

# VIVA! ひめじ

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Himeji Cultural and International Exchange Foundation  
– newsletter editing volunteers

## Let's Play in the Park ②

### Eco-park Aboshi

There is a lawn area in Eco-park Aboshi. There is also a ground golf course, an open space with a ship-shaped playground structure, and an artificial hill with a great view. You can reach these areas along a pedestrian path. Furthermore, you can see the industrial complex on the opposite shore. The factory night view is also popular.

The Aboshi Health Promotion Center, “REFRE CHOSA,” is equipped with spa facilities, a heated pool, and a training gym. These facilities are available for a fee. “REFRE CHOSA” uses heat generated from waste incineration.



A lawn area in Eco-park Aboshi

**Address:** 4-1 Aboshihama, Aboshi-ku, Himeji City

**Access:** A shuttle bus runs from Sanyo Aboshi Station to Eco-park Aboshi. It is about 4 kilometers from the Hamada Substation intersection on Route 250.

**Parking:** 250 cars (free)

### Chosha-mae Park (Kodera town)

This park is located across from the Himeji City Kodera Office on the north side, in a quiet residential neighborhood. There is a scenic plaza with tiled walkways extending in all directions.

There are two play structures, and further back you will find a slide and swings. Benches are placed throughout the park, making it a perfect place for children to play or to take a break during a walk. There are also restrooms in the park.



Chosha-mae Park

**Address:** 6 Koro, Kodera-cho, Himeji City

**Access:** About a 2-minute walk from Koro Station or a 2-minute walk from the Koro Ekimae Bus Stop (Shinki Bus)

**Parking:** 15 spaces (free)

## Issuing Ao-kippu When a Cyclist Violates Traffic Rules

In Japan, bicycles are treated as vehicles under the Road Traffic Act. This means that cyclists must follow traffic rules in the same way as automobiles and motorcycles. Violating traffic rules while riding a bicycle can lead to serious accidents.

From April 1, 2026, an Ao-kippu (blue ticket) system will be introduced for bicycle traffic violations. This system applies to cyclists aged 16 and over. When a cyclist commits certain traffic violations, a police officer may issue an Ao-kippu.

By following traffic rules properly, we can help prevent accidents and ride bicycles safely.

### What is an Ao-kippu (Blue ticket)?

An Ao-kippu (blue ticket) is a notice issued by the police for traffic violations.

If a cyclist aged 16 or older violates traffic rules, the police may issue this blue ticket.

The fine must be paid within seven days, starting from the day after the violation.

If the fine is paid within this period, no criminal punishment will be imposed.



### Examples of Bicycle Traffic Violations

#### Using a mobile phone while riding



**Fine: 12,000 yen**

#### Entering a railroad crossing when prohibited



**Fine: 7,000 yen**

**Improper lane use**  
(such as riding on the wrong side of the road)



**Fine: 6,000 yen**

**Ignoring traffic signals**



**Fine: 6,000 yen**  
(5,000 yen for flashing signals)

**Violations (5,000 yen fine each)**



**Failure to stop  
at a stop sign**



**Using earphones  
while riding**



**Riding without a light  
at night**

**Violations (3,000 yen fine each)**



**Riding with two people  
on one bicycle**



**Riding side by side  
(riding abreast)**



**Find more details  
From The MPD official**

## Himeji, a City Filled with Music ♪

Himeji City aims to be a city filled with music and dreams. The city has a variety of venues, including “Arcrea Himeji”, which opened in 2021, “Caspa Hall”, and “Parnassus Hall”, which features a pipe organ. In addition, various groups are actively engaged in musical activities throughout the city. Last year, a guitar and mandolin specialty store—one of only six in Japan—also opened. Why not enjoy music in a relaxed and welcoming atmosphere?

### Arrival of the Expo’s Automated Piano in Himeji

This grand piano was exhibited at the Austrian Pavilion of the Osaka–Kansai Expo. It was purchased by Himeji City using donations from local businesses for cultural promotion and will be available for public use at “Arcrea Himeji” (fees apply).

Made in Germany, it is a limited edition with only 16 units worldwide. This project was realized last year in connection with the sister-city relationship established between Schönbrunn Palace in Austria and Himeji Castle. The piano is decorated with a famous ukiyo-e design.



The grand piano purchased by Himeji City

### Morning Harmony at Parnassus Hall

On the second Saturday morning of every month, you can enjoy high-quality classical music for just 500 yen. Children aged three and over are welcome to attend.

### Le Pont International Music Festival

KASHIMOTO Daishin, a world-renowned violinist and music director, holds this festival annually in Ako and Himeji. With the hope of serving as a bridge between the local community and the world, international artists have been invited to perform since 2012. Authentic performances can be enjoyed for 1,000 yen per concert.



Morning Harmony at Parnassus Hall

### Installation of Street Pianos

Anyone is welcome to perform for free.

- JR Himeji Station, 1st-floor Central Concourse (outside the ticket gates):  
Not available from 1:30AM to 4:30AM
- Environmental Learning Center, 1st floor (inside Eco-park Aboshi):  
Available from 9:00AM to 5:00PM  
Closed on facility holidays.

## People -Interview-

### Gita & Aarjan GAUTAM (Nepal)



Gita

Aarjan

Aarjan is a second-year junior high school student living in Himeji City. His parents came to Japan earlier for work. Due to the impact of COVID-19, Aarjan and his sister followed them and came to Japan in 2022. Aarjan speaks four languages: Nepali, English, Japanese, and an Indian language. His mother, Gita, worked as a medical secretary in Nepal, and now she works in a restaurant in Japan.

**Q** What kind of country is Nepal?

**A** **Aarjan:** Nepal is a country located between India and China. Surrounded by high mountains such as the Himalayas, it is rich in nature and has four seasons. In Hinduism, there is a ceremony called “Vartabandha,” through which a boy is recognized as a young man. I returned to Nepal with my family last March to participate in this ceremony. I shaved my head and wore a special yellow outfit.

**Q** You both speak Japanese very well. How did you learn it?

**A** **Aarjan:** By attending Egret Himeji’s “Nihongo Hiroba Kids” class every Sunday. In elementary school, I used textbooks written in easy Japanese.

**Gita:** By attending the “Nihongo Koza” at Egret Himeji twice a week, on Saturdays and Sundays. I also woke up in the middle of the night and studied hard at home.

**Q** What are the differences between the school you attended in Nepal and schools in Japan?

**A** **Aarjan:** In Nepal, students start learning English before entering school. Most classes are taught in English. Nepali, the official language, is taught every day as a subject. School starts at 9:30AM Students have six hours of classes a day, and the subjects are almost the same as in Japan. They also take computer classes. Furthermore, students attend the same school for 10 years and commute by school bus. There is no school lunch in Nepal. In Japan, when the school lunch menu includes foods that I cannot eat for religious reasons, I eat the bento my mother makes for me.

**Q** What surprised you or impressed you about life in Japan?

**A** **Aarjan:** First of all, I was amazed by Japanese trains and vending machines. I was also impressed by the kindness of the people around me, who taught me how to ride the train or bus when I didn’t know how.

**Gita:** I was surprised to see many women driving cars. I was also surprised to see many people drinking while walking, and that women drink alcohol.

## Cosplay Fans Gather in Himeji

A large cosplay event called “Hime CON 2026” will be held throughout the city of Himeji. From Himeji Station to the area around Himeji Castle, there will be a parade of cosplayers, making the city feel just like the world of anime.

**Event Dates:** April 11 (Sat) & 12 (Sun)

**Main Venue:** Arcrea Himeji – free anime song live concerts and guest talk shows

**Sub Venue:** Himeji Station North Nigiwai Exchange Square Stage – singing and dancing performances

**Cosplay Photo Locations:** In front of Himeji Castle, Kokoen Garden, Himeji City Museum of Art, Mt. Tegara, and other spots



For more details,  
click here

Those participating as cosplayers or photographers are required to purchase tickets in advance. Visitors who are not in cosplay can also enjoy the event. When taking photos, please ask for permission first.



During the New Year’s holiday, I attended a live concert at Arcrea Himeji and visited an art exhibition in Osaka. It was a wonderful time. Art is essential for the heart. Speaking of art, the Himeji City Museum of Art will be closed for large-scale renovation work from April 1 until around the end of December 2027. I’m looking forward to seeing the renewed museum when it reopens.

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### People Who Cooperated in Creating This Newsletter

Japanese: SUZUKI Kazuhiro, SHIGETA Fusako, KUNIMITSU Minako, KONISHI Yasue, SHIMODA Yasue, NAKAGAWA Hiroe

English: MAEDA Eiko, MIYAJIMA Minako, MASUKO Nami, FUKUMIZU Yayoi, HASHIZUMI Maya, FULTZ Justin

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

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You can read previous issues of “VIVA! ひめじ” on the website of Himeji Cultural and International Exchange Foundation International Exchange Section. The next issue will be available in June, 2026.

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 address on the right.



Website

#### Contact Information

Himeji Cultural and International  
Exchange Foundation

3<sup>rd</sup> floor, Egret Himeji,

68-290 Honmachi, Himeji City,

Hyogo 670-0012

TEL : 079-282-8950 FAX : 079-282-8955

Email: info-iec@himeji-iec.or.jp

HP: <https://himeji-iec.or.jp/>