

# HELLO, FRIENDS !!

Shimane Hello Friends 

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Hello, everyone. Welcome to the world of HELLO, FRIENDS!! International students who had to wait for such a long time, welcome to Japan!! How did you find living and studying here in Izumo? I hope you love it. The pandemic is still affecting our daily lives and I cannot help but check the new cases of infection daily in Shimane, but I think things are moving forward steadily. Shimane is blessed with beautiful, abundant nature. Please enjoy it as much as the circumstances allow, and let me know if you find your favorite.

## 1 . LET'S MEET TODAY'S GUEST !!



Today's guest is **SHIBLY ABU ZAFFAR** san from Bangladesh. He is in his 4<sup>th</sup> year in the Ph.D. program and belongs to the Department of Internal Medicine, Internal Medicine III Unit. He is in his 4<sup>th</sup> year, as I said, but it seems to be more than that. I don't know why but I guess it's because he acclimated himself to his surroundings so well and so he always looks confident.



### 1. First, may I ask why you became interested in Shimane University to study as a Ph.D. student?

I was an Assistant Professor for a science and technology university in Bangladesh and had some colleagues who had completed the Ph.D. program here earlier in the field of Neurology. My professor also knew about Shimane University. So, I had a little interest. But it wasn't until I came across some interesting research on the Internet and discovered that the researcher was affiliated with this university that I seriously considered studying here. The paper's lead author who caught my attention was my current supervisor, Prof. Nagai. Moreover, I was happily surprised to hear that there was a compatriot who had already completed his Ph.D. under Nagai sensei's supervision. To begin with, I reached out to Dr. Sheik Mohammad Abdullah, an efficient member of Nagai sensei's research group through a colleague who was earning a Ph.D. at this university at the time. He (Sheik Mohammad Abdullah) became a bridge between Nagai sensei and me. After several correspondences during which I sent my resume and other materials to show my research field, Nagai sensei accepted me as an applicant for the MEXT Scholarship. After that, I was selected for the MEXT (Japan's educational ministry) scholarship to pursue my Ph.D. under Professor Nagai's supervision.



## 2. What was your first impression when coming to Izumo?

Dhaka is Bangladesh's capital and largest city, as well as the world's largest Bengali-speaking metropolis. With a population of 8.9 million citizens as of 2011 and a population of about 21.7 million in the Greater Dhaka Area, it is the world's eighth-biggest and sixth most densely-populated metropolis. There is a lot of noise, and everyone seems to be in a hurry.

However, in Izumo, there are many farmlands and traditional residences, and people appear to live in peace and without rushing. I love it because my hometown is also in the countryside and shares many aspects with Izumo. So, when I arrived in Izumo for the first time, I felt a kind of nostalgia as if I had come back to my hometown. The temperature is also good. It is hot in Bangladesh throughout the year but here in Japan, there are four distinctive seasons. Each season has its unique landscape made of trees, flowers, and other greenery. I especially love the colder months. The crispy air and piercing wind awaken my senses and I even feel I can work more efficiently.

**- I have seen many international students from Bangladesh who lamented the coldness of the winter in Japan. But you love it? Interesting!!**



## 3. What has been your biggest culture shock since coming to Japan?

It was a positive shock. In Japan, how punctual the transportation system is!! I realized it when I took the bus for the first time. It came just on time. It was unbelievable compared to the situation in Bangladesh. Not only the bus but also the railroad service keeps the punctuality.

Oh, speaking of the bus, I remembered one thing which also surprised me in a very positive manner. I was walking to the nearby bus stop from my dormitory one day. Suddenly it started raining. I kept walking rather than going back to my dormitory to get an umbrella. Then, a car pulled over and the driver shouted at me.



I couldn't understand the Japanese but from her gesture, I figured out that she was trying to give me her umbrella. I declined because I thought it was too much, but she insisted. I accepted it in the end with a big thanks and the driver smiled and left the spot without mentioning her name or contact, which meant that I would have no clues about how to return the umbrella. Even more surprisingly, the umbrella was brand-new!! "How generous the Japanese are!!", I thought. I will remember the hospitality forever.

**- People here love to do something for those who are in trouble. It's all the more so if the person is from a foreign country, as you are!**



#### 4. What's your favorite Japanese food or Japanese word?

I love sashimi, sushi, miso soup, tempura, and oden, just to name a few (more than a few!!)

**- Sashimi, sushi, and tempura are the things many mention. Miso soup and oden show you are a genuine Japanese food lover.**



I sometimes make miso soup by myself. It has a different taste than what we Bangladeshis are used to, but I have come to love it. Oh, I have tried a bamboo shoot as well. I was given a boiled bamboo shoot one day. I didn't know how it tastes and had no idea how to cook it but anyway, I decided to fry it with shrimps. My intuition turned out to be right. The combination seasoned with our usual spices was so delicious.

**- Sounds yummy!! I want to try the combination myself someday. Raw bamboo shoots are marketed only in spring. In that sense, it is very valuable. Boiling one takes a big pot and lots of time. So, I don't think international students buy raw bamboo shoots for themselves. The "someone" who gave it to you is really nice and generous, and must have wanted you to feel the spring through your tongue.**

#### 5. What's your favorite sightseeing spot in Japan?

Oh, the question makes me a bit sad. Due to the pandemic, I haven't gone sightseeing for a long time. I went to beautiful places such as Miyajima, Tottori Sand Dunes, Mt. Daisen, and other places in my first year. The Izumo Host Family Club took us there. Also, I was impressed by the fireworks festival in Matsue. Those were completely different from the ones in Bangladesh. More elaborate and artistic. I'm sure I'll miss them after I go back to my country. Speaking of going back to my homeland, there is one place I'd definitely like to visit before that. It's Mt. Fuji. The majestic mountain is so attractive and even mysterious.

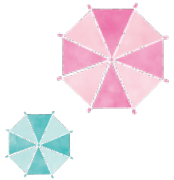


**- I sometimes hear about Mt. Fuji from the international students. I haven't imagined Mt. Fuji is so popular among them. But I can agree because just taking a glance at it through the window of the Shinkansen (Japanese bullet train) or airplane gives me enormous excitement. Mt. Fuji has such magical power and I'm happy to share my feelings with you.**

#### 6. What do you picture in your mind as a career path after graduation?

I have a post at my university in Bangladesh. So I have to go back to my country and deliver the knowledge I have earned here to my students and faculty members because I owe a lot to my alma mater. I will be working there for several years to dedicate myself to developing the environment surrounding medical science in my motherland. After that, maybe I will apply for a postdoc post in the U.S. or another country to challenge my potential and develop my career further.

Thank you, Shibly san. This time we did the interview remotely, as I did in the last issue. I have to apologize to him though. There were unexpected things that happened before and during the interview, and the time for the interview had to be shortened. He didn't seem to mind the interruptions, and I was grateful for that. I somehow knew his generosity beforehand and maybe that's why I failed to prepare things perfectly. So, sorry Shibly san and thank you again.



*This corner, "Let's meet today's guest!!" is now recruiting volunteer interviewees. Please contact me, Yuko Okada, at [gakumh04@jn.shimane-u.ac.jp](mailto:gakumh04@jn.shimane-u.ac.jp) or come to my office if you can take time for the interview. If we have no volunteers, we will ask someone to be the next interviewee.*

## 2. LET'S LEARN ABOUT "KOKE"



Do you know "koke"? It's translated as "moss" in English. Do you like it? I love it!! Why? Just imagine green fluffy carpet sprawling in the forest or on the steps leading to the gate of an old shrine or temple. Koke grows little by little on wet soil in the shade.

The climate in Japan is suitable for the growth of koke, especially in the rainy season. If the soil is dug up for farming or other purposes, koke won't grow. The weight of history and the feeling of serenity strike the hearts of Japanese people. I don't know if your countries see koke like we do in Japan or not, but koke is said to symbolize a kind of aesthetics unique to Japan, called "wabi sabi".

There is even a temple whose name is "Kokedera" in Kyoto. It may be difficult to travel to Kyoto in this pandemic era but there is a way to easily enjoy koke at home. "Kokedama" is a playful plant which consists of a plant, earth and koke. The root of the plant is wrapped by earth in a ball-shaped manner and koke covers it. Both finished ones and kits to make a kokedama are available at stores. The day when you become a koke-lover is coming soon!!



### 3 . LET'S TRY THIS JAPANESE RECIPE !!

#### ● Kyuuri no hiya jiru ● (cucumber) (cold) (soup)

Cucumber is a summer vegetable. It contains a lot of potassium, which can rehydrate our body and regulate the temperature. So, it is an indispensable food to prevent us from suffering summer heat fatigue. Today, I'm introducing cucumber cold soup. It is a traditional dish in some parts of Japan. Even if we lose our appetite in the hot summer, this goes down smoothly. I promise it!!



#### ✧ INGREDIENTS (For two persons)

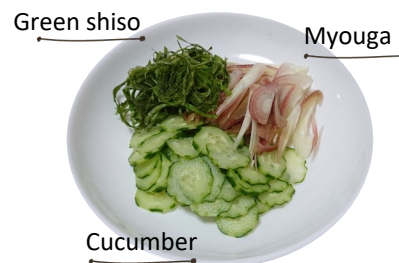
- Cucumber .....1 piece
- Dried horse mackerel (aji no himono, 鰯の干物) .....1 piece
- Green shiso (aojiso, 青じそ) otherwise called Ohba(大葉) .....5 leaves
- Myouga or Japanese ginger .....2 pieces
- Miso .....3 tbsps
- Soup stock ..... 400ml
- Ground white sesame ..... 1 tbsp
- Cooked rice ..... 2 bowls



Aji no himono

#### ✧ HOW TO MAKE

- 1** Cool the soup stock in the refrigerator.
- 2** Thinly slice the cucumber.  
Sprinkle salt (not listed as the ingredients), leave it for 5 min., and squeeze out excess moisture.
- 3** Cut the green shiso leaves into thin strips.
- 4** Thinly slice the myouga pieces.
- 5** Put **3** and **4** in water and wipe them with a cloth or paper towel.
- 6** Grill the horse mackerel, remove the bones, and flake the flesh.
- 7** Put the miso in a bowl. Add the cold soup stock to the bowl little by little while mixing thoroughly.
- 8** Add **2**, **5**, **6**, and the ground white sesame too.



## 4 . EVENT INFORMATION



### GESSHO-JI TEMPLE

● 月照寺 ●

The rainy season will start soon. Just thinking about it makes me blue. The long duration of no sunshine and humid air will bring a good environment for koke, though. Along with koke, there is one positive thing associated with the rainy season. It's hydrangea. It's called ajisai in Japanese and is in full bloom during the rainy season. This temple is well known for ajisai. You will be overwhelmed by the huge number of ajisais (about 30,000 plants!!) once you enter the entrance gate of the temple.

**ADDRESS** 〒690-0875 島根県松江市外中原町 179  
Sotonakabara-cho 179, Matsue-city, Shimane Pref.

**TEL** 0852-21-6056

**OPENING** from 10:00 to 16:00 (8:30-17:30 only in June)  
Last admission time is 30 min before.



**ADMISSION FEE:**

500 yen/adult, 300 yen/junior or high schooler, 200 yen/elementary schooler

**ACCESS** <Ichibata line>  
Dentetsu Izumo-shi Station → Matsue Shinjiko Onsen Station (the terminal)  
Matsue Shinjiko Onsen Station → 13 min. on foot → Gessho-ji Temple

**MAP** [https://map.yahoo.co.jp/place?gid=s96WmOsEONM&uid=a4232deffab998d9a19b28e0fcefed7f9759a261&q=%E6%9C%88%E7%85%A7%E5%AF%BA&lat=35.47136&lon=133.03190&zoom=14&maptype=basic&fr=sydd\\_GEDD\\_spot\\_map\\_p](https://map.yahoo.co.jp/place?gid=s96WmOsEONM&uid=a4232deffab998d9a19b28e0fcefed7f9759a261&q=%E6%9C%88%E7%85%A7%E5%AF%BA&lat=35.47136&lon=133.03190&zoom=14&maptype=basic&fr=sydd_GEDD_spot_map_p)

**OFFICIAL WEBSITE** <https://www.gesshoji-matsue.com/>



“HELLO,FRIENDS!!” is created by *The English Project Team*.

If you have any comments or questions, please contact us:  
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The English used on “HELLO,FRIENDS!!” is supervised  
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