

# Japan in Melbourne

June 2012



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[www.japaninmelbourne.com.au](http://www.japaninmelbourne.com.au)

Japanese culture, interviews, food and beauty guide, classified... and much more!

## EVENT CALENDAR [ 2012 JUNE ]

### • Nihonga: Japanese Painting

**DATE** Now until 1 July  
**VENUE** Hamilton Art Gallery, 107 Brown Street, Hamilton  
**ADMISSION** Free  
**WEBSITE** [www.hamiltongallery.org](http://www.hamiltongallery.org)

In the Meiji Era, Japanese artists started to embrace the Western way of painting and challenged the traditional Japanese style by using canvas instead of paper and silk and frames instead of scrolls. While they shift to different materials, they preserved the concept of traditional Japanese painting such as: flora, landscapes and beautiful women. This is a rare chance to see some of these paintings here in Hamilton, Victoria, so don't miss it!



### • Pianist Hiromi in Melbourne International Jazz Festival

**DATE** 2, 4 & 5 June  
**VENUE** Melbourne Recital Centre (2 and 4 June)  
Bennett Lane Jazz Club (5 June, SOLD OUT)  
**ADMISSION** Varies  
**WEBSITE** [melbournejazz.com](http://melbournejazz.com)

Born in Shizuoka, Hiromi is an internationally well-received and multi-awarded artist. As a successful pianist, her work in Jazz has pushed her career into a new peak with in depth complexity and sophistication. With her solo session completely sold out 2 weeks before the performance, her appearance in the Melbourne International Jazz festival will surely be another huge success.

### • Japanese Puppet Rakugo

**DATE** 14-16 June 7pm & 17 June 6pm  
**VENUE** The Butterfly Club, 204 Bank Street, South Melbourne  
**ADMISSION** \$23 (\$20 Concession)  
**BOOKING** [thebutterflyclub.com](http://thebutterflyclub.com)

Showko is a performing Rakugo performer. Performing with handmade puppets, Showko's unique performing style ensures the performances are entertaining to audiences of all ages. After performing extensively in London, Osaka and Singapore, Showko is now bringing the laughter to Melbourne. Bring someone you love and share a laugh or two. After all, that's what Rakugo is all about.



### • Game Master – Exhibition at ACMI

**DATE** 28 June – 28 October  
**VENUE** ACMI, Federation Square, Melbourne  
**ADMISSION** Varies  
**WEBSITE** [www.acmi.net.au/game-masters.aspx](http://www.acmi.net.au/game-masters.aspx)

As part of this year's Winter Masterpiece, ACMI is holding an exhibition featuring works from more than 30 video game designers. From the famous *Mario Brothers* and *Link*, to *Metal Gear Solid*, to *Child of Eden*. If you are interested in video games, this exhibition surely has something for you!

### • Stars of the Tokyo Stage

**DATE** 29 June – 25 August  
**VENUE** RMIT Gallery, 344 Swanston Street, Melbourne  
**ADMISSION** Free  
**WEBSITE** [nga.gov.au/TokyoStage](http://nga.gov.au/TokyoStage)

An exclusive collection from the National Gallery of Australia is touring Australia, and will arrive in Melbourne at the end of this month. This collection of prints is showcasing images of life in the world of Kabuki, a traditional Japanese style of theatre. These images are created by Japanese artist Natori Shunsen (1886–1960).



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## JIM INTERVIEW Showko, The Female Rakugo Performer is here in Melbourne!



### ~Japanese Puppet Rakugo~

Japanese comedy show with a blend of traditional entertainment, puppetry, song, dance, bamboo magic...and monsters. Based on a 400yr old form of traditional storytelling the kimono clad Showko kneels on a cushion to perform but puts a new spin on it with her puppets and amazing ventriloquism skills to make it more visual, fun and hilarious .....Banzai!

don't work in English as we play with words. So I figured I'd make it more interesting by rearranging the stories and adding my puppets to make it my style.

### - How's the public reaction like in Melbourne?

I feel that Melbournians hold strong views on art. It is not like how critics see it, but more of a "let's enjoy it" kind of warm feeling. They often end up being very excited. Sometimes misunderstanding occurs when I wear a kimono. People think I am a geisha! (laughs)

### - Rakugo in English!? It sounds very interesting!

When I first saw my master's (Shofukutei Kakusho) live performance in Singapore, I was so excited and thought "This is it!" The Puppet Rakugo made me laugh from the bottom of my heart.

I was so determined to become his apprentice that I even ended up following him to London, without discussing it with anyone. With Japanese traditional rakugo, its already interesting enough translated directly into English, but some jokes

### - Ventriloquism seems very difficult to do...

England is the home of ventriloquism. I was quite good at hiding my mouth movement when I learnt ventriloquism in Japan but it was very difficult to pronounce "M", "B" and "P" sounds without moving my lips. I got some English books on ventriloquism to learn and before heading to England I practiced on my husband morning till night even for daily conversations before I had to perform the real deal over there. Eventually, my husband said to me, "Please, I beg you! Just talk normally!" But thanks to the practice, I was able to perfect my ventriloquism skill in a very short period of time.

### - What is special about your performance in June?

I tried incorporating a musical like style into my songs and lyrics. I want to create a special, Melbourne only version, so I added my own songs to make the show more enjoyable. The songs are original so it would be fantastic if I were able to garner some laughter.

As it is one of Shofukutei Kakusho's policies, our goal is to deliver happiness and warmth to the whole family, so children are most welcome!

I regularly go back to Japan to perform but I believe it's my duty to introduce Japan through this form of comedy. I want to make Australians laugh out loud with my English rakugo shows.

Please refer to the Event Calendar on the left for details of Showko's "Japanese Puppet Rakugo" (14-17/6).

Showko's Official Website: [www.show-ko.com](http://www.show-ko.com)  
Story: Kurilui Photos: sHue :)

## UNVEILING JAPAN Snow

### Happy in APPI

Appi Kogen [www.appi.co.jp/foreign\\_country/english/](http://www.appi.co.jp/foreign_country/english/)

Appi Kogen, the ski resort located in Hachimantai City, Iwate, enables you to ski on one of Japan's best snowfields from early May through to early December.

Located on the Pacific Coast coupled with the vast skiing area, makes Appi Kogen Ski Resort, one of the top dogs in the industry.

Appi's snow is of exceptional quality. Skiing and snowboarding in a world of full of light, dry powder snow is so enjoyable as if all you can feel is the speed and everything else is

frozen in time. Whether you are travelling alone or with your family and friends, skiers of all levels will be astonished by the scenery and the facilities of this shimmering oasis of snow.

Take a break from skiing; there are some great ideas recommended by the friendly staff to enjoy yourself with all your senses. An après-ski at the local bar or quality Japanese sake at a Japanese restaurant, relaxing your muscles in a hot spring or indoor swimming with your family, just to name a few. What a treat it'd be! Looking out the window to see snowflakes dancing around whilst you are swimming!

The foot massage I've had here is probably the best I've ever had! Swiss is renowned for its snow scenery; Canada is great too. Hokkaido



and Hakuba in Nagano are superb. But this year, just go to Appi! See it for yourself, you definitely won't regret it! Happy in Appi!

Story and Photos : Jun Hasegawa  
Enquires: [info@tryber.com.au](mailto:info@tryber.com.au)  
Brochures and travel planning available



Metta Scents can sever one's connection with the busy world by offering tranquility through incense. Focusing on Japanese incense, Metta Scents stocks more than one hundred varieties of quality incense made from pure natural

ingredients. Unable to locate a Japanese incense store in Melbourne, Kim, the store owner, opened this cute, small shop in April 2011 with her son, Dan.

The keywords in choosing incense are "wellbeing, peace and goodwill". Thus, one should try inhaling the relaxing natural smell which eases the mind and body. Low-smoke incense is also available to cater for people with sensitive noses.

Expressing her passion for incense, Kim explains to us that "Japanese incense is very different from those that come from India and other countries as they are very subtle and delicate." Whilst showing us the aromatic products produced in Australia, Kim points to the scented sachets and tells us that "these ones could be very good souvenirs."

For this particular scented sachet, sandalwood from Western Australia is used. These are great



to put in drawers and closets. In addition, the pattern on the cover are actually designed and illustrated by the indigenous artists. How special!

For people who are not particularly into incense, the intoxicating aroma can still blow your mind. "As each incense is the essence of the heart and soul of the maker, each one tells a different story. I really enjoy telling these stories to my customers." Metta Scents is truly a store of full of love and commitment.

Story and Photos : Sherry Chen

### Metta Scents

● 111 Greville St, Prahran ● 03 9939 4893  
● Tue-Fri 11am-6pm, Sat 11am-4pm, Sun 12pm-4pm  
● [mettascents.com](http://mettascents.com) (with online store)

## Yamato Nadeshiko



Photos : sHue :)

Updating every Thursday! [www.japaninmelbourne.com.au/beauty/nadeshiko](http://www.japaninmelbourne.com.au/beauty/nadeshiko)

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To be eligible for this prize, you must include: your full name, mobile number and your opinion of JIM. Please remember to mark "Green Tea Giveaway" in the subject line.  
Entry closes on Sat 30 June 2012.  
Winners will be notified through email on Mon 2 July and will have to collect their prize by visiting JIM office.





providing top quality services and food to customers has remained the upmost priority from the very beginning. This is why they are becoming more popular with the locals.

Aiming to do his best all the time, Mr. Aoki tells us that "Efforts are never pointless even if the best is not achieved. However, if you are just satisfied by that and never aim higher, it is impossible to reach the top".

Lunch Bento box – Traditional (chicken katsu / sashimi / goza / green / rice / miso) \$17.00



Sashimi entree (dinner) \$16.00



Grilled half cut eggplant with miso paste and spring onion \$13.00



From the monochrome décor, the reflections from wine glasses and radiant white table



owner chef Hiryasu Aoki

cloths, it may seem like a fancy French or Italian restaurant at a first glance but, this is actually a Japanese restaurant! Just twenty minutes away by tram from the CBD, {EIS} Japanese Restaurant, is located in the beautiful suburbs of Albert Park.

Inspired by the European style of using phonetic alphabets as names, the owner, Mr. Aoki, decided to name his restaurant {EIS} which is pronounced as "Ace", meaning "excellent". Opened in 2001 with refurbishment in 2008, {EIS} has recently celebrated their 11th year anniversary. Although there has been a change in interior design, the policy of



This cosy restaurant provides a simple fare of surprisingly high quality food, making regulars more than satisfied. There is just something so intriguing about {EIS} that makes them return for more. Book a table at {EIS} today and experience the wonders that has mesmerised the crowd.

Story : Tiffany Ho Photos : Yoshimi Okita

**{EIS} Japanese Restaurant**  
 ● 188 Bridport Street, Albert Park ● 03 9645 7448  
 ● LUNCH Mon-Fri 12pm-2:30pm, DINNER Mon-Sat 6pm-10:30pm ● www.eisjapaneserestaurant.com

**Hangout Place**

**The Cupcake Family**



**Love at first bite**

Until pastissier extraordinaire, Adriano Zumbo showcased his amazing macaron tower on Masterchef, they were unknown in Melbourne. Nowadays, macaron and cupcake boutiques are sprouting success across the city.

Pauline, one of the owners of The Cupcake Family, first opened this cosy café in 2009 because there were few cupcake stores

and macarons were nowhere to be seen. She thought it was a good idea to showcase a variety of pastries in a shop with a contemporary classical interior.

"Tasting as beautiful as they look, Pauline tells us the secret to their cupcakes is all about quality ingredients in generous portions.

Want to try something Japanese? Go for the black sesame and green tea macarons. Adjusting flavours according to seasonal changes, it is amazing to see "mon blanc" featured; a flavour popular in Japan during autumn.

To avoid disappointment, get in there early to secure your favourites.

Story : Tiffany Ho Photos : sHue :)

**The Cupcake Family**  
 ● Shop 22 Red Cape Lane, QV Centre, Melbourne  
 ● 03 9663 0055 ● www.thecupcakefamily.com.au  
 ● Mon - Fri 9:30am - 6:30pm Sat 11am - 6pm Sun Closed



For latest updates, please visit [www.japaninmelbourne.com.au](http://www.japaninmelbourne.com.au)

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**A healing space hidden within the city, there, when you open the door, the serenity of Japan awaits you. SAKURA LOUNGE**

spend with your loved ones is considered most valuable, the newly refurbished massage room, "Kyoto Room" allows up to three people to enjoy it together. Catering for both female and male patrons, popularity has been steadily increasing through word-of-mouth. There have even been clients coming in from interstate and overseas too.

Once you put on your Japanese slippers, you will encounter a stone-paved corridor with Japanese and Western-styled rooms. The tranquility will make you forget that you are in the busy CBD.

Going up the stairs scattered with sakura petals, you will be surrounded by bamboo handrails. A stroll past the balcony leads you to the "Kyoto Room". It is the size of eight Tatami and has three sets of Futon which allows three people to

be massaged at the same time.

The room, filled with warm lighting and Tatami scent, is also soundproof. Bursting with Japanese flair, you will have the illusion of entering a secluded Japanese inn.

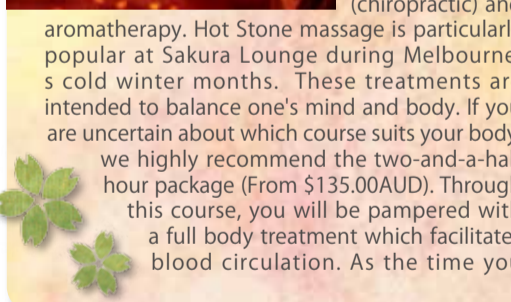
For Shiatsu, one is asked to lie on soft futon on their chest with a face rest for comfort. According to one of their therapists, Kumiko Yoshida, one's body stiffness and lifestyle can be revealed by a simple touch.

The owner, Jason, tells us, "When people think of Shiatsu, they think of Sakura Lounge's skills and professionalism". As a customer-first service, Sakura Lounge is fully equipped with various amenities and all products used can be purchased via their online store. As part of convenience, online bookings are also available. Let us help you treasure your time at Sakura Lounge, with your close friends and family.

Story : Kurilui Photos : sHue :)



At Sakura Lounge, there is a choice of eight different massage and beauty courses including shiatsu, seitaï (chiropractic) and aromatherapy. Hot Stone massage is particularly popular at Sakura Lounge during Melbourne's cold winter months. These treatments are intended to balance one's mind and body. If you are uncertain about which course suits your body, we highly recommend the two-and-a-half hour package (From \$135.00AUD). Through this course, you will be pampered with a full body treatment which facilitates blood circulation. As the time you



**Sakura Lounge**  
*inner peace, outer glow.*

**SAKURA LOUNGE**  
 8-10 Warburton Lane, Melbourne  
 03 9642 3663  
 www.sakuralounge.com.au  
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 (Tue, Wedn and Thu till 8:30pm),  
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