

VIVA!

ひめじ

English

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Himeji Cultural and International Exchange

Foundation newsletter editing volunteers

URL <http://www.himeji-iec.or.jp>

<People> Ms. Watanabe Le

Ms. Watanabe is from Cam Ranh Tỉnh Khánh Hòa, in South Vietnam.

Now, she lives in Himeji with her husband and two children because her eldest daughter left the house for her marriage.



Q: How did you come to Japan?

A: I left home with my uncle when I was 8 years old, but before I knew it, I was in a small boat.

After the boat had drifted about, I was helped by Japanese vessel and I came to Japan without knowing anything. After that, I became the adopted daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Watanabe. I met my husband at Vietnamese exchange meeting, and came to Himeji when I married him.

Q: How did you feel about your life in Japan?

A: I had no friends that I could ask for advice even when I had troubles, because I was the only Vietnamese person at school.

Q: What do you do now?

A: I support Vietnamese children at elementary and junior high schools in Himeji 2-3 times a week. I also give Vietnamese people some advice about daily life. I have always thought that I want to do something for people, because many people have helped me in the past. So, I like my current job. I want many people to know that there is a place where they can ask for some advice; and I want to continue this work.

★ Vietnamese counseling center

Jotomachi Sogo Center (Tue), Takagi Sogo Center (Wed), Minonosato Exchange Center (Thu), 3rd floor, Egret Himeji (Fri)

<Phone number> 080-6158-4445

<Time> 1:00 pm ~ 5:00 pm

<Consultation fee> Free

Please make a reservation on the phone in advance.



New Year's Decorations

Japan has a custom of inviting “*Toshigamisama*” home and celebrating the New Year. “*Toshigamisama*”, one of the Japanese deities, comes over at the beginning of the year and promises a family’s good health and rich harvest for the year. Let me tell you how to welcome the deity with New Year’s ornaments.

●*Kadomatsu*

This is a new year’s pine decoration made up of pine and bamboo branches, placed in front of a house or at its gate. It is a mark for *Toshigamisama*, or the deity, to be able to reach the house without getting lost.

●*Shimekazari*

This consists of objects such as new straw, *Urajiro* (a kind of fern), *Yuzuriha* (false daphne), and *Daidai* (a kind of orange). Similar to *Kadomatsu*, this ornament is displayed to greet the deity. It is said that we can keep evils from entering the house by placing it at the entrance hall.



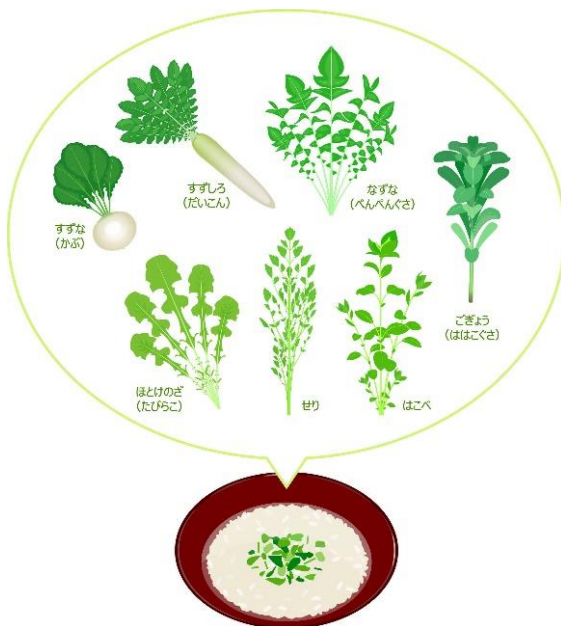
●*Kagamimochi*

This is an offering of a set of two round rice cakes to entertain the deity. A big set is displayed in the alcove or the entrance hall. A smaller one is placed in the dining room or the family room. We pray for the health and happiness by eating the cake with family members on the day called *Kagamibiraki*. (Jan.11)



【The duration and disposal of decorations】

The decorations are generally displayed from December 28-January 7. Its period can vary in different regions. Afterwards, the ornaments are burnt at a Shinto shrine around January 15. This event is called “*Tondoyaki*” or “*Otakiage*”.



Let’s eat while praying for good health on Jan. 7! How to cook “Porridge with spring herbs”

☆Seven spring herbs☆

Seri, Nazuna, Gogyo, Hakobera, Hotokenoza, Suzuna (turnip), *Suzushiro* (Japanese radish)

- (1) Wash the rice and soak it in water.
- (2) Put a little salt in boiling hot water, and boil all the herbs quickly. Cut them into 1cm pieces after cooling them with cold water.
- (3) Pour the rice and broth into an earthenware pot, close the cap and put it on high heat. When boiled, lower the temperature and cook it for 30-40 minutes.
- (4) Add the herbs and season to taste with the salt. Now it’s ready to serve.

Ingredients for four portions
Rice: 1 cup (180cc)
Broth: 4 cups (800cc)
Spring herbs: As desired
Salt: 1 teaspoon

☆☆How about enjoying your trip with a Youth 18 Ticket☆☆

◆With a “Youth 18 Ticket”, you can travel to a far destination at a reasonable cost. But, the usage period is limited.

1. No age restriction

This special ticket is sold at locations such as JR “Green Windows”, and travel centers. It’s named “Youth 18 Ticket”, but it’s valid for all ages. There is no discounted version for children.



2. Price

The price is 11,850 JPY for five days. (One ticket is valid for five days). It can be used on JR railways, and some buses and ferries. The value of one day for one person is 2,370 JPY. If your trip would exceed this amount, this ticket is a good deal. One ticket can be used by many people simultaneously.

(Examples)

- One person could use the ticket on five different days
- Five people could use the ticket on a single day

3. Unlimited transfer for one day.

You can ride as many trains as you want for one day, on all JR lines in Japan. Each day ends at midnight. But, if you are on a train which runs over midnight, it is valid until the next stop only. After that, an additional fee will be charged.

4. Train types

The ticket can be used on local, rapid, and special rapid trains.

You cannot use it on bullet trains, limited-express or express trains.

5. Usage dates

For the winter season, you can buy the ticket from December 1st to December 31st. You can use it from December 10th to January 10th. The dates for the spring and summer seasons have not been announced yet. In addition, the Green Window does not open early in the morning. So, I recommend purchasing the ticket in advance.

※※Examples of round trips※※

In the case of the special rapid train, travelling between Himeji and Kyoto is a good deal; it’s normally 4,540 JPY.

It’s also possible to go from Himeji to Nagoya; by taking trains in the early morning, you can enjoy up to five hours in Nagoya, before coming back.

How about creating your own original journeys?



Winter Event Information

We recommend the following events taking place from New Year's to early spring.

❁Harimano-kuni Sohsha new Ebisu Festival (January 14 to 16)

This festival is popular among Himeji residents as 'Himeji's Ebessan'. In the shrine yard, there will be sales of bamboo grasses and a dedication of a bigeye tuna for prospering business. The bamboo grass is a plant with strong vitality; the leaves are a lush green, and stay green even during winter, so it is regarded as a good luck charm. As for the bigeye tuna, it is said that your money luck rises if you attach money to it. On the 15th, a parade of "Hoe Kago Gyoretsu", carrying the good fortune girl, will depart from Sohsha and go around Nikaimachi shopping street, raising the "Hoe Kago" high while shaking violently to pray for the booming economy.



❁Setsubun festival / demonic chasing

Setsubun is known for "Demon"s, who have a role of invading misfortune and inviting happiness. Demons' dancing and bean-throwing rites are done in various places so that the visitors come to have luck.

January 18th: Shoshazan Engyo-ji

February 3rd: Harimanokuni Sohsha, Hiromine Jinja, Himeji Jinja

February 11th: Masuiyama Zuigan-ji

❁World Heritage Himeji Castle Marathon 2018 (Started at 9:00 am on February 11)

Many runners will run a 42.195 km course around Himeji City, starting at Otemae Street, and finishing at Himeji Castle Sannomaru Square. Many foreign runners will participate. (Registration has already closed). In addition to spectators being able to cheer along the roadside, food and product exhibitions and stage events will be held near the start and finish points.

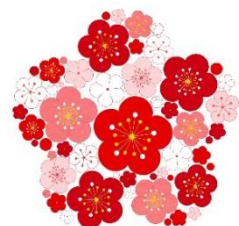


❁Kokoen the Plum Blossom Exhibition (February 18th ~ March 9th)

At various places in the garden, you can appreciate colorful plum blossoms such as crimson, white, and bonsai plums.

<Open time> 9:00 am - 5:00 pm (last entry: 4:30 pm)

<Admission fee> Adults: 300 yen, Students: 150 yen

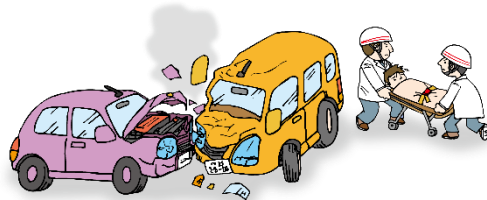


◆◆ Actions after causing a traffic accident ◆◆

If you have caused a traffic accident, you should rescue the injured by calling for an ambulance, and then call the police.

1. First of all, check if anybody is injured. On finding the injured, call 119 for an ambulance.

2. Please call 110 for the police station to report the accident resulting in injury and/or in property damage. This action is requested by the law. If you act against it, you will be punished with imprisonment of up to three months, or with a fine of up to 50 thousand yen. As a precaution, you should see a doctor for medical advice even in the case of a slight injury. Moreover, you should try to take pictures and/or video of the circumstantial evidence at the time of the accident.



3. Contact your insurance company or agency according to your contract.

The transportation cost of the damaged cars and the cost of a rental car may be paid by the insurance company depending on the contract.

4. Confirm the names and addresses of the injured party.

Please get the information of the names, addresses, and phone numbers of the injured party so that you can contact them at a later time. This information is required for a private settlement and for an apology. If eyewitness's accounts of the accident are available, confirm their names, addresses and phone numbers.

※ The insurance company will inspect the damage and assess causes to pay for reparations.

The inspection and assessment are required to decide the percentage of the liability arising from negligence. The compensation for property damages will be negotiated.

But in the case of an accident resulting in injury or death, the negotiation for settlement out of court will be made for the medical expenses and consolation money, as well as the damages. If the negotiations are not successful, the only way to settle is in court.

Recently, bicycle accidents have been increasing in number. Regulations are stricter, and the person who caused the accident must pay the injured party much more money than before.

A slight carelessness will result in a fatal mistake. Always keep traffic safety in mind and be careful to prevent any kind of traffic trouble.



☆Information about the Himeji Cultural and International Exchange Foundation☆

■The 13th Japanese Speech contest

- Date and Time: Sunday, February 25th, 1:00 pm-4:00 pm
- Place: I-messae (inside the Gender Equality Promotion Center) at Egret Himeji, 3rd floor
- Sponsor: Himeji Cultural and International Exchange Foundation
- Content: People from other countries who live, study and work in Himeji will present their thoughts and feelings from their daily life in Japanese. As we listen to the speech, we can be surprised by viewpoints that are unique to foreigners, and find out about good points of Japan. This event creates a big sensation every year. We plan to include performances such as song and dance. As well as Gold, Silver and Bronze, there is an "Audience prize" which is selected by an audience vote. So please come and listen to the enthusiasm of the speakers.
- Inquiry: Himeji Cultural and International Exchange Foundation (see below for details)

※※※ Editor's Postscript ※※※

In recent years, in countries in the Middle East and Southeast Asia, you see families on TV with young children are evacuating to foreign countries as refugees, because of civil war or racial conflicts. I assume that the trouble of being able to adjust to a new country will be an ordeal, even though they reached a safe place. I wish for world peace by continuing patient talks in order to prevent war which destroys everything.

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These names are used with the contributors' permission.

Their assistance is much appreciated.

You can read back numbers of "VIVA! ひめじ" at the website of the Himeji Cultural and International Exchange Foundation (International Exchange Section)(<http://www.himeji-iec.or.jp/>).

The next issue of "VIVA! ひめじ" will be available in March. Don't miss it! We invite your comments and suggestions.

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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