



Scrapbooking The Bison Community.

A collection of Experiences and Observations

Angie Baird, Noah Bedard, Ethan Gomes, and Kolby Robertson



Meet Our Team



Angie Baird
IMGD



Noah Bedard
Professional Writing



Ethan Gomes
Mechanical
Engineering



Kolby Robertson
Civil
Engineering

Key Characters



Wakabayashi Noriyoshi
(Nori)



Nishimura-san



Miyako-san

What is Bison?

A community AND a village

- A village that provides a home to artists and craftsmen
- A wider community of people impacted by Japanese social problems



Social Factors

Housing Problem

- Overabundance of Homes

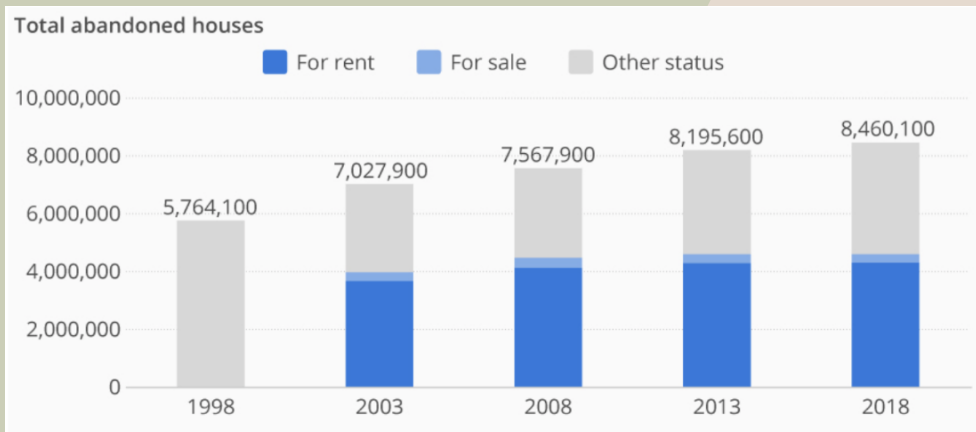
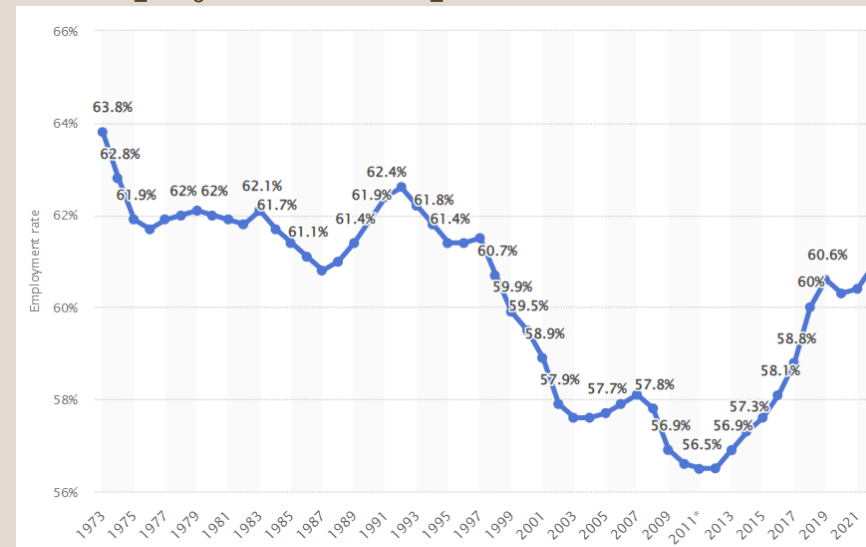


Figure 3: Japanese Statistics Bureau

<https://www.statista.com/chart/17995/vacant-houses-in-japan-by-prefecture/#:-:text=That%20means%208.5%20million%20houses,of%20dilapidation%20unsuited%20for%20use.>

Poor Job Market Conditions

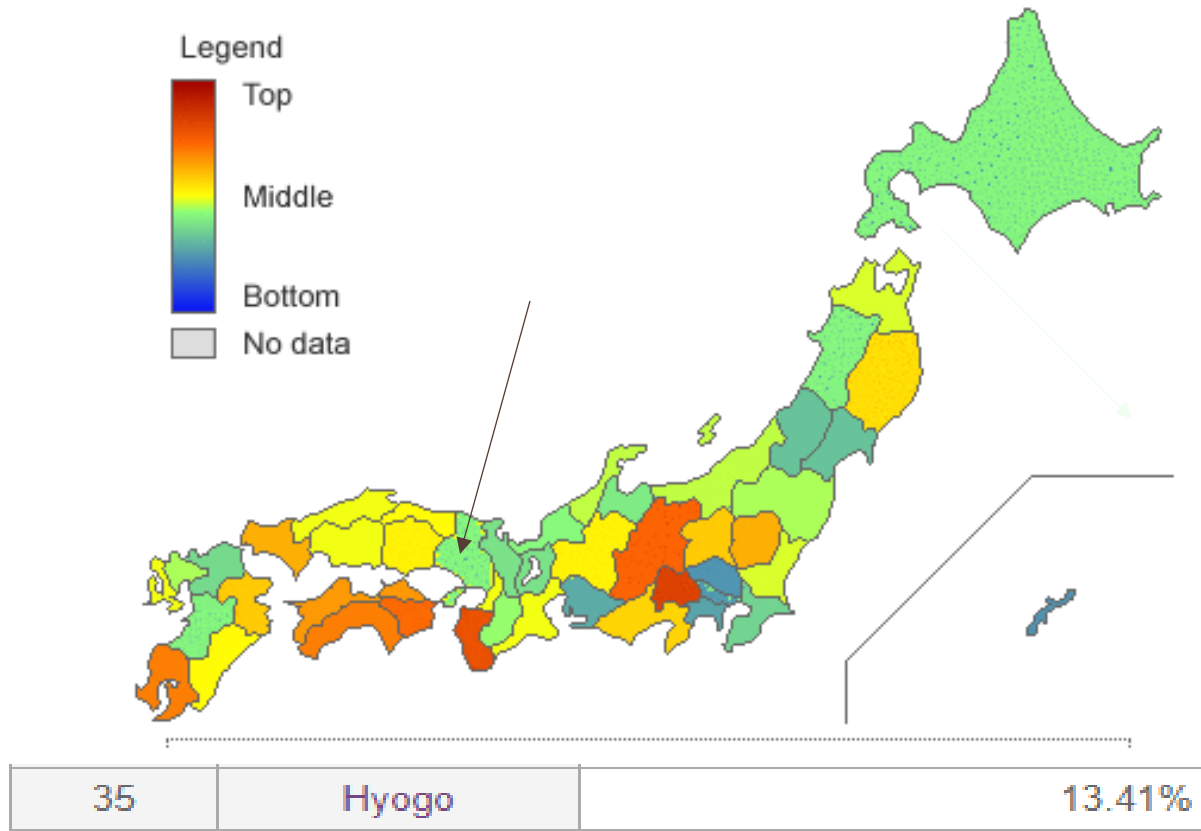
Employment in Japan from 1972-2022



Japan: Employment Rate 1972-2022, from Statista

<https://www.statista.com/statistics/643211/japan-employment-rate/>

Portion of Abandoned Houses by Prefecture



Specific to Hyogo Prefecture

Nishimura-san And His Work

- Was introduced into DIY/renovation early in life
- Later went to college for architecture
- Employment struggles ... Began living in and renovating akiya
- Later founded Nishimura-gumi 2018
- Haioku LLC in 2020
 - With the help of Miyako-san



How was Bison created?

Location: Hyogo Ward, Kobe, Japan

Nishimura-Gumi was given a house in the area in 2018

As he renovated, owners of the abandoned houses around him began selling him their properties

Bought all 9 houses for around \$133,000 in total

Officially established the community in 2020

As of now, 7 houses are renovated with 2 under construction



Picture taken by Yoko

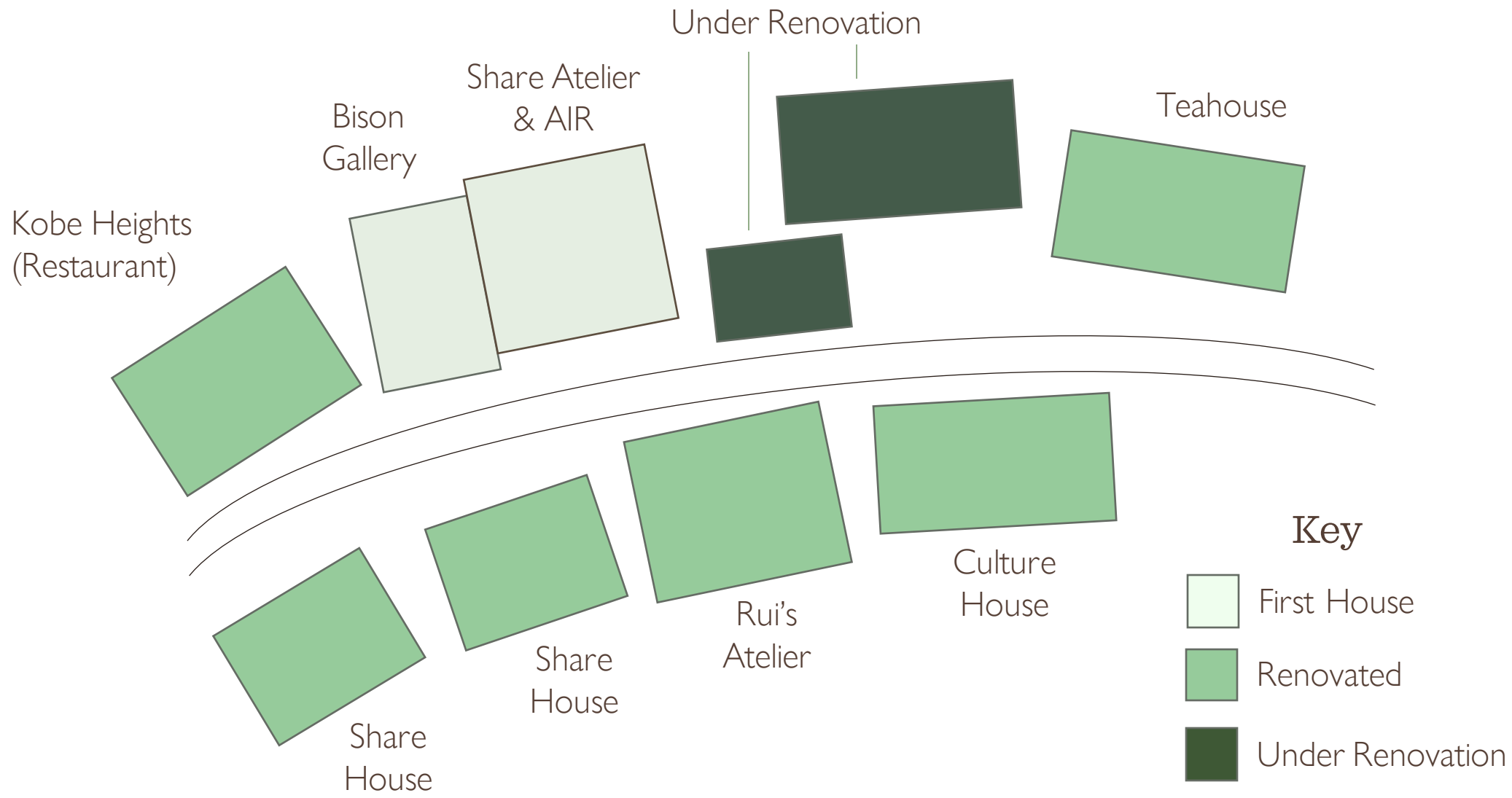
BEFORE



AFTER



Photos from by Nishimura-gumi, Bison Gallery Page: <https://nishimura-gumi.net/1198/>



Where do we fit in?

Documentation



Experience life in the community



Gather stories of those involved



Compile our stories and experiences in a virtual scrapbook



The background features a mix of organic shapes. A large, dark green circle is on the left, partially overlapping a light purple shape. Another dark green circle is at the top right. Faint, stylized pine branches are visible in the top left. A white line with a slight curve runs across the bottom right.

Our Experiences

Timeline



Overview

- Oct 25-Nov 11:
Acclimate to Japan and Culture
- Nov 11-Nov 18:
First stay in Bison + Nishimura Interview
- Nov 18-Nov 25:
Analyze findings
- Nov 25-Dec 2:
Second stay + Apply things to Yoko Interview
- Dec 2-Dec 12:
Concluding Project
- Dec 12-Dec 16:
Final Goodbyes and Free Time

First Visit (Oct. 30th)



The Shog



The Nature

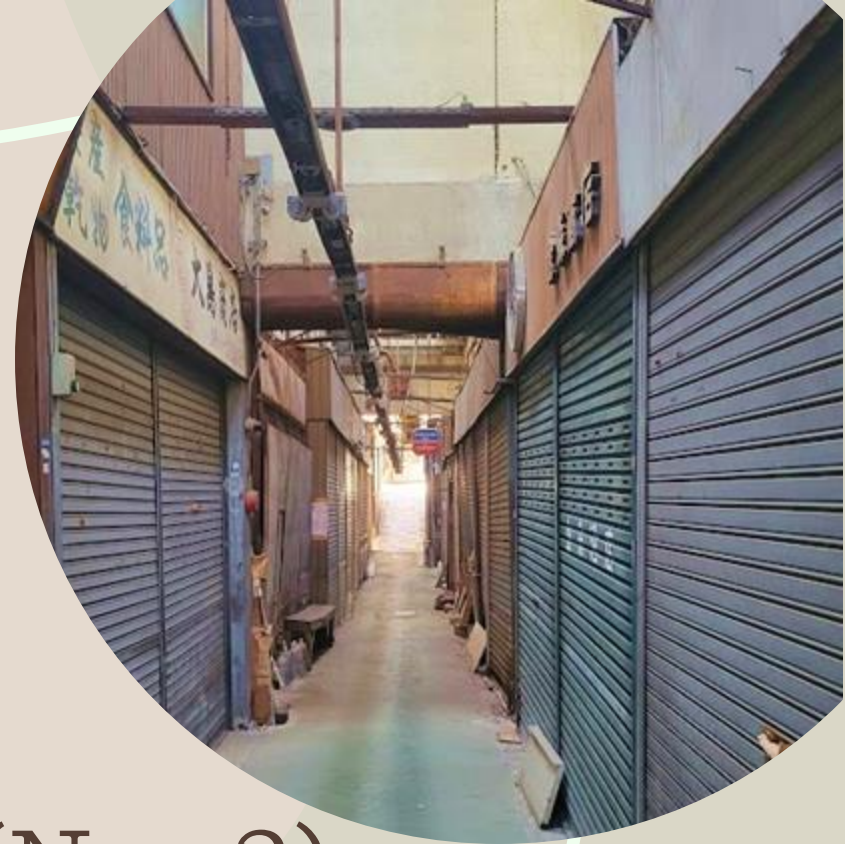
"This is a hole, and this is the kanji for hole" - Nishimura-san



THE HOLE

- Our first stop on our tour of Bison, and our first guided impression of the village
 - Immediately told us that our experience would be very different than we expected
 - Fluid work process
 - "Just do it attitude"





Site Tours (Nov 2)

- Barracklyn Bamboo House
- Shotengai
 - Wooden Shopping Center





Week-long Stay (Nov. 13th-17th)

The Bison Community



The Workshop (Nov 11)

- Culture of being welcoming and learning from each other
- Strangers from all over Kansai bonding together
- Embracing and actively asking about stranger's perspectives
- Also further built on ideas of sustainability we were introduced to



Working with Cécile (Nov 16)

- Art is about finding your own way of doing things
- Enjoy the process



Cécile Ngoc
Sương Perdu



Three-day Stay (Nov. 30th- Dec. 2nd)

- Living at Bison

- Demolition

- Interviewing Miyako-san



CONTROLLED DEMOLITION

- Demolition is the first phase of a renovation
- Instructed to not hit things too hard
 - Protect key structural elements of the building
 - Also re-used materials to create furniture for Bison



Making a Shoe Shelf

Taking Measurements



Material Prep.

Building



Complete



Our Discoveries

FREEDOM

To pursue individual passions

CREATIVITY

In art and architecture

SUSTAINABILITY

And a reverence for nature

COMMUNITY

Building a family



FREEDOM

To pursue individual passions

Nishimura-san on freedom

Is a community for Artists and Craftsmen **AND** A community of free minded individuals who want to break away from typical society

Less emphasis on money

Less financial stress on individuals breeds opportunity and community

Freedom in Bison compared to America

Collectivist approach to community

FREEDOM

To pursue individual passions

CREATIVITY

In art and architecture

Just do it
mentality

Letting yourself make something simply because you want to

Art can be
anything

Art is finding something you love and doing it in your own way

Process-based
mindset

Not worrying about the final product

FREEDOM

To pursue individual passions

CREATIVITY

In art and architecture

SUSTAINABILITY

And reverence for nature

Abandoned
Houses

Instead of building new homes,
rebuild existing ones.

Recycled
materials

Things don't serve one purpose

Incooperatin
g nature

Homes are as much ours as
natures



FREEDOM

To pursue individual passions

CREATIVITY

In art and architecture

SUSTAINABILITY

And reverence for nature

Community

Building a family

Internal Actions Eat lunch, hold events and bonding experiences

Work Culture Work begins to blur because of how close everyone becomes

Outreach While Bison is uniquely distinct from mainstream Japan, they don't isolate themselves from it

Closing notes



Thank You !

Questions?



Works Cited

- <https://thenounproject.com/>
- <https://www.statista.com/statistics/643211/japan-employment-rate>
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