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Bed Bugs in skyscrapers

Bugs strike fear in winter NY

Out of the blue I decided to go to New York this December. I found a cheap travel package so I took one of our newcomers and set off to mid winter New York.

Our hotel stood in Brooklyn right off the freeway. Next door was a meat processing center. Our carpet was damp for unknown reasons, the windows were iron-barred, and the dresser was broken and unusable. Guess you get what you pay for.

I didn't know anything about this hotel since I made reservations right before the trip, and I started researching it only after I made the payment.

I checked online where I saw review saying 'this hotel has bedbugs. I still can see where I got bit.' I didn't know what bedbugs were, but the more I researched the more scared I became of them. They're called "Tokojirami" or the "Nanking-mushi" in Japan. They climb up beds while you sleep and suck your blood, leaving really itchy scars behind. Apparently they are a pain



to exterminate.

I trembled in fear of this bug, so I prepared Naphthalene which is supposed to repel them, and large garbage bags to put under the bed sheets.

I even asked the receptionist at the hotel if it was true they had bedbugs, and if I could change rooms if they did. Kind of rude now that I think about it.

In conclusion, we had no bedbugs in our room. We enjoyed the trip as a whole as well.

I hope our newcomer has become interested in cultures outside of Japan through this trip, and will be motivated to work in an international environment, constantly challenging his limits to compete with talents from around the world.



They must be everywhere...



Hello, today I'd like to review an animated film. "Tokyo God Fathers" directed by Satoshi Kon. I first saw this movie 3 years ago, but until then it wasn't something I'd get out of my way to watch.

At first I thought it was those Japanese animations with a confusing plot, so I just watched it to study it's carefully drawn background art. But the realistic and loveable homeless characters matched perfectly with it's bizarre slapstick story, I found myself joyfully absorbed in the film all the way to the end.

After watching this I went ahead and watched other animations directed by Satoshi Kon, such as "Millennium Actress" and "Paprika." Both were very artistic films with strange and marvelous stories to tell,.

It thrilled me that there was a director out there that could create such enjoyable movies, so it shocked me to find out he had already passed away.

It's truly a shame thinking of all the great films that he could have produced. May he rest in peace.



such intense characters



How's it going, this is Taro. Autumn has gone with the wind, and now we've entered the holiday season here.

Our cities are getting more and more busy along with the holiday hype. You can tell the time of the year with all the Christmas decorations going up everywhere.

Shops and houses are decorated with gorgeous illuminations and holiday related knickknacks. Just driving around the block can become a little light show on its own.

I remember decorating our house with my father as a child, stapling lights to the edge of the roof and the walls. We didn't go crazy over it, but some people over here really go wild with these

decorations.

For beginners we've got people decorating the front yard with big Santa's and snowmen, sometimes they trim their bushes in shapes like reindeers and cover them with light, and many other sort of setups that you can tell a fair amount of time went into.

One of the craziest Christmas house I can remember was where not only was the outside covered in Christmas related stuff, but they actually had opened their doors to all visitors, so they could show off their decoration in side the house too. What was setup inside was 3 or 4 rooms literally packed with miniature sets of snowy towns, trains, nativity scene, and other holiday relat-



[about Yoshitoshi Tsukioka]

Tsukioka was an active Ukiyoe artist during the end of the Edo period to the early Meiji period, mainly drawing Bijin-ga (beautiful women), historical pictures and Yakusha-e (actor portraits).

[Yoshitoshi Tsukioka's appeal]

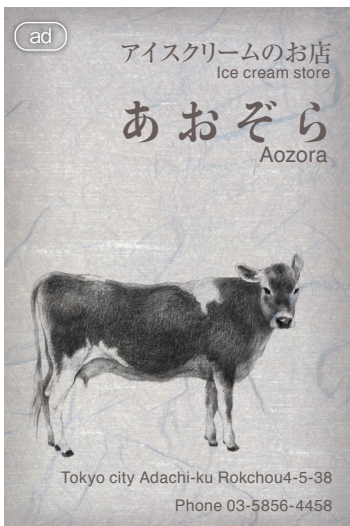
Tsukioka draws in many areas of Ukiyoe, but I must say his most respectable work is his Muzan-e (tragic pictures), in which he draws the most cruel and violent scenes from Kabuki.

He was called "the Mad artist" and "Blood covered Yoshitoshi" because of these works. This must have been quite a shock in the Ukiyoe field as there was no one else who drew shocking images as he did. While some people just saw him as a twisted artists who enjoyed such disturbing images, critics rated his works highly and in time he and his works were widely accepted to the general public as well.



writing & art by Haruka Abe

I believe Tsukioka wanted to leave an impact in the world of Ukiyoe, which was entering a downfall at his time, motivating him to draw his Muzan-e. He was a great challenger of the Ukiyoe industry, and a professional artist who had the future of Ukiyoe in mind. I consider him a responsible artist to learn from and look up to.



writing and art by Masayo Kobayashi

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▲ "Cake" art by Ken Fujino

"I know it's just a lump of sugar, but I always disliked eating this Santa on the cake."

▼ "Untitled" art by Akitoshi Sugimoto



"I used the painting software SAI for this piece. I attempted to create a traditional oil painting feel to it, but it didn't go as well as I hoped. I think I'll continue using SAI for my next piece."

ed themes and decorations.

I can't imagine how much passion went into that. Nor can I think of opening my house to strangers for it. I vaguely remember cops on the guard, now that I think about it.

Anyways Happy New Years to all!

