

VIVA ! ひめじ

Himeji Cultural and International Exchange
Foundation newsletter editing volunteers
URL <http://www.himeji-iec.or.jp>

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<People> Ms. Phan Thi Minh Xuan

Ms Phan Thi Minh Xuan is from Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam. She has been living in Japan since 2003.

She sometimes gives lectures in a class called “DEMAEKOUZA” about Vietnamese culture and history and about peoples’ daily lives. Because she speaks Japanese so well, her class is very popular at community centers and schools. She is expected to give lectures more regularly this year.

Q: Tell us about your country.

A: Vietnam is a long and narrow country with land that stretches from north to south. The area of the country is about 90% the same as Japan. The southern area is near the equator, and its tropical climate has both a rainy and a dry season. The northern area has a temperate climate with four seasons. Vietnam's major industry is agriculture. These days, the number of foreign-capitalized companies has been increasing. Vietnamese citizens are affectionate and gentle. 80% of them are Buddhists.

Q: What brought you to Japan? And what was your first impression of Japan?

A: I met my husband when I was working for a Japanese company in Vietnam.

Soon after we got married, we moved to Japan. Japan is so advanced in industries and medicine that I have been living here comfortably. Even when I gave birth to my two children, I felt at ease.

Q: Tell us about Vietnamese cuisine. And what’s your favorite Japanese food?

A: The typical ingredients in Vietnamese cuisine are coconut milk and fish sauce, which aren’t common in Japan. I know some people don’t like these Vietnamese tastes. Yet I think many Japanese people get used to them. A few popular Vietnamese dishes are Pho (rice noodles), Banh xeo (Vietnamese style Okonomiyaki), Steamed ground pork, and Vietnam style curry (coconut curry).

My favorite Japanese foods are sushi, sukiyaki and nabe.

Q: What is your dream for the future?

A: Now both of my hands are always full with taking care of my two children. After they grow up, I’ll be able to take more time to study Japanese. Then I hope to get a job translating and interpreting.

Furthermore I’d like to teach more Japanese people how to cook Vietnamese cuisine.

Take a Stroll Around Town

We interviewed Yuko Hashimoto, who has been a part of the “Himeji Re-shop Project”

“Himeji Re-shop Project”

We have been working to renovate different areas of Himeji by turning old houses into new shops. By refurbishing old and damaged vacant houses, we will attract more people to rarely visited areas of town.

The focus of our activity is around Mt. Otokoyama, the small mountain west of Himeji Castle. There are now many shops as well as sightseeing spots such as a samurai residence, the Literature Museum, and more. It's a great place to take a stroll. A few of the area's other places of interest are listed below.



“Mushiko-mado”
Insect cage window

Town House Coffee Shop “Syouan”

This coffee shop is located in a renovated house that was built over 100 years ago. You can see architectural characteristics of folk houses of this era, such as insect cage windows and chests of drawers built into the stairway. Plus the cafe serves many dishes that were popular during old times. You can make yourself at home in this cafe while drinking Japanese tea in a traditional setting.

Address : 9 Zaimoku-cho (town), Himeji-shi

TEL : 079-297-0828 <http://syouan.net/>

31st March (Sat) 13:30~ The “Dancing of Dolls” kids' dance troupe will perform Japanese dancing.

Guesthouse “Engakudou”

This guesthouse offers affordable accommodation and is located just a few feet away from Himeji Castle. The site is called Yanagi-machi and the hotel maintains its old style. The owner of the house had been sharing residence with a soldier, in accordance with Japanese tradition. At this time, he decided to renovate the house. Now this site is used as a perfect accommodation spot for both domestic and international travelers.

Address : 8-2 Yanagi-machi (town) , Himeji-shi

TEL : 079-260-7373 <http://engakudou.com/index.html>



Otokoyama-Hachimangu Shrine · Senhime-Tenmangu Shrine

You can enjoy a lovely view of Himeji castle from the top of Mt. Otokoyama. This site is considered the best place to overlook Himeji-shi, especially at night. Otokoyama-Hachimangu Shrine is famous for the god who protects against evils. According to legend, Princess Sen also bowed toward the shrine every day.

There is also Senhime-Tenmangu Shrine, (a shrine dedicated to Sugawara Michizane's spirit) located halfway up the Mt. Otokoyama. There are so many people who take an interest in the shrine, not only because it's dedicated to the god of love, but also because the shrine is associated with Senhime (Princess Sen).

Address : 1-3 Yamanoi-cho
(town), Himeji-shi

Literature Museum · “Boukeitei”

The Himeji Literature (Bungaku) Museum is a masterpiece of modern architecture which was designed by the architect Tadao Ando. The “Boukeitei” contains forty tatami mats and a tea ceremony room that is reflective of Japanese houses from the Taisho period.

The “Boukeitei” is also a Japanese cultural asset because it was built as a secondary residence for businessman Sir Hamamoto in the early Taisho period. Wedding ceremonies often took place here in the past.

Address : 84 Yamanoi-cho (town), Himeji-shi
TEL : 079-293-8228 <http://www.city.himeji.lg.jp/bungaku/>

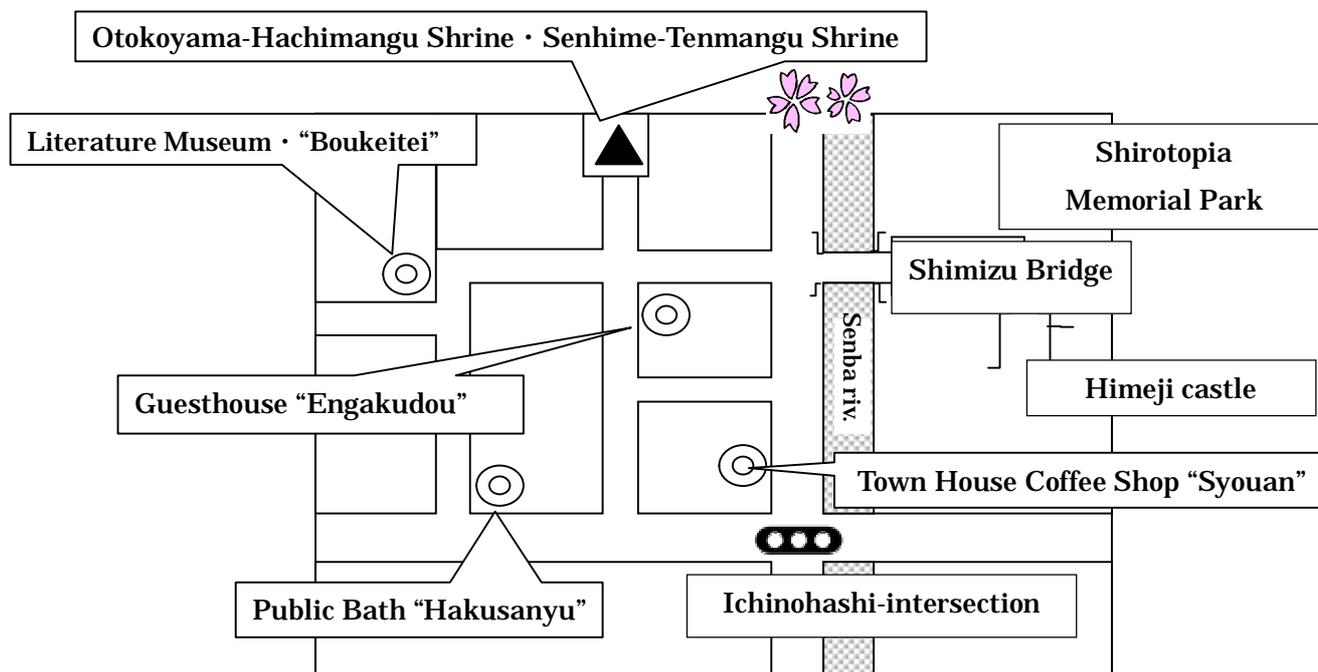
Public Bath “Hakusanyu”

This two story building was established in 1926. “Hakusanyu” is the oldest public bath in Himeji that is still open to the public.

Address : 8 Otsu, Takajou-machi (town) , Himeji-shi TEL : 079-293-4169

The neighborhood near the castle moat has plenty of trees and is suitable for taking a walk. The northern part of Shimizu Bridge has many beautiful rows of Sakura trees that make it an excellent cherry blossom viewing site. We definitely recommend that you take a walk in this area. We believe that you will be able to feel old townscape of the castle surroundings and the remains of history by walking slowly.

We hope that through our renovations, citizens and visitors will be able to enjoy not just the castle, but the surrounding areas as well.



As the amended law for the immigration control act will come into effect on July 9, 2012, the new residency management system will begin. This new system will be applied to foreign nationals residing legally in Japan for the mid- to long- term with resident status under the immigration control act, such as those married to a Japanese national as well as Japanese descendants “nikkei”, those working for an employer in Japan, as well as technical interns, students, and permanent residents. It will not apply to those visiting Japan for a short period of time as a tourist.

○ A special re-entry permit system

Foreign nationals who will be re-entering Japan within one year of their departure will not be required to apply for a re-entry permit, while under the current act they are required to do so whenever they depart from Japan. Please note that this permit system is applicable only to those who are to re-enter Japan to continue their activities in Japan. Therefore students whose period of school registration is over while abroad are not subject to this permit.

Be sure to apply for a re-entry permit in case you plan to re-enter Japan more than a year after your departure. The maximum validity period of a re-entry permit issued after implementation of the new system is to be extended from the current three years to five years.

○ The alien registration system will be abolished

The current alien registration certificates for mid- to long-term residents will be exchanged for a resident card at regional immigration offices. The certificates will be deemed, for a certain period, to be equivalent to the resident card until the card is issued. Please note that the period depends on the resident's status and age as of July 9. Mid- to long-term residents will be asked to exchange their certificates for a resident card when filing an application at a regional immigration office.

○ A new resident registration system for foreign residents will begin

Beginning in May, the local municipality will provide each applicable foreign resident with a provisional residence record. Please check it with the information on the registration card to see if all the details are correct. If there are any errors, you will be able to notify your municipality under the current system. When you move to another municipality on and after July 9, you will be required to give notice and obtain a “move out certificate” before moving to a new area. Under the new system, foreign residents will be listed on the basic residence record. The basic resident registration will list all members of a single household including the one that consists of both Japanese and foreign nationals. Since illegal residents cannot be registered under the new system, any foreign national illegally staying in Japan is advised to visit the nearest regional immigration office to follow the necessary procedures.

< For Inquiries >

Himeji Port Branch office, Kobe District Immigration Office,

Osaka Regional Immigration Bureau TEL : 079-235-4688

Himeji City Citizen's Section for Alien Registration TEL : 079-221-2355

< For Further Information >

Immigration Bureau of Japan web site http://www.immi-moj.go.jp/newimmiact_1/en/

To Protect Yourself from Tsunami Disaster

Since Japan is prone to natural disasters, it is necessary to be always prepared. The Himeji City Regional Plan for Disaster Prevention indicates specific measures against earthquakes and storm or flood disasters. Here we will introduce designated evacuation routes and evacuation places, and a few measurements for Tsunami disaster preparedness.

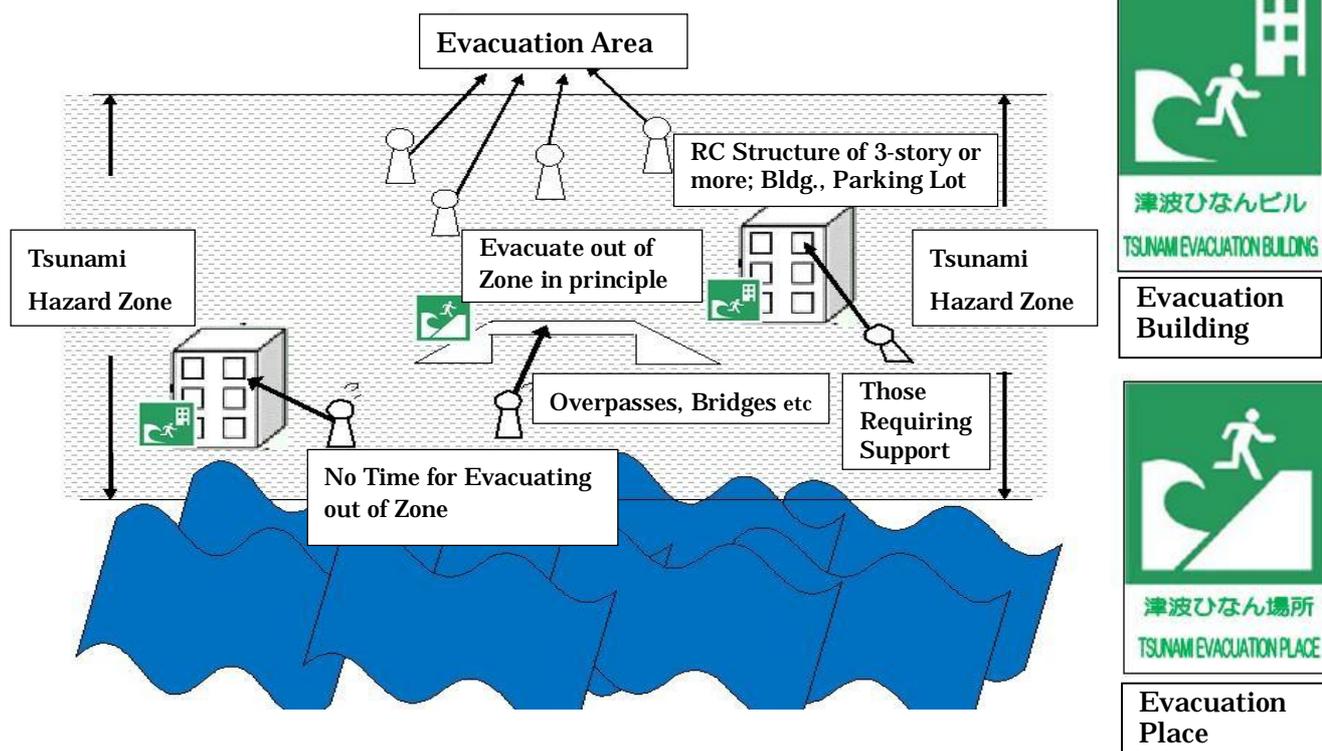
We hope to take measures against the predicted Tonankai /Nankai earthquake that is likely to occur in the early 21st century. The first wave of Tsunami is estimated to arrive in 97 to 130 minutes following the earthquake. When a Tsunami Warning/Advisory is issued, citizens must evacuate on foot to upland areas; roughly north of Route 250 for people living in Himeji, outside of each designated hazard zone which is subject to evacuation.

Your municipality also designates temporary evacuation places for those who are unable to evacuate to the above mentioned safety areas. Among others are “TSUNAMI-HINAN-BIRU (Tsunami Evacuation Building)” such as schools and buildings and “TSUNAMI-HINAN-BASHO (Tsunami Evacuation Place)” such as overpasses and bridges.

When an earthquake of maximum seismic intensity of 5.0 or more occurs, a Tsunami Warning/Advisory concurrently with Early Earthquake Warning will be broadcast through TV, radio, cellular phone, and other media outlets. In these cases, please take appropriate actions in accordance with the media information.

It is important to memorize the locations evacuation places and routes that you think are easy and safe to evacuate as well as the time required for evacuation by referring to the Himeji City website on Tsunami Evacuation Facilities Prospectus.

〈Inquiry〉 Risk Management Bureau at Himeji City Hall TEL:079-223-9522



Information about the Himeji Cultural and International Exchange Foundation

“VIVA! ひめじ” Volunteer Recruitment!

We issue “VIVA! ひめじ” four times a year for foreign residents at The Himeji Cultural and International Exchange Foundation. The newsletter is made possible by volunteer journalists who write the articles and editors who translate this article into six languages: English, Chinese, Vietnamese, Spanish, Portuguese and Japanese.

We are looking for volunteers who can edit and translate for us at “VIVA! ひめじ”.
Please contact us if you are interested in or have any questions.

Editor's Postscript

One year has passed since The Tohoku Earthquake tragedy. People from all over Japan and the rest of the world helped us through these difficult times. Through this tragedy, we were able to remember how warm and generous humankind can be. Everyone, spring is coming soon. We wish we have a good year full of smiles and laughter. “Viva! ひめじ” No.41 is issued in June. Please keep an eye out for it. We would love to hear your opinions and feeling about the newsletter. To share, please contact us below.

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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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