



REFLECTIONS ON JAPAN

Stepping out of line in the East

PHOTOS BY CHRISTOPHER SERJU
All the participants took off their shoes and participated in the press briefing barefooted.

The Gleaner's Christopher Serju recently participated in a journalism fellowship in Japan. Today, we present his reflections on his time in the East Asian nation.

Christopher Serju
Gleaner Writer

THE FACT that it was an honest mistake which caused me to lose face in Japan did little to ease my discomfort. Interestingly, it was my determination to lend a helping hand which led to my embarrassment.

I was handing out chairs to our Japanese host to set up for our meeting at the community centre where we would receive an update on the status of the temporary housing programme for residents who were dislocated during the 2016 earthquakes which devastated Mashiki. In my attempt to hasten our progress, I stepped up on to the elevated floor to hand him the chair when I was stopped in my tracks by the urgency of the shout.



Programme coordinator Mayuko Fukasawa explains that shoes, though worn to the office, are never allowed into Japanese homes beyond the genkan, a specially designated holding area inside the doorway.

"Take off your shoes!"
Immediately, I knew I had erred and proceeded to shuck my shoes. The voice was that of Megumi

Araki, the director/secretary general of the Association for Promotion of International Cooperation (APIC). APIC was sponsoring the Japan

Journalism Fellowship in cooperation with the Tokyo-based Foreign Press Centre Japan.

The reprimand was delivered with a sense of urgency but no anger, and for that I was grateful.

I had heard that shoes were not allowed in Japanese homes but this was a community centre and, therefore, excluded, I thought, until our presenter explained that it was in essence "a home for all the people".

Properly chastened, I took my place among the other participants when the peace was broken for the second time in a few minutes. Ironically, André Huie, a Jamaica-born senior journalist, CEO and co-founder of SKN Newswire

out of St Kitts, who was out of the room when I was chastised, also committed the cardinal sin.

As the tour of the Tempo Temporary Housing compound progressed, we were shown one of the model houses and, again, had to take off our shoes, despite the fact that no one was resident.

THE EXPLANATION

During a break, one of our coordinators, Mayuko Fukasawa, explained: "In office buildings, yes, we wear shoes. Like if I go to the office, yes. For my house, we take off our shoes at the entrance and inside house we do not wear shoes, never."

"We call it Genkan. It's sorta like

a small space between the entrance and the floor."


The primary purpose of the Genkan is for the removal of shoes before entering the main house or building.

"If you are not comfortable barefooted inside the house, then you wear slippers or socks," Mayuko continued.

"That is why one of the first things I tell people when they come to Japan is to make sure their socks don't have holes in them," Programme Coordinator Floyd Takeuchi said with a smile.


"Seriously."

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LUNCH HOUR Concert

P R E S E N T S



Friday, 29 November 2019 @ 12:30 p.m.
Bank of Jamaica Auditorium

ADMISSION FREE
Limited seating available



Ministry of Finance & the Public Service

SALE OF PROPERTY

"Lot 501, Westgate Hills, Montego Bay, St. James"

The Ministry of Finance & the Public Service invites sealed offers for the purchase of property known as "Lot 501, Westgate Hills, Montego Bay, St. James", for residential purposes.

Applicants must obtain an information package, which provides further details on the requirements for submission of applications for the property, from the Financial Investigations Division, 1 Shalimar Avenue, Vineyard Town, Kingston 3. Applications may be obtained during the period **November 20, 2019 to December 11, 2019** between 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. from **Mondays to Thursdays and Fridays at 9:00 a.m. from 3:00 p.m.**




STREET #	VALUATION NUMBER	AREA OF LAND (SQ. M.)	AREA OF BUILDING (SQ. M.)	TITLE REFERENCE
501	031d-5x-24-042	859.427	735.51	Volume 1518 Folio 146

Items to be submitted in your application:

1. A completed application form **indicating the amount being offered.**
2. **Applications by COMPANIES** – Companies must be in good standing and be in possession of an up-to-date Tax Compliance Letter (TCL) or a current Tax Compliance Certificate (TCC);
3. **Application by INDIVIDUALS** – Individuals must submit a copy of their Taxpayer Registration Number (TRN) Card, Letter or Slip **AND** a copy of a government issued photo identification, that is, a Driver's Licence, Passport or National Identification Card.

The application must be submitted in a plain, sealed envelope and labelled "Offer to purchase "Lot 501, Westgate Hills, Montego Bay, St. James", and must be deposited in the Tender Box located in the reception area of the Financial Investigations Division at 1 Shalimar Avenue, Vineyard Town, Kingston 3, no later than **10:00 a.m. on Thursday, December 12, 2019.**

Opening of offers will take place at **10:15 a.m. on Thursday, December 12, 2019** in the Conference Room at Financial Investigations Division at 1 Shalimar Avenue, Vineyard Town, Kingston 3, in the presence of the Division's representatives and applicants who choose to attend.

Further information is available from the email address, properties@fid.gov.jm and website, www.fid.gov.jm.

Please note: THE FINANCIAL INVESTIGATIONS DIVISION SHALL NOT BE BOUND TO ACCEPT ANY OFFER RECEIVED.