them and said hello politely, and they didn't respond. They didn't acknowledge her with a simple glance. She looked at the floor, waiting patiently for the train to arrive. It did, and she got on, as usual.

The school day went by like any other. She sat in the front of the classroom, and took notes intently. She was very smart, and very studious. She would raise her hand to ask a question, or give an answer, and the teacher wouldn't notice. She would make an observant comment, or suggestion, but the words fell on deaf ears. She wouldn't give up. She still offered her bright comments even if nobody cared. She knew if she studied hard, she would get into Tokyo University, the most competitive college in all Japan. With her ivory skin, deep-set, almond-shaped eyes, thick dark brown hair and slim body, she would be considered beautiful to most people. But to the rest of the people in Japan, she was quite ordinary. People didn't give her a second glance, and in most cases, they didn't give her a first glance either. She thought of dying her hair a different color, like blond, but as soon as she thought of it, the girls started doing it.

At home, she wasn't noticed despite her efforts. She always cleaned and was very tidy, but then again, so was everyone else. She had a brother, Kenji, whose grades weren't as impeccable as hers, but he was noticed because of the outlandish things he would do, like dye his hair red and constantly play Dance Dance Revolution in the local arcade. She just studied. She liked listening to American pop music, for her passion was studying English. She wanted to move to America some day and marry an American man. And Tokyo University had a very good English/American studies department.

The end of her senior year came, and all her hard work paid off-she was going to Tokyo University. She was a modest person, so she didn' t start telling everyone. Not like ~~they~~ they would hear her anyway, for she was invisible. So she packed her bags and left home. They said they would miss her...Lies.

She entered the university nervously. Would it be the same as high school? Would people not care about her? Days passed. People still didn' t remember her name, people still wouldn' t care if she was talking; it was the same story. But she persisted. Most Japanese would shrug and say "It can' t be helped," but she was determined to at least have people say "Hi" to her. Was she weird? She went to her dorm room, where there was a full-length mirror on the door. She looked herself over. She was wearing regular clothes, just like everyone else. She looked like a normal Japanese girl. She was clean and well groomed, and had good behavior. So why didn' t people talk to her? It was almost like they were purposely ignoring her.

In her senior year at Tokyo University, she got the opportunity to study abroad in America, and that too at Princeton, due to her academic success. She experienced many things in America, like watching sports, shopping in American stores, being able to see and experience many diverse cultures in one place, etc. One time, she went to a local theater to see a show for her American Dramatics class. The show she saw was "Chicago". There was one character in the show that appealed to her. He sang this song that talked about him being like cellophane. Cellophane seemed to be a clear substance. But the chorus of the song was "Cellophane, Mr. Cellophane, should' a been my name, Mr. Cellophane, ' cuz you can look right through me, walk right by me, and never know I' m there..." The song made her think about herself, and she seemed to identify with him. So she learned this song, and whenever she felt bad, she would sing it softly to herself. She liked to sing. She joined one of the choirs on campus. Today was her first choir rehearsal. She sat in the alto section, next to a blond girl with pigtails. "Strange hairstyle for an American college student," she thought. The girl turned to her with bright green eyes. "Hi!" She was startled. A greeting, and an energetic one at that. She said "Hello.," back, quietly, a bit embarrassed by her own accent. "Are you here studying abroad?" "Yes." "Ooh! What country are you from, and what' s your major?" "I' m from Japan, and my major is Engr-English." She blushed at her slip of the "l". She smiled widely. "My major is Japanese!!" She pointed to her shirt, which said, "I want to be Japanese" in Japanese characters. She smiled, reading the shirt. The director clapped his hands, signaling for everyone to be quiet and start the warm-up. The American girl turned to her, whispering. "What' s your name?" She stopped short. The American girl smiled and said it in Japanese. "*O-namae wa nan desu ka?*" The Japanese girl shook her head. She could understand the girl fine, in English or Japanese. "My name? It' s Meiko." The American girl smiled. "Meiko. *Ii namae dana.* Mine is Melody." "Me-ro-di. That' s a nice name." Melody offered her hand. "*Yoroshiku.*" Meiko took her hand. "Nice to meet you, too." They smiled and shook hands.

My Graduation

I graduated Wednesday, June 18th, 2003. So much has happened this year..and these four years. If someone had told me in September of 9th grade what I would see, do, and become, I wouldn't have believed him or her.

I wouldn't have believed that I would-

- Become a thespian,
- Wear red lipstick every day,
- Meet a small group of best friends
- Gain a best friend who would then in turn get a boyfriend and start hanging with different circles
- Become sexual partners with that quiet nerd that played Dungeons and Dragons with the rest of the boys
- Play Dungeons and Dragons and have my own dice
- Get accepted to the University of Hawaii to study Japanese,
- Aspire to become an English teacher in Japan,
- Play Dance Dance Revolution,
- Wear clothes from the Salvation Army,
- Stop biting my nails,
- Have a laptop and use it at school
- Cross-dress, at least on stage
- Go to my Senior Prom with a Japanese girl

I wouldn't have believed it at all. It's amazing how much I've changed and matured. I'm not mature yet, by any means, but I've come a long way, and college is up ahead. I am grateful to live in the age of the Internet. Even though I probably won't see my friends again, we can still all stay in contact, even Chihiro, and me through e-mail, instant messaging, blogs, and even through MyNippon.com.

This school year was amazing. As every year has been. So much can happen in a year. This year alone, I was in Camelot, one of the single greatest and emotionally draining experiences of my life. I cried so much on the last night of that show. But I still treasure every single theatre experience I've ever had. In SeraMyu, there was a First Stage that started everything. The cast had little change and spent 5 years together. They outgrew their roles, unfortunately, and had to graduate. Ayako Morino, who had played Sailor Mercury for 5 years, said, "I will always remember each performance. That's the truth." And I know exactly how she feels. Every performance is memorable in its own way.

I also met Chihiro, which has been a huge influence on my life, whether she knows it or not. No matter how many other Japanese people I meet, whether they are smart cram-school students, *kogals*, businessmen, or anything else, I will always remember her. She's such a shy person, yet she had the incredible courage to come to America. If she can come to America, I can definitely go to Japan.

...naitteru...

It makes me sad that I'm not going to see all those familiar faces anymore, but I'm happy that everyone, myself included, will be following their own paths.

~

When in doubt, go red!

My favorite color is red. Actually, I love all the colors in the rainbow aesthetically, but personally, my colors only extend through the warm section of the spectrum. It's an obsession, and a borderline compulsion. I only wear red, pink, orange, or yellow, with blue denim, white, gray, or black as neutrals.

That also applies to my diet in a way. When I go to the supermarket, even my food is color-coded. I always pick out the strawberry, cherry, orange, or other similar flavors when it comes to soda, fruit, and other snacks. Not to say I don't eat meat or vegetables because they are not these colors, because my rule or motto is "If it can be red, it should be."

I love red lipstick. I like it because not only is it red, it happens to go well with my pale skin and other features. I think I'm one of the few that can pull it off casually. But, it's not so much a vanity thing as it is a style thing. I feel not quite myself if my lips are bare.

My obsession with the color red has earned me the nickname of "Red" a few times. If people don't know my name, they will link me to the color red somehow. I like it. It's a trademark of Samei.

Hey, even this page is red. ::laughs::

Do I recommend that other teenagers try red too? While black has long been touted as the safe color for women, I am not sure. I think black might look good on all these young (and old) women trying to look and elegant and sexy but for me that is red. In my opinion, no one can ignore you if you go with red. Not only the color invites attention, you can also show that you are bold and bright - you want to show what you like. So for a change give red a chance and let me know what happens.

~

Remembering my Japanese theater friends

Theatre and Japanese culture are two important things to me, and I got to experience them both last year in Nebraska. Every year, the thespians (or drama students) from high schools all over the country and the world come to the University of Nebraska and participate in a weeklong International Thespian Festival every summer. For a week, we attend performances and workshops. Every day is a long day, but it is worth it. Last year

was my first time going there, and luckily for me, there was also a group of theatre students from a Japanese high school attending. Their group presented a main stage play, as did our school. Over that week, I spoke to them as I saw them. We chatted about movies, anime, the plays we had seen the previous day, and so on. I would speak in my limited Japanese, and they would enthusiastically reply in broken English. It was really fun. The girls were all very cute and friendly. The guys were friendly and polite, but still very funny and crazy like our American high school boys. The first day there, I played in the fountain outside of the Student Union with them. They were splashing and climbing on the rocks, and just generally being boys. One even tried to pull me onto a rock with him, but I politely declined and climbed up my own way. The week was a lot of fun. Their play was very good. Everyone appreciated the culture very nicely and maturely, even though the whole play was in Japanese. Our play also went over very well, despite the things that went wrong, such as the gun not going off in the end. (We presented 'Blood Brothers', a story about twins born to a poor mother with 7 kids, who gave one to a wealthy friend who couldn't bear children. They're named Mickey and Eddie. The play follows their lives, and they both befriend a woman, Linda, and Mickey marries her. Mickey starts having severe depression, which drives Linda to have an affair with Eddie. The end of the play is a very climactic scene in which Mickey confronts Eddie, holding a gun, and their mother comes in and tells them that they are twins, and Mickey starts crying and accidentally shoots Eddie, and is then shot down by policemen at the scene. Mickey's gun didn't go off in Nebraska; it was awful.

At the end of the week, we said our goodbyes and took lots of pictures to remember each other. I said "*Omoidashite, wasurenaide,*" and they replied with 'Remember you.' It was a great experience. I'm going again this year, even though I know there won't be another Japanese troupe. (I imagine it's very expensive for them to come) It's almost that time again, we're rehearsing a one-act play to perform there during the day (not a main stage) and I've already paid the money to go. It's been almost a whole year, and thinking back, I was telling the truth to them. It's been almost a whole year, and I've remembered them, and I haven't forgotten.

~

At the International Thespian Festival

I'm typing this on the bus home from my 2nd and last trip to the International Thespian Festival in Lincoln, Nebraska. It was a lot of fun this year. I met a lot of fun people from all over the country and the world, and saw a lot of great shows.

The bus trip up was fun. We slept, ate, watched movies, and got truckers to honk at us by making the universal 'Honk your horn!' arm movement. The trip is from 19 -25 hours long, which requires us to stay overnight at a hotel. I swam in the pool there, and we watched a really bad made-for-TV movie because the TV didn't get Cartoon Network, and we wanted to watch Adult Swim.

We got there, and since I had been so busy last year with workshops, I decided not to limit myself and go exploring and experience some different things. I walked a few blocks away from the dorms, and found a seedy-looking street with 3 thrift stores. I was in heaven. Unfortunately, they all closed by the time I got there. So I vowed to go back earlier the next day. I also got blisters from that walk because I decided to wear new shoes. So I stopped and got a box of Band-Aids. I did go back to the thrift stores the next day, and got some neat clothes, mainly for the theme dances that week. Every night after the evening main stage, we have a dance or other event. They have optional themes for the dances. I love doing those kinds of things, so I did prepare, but I found some fun additional items to augment my costumes, and a really great dress for the last night, which is a formal dance. It was only 3.00. I also got a cute little coral colored one-piece outfit that fit the "Under the Sea" theme, and a pair of black gloves with fringe for the "Wild Wild West" dance. I had my costume for the first dance taken care of. It was "Light the Night", so I brought my beloved sequin pants, the top from my prom dress, a blue, shiny half-jacket (that I cut in half) and a shiny silver dress, which with the aid of a single safety pin and some skill, was a skirt that night. An interesting thing I noticed at the dances, aside from some of the great dancers, was the fact that everyone applauded after every song. . and it was a DJ.

Aside from the dances, I attended a few workshops that I had attended the previous year, because I liked them so much. I also saw a few of the plays during the day. And I just hung out and did nothing sometimes. I would go back to my dorm room and play some Ayumi Hamasaki or Morning Musume music videos on my laptop and sing along and eat Japanese candy. My roommate didn't seem to mind. She even tried to sing along, making up words.

The dorms were single-sex for this trip. I really wish they weren't. I really feel I can identify more with boys than with girls. Every morning, the girls would all run around doing their hair and fussing with their clothes, obsessing over whether they looked fat—and they were all skinny! They would also trade clothes and change their outfits as many as 3 times until they were satisfied with how they looked. I would just pick out a shirt and a pair of shorts in coordinating colors (orange and yellow, red and black, red and denim, orange and red.), pick shoes that matched (I brought 3 pairs of platform slides- red, black, and white, and red and black platform sneakers.) and brush my hair, put it in some pigtail style, do my makeup, and be off on my way. Is it just that the rest of these girls aren't organized? We're all around 13 -18. I'm not even the oldest. Another phenomenon I noticed with these girls was that even after they were only in their rooms for a day or two, the rooms were horribly messy. Some of them even brought their own sheets and rearranged the rooms. I don't get it. . I feel so different, me with my clean side of the room. It's not that I mind it, either. . as long as it doesn't get to my corner of the room. My roommate even asked me if I minded her being so messy, and I said of course I didn't, because my best friend was my roommate the year before, and she was just as messy as anyone. I just told her that even if the mass of dirty clothes and trash finds itself over to my side of the room, I'll just toss it back over to her side and not say anything.

The weather this week was great. Hot and sunny, just like I like it. One day was a bit chilly and cloudy, but I came prepared with a pair of Capri pants. And then on Friday night, there was a huge thunderstorm. It started during the second half of the musical and the lightning could be seen in the distance until the a.m. hours. I usually hate rain and water, me being a red fanatic and all, but when there are other people around to play with, I find it enjoyable. I got soaked in the rain, and stayed out and played with people from all different states that were as crazy as me, and risked getting struck by lightning. It was a lot of fun. The lightning was huge.. it lit up the whole sky and you could see the bolts across the clouds, like veins. When a really big lightning bolt lit up the sky, I applauded.

And now here I am, on the bus home. I took a nice nap this morning, we woke up at 6 to get on the bus and I was very tired so I slept on the bus until 10. I even had a really good dream that I remember vividly. I was in a city, I think New York, and a van drove by and stopped and asked me if I wanted to make a music video. I of course said "Yes!" immediately, and I was taken somewhere. But it wasn't a music video with me. We were sitting in front of a screen or computer of some sort, splicing clips of other things to some songs that I don't recognize or remember. And for some reason, Simon and Randy from American Idol were there? And then they introduced me to this boy..oh my God, he was cute. He was skinny, so skinny I could hold his waist firmly with my hands. It was almost unworldly. He had very short hair, and a cute face. He was also very shy. I practically jumped on him, which was very out of character for me because I'm not assertive at all. (I had the hardest time finding a boy to dance with me at the dances, because I couldn't ask them!) And..I think me, Randy, Simon, and the boy went somewhere else..and they were going to give us some.."private time"..It was a very odd dream, as all dreams are. I wish I could meet that boy though he seemed nice! I think he was a manifestation of some of the gay guys I saw this week though. They're all very cute...

Which gets me thinking about college again..right now, it still seems so far away. But I know that it will come up faster than I realize. It's going to open up so many new doors for me. So many new potential friends, and boyfriends. I think I'll finally enter the dating word and pursue a relationship. I personally think I might be too young for it, but I can't let that stop me. I'm excited for college. The academic pursuits, and possible social pursuits, and everything that goes with it.

~

Your own look!

I really can't relate to most American girls my age, it seems. They're all fussing over their clothes, makeup, boys, and such. They watch shows like "Gilmore Girls" and "Dawson's Creek". My mom says I have gender issues, and I really think I do. I can relate much more to guys my age than girls. I would sooner watch a sitcom on FOX or a cartoon on Adult Swim or TNN before I watch a teen soap opera or American Idol or whatever it is that girls watch. I don't even know half the stuff girls my age do...it's quite alien to me. I also hate talking on the phone. I prefer email and instant messaging, because I feel I can

express myself better in writing. I also like to play video games and I can belch as good as any guy.

Not to say I'm totally unfeminine. In fact that is what this article is all about. You can be whatever you want but as long as you are feminine guys will still like you. Despite appearing to be not your average teenager, you know the ones the magazines want you to be, I think I actually have a personality of my own and it has not been built on some stupid magazine's image for me. In any case, a lot of the fashion is actually created in these magazines because some big consumer products company is paying for it.

I thought I would share some of the things that I do so that you can create whatever image you want. Cute? Sex kitten? Next-door girl? Fashionable nerd? Above all, follow your guts. If you like something, it does not matter if others don't because it is you who will wear it. And believe me there is always someone who will appreciate you for who you are. Trying to be everything to everyone just does not work which many of my friends try to do. In the process, they run around like crazy animals, constantly worrying, and never getting anywhere.

1. Always have a clean look. Nothing can be a bigger turnoff than a messy look. You do not have to wear expensive outfits or spent hours getting ready. As long as you take good care of your outfits and then pay attention to little details, you can come across as a charming person. For instance, I still reapply my lipstick after every meal. It's just that, I guess I'm more efficient than most girls my age. While they're fussing over their outfits and hair and such, I'm already dressed and ready. I use the extra time to listen to Japanese music instead.
2. Create a personal style so that people will remember you. If you follow the trends in some teen magazine, you will just look like everyone else. Remember everyone else reads the same magazine too. I always know what I want, and it's always the same thing. It is *my* style. I start with my outfit. Even if I haven't laid it out the night before, it's still pretty easy to put together a combination from my wardrobe. Just some shorts or jeans and a shirt or tank top. I wear red and orange, red and black, orange and yellow, or any of the above with blue denim. I do like to paint my nails and toenails red, because especially in the summer, it looks more finished and coordinated with the rest of my outfit.
3. Oh the wonders that makeup can do! It is OK to have the natural look for certain occasions but I strongly believe that makeup adds that extra color. My makeup is very simple. I put on some powder, maybe a little bit of foundation to cover up imperfections, my red lipstick, and if I have the time or I just want to look pretty, I put on some black eyeliner and mascara. I never line the whole eye, just the outer corners with a bit of cat's eyes.
4. Did you know that hair could make all the difference in how you look? I think we all need to take a hard look at our hairstyles and maybe even consult a professional to select the right hairstyle for us. In the summer especially, I like to put my hair up in a pigtail-type style...either odangos, braids, or just plain pigtails. An easy style that looks good is to put the hair in pigtails, then take half of each and wrap it around the fastener, and secure with another fastener. I like doing that

one a lot. I also like having cute scrunchies and hair accessories for my pigtails. I have red roses, balls, and some really neat ones. I also have a few colored hairpieces. I am a little fussy about my bangs. I hate it when they don' t lay right. So I just wet them and dry them so they lay nicely.

~

Boys! Boys! Boys!

Let me start at the beginning. I've known Geoff since middle school. We sort of traveled in the same circles, but never really talked. I always knew him as that quiet guy who was good at DnD. He stopped going to our school around 10th grade and became home-schooled. With that, he was able to get his GED and start taking community college courses when the rest of us were in 12th grade. In the summer before 11th grade, my friend Jeremy took me, Cassie, and Tara up to his summer home in Vermont with his parents. It was a lot of fun, and while there we called our friend Steve, and an interesting occurrence happened when we found out Tara and Steve really liked each other. So when we started school, we encouraged the two to date. Meanwhile, Jeremy started dating Michelle, who lives in another school district. Jeremy encouraged us to all hang out. We formed a group of 6 close friends. Jeremy, Michelle, Tara, Steve, Geoff, and me. We started to hang out and play Dungeons and Dragons and video games. As soon as Tara met Geoff, she started going after him. She logically then broke up with Steve for him, and then a love triangle ensued.

In addition to our usual 6, we'd occasionally have other people hang out with us , such as Sean, a tall, dark, long-haired, quiet type, Chihiro, and Nick. Nick was one of the craziest boys I had ever met. He started a tradition for the 6 of us in which we get in the nude under our individual blankets. We did it in the complete darkness of Jeremy's basement when we would frequently sleepover. It was raunchy enough to amuse us. That's when stuff started to happen with me and Geoff, and a couple other people, but mostly Geoff. It got to the point where when the lights went out; we would just immediately couple up. Much to the discomfort of both Tara and Steve. Especially Steve, because he would always complain and get sulky when he didn't get attention. I got angry with him a lot, because it was usually his fault. And it ruins the pleasure everyone else is getting when someone is bitching and moaning about how they're not getting any pleasure.

With school ending and college starting and all, Jeremy and his parents moved up to their home in Vermont, and sold the house in Pennsylvania. We had one last sleepover in the basement, and everyone else left the house that morning, including Jeremy and Michelle to take some other people home. I decided to go all the way with him.

And so here we are in Vermont, just Jeremy's parents, Jeremy and Michelle, and me and Geoff. The first night here was very hot, so we slept nude in the same bed. There was a double bed and a twin bed in our room, so I told him it was OK for us both to share the double. It was much more comfortable than the twin anyway.

That night, he confessed that he liked me more than physically. We agreed to try some boyfriend-girlfriend type stuff, like kissing and cuddling. It's nice. He can be really sweet. I'm just afraid I can't return the same feelings to him. I just want this to be a fun, little fling before Hawaii, where I want to meet my Japanese boy. Jeremy and Michelle say that we could do a long-distance relationship, because we're both online so much, but I really don't see a point in it if our relationship exists mostly on a sexual level. I'm not sure I'm able to make such an emotional commitment at this point in my life. I just feel kind of bad, because I don't want Geoff to either, and I'm afraid that he might have already.

But on the other hand, we really don't seem to be the *uber-lovey-dovey* couple. Geoff would rather play video games than play with me, it seems. We slept in our separate beds a couple nights this week. This couple stuff confuses me. Maybe because we're not even a real couple..but I thought we were..but I didn't want us to be..I'm confused.

I find myself acting different, in ways I didn't think I could act when I'm with him. I giggle and act girly. I'm amused by it. When we wake up in the morning, he makes fun of me for doing my hair and makeup like a girl, and I make the comment that a lot of girls are worse than me. I know I've lived with them.

By day I'm giggly, innocent, and standoffish, but at night it seems I can be completely different. I love creating pleasure for him, and he loves creating pleasure for me. I try to use different techniques I have heard of. Sex is starting to be fun. The first few times were painful for me, but recently the initial pain is starting to decrease. We use a condom every time. I know we should use more, but I don't know the first thing about getting 'The Pill'.

And then what if I come home on winter break and stuff? I really don't want to have this thing still going on. And Jeremy tells me that I care and he cares and it's nice to have someone you can cuddle with. Well, he didn't start his relationship with Michelle with some fooling around in the dark. They actually talked and got to know one another and went on dates and stuff.

It's true that when we get home, we live just a 10-minute walk from one another. I'm not sure I want to keep this going. Idealistically, we could have a long-distance relationship and come back and see each other every 8 months or so, and make love. But realistically, we're having sex, and that's it. Just let me have some fun and go off to Hawaii to meet some Japanese guy. I'm not sure we really have a future when I'm going off to Japan to become an English teacher. And that's my goal in life, so I'd appreciate not changing it for a guy that I'm having sex with.

I have made up my mind, for once. I don't want this to last. It's stupid. A sexual relationship turning into some kind of fairy-tale long distance relationship and we're in love? It's fun for now, but it's nothing to get hung up on. I want to be mature about this and move on with my life. Lots of people have sex for pleasure. I guess I'm one of them.

Think for yourself, Girls!

In our American society, it seems that it's "cool" to be more sexy than cute. In Japan, it seems to be the opposite. Which is why I love Japanese pop culture. It's such a welcome change to watch Ayumi Hamasaki and Utada Hikaru rather than Brittany Spears or Christina Aguilera.

I have no problem with skimpy clothes, makeup, or dyeing hair, as long as the person still retains a sense of individuality. I'm just tired of seeing girls my age ALL dyeing their hair blond, going to tanning salons, and wearing tiny clothes. They all look the same, and I don't think it's attractive at all, especially because it's known that tanning lamps can cause skin cancer and premature aging of the skin, just like overexposure to the sun. But just like everything else, they fully know the risks but do it anyway, just like with sex, drugs, and alcohol. I think it's the most unattractive thing in the world when I'm in General Bio class and the girls next to me are giggling and reiterating the events of the past weekend, when they got drunk and almost arrested, had sex with some guys that they hardly know, and "smoked a bowl" and got high. It's sad but it's true. This is what "normal" girls living in suburbs do, apparently.

I'm ashamed to say I actually had a subscription to Seventeen Magazine for four years. It's probably the lightest magazine out there; there are ones that are a lot worse. I only read the columns and stories, because the rest of the magazine was just the "hot new looks". Just pages and pages of makeup and clothes that are the "latest new style" and are supposed to be really popular that season. I really don't like buying new clothes when I have a closet full of perfectly good outfits that I like. But apparently the "normal" teenager goes out and buys a miniskirt because it's "in style" and because some idol of theirs was seen wearing it while hanging out with her boyfriend. And they have a whole section dedicated to "hot" boys. They'll highlight some celebrity, and then proceed to write a whole article on why he's the perfect man, how he's so cute, and what he likes in a female. In one issue, in their "Movies, Books, CDs" section, they mentioned "Lord of the Rings" and Elijah Wood playing Frodo and Orlando Bloom playing Legolas, with a statement to the effect of "We'll ignore their nasty hairstyles, because they're so hot." That disgusted me to no end, being a Lord of the Rings fan.

I've already established that I'm not 'normal' if the definition of normal is to be like everyone else. I just feel the need to clarify it now. I do not follow every media-induced trend, I'm not boy-crazy, and if it's harmful to my body, chances are I won't do it. I think for myself rather than letting some brainless schoolmates and TV personality control my actions. Maybe that's why all those brainless girls from my school are going to community college with an undeclared major and will bag groceries, while chatting with the cashier in the next lane about some cute boy. And I'm going to a real university to study Japanese at age 16 so that when I arrive in Japan I am ready.

Off to college!

I am so stressed. I never get stressed. College is creeping up on me fast. Almost like it did in the beginning of the year. I didn't start seriously looking at colleges until November of my senior year. Until then, I was just sort of floating around, thinking about theatre, art, and computers, and looking at any colleges other people were looking at in my area. University of the Arts, Philly College of Arts, Art Institute, and so on. But then I decided that while Japanese is a huge interest of mine, it's also a very good language to learn and would open a lot of career opportunities. So I decided that it would be my major. Which narrowed down my college choices considerably. A college that offers a major in Japanese, in a warm area. I sent 4 applications out. Arizona State University, San Francisco State University, University of Hawaii at Hilo, and University of Hawaii at Manoa. ASU and SFSU rejected me, both Hawaii campuses accepted me. I tore up the rejection letters, because it didn't matter. University of Hawaii at Manoa was my first choice.

I sent all the preliminary forms and tuition, got a physical, etc. It was just great to be content and have a future, finally. I had felt like everyone else had it together except me, until I got the big envelope in the mail. I was nervous, even though I never let on.

I spent this summer doing various things, as my previous articles state, and now it's time to go. It costs a lot to ship to Hawaii, so I'm doing my best to fit all my things into 4 suitcases. I've been stressing and freaking out. I've never gone to college before, obviously, so this is all very new to me. I'm very happy though. Aside from being able to study a great language, I'll be in Hawaii! Everyone is so jealous. I feel bad, I don't even like beaches. And the sunlight will be a big change for me, I know I'll get tan and my hair will even go blond (I know from experience how easy it is for my hair to change to blond), and there will be so many new experiences; I might become a different person.

I think my favorite things about Hawaii will soon be the abundance of Pocky and other Japanese foods, and DDR machines.

I have no idea what's ahead. I'm scared, but I want it so much.

Well, back to packing. I've found that standing on the suitcase really helps to compress all the clothes. I put them in plastic bags too for organization reasons. I'm such a kid. I'm taking stuffed animals, action figures, anime, *manga*, and video games. I can't wait to deck out my dorm room, and meet my roommate. I hope she's Japanese.

Well, I'll find everything out when I get there, and I'll be sure to write about it.

A *gaijin* student in Hawaii

The plane ride was about 9 hours long. I pulled an all-nighter the night before, and took a caffeine pill at about 4 AM, which was when I left to go to the airport. Bad mistake; I think that's what made me nauseous on the plane. The plane rides were less than great. My first ride was to Houston, Texas, and I was sitting in front of a man, woman, and their son who was flying for the first time. The husband got drunk, the kid got hyper, and the mother was just generally disruptive; however, not as bad as the other two. So my parents and I didn't sleep much on that 2-hour flight. The in-flight movie was "What a Girl Wants", which I refused to watch, but was nevertheless exposed to anyway, and I'm glad I didn't watch it, because from what I saw it was a cliché teenybopper "rags to riches" story. I felt nauseous toward the end of the flight, all through the changing process, and through most of the flight to Hawaii. It was annoying more than it was unpleasant. I went to the bathroom several times, to see if I was actually going to get sick, but I never did. I kind of wanted to, just to get it over with and feel better. That plane was much more fun though. My parents and I sat in the center aisle, and in this plane, there was a mini-LCD screen on the back of each seat. There was also a remote, and one could choose "channels" playing different TV shows, movies, and such. I watched an episode of *Frasier*, the movie "Anger Management", and a couple other programs. There were also music stations. One was in Japanese, and one played Showtunes, so I was switching between them. There was also the option of playing some games, but they weren't very good. They were like the arcade games that come with Windows. I played Solitaire for a little while. I hear that flights to Japan come with SNES games on the little screens though. Another reason for me to fly to Japan, I guess.

I arrived in Hawaii and it was at first like any other tropical paradise. I felt instantly comfortable with my new surroundings, being that I lived on a Caribbean island called St. Maarten for about 4 years when I was younger. The surroundings were beautiful and it had its share of cute little houses like the ones everywhere in St. Maarten. But unlike St. Maarten, Hawaii is part of the US and is far more commercialized. And that's always a plus. I saw my college for the first time, spent 10 days in a hotel in Waikiki, being a tourist. I had many fun experiences. I talked to a lot of Japanese people, and for two days there was even a Japanese culture festival that featured line dancing and I went up and danced with them, with paper fans and all. I felt really 'Japanese'. I had a Japanese calligraphy artist write out "*Nihonjin ni naritai*" for me, he smiled a bit when I told him the phrase. I later showed it to a Japanese guy who was reading another tourist's paper, and he laughed when he saw mine. Calligraphy with a brush is hard; I hope I never have to do it. I'll be happy if I can just read the kanji.

I already love being a *gaijin*, in my own country. At the festival and around the town, Japanese people would always be a little shocked when I came out with a phrase or two. At the festival, there were a lot of children in *yukatas*, especially one very beautiful one who was clearly half-*gaijin* because of her natural blond hair. I loved to run up to them and say a phrase like "*Kawaii kodomo!*" and the child and parent would both turn their heads to me like "What?" and then smile. The first night we were there, my parents and I

ate dinner in a soba noodle house, because it was right next to the hotel. We were the only white family in the entire place. My parents kept telling me to say stuff in Japanese for them, even though the waitresses spoke good English. But I obliged because I love to speak Japanese. I asked for forks, and the woman understood completely. A couple days later, I was in the mood for sushi, so I went to a sushi place where the situation was the same, I was the only *gaijin* in the restaurant. The waiters loved it though. I used my meager Japanese and told them I was studying and working hard, and they were all very kind to me and very interested, they asked me where I was from, etc, and I complimented the sushi by saying "*Oishii*" and was very nice in return. It was a lot of fun.

My classes started on the 25th. I already love my Japanese class. I want it to be twice as long! My teacher is a Japanese woman who married a *gaijin* and has an accent. There are 9 people in my class. I'm in JPN 100, which is slightly more accelerated than 101, but is still pretty much a beginner course. I'm lucky I got into 100, because I registered late and all the 101 classes were full, so I had to take an exam to place into 100. I don't know how I passed, but I was very lucky.

I decorated my dorm and I'm very happy with it. My roommate is Japanese, but her English is really good. It puts my Japanese to shame. Hopefully we'll be good friends. I'm already looking for a Japanese boyfriend. I'm way too shy, so the Japanese guy will have to be more outgoing than me. I heard the Japanese men could be equally shy especially in front of blonde women. Yikes. I might be single for a long while.

~

Settling down in Hawaii

The first weekend after school started, because I had Monday off on account of Labor Day, I went out to Waikiki to have myself some dinner. I wore a gray strappy tank top that has a red and black tattoo-type band across the chest that says "Tampa" and has a heart, and a red bra (you can see the straps) and black short-shorts and red platform shoes, with my hair up in buns with black and gray hair things (mesh pieces of cloth that sorta hang down...Cute). A pale white girl in said outfit and hairstyle, going into Waikiki for dinner alone. That just spells fun right there.

Anyway, I did walk along the beach and admire it a little. It was the weekend, so a lot of people were there, plus there was a Hawaiian music band playing on the stage on the beach, and food vendors. But I decided to opt for the "Japanese Pop" restaurant, which was a really cool place. Sushi and noodles and stuff, and the atmosphere was the really neat thing about it. Everything was very artsy and colorful, the owner is an artist I take it...Very creatively decorated, painting everywhere....Also mostly Japanese people eating there. All the waiters and waitresses were like...extra polite. And speaking English to me. A little Japanese was mixed in when it was established that I could communicate in Japanese...But that was fun. Because I was literally the one *gaijin*. People at other tables kept watching me eat because apparently it was amusing? ^^;; Oh, and I almost ordered an alcoholic drink. I didn't know, it was a "Strawberry Tropical Drink" and I went to

order it and the waitress was like "That has alcohol in it, OK?" and I was like "O.o No, I'm too young!! I'll have a Coke then..." But I wonder, would she have ID'd me? O.o; Do I pass that much?? Even when wearing my hair in odangos?? Scary thought. It was a very enjoyable meal, very fun; I had sashimi, rice (I ate all my rice. First time I've ever finished a whole bowl of rice!!!), miso soup, and veggies. For 20 bucks, which wasn't that bad. I kind of wanted a meal with meat and stuff, but I couldn't resist the call of raw fish. It was all very fresh and delicious too. ^_^ One of the waiters told me my hairstyle was cute. o.o Can't resist the buns. They rule.

After dinner, I had like a couple hours to just wander around, so I went to the Hello Project Information Village. Grr. Morning Musume was here, for a week, but I was moving in to college, so I didn't see them!!!! >.< Maybe...next year? I bought a little poster with the 15 members on it; it's very nice and pretty. And a notebook, some stickers, and a couple of free maps of Hawaii with the girls from Coconuts Musume on it (Ayaka and Mika..the two English-speaking girls.) And then I went to Macy's and I got a pair of red clear plastic (gel-type) platform slides for \$10.00. And I used my gift card that had \$13 left on it, so now I have a Macy's Gift card with 3 bucks on it. >.o; LOL, in the store there was a woman and a little girl, and a family with a little boy (all Japanese) and the mother of the girl told me her daughter thought my hairstyle was cute. ^_^ And then a very interesting thing happened. The boy went up to the girl, and mind you, this boy was about 2 it seems, while the girl was at least 6 or 7, and the boy just like...examines her, and walks in circles around her. The parents were all standing around watching this, and laughing, including me. It was very peculiar and very funny. I even said a couple phrases like "*Kawaii desu ne!!*" and "mou guruguru?" (Again, circling, circling?) and eventually the parents took the little boy away and we parted ways.

I walked around the town, there was a group of black people and one white guy, a set of drums keeping the beat, and they were just rapping and freestyling. It was cool. I could groove to it. LOL, me and my white girl groove. The Japanese people were loving it. Taking pictures and all. I gave them a tip, cuz they're mah homiez..nah, I just appreciated what they were doing, it was very interesting, plus they reminded me of my brother who's in Philly right now tryin' to make it, yo. Me and my Phillyspeak. So yea, I hear them. Yo. shizzle to my nizzle. (what does that even mean? O.o;)

All Philly-speak aside, then I decided to head back to the trolley stop because duh, I needed to get home sometime tonight...On the way there's this group of 4 guys. And one guy goes "Hey, are you Canadian?" and I'm like "stopping walking: ...O.o looks at own white skin:.....Nope, I'm from Pennsylvania..." and they like, asked me about myself and stuff, and I told them I was a University student, and my major is Japanese, blah blah blah, and the guy's like "So what are you doing tonight?" and I say "Well, I'm just going back to my dorm, I already ate and stuff, so..." and he asks me to just have a cocktail or two with him and I'm like "O.o I really can't do that, I'm 16." and I told them about what happened earlier with the strawberry drink, and he was like "Ok, then we'll just get some strawberry soda and vodka, and.." And I was like "Um, no thanks, I really have to just get back to my dorm, OK?" and said my goodbyes and left. Go me and my uber-nerdiness!!! I was flattered by the offer though. But I'd rather play video games and study Japanese than get drunk with random guys I met on the street. O.o; Plus that's really dangerous.

Luckily I wear a waist pack, so my money and stuff is right there. On my waist. So I can keep tabs on it without actually having to keep tabs on it.

Anyway, after that strange, unwelcome encounter came another one! But nicer this time. An older man was walking next to me and he asked me if I was alone, and I said yes. His name is J.D and he' s from South Korea, and he' s here for four months at some University here doing some kind of computer study with a Japanese company. It' s pretty cool, I have his business card. We just walked and talked, and he just got here yesterday, and he just walked with me to the trolley stop and waited with me. And we talked and talked; we basically know each other' s life stories now. He seemed really nice and open and friendly and stuff. He said I had "eyes to attract others". His English is pretty good, actually. He was using all kinds of good vocabulary. He picked up on that I' m very shy and modest (Even more so now that I' m in such a new place) I did detect some minor flirting. He read my palm, several times he said we were destined to meet (such as he was born in 68, I was in 86,) etc...but he seems like a good person to have as a friend, very kind. No dating though. He' s kinda...twice my age? But a very kind person who was nice to talk to during the long wait for the trolley. And then I talked to some Japanese people who sat next to me on the trolley. I took out my Morning Musume notebook cuz the one girl was on her cell, I wanted to look at it and stuff, and they were like "O.O You like Momusu?" Wonderful icebreaker, those girls are. The one girl pointed to Ai Kago and was like "I know her. She' s my friend." and I was just like "O.O.....*honto.....ni??*" and the other girl laughed a bit at my reaction and the first girl was like "Yea." and I was like "O.O!! *Hontoni?!*" It was pretty funny. She also said she was a University of Hawaii Student. LOL. Who isn' t, we have a huge student body here! But that was pretty cool. I told her in my broken Japanese that I liked Kago a lot, hence the buns, but my favorites were Mari and Kaori, and we just sorta chatted about Momusu and Ayu during the ride, (how I think they might be getting a bit too sexy in their new PVs, and how I miss the days of "Chu! Natsu Party!" and "Summer Reggae Rainbow!", etc. And how Ayu' s Hanabi is the best song ever...the one girl agreed.)

I got home that night and got some emails from JD. He asked me to go out with him for dinner and a movie. A date?! I was a little wary, but he really seemed genuinely nice, and if his story was false, then bravo, he had business cards and everything. But I think he' s genuine. I replied to his emails and we went back and forth and decided to go out that Friday. He picked me up in his rental car at the Korean Studies building. While I was waiting there, I saw a nice old Japanese man feeding one of the feral cats that lives on campus. He was taking great care to feed her. I expressed an interest in the cat, because I love cats, my own cat in Pennsylvania came from feral cats. I talked to him, and it turns out he' s a Japanese 101 professor, and I don' t have him because I' m in 100, the accelerated class. So we conversed a bit in English and Japanese. He named the cat Mimi, or Mi-chan and he takes care of her even though she lives outside. JD picked me up, and we decided to go to the movie theatre and see Freaky Friday. Before the movie, we had a quick meal at a Korean restaurant. It was the first time I had Korean food. Freaky Friday was a good movie. A bit of a classic cliché, feel-good family movie, but it was enjoyable. JD doesn' t know some American slang, so I had to explain it throughout the movie. It was pretty cool, I didn' t mind at all. JD was very generous and kind throughout the

evening. He paid for both the dinner and the movie. I was very grateful, and thanked him many times over. I feel guilty accepting such things, especially from an older man, especially when he doesn't actually want something in return. Hard to believe that there are just nice people in the world. Well, he did say I was cute several times. ^_^ So, he drove me back to my dorm. Last I heard, he moved into a place for rent, and he has a 56k connection. He hasn't emailed me since; I suspect that's why. Either way, it was a very nice experience for someone so far away from home to meet a genuinely kind person very early. It's kind of weird though, because my first "date" was with someone not even in my college!

Update

I went on a second "date" with him, and I was very happy to be going out somewhere. I did my hair cutely and so forth, wore Capri pants and a tank top; we went out to a little Japanese place and had some sushi and *udon*. Then some shave ice out by the pier where the boats were. I was having the strangest case of *deja vu*, because the place looked exactly like a place in St. Maarten I went to as a kid. And then JD kissed me. Yea. It was one of those "I knew it was coming but didn't know or care to stop it really" and then we got back into his car, and started driving. Me, being a little bit cautious at being at this guy's mercy pretty much because he's the one driving, asked where we were going, and he said "my place." OK, massive red flag. I told him to take me home. He stopped at the beach in his car, parked, and turned the lights off. OK, make-outs coming, that I don't want to participate in. I told him no. He even tried to pull one of those "but if you don't kiss me, I can't start the car" tricks. I told him not to try that, and to just take me home. I was feeling really awkward at this point. Not in any real danger, as he was in fact taking me home as I asked, and he had done nothing more than kiss me (and hold my hand). He asked me why I would do this with other boys, (as I had mentioned earlier in the evening) but not him. I didn't answer. I should have said "because you're twice my age, that's kind of a bad thing". I mean, he's handsome, nice, gentlemanly...At no point during this whole thing did I feel like I was in any real danger of being assaulted. (If I did, I had a plan to punch him, get out, and run to the nearest bus stop or use my cell phone to call the police or cab). I ended up getting home around 2 hours after I left, a very short date. I wasn't a very happy person. Of course I knew he had these intentions. It's obvious. He called me cute, bought me dinner, etc. I still believe that he didn't have bold intentions of having sex with me, that he actually wanted to forge some kind of relationship. Unfortunately, I want neither with him. With him, I just wanted a friend to go out to dinner with, talk to, an older brother type like I had in Pennsylvania. But he had to express his true intentions and ruin a perfectly good friendship. We've emailed a couple times since, but I honestly feel awkward concerning him so I don't know if we'll ever go out somewhere just the two of us ever again.

My Experience at the Kiyoshi Hikawa Concert

Subarashii, kakkoi, O.O... I have a lot of words to describe the *sekushii-ness* of Kiyoshi Hikawa. Of course though, the main thing WAS his voice and music. It. Was. Incredible. His image was just a plus.

Ok, let me start from the beginning. I went to Waikiki on the trolley around 4 or so and did some shopping, sightseeing, etc.... I, of course, made a stop at the Hello! Project information center, saw Nacchi' s new single and the ZYX video...those kids are too young to be dancing and wearing clothes like that. O.o...then I went downstairs to head to the Sheraton Waikiki for the concert, and people were holding signs in Japanese, and I went up to one and tried to read the hiragana...and I was like "Ki.....yo.. ..shi... ..Ha.... wa..." and the guy was like "Kiyoshi Hawaii. Do you know Kiyoshi Hikawa?" and I was like "O.o Yea I' m gonna see him!" and he was like "O.o; Oh. This way, please." For some reason, I had this feeling that there were going to be a lot of Japanese people there. Boy, was I right. I think I can safely say I was the only white teenage girl there. Seriously. 2,000 people. And me the only white one. That makes me very happy. ^_^ I got some of the funniest looks when I was going in. That was a great experience in itself. The seating was by table, and mine was empty for a while cuz I came way early, but people came and eventually the whole place was filled up. I was way in back, with a lot of old people. I would say a good portion of the audience was female and middle aged or over, but there were younger girls and some guys there too. Even a few little kids with their parents. A mixed group. But anyway, I talked to the rest of the people at my table in Japanese; it was fun. Introduced myself and all. There were 1300 people from Hawaii, and over 700 from Japan, Kiyoshi Hikawa' s Fan Club. They had badges and they got to meet him and they flew from Japan to see his concert. *Sugoi~*

Then the concert started. I was so far away so he looked like Gackt. LOL. Skinny, longish hair, but man, he sings the pants off Gackt (a sight I' d actually like to see...Oh wait. ::looks at nude picture on wall:: That' s right, I have a picture of Gackt pants less already. Oh well...) but...yea. First he came out in a white suit with sparkles on it, and then he wore an Aloha shirt with the white pants, then he wore a sexy black suit and then he took the jacket off and he had a black vest and red shirt underneath. *Sekushii* ^.^ And there was audience participation stuff. The fan club people, especially the teenagers, had glow sticks like at an Ayu or MM concert, so I improvised with a fan and a red squeeze light. And I shouted "Kiyoshi! *Kakkoi! Suteki!!*" all the way from the back...the old people section. I felt so weird, but it was sooooo fun! He danced and sung and his band rocked, and it was soooo great! And there were parts in between where he would talk with another guy and it was so cute! And I understood a surprising amount of it. He' s an *enka* singer, but he' s really modernized it. His songs were so exciting. And when they talked, he would go "*Genki desu ka?*" and I would shout "Genki deeeeeeesu!" along with the rest of the young/loud people and people would give me strange looks like "the gaijin understands? Holy crap!" and he talked about his stay in Hawaii, things he bought, etc. Someone in the audience asked what he bought for his mother, and he did buy something for her. A handbag with an orange handle, I believe. Yea, I never cease to amaze myself with what I can say and comprehend in Japanese. o.o; Anyway, when he came out in the

black suit he sang a slow song that almost brought me to tears. My God....his voice is sooo good and sooo powerful, and the *enka* style is so interesting, and he really brings something modern to it with his youth and cool image and dancing. So cool. I like everything about him. But I can't find very much stuff to download. And there was nothing there to buy.

Nevertheless, it was amazing. And I love the looks I get when I'm the only gaijin. As for dress code, there were people in formal wear, people in Aloha shirts and dresses, and teenagers in jeans. I wore jeans, my nice orange/yellow top with the black palm trees on it, a my long sleeve orange button-down blouse (thrift store), black shoes I got from the thrift store too, and I carried a yellow handbag for my camera and a couple books (shoulda brought a dictionary or something though >.<) and well, I looked like Samei, which everyone just has to notice. ^_^

And then afterwards I talked to some more people, told them in Japanese that this is my first time ever seeing Kiyoshi, and I bought the ticket after seeing the commercial, that I've never heard of him before. Then I went shopping a little bit, didn't buy anything though, Then I had some Vietnamese food for dinner. *Natsukashii*...I love Vietnamese food. Then I got on the trolley but he wouldn't stop at Dole St, a little outside it though, and he was the last one, and it seemed kind of silly cuz like half the people on the trolley were UH students. But oh well, it was like a 5 minute walk; I knew how to get home (for once). And I said something about my RA being a gay guy and they were like "Michael?" and I was like "Yea!!! He rules!" yea. Michael has a fan club. I told them about him trying to steal one of my Japanese boys. I find that pretty funny. If I find a gay one I'll let him know. If I find a bi one...er. Sorry, Michael. ^_^

So, that was my first *enka* experience. A modern one, but it was *enka* nonetheless. It was amazing, especially the experience of being a total gaijin. I always wear my big platform shoes, and I towered over some of these old ladies at my acquired height of about 5' 6". Not very impressive at all, but I felt really tall around all of those Japanese people. I would recommend anyone to listen to, or if they're lucky enough, to see Kiyoshi Hikawa in action. He is amazing, even if you're not into *enka*, even if you're not into Japanese music at all. His voice is powerful and he has such impressive control of it, and it's just amazing to hear. He can be so cute, funny, and lighthearted, but then totally switch gears and be so dignified, powerful, and beautiful, that I just want to cry. Plus, as I have said many times before, he's *shou sekushii*

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***Sekusu-tomo* or Sex friend**

Sometimes people have needs. Especially teenagers and young adults. Sometimes people don't want emotional attachment, they just want the pleasure. It's casual sex; it's having a sex friend or as the Japanese call it as *sekusu-tomo* (a word derived by combining the English word sex and the Japanese word for friend '*tomodachi*'). I first learned about *sekusu-tomo* when I came across a term popular in Hawaii "fuck buddy".

I was actually introduced to this concept before college, of course, and with someone you're comfortable with, it can be very fulfilling to have pleasure without emotional attachment. I was denying myself that before, tricking myself into thinking that there just has to be emotions whenever sex is involved. But it really doesn't, at least not for me. Some people think there's only one way someone can have sex. They have to meet someone they like, fall in love with them, go on many dates, and after about a year of this they can make the "big decision". This may be all well and good for some people, but for me, it is not.

Now, I'm not saying I will have sex with someone I just met and hardly know; that is reckless. But not all casual sex is reckless. Other reckless behaviors I refuse to engage in is drink alcohol with a mixed group of strangers, smoke pot, cigarettes, or do other harmful drugs in any situation, or drink excessive amounts of alcohol in any situation. But I am willing to explore new boundaries sexually. Which is what a lot of people do at college. It's a shame how bound, down, unrealistic, and moralistic our society is, especially in the mainland. Especially in the suburbs. Here, it's not uncommon for someone to have friends that they have sex with, but they are not boyfriends or girlfriends. And they don't have to be drunk or at a wild party to engage in such "taboo" acts. I'm finding that I'm breaking out of that line of thinking, that every girl who sleeps with someone who isn't a boyfriend is labeled a "slut" and a guy who does the same is a "scumbag". And they act like now I will sleep with anyone because apparently I have no standards anymore?

My so-called friends in the mainland still carry this line of thinking, unfortunately. So now to them, I'm turning into a "slut" because I found *ækusu-tomo*. I guess they never want to explore themselves sexually. Well, two of my friends have been in a serious relationship for over 2 years now, and I respect that, even if they were the same people that weren't happy unless they slept together every night, that they have found their way of doing things, and I have found mine. I would love to do something different sexually, and this is my time to do it. There are stores and clinics on the island, near campus, that cater to sexual needs, providing toys, videos, and yes, all kinds of contraceptives to make sure everyone stays safe. Plus, I do ask, if that helps anything. But through all their insults and ramblings about the dangers of STDs, I could see that my friends do actually care about me, and in turn I will heed their warnings and listen to them. I would want no less for myself. I've already met some really nice gay/bi guys who are into exploring different types of sex. They will try to help me find a nice girl. My one friend, Richard, is so funny and outgoing, I'm always happy when I'm with him! His love for everything is infectious!

~

Pigtail fetish

Perhaps it's just a coincidence. Perhaps it's because this is also the first time I've been able to go out on my own. But either way, I've been noticing some of the weirdest things. People like pigtails. I'm not only referring to the girls that like the look of the red flowers,

I'm referring to the guys. It's the strangest thing, but I think guys here have a bit more of a "pigtail fetish" than one would find in the mainland. Or one could also call it the Lolita complex, or *rorikon* (the Japanese term for Lolita complex).

My style is primarily my glasses, red lipstick, shoes with platforms (because I don't consider 5' 3" as being tall enough.) and on days when I'm in the mood, a pigtail style and/or eyeliner and mascara. Being in Hawaii, I wear shorts whenever I feel my legs are presentable (I don't like shaving my legs often and the hair grows so fast that I would have to do it at least every other day, maybe every day) and tank tops or short sleeves. There are a few occasions where I have gone out in swimwear (my swimsuit is a tankini and I wear swimming trunks with it) or a tank top and shorts. But one of my favorite outfits is a red shirt with my baggy gray camo pants, and my red platform sandals, and I wear my hair in buns or pigtail braids.

Thinking back, it seems that every time a guy has made a comment saying I'm attractive, I have had my hair in pigtails, and of course, been wearing my glasses. Is it nerd appeal as well? When I met JD, my hair was in buns, and my clothing was brief as the pictures in the article state. I was wearing a black Phantom of the Opera T-shirt, jeans, and my hair was in pigtails with rose ornaments when a boy stopped next to me on his bike while I was walking to the dorm. He made a rather loud squealing noise while stopping so I would turn and look at him. He said "Hi" to me, and promptly nodded and gave me that face that I hate to see on boys. It was the "Oh yea, that's right, I'm hot shit" face. I promptly turned and walked away.

The next incident was when I was walking over to Tokai University for the Japanese Culture Club Event. A couple of guys in their car were waiting at a light, and they were going in the opposite direction as me, and one of the guys asked me where I was headed, and I told him I was going to Kapiolani Boulevard, and he just nodded and said "Well, you're pretty hot." and I kept walking. This was when I was wearing my lovely red tank top and camouflage pants outfit, with pigtail braids.

One other incident was when I was in Waikiki going to Goro-san's beach party. In my swimwear as earlier stated and pigtails with red and orange flowers. This was by far the strangest incident. A boy walked by me while I was waiting to cross the street, and he turned his head to look at me, and his face was seductive as he ran just his index finger across my bare shoulder area, and I promptly gave him a look of "What the hell are you doing? Please go away, you're weird." and walked across the street.

Boys seem to like me with my hair down as well, but I haven't gotten strong, direct comments like I did when I have my pigtails. I do like this kind of attention, I must admit. It's a real self-esteem booster. But it's not the way to win me. I'll take the compliment with a smile, or just keep walking. Finding me attractive is nice, but what matters is how I like *you*.

More on sex-friends or *sekusu-tomo*

Last Friday, I went to Tokai University for a Japanese Culture Club party. It was so fun! First, I walked there. It was about a mile, but I didn't mind it at all. Since coming to Hawaii, I've been walking a lot more. I have no problem with walking, when it actually gets me somewhere. First, we had dinner in the cafeteria. Tokai University is a Hawaiian branch of a Japanese school, and all the students there are from Japan. I had fun talking with some people during dinner, and then we went up to a small auditorium type room for speeches and conversation exchanges. The first speeches were by Japanese people speaking English. The girl that spoke was very sweet, and then three guys came up and they did a skit speaking English. It was about a Japanese boy's experience in Hawaii. They were so funny; they all reminded me of my friends at home. They made fun of Chinese people, Japanese tourists, Hawaiian surfers, and American women with big breasts (...hey.). And there was a pretty man playing a mermaid. He was tall and skinny, with dyed blond hair and he was wearing a bed sheet taped around his legs and fins to simulate a tail, and a swimsuit top. He had a very deep voice, though, and only had two lines. "I am the mermaid," and "I know everything that you do, because I am a mermaid." He was my favorite character. Then we had English conversation, and I tried to explain "dough", "bough" and "cough" and how they are all different in pronunciation, and I even wrote out the pronunciation in katakana. Then there were speeches by Americans learning Japanese. It seems that there are a lot of gaijin men in this club. I like being a minority for once though. Then we had a conversation in Japanese. I'm trying very hard!

Then it was over, and we hung around talking for a while. I got out my book of Japanese pickup lines and slang, and the Japanese girls were reading it and squealing. The book was in English and *romaji*, so they had a hard time reading it. I went through and wrote my favorite ones in kana and kanji for them. And then of course, all the boys came over; they were all very interested in learning pick-up lines. And so one of the sensei told us to practice on each other! It was so funny! So Ryo-san was standing in front of me, holding the book, and he said "...Will you.. become.. my.. Japanese..teacher?" and I went "No! English! I'm going to teach you English!" and he was very confused, so I tried to explain it further by saying that since I speak English, and he speaks Japanese, I would ask him to be my Japanese teacher, and I would be his English teacher, and then I just blurted out the line in Japanese. "*Atashi no nihongo sensei ni nattekureru?*" and everyone was taken back and went "....*Sugooooi!*" And I was a little embarrassed because that was my favorite pick-up line.

We talked some more, and Ryo-san started inviting people to drink with him. At first, I thought we were going out for drinks, which I was unsure of because I'm 17. But Ryo-san is only 19. A lot of us were under 21. We went up to his dorm room, which was very clean, and he even laid out a plastic sheet in case we spilled. Jay, our gaijin man, went and bought the drinks. He got beer for everyone, and I asked him nicely to get me something strawberry-flavored, which was very nice. There was also a bottle of vodka and a couple of shot glasses floating around. First things first, when we got the beer, he made everyone partake in an American tradition--a drinking game. He made all the boys drink their beer through straws while doing pushups. It was funny.

Within a short time the conversation turned to sex. Being the only female in the room, and a gaijin at that, I wasn't the least bit embarrassed. I was happy to talk about such things in such a mixed group. Incidentally, I had about 10 condoms in my waist pack. It had been Coming Out Day in the Campus Center on Friday, and so all the gay, lesbian, and transgendered organizations had tables in the Campus Center giving out pamphlets, stickers, and yes, condoms and lubes. All colors, flavors, and styles. And some flavored lubes to boot. I spread them out for the boys to look at, and explained my view on fuck buddies or sekusutomo. I think Ryo-san portrayed his feelings the best when he raised his hands in the air and shouted "*Amerika saaaaikooooou~!!!*" and then thought for a moment, and said "In English! I love America!!!" I can safely say, around that time, everyone in the room wanted to have sex with me. And then one of the Japanese boys said that he couldn't have sex without love. Jay promptly yelled that he was *baka*, or idiot, and gave us a very loud speech about how "love" is something wonderful, that you look up to, but SEX! is something totally different, and that you should never mix the two, because that's called marriage.

They realized that I was indeed a minority in the room, and decided to invite over some Japanese girls. They didn't do much. They talked quietly, and drank some beer. Mermaid san (that's what we called him the whole night) and his girlfriend came over, and left after a while also for a cigarette. The boys told me they were going to have sex.

I also taught them some English, and it seemed that they already knew a lot of terms. I taught them tame English, stuff like "When Pigs Fly", which I got the idea from Ayaka from Coconuts Musume, who is a Japanese from Hawaii, and teaches the girls from Morning Musume fun and useful English phrases. Then I taught them euphemisms for sex, masturbation, genitals, and of course, different slang and curse words. They picked them up really fast, and they were telling each other to "shut the fuck up, bitch" in no time.

After a while, people started to leave. The Tokai students lived in the dorms where we already were, and Jay and the other gaijin went home on his moped. Which left me. I had walked there, so I was fine with walking back, even if it was about 2 AM. But Ryo-san wouldn't have it. Him and his roommates told me that it was very dangerous walking in this area alone at night, and they were either going to escort me or have me stay here. Well, I wasn't about to make these boys walk two miles on account of me, so I stayed.

The situation was three boys to a room, but one had left, leaving Ryo-san, Yuji-san, and me. There were two beds and a third mattress on the floor. Ryo-san gave me one of the beds and took the floor, and Yuji-san had the other bed. We tried to go to sleep in vain, but we just didn't want to, so we talked a bit instead. Then, Ryo-san came up and lay in bed with me. He was shirtless, and it was nice. I wasn't about to kick a boy out of his own bed anyway. Not that I had any intention. I was happy. We stayed cuddling for a while. Yuji-san started talking to Ryo-san. I had no idea what they were saying. I heard my name mentioned only once. I think Yuji-san wanted to leave, but Ryo-san didn't want to be rude and cast him out. Ryo-san and me moved to the mattress on the floor, and moved

a second mattress so Yuji-san could also stay down there. I wondered if I should lay in the spot closest to me, which was next to Ryo-san, or lay between them both. I asked them, and Ryo-san made me lay next to him. After this, Yuji-san left. I asked him to stay in my broken Japanese, saying that the three of us would be fine with me. "*Sannin ii desu yo!*" But he left, so I said "*Gomen nasai, Yuji-san.*" My friends gave me high fives when they learned that I had suggested a threesome. Hey, I came to college to experience and learn new things, right?

Well, now that the third wheel, as it seems was gone, Ryo-san and I were alone. Sex with him was great. We did about 5 different positions, and he went twice for about an hour each. Two things I had never experienced with my previous partner. That morning, him and his other friend woke me up and walked me to the bus stop so I could go back to UH, and get some more sleep.

I didn't do anything that I regret. We used condoms (one each time) and I have no regrets. Except for the fact that Yuji-san left. I want to do something like that again, it was a lot of fun but safety was still an important issue. I love my FOB (Fresh Off the Boat) boys, and girls too. Hawaii is a great place if you love Japanese people. I don't intend to go to any other place to learn Japanese, except for Japan of course.

~

"Japanese boys" are better than "candy"

Well, for the first time ever, I didn't go trick or treating this Halloween. But who needs "candy" when you can have a "Japanese boy"?

I had a packed day on Halloween. So much to do that I forgot to eat lunch and dinner. Not that I noticed, at least until the next day. I went to my classes in costume, and then I went to my first party of the day, the NICE Program party. I saw a lot of people, some of whom I knew from the weekly Japanese-English conversation exchanges I go to. Everybody's costume was very cute. Jay-san was there, and he introduced me to some Japanese boys by saying, "She's crazy and she likes Japanese boys." And then said to me "They like American girls". Then came the Talent Show and I sang a cute song from the Sailor Moon Musicals originally sung by a young kid. I practiced the Japanese a lot beforehand so I could sing it well, and people liked it, especially the cute choreography I put with it. I got a lot of compliments. I'm shy about receiving them, so I said "*hazukashii*", or embarrassing, a lot.

Then I went to the Anime Club's party, where we watched the Dirty Pair Halloween episode. It was fun to be with some English speakers. After that, I went to Tokai. My parents had stressed that I take a bus and not walk, even though I had done it before. I decided to abide by their wishes and took a bus. I ended up in Waikiki and called a cab to take me to Tokai. I got to the party and there was a student punk band there that was very good. They even sang, "I want to be the Minority" in English. Then we decided we were going to Waikiki. It was the Tokai boys from the other time, a few girls, Jay-san and his

friends, and another gaijin girl named Sabrina. At first, I saw her as competition and I didn't like her. But I actually think she's really cool; because it turns out she's a lot like me. She's 17 as well. And she has a boyfriend, so she isn't really interested in all the Japanese boys like I am. We walked to Waikiki and Jay was being crazy, dressed in drag and showing off his body to people in their cars. At one point he ran into the street to harass people waiting at a light. It was funny. I got into a habit of flashing my "panties" to people. My costume was Little Red Riding Hood, or *akazukin-chan*. I was wearing a short red dress (that some of the Japanese girls called a "*chou mini*") with fishnets, and over the fishnets, boxers rolled up to look like panties. But in reality, my panties were many layers under. So flashing these "panties" was harmless and fun. I flashed Japanese girls, people dressed as religious/political figures, and tourists with video cameras. We saw a lot of neat costumes and a lot of drunken people. People laughing and proclaiming their love for you. Total strangers that want to give you hugs. It was fun, although none of our group members got drunk on account, and I wouldn't want to get drunk in such a crowded public setting anyway.

Then we started to head home, and went along the beach. It was very pretty at night, the moon's reflection on the ocean and such. Then Jay went skinnydipping... and proceeded to lie on his stomach in the sand and pretend that he was "stuck". It was funny. And the Japanese boys decided to randomly race each other down the beach. Takahito, or Taka-san was a fast runner. But he got really tired and sat down on the trashcan lid that I was sitting on. Earlier the boys had all gone up to me and introduced him to me as the boy that wanted to lose his virginity to me. I introduced myself and mistook him for Ken-san, and he quickly corrected me and told me he was Takahito. That was embarrassing. But here he was, sitting with me on the beach. We talked a little bit in English and Japanese. Then everyone decided to head back. Some of the boys wanted to do Karaoke, and I wanted to go of course, but they only wanted Tokai students there (I guess they're intimidated by a gaijin girl who has a collection of condoms). Which was OK, because Taka-san wanted to come home and sleep with me. I was happy. I was going to have a Japanese boy in my room for the first time. We walked over a mile back to my place, for me to discover that the front desk was open, and it would indeed remain that way until four in the morning. My dorm has a strict guest policy. No guests after midnight, all guests must be signed in and be UH students. Well, since none of those were going to work, Taka-san and I sat outside, talking. We had no idea what to do or where to go now, as he didn't want to go to Tokai because they had a 24-hour guard. And outside was out of the question, as it was one in the morning on Halloween and people were walking around as if it were the afternoon. And we both wanted to have sex. He even said in English "I want to have sex." It was funny. I responded, "Me too." He looked at me and said, "You can't say that." And then I said, "Yes I can *Atashi mo!*" It seems that perhaps because of the culture differences, the Japanese boys don't want to talk much about sex with me even though I talk about it in fun.

So we sat out there. He gave me his email address, and we talked some more. Then one of the RAs who worked the front desk on some mornings, Mike, walked by and instantly saw our predicament. He offered some advice to just ask the person at the front desk to let us by. They're just fellow students, after all, and they'd be able to understand. So I did

just that, walked in and asked if my "boyfriend" and I could go up. And she said yes, and I thanked her and took him up to my room.

We were both so tired from all the walking we did that we just went and collapsed on the two beds in my room. I changed out of my costume and into a T-shirt and boxers, and we lay there, and then he went "Hey, weren' t we going to have sex?" and he started it. I felt very honored that he gave up his virginity to me, as I know that' s almost like a girl in America giving it up. Of course, it being his first time, he wasn' t an hour long or even going twice, but it was still amazing. I said "*sugoi kimochi*" and he said "English", so I said, "It feels really great." It' s such an experience to have bilingual sex. After that, we lay there, and I noticed he was playing with my hair, admiring it. I asked him "*Omoshiroi desu ka?*" or "Is it interesting?" and he replied "*Omoshiroi desu.*"

He told me not to tell the other people from Tokai; he did not want this being found out by his friends. I think it was obvious to everyone in our group what we did, but I made the promise. It' s obvious to Yuji and others what Ryo and I did as well, because Yuji got kicked out of the room for it. While American boys like to brag to their friends, Japanese boys seem to be the complete opposite. It seems I have a very strange relationship with the Tokai boys. It' s known that I like Japanese boys, and they like American girls, and I' m very open about my sexual habits, hence my carrying around condoms with little shame. And they' re all boys between the ages of 17-23, so I think it' s obvious what they all want. And since I don' t actively "come on" to people or do the asking, for me it' s just a waiting game to see who will come up next. It would be so much easier if everyone were more open about it. I could just walk into the room and ask, "Who is it going to be this weekend?" But no, they' re too shy, and even I' m too shy. I' m kind of hoping Taka-san again though. Ryo-san hasn' t really emailed me or talked to me much since that Friday night, but Taka-san emails me regularly and has expressed wanting to do that again. I know Yuji-san wants me though. And then there' s Ken-san. I' ll just have to wait and see on them. All in all, I have to say "Japanese boys" are better than "candy".

~

Falling in love with a *sekusutomo*?

I thought about Taka-san all week, I even wrote a *tanka* (Japanese poem like the haiku) in Japanese about him. I wondered if I was developing an interest in him beyond sex friends. I felt lonely in bed without him, even though we slept in separate beds afterwards because the dorm beds are very narrow. I wondered if I was starting to like him, or I just missed the sex. I knew either way I had to see him again to figure my feelings out.

Taka-san emailed me on Friday saying that he would like to get together again with me on the weekend. I emailed him back saying that Friday is the best night because my friend Greg would be working the front desk and he would let us in, no questions asked. So he emailed me again within minutes and I gave him my phone number. He came over and we went up to my room.

The second time was as good as the first time, if not better. We had more foreplay this time. He took off my bra and said that my breasts were big. I was happy he liked them. I told him he was big as well, and he said, "You flatter me." And then asked in Japanese how American men were, and I said about the same. It's true. That Asian men rule is a myth. I learned another thing about sex with the Japanese. He was telling me very matter-of-factly where he wanted me to touch him and lick him, and he asked me what I wanted him to do, and me never being asked that before, I said anything is fine. Perhaps I'll form an opinion next time. It wasn't like we were talking dirty, either. We were merely communicating. He absolutely loved his nipples licked, so much that he told me to do it twice. There was one point where I thought he was going to enter me without a condom, and I immediately started freaking out and shouted, "*Iya-ya-ya-ya-ya da!!!! Dame desu!!!*" and he laughed and said he knew, he wasn't going to do that. There was also a point where I went to get some lubricant, which was stored in my phallic toothbrush holder (that ironically never holds toothbrushes) and he immediately saw the phallic object and got a little worried. I was just getting the packet of lube though.

This time, he went for at least twice as long, and we tried different positions, like *bakku*, or doggy-style, and one where I had my legs on his shoulders. He made a really funny confused face when I put my legs on his shoulders and said "Are you flexible?" and I said, "Well, we'll find out." That was a good position actually. Then we went back to *seijoi*, or missionary. I don't like being on top, so we didn't *seijoi*. We spoke both Japanese and English many times during this experience, and it was so great to hear my partner saying "*Aa! Iku!*" when he climaxed. I think that's why he wants me to speak English. I'll try to speak more English, even though Americans don't tend to say actual words like "*kimochi*" when they have sex. I'll try to think of something to say in English.

Afterwards, we went over English together, I got out my book of Japanese phrases for lovemaking and pick-up lines that I had at Tokai, and we went over some of those phrases. Then we talked about English grammar, watched some of Ayaka's English Lessons, and went to bed. I'm happy to be just his *sekkusu-tomo*, and his English and Japanese studying partner. I was worried that I wanted something more, but after seeing him again, I know that I just want to see him, to share sex and English and Japanese, not to become his girlfriend or *koibito*. Emotions are hard to decode sometimes, but I just know if I'm satisfied with something, I shouldn't try to change it. I love what we have. He treats me so nicely, and when we kiss or have sex or just lay there, he always looks at me. It's like he's admiring me. My gaijin body and brown/blonde hair, and my tan but still light skin. It makes me embarrassed that someone could admire me, because I don't think I'm great enough to be admired. But it makes us both happy. I hope I see Taka-san many more times. There are so many things I want to try. Next time I will put the beds together so we don't have to sleep separately. And maybe soon I will drop the honorifics. But while I want to think that what we have is great, there's also a fear of him not speaking to me, like Ryo-san.

I don't know why Japanese people do that. Chihiro has stopped answering my emails as well. From reading other stories here, I've seen that it's not uncommon, which saddens me

as I love emailing people and staying in touch. I eagerly await my next email from Taka. I hope I'm not waiting in vain.

~

Visiting Japanese students

Last week, I went to a Yamaguchi *Kenjinkai* picnic. It was an event for students from the Yamaguchi Prefecture, in fishery school, learning how to fish. They are currently making their way at sea around Polynesia, and stopping at Hawaii, decided to invite the Japanese Culture Club of UH so their students from Japan could meet some Hawaii students.

Again, I was the only white girl there. I was very happy. Out of all the students there, only three of them were female. The rest were all young, fit Japanese boys.

Unfortunately, the girls were the only ones I personally introduced myself to. We all did group introductions; I did mine in Japanese. There were a couple Japanese boys that said they were looking for a girlfriend; it's a shame I didn't say something like “*Watashi mo boifurendo o sagashiteimasu*”, or “I'm also looking for a boyfriend”

I played soccer with them, played a game like Bocchi where you roll a ball between two sticks. I tried and couldn't get it. Anthony told me to close my eyes, and I got it! It was so funny he tackled me and we were on the ground laughing. And then after dinner, we had a limbo game. I tried to limbo, and I couldn't. I was embarrassed, but Anthony told me that all the guys were looking at my breasts and had to sit down. It was funny.

Later, Anthony drove me and another guy home. He dropped Ruben off at the apartments, and then we went to a parking lot and talked. He told me that I was sexy, and I could have sex with many Japanese boys, and they would pay money for it. And it would be OK because I could say it was tutoring. I must admit, for a second I thought it would be a good idea. He said I could earn a lot. But I declined. I don't want to have sex with so many strangers. I'm happy to get it my own way, than to have the boys handed to me. And I don't need the money, especially from that. And I didn't like the vibe I was getting from Anthony. There was also a condition. He would give me the space to do it in, and bring the customers, but he had to have me first. I didn't want to have sex with him, so I declined completely at that point. He told me to reconsider, that he was that good at making love. I wasn't impressed and stood by my decision.

Then one thing led to another and he started to touch me, and told me he could bring me to orgasm. He stimulated me with his hands and mouth, and indeed gave me pleasure. But then he tried to take it further, saying that I got mine, now he should get his. But I already said I wouldn't have sex with him, and I stood by that. He tried kissing my neck and coaxing me, but I wouldn't have it. Then, he just tried to enter...without using a condom. I literally grabbed him before he could, and asked him, in impolite terms, what the hell he was doing without a condom. He reluctantly got off of me to get out his wallet, and I told him I still stood by my decision—we weren't having sex, no way, no how, even if he did have a condom. So he took me home. Some of my friends took this as some kind of attempted rape or sexual assault, but it wasn't. I withdrew my consent and

he complied. Yes, it was selfish to get my own pleasure and then deny him his. But it was wrong of him to think that he could persuade me into having sex with him, even when I told him in many explicit terms that I wouldn't, ever. So he deserved it. If there's any "victim" in this, it's him.

~

A dull thanksgiving?

A hot dog from 7-11 and an Icee was my Thanksgiving dinner. I think it was the lowest I've ever felt. I didn't have any one to have dinner with, so I ate alone. Thanksgiving would have been just my parents and me this year, but I still felt very lonely and depressed. I thought back to the days when Thanksgiving was my parents, my brother, Lucille, my grandfather, and me. Lucille was not my grandmother, but just like one. After my mom's mom had died, Lucille met her some years later and took over the role. Lucille was my grandfather's lady friend. In addition to being good to my mother, she also adopted two infants, Ellie and Debbie. Debbie died when I was young, she was in her 20's I think, of a drug overdose. Ellie currently lives in South Philly. After Lucille died, Ellie and my mom both made an effort to become friends, which was hard considering my mother enjoys the fine points of life, lives in the suburbs, and Ellie is a Harley Davidson fan, has a biker boyfriend, and there was even evidence that she works as a call girl. So they tried despite their differences to become friends, and there was some unpleasantness, so that was dashed.

I had an "aunt" for a short time though. Oh yes, I have a biological aunt and uncle, and even a great-aunt. And another set of grandparents. And some cousins. They all live in Pennsylvania too. The problem is, there was some unpleasantness between everyone and my mother some years back. She thinks they're not good people to associate with. I talk to my paternal grandfather by email though. He sends me gifts around the holidays. I met my other cousin last year. It's a funny story actually. Funny in a sad way. We went to KFC during break from our Camelot rehearsal. It was Tara, Jeremy, and I. I saw my Aunt Julie, her husband Milo, and my 7-8 year old cousin Jenny, and a little toddler boy. I forget his name. I whispered to my friends "...That's my cousin." And they both quickly said, "Then say hi!" but.. I didn't know how to, exactly. I had no problem with them, but my mom did, so I hadn't talked to them in years. Almost 4 years actually. So finally, Milo said "Do I know you from somewhere? You look familiar." No family member should ever have to say that. I told him who I was, and talked to them for a little bit, told them I was on break from Camelot rehearsal, asked about my little cousins, and then my food came, so I had to leave. Tara and Jeremy both have close families, so they were totally perplexed by my situation.

Dan is my half-brother, actually, so there's a whole side to his family that I've met and I used to see regularly, but times change, and we've grown apart. Dan has his father Gary, who married his stepmother Joanne, who already had a daughter named Tina, who sort of became my older sister, as she is about 10 years my senior. And Joann also has her parents, Lillian and Joe. Her side of the family is Italian, so it used to be a tradition at

holidays for them to invite everyone in the family, including my parents and me, into their small apartment in South Philly. It was a bit cramped, but everyone always had a good time. Lillian cooked a huge array of Italian dishes for everyone and we had a big feast. Gary also had a brother Alan, who married Lena. Lena always endlessly showered me with compliments, saying how pretty I was, and how I should be a model. I always had fun at these gatherings, even though I only went to two or three. Unfortunately, in recent years, Joe died of cancer, and Joann divorced from Gary, and moved in with Lillian and her sister who came to live with her as well. The most recent party I went to, they ordered a deli tray. Everyone was disappointed; as they could still smell all that delicious food she had cooked over the years, because it was baked into the walls of the tiny kitchen. The last time I saw Tina; she was dating a plastic surgeon and had breast implants. They were big, round, and floating. They scared me.

Last, but not least, always a big part of Thanksgiving gatherings, my Poppy. Or my maternal grandfather. After Lucille died, his Alzheimer's really increased. He was still living in Northeast Philly, in the house I had spent my first 5-6 years of my life in. My dad started going over every week, a 40-minute drive on the highway mind you, to give him food and check on him. His refrigerator had broken, so we got him a new one and put it in the living room. Then he kept unplugging his TV and refrigerator, so my dad would have to make that drive to plug it back in, sometimes during his work hours at the store. We finally moved him into an assisted living facility. We visited him every week and talked to him, but recently it seems he can't really do that anymore. He has three sisters. One is deceased, one doesn't keep in contact, and one I've only met a few times. Lena. She has three sons, and she is a very strange person. Two of her sons are essentially mama's boys, possibly emotionally dysfunctional, never married, live at home, etc. I've met my cousin Kenny, he used to be really close to the family, but we've grown apart over the years as well, and he can't get away much as Lena's health has declined. Her third son, Donald, moved out, went to college, and got a degree in Political Science and has written a few textbooks on socialism and other subjects. He emails me occasionally. I have never met him.

My brother is with his group Tangled Thoughts, trying to make it as a rapper in Philly, traveling all over. He might get his record deal soon; I'm on his side. I don't mind rap music so much anymore. I used to hate it. But I'm growing an appreciation for it, partly because I listen to some Japanese rap, like Da Pump, TK, and King (a group of four teenage girls, two of which were in the Sailor Moon Musicals. They don't do hip-hop kind of rap, more like rap mixed with rock.) And even Ayumi Hamasaki and Morning Musume rap in a couple of their songs, and trying to rap along helps me in my Japanese. I tell everybody about him. When his CD comes out, I want to rip it and send mp3s to people. Hey, I love him, but I also love pirating. Plus, I don't listen to CDs; I find it easier to make a play-list with 500+ songs to listen to.

So this Thanksgiving, it was just my parents. They cooked a turkey breast and ate it, just the two of them now. I feel almost guilty being in Hawaii, while it's true that I'm studying Japanese and working hard, it's also..like a vacation. Whenever I see something that my parents would enjoy, like a concert, I always get a twinge of guilt, like

I wish they were here. But on the other hand, I love being away. I can get my Japanese boys now, stay up till 4 in the morning, all good stuff. Anyway, I'll be home for Christmas, and I can't wait to see everyone.

~

Thanksgiving was exciting after all

My Thanksgiving wasn't looking too happy, that is until Taka-san came over.

Let me start from the beginning. I woke up around 1 PM or so, and got ready for lunch at the Chancellor. The Chancellor of the University. I have no idea what this position means, or why it has such a prestigious title. But he was giving free lunch, so Greg and me signed up at the beginning of the month and RSVPed. It was a very nice affair. Completely casual, as most affairs in Hawaii are. The food was very good. I'm used to my mom's home-cooked turkey, so to me, the cranberry sauce was awful (because I like that stuff that comes in a can) and the turkey was dry...but the mashed potatoes were excellent. And the pumpkin pie was delicious, despite the absence of whipped cream. Either way, I was happy to get a good Thanksgiving meal. I also met many people; most of them staff members or such in the dorms. Greg being an RA, they spent most of the time talking about official dorm matters.

Then I went back home around 2 or so, and spent the rest of the day playing video games. My parents called me at one point, and that made me depressed. I spent a while contemplating and being sad and lonely, and I was bored, so I headed off to the arcade, and to see if I could find some dinner somewhere.

On the way there, I heard someone saying, "Help!" so I of course, looked around. I saw a man lying on the sidewalk, waving, saying he was in distress. I was a little wary, but I crossed the street and saw that a Hawaiian man was indeed in distress. His bike was in a small depression between the sidewalk and the grass, and his face, hand, and foot were all bleeding. I immediately asked him if he wanted me to call 911, and he said yes, so I did. I called, said there was a man who has had an accident on his bike, he was conscious, and said his head and face and hand hurt. They sent one, and I asked him some more questions, could he walk, etc, and I deduced that he wasn't seriously injured, but just very shaken up and scared. He was on his way to a friend's house for Thanksgiving dinner; he even had a bag of food with him. He thanked me profusely and apologized for taking my time, and I said it was no problem, after all I wasn't doing anything, and I would want someone to help me if I were in that situation. I stayed with him until the ambulance came (I had to flag them down) and then went to the arcade once I knew that he was getting some help.

Feeling good, I went to the arcade and played a racing game and some DDR, and did very well playing my favorite songs on the machine. Then since everything was closed, I went to 7-11 and got a hot dog and an icee. I ate that on the way home, and then played on the swings in the playground next to my dorms for a bit. Then I came home and found

an email from Taka-san, he said he was sorry, but he was playing basketball with his friends, and he suggested we get together tomorrow. And then I got a phone call. It was Taka-san. He asked if it was true that there was no security in the dorms right now. I said yes, the only RA in the dorms was my friend Greg, and he was preparing to get drunk in his room tonight (against the rules). So that decided it. He came over.

I was afraid I had scared him off with a recent email in which I asked if he knew any guys that wanted to have sex with an American man, for my friend Richy. And then I proceeded to ask if he knew any girls that wanted to have sex with me. He replied that he does not know any gay guys, he is not gay, and that I scared him with this information. But upon coming into my room, he started asking about *cosplay*. I confessed that I didn't know much about *cosplay*, and we talked some more, and started to kiss. He asked me if I could wear a skirt, but I don't have any. Now I know what to look for in the thrift shop, or get when I go home for Christmas. He spoke in Japanese to me, and then said, "First time, only English. Second time, only Japanese." And it took me a few seconds, but I got what he was saying, and started laughing. So we only used English for everything. Then we got out of our clothes, and he did something unexpected, he stood up and took me in front of the mirror, so we could watch ourselves kiss and touch each other. He really liked that. He loved seeing himself with a pale American, and I loved seeing myself with this tall, skinny, tanned Japanese. Then he sat on the bed, and I pleased him with my tongue. He loves his nipples being licked; he always requests it. And he loves the feel of my breasts on him. I like the feel of a smooth chest on a guy. And he also kissed me after I had given him a blowjob, something most American men wouldn't do. And then he asked for a condom, and said, "Do you want to use one?" and I said "Of course. I'm not stupid." And then he got on top of me, and said, ".. Say something". And I went "Well...what should I say?" and started laughing and then said, "Umm..Fuck me." And so, he did. He also said, "I'm coming." He's learning English very well.

Unfortunately, he was tired, so he couldn't do a second time. So we lay in the separate beds (I tried to put the mattresses on the floor...but they wouldn't fit. Stupid small room) and talked for a while. He said he doesn't like Hikawa Kiyoshi, and I said "Duh, that's because you're a straight guy." And we talked for a while about English and Japanese, and also about ourselves. He asked me what my scariest experience was, and we exchanged stories. Then we talked about high school and stuff. Finally, we just got tired and went to sleep. I turned out the lights and said "*Oyasumi nasai*" and he replied with a mumbled "*oyasumi*".

And so the tradition of having sex on holidays was continued. First Halloween and now Thanksgiving. It's a shame I won't be here on Christmas or New Year's.

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Sexy Bonus for Thanksgiving

Not one this weekend, but two..

I met Goro-san a while ago. He had put an ad up on campus, saying that he was a male UH student from Tokyo, looking to meet English speaking friends. I took his email address and emailed him. We emailed for a while, and eventually met. He spent the day in my room playing video games. My flamboyantly gay RA, Michael, came in briefly and immediately eyed Goro-san. Upon Michael leaving, Goro-san said to me, "I am straight." Later on, I talked to Michael, and Michael immediately asked me who that cute Japanese boy was, and I told him Goro-san was straight, and he was visibly disappointed, but then I mentioned that it might be good for me, and he lit up and said to let him know how that goes.

Goro-san is very much into fashion. He used to work for a fashion magazine in Tokyo. He wants to go to Britain and study fashion. He's also very into British music and he sometimes speaks Queen's English.

After that, I saw him a couple times again. He invited me to a barbeque party that his friend was having on the beach. I also saw him on Halloween, briefly in Waikiki. I flashed my "panties" if you recall what I wore for Halloween. It was very spontaneous. We called and emailed a bit, but didn't really do much, until he called me on Thanksgiving. We made plans to hang out the following night. Little did I know I would get a call from Taka-san a bit later and thus the rest of my night would be occupied.

He called me the next night, and came over to my room around 10. We played video games and practiced English and Japanese, and watched stuff on my computer. Then at midnight, I got a call from the front desk. We have a "Cinderella" guest policy, as I refer to it in my other articles, in which a guest has to be signed in, and they have to sign out at midnight. And on weekends, the desk is open until 4. So it was not good for me. We reluctantly went downstairs. I was going to suggest maybe hanging out somewhere else, but as soon as I got to the lobby, I saw my friend Greg. Hopeful, I asked if he would be working the desk now. If he was, then I could bring Goro-san back up, no questions asked, as I had done before with Taka-san. Greg said no, but no one would be working the desk now because the girl hadn't shown up. So we went outside, and I explained to him in Japanese, and then we went back up to my room. We hung around some more, talking, practicing Japanese and English. He looked at my graduating class picture, and made comments on their fashion, people of different ethnicities, and which girls were cute.

As I sat right there, on the bed, next to him, I thought Goro-san was pretty much unattainable, that he didn't like me. He told me how in Tokyo, he was a *nanpa* guru. He had seen his share of love hotels. He also had models for friends; in addition to all the cute girls he's probably *nanpa*-ed. But I didn't want to give up. He lay down next to me, saying he was tired. I took off my glasses eventually, so it would be more comfortable to lie down. Plus, since he was right in front of me, I didn't need the m. Then he rolled over on his stomach, complaining that his back hurt in Japanese. That left a window for me, and while I had not said about 75% of what I was thinking the entire night (because I have a dirty mind) I had to speak now. I started laughing and said he shouldn't say that

because it sounds like he had sex. He playfully tapped me and laughed and said I shouldn't say such things. I apologized and said that I have a dirty mind.

We talked about things, and at that point I tried to say more of what I was thinking, and the conversation turned to American girls. Goro-san said that he thought most Japanese guys didn't like American women. I said, "I don't think so." And said that the reason was because of my large chest. He shook his head and said he'd never noticed I had a large chest, (which I find hard to believe.. as he had seen me in a bathing suit before.) and I assured him that I did. I happened to be wearing a black T-shirt that day, instead of my usual bright colored tank tops. He asked if he could touch them, and then quickly retracted the question as he realized it wasn't a proper thing to ask. I laughed and told him it was OK, and that he could. The minute he touched them, his eyes widened as he said "*Sugoi!*" and then we proceeded to argue over them. He insisted I was a D cup, and I insist that I'm a C, because that's what all my bras say. He also asked if they were real. I wish I could say that's the first time I've been asked that.

So he finally took his hands away, and a thought popped into my head that I just couldn't ignore. I started laughing, and he asked me what was so funny. I said I was very *hazukashii*, and I couldn't say what I was thinking, because it was so dirty. He laughed and told me to say it. I tried to stop laughing long enough to say, "Well, you touched mine, and I want to know, "*Chinchin dou desu ka?* Can I touch it?" And he blinked, and said "*Chotto matte.*" And closed his eyes, and I asked, "*O okii ni naru?*" (Are you making it big?). He nodded and asked if he could touch me again. And so, it went from there. This boy obviously had experience. His touch was so gentle, very much unlike the other Japanese boys who had a tendency to be a bit rough. Even though he did seem to have an interest in ears. He didn't last very long, and apologized because that was the first time he's had sex since coming to Hawaii.. so it's been more than a few months. I asked if it was his first time with an American, and he said yes. That cleared it up, and made me happy. We lay there for a while. Then eventually he decided to go back to his place in Waikiki. By now it was almost 5 a.m. So not only did I get to see my fuck-buddy on Thanksgiving, I gained a new one on the day after. It has been a good 4-day weekend indeed. And I'm learning so much Japanese. Goro-san and I used both Japanese and English during the whole evening.

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It's Goro and I again - sex of course

This Sunday was my third time seeing Goro. He came over last week too. Last week was fun, even if I don't remember some of it. I'm learning many things from him. He taught me the word for a girl's period, which is *seiri*. And he has no problem with having sex with a girl during it also. He says it cannot be helped, and I was of course.. shocked. I said that I thought it was disgusting, with the blood and all, and that if I were a guy I would not want to do that. He said he didn't give a fuck (I taught him that phrase), plus a girl can't get pregnant when she's on her period. He also informed me that I was very loud last weekend.

Last night was fun even if it was short (he stayed the whole night last week). I did my usual playing DDR, and I was setting out to walk to Waikiki again, and I decided to eat at KFC. Yes, despite having about 20 (and I'm not exaggerating) Japanese restaurants within walking distance, I decided to eat at KFC. I guess it was because it was nostalgic. While I was there, I got a text message from Goro, saying he wanted to come over that night at 8. I texted him back, and said sure. And then I came back to my dorm around 7, and my friend Richy was working the front desk, so I talked to him, we studied Japanese (he's in 202 though, so it's very hard) and Goro called me, and Richy knew exactly what would go on tonight. Perfect because Richy wouldn't make me sign him in, and I knew that. So he called, said he would be there in about 10 minutes, I did a happy dance around the lobby like a dork, Richy laughed.. And then he arrived and we went up. Goro asked if I had to sign him in, or ask, or something, but Richy just smiled and went, "Have fun." And upon entering the elevator, Goro said, "He knows. Doesn't he?" and I nodded and laughed.

We got up to the floor, and there was my RA Michael, walking around, and I just waved hi and we went into my room. We talked and had snacks, and he went on my computer looking for Queen sites. He really loves the band Queen. Then we watched porn for some reason. For a guy who claims to not "heed" porn..he sure knows a lot about it. It's almost disturbing. This time to start the sex, I started talking about the tattoo I want - a red rose on my left pelvic bone. It's a good spot because my underwear covers it. Actually, I might get a red rose and a red hibiscus together in that spot. Well, it's mostly covered by underwear. This day I happened to be wearing the kind that had strings on the sides, so it wasn't hiding much of my temporary tattoo I had on there for fun. Goro asked me to show him my underwear, so I shrugged and took my shorts off. I hang out in my room without pants on all the time, so it's nothing special for me. Then I took my top off to show him my bra.. and so the making out started. The making out turned to oral sex. This guy really likes to please a woman. Unfortunately for him (and every guy out there) it's really hard to get me to climax. So he didn't. But I don't care. I never care about getting to climax. I took out my "bag of fun" which contained my phallic toothbrush holder...and..yea. That was fun. I wish I had some real sex toys though. That is going to be one fun weekend, when I have some real toys. Anyway, I almost made him come with my mouth.. He had to like, get up and stop. And then we did like five different positions...that was fun. So afterwards I took the condom and drank from it in front of him..just to be weird. He looked at me strangely and said, "..Is that a hobby?" and I laughed and said "Sort of."

Then it was about 12, and he wanted to go drink with his friends..so I escorted him down. There was Michael's friend John, with whom I had gone to a YAC meeting, or a Youth Action Committee, for AIDS/HIV prevention. Michael asked me to go (because I'm the statistical "high risk straight female" because he knows I'm sexually active), and so I was the one straight female in a group of gay men and transsexuals. It was a lot of fun. I'm a "fruit fly", as the drag queen/bear put it. A group of us had exchanged many stories in the car, all of them above PG-13. So John knew exactly what was going on as well. Now for poor Goro standing here, this is the 3rd person he has met in the building that knows we have sex. He was a bit uncomfortable as John just stood there in the

doorway, waiting for Michael, and upon seeing us, getting this very embarrassed/
knowing expression, complete with a half-smile at me. So Goro mumbled a goodbye and
left, leaving him, and me and his friend Margot standing there. After silence, he just said
“..Tired?” and I went, ‘Nah, not really.’ And then he said ‘Well..a little hot, sweaty
maybe?’ and I started laughing and I said I had to keep up my status as the ‘high risk
straight female’, and that at least I didn’t smoke, which he did like a chimney. So then we
went back and forth discussing STDs and lung cancer. And I said plus, I’ve done it with
him before, and we use a condom. So Michael came down groggily (he was sick that day
plus stress from finals) and John immediately went ‘Your resident did something very
bad!!!’ and Michael was like ‘Oh, the Japanese guy? I know.’ Which is another reason I
love Michael. Michael is like a big brother, or maybe more like a sister in this case,
because I can talk to him about everything. So then I went back up to my room and
stayed up for a couple more hours..then went to sleep. Finals are coming up, then
Christmas.. I get to go home! I never thought I would be happy about such a thing, but I
really miss my parents, my pets, and the food!!! I want some good fresh strawberries and
medium-rare filet mignon! So, this will probably be my last update until Christmas, so
Happy Holidays and Aloha everyone!

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