K: So, lately I’ve been thinking about a blended topic. (laughs) So I feel like I’m already starting off with a digression, but it’s Japanese technology and failed expectations by expats. Is kind of what I’ve been thinking about. And… I think that’s because of the state of the world, and a lot of my clients that I work with are language teachers or educators that are – that work for for-profit schools that call themselves non-profit, but whatever, that’s a different story. Independent international schools, and they’re all – they all seem to be really disappointed that Japan isn’t set up to use Zoom. And neither were many of the public schools. None of the public schools are set up to use Zoom. And what Zoom is – it’s an online platform for education. For teachers and meetings and things like that, so you can do e-schools and e-classrooms. And Japan just wasn’t widely set up for that.

And just like… Japan doesn’t have smartboards in most classrooms. And what a smartboard is, it’s basically a projector that you can project images from your computer onto a screen or a whiteboard, and then you can manipulate the objects once they’ve been projected. And that’s a smartboard. Did I do a good job explaining a smartboard? Because you’ve used a smartboard. I never have. I’ve seen broken smartboards (laughs) in one of the international schools’ classrooms. I’ve never actually used one.

C: Yes, you did a good job explaining one particular type. There are a variety of smartboards. You’ve dealt with some of the other ones. Some of them that are available here in Japan, you write on it using normal markers, and then you can print out the board.

K: Yeah.

C: I know you’ve dealt with that one when you were doing corporate gigs.

K: Yeah.

C: But, yeah, you did a good job with smartboards. I think the problem with Zoom is you can’t use a fax machine to sign up for Zoom.

K: (laughs) Well, and I think, too, that Zoom just wasn’t… necessary. And I think that, for me, it’s because of a part of Japanese culture that people don’t get. And that is the personal touch.

C: Mhm.

K: The personal touch is highly valued in Japan. Like, a handwritten note rather – so, I have a psychiatrist that I’ve been working with for about a decade now, and we have a lovely working relationship. We don’t step on each other’s toes, we don’t get into each other’s lanes, and we work really great together, and I know exactly the quality of service that my clients are getting when they work with her. And… she – every – twice a year, she sends me a box of cookies. At the beginning. And with a handwritten note. And that has meant so much to me, but I have never sent her any handwritten notes because I refer far more clients to her than she refers to me.

C: Yeah.

K: So, it’s a top-down relationship where I’m at the top of the relationship because she’s at the receiving end.

C: Yes.

K: And there’s different words for receiving in Japanese. And I think, once people learn those words in Japanese, I kind of expect them to understand Japanese giving culture.

C: Mmm.

K: The fact that there are, to my knowledge, seven different words for different ways of receiving something: whether you receive it graciously, whether you receive it with gratitude, whether you’re honored to receive it – the words for “I got this from somebody. Somebody gave this to me. I received it” – it goes ways deeper in Japanese. Is that your experience?

C: Yeah. And a separate verb for “you gave it to me.”

K: Yup. And there’s a matching set for the energy that you gave it with.

C: Yeah.

K: And… so, for me, I think that that’s what people are missing. They’re missing that, in business culture, it would be extremely word to start up a relationship without having a physical space for someone to come to and a physical experience because you have to invite them – in Japanese culture, when you do business, if it’s a personal business that’s not retail or something, the custom is you invite them in, you offer them a beverage, then you listen to their needs.

C: Mhm.

K: That’s the standard. Across the board.

C: Yeah, but I think that it varies between industries and how often they deal with foreign clients.

K: Mhm.

C: So, I think that some… it’s given lip service that that’s what they do, but they don’t actually do that. It’s like you sit down, they put a cup of nasty tea in front of you, and they’re like, “okay, fine, tell me what you want.”

K: But they still expect you to come into their physical business, sit down, and get that nasty cup of tea.

C: They do. And I think that’s… I don’t… I think it’s the willingness of employers, in particular, to demand tedium from their employees.

K: Yes.

C: So, why should you set up Zoom if you can just demand everybody just come to the office?

K: Yeah.

C: That kind of thing. And I saw a report a while ago about… one company whose clients were using Zoom because they were quarantining but was demanding that their employees come to the office to sit around and use Zoom with the clients rather than having them do it from home.

K: I think that also goes back to Japanese culture in whatever – and I think that there’s still a lot of, and this is going to be controversial but I live in Japan, I’ve lived here for 15 years, I’ve ready extensive history, and this is my opinion. I am not an expert on Japan. But my opinion, and my perception, is that they’re still a lot of Japanese culture set in the time of the samurai and set under time of – and very Feudalistic in my mind. And part of that is, like, if – if, okay, if you’re in the Shogun Era, and your head, your feudal lord, is at work, everybody else should be at work until the lord goes home and should be working later than the feudal lord. And… to me, that makes sense. If I’m queen of the country or of this city or of this domain, yeah, everybody should be working harder than the queen.

C: Mhm.

K: And I think that mindset is still in Japanese companies that, when you work so hard to build your company, you want everybody else working as hard for the success of your company as you are.

C: I think definitely. I think it was only a couple of years ago that the government was scolding companies because their employees kept dying from working, you know, 120, 200 overtime hours per month.

K: Yeah.

C: And when you’re talking about working 200

K: And these are executives, so these aren’t just low-level people. These are executives doing this.

C: And salespeople, too.

K: Yeah, executives, salespeople… but I want to – so, for me, in this discussion, I want to make sure it’s fair and even-handed, and it’s not just the soft – just the freshmen.

C: Oh, no.

K: I think I’m a little bit defensive because I am a business owner in Japan.

C: Right.

K: But I don’t e – I expect that I work – I think this is me particularly, my tic. I don’t expect that anybody works harder than me that works for my company. I expect that everybody does not work as hard as I do. I expect everybody to work less than I do because they get a smaller piece of the pie than I do.

C: Mhm.

K: And I am completely responsible, and at any point of time, I can fire their ass. (laughs) And that’s why I don’t – I only have one regular employee, and then I have people that I contract with because I don’t want that responsibility. But I think, if you’ve never owned a company, when something happens – like after the 3/11 earthquake. It was a really scary time for my company because three major countries that foreigners come from recalled all of their citizens.

C: Right.

K: And that was shocking. Didn’t affect my business – thank goodness that I have a balance between Japanese nationals and foreign nationals. But a lot of foreign nationals, when things happen… when trauma strikes the world, the first thing they do is return to their country of origin.

C: Right.

K: So, that makes any company that’s working or employing foreign nationals in a precarious place when things go bad.

C: I think, sometimes, that’s just a change to take stock and say, “Am I really happy with what I’m doing?” Because I know you say Japanese workers work hard, but I think that’s not… strictly true. I’m not talking about individuals; I’m talking as a general proposition.

K: I didn’t say Japanese workers work hard.

C: You said they expect their workers to work harder than them.

K: Yeah. Longer.

C: Longer, I think, is the key.

K: Yeah, I meant to say longer.

C: Yeah. Because

K: Longer with the expectation that they’ll be more productive.

C: Right. And study after study just says that that is not true, and there’s a few Japanese companies that embrace that and have said, “you know what? People really aren’t their sharpest after 70 hours in a week. Maybe we should have them work a little bit less.”

K: Well, and most Japanese companies have open floorplans.

C: Mhm.

K: And, so, the boss usually sits, and this is really, really difficult for a lot of foreign nationals when their boss sits behind them and can see their computer screen. They feel – it really just breaks them down mentally. And… or when they work in a room where their boss can record their room at any time that they see fit, it really breaks them down mentally, and I’m like – for me, I don’t understand why. I feel like that’s a communication thing. As their therapist, I work out what’s going with that and how to… help them cope with that, but it goes from like – the highest person in the office sits furthest back, and the closer you get to the door the lower the standing of that person.

C: I know one local company that has like 50 people work in the office, and they have five rows of ten benches – of like ten seats in each bench.

K: Yeah.

C: And that’s just how they work. I think there’s – when you sit open floorplan, I feel like the Japanese office aesthetic is more cluttered floorplan.

K: Yes, but there’s no partitions.

C: No.

K: There’s no privacy.

C: No, but they’re not like doing the Marie Kondo of it all.

K: Yeah, no. It’s super cluttered.

C: Japanese workplaces do not spark joy.

K: But, recently, with the pandemic, they’ve put up… couch / sneeze shields, so now everybody’s getting a cubicle, and they’re freaking loving it.

C: Mmm.

K: And, so, they’re wanting to keep the cubicles in place because they’re loving the privacy

C: Even though they’re clear?

K: Yeah. Because they’ve switched the desks from being row upon row where everyone can see each other now to having sneeze shields.

C: Uh-huh.

K: Plastic shields – I don’t know what they were made of, okay? Just putting that out there, and if you all have been listening, you know Chad is very particular about the difference between plexiglass and plastic.

C: Yes. They are not plexiglass.

K: Yeah.

C: They might not even be plastic. They might be vinyl.

K: Yeah, they could be because I’ve never seen them. So, they have the computers set up so that they can wrap them. The desks now are all wrapped. They have like a U, like a square U, wrapped around them, and an entry-point, and that’s creating more privacy, and they’re really loving it. So, the reason that the Japanese don’t use Zoom; I feel like it’s culture based.

C: Yeah, I feel like that, too.

K: And, the reason – and so, I find a lot of people hating on Japanese technology and saying that the Japanese aren’t innovative and aren’t creative, and they’re supposed to be the technological leaders in the world. And I think that that’s – to me, it’s a bit racist.

C: Yeah.

K: Or, at least, culturally biased, and, at best, culturally naïve. Like, when you look at technology and where certain different types of technology are being generated, I think Japan leads the world in the area of robotics but does not lead the world in the area of aeronautics, does not lead the world in software and hardware; it’s trying to carve out their niche in virtual reality.

C: I think it’s difficult to overstate how risk averse Japan is as a culture.

K: Yeah.

C: And that goes down to the laws. If you have a company, like a corporation, you can be personally liable for the company’s debts if you weren’t careful enough in what you were doing.

K: Yes.

C: And it’s not a matter of, like in the U.S., you can talk about piercing the corporate veil where you’re just kind of sloppy with your bookkeeping.

K: Yeah.

C: This is even if your bookkeeping is good, if you didn’t make the “safe decisions” and your company goes under, then you can be found liable for those debts.

K: Yeah.

C: So, there’s, like, a really strong culture and legal ramifications that say, “you should be risk averse.” So, I think Zoom is really risky because how do you know that those people are really working? Because you can’t see them. You’re having to trust them. You’re having to take the risk that some people will not work as hard as they would if they were in the office. And, so… management is trained that… they should accept the certainty of getting 20% rather than the risk that they might only get 18% of somebody’s capacity.

K: Well, too, Japan is very protective of keeping its culture intact.

C: Right.

K: So, when we look at the public schools, I think that, as expats – and I think we may have talked about this before: in the United States, I never cleaned a single thing in… at any of the schools I attended.

C: Mhm.

K: And, in Japan, it is expected that – a whole culture and sort of family unit is built at the school level, and, so the students are responsible for cleaning and maintaining the school. Every day after the school day ends, they wipe everything down; they sweep everything themselves; they take the garbage out themselves; and, after lunchtime, they wipe down the tables themselves; they clean up their own dishes; they pack up their dishes and such. So… I feel like, when you’re saying that – when people are criticizing Japan and saying, “well, they’re so technologically advanced, why weren’t they ready to do school distance learning?” And I think that… for me, having been here after – having been here after the 3/11 three months’ worth – so, it’s the big tsunami when I say 3/11 that I’m referring to.

C: Yeah.

K: The giant earthquake and then the tsunami afterwards. What a lot of people don’t realize is that it was three months of earthquakes. It was a really traumatic time for the entire country, and, no, we did not expect the students of the region most heavily hit to go to school.

C: Yeah.

K: We didn’t expect them to go to school, and there is a program in place: after trauma strikes, they do an impacted coursework to get them caught up with the rest of the nation. So, I feel like people need to educate themselves on what we do in the United States versus what we do in Canada versus what we do in Australia versus what we do in Japan. Because, in the United States, after the Loma Prieta Earthquake, there was no dispensation given to the students who were impacted by that. There was no… extra course makeup, and a lot of people stayed out of school after the big Loma Prieta earthquake because it was a massive hit to the Bay Area and Northern California, and there was a part of San Francisco that fell into the ocean. And there was a huge structure that was collapsed, and

C: I know there were roads, too, because I moved to San Francisco in 1995, and Loma Prieta was in 89.

K: Yeah.

C: And it still hadn’t been rebuilt. Like, the road structures.

K: There were structures that they just decided would never be earthquake safe.

C: Yeah.

K: And, when the Bay Bridge goes out, that’s a lot of people who can’t get to work.

C: So, I think that, when people look at Japanese technology, there’s kind of two sides to it. One is that a lot of the technology that is really advanced – it isn’t obvious to people that that technology is there. If you look at, like, Japanese structural engineering is really top-notch.

K: Yeah.

C: Like, if you want to build a building that is earthquake-proof, the whole world looks to Japan for “how do we do this and what are the best practices” and that kind of thing. I think you say, “well, that’s not a very exciting technology.” Well, it is when your building doesn’t fall down because you had an earthquake.

K: Yeah.

C: But it’s not as flashy as, you know, an iPhone or whatever.

K: And iPhone didn’t come from the U- I mean, didn’t come from Japan, it came from the U.S.

C: That’s what I’m saying is that you have this technology that’s flashy that came from somewhere else.

K: Yeah.

C: But, you know, Japan has the Nintendo. So, I think there’s this kind of…

K: (laughs) Did you just throw Japan a bone?

C: I did. And Sony is a Japanese company.

K: Androids came from Japan.

C: Android – yeah, Android operating system came out of Google.

K: Yeah, came from Japan.

C: Came out of

K: I actually know one of the leading people who designed the Android operating

C: The Android operating system came out of Google, and the people that you know

K: One of the designers who designed the Android operating system, I taught him English in Japan.

C: Okay.

K: So… mmnmnmn. It was an international effort.

C: A lot of it was open-source software, so yes. And there have been numerous improvements that people have put together

K: You never accept that I worked with the dude who developed Android. Like, even when I told you that I was working with him, you were like, “no” and I’m like, “there are things that I can’t tell you about that this guy’s telling me about” but it doesn’t make any sense because I’m teaching him how to talk about it in English.

C: Right. So, I would say like the user interface and that kind of thing has been outsourced and designing the Japanese one – I could totally see somebody in Japan doing that.

K: I’m saying before Android came out, so it wasn’t all developed in the United States.

C: Okay.

K: This guy was developing it, and I know because I was teaching him how to talk about it in English. And I was asking you for some specific terminology that you did not know

C: Yeah.

K: So, I had to do research on it. But I think it was such a dark time in our life when I was teaching English because I did not enjoy teaching English.

C: No, you did not.

K: And I was not the most pleasant person. Like, thank you for staying with me through that. … Thank me for my sacrifice.

C: Thank you for your sacrifice.

K: (laughs)

C: Ostukaresamadeshita.

K: (laughs)

C: That’s actually just thank you for your hard work.

K: Yeah. So, I don’t bash English teaching ever as a profession. I do think it’s a skilled profession. I think there are some people who are amazing at it. In my time observing lessons, there are some of them, I’m like, “damn, that was an elegant lesson.”

C: I think there’s two things to be good at a job: there’s like being good at doing the job, and then there’s being good at working the job.

K: I saw this dude that was like, he did a 40-minute lesson on ATMs. That shit was so tight. And then I felt kind of embarrassed because I was like, “that was a really elegant lesson.” And then he went up to the managers like, “she said my lesson was elegant.” Because when I observed, I was rating everybody and telling them what I thought about their lessons.

C: Yeah.

K: Which I didn’t know that, when you’re observing, and you’re not working for the company, you shouldn’t do that. I just thought it was good constructive feedback. Because I told one person, “that was rough.” I jumped in because they couldn’t describe “up a tree.”

C: Uh-huh.

K: And they had a whiteboard. And I drew a whiteboard – on the whiteboard, I drew an arrow and wrote the word “up” and said, “up.” And then I drew a tree and then I said, “a tree.” And then I a drew an arrow on the tree, and I wrote on the whiteboard “up a tree.” And then the clients said, “up a tree!” And they were so happy, and they applauded me.

C: Yeah.

K: That dude hated me the entire time I was working there up until right before I quit working for that one company. He came, and I said – I apologized to him and said, “hey, you know what, I think you’re a good teacher. I’m sorry I jumped in, but it was really painful for me.”

C: “And I’ve played a lot of Pictionary.”

K: Yeah. “It was really painful for me, and I just wanted to move on because I knew you were being recorded. I was actually trying to be helpful, and I realize that wasn’t my place. That was your lesson, and I’m sorry.”

C: Mhm.

K: And he was like, “thank you. I appreciate that.” But the way he said it, I could tell, “I still don’t like you.”

C: Mhm.

K: “And I never will.” And I was like, “right on. I earned that dislike.”

C: (laughs)

K: Because that’s hella rude. Someone’s teaching, and you just can’t stand watching them do it badly, and you don’t even work for the company yet, and you’re just like, “dude. Up. It’s just an arrow, come on, that’s so basic.”

C: Yes.

K: would you ever do something that rude?

C: I would definitely do something that rude. I wouldn’t do that specific thing, but there are definitely people who find me rude.

K: (laughs) Wait to get my back. So, when it comes to Japanese technology and people’s expectations when they come over, I think that they don’t understand Americans’ cultural relationship with technology. America loves technology and loves to implement and use technology as soon as it comes out. And… I think that a lot of the people I’m talking to now don’t remember when Word came out.

C: Mhm.

K: And what a complete debacle that was. Because everyone just started using it, and it was completely broken.

C: Yes, it was.

K: And it didn’t work. But everyone was still using this broken thing, and I wouldn’t use it, and people were criticizing me, and I was like, “it doesn’t work.”

C: Yeah.

K: “It doesn’t work. I’m not using this thing that I have to patch and fix that I don’t have the ability to patch and fix.”

C: Yeah, Word Perfect was definitely a stronger product at the time.

K: Yeah. So, I was like, “I’m not doing that.”

C: And I grew up on a program called Bank Street Writer – actually, I was in 8th grade when Bank Street Writer came out.

K: So, what’s your view because we have – we’re from different generations, you and I.

C: We are from different generations.

K: (laughs)

C: You are part of the greatest generation.

K: (laughs)

C: And I am Gen-X.

K: Completely. Completely. Thank you.

C: Okay, boomer.

K: (laughs) So. What’s your view on America’s relationship with technology?

C: I think that America because of the structure – because of the incentive structures – is willing to just waste technology. Just, like, waste enormous amounts of it.

K: Waste?

C: Yeah, waste.

K: Okay.

C: And, so, that results in a very high rate of innovation and also a very high rate of obsolescence.

K: A high rate of what?

C: Innovation but also of obsolescence. Things becoming obsolete.

K: Yeah. Every time, you use obsolescence, I always say, “what?”

C: Yeah. (laughs)

K: Because you are the only person I know that says it.

C: I don’t know why.

K: I don’t think I’ve ever heard anyone else – I’ve read it – but I think you’re the only person

C: Okay, so you know it’s a real word.

K: Yeah, I know it’s a real word. Just like bigly is a real word.

C: Yes.

K: But they sound equally strange to me. Not comparing you to the person who made bigly famous.

C: Mhm.

K: But, like… I don’t know. Do you all use obsolescence? Tweet it at me if you use it. Just tweet it at us. Just one word. Just tweet out “obsolescence” and you will completely make my day.

(laughter)

K: I’ll be like, “oh, babe, you’ve got your obsolescence posse.”

C: Yes.

(laughter)

K: Okay, so, you were saying… American culture leads to what, now?

C: Leads to rapid innovation but also rapid obsolescence. There are a lot of abandoned technologies that just go nowhere. So, I think about

K: Because the Betamax was so far and away superior to the VHS.

C: Yeah, but also, you’ve got things like – do you remember zip drives?

K: Yup.

C: And do you remember jazz drives?

K: Yeah.

C: So, like, zip drives and jazz drives – zip drives, I think, lasted about two years. Jazz drives, I had one, that was a technology for, like, a year.

K: Really?

C: Yeah. And mini discs. So, you had CDs and DVDs and Laser Discs, but mini discs.

K: Yeah, I remember mini discs.

C: Yeah, they were only around for like five years.

K: A hot minute. That felt like a hot minute. The mini-disc fad came and went.

C: Right.

K: And I remember there were, like, mini-disc players, and you could wear them on your hip because they had music on them.

C: Yeah because mini discs were programmable. That was their big thing was you could record onto them with a mini-disc player.

K: Because they were trying to replace walkmen with mini-discs, and that didn’t work.

C: Right.

K: And I still have an iPod.

C: Yes.

K: I still have an old-fashioned, like… ancient, ancient iPod where we have a special

C: We have a special charger for it and everything.

K: And it has a gang of music on it, man.

C: Can’t play videos ore anything, can’t connect wirelessly.

K: Nope. It’s just music.

C: Yeah.

K: And I love, love music. So, last month – speaking of music, I have to digress because I have to have a little rant here. I am so disappointed in my peeps. Okay like, my family, and my former friends – I’m breaking up with them because they didn’t do it.

C: Yeah, you are.

K: So, the Baby Face versus Teddy Riley IG battle – freaking epic. So, what did I do after watching it and feeling that nostalgia? I reached out to my family members and people that I knew during that era; people who had gone to those and seen this music performed live with me and all of that. And, to my disappointment, most of them hadn’t even… heard that the battle happened, one which like what – two, didn’t watch it after I told them about it. Hashtag disappointed. Like, I wanted to snatch their black cards. I did. I was like, I’m so – just like eugh. Come on. Come on.

C: Did you know that Japan invented the hashtag?

K: (laughs) Japan invented emojis.

C: Yes, Japan did invent emojis.

K: Yup. And we used to use them in SMS, and there was a whole book of Japanese emojis. They were so creative, and I remember teaching

C: We had a lot of options, too, yeah.

K: Teaching classes on what the different emojis mean. And I still have to explain Japanese emoji use to expats.

C: Well, and, when I was editing, I had one client who wrote about emojis. That was like their – their topic of study was emojis and other non-verbal ways of communicating emotion over text.

K: Yeah. And, so, for me – and Japan invented Line.

C: Yes.

K: And I feel like Japan is technologically advanced, but they use – the use of technology is culture-bound and culture-based.

C: And that’s what was I saying about the risk aversion. I think technology is adopted in Japan when it is clearly superior to the alternative and it’s going to be around for a while.

K: Yeah.

C: So, a new tech

K: But Line was adopted quick.

C: Because Line filled a niche that – that nothing else did. So, Line didn’t push anything else out.

K: No.

C: Line was like, nobody else at the time had a messaging system where you could send a message without the other person being on and then see when they read it. So, that read notification, that now everything has, was the big thing about line.

K: Yeah.

C: Because it was intended to help people get in touch with their loved ones if the phone system was overwhelmed.

K: Yeah. Which it was after the quake.

C: Yeah. And they said, well, if you see that it’s been read, you know that, even if the other person can’t get back to you, that they’re safe. Or at least that

K: No, that they’re near their phone.

C: Or that they’re alive. Yeah.

K: And they’ve read it. So, you can be like, “hey you need to search for this person because they at least can turn their phone on and read this message.” And what I love about Line is Line also allows you to be stealthy because you can read the first bit of a message.

C: Mhm.

K: And, so, I love that. I don’t – I’m not on Line except for you with and Rasta, and I love that I can read a bit of the message and determine whether or not I have the emotional space to deal with that.

C: Yes.

K: (laughs) I’m just playing. I open it up and read it – most often than not, I will call you after you’ve Lined me before reading the Line message and ask you, “what’d you say?”

C: Yes, you will.

K: (laughs) And you’ll be like, “what?” And I’m like, “what’d you say? You sent me a Line message.” And you’re like, “you can read it.” And I’m like, “yeah.”

C: And I’m like – “I will walk from the other room out there and tell you.”

K: (laughs) Yes. Because I have called you like, “what?”

C: So, I think like cellphones when people are like, “well the system in Japan is so advanced” and I think that’s because Japan’s population density allows that. So, Japan has a lot of 5g usage, has got 4g almost everywhere because the population density is so conc- is so high in the urban areas that it’s very concentrated.

K: Yeah.

C: When we went to Niko a while ago, which we’ve done a podcast about Niko listen to it if you want to know

K: No, we did a podcast episode about Hakone.

C: Hakone, yes, sorry. Niko is

K: We went to Niko years ago.

C: I was thinking of Hakone.

K: Like a decade ago.

C: Yes, I was thinking of Hakone.

K: (laughs) You’re like, “just the other day” just the other decade, we went to Niko. (laughs)

C: Yes. I was thinking of Hakone.

K: And we went to Hakone over a year ago, babe.

C: We went to Hakone in December.

K: No, we did not. We did not go this year.

C: You do not remember being

K: We did not go 2019 December.

C: Yeah, the end of December. You don’t remember being there for the Christmas and then right after they took down the Christmas stuff?

K: No that’s not, we did the Hakone live in September, I think, of 2019.

C: Yes. We did the Hakone live

K: That is the episode that we did.

C: Yes, so people should go back and listen to that.

K: (laughs) But you keep giving them the wrong dates. You’re like, “December. The other day.” No, this is like… nine months ago.

C: We went in September, and then we liked it so much we went back in December.

K: Yes, but that was a private trip.

C: Yes, it was. Nobody else came on that trip.

K: Oh my gosh, I don’t want to talk about it. It’s private.

C: Okay.

K: Dang.

C: Okay, well, in September, when we went

K: Thank you. Because that’s when we did the almost-live from Hakone episode.

C: Yeah. I noticed that, when we were driving up through the mountains, my phone was down to 3g.

K: (laughs)

C: There was no 4g service available. There was barely internet.

K: Something that everybody talks about is the advancement – at least, last month, at the height of the pandemic – everybody was talking about, “why doesn’t Japan roll out its robots” because they do have medical robots.

C: Yeah.

K: And I think that they don’t understand what the medical robots can and cannot do.

C: Yes.

K: Like, the medical robots cannot incubate somebody.

C: Intubate?

K: Put them on a ventilator.

C: Yeah, intubate.

K: Yeah. What are you saying? It sounds exactly like what I’m saying to me.

C: Incubate is what you do to eggs so that they hatch. Intubate, like put a tube into.

K: Oh, intubate.

C: Intubate.

K: Intubate?

C: Yeah.

K: Okay. You heard it here, folks, Kisstopher learned a new word.

(laughter)

K: But they can’t intubate.

C: Yeah.

K: So, they can move someone, they can change sheets, but they can’t intubate. So, everybody was like, “why aren’t they just using the nurse robots” and I’m like, “because they can’t.”

C: Right.

K: Duh. And who wants a robot sticking a tube down them? Nobody wants that. And everybody’s talking about the fear and the patient size, but what japan did do was that they set up monitoring systems – cameras in all of the rooms – and direct feedback from the beds to stations so that it limited the amount of nurses that had to be on the floor.

C: Right.

K: So, to me, Japan is using technology to help in a way that the United States didn’t.

C: Mhm.

K: The United States – which I’m not bashing the United States or any particular country during this time of grief and sorrow for the entire world. But I am saying that, I guess, I’m still defensive about the – I’m critical of the Japanese government. I’m critical of things that are going on in Japan, I just – when people first arrive and start bashing Japan – it kind of irks me a little bit because I’m like, “give it a minute. Get to know the country a little bit, first, before you start saying your country of origin is so far superior.” Or you can turn your ass around and get back on a plane and leave.

C: I feel like there’s a difference between saying, “these are problems with the country that I’m in. These are structural problems; these are things that bother me” and “everything was better back where I came from.”

K: Yea.

C: And, if everything was better back where you came from, then go ahead on.

K: Yeah. Go ahead and go back to where everything was better. Because, for me, what gets under my skin is that he will say, “my country is far and away superior to Japan in every way except I can’t make a living in my country.”

C: Yeah.

K: “I’m a college-educated person, my country who’s superior – far and away – in every way to Japan won’t allow me to make a living wage.”

C: Mhm.

K: Then your country is not superior to Japan in every way, and if you’re coming here to work, you’re going to have to get used to work culture in Japan.

K: I felt that way about Alaska. Like, I liked the culture in Alaska better than I liked the culture of Silicon Valley, specifically.

K: You like the racist, separatist culture of Alaska?

C: Better than the racist, separative culture of Silicon Valley? Yes. That’s why I’m not saying California culture or Northern California culture. I’m saying specifically Silicon Valley and specifically the tech industry in Silicon Valley.

K: And, as somebody born and raised in Silicon Valley, the separatist that he is talking about is that we want to separate from Southern California. Because we view Southern California as a drain on all of Northern California’s resources.

C: I was actually thinking of all the tech bros who want to situate a boat off the coast of the U.S. so they’re not subject to U.S. laws and set up their techno-utopia out there.

K: Oh, that whole claptrap?

C: Yeah. So, that’s what I’m saying

K: Okay, so you’re like the extremist

C: Right.

K: Okay. I’m just talking about the normal California separatists that want to separate from – so, in Northern California, they want to separate from Southern California, and in Southern California they want to separate from Northern California. Southern California generates a lot of money for Northern California, and Northern California generates a lot of water for Southern California, so they’re both completely interdependent on each other for different things. And, right in the middle of the state, it introduces most of the state’s food.

C: Yes. So, where that line should be drawn, it’s always – like, there’s – every couple years, there’s a bill in California about how to separate and become northern California.

C: Which usually amounts to, “mmkay, so we want everyone in what’s now the state to pay taxes to us, and we only provide services for the Northern half.”

K: Yup.

C: But what I was saying bout Alaska is that there was no work that I could do. And, so, as much as I enjoyed the weather and all that,

K: So, you love Alaska so much that every time I ask, “can we take a trip to Alaska” you say, “the Winter’s too cold and there’s nothing to do, and the Summer’s too hot, and the state bird is the mosquito.”

C: Yes.

K: Because the mosquitos will bite you through your jeans.

C: Yes, they will.

K: And you talk about gun ownership and how much it disturbs you.

C: Yes.

K: And then you complain about the Alaskan bush people.

C: I don’t even know what the Alaskan bush people are.

K: Like, the people who are extreme “we live off the grid.”

C: No. I complain about that T.V. show.

K: Oh okay, well, I really like the T.V. show. So, what are you saying? I think you’re perpetrating a Fraud on the listeners, and I’m not having it.

C: What I am saying

K: I think you’re romanticizing your memory of Alaska because you were like, “no, we will never go there.”

C: Okay, and, so, you get the point that I’m making.

K: What’s the point you’re making?

C: I think when people come over here, if they don’t immediately find it to their liking, they romanticize where they came from. They forget there was a reason that they left.

K: So, I just reminded you of why you left Alaska?

C: No, I never forget why I left Alaska.

K: Okay. So, then, why were you saying that you think Alaska’s great?

C: Because there – there were aspects of it that I really enjoyed. That I really liked.

K: Yeah, there were.

C: And when I moved to California, I missed some of those aspects.

K: Yes, you did.

C: But there were also parts of California that were way better than what I had experienced in Alaska.

K: Yeah. So, you’re saying that that’s the case with everywhere.

C: Yeah, that’s my thinking.

K: That everywhere, there are plus and minuses.

C: Right.

K: So, we’re going to keep the conversation going over on the take twos, but something I wanted to ask people in this episode before we wrap this up is, do you think that the use of technology, and the development of technology and perception of technology is culture-based? Because I believe these things are culture-bound, and what culture-bound means is that culture dictates innovation when it comes to technology, and culture dictates use of innovation when it comes to technology. And, for me, because I’m a psychologist and because one of my many fields of expertise is culture, I believe that everything is culture-bound. And, to be honest and to be transparent, that belief is just being strengthened by the fact that I’m writing my PhD on cultural intelligence, and so

C: Mhm.

K: I might be living in a culture bubble because everything I’m readying, right now – like, every piece of literature – is saying why things are culture-bound.

C: You are kind of surrounded by that, yes.

K: Yes. Like… literally every week, I’m reading hundreds and hundreds of pages, and, as your editor, I am reading them by proxy. You’re reading my interpretation and restatement of them.

C: Yes.

K: And, so, I have literally read over – in the past three years – thousands of articles that make the argument that everything is culture-bound. And everything is culture specific. And, so, I feel really – like, that’s… just to let people know why am I so “it’s culture-bound” that’s where I’m at. And, then, I absolutely love living in Japan, and I really enjoy Japanese culture. I really enjoy the distant intimacy.

C: Mhm.

K: And, so, for me, I really like the fact that most people give you the personal touch in business, and that the personal touch is viewed as professional – it really changed - the way I set up my intake changed dramatically.

C: Mhm.

K: From the U.S. to Japan. And the way I use technology changed dramatically from the U.S. to Japan. And my technological expectations changed. So, for me, I feel like there’s been an awakening of a deeper part of my myself and an addition to who I am and a deepening of my beliefs and understanding of the role of technology in my life. And, for me, technology is central to my life because, hello, I’m getting my PhD over the internet.

C: Yes.

K: And the best way to contact me is via email, but there is also that personal touch, so I miss the process of a client in to my place of business, and that intimacy of just sitting in a room and just having a conversation.

C: Right. Shutting out the outside world.

K: Yeah, shutting out the outside world and creating just – creating an experience.

C: Yeah.

K: Where they’re out of their element, and they’re in this completely neutral environment, and they’re able to create a place where they’re the most important in the world and the most important person in the room. And... I miss that because it’s kind of hard to do that when people are still at home and doing it over Skype. I really appreciate my clients hanging - hanging with me through my quarantine.

C: Even though it’s been in T.V. shows since at least the 70s, nobody has yet invented the cone of silence.

K: Yes. (laughs) And I don’t create the cone of silence. I create the cone of cacophonous ocean waves that drown out every outside noise.

C: In your office, yes.

K: Yeah, in my office. I don’t do that here. So, we’re going to head on over to the take two, and you can head on over with us to our Patreon and listen to our thoughts on the episode and… hit us up. Let us know on Twitter or Facebook or Instagram, do you think technology use is culture-bound? I do. What do you think, babe?

C: I think opposite lessens.

K: (laughs)

C: Yes, I think that each culture has its own problems that it’s trying to solve, and that technology is trying to solve problems. Sometimes, the only problem it’s trying to solve is “how do I show that I’m the coolest kid.”

K: Yeah.

C: It’s just for prestige. Other times, it’s problems like, “we have more earthquakes than most countries, and we don’t want any buildings to fall down.”

K: Yeah.

C: So, I think that if you want to know what the technology is going to be, look up what the needs are.

K: Mmm. That’s clever. So, we hope you enjoyed this… sort of cultural technologal – technologal – cultural technology episode. I’m going to be so curious as to what Chad names this episode. I don’t think I’m going to agree with it, but

C: You’re not.

K: (laughs) Follow us on over to Patreon. Keep the conversation going and hit us up on social media. Bye.

C: Bye-bye.

K: (laughs)