

VIVA ! ひめじ

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<People> Mr. Richard Hoskin

Richard comes from Surrey in Britain. It has been about two and half years since he came to Japan in June 2006. He came to live in Himeji last February after living in Mie and Osaka. Currently, he teaches English while learning Japanese in Egret Himeji.

Q: Could you tell us about Britain?

A: We have four seasons in Britain, but the temperature does not change so much like in Japan. Surrey is located about a ten minutes drive from Wimbledon. Regarding food, we often have meat, vegetables, and pie. Recently, Indian curry, Italian, and Chinese food have become popular.

Q: Why did you come to Japan ?

A: When I was in Britain I saw some TV programmes of Japan, in which I saw bright streets, crowded scramble crossings, and many skyscrapers, which arose my interest in Japan. Moreover, I have a strong image of Japan among Asian countries. I decided to go to Japan for my experience and cross-cultural experience.

Q: Do you like Japanese food ?

A: I like every Japanese food. I even have a rice cooker. Hot sake is very nice.

Q: Could you tell us your impression of Japan ?

A: I first visited Mie prefecture in Japan. There are a lot of mountains and rivers in Mie, so it was very different from the urban image of Japan, like Tokyo. Besides, I was surprised how Japanese people work very hard compared with British people.

Q: What are your hobbies ?

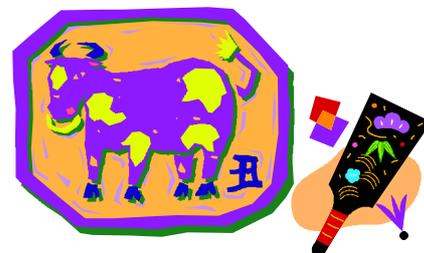
A: I used to play darts at pubs in Britain. I have a dart board in my house. There are some places you can play darts in Himeji, so I sometimes go there. It is quite fun to play darts since I can relax and communicate with Japanese people. I also like exercising at the gym.

Q: Do you have anything you want to do next?

A: The more I learn Japanese, the more I am interested in Japan. Through the words I can learn about Japanese culture and life, and also discover many new things. Not only traditional Japanese culture, but I am also interested in the advanced aspect of Japanese culture. Because I like to learn about the cultures of various countries around the world, I would like to visit India and Brazil too, but I will stay in Japan for a while.

☆☆ 2008-2009 Year-end and New Year's Events Information☆☆

New Year's events will be held in Himeji during the coming new year period as follows. Please note that some scheduled events and contents may change.



◇ Mt. Shosha (<http://www.shosha.or.jp/>)

On New Year's Eve, the all-night ropeway service will be available from 9:00pm, running every 15 minutes. The "Bells on New Year's Eve" event will take place at Engyouji-temple from 11:50pm. Also, from midnight on January 1st, there will be an event in which a Chinese zodiac ornament (2009 is the year of the cow) will be given to each attendee. Please remember to bring a flashlight with you because the way to Engyouji-temple is dark after getting off the ropeway.

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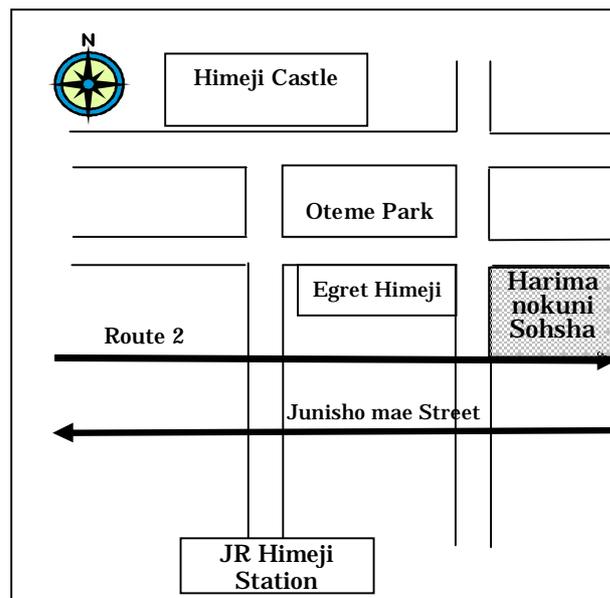
Take the number 8 Shinki-bus from in front of the Sanyo department store near the JR Himeji station north exit, and get off the bus at the last stop "Ropeway-Mae (in front of the ropeway)". It takes about 28 minutes. Fare: 260 yen.

◇ Himeji Castle

Admission is free from 7:00am to 4:00pm on January 1st, 2009. On January 2nd and 3rd, an eco-bag will be provided for the first 500 people who enter the castle.

◇ Harimanokuni Sohsha

On December 31st, 2008, they will have an event called the "Wanuke festival" in which people pass through a loop 3 meters in diameter three times, wishing for good health. Also in the new year, people visit this location to make their New Year's prayers (Hatsumode). A Hatsu Ebis festival is held on January 14th~16th, when many people visit to pray for a good year such as for safe driving and business success.



◇ The 35th All Japan Kite Flying Festival

The festival will be held at the Himeji racetrack (Himeji Koen Keibajyo) on January 11th, 2009. Over 800 kites with 80 kinds of kites from all over Japan, including Tsugaru-kites (from Aomori prefecture), Ren-kites and Mukade-kites, will be flying in the sky.

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Take the number 3, 62, or 86 Shinki-bus from in front of the Sanyo department store near the JR Himeji station north exit, and get off the bus at "Keibajyo-Mae (in front of racetrack)". It takes about 15 minutes. Fare: 200 yen.

The night watch bell and Hatsumode will also be held at various other temples and shrines in Himeji. It is also believed that seeing the first sunrise of the year is lucky. There are many places to see the sunrise around Himeji such as Mt.Shosha, Himeji castle, and Himeji port. Wherever you go, don't forget to keep yourself warm!

Toshikoshi-Soba Noodles

In Japan, there is a custom of eating buckwheat noodles on New Year's Eve.

This custom started in the middle of the Edo Period. It is well known that Toshikoshi-Soba is eaten in the hope of a thin, but long life, similar to the buckwheat noodles. There are various views on the origin of the custom. I would love to introduce some of them.

People eat buckwheat noodles to break a year of hardship and wish for good luck in the coming year because they are easy to break. It is common to wish for good luck and money, because goldsmiths used to use the paste of buckwheat powder to collect gold powder in the past.

● INGREDIENTS for 4 people:

Japanese soba (buckwheat) noodles	4 packs	
Boneless chicken leg	200g	
Scallion	80g	
Japanese mixed spices (七味唐辛子)	as you like	
Soup	soup stock	1,000cc
	light soy sauce	65cc
	mirin (sweet sake)	65cc
	sugar	a little



☆Procedure☆

1. Cut chicken leg into small, easy to chew pieces. Slice scallions using a diagonal cut.

2. Boil soup stock in a pan, and add soy sauce, mirin, and sugar to prepare the soup.

Add the cut chicken pieces in the pan and heat. Add the sliced scallions when the chicken is cooked.

3. Boil enough water in another pan to cook the soba.

Drain the boiled soba noodles well in a colander and transfer them to a warm bowl.

4. Put chicken and scallions on top of the soba noodles, and add the prepared soup.

Add Japanese mixed spices (七味唐辛子) if you like.

Some people eat zaru-soba* instead of toshikoshi-saba. During the cold season, we would prefer to eat soba with hot soup. Please choose your favorite toppings such as tempura prawns or vegetables. It is very convenient to use ready-made soup stock.

* Zaru-Soba : Dip cold noodles in a liquid sauce to eat.

Revised Traffic Law (Part 2)

As with the preceding issue, this issue continues to introduce the revised Traffic Laws for 2009. This issue features bicycle laws. Compared to cars, bicycles are more frequently used regardless of age, so please obey the following rules for fun and safety.

① Rules for riding a bicycle on the sidewalk:



- Riding a bicycle on the sidewalk is allowed when:
 - Traffic signs or lane markings indicate the sidewalk as a bicycle lane.
 - Operators are under 13 years old, elderly people aged 70 and over, or disabled people, etc.
 - Riding on the sidewalk is the only safe path of travel due to traffic circumstances.



- Pedestrians need to make an effort to avoid walking in “specified bicycle lanes”.

② Helmet Promotion

- Parents of children under 13 years old should encourage their children to wear a bicycle helmet.



Japan Traffic Safety Association
National Police Agency

Partial Revision to Hyogo Traffic Laws (This revised law came into force on July 1, 2008.)

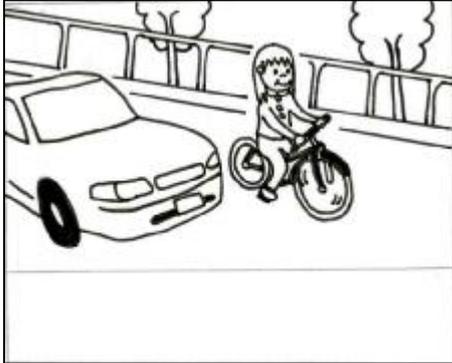
- Ban on the use of cell-phones while bicycling.
 - Never use a cell-phone to chat or send/ receive mail, etc., while riding a bicycle.
- Ban on the use of headphones or earphones while driving vehicles such as cars, motorbikes, or bicycles, etc.
 - Any disruptive actions that hinder your ability to hear traffic (e.g., a whistle or other signal sound) while driving vehicles (including bicycles) is prohibited, as described in the preceding issue.

Those who violate any of the above will be punished according to the Law, so please be careful.

Enjoy safe bicycle riding!!

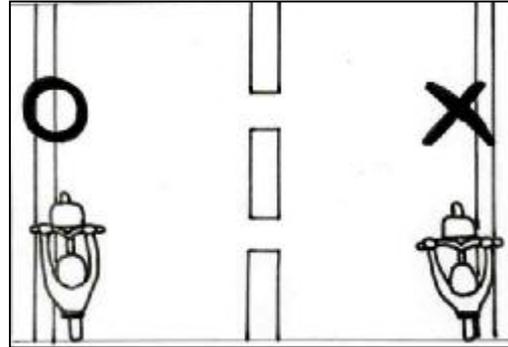
★Ride on streets, not sidewalks.

The bicycle is classified as a lightweight car under the Traffic Law, so ride on the street if a separate sidewalk is installed.



★Ride in the same direction as motor vehicles.

Drive as close to the left-side of the road way as possible.



★Yield to pedestrians on sidewalks.

- Drive only as fast as will allow you to be able to stop quickly.
- Stop in case of blocking foot traffic.
- Drive as close to the street as possible when riding on the sidewalk.

★Obey the following safety rules:

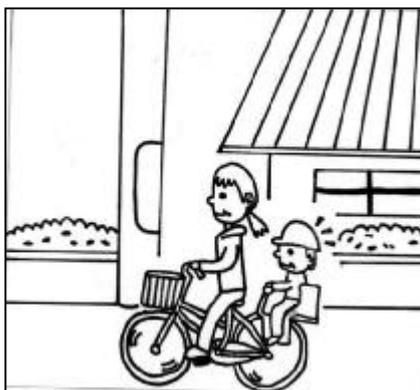
- Never drink and drive
- Never ride double unless you ride with children under 6 years old
- Never ride side-by-side
- Turn on the front and rear lamps at night
- Follow signal signs for pedestrians/ bicycles
- Take extra caution at intersections and stop at stop signs. Drive slow and never enter the crossing road without knowing of its hazards.



★Make children wear a bicycle helmet.

Parents have a responsibility to ensure that children wear helmets.

★Do not ride with an open umbrella.



☆☆☆ Information About the Himeji International Association ☆☆☆

The next set of Japanese language courses for foreign residents in Japan will be held beginning January 2009. Each course has a total of ten lessons to study Japanese conversation and grammar with beginner's textbooks.

●Tuition: 3,000 yen (ten lessons) ●Capacity: 20 (maximum) ●Deadline: up until 3 days before the first class

Beginner A		Beginner B		Beginner C		Beginner D	
『Minna no Nihongo I』 Unit 1 to 7		『Minna no Nihongo I』 Unit 8 to 16		『Minna no Nihongo I』 Unit 17 to 25		『Minna no Nihongo II』 Unit 36 to 50 (Sun) / Unit 42 to 50 (Wed)	
Sun	10:30~12:00 1/18~	Sun	13:00~14:30 1/18~	Sun	13:00~14:30 1/18~	Sun	10:30~12:00 1/18~
Wed	19:00~20:30 1/21~	Thu	19:00~20:30 1/22~	Thu	19:00~20:30 1/22~	Wed	19:00~20:30 1/21~

For additional information, please contact the Himeji International Association at the address below.

※※※ Editor's Postscript ※※※

There are only a few days left in this Olympic year of 2008.

The Nobel Prize award ceremony will be held in the middle of December in Stockholm, Sweden.

Maybe some of you would think about the issues of peace, literature, and economics. I personally find myself sometimes daydreaming about the future of the science world. The next, 28th edition of 「VIVA! ひめじ」 will be published in March 2009. We would love to hear your comments so that we may continue to provide an informative magazine for every reader.

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These names are used with the contributors' permission.

Their assistance is much appreciated.

We are always looking for translators and native speakers to assist us with translating and proofreading upcoming editions of 「VIVA! ひめじ」. If you are interested, please contact us at the following address:

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