

The Newsletters for foreign residents

VIVA ! ひめじ

Issued by Himeji International Association
newsletter editing volunteers.
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<People>

Mr. Mehmet Colayir

Colayir came from Sanliurfa in eastern Turkey. He has visited Japan twice before for sightseeing. Colayir has been living in Taishi Town (Hyogo) since December 2007, which is his third time visiting Japan. His wife is Japanese.

Question: What can you teach us about Turkey?

Answer: Turkey is located between two continents, Asia and Europe.

Because it has been influenced by both Asia and Europe, our culture, history and language represents both "Asian style" and "European style" in each region. Our country has famous world heritage sites such as Sultan ahmet mosque, Dolma bahce palace, Efes ruins, Capadocia and a huge group of statue on Nemrut mountain.

Q: How do you feel about Japan?

A: When I first visited Japan, I was amazed by the fact that nobody wore the "Chonmage" hairstyle or was walking around with swords, as I had a strong impression that that was what Japan was like. However, when I meet Japanese people, they are actually all polite and kind. Japanese people embrace traditional culture and festivals although the technology of Japan is state of the art and progressive. I also felt the education system is very good. In regards to Japanese language, I understand hiragana. I still have trouble with Japanese conversation though, but my wife and colleagues always kindly teach me, so I always appreciate that.

Q: What are you doing during your free time?

A: One of my interests is shopping in Kobe. I buy clothes, tea and cheeses there which are not available in Himeji. While I am there, I go to eat at a Turkish restaurant which my friend is managing. My other interest is visiting coffee stores in Himeji. With my wife, I drink coffee imported from all around the world a couple of times a week.

Q: Do you have a dream which you want to come true?

A: If I have kids in the near future, I want to convey the excellence of Japan to them.

So I plan to keep living here in Taishi Town. And I am considering opening European-style restaurant and coffee store here in Himeji.

Event Information (Spring 2010)

In Japan, nothing marks the arrival of spring more clearly than cherry blossoms. The history of cherry blossom viewing dates back to ancient times, when the nobility made a wish on cherry blossoms. Later on, it became popular among the public, becoming a time honored custom that has been closely linked to Japanese culture. Each spring, the cherry blossom season begins in Okinawa and moves gradually northward. Here is some information for you about popular spots in and around Himeji for cherry blossom viewing.



(Being based on the current information, the following may need to be confirmed beforehand.)

●Cherry Blossom Viewing in Himeji Castle: Early April

Himeji Castle Cherry blossom viewing party/Drum performance: April 3, Sat.

Night party: April 2, Fri. to April 11, Sun. 18:00-21:00 (Entry by 20:30)

<More information> Event Committee Tel: 079-287-3656

●Tatsuno Cherry Festival: Early April

Tatsuno Park: 25 min. walk from the JR Hon Tatsuno Sta.

It is said that in Tatsuno Park you can view 3000 cherry trees at a glance and is, along with the Himeji Castle, a popular spot for cherry blossoms. Samurai parade (on April 4), tea ceremony, Japanese classic music concert, and other events are scheduled.

<More information> Tatsuno Tourist Association Tel: 0791-64-3156

●Nostalgic Hina and Samurai Dolls Exhibition: Feb 27, Sat to June 8, Tues 10:00-17:00

The Japan Toy Museum: Walk east for 15 min. from the JR Kouro Sta.

Around 350 sets of hina and samurai dolls that were made during and after the Edo Period are displayed.

<More information> Refer to "Kodera Cycling Course" on page 3.

●Shellfish Gathering: April 1 to June 30

*Shirahama Beach: Approx. 10 min. walk from the Sanyo Dentetsu Shirahama-no-miya Sta.

<More information> Cooperative Association Tel: 079-245-5645

*Matogata Beach: Approx. 15 min. walk from the Sanyo Dentetsu Matogata Sta., Free shuttle service from Oshio Sta. (Advance reservations are required.)

<More information> Tel: 079-254-1964/1954

*Shinmaiko Beach: Approx. 8 min. drive from the Sanyo Dentetsu Aboshi Sta.

<More information> Tel: 079-322-0424

Participation fees (including facility charges) vary by location: 1200-1400 yen for adults, 900-1200 yen for children, and 400-750 yen for infants.

Shellfish festival, treasure hunting and other special events will be held on specific days.

<More information> Contact officials of each beach



Other Events

●Princess Sen's Botan Festival: April 24, Sat., 25, Sun. in Himeji Castle Sannnomaru Square Botan Garden

●Mt. Shosha Fresh Green Festival: May 2, Sun. to 5, Wed. around Engyoji Temple

Let's Go Out by Bicycle !



It is getting warm outside, so why don't you go out by bicycle and relax?

You might find some different scenery than usual.

The cherry blossoms will bloom soon in Japan. We would like to introduce some good spots for cherry blossom viewing where you can go by bicycle.

●JR Himeji station → Around Himeji castle

There are a lot of cherry trees around Himeji Art Gallery and Museum, and the moat. It is nice to look at the old streets around Himeji City Museum of Literature.

●JR Himeji station → Around Sanzaemonbori

There are row of cherry blossom trees along Canal Park, located in Sotoborigawa, the east side of Himeji City Hall. We recommend viewing them from the east side of the Disaster Control Center.

●JR Himeji station → Around Tegarayama Central Park

There are a lot of cherry blossom viewing spots in the Park: "Rock Garden" and the place with western buildings and towers. There is also a rotating observation deck that commands a panoramic view of the city, and a botanical garden (admission fee required).

●Cycling course along Yumesaki River

There is an approximately 20 km-long cycling course along both sides of Yumisaki River, that runs through the west part of Himeji.

From around the east side of Yobe Station on the JR Kishin line to Sanyo Yumesaki Gawa Station, many cherry blossom trees are planted along the river. On a fine day, people enjoy BBQ or fishing there.

●Koudera-cho Cycling Course

The course starts from Kouro station of JR Bantan line, then goes around Koudera folklore Museum, Japan Toy Museum and Koudera Park and Sports Center.

Free bicycle rental for sightseeing is available from 9:00 to 16:00 at Koudera Town Office, located at the east side of JR Kouro Station.

Koudera folklore Museum: 079-232-3522

Japan Toy Museum : 079-232-4388 <http://www.japan-toy-museum.org>

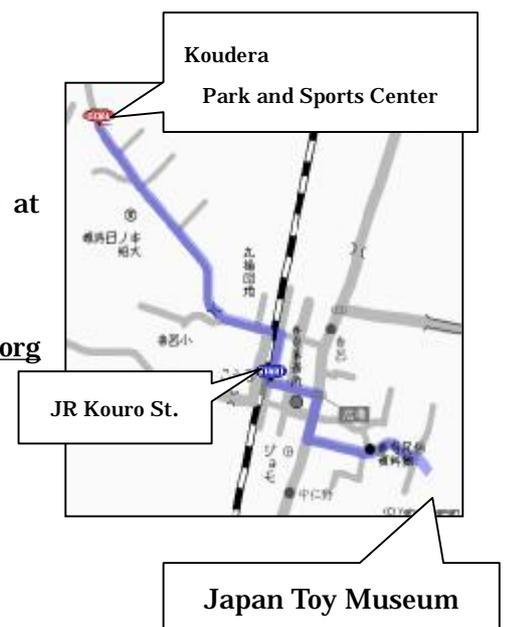
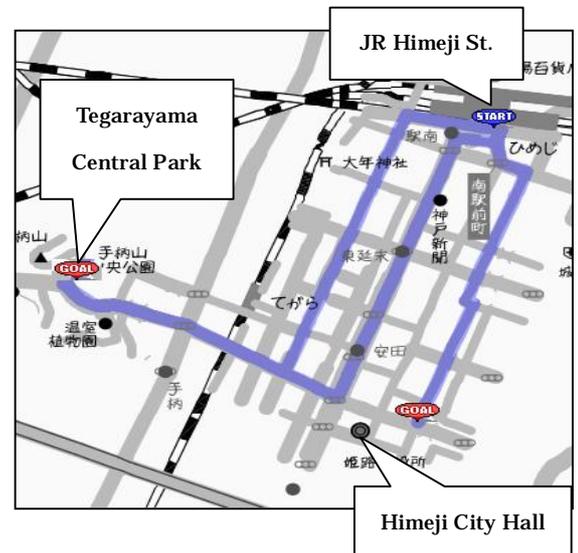
※※Bicycle Rental Information※※

Rent a bicycle for looking around Himeji city for free

Place for application : Himeji City Tourist Information Center

(The west side of Central concourse at JR Himeji Station)

Office hours : 9:00~16:00 <Inquires> : 079-287-3658



Green Eco-Point System

The “Green Eco-Point system” was introduced on May 15, 2009. If you buy home electronics that have a high energy-saving level, you’ll get eco points that can then be exchanged for various goods or services. You’ll get additional points if you purchase a new appliance to replace an old one for recycling.

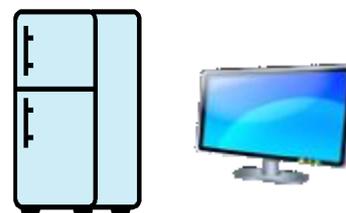
Carbon dioxide (CO₂) released from home electronics accounts for about 70% of the total CO₂ emissions from home, with half coming from air conditioners, refrigerators and TV sets. The Eco-Point system is expected to promote the purchase of energy-efficient appliances and produce the following positive outcomes:



1. Reducing CO₂ emissions from homes as a measure against global warming
2. Stimulating economic activities
3. Spreading T-DMB (Terrestrial digital media broadcasting)

Products applicable to the Eco-Point System

Air-conditioners, refrigerators, or T-DMB TV sets that are rated four stars (☆☆☆☆) or equivalent in terms of energy-saving and that are purchased on or after May 15, 2009



Goods and services for exchange

You can choose gift certificates, prepaid cards, or regional specialties (about 20,000 kinds), including energy-efficient LED light bulbs, rechargeable batteries and so on.

Implementation period

The period of implementation has been extended to the end of 2010 although the original period was up to the end of March 2010.

How to apply

Fill out an application form and send it to the eco point application office together with the following documents.

1. Warranty that specifies the date of purchase, name of the store, product number, and serial number
2. Receipt that specifies the date of purchase, name of the store, product number, and the name of purchaser
3. Copy of document processed for recycling of your old appliance (if applicable)

The form can also be filled out online.

Receiving a gift is supposed to take a month or two after application.

For more information, visit the Website of the Eco-Action-Point Program Office.

<http://www.eco-points.jp>



“Himeji-hatsu Sekai” (From Himeji to the World)

Those who have just arrived in Japan or stay in Japan for a long time will be at a loss as to where they could ask their problems. We would like to introduce a registered volunteer group in Himeji International Association, “Himeji-hatsu-Sekai”, that has offered consultation on everyday life for foreigners for about five years at Egret Himeji.



Everyday life consultation in multiple languages by “Himeji-hatsu Sekai”

Date : The second and fourth Sunday every month, 14 : 00~17 : 00

If you have any problems or issues you cannot understand, don't worry by yourself, but please come for a consultation.

Place : Consultation room (back of Library), 4F Egret Himeji

Languages : English, Chinese, Spanish, Portuguese, Vietnamese, easy Japanese

TEL : 079-287-0821 (only on the consultation day) E-mail: fromhimeji@msn.com

If necessary, we could accompany you to administrative institutions, hospitals, etc.

Examples of consultation

- Bureaucratic documents: explanation on what one cannot understand the information from government etc; revising documents which have been returned because of deficiency.
- Job Consultation: accidents on the job, procedure when one becomes unemployed, job hunting, residence, some useful points for getting a job (job information, how to get qualifications, how to write CV)
- Education, Japanese: how to enter school in the midterm; advance to high school; where one can find a Japanese class.
- Other : residential status, marriage, divorce, medical services, health insurance.

Policy

- Listen to the consulter, and sort out the problems together.
- Consultation is free. For specific consultation, we will ask local collaborators and group network.
- We would like to consider the contents of consultation, and to make an effort to offer you good support.

Future effort and foresight

- Human resource development: we would like to increase the number accompanying volunteers.
- Both consultants and interpreters attend training, workshops and case studies for considering the theme of consultation.
- Exchanges: join classes and events where foreigners get together, and become their good neighbors and friends.
- Cooperation and collaboration with other NPOs and institutions

Seeking Volunteers

Counseling staff needed now. Counseling is very satisfying.

We welcome anyone who is interested in helping foreigners in need. Regardless of age, gender, experience, or language.

Contact: “Himeji-hatsu Sekai” (representative, Toshio Takashima) TEL: 080-5360-4297

☆Information from Himeji International Association☆

※ Japanese Classes for Foreign Residents 2010 1st Term (10 lessons, May - July 2010)

You will learn basic Japanese, including grammars, conversation, reading and writing, from a professional teacher.

- 20 seats for each class (Beginner A -D)
- Course Fee: ¥3,000 (10 lessons)
- Location: Himeji International Exchange Center (Egret Himeji 4F, 68-290 Honmachi, Himeji)
- Application: Visit Himeji International Association Office (Egret Himeji 3F) after April.



※※※ Editor's Postscript ※※※※

After the long winter, spring is just around the corner. Apart from typical spring ingredients, such as baby bamboo shoots and spring cabbage, wakame sea weed is also the best in this season. Although dried wakame is available throughout the year, fresh wakame, which comes into season from February through May, is unparalleled in softness. It is said that wakame goes off in the beginning of summer when sea water becomes warmer. Why don't you try some fresh spring wakame to feel the season in the water?

The next issue of "VIVA! ひめじ No.33" will be out in June 2010. Your opinions and comments are always appreciated for our improvement and encouragement.

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(only names permitted are carried)

Special thanks to you all!

We are currently seeking translation assistants and native proofreaders. Please contact us at the office below if you are interested in this program.

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