



PICTURES MAKE GREAT PETS

// ISSUE SIX // JAPAN //

This zine was originally supposed to be published in 2016, after me and my then-girlfriend (now wife) came back from our trip to China and Japan, but I lost faith in it and just never got round to it. I guess the format is a bit different from what I usually do, so I wasn't sure if anyone would be interested in it. And I'm still not, but now I kind of feel I want to get it out of my system.

The text consists of one single sentence, spanning eighteen or so pages, which of course is a hideous crime to good writing and grammar. The intention was to capture the feeling of going to China and Japan for the first time, with twenty years of expectations in your head. It was a complete sensory overload and I don't think I've properly processed the trip yet. We went to seven different places in just under three weeks and did an insane amount of exploring. I normally don't keep a diary when travelling, but in Japan it was the only way I could even begin to digest what I had experienced.

The text is just like it was five years ago, with only minor typos having been changed, so there is a possibility that restaurants and bars mentioned no longer exists.

Nik Vestberg, August 2020



Getting our passports stamped and feeling weird about having 36 hours to spend in Beijing just because it's China and massive and thinking "where do you start and what do you do?" and the surreal feeling of walking along Tiananmen Square and trying to remember what the place looked like in that famous piece of news footage and being astounded at how massive everything was and making food decisions based on cartoon characters and taking a chance on cake with unknown fillings and eating the spiciest and cheapest and tastiest noodles and getting vibrating lips from the heat and drinking Chinese craft beer and wearing shorts for the first time of the year and trying to see the Great Wall but missing the last official bus and being hassled by taxi drivers wanting to drive us there but managing to say no and seeing a 26m Buddha carved from a single tree instead and taking photos even though you weren't allowed to take photos just because everyone else was doing it and seeing a building site with a crane labelled 'Zoom Lion' and buying chocolate ice cream with charcoal candy floss and drinking more random Chinese craft beer with names like Zombie Pirate Ale and finding loads of little bars down the side streets (the hutongs) and playing cards and walking a lot and trying to find Punk Rock Noodles because I had read about it somewhere but couldn't google it because google was blocked and eventually finding it and eating amazing food again (melon leaves!!!) and eating weird but awesome hotel breakfast and having a rooftop pool but being a wimp and just watching Cat swim instead and being jet-lagged and amazed at everything and walking until our legs and feet hurt in a good way and feeling lost and a long way from home but excited and not understanding traffic rules cause it just seemed to be recommendations and so much traffic and so many people and feeling a bit stressed about it all but knowing you'll be alright because London is a mess as well and having too much fun and running out of money and walking



through dark Beijing streets trying to find an ATM and finally getting a cab to the airport hotel and the taxi dropping us at the wrong hotel and having to wait for another and everything taking ages and eventually getting to the right place and just being knackered and overwhelmed but still just wishing we had more time to spend in this amazing place but also being insanely excited about going to Japan and >>TOKYO>> and landing at Haneda Airport and thinking "oh-my-fucking-god I'm in Tokyo" and not really being able to process it and feeling lost almost immediately and eventually finding the JR (Japan Rail) service desk and picking up our rail passes and finding the wifi shop and picking up our 'Ninja pocket wifi' and buying a Pasma card and getting on the Tokyo subway for the first time and being amazed and overwhelmed by the smallest things like stickers and signs like the one of the crying train and people wearing face masks and finding Sasazuka station and getting to the apartment we had rented and everything being pink and cute and small and finding a restaurant just around the corner and starting the Tokyo visit with amazing avocado salad and Spaghetti Bolognese and beer and coffee and going into Shinjuku and being blown away by all the neon and all the people and finding the Golden Gai area and walking up and down the little alleyways and seeing business men knocking on secret doors and not really knowing what to do or where to go and looking for places with no cover charge and being bummed about the punk bar having a cover charge and finding a rock bar with free entry that just played Alice Cooper live videos and drinking beer and bourbon and sitting by the bar playing plastic toy games and eating corn snacks and finding the Suspiria-themed bar Cambiare and drinking Suntory Whisky and going for noodles at Nagi and having to place the order in a vending machine and seeing that the wall had been signed by Wayne Gretzky and sending a message to David back home to tell him about it and finding



the bowl of ramen tasty but a bit too fishy and feeling a bit sick from the tiny whole white fish being used as seasoning and just floating in the bowl and moving on to a horror VHS bar called Deathmatch In Hell and drinking beer and watching Braindead and loving everything about it and taking a taxi to go for karaoke with some people Cat knew and singing my heart out to Bryan Adams and DEVO and drinking too much beer and waiting for what seemed like forever to get a cab and still being jet-lagged or maybe just drunk and tired and grumpy and just wanting to sleep and eventually giving up on the taxi and going to McDonald's instead and having my first beef burger in eight years and trying to get a cab again and finally getting one and going home and sleeping for too long and feeling like a giant in the tiny shower and buying some sort of pizza-dough-with-ham stick at the next door bakery and going to Akihabara and everything being bright and big and busy and crazy and going to a five floor sex shop that sold everything from giant traffic cone sized dildos to Manga sex dolls and alien sex dolls and just plain weird sex dolls and pornographic pillow cases and school girl panties and everything in between and walking to Ueno Park and looking at all the prettiness and the swan-shaped pedal boats and all the birds and being a bit bummed about having missed the cherry blossoms because you could really picture how amazing it would've been but then not really caring and seeing a post box shaped as a panda and more signs and going for Korean lunch and having amazing kimchi pancakes and zucchini tempura and almost thinking that the tiny vacuum packed wet hand towels were sweets or mints and walking around more residential areas and getting more good coffee and going to Shibuya and seeing the statue of Hachiku the dog and meeting up with the guys from the previous night's karaoke and using the famous Shibuya crossing and going to a modern but traditional Japanese restaurant and having to take



off our shoes and being glad I was wearing good socks and eating gyoza and beef and fried egg cabbage and edamame beans and not being able to figure out how to work the lock on the toilet door and having a Japanese man walk in on me and him getting embarrassed and apologising twenty times and giving me loads of hugs and going to Beat Bar and chatting to people and wanting to go into the bar next door where some Japanese amateur wrestlers were practising and meeting a band called The Monorals who knew our friend Trev and had released a record on Oddbox and realising how difficult it is to say Trevor in Japanese (Te-le-ve-lob) and having a great time and going to Mos Burger and eating awesome burgers with mountains of cabbage or maybe they weren't awesome at all and we were just drunk and walking home and someone shouting "FUUUUCK YOOOOOU" in a Japanese accent at us from a moving car and waking up to heavy rain and going to Harajuku and trying to get to a particular pancake place and finding it was closed and being soaked and grumpy and Cat's umbrella getting blown to pieces and giving up on pancakes and going to a curry place instead and walking down Takeshita Street and seeing too many cute things and so much colour and going to Kiddy Land and looking at toys and kind of wishing you'd been there as a kid but not really caring cause now that you were an adult you could buy whatever you wanted anyway and not buying anything because we would be coming back to Tokyo in a couple of weeks and deciding what to eat next and thinking about getting some crazy-coloured crepes but resisting the urge and buying some sort of doughnut custard stick instead and queueing for ages to buy a lobster and prawn roll and taking so many photos and walking around the park to the Meiji Shrine and stumbling upon a wedding and seeing barrels and barrels of sake having been given as offering to the temple and the gods and being amazed at everything and walking into Shinjuku and trying to find a bar without a cover



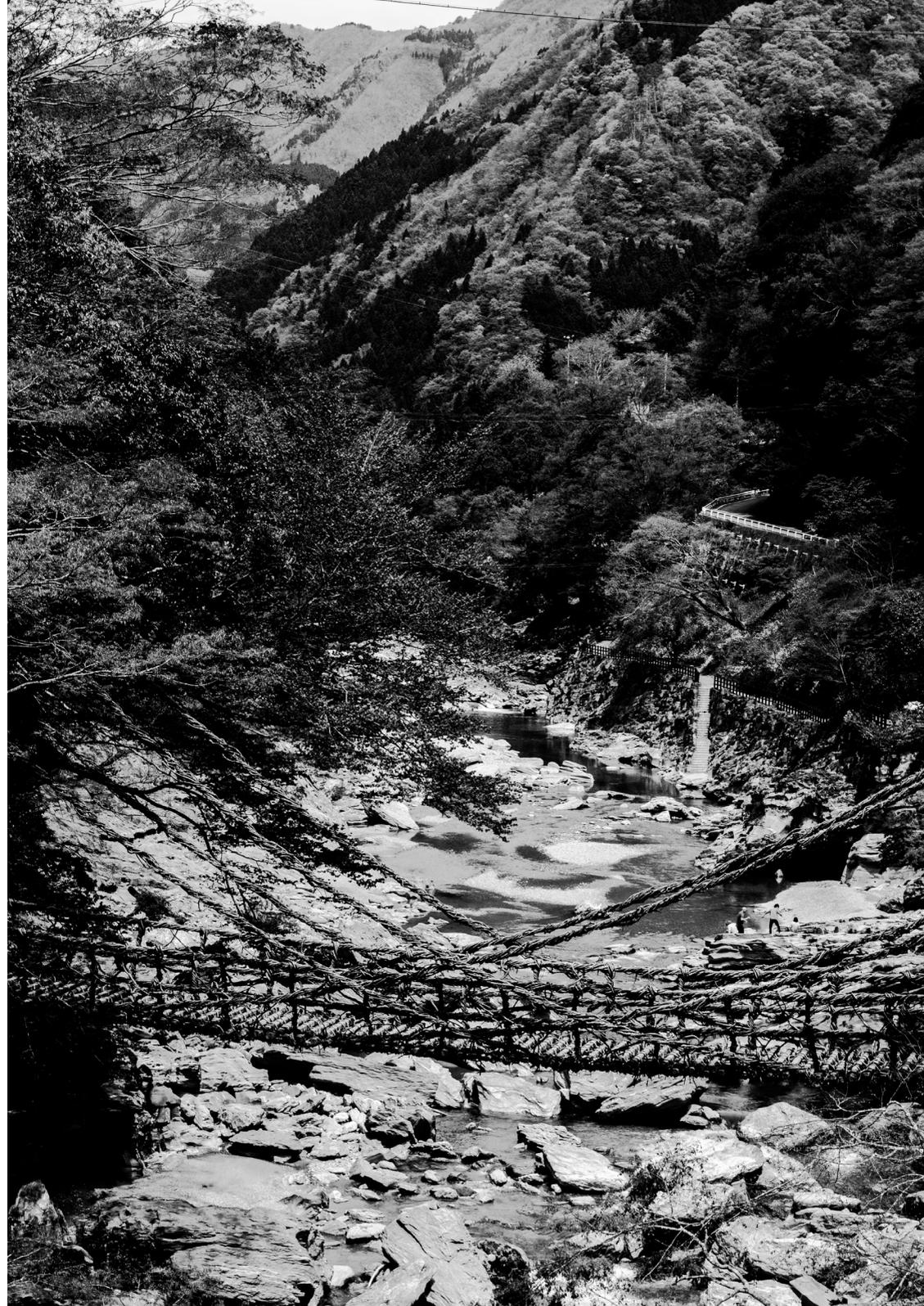
charge and trying to get to an 8-bit cafe and finding it was closed and stumbling upon a photography exhibition and not being particularly impressed and thinking it reminded me a bit of Daido Moriyama's work but nowhere near as good and trying to decide on what to eat and not really being able to and deciding on burgers again and going to a nice place and having beef chilli cheese burgers and chips and fancy beer and then walking home and finding all sorts of amazing bars near our flat and wanting to come back and try them all and going into a small local restaurant and having a beer and a Suntory highball and eating amazing pickles and seeing a drunk Japanese person sleeping at his table surrounded by friends and nobody caring and going home and already missing small things like the cute stickers on the light switches and packing and getting ready to leave Tokyo and being more than ready to come back again but being excited about going to >>KYOTO>> and using our Japan Rail passes for the first time and buying food at the station and buying hot coffee in a can from a vending machine and getting on a bullet train and seeing Mt Fuji from the window but missing the opportunity to take a photo and getting to Kyoto and navigating the subway station like legends and getting to our hotel and not really knowing what to expect from a 'love hotel' and being amazed and amused at room facilities like a slot machine and a giant vibrator and vending machines with sexy outfits and cellophane-wrapped feathers and condoms and pixelated porn on every second TV channel and free virility drinks and a whirlpool bathtub with mood lighting and wearing cool Japanese robes and walking into Kyoto city centre and looking for a good place to have lunch but giving up and eating the saddest burgers instead and feeling sick and disappointed and walking around seeing soooo many temples and shrines and eventually going to a Japanese Mexican bar where they were showing Jim Jarmusch's Down By Law and drinking beer and frozen



margaritas and playing cards and eating roasted corn and moving on to Cafe La Siesta and playing Excitebike on a NES in a giant plastic Game Boy case and Dr Mario on a normal Game Boy and drinking big bottles of Heartland beer and listening to chiptune music and going to a famous place for dinner and having amazing okinamiyaki (cabbage pancakes with egg and noodles and toppings and heaps of mayonnaise) and walking homewards and finding a craft beer place and drinking a citrus IPA and staggering back to the hotel and going to bed late and regretting having asked for breakfast at 9am and getting woken up by it being served to our room and embarrassing the maid by accepting the food tray in my pants and eating toast with eggs and bacon and pickled cabbage and leaving the hotel and having amazing coffee made by a happy old man and realising just how close we were to everything and seeing another life-time's worth of shrines and temples and zen gardens and grave yards and being amazed by everything and finding an amazing restaurant and eating Okinawan rice with tofu and pork and bitter melon and overdoing the habanero hot sauce as usual and walking along the Philosophers path and seeing cherry blossoms and taking sappy couple selfies and getting a bit sun burnt and seeing more shrines and going back to the hotel and trying out the whirlpool bath and going to a highly recommended restaurant and having the worst dinner experience of my life and having to eat octopus eggs and the same weird ghost fish I got in the Tokyo noodle place and thinking that that they looked like something out of a Studio Ghibli movie and having to eat soy milk skin and mashed fish and a cup with hot fishy jelly rice pudding goo and feeling sick and almost throwing up with every bite and feeling like an unhappy picky child but getting through it and resentfully paying seventy pounds and having to go back to the Mexican bar to have another frozen margarita to make everything better and going back to the hotel and drinking beer



in bed and watching Celeste and Jesse Forever and sleeping in and renting bikes and learning how to navigate Kyoto traffic and eating an amazing steamed dough bun with beef stew and cycling to the crazy Fushimi Inari Shrine and having my mind blown over and over again and seeing thousands of fox statues and walking through red gate after red gate until our legs hurt and reaching the top and climbing down and taking too many identical photos and buying a gigantic plate of soba noodles with pork and mayonnaise and cycling along the river and buying cans of beer and sitting in the sun and watching big Japanese birds fighting over food in the river and going back to the craft beer place for chips and pizza just to have something normal and western and going to the Galaxie 500 bar and listening to Blonde Redhead and drinking sake and sesame shochu and walking home and buying discount fried chicken and watching the Simpsons and eating in bed and loving Kyoto and being sad about not having had time to see the monkeys or the bamboo forest and going to bed thinking we were going to Hiroshima next but waking up and realising we were actually going to >>MIYOSHI>> and being excited and looking forward to having a break from city life and buying more tasty station food and eating on the bullet train to Okiyama and wandering around the station looking at toys and sweets and explicit manga comics and talking to a robot and getting on a normal train to Oboke and watching the rain hit the windows of the train hard as we went through the amazing cartoon dream landscape and finally getting off and trying to get a taxi but being nervous about waking up the sleeping taxi driver but finally doing it and getting a taxi to the hotel and driving in the rain up and down the winding roads and getting to the hotel and being assisted to our rooms and being served tea and having yukatas fitted and drinking beer and looking out at the amazing view from our room and having our first ten-course dinner and loving it but



being confused about the order in which to eat things and what was what and how to eat the whole fish on a stick and feeling stuffed and staggering back to the room for a breather and resting for a while to digest and taking the cable car up to the open air hot spring bath and being nervous about the possibility of other people being there but having it all to ourselves and sitting in the bath and feeling lucky and going back to the room to sleep and waking up early to a clear blue sky and still feeling full from dinner and not wanting to eat more Japanese food for breakfast but doing it anyway and enjoying it and going back up to the hot spring bath and having it to ourselves again and going for a walk along amazing winding roads and seeing rusty vending machines and other cool and pretty things and seeing massive carp-shaped wind socks and sending a photo to my sister because she wanted pictures of everything that existed as emojis and getting to the Kazurabashi vine bridge and being a bit disappointed about the steel wire holding it together but then being glad and crossing it and feeling wobbly but doing a much better job than the terrified elderly tourists behind us and walking down to the river bed and climbing the rocks and seeing a waterfall and loads of scarecrows and eating ice cream and walking back to the hotel and seeing a cool bus and watching the hotel staff drying last night's rented umbrellas and drinking more beer and reading and relaxing and going back up to the hot spring bath and having to share it with a naked Japanese man and going down for dinner and enjoying it more than the previous night and learning how to eat the fish on the stick and going back to the room to watch a movie and sleeping again and hating the pillow that seemed to be stuffed with rice and waking up for western style breakfast and being excited at the sight of bread and hot coffee and going back up the cable car to the hot spring for a final dip and saying goodbye to a very magical place with hotel





CHANEL

販売

2号店
飛越
GINZO

飛越
GINZO

未使用全て正規品全て半額

GINZO FASHION WATCH
OUTLET FAIR
2016 SPRING
ALL BRANDS OF
FASHION WATCH & JEWELRY
Japan
TAX FREE
VISA
MasterCard

B1F
↓

質
大黒屋

パンドラ
B2F

買取
TAX FREE

歯科医院

薬

三井ドラッグ

車両進入禁止
路上喫煙禁止

車両進入禁止
路上喫煙禁止

staff waving to us on the road as our taxi took off and going back to Oboke Station with the weird little scarecrow symbol and taking the 'smile railway' to >>HIROSHIMA>> and walking around Okiyama Station and being amazed again at how seriously the Japanese take their coffee-making and buying more gorgeous food at the station and remembering the sad Pret sandwiches at home in London and eating on the bullet train and the brown seats reminding me of my grandfather's sofa but without the strong smell of cigarette smoke and getting to Hiroshima and the place being a bit depressing and the rain not making it any better and going to the Atomic Bomb Dome and the Peace Memorial Museum and feeling a bit overwhelmed about it all and sad about how awful humans can be and walking through the city and not really having done any research about the place and not knowing if there would be anything nice to do and thinking about how any elderly people in the street could've actually experienced the bomb and finally needing a drink to wind down and stop thinking about it all and going to Dumb Records and having a beer and looking at records and then going to Koba and having an amazing white pizza and just as amazing Spaghetti Bolognese made right in front of us and watching metal music videos by bands including Motley Crue, Anthrax and Poison and talking to and getting recommendations from Bom the friendly owner and then walking the streets and really warming to the place and going to Rakubeer for Japanese craft ales and then to Mac to just have normal beers and the bar maid laughing at me after realising that all the men at the bar were wearing almost identical white and red-striped t-shirts and going to a Mexican Diner called Graffity for second dinner and sharing an amazing burrito and an amazing Quesadilla and then going to a swanky cocktail bar called Bourbon Square for Whiskey Sours and some sort of strawberry concoction and going back to the hotel and tiny room and setting the alarm to make sure we got up for



breakfast and getting up and being a bit weirded out about the food on offer but just going with it and having Katsu curry with rice and scrambled eggs and toast and yakisoba noodles and croissants and yoghurt and coffee and thinking it was amazing and taking the train and the ferry to Miyajima and seeing the floating shrine from the boat and getting to the island and seeing tame deer trying to steal people's food and taking loads photos of pretty shrines and walking up Mount Misen and being gobsmacked by the amazing views the higher up the mountain we climbed and seeing warning signs for poisonous snakes and being more and more worried about snakes for every sign we saw and finally getting to the top and eating our packed lunch and trying to find the cable car to take the easy option down but not finding it and walking down instead and worrying about snakes again and reading those signs over and over again and wondering if anyone ever really picked the snake up with a stick and wondering how much it would cost to call the number on the poster if one of us got bitten and wondering if I would be able to explain where I was and finally getting down and finding that the tide was low and joining the crowd by the now formerly floating shrine and seeing loads of coins in the exposed river bed and watching Japanese families trying to find clams and buying ice cream and watching the world and getting back on the ferry and taking the train back to Hiroshima and going to the Atomic Dome again to take some photos in the dark and going to Nagata-Ya for more Okinomiyaki and loving it again but feeling a bit sick again and going to a giant arcade and playing the drumming game and going up to the floor devoted to makeovers and photo booths and taking silly photos that made our skin smoother and eyes bigger and not understanding any of the instructions and having to register using a Japanese keyboard and having to give ourselves Japanese names by pressing random keys and going to a craft beer place called



Hang Out and having nice beer and listening to Blink 182 and walking the streets and really loving Hiroshima and not wanting to go to Kobe because we didn't know anything about it but then being excited about going somewhere else in the morning and waking up and having crazy breakfast again and walking to the station and getting totally creeped out by all the demonic school bus stop signs and making it to >>KOBE>> and walking out of the station and being surprised at the size of the place and navigating to our hotel and seeing loads of places worth checking out and walking around the arty bit of town and going to Modernark for lunch and having vegetarian burritos and finding my dream fizzy drink in a vending machine again and walking through the city and seeing some more temples and looking in vintage shops and going into an amazing children's book store and taking pictures of too many things and signs and having a beer in The Mid Diner and playing cards and going for great pizza at Azzurri and not wanting to eat tentacles and seeing a restaurant called Penetrate and a parking service called Poo and a music venue called Live House Chicken George and wanting to go inside the Korean embassy cause it looked kind of awesome in the night light and going to a great but empty Hawaiian bar and Cat ordering a fancy cocktail with an umbrella and a sparkler in it and finally deciding to have an early night and going back to the hotel and waking up and being bummed about not getting free hotel breakfast and going to a bakery and buying a pizza dough and bacon stick and cinnamon roll and getting ice coffee and eating in the grounds of a nearby temple and walking up another big hill to get to the Kobe herb and flower garden and the sun shining and seeing waterfalls and no warnings about snakes but loads of cobwebs but no spiders and reaching the top and having a beer and seeing a stray cat with Mickey Mouse-like markings on its nose and walking down the hill and walking all the way to the harbour and



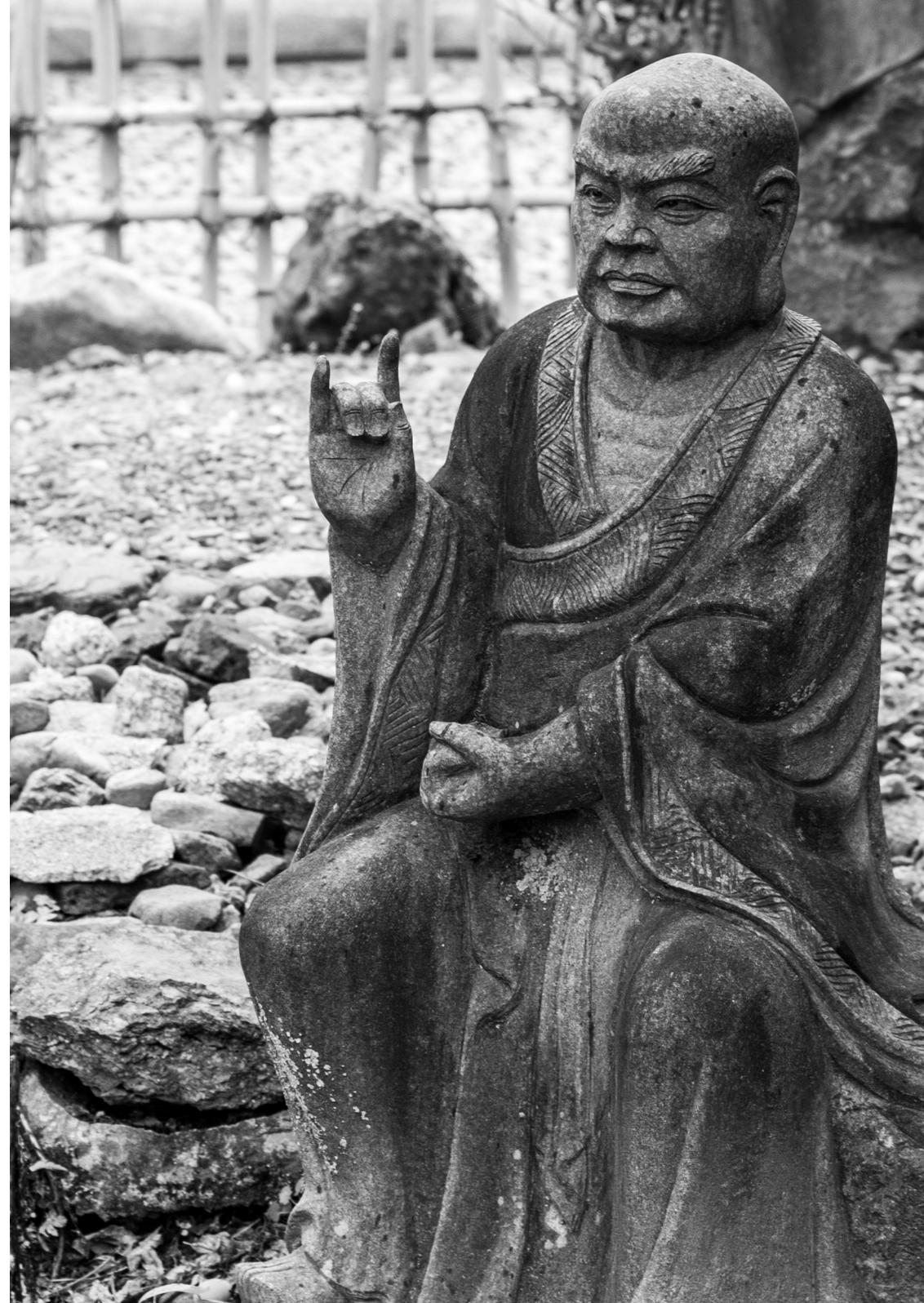
seeing modern art sculptures and feeling knackered and having a beer in a crappy restaurant and walking back to the hotel for a rest and going for amazing Kobe beef burgers at Wanto and having tasty craft beer at Hopstand and going to Baskin Robbins for crazy purple and neon green Japanese special ice cream with popping candy and going to the Cisco Diner for a final beer and wanting their hamburger lamp and going home and having to re-plan our upcoming hiking days because of the rain and deciding to go to >>OSAKA>> and walking from the station and carrying our bags to the hotel in the rain and heading for Osaka Castle and being a bit disappointed as it didn't quite justify the long walk but being glad to have seen it and at least there was a stand selling square watermelons and that pretty much made the whole Japan trip worthwhile anyway and seeing loads of people on bikes holding umbrellas and some people having special umbrella holders on their bikes and being amazed at all the weird buildings and the crazy electric cables hanging from poles everywhere and looking at vintage toys and finding a great lunch place that sold craft ale and tasty gyoza and again wondering about the little side dish of macaroni and what its purpose was and walking round record shops and finding loads of unexpected things in King Kong Records like Randy, Good Riddance and Guttermouth albums on vinyl but not giving in to teenage nostalgia and only buying a Mr T Experience LP and finding basements with loads of closed bars and deciding to come back later and going for great coffee and relaxing in the hotel and thinking it felt a bit like a Japanese Travelodge and watching Heat and drinking cans of Asahi and Sapporo and loads of snacks and having Mexican food for dinner and going to a video game bar and playing Mario Cart and Street Fighter on the SNES and going to another craft beer bar and so much neon and so many people and seeing the coolest looking supermarket ever where all the aisle



descriptions and signs were in neon lighting and trying the Cherry Bomb bar one last time and finding it was open and having a final drink and then another and talking to the American bartender and seeing a drunk Japanese girl fall over badly only to get up and order another beer and being all boozed out and tired of travelling and going back to the hotel to sleep and having hotel breakfast and wandering around trying to find Japanese vintage clothes but mainly seeing American stuff and finding an awesome Vans tracksuit top that sadly was too big and looking in more record shops and not finding anything and seeing more amazing toys in Mandarake and buying a Japanese Pac-Man t-shirt in a vintage shop and having Hawaiian for lunch and being a bit disappointed by the food but being glad to have tried Mahi Mahi fish as it reminded me of the movie Bio-Dome and going for more great coffee and a cookie and finally making it to the Punk And Destroy record store and not buying anything but being amused by how popular Swedish crust bands from the 80s and 90s appeared to be in Japan and Cat buying more than twenty pairs of dungarees to sell at her market stall back home and seeing an amazing pinball arcade and twirling escalators and heading back to the hotel to pick our stuff up and taking a cab to Shin-Osaka Station and realising how massive the city was and how we only really saw the tiniest part of it and looking forward to getting back to Kyoto and being surprised when we realised the train only took 16 minutes and that we really didn't need to plan that journey at all and being happy about being back in >>KYOTO>> and dragging our heavy bags to the guesthouse and deciding on Mexican food for dinner again and eating decent burritos and amazing nachos and great enchiladas and lots of hot sauce and drinking margaritas and beer and taking selfies in the crazy blue bathroom and going to a supermarket and buying amazing burger shaped chocolate biscuits and finding another vending machine that sold my favourite



soft drink and buying more ice cream and seeing ghost fish but not having to eat them and missing a metal gig and wanting to know what a smart doctor was and having an early night and getting up to rent bikes and cycling to Arashiyama and seeing people hit golf balls into the river and being blown away by the landscape and almost being unable to move because of the wind and seeing the bamboo forest and having amazing katsu pork noodles for lunch in a cute local restaurant and being constantly surprised at how fast Japanese people eat and seeing loads of people dressed in kimonos and Cat buying an ice cream sampler cone with cherry blossom, green tea and some other tea flavour and seeing signs for monkeys but not seeing any monkeys and deciding against going up the monkey mountains and cycling back with the wind in our back and seeing explosive bike signs and people playing baseball and going to the arty part of town and looking at more records and seeing records by friends and sending them phone photos and walking around and finding a cosy craft beer pub and having tasty Thai food for dinner but being freaked out by the miniature ghost prawns in the green papaya salad and drinking more beer and going back to the craft beer place for more beer and then sleep and being ready to make the most of >>TOKYO>> and taking the bullet train for a final time and watching the amazing landscape and missing Mt Fuji again and getting to Tokyo where they had super skinny escalators and being excited about being back in the place where even the signs were over-the-top and intense and sometimes scary and sometimes fun and staying glued to our google maps and finding our flat and seeing warning signs about climbing into the storage lockers and wandering if I could fit inside the locker and kind of wanting to try and dumping all our stuff and walking around the quieter parts of Shibuya and going to Yoyogi Park and seeing signs that seemed to say that everything was prohibited and being glad that



bongos was on the list of forbidden items and buying beers and laying on the grass and watching Japanese park life and being amazed at how well-behaved everybody was and seeing almost no litter and watching people practising traditional dance and drumming and people playing baseball and badminton and people skateboarding and people blowing soap bubbles and taking elaborate selfies and going to a Norwegian hipster coffee shop and having expensive, weird and not particularly nice iced coffees and seeing a group of people driving go-carts round Shibuya traffic dressed as Mario Kart characters and going to 418Kamiyama for great burgers and beer and seeing the burger lamp again and wanting it badly and walking to Nonbei Yokocho and looking into the little alleyways and trying to decide on a bar and eventually going into one called Curva and having a beer and a wine and everything being awesome and much more relaxed than Golden Gai and walking the crazy streets of Shibuya and going up stairwells and peeking inside rock bars and hipster bars and DJ bars and going to Ø1 for more Japanese craft beer and walking homewards and stopping by a punk restaurant and having sake and beer and going to Family Mart to get breakfast stuff and buying weird Japanese granola and the best ice cream ever and all the snacks and getting up early to go to the Studio Ghibli Museum and taking the train to Mikata and wondering what a romancecar was and walking right into a peace rally and walking the pretty streets and looking at buildings and sparkling junctions and signs and thinking that everything is cute and walking around the Ghibli building and not being allowed to take photos and looking at drawings and magic lanterns and amazing dioramas and snippets of animation and being stupid adults and not being allowed to play on the cat bus and seeing an unreleased short film about sumo wrestling mice in the museum cinema and going to Shinjuku Gardens and seeing an old man eating my dream ice cream from the night



before and laying on the grass and seeing gigantic ants and walking into Harajuku and going for coffee and cherry pie with ice cream and seeing two drunk Japanese guys play pranks on each other and walking back to Shibuya and going to the Ø1 place again and having the first beer of the day and enjoying it but kind of looking forward to some booze-free days and wondering what all the kids were doing outside Star Lounge and going for trashy but high-tech sushi where you ordered on an iPad in front of you and your food was delivered by mini bullet train to your seat and eating raw salmon and grilled salmon and seared tuna and tempura vegetables and spicy miso noodle soup and Japanese omelettes and prawn and avocado something and pork something and watching the plates tower up in front of us and being tempted by the cheese burger "sushi" but being full and getting dessert instead and wandering around Shibuya at night and buying Nintendo playing cards and going for a last beer and thinking that someone should make a movie starring Freddy Krueger, Donald Duck and Dennis The Menace and waking up in the morning being sad about it being our last proper full day and spending a day apart for the first time in almost three weeks in order to do some shopping and walking to the Tokyo City Opera Art Gallery for the Ryan McGinley exhibition and loving it and being blown away by the colours and spending ages inside and wishing Cat was there to see it and buying the exhibition catalogue and some Daido Moriyama books in the book store and drinking too much ice coffee and walking to Shinjuku and seeing a shop with a giant 3D printer and seeing the giant Godzilla and an arm-wrestling restaurant and looking at records and finding loads but only buying a couple and seeing the robot restaurant and not being that bothered about going anymore after having experienced so much craziness anyway and signs and ads for extreme nose hair and sweat jelly and more signs and signs and signs and walking to Harajuku and Kiddy Land and



buying a Peanuts vase and a screaming egg for my sister and going to Mandarake in Shibuya and being overwhelmed by awesomeness and wanting everything but not buying anything and meeting up with Cat and going for a beer and donuts and taking the train to Shinjuku and looking at more records and craft beer and nachos and smoked tuna and pulled pork pizza and seeing a J-Pop band performing on the street with people screaming along to the chorus which was either in Japanese or about the "Endless Summer" and making a final stop at Village Vanguard but not finding much and only buying a creepy sticker to put on my guitar and going back to the punk restaurant for a final sake and having to use google translate to make the simplest of orders and listening to British Oi music and seeing punk kids play-wrestle to impress the girls and buying some alcopops and Cat buying a horrible red bean ice cream by mistake and putting it in the sink and it refusing to melt because it was evil and watching the Simpsons before going to bed and packing our bags and feeling bummed about it being the last day in Japan and trying to dump our bags at Shinagawa Station but finding that all the coin lockers were taken so going to the airport hotel and leaving them in our room and desperately trying to find the hamburger shaped chocolate biscuits but only finding mushroom/pine cone/tree stump-shaped ones and seeing a Super Mario Bros infomercial and going back to café Chung Hak Dong for Korean lunch and having amazing bibimbap and knowing that we were not going to miss people smoking in restaurants and walking through Ueno Park a last time and the old men showing Cat how to feed the birds from her hand and walking through Akhihabara and taking in all the craziness for the last time and seeing cosplay girls handing out flyers for maid cafes and sleazy men handing out flyers for sex clubs and going to Mandarake again and wanting to buy all the vinyl monster toys but feeling like I shouldn't cause what's the point and do I really need a £40 plastic



robot and restraining myself and going into a retro gaming centre and seeing piles of Game Boys and Super Nintendos and fun things and wanting to buy everything but just buying weird corn snacks that tasted like Monster Munch and going to another six floor sex shop and looking at alien pocket pussies and random weirdness and being confused by the costume department selling normal cardigans and going to a craft beer place and taking night time photos of neon lights and walking to Kanda and having expensive beer in an amazing Scottish pub that was nothing like a Scottish pub and going for the best noodles of the holiday and taking more photos and seeing vending machines filled with secret packages and plastic spiders and marbles and thinking it was probably an art project but not being completely sure and going to Yona Yona for a final beer and it starting to hit home that we were actually going back tomorrow and taking the subway for a last time and being tipsy and buying lots of chocolate in Lawson and being a bit sad about never having found the amazing burger biscuits again and eating ice cream in bed and trying to watch the Simpsons but the internet being too crappy and wanting to wear hotel robes forever and waking up and flying home and desperately wanting to return in the not too distant future.

Nik Vestberg, 13 April - 4 May 2016

