

VOICES From THE NEW YORKERS



Rats Going Viral: A Decade in Review

by Ashley Matarama

2020 is the Year of the Rat in the animal zodiac. As the new year begins, I thought it would be interesting to look back at two times in the last decade where rats went viral in the States as well as in Japan.

The first incident takes us back to 2015, when a video was taken of a rat in the N.Y. subway dragging a slice of pizza down the stairs. This viral sensation became known as "Pizza Rat" and got millions of views worldwide. The iconic New York-style pizza slice got its fifteen minutes of fame along with the city's hungry little rodent resident.

The second incident happened towards the end of the decade in Tokyo. In 2019, convenience store chain FamilyMart got into trouble when one of its stores in the Tokyo district of Shibuya was filmed with rats moving about the aisles and eating various food items. The rat infested chain promptly got shut down.

Whether you find rats endearing or are creeped out by them, you can't argue with the fact that they are quite cunning. Thanks to that cunningness, the rat was the first to arrive at the Emperor's banquet according to the zodiac myth. They get themselves around and often garner fame, to our surprise or to our dismay. Perhaps rats will go viral again, but hopefully not in a bubonic plague kind of way!

THE JAPAN VOICE

COOL JAPAN from New Yorkers' Viewpoints



Business Suits Are Like Men's Battle Uniform Samurai Suit/Jacket Designed by Kazutoshi Murai

He was born in Asakusabashi, Tokyo in 1966. He is a 3rd generation tailor and has been watching his grandfather and father sewing since he was a child. Graduated from fashion school at the age of 20 and designed a body by working as a fitness instructor at the sports club until the age of 24, aiming for the collaboration of fashion and fitness. He started selling a Samurai Suit/Jacket at the WAZA SHOP in Soho, New York, in February 2017. This year, he wants

to sell SAMURAI JACKET SUIT more and do the rental business as he wants to introduce a good quality of Japanese products. Murai said, "I want professional people all over the world to wear our suit and hope that will boost the motivation by wearing it. Business suit is like men's battle uniform. I hope people can feel the wish and will. Chosen people feels the value to the will."

Samurai Suit/Jacket is a custom-made suit attached with Japanese classic designs to lining, based on modern-England traditional style. Wagara, Japanese classic designs, each have-meaning and concept such as "will", "happiness", "progress/development", etc. It is said in the old history books that having luxury things were prohibited by Tokugawa Shogunate. So people wanted to express their personality through the lining in Edo period. Murai said, "I want to use this method in this era. I want to make people feel free to express the personality and will by wearing the only one custom-made suit."

(Ryoichi Miura/Translated by Chikako Iwasaki)



Enjoy Toshikoshi Soba Sakagura's Gift to JAA Volunteers

A relief party and a place to show respect to elders for the Japanese American Association of New York (Chairman Suzan Onuma) was held on December 30th at Sakagura Midtown with about 25 volunteers in the association. This event is held annually by Shuho Yagi, the owner of the Sakagura Midtown and CEO of the TIC group. The volunteers were served cold soba and hot soba with tempura. Yagi was gifted a bouquet of flowers and thank you words from Onuma and Director Michiyo Noda. Yagi just received a Medal of Honor with gold and silver rays in Tokyo. "I will continue to build a healthy society for both Japanese and American without forgetting how thankful I am to everybody," said Yagi.

(Ryoichi Miura/Translated by Kanta Hakamata)



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Advertisement for Maekake aprons. Includes text: 'Now is the time to spread Japanese traditional craftsman's skill', 'Art apron since Edo period', 'Maekake aprons have been used since 19th century for the purposes of advertisement and guarding hips. It is made of 100% cotton, thick fabric. You can enjoy traditional craftsman's handmade aprons.' Lists various apron designs like 'YUME', 'Kotobuki', 'Daruma', 'Kokorozashi', and 'MAEKAKE Tote Bag' with prices. Includes website URL: http://www.anything.ne.jp/newyork/ and shipping information.

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