

# VIVA ! ひめじ

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

<English Version> March 2011 Vol.36

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<People> Mr. Sylvain Parent

Mr. Parent is from the suburbs of Montreal which is the capital city of Quebec, the eastern province of Canada. After studying the Japanese language and Japanese culture at a university in Montreal, he came to Japan on the Working Holiday three years ago. At first he learned about Japan, working at “an English-conversation-café” in Konohana-ku(ward), Osaka. He moved to Himeji in August last year and has lived here ever since.

Q: Could you tell us what field of Japanese you studied in Canada and how you got interested in Japan?

A: I studied the Japanese language and Japanese culture at a university in Montreal. I read literary works like *The Tale of Genji* and *The Tale of the Heike*, and *Kabuki* and Japanese movies in particular aroused my interest. I often saw films directed by Shion Sono and Takashi Miike. My strong interest in Japan was attributed to “Japanese Anime-culture” which attracted me so much. I started to study Kanji as a teacher of my junior high school advised me that it would be advantageous to be able to read Chinese characters. I have come to read Chinese characters a bit better but it’s still difficult for me to read them. In fact, I find it hard to read a note on a medicine box at a drugstore. So even now I keep on studying Japanese at Egret Himeji.

Q: How do you like your life in Japan? We understand that you work as an ALT(Assistant Language Teacher).

A: I give English lessons at three elementary schools and one junior high school. I see many a cheerful boys and girls especially in the lower grades of an elementary school. I try to keep the class alive, making all sorts of expressive faces and using interesting body language. I enjoy taking part in the events held at a nearby elementary school and a local public hall in my place of residence. Himeji is a really comfortable to live as the surroundings are peaceful and the commodity prices are low compared with those in Montreal and Osaka.

Q: How do you spend your time off?

A: I’m fond of writing stories and watching movies and professional wrestling. I also like rock music such as heavy-metal and punk. I go to Karaoke box to sing and a live house to dance and shout to the music. As a matter of fact, I’m a good cook too and attempted some challenging Italian and American meals while in Canada. I sometimes make a six tiered huge pizza with my roommate here.

Q: What are your plans for the future?

A: I’d like to live here longer enough to fit into Japan and to become “a useful person in the community”. I think there should be something useful that I can contribute to the community as a person from abroad.

## Spring Information for going out (2011)

This issue we introduce you to information on the restoration of Himeji castle and places of Sakura scenic Beauty where you can enjoy views of the Inland Sea.

### ◎ Large scale restoration of Himeji castle.

A facility for repair observation of the castle tower “Tenku no Shirasagi (A white heron (bird) of the sky)” will open from March 26 (Saturday) and remain open for almost 3 years. It has been 45 years since the last large scale repair of the Showa era. The current large scale repair of the Heisei era has been in the planning stages since 2009.

The maintenance & repair work of the castle tower, which is world heritage, has been making headway. The repairs include work to an outer wall, a tile roof and earthquake-proof reinforcement work. The anticipated completion date of construction is March 2015. You can observe construction and the partial structure inside the castle tower, which has built using traditional architecture.



< Admission > Adults : ¥400+ facility observation fee (¥200) kids : ¥200+(¥100)

< Contact > Information Center of Himeji Castle Tel:079-287-2013 (appointment gets priority)

< HP > <http://himejijo-syuri.jp/>

### ◎ The little red cliff

“The little red cliff” is a place of scenic beauty in the spring time, you can get a one hundred and eighty degree view of the Inland Sea and get a great look at Awaji and Ieshima Islands. An odd shaped huge rock stands out at sea to the south of Kiniwa mountain and you can also enjoy a superb view of a cliff out. We also recommend you a walk of O-ne promenade.

< Access > Kiba-town Himeji city : Shinki-bus from Himeji station south area towards Matogata (93 system) a loop line bus. Get off at Fukudomari terminal (30 minutes) or Sanyo train Matogata station, about 30 minutes on foot.

< Contact > Sightseeing Information Center of Himeji Tel:079-287-0003

### ◎ The cape of Manyo (never ending time)

The promenade is fully furnished, and you can enjoy both beach and hiking path.

The camellia and Sakura roadside trees of every season are outstanding, and you can enjoy a superb view of the inland sea which may remind you of never ending time (Manyo).

< Access > Shinki-bus: from Aioi station go towards the cape of Manyo (Manyo-no-misaki Japanese ) terminal (20 minutes). The operation is 3~4 times per a day.

By car: This cape is a popular parking area and rest place for route 250 (a national road)

< Contact > Sightseeing Association of Aioi City Tel:0791-22-7177 (weekday 8:30~17:15)

### ☆☆☆The other event information☆☆☆

#### ☆ Aioi Peron festival

May 28 (Saturday) Marine fire works 19:50~20:50

May 29 (Sunday) Peron boat race, track and field parade/ carnival 9:00~16:00

“Peron” boat race was established at the Aioi festival in 1963 and was introduced from Nagasaki. People in Aioi look forward to the Aioi Peron festival, a big event, which signals the beginning of summer.

< Access > The shuttle bus will be operated from Aioi station on that weekend. Or 20 minutes on foot from Aioi station.

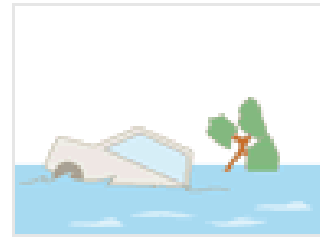
< Contact > Industry Promotion Section of Aioi City Tel:0791-23-7133

## How to Protect Yourself from Guerrilla Gouu (Guerrilla Downpour)

In the previous issue, Vol.35, we discussed what to do on a regular basis to prepare for disaster. Have you ever heard a *Guerrilla Gouu (Guerrilla Downpour)*? It occurs when unexpectedly gallons of rain fall over a short time in a very narrow area. Records show that muddy streams can appear as soon as 10 minutes after a *guerrilla downpour* starts, and that the water level can rise by more than 1 meter in 2 minutes.

The rainy season is coming, so react swiftly when you notice the following signs. Don't be complaisant and stay alert.

- i River water becomes murky and carries debris.
- i Cold winds blow suddenly, and the sky gets dark.
- i There is heavy rain and hail.



### While at home

- i When water level around your house rises by 20-30 cm, or floods, you should evacuate.
- i Guide your way through the water with umbrellas or sticks to avoid falling into water channels or open manholes.
- i You might slip in the flood, so share a rope with some people.
- i Rain boots are not suitable because it is tough to move smoothly with boots filled with water. Wear shoes with shoelaces.
- i After the water level raises over 40 cm, doors don't open easily and you may have difficulty walking around even if you manage to step outside your door. So, evacuate to higher places such as upper floors of buildings.
- i Put something such as floor cloth into outlets of toilets and bathtub, because sewage water can flow back.

### While driving

- i Stop your car when the water level rises up to 20 – 30 cm.
- i Break the windows with tools such as a jack or wrench when you cannot open the door.
- i You should not drive through under passes on the rails and roads because water builds up underground.

### While underground

- i Walk along the ground through corridors proceeding in the same direction as the water. Do not going the opposite way as the water even if there is a close exit.

As we introduced in the previous volume, disaster information is announced officially when abysmal weather is expected. However, Guerrilla downpours occur in a short time span and in very narrow areas, so announcements about them are very difficult. These days, you can receive weather information through mobile phones according to the place where you live, so it might be better to utilize that.

Home page of meteorological institute <http://www.jma.go.jp/jma/indexe.html>

## Sweets

★ *Wagashi*.....(*nerikiri manjyu higasi dango senbei* etc)

In ancient times sweets were very difficult to get, and so the kanji characters in the word *kashi* (菓子) originally referred to fruit or nuts.

In the 8<sup>th</sup> century rice and wheat flour (*komeko*) started to be imported from China and sugar was added to make them sweet.



Sugar was produced in Edo period and became a deeply ingrained part of sweets culture in 19<sup>th</sup> century. Through this culture it became and continue to be the base of *wagashi*.

★ *Yougashi*.....(cake cookies pie etc)



In the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, butter, sugar, milk, and eggs were introduced into Japan from Europe. They proved to be good ingredients for a new type of confectionery. The new sweet that emerged in Japan were a fusion of traditional sweets and more modern Western ideas called *yougashi*.

Since then, the taste and variety of these two kinds of sweets has been continually evolving. And, continue to be enjoyed by Japanese people.

However, over time Japanese food-styles, including sweets, have become increasingly influenced by western cultures.

The *yougashi* tends to be more popular these days, but traditional *wagashi*, which is almost entirely handmade, is colorful and intended to please the eye as much as the taste. It can also represent the seasons and as a result is popular with young and old alike as a present or treat for seasonal events.

Today's recipe is about *Ichigo Daifuku* (you can make this easily in a microwave oven).

This is a new type of sweet that a fusion of *wagashi* and *yougashi* the onset of spring represented.

### ICHIGO DAIFUKU

#### Ingredients (10pieces)

- |                                    |                                      |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| A..... <i>joushinko</i> .....40g   | E.....strawberry.....10              |
| B..... <i>shiratamako</i> .....80g | F.....white bean jam....200g         |
| C .....sugar.. .....60g            | G .....a little of <i>katakuriko</i> |
| D .....water.....230cc             |                                      |



#### Directions

- ① Rinse strawberries and cut off outside layer.
- ② (F) divide in to ten and wrap(E) in (F) with out top.
- ③ In a large bowl, combine (A), (B) and (C).  
Pour in (D) slowly mixing well as you do. Put lid on bowl.
- ④ Put ③ in microwave oven and heat for 2 minutes (600w).
- ⑤ Take out and stir until smooth.
- ⑥ Repeat ⑤ three times (mix ⑥ until clear and smooth).
- ⑦ Take out put on plate covered with(G). (Optional: cut into 10 pieces before wrapping).
- ⑧ Wrap ② in ⑦ before it become cold.

## ☆☆☆Installation of Household Fire Alarm Devices☆☆☆

Did you know we all have to install fire alarms in our houses? Due to revisions of the fire regulation in Himeji city, all newly built residential buildings (built after June 1, 2006) are required to install fire alarms. Residential buildings in this category and refurbished residences should be installed fire alarms by May 31, 2011. The new legislation stems from the realization that 60% of deaths caused by fire are due to failing to evacuate. Therefore, in order to protect life, it is important to detect fire as early as possible.

◎ What kinds of fire alarms are there? How much do they cost?

There are several brands of alarms. Usually fire alarms; hang on walls or to ceilings and cost about 3000 yen. Please get the products with a NS approval mark. This means they are certified by the Japan Fire Equipment Inspection Institute.



Hanging On walls

To ceilings

NS approval mark

◎ Where should we install?

**Q** Where should we install the household fire alarm devices?

**A**

**Bedrooms:** Install fire alarms in rooms where people sleep.

**Bedroom:** (for kids)

**Stairs:** If the bedrooms are upstairs, place a fire alarm at the stairs.

**Kitchen, other livings:** ※not obligatory, but better to be placed.

Bedrooms are the most important place for smoke alarms. If the bedrooms are upstairs, then it is also necessary to place an alarm in the stairway corridor.

※If automatic fire alarms or sprinkler system are installed, it is not necessary to place fire alarms.

◎ Where can we buy them?

Fire equipment shops, electronics retail stores, gas companies, home improvement centers etc.

◎ Be aware of malicious door-to-door sales.

The Fire Department will never visit you to sell the devices directly or outsource to any distributors. If you think it's suspicious, give a clear no.

◎ There is an experience center in Disaster Prevention Plaza.

You can install the fire alarms by yourselves, or ask Himeji Silver Human Resources Center, which sells the devices and installs them.

◎ Inquiries:

Fire Prevention Division of Himeji Fire Department:

TEL : 079-223-9532 <http://www.city.himeji.lg.jp/syoubou/>

Himeji Disaster Prevention Plaza:

TEL : 079-223-9977 <http://www.city.himeji.lg.jp/syoubou/plaza.html>

Himeji Silver Human Resources Center: TEL : 079-282-4000 (main number)

☆☆Information about the Himeji Cultural and International Exchange Foundation☆☆

A delivery course in international understanding

A course will be held to promote better international understanding among citizens. We provide the opportunity to hear from foreign resident and learn about other cultures. This course is a slide lecture and we learn in a fun atmosphere about the languages, cultures and life styles of Mexico, Argentina, Cambodia, Viet Nam, Philippines, China, Sweden, Belgium, Tanzania and South Korea. Please check the following Himeji Cultural and International Exchange Foundation website for the date and location: <http://www.himeji-iec.or.jp>.

※※※※Editor's Postscript※※※※

It is getting warmer and cold winter is ending. The weather is now much better for going out. Spring is blooming season with brightly-colored flowers such as dandelions, cherry blossoms and tulips. Why don't you go out actively to view flower blossoms and enjoy beautiful smell in order to feel spring in your day off. The next 「VIVA!ひめじ」 Vol.37 will be published in June 2011. We would love to hear your comments to continuously provide an informative magazine for every reader.

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These names are used with the contributors' permission.

Their assistance is much appreciated.

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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