

# KIRITAKA English Journal Vol.40

~Stay Independent, Stay as ONE TEAM~ December 20th, 2024



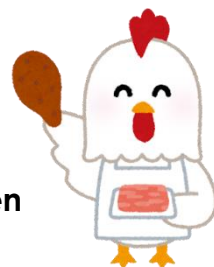
## Kiwi Corner



As the days get colder and darker, and we approach the end of this term, one of my favourite holidays is also getting closer: Christmas! For this month's Kiwi Corner, I'd like to introduce, from around the world, some

### Christmas traditions

One interesting thing I found since coming to Japan is your tradition of (obsession with) eating KFC at Christmastime. I thought this was truly peculiar as KFC is a fast food chain that's typically seen as serving cheap and unhealthy food in New Zealand. According to CNN, Japan didn't have any particular traditions for Christmas until the 1970s, and in 1974 KFC launched its



Eating KFC at Christmastime  
— how bizarre!

**"Kentucky for Christmas"** campaign. Since that advertising campaign, and for the last fifty years, KFC's fried chicken has become a staple for Japanese families and couples celebrating Christmas!

Another interesting Christmas tradition from around the world is **decorating Christmas trees**. Having done



this since I was a child in New Zealand, I'd never really thought about why we do this. After doing some research, I found that the tradition comes from **Northern Europe**, where tree worship was common. People would decorate a living tree outdoors with candles and ornaments with the idea of preventing evil spirits from entering their homes and towns.

Putting decorations on a  
tree — how peculiar!

Finally, the most interesting tradition (in my opinion) comes from **Venezuela**. On Christmas morning, people light off **firecrackers** to wake everyone up, then everyone straps

on **roller skates** and skates to church. After all the praying, families and friends then get together to dance, eat, and make music. This tradition is said to have started as a Southern Hemispheric response to sledding, and has grown so popular that **the streets are closed to traffic** in **Venezuela's capital city of Caracas** on Christmas morning to keep the skaters safe.



Roller skating on Christmas day?  
Sounds fun!

However you spend your Christmas, I hope you have a wonderful and relaxing time with friends and family. This is the last edition of the Kiritaka English Journal for 2024, and the 40<sup>th</sup> edition ever, so I'd like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who keeps reading our articles month after month.

### Happy Holidays, and see you again in 2025!

This month I'd like to introduce a (relatively) recent Christmas song from 2013. It's by the famous singer from the U.S., Kelly Clarkson. You can listen to it here: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EM2Fnp\\_qnE8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EM2Fnp_qnE8)

(Liam Campbell)



# Tea Time with Choy



Merry Choymas everybody! For this month's newsletter, I wanted to do something a little different. I'm about to spill the tea on myself and tell you the story of how I came to Japan.

There's a place in Taiwan called Shifen where you can write your wishes on lanterns and send them to the sky. This time last year, I wrote "Japan 2024" on mine and hoped for the best. When I got home, I received an email inviting me to an interview with the JET programme. I was overjoyed! I immediately started preparing.

After all the preparation I did, I was not ready for the first question when the interviewer asked, "Tell me a crazy story about your students." I couldn't think of one. I froze. The question took me by surprise and then I felt like I bombed the whole interview. I replayed that 15 minute interview in my head a million times, thinking of all the ways I could've answered them differently. For two months, I was convinced that I had failed. The dream was over.

In March, I received an email saying I had been accepted as an alternative candidate. It was neither a yes or a no. I didn't know how to feel- I was stuck in limbo, waiting for someone to drop out. What if nobody dropped out? Why would they? Despite my worries, my friends and family had faith in me, and I kept the faith too. I continued to gather all the documents the JET programme asked for and submitted them. I had done everything I could. It was out of my hands now.



The day after I submitted everything, I received a missed call from the Embassy of Japan. I was on my lunch break. I ate my food so fast and rushed outside to call them back. They told me the news: I had been upgraded to the shortlist! My wish was about to become a reality. I was going to live my dream in Japan! And to think, just a few months before going to Taiwan, I almost didn't submit my application because I thought I wasn't good enough. I was.

When good things are trying to find you, I hope you let them.

For this month's song, I chose one that is full of advice. Listen to this whenever you need it.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sTJ7AzBIJoI>

