



HELLO, FRIENDS !!

Shimane Hello Friends



VOL.20
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Hello, everyone. Welcome to the world of HELLO, FRIENDS!!

The rainy season has gone in the blink of an eye this year. It's so short that I was really scared of the water shortage. Then, lengthy rainy days came in the first half of July as if it was like a second rainy season. I also noticed that Higurashi, a kind of cicada, started singing far earlier this summer. Meanwhile, the infection numbers have skyrocketed in Shimane from June to July, ushering in the nationwide 7th wave. On top of these, many worrisome things are now occurring around the globe. Let's stay calm and be prepared no matter what happens as this world is full of unpredictable things.



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

Today's guest is YANG JIAHAO san from China. He is in his 4th year in the Ph.D. program and belongs to the Department of Pediatrics. There is a famous catchphrase in a popular Japanese TV drama that develops stories around the main character, a female medical doctor. She says, "Watashi shippai shinainode (meaning "I won't make mistakes") in the climax of each episode. I don't know why but Yang san seems to be the same type, a man who doesn't make mistakes. Is it true? I was so curious!!



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

I came to Izumo for the first time in 2013 as an exchange student in my second year of college. It was just a two-week stay but was so impressive that my love for Shimane University became decisive. The supervisor at that time was Karino sensei (of the Clinical skill-up center). This is an unforgettable exchange and learning journey. Before we arrived in Japan, Karino sensei thought we were nursing students. He was very kind and went to great lengths to prepare us for the hospital visit in order to give us something to learn. The itinerary was very detailed, and even after he knew that we were actually students in the medical department, he did his best to arrange our itinerary and study plan. After learning that one of the students was majoring in the oral cavity, he immediately discussed with the school leaders and let us observe a maxillofacial surgery for oral cancer patients to transplant lower back tissue. Practical experience is precious.

Anyway, thanks to him, we learned a lot that day. He also showed us around the vast Izumo Shrine. It was really a memorable day. To be honest, none of us were good at English conversation. We used hand signals to communicate. It was enjoyable.

I came to Izumo again in 2018 for a one-year exchange program in the Master's course at Ningxia Medical University. I also have an unforgettable story behind the experience. The exchange students were to be selected through an interview. The interviewers, who would be their future supervisors, came all the way from Shimane to our campus and the interviews were scheduled for the morning on one day. I was among the applicants. I had to attend a conference in Guangdong, the southern province, the day before. It is far away from Ningxia, the northwestern part of China. It was OK, and I thought there was a convenient flight after the conference to arrive in Ningxia in time. The takeoff, however, was significantly delayed due to bad weather. I was forced to stay the night at the airport, which meant I wouldn't be able to make it to the interview the following day. It couldn't be helped. I called the officer to let him know about the situation. I almost gave up. Then, things developed unexpectedly. To my surprise, the interviewers rescheduled my interview, one day later at a hotel!! I couldn't believe it. Anyway, I did my best to make the best of the precious chance. One of the interviewers was my current supervisor, Prof. Taketani. Including this hotel event, I owe him a countless number of things.

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

It was the weather. Ningxia is dry, and sometimes it is hard to breathe at night due to the extremely dry air. Compared to that, the atmosphere contains much more moisture here, and my wife likes it because she says it's good for our skin.

- She is right. Shimane boasts of itself as “bihada-ken”, which can be literally translated into “beautiful skin prefecture” because the air is more humid and the sunshine duration is shorter than any other prefectures in Japan, according to the prefecture's sightseeing association, or “公益社団法人 島根県観光連盟”. Shimane is located in the Sanin area, which is subject to lots of rain and snow.



Another occasion I was impressed by was when I was standing on the side of a country road with no traffic lights, waiting for a car to pass by, when it suddenly stopped and allowed me to cross. Nice and polite.

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

I have seen people bow during a telephone call sometimes. It feels strange to me, but maybe it comes from their politeness. It's not a bad thing at all, I think. I might get the habit by the time I go back to China, ha ha ha....



Oh, and the shape of chopsticks is different from that in China. Japanese ones are tapered with the width narrowed at the tip, but the width in ours is almost the same. In other words, Japanese chopsticks come across as triangular, while Chinese ones look rectangular. My wife, who came to Japan this spring, hasn't gotten accustomed to it yet and has a little difficulty in using them.

- I've never heard of it. Interesting! To a Japanese, rectangular chopsticks seem hard to use. I'd love to try Chinese ones someday.

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

Sushi and ramen. Ramen is said to be originated in China, but Chinese ramen and Japanese ramen are quite different. Chinese ramen is much lighter. I prefer the Japanese style of ramen. I love it so much that I once tried making ramen myself. My attempt ended in failure. The key is soup. Professionals use a lot of chicken, pork, bonito, or anything else to make a good soup. We cannot imitate the rich soup just with the ingredients at hand.



- If you can compromise to a certain extent for the taste, “instant ramen” or instant noodles might be worth a try. The quick, easy, affordably-priced noodle packs are said to be one of the greatest inventions ever in Japan. Each pack conveniently comes with a separate pouch of soup stock.

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

There are two things. The first one is the fireworks festival in Matsue, called “Matsue Suigo Sai”. It was in my 1st year as a Ph.D. student when my senior and his wife took me to the site by car. He knew very well about how to enjoy it to the fullest, including an excellent spot to look at them and how early we should be there to secure such a spot. I marveled at the brilliant show illuminating the night sky. Unfortunately, the organizers had to cancel it two years in a row due to the pandemic. I hope it takes place this year and we can enjoy it firsthand. If it happens, I'd like to play the role of taking someone as my senior did three years ago, not the one being taken (※).

※This interview took place in late June.

The second one is castles. I'm into Japanese castles. The architectural style is quite different from the Chinese ones. I've visited Matsue Castle and Himeji Castle so far. I learned that there are five castles designated as national treasures in Japan. How lucky I am because the two castles are included in the five. The other three are Inuyama Castle, Hikone Castle, and Matsumoto Castle. I want to visit these as well before returning to China.



Hikone Castle

- I visited Hikone Castle just before the pandemic started. Not only the castle itself but also Hikone City is very attractive as a whole. It prospered during the Edo period as a castle town, and the atmosphere from then can be felt even today.

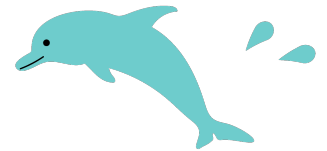
6. What do you picture in your mind as a career path after graduation?

I sometimes discuss that with my supervisor. It's not finally decided, but one possibility is that I will stay here for another year and wait for my wife's graduation. After returning to China, I'll go back to my university, Ningxia Medical University, to work as a lecturer and medical doctor. I have accumulated a lot of academic knowledge and medical skills in the field of pediatrics thanks to Taketani sensei and other doctors' guidance. I should share such things with my future students and devote myself to treating patients. That's my way of paying back their kindness. Of course, I'll keep doing my research to pursue the scientific truth and find better solutions.

In the course of developing my career in these ways, it would be great if I could serve as a bridge between Ningxia Medical University and Shimane University to deepen mutual understanding and foster the partnership even further.

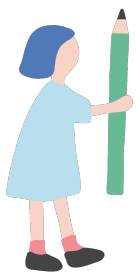
Thank you, Yang san. I was really satisfied to hear lots of interesting stories this time too. I felt a strong bond between his supervisor and him, which maybe started at the point of the interview in the hotel. I hope the bond gets even stronger and prompts more students to come to Shimane University.

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 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.



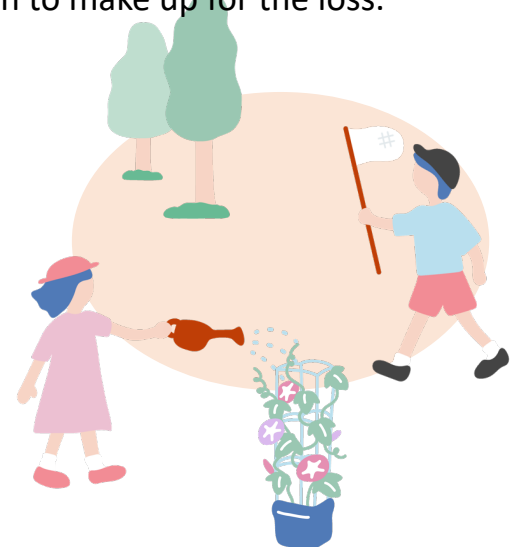
2. LET'S LEARN ABOUT JAPANESE SUMMER BREAK

It's in the middle of the summer and it's in the middle of natsuyasumi or summer break for schoolers in Japan. It lasts for about 40 days except for northern prefectures, which have longer winter breaks instead. How did it start and why that long? According to what I learned, the then Ministry of Education (current MEXT) decided some rules on elementary school matters in 1881 including a summer break. This is said to be the beginning of the summer break. They sent a letter to each prefecture to let them know about the rules.



The government followed the summer vacations in western countries because they were eager to improve the Japanese education system by taking in the western style. A school year starts in April in Japan, which means a summer break kicks in just about 4 months from the beginning of a new academic year. Someone thought it would be undesirable to disrupt the flow of study and students might forget what they learned during the holidays. Hence, homework was brought in to make up for the loss.

A record of homework dating back to as old as 1910 was found in southwestern Japan in 2006. I remember how dearly I wished there would have been no homework during each summer break as a kid. Meanwhile, summer is a turning point from an old academic year to the new one in western countries. Almost no school and no homework for 2 or 3 months. "Sounds great!", I almost can hear some kids lamenting like this around me 😊 .



3 . LET'S TRY THIS JAPANESE RECIPE !!



• Gyunyu kan •

I will introduce sweets this summer again as I did last year. Please refer to our back number “HELLO, FRIENDS!!” vol.14 (google “hello, friends shimane”) for “kanten”, one of the ingredients of this time’s recipe. “Gyunyu (milk) kan (kanten)” can be made easily at low cost and looks beautiful with the brilliant orange of mikan (mandarin orange) reminiscent of sunflower, the symbol of summer. If you love it, I’ll be tremendously happy!!

🚩 INGREDIENTS

(For four persons)

- Milk300ml
- Water & liquid of the can200ml
- Powdered agar
(こなかんでん/粉寒天 konakanten) ... 4 g
- Canned mikan1 can (190 g)
- Sugar40 g



🚩 HOW TO MAKE

- ❶ Put the milk in a heat-resistant container and warm up to body temperature in a microwave (for about 1 min. at 500 W).
- ❷ Put the content of the can in a strainer to separate the fruits and syrup. Add water to the syrup to make them 200 ml in volume together.
- ❸ Put the water and syrup in a pan. Add the powdered agar to it. Mix well and put it over heat.
When it comes to the boil, mix well for about 2 min. and add the sugar.
- ❹ Turn off the heat and add ❶ .
- ❺ Place the mikan in a container and pour ❹ over it. Let it cool for a while and put it in a refrigerator to harden.
- ❻ Cut into pieces to eat.



Key to success - Make sure to dissolve the agar completely in ❸ .

4 . SIGHTSEEING INFORMATION

八雲風穴 Yakumo fuketsu

Fuketsu is a cave formed as a result of a landslide or a volcano eruption. Natural cold winds blow through the stone walls due to the temperature differences between outside and inside or/and the wind pressure. So, it is like a natural air-conditioner. In Japan there are many at the foot of Mt. Fuji, an active volcano. Yakumo fuketsu is located in the southern part of Izumo city. Even in the mid-summer, the air is as low as 5 -10°C in the cave. There used to be some stalls around it and one of them sold goat milk ice-cream. Due to the pandemic, however, there are no shops and the open period is made shorter this summer. If you want to try the goat ice-cream, drop by the nearby "Asabara Yagi (goat) farm"

<https://www.kankou-shimane.com/destination/20710>



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OPENING from July 16 to Aug. 31 Time: from 9:00 to 17:00



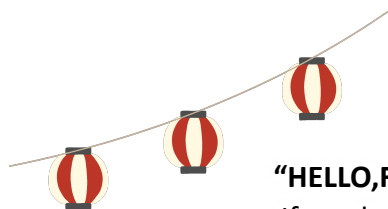
ADMISSION FEE: 200 yen/adult 100 yen/child



MAP <https://www.google.co.jp/maps/place/35%C2%B014'34.3%22N+132%C2%B045'10.2%22E/@35.2428565,132.7528354,13z/data=!4m5!3m4!1s0x0:0x4265505cccd33640!8m2!3d35.2428565!4d132.7528354?hl=ja>



OFFICIAL WEBSITE <http://www.wind-cave.jp/about>



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

If you have any comments or questions, please contact us:

gakumh04@jn.shimane-u.ac.jp (addressed to Yuko Okada)

The English used on "HELLO,FRIENDS!!" is supervised by our English teacher, *Ms. Murphy, Lynne*.

