

# Zekkyou gakkyu manga by ishikawa emi: the life of japanese high school students

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Zekkyou Gakkyu, Ishikawa Emi's Manga, is a compilation of horror one shots. Each chapter has different characters and plots, but the main focus is that horror is added in the mundane events and lives of Japanese high school students; some were of life in school, during their field trips, during their summer or winter vacation, some were even set at their homes.

Chapter 5, entitled 5th Period: Bloody Valentine, was set a few days leading up to Valentine's Day and is centered on a girl who was delusional, as she thought she was in a relationship with the most popular boy in their school and that someone was trying to bully and blackmail her to destroy their relationship. She ends up preparing him a chocolate for Valentine's Day. However, the reader finds out in the end, after trying to give him the chocolate that she was actually the one blackmailing the couple and ends up killing them both thinking she was the victim of everything that happened. Initially, we see Misaki, the protagonist, interacting with her crush, Naoyuki, her senpai. It is seen in page five that she was going through a magazine looking at the pages of different chocolate types as Valentine's Day might have been near. Due to the fact that they were not together yet, she might have been considering confessing to him by giving him chocolates, as it was already implied in the earlier pages that she fell in love with him on the first day of school, shown on the first panel on the first page. It can be assumed that she already fell for him on their opening ceremony day due to the outfit she wore. This crush grew throughout time seen in the other panels of the first page through the passing events and seasons — Naoyuki wearing a scarf with falling leaves, then Naoyuki during their PE classes probably during summer due to their outfit of short sleeves and shorts. As seen on

page seven, the two became a couple according to Misaki after confessing to Naoyuki the day after they had their first interaction. It can be implied that they might have become a couple and that Naoyuki accepted her confession.

In Japan, one way of stating one's feelings for another person is through the act of confessing or kokuhaku (告白). Confessions are done when they want to have a serious relationship with someone, one that is not just limited to seeing them a few times. Compared also to Western countries, wherein saying thing like “ I love you” is a big deal, Japanese confess using the term suki (好き), which can mean like and love. Japanese people have a phrase called aishiteru (愛してる), but this phrase is limited to really special cases — for those that have a special place in one's heart.

Going back to page six we see Misaki preparing to surprise her “ boyfriend” Naoyuki for Valentine's by making him handmade chocolates. Here we can see how a girl, Misaki, was planning to give the guy she likes chocolate.

Internationally, Valentine's Day is known to be a day for couples. It is also essentially a special day to celebrate love, not just limited to couples, but it can be also for family and friends. Couples can give each other things like flowers, cards, and different kinds of sweets to show their affection. In Japan though, Valentine's Day is a special event for girls. There is a tradition that it is during Valentine's wherein the girls give the boys chocolate.

Valentine's has existed in Japan ever since the postwar era, the time wherein they were recovering from its impact (Nagoya International Center). It started in 1958 because of the chocolate company known as Mary Chocolate

at the Isetan Department Store. Chocolates were promoted as products people could buy for Valentine's Day. It was not as successful as they had hoped due to the fact that people were not yet aware of what Valentine's Day was in Japan. On their next attempt, they thought of changing the way they marketed the chocolates by making them heart shaped and giving the customer the ability to engrave the names of the recipient. They also added the slogan " Valentine's Day is the day for a woman to share love with someone she loves." It was then in the 1970s when Chocolate and Cocoa Association of Japan declared that February 14th as the day for chocolates and became a day for girls to offer gifts to their loved ones and confess their love to them through chocolates.

Due to this culture, two types of chocolates came about with the first being the honmei chocolate (本命チョコレート). This type of chocolate is one that is given to lovers, boyfriends — the " special someone" that the girl may like. There is a tendency for these types of chocolate to be handmade to add to the special factor they have. It can be assumed that the chocolate Misaki was making for Naoyuki was honmei due to the handmade ffa as well as the fact that she was giving it to her boyfriend, Naoyuki. Different from the one Misaki made for Naoyuki, there is another chocolate known as the giri chocolate (義理チョコレート) which is also known as " obligatory chocolate" which are given to the friends or workmates of the girl. These chocolates, compared to honmei, do not have romantic feelings attached to them and are given out of gratitude and appreciation.

One event brought about by the popularity of Valentine's Day that is distinctively unique in Japan is known as White Day. White Day happens on March 14th, exactly a month after Valentine's Day. It is the time for guys to return the feelings that they received from the girls — their version of Valentine's. During White Day, there is a custom called sanbai-gaeshiin which means that the gifts the guys give back should be “ three times the value of what they received a month earlier”. Compared to Valentine's, which was already a well-known event worldwide, White Day was really a marketing tactic created by the candy industry. In order to get more income. In 1977, the National Confectionery Industry Association created a new holiday called Marshmallow Day. Not everyone was a fan of marshmallows, so it changed to chocolate, but the color of the product stuck, which was why it ended up being called “ White” Day.

As mentioned earlier, Misaki really liked Naoyuki ever since she saw him for the first time. However, she was rejected by Naoyuki when she confessed to him. Due to how strong her feelings were, she essentially created an illusion wherein she convinced herself that she was already dating him. She even feared the blackmail notes that she herself created. Her delusion led to her killing Naoyuki and his real girlfriend in the end as she could not accept that she was not his actual girlfriend. This characteristic classifies her as a yandere. Japan has unique archetypes based on their bizarre personalities; one area of this would be the dere characters. Dere comes from the word deredere (ㇿㇿㇿㇿ) which pertains to the “ how someone looks like when they are in love.” When dere is combined with other words, it shows the type of

person they are with regards to their romantic tendencies. Examples of this would be the tsundere, kuudere, and dandere. The tsundere-tsun coming from the word tsuntsun (ツンツン) which means aloof — for example, is known to be stuck-up and conceited on the outside but they are actually soft and very caring secretly. They often get embarrassed when it comes to feelings and showing their affection.

Yanderes, the archetype that matches Misaki, are known to be a bit crazy. Yan comes from yanderu (ヤンデル) which means “to be sick mentally”. On the outside, yanderes are seen to be cute and loving, essentially, they look normal because they keep that certain part of them inside. When it comes to who they love, they would do anything for them even going as far as violence. If someone were to get in between the person they like, they get extremely jealous when people try to get close to them. There are also two types of them, the obsessive and the possessive. Obsessive yanderes will inflict harm on anyone who will get close to their loved one while the possessive ones will willingly kill the special person they love as it is their way of making them “theirs” because no one else can have them. Misaki is exactly a yandere due to how she looked normal in the early parts of the one shot then becoming more violent and obsessed to the point of killing Naoyuki and his girlfriend making it so that he will be forever “hers.”

Bloody Valentine may have just been a one shot, but it already depicted some forms of culture and ideas that were evident in Japan. They were things not explicitly stated as they were ones that a reader can infer and observe based on the events in the story.