

PUBLIC RELATIONS MAGAZINE

# DATE

伊達

ENGLISH  
DIGEST

January 2020



# DATE CITY NEWS

The following are synopses of the news articles found in the Japanese edition.

Withdrawal notification necessary from those leaving National Health Insurance for Social Health Insurance; notifications to be mailed in January

Free measles and rubella vaccinations available for preschool-aged children; vaccination before entering elementary school is strongly encouraged

Residential water pipes at risk of freezing due to sub-zero temperatures or long periods of disuse

Measures to prevent pipes from freezing:

- Wrap outdoor pipes in cloth to prevent contact with cold winter air.
- Use pipe insulation on bare pipes and inside meter boxes.
- Use the external drain to remove water from indoor plumbing when freezing weather is forecast or before long periods of disuse.
- Pipes can also be prevented from freezing by maintaining a small, continuous flow of water through them.

Musical *ZIPANG GRAFFITI 1613* to be performed on February 16th, 2020 at Date Town's MDD Hall

Doors open at 13:30 for 14:00 performance; tickets on sale now ( ¥2000 / ¥1000 for high school students and younger)



Participants sought for Date City's January Challenge Day

All are encouraged to enjoy sports at the Date Gymnasium on January 29th from 10 AM until 3 PM.



*Hobara Station and the Jinya Street area to be illuminated nightly with Christmas lights through January 31st*

## FACEBOOK MESSAGE

The Date City Coordinators for International Relations now have their own Facebook page! Tony and Shannen will provide you with information on Date City in English.



Shannen Donovan



Anthony Gillan

## Life Under a *Kotatsu*

It seems that many people use the New Year holidays to travel, but I am not one of them. Instead, I am looking forward to spending the New Year holidays under a heated table. However, for many years until now, I had made a point of not having a *kotatsu* in my home, a decision based on my own experience.

The first time I experienced a winter in Fukushima, I was surprised by how cold it was. Not that I thought it was very cold outdoors (the rivers don't even freeze here); I was surprised by how cold it was indoors. As someone accustomed to insulated American homes, I found it exceedingly uncomfortable. The sole form of heating in my apartment was a *kotatsu*. That holiday season I barely ever crawled out from underneath it, and spent entire days there studying the Japanese language while watching the snow silently fall outside the window.

It wasn't just that holiday season, either - my first two winters in Fukushima I was without a kerosene stove, and lived my life under a *kotatsu*. So I was able to experience firsthand the benefits and shortfalls of life with a *kotatsu*.

Without a doubt, being under a *kotatsu* in winter is comfortable, and probably a perfect way to relax if there is no need to get up. Except, there is always a need to get up, whether it be dirty dishes in the sink or just an empty stomach. Yet braving the elements to address that need becomes so unpleasant that whatever is awaiting one's attention ends up waiting,

and waiting, and waiting, and possibly just gets postponed until spring.

As the rooms become colder and colder, it becomes harder and harder to escape from the warm grip of the *kotatsu*, until one becomes a veritable *kotatsu* prisoner. If one ends up sleeping underneath it, more often than not the reward involves a sore throat, runny nose, and a week of cold medicine. Nevertheless, doing so is still much safer than falling asleep with a kerosene heater left lit. Using the tiny electric heater inside a *kotatsu* also uses much less energy than trying to heat a whole room, not to mention an entire apartment or house.

So having built up significant experience with *kotatsu* use, I had become intent on living life without one; but eventually, bringing to mind its certain undeniable merits, I bought a sturdy, Japanese-made *kotatsu* shortly before the consumption tax hike. Usually young and single people buy a small and cheap *kotatsu*, but I finally settled on a monster that can seat ten people simultaneously, and which I expect will last me my whole life (if not longer).

People who sit together under a *kotatsu* seem to develop stronger interpersonal ties, and so it is my hope that in the future this gargantuan piece of furniture can aid in raising a large, close-knit family. Holding onto this hope, I look forward to yet again spending this coming holiday in study and under a *kotatsu*.