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

### <People> Ms. Kamatani Shizuka (China)



Ms. Kamatani is from Shenyang city, the provincial capital of the Liaoning province in China. She has lived in Himeji since 2001. She works as a Chinese counselor at the Foreign Counseling Center of Himeji every Tuesday from 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM.

Q: What kind of place is the Liaoning province?

A: The Liaoning province is one of three provinces located in the North East of China. It gets very cold in the winter (-20°C) and very hot in the summer (35°C). When I was a child, I used to skate on a river covered with ice in the winter. The Northeastern provinces are famous for having the best rice in China, but I think Japanese rice is better than the rice from Liaoning.

Q: What brought you to Japan?

A: My father really likes Japan and he can speak a little bit of Japanese. At my father's recommendation, I participated in a short-term study abroad program at a university in Okayama. During this time, I saw some photos of the four seasons of Himeji Castle at the Ohara museum. I was fascinated by those photos and wished to live in Himeji. After that, I moved to Himeji and got married to my kind husband.

Q: What do you think about Japan?

A: Before coming to Japan, I was afraid of Japanese people and was very worried about studying in Japan. However, I had an experience that changed my mind. One time, I went to a museum and left my bicycle unlocked with my bag full of money (my tuition money etc.) in the basket. When I returned from the museum there was an old man waiting near my bicycle. He told me that I had left something and had been watching it while I was away. When I checked the inside of my bag nothing was taken, and I thought how tender-hearted and kind Japanese people are.

Q: What is your dream?

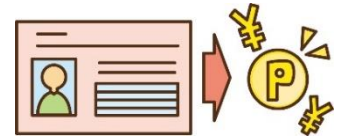
A: There are few opportunities for Chinese people to communicate each other, so someday I want to create a place where many people can gather and enjoy each other's company. I hope we can talk about our troubles, cook together, and work as volunteers at this place.

## My Number Card – More Ways to Use Your Card!

You can now use your My Number Card (Individual Number Card) to collect points while shopping (Myna Point) and will be able to use it as a Health Insurance card. Please see below for more information.

### ■ What is Myna Point?

- Myna Point is a service associated with the use of your My Number Card where you can receive 25% of the amount spent when using a registered cashless payment service, charging money, or shopping. Applicants are eligible to receive up to 5,000yen worth of points per person. Some services give additional points.



- You can submit your registration for the Myna Point service via smartphone, PC, and through terminals located at supermarkets, convenience stores, and post offices.
- The Myna Point service is valid until March, 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021 or until the maximum budget for the service is reached. However, there is a possibility that the deadline will be extended.

### ■ Use your My Number card in place of a health insurance card

- When: from March 2021. You must register your My Number card in advance in order to use it as a health insurance card. You are not required to register; you can continue using your health insurance card separately from your My Number card as well.
- Where: applicable only at medical institutions and pharmacies that have installed an online confirmation system for health insurance qualification. The list of the institutions with the online system will be uploaded on the website of Ministry of Health and Welfare in the upcoming months.
- Why: advantages of using the My Number card as health insurance card are as follows:
  - ① In the event of a job change, marriage, or move – you can continue using your My Number card at medical institutions or pharmacies instead of having to wait until the revised health insurance card is received in the mail.
  - ② Quick confirmation of the health insurance qualification.
  - ③ When applying for the High-Cost Medical Expense Benefit, you do not need to go through the complicated procedure, or pay more than the limit.
  - ④ It will allow an individual to confirm their personal information involving examinations and current drug prescriptions, which will improve medical treatment and the quality of health management.
  - ⑤ Medical spending exemption procedures will be simplified.


※④, ⑤ are provided on Mynaportal. Mynaportal is an online webtool for searching personal information or history of administrative procedures after registration.

## ■What is an My Number Card?

- An “My Number” is a 12-digit number issues to all citizens and residents of Japan, including resident foreigners, and is used for office procedures regarding social security, taxation, and disaster purposes (under the law.)
- An My Number Card is a plastic card which displays the bearer’s name, address, date of birth, sex, My Number, and ID photograph. The card is embedded with an IC chip and can be used as an identification card for identity verifications as well as to simplify procedures at government agencies, local public bodies, or financial institutions. It is also used to prevent illegal activity.
- Validation period for My Number Card is 10 years (5 years for persons under 20 years of age) and 5 years for a card with the electric certificate (IC chip) .


## ■How to apply for an My Number Card

PC, Smartphone



Fill out the application form on the site and send it with an ID photo attached.

Mail



Mail the application form with an ID photo attached to municipal office.

Applications can also be submitted through the ID Photo booth



- You can receive your My Number Card via secure mail (delivered to your home address) or it can be picked at the municipal office (advance reservation required) with an identity verification document, such as a driver license.

## ■Services you can access with your My Number Card

- Identification (opening an account at financial institution, issuing a passport, etc.)
- Various certifications can be issued at convenience stores (Resident’s card, seal certificate, etc.)
- Various administrative procedures (final tax returns including e-Tax, etc.)

Due to the Pandemic, you may now be required to use the My Number Card in order to provide identification, implement online administrative procedures, and establish or maintain certifications electronically. Please be sure to confirm the latest information when using your My Number Card.

## Do you know Himeji's specialty, *Renkon* (Lotus Roots)?

*Renkon* is used in the New Year's dish, *OSECHI*, for good luck. When sliced, the holes represent symbols of an unobstructed view of the future. Ibaraki prefecture is commonly known as the origin of *renkon*, but in actuality, southwestern Himeji is also famous for cultivating it. We spoke with Mr. Funabiki who produces *renkon* in Otsu-ku Kanbee-cho.



### ◆ *Renkon* season is from October to March

*Renkon* comes from the underground stem of the lotus plant. Because it is cultivated in a large pond, we pay close attention to the amount of the water.

We begin harvesting *renkon* at the end of August, when the lotus flowers finish blooming. “New *Renkon*” is harvested when the leaves are green and is characterized by its crunchy texture. From October to March, when the leaf dies and the stem is matured, soft and sticky *renkon* is harvested.

### ◆ Different ways to enjoy *renkon*.

My family often eat *renkon tempura*, which is simply breaded and fried *renkon*. I recommend boiling and adding flavor to the *renkon* before frying it.

*Renkon* chips is another interesting way to eat *renkon*. You make the chips by cutting the *renkon* into round slices or into long, thin pieces, like French fries, and fry it. You can also enjoy *renkon*'s original flavor and crunchiness by adding diced or grated *renkon* into hamburger steaks or *okonomiyaki*.

*Renkon* can go bad quickly when exposed to air so make sure to wrap it and put it in the fridge.

### Let's cook! “Vinegar *Renkon*” – A Classic New Year's Dish

Ingredients *renkon* 70g  
★vinegar 50cc  
★sugar 1/2 tbsp  
★a little salt, light soy sauce  
1 red pepper







- ① Cut the *renkon* into 7mm round slices and boil them.
- ② Cool the boiled *renkon* in a cold water and drain.
- ③ Put ★into pan, simmer, turn off heat and cool.
- ④ Put ③, the red pepper cut into round slices, and ② (cooled *renkon*) in a container to marinate.
- ⑤ Marinate for a half day. The dish is ready when the *renkon* has a flavor.

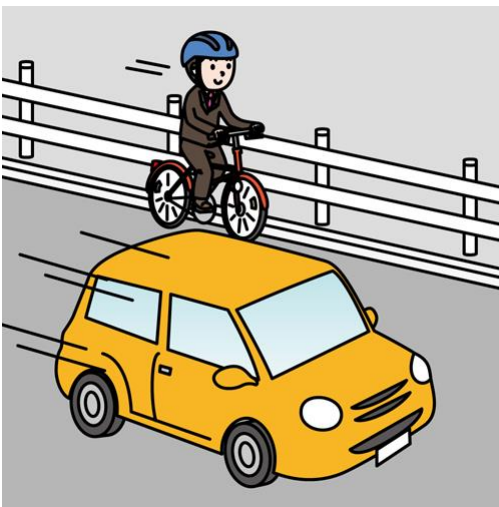
※You can purchase *renkon* harvested in Himeji at “Shunsaigura”, a direct sales store of JA Hyogo West, or at supermarkets where local vegetables are sold.

# Ride Your Bicycle Safely

Bicycles are convenient to all ages but in recent years, the number of fatal accidents has been increasing due to reckless bicycle riding. Reckless bicycle riders are subject to penalty under the Violation of Traffic Rules law which includes classes on riding a bicycle, fines, or penal servitude. Please be aware of the traffic law and ride your bicycle safely.

Traffic Law Penalties	
	...Less than 5 years of penal servitude or a fine of less than 1 million Yen.
	...Less than 3 months of penal servitude or a fine less than 50,000 Yen.
	...Fine under 50,000 Yen.
	...Fine under 20,000 Yen.

## « 5 Rules on How to Ride a Bicycle Safely in Japan. »



### (1) Ride on designated paths

Traffic law regulations classify bicycles as light vehicles. Bicycles are to be ridden on the road unless there are signs indicating it's okay to ride on the sidewalk.

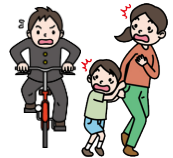
### (2) "Keep Left" when riding a bicycle.

Ride in the direction of traffic.

### (3) Pedestrians have priority on the sidewalks.

Ride slowly when riding on the sidewalks.

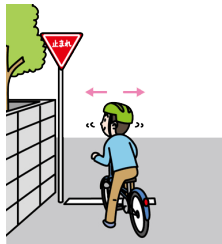
When riding on the sidewalk, slow down and pass pedestrians at a distance.



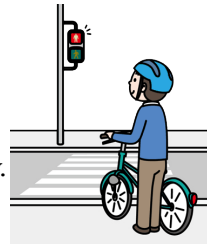
### (4) Follow the Rules for Protection.



Turn on your lights at night.



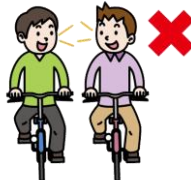
Stop at Intersections.  
Check for safety.



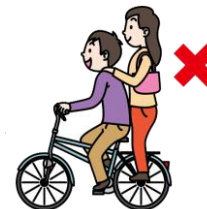
Obey the traffic lights.



Don't ride after drinking alcohol.



Don't ride side-by-side



Riding double is prohibited.



### (5) Children must have a Helmet on.

This includes toddlers riding in the child seat.



### Distracted riding is also prohibited

- Smart phones / Mobile phones
- Earphones / Headphones
- Umbrellas



☆Announcements from the Himeji Cultural and International Exchange Foundation☆

■We are accepting content material for VIVA! Himeji!

In order to be more useful to you, VIVA! Himeji is looking for recommendations on topics that you would like for us to cover in the magazine. Please submit your topic recommendations regarding Japan's daily life, traditions, etc. to the contact information at the bottom of this page.



◇◆◇Letter from the Editor◆◆◇

2020 was a year spent being at the mercy of COVID-19. Instead of the usual articles covering events and festivals, we published articles about the virus and virus prevention. We held an editorial meeting online as well. Being that it was our first attempt we experienced some confusion and missed being able to meet in person. We hope to publish fun and entertaining articles again in 2021.



**Disaster Prevention Vocabulary of This Issue**

非常 <sup>ひじょう</sup> *Hijou*: Emergency

Ex) 非常口 <sup>ひじょうぐち</sup> *Hijou-guchi*: Emergency Exit

非常持ち出し品 <sup>ひじょうもちだしひん</sup> *Hijou-mochidashi-hin*: Emergency supplies

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These names are used with the contributors' permission.  
Their assistance is much appreciated.

You can read previous issues of "VIVA! ひめじ" on the Himeji Cultural and International Exchange Foundation's website (International Exchange Section) (<https://www.himeji-iec.or.jp/>).

The next issue will be available in March 2021.

We welcome your comments and suggestions. We are also looking for translators and native speakers to assist us with translating and proofreading upcoming editions. If you are interested, please contact us at the following address.

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