

HELLO, FRIENDS!!



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Shimane University Hello Friends



Hello, everyone. Welcome to the world of “HELLO, FRIENDS!!”. What? Yeah, you are quick!! From now on, please call this paper “HELLO, FRIENDS!!”. Easy to remember, isn’t it?

Well, it’s almost the end of 2020, a year of turbulence, due to COVID-19. Who could have imagined this situation a year earlier? Hopefully 2021 will be a bright year and all of us can look back on it with joyful memories.



1 Let's meet today's guest !!

We have **SINTAYEHU FEKADU KEBEDE**-san from Ethiopia to join us this time. He is now in his 4th year of the Ph.D. course and belongs to the Department of Microbiology.



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

In October, 2016, the professor of the Dept. of Microbiology, Yoshiyama-sensei, visited my university, Hawassa University in Ethiopia, to foster a collaboration established in 2013, and introduce his research themes. It was about research on infection-associated cancer, specifically gastric cancer. I was so enthusiastic about his presentation and astonished about how he and the research team were deeply investigating to find solutions on one of the global health problems, gastric cancer.

I learned that the presenter (Yoshiyama-sensei)’s university (Shimane Univ.) has an international partnership agreement with our university and I got interested in this university. At the end of the presentation, Yoshiyama-sensei announced that anyone who would like to study in Japan could contact him. Everyone tried to contact the professor soon after he went back to Japan. I instantly sent some documents including my related research history, and publication and resume to him by e-mail. After some correspondences, Sensei accepted to take care of me as a Ph.D. student. I was overjoyed.



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

Actually, it was my first time to come abroad. A long-distance flight of 16 hours, transit in Hong Kong, immigration, customs procedures..., everything was new to me. After a one-night stay in a hotel near Narita airport in the Tokyo metropolitan area, I took a flight from Haneda and finally arrived here in Izumo. Yoshiyama-sensei arranged all the necessary things including booking the hotels. So, things went very smoothly. Thus, I was finally introduced to the microbiology lab members and Shimane University communities and started the new chapter of my life, PhD study without any worries.

The most impressive thing so far was “snow”. As you know, we don’t have snow in Ethiopia, as my country is located near the equator. You don’t like snow since it’s cold, do you? For me, however, snow is something I’d like to appreciate as a special gift which visits us only a few times every year and gradually turns everything WHITE.



I once saw you walking in the snow with some other guys a couple of years ago near the campus. It looked like you were really enjoying the “snow-walking”.

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

Well, oh, it’s chopsticks. When I was invited to the welcome dinner, I saw people around me using their chopsticks in a sophisticated manner. I tried to manage but gave up and asked for a spoon to replace them. This is my 4th year in Japan now but I still cannot get accustomed to using them, maybe due to less attention because of alternatives.



Another thing which is somewhat different from our culture is that people take off their shoes in houses. In Ethiopia, in some places like the inside of the Church (Orthodox Christian Church) or most Muslim communities, they use slippers while being in their home. In addition, well-to-do families, especially those who live in the city, do the same.



I feel at home now without shoes in my dormitory. It got so familiar that I think it will be uncomfortable with shoes indoors for a while after going back to my country.

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

My favorite Japanese words are “Ohayou gozaimasu” and “Konnichiwa”. My older son goes to Enya Yochien (kindergarten) and I take him to and from there every day. When I see other parents on our way or at the yochien, we exchange greetings. Thanks to these daily communications, we can feel closer to each other. Even on weekends when the yochien is closed, we still meet and greet at the nearby park. Through his everyday life with friends alongside, my son can speak Japanese very well now.



Speaking of Enya Yochien, the head and yochien community care a lot about not only children but also about parents. The principal sends e-mails with photos which cast the school activities during some events. I’m encouraged to be a member of this international community.

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

In Izumo, I love Izumo Taisha Grand Shrine. The building style is unique and the fact that it was made only of wood amazed me. There are a lot of long-lived trees on the premises. The scenery reminds me what an important role the nature plays in our environments, especially so considering the situation in my country where deforestation has been progressing rapidly.

Outside Izumo, let me pick Kanazawa and Okinawa. I went there from Otsuka Toshimi Scholarship Foundation. In Kanazawa, it was in February and the amount of snow was enormous. According to the explanation by the tour guide, the houses are built so as to endure the weight of snow.



Kanazawa/ 金沢



Okinawa/ 沖縄

In Okinawa, I was intrigued in a completely different way. The Ryukyu Kingdom used to rule the area. On the other hand, there was a period when the U.S. military occupied it after WW II. So, we saw many traces of their influence around Okinawa. It is really a pity that Otsuka had to cancel all the trips this year due to COVID-19.

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

As a lecturer, I will devote myself to teaching the students of Hawassa University the knowledge and skills I have earned. I don't think it will be easy given the differences in the academic environment. For example, even if I want to conduct the same experiment, the lack of the equipment and reagent supplies in the lab will be a burden. So, it will be realistic that I first try to raise their self-esteem and solve issues one by one. Anyway, I hope I can contribute to the development of our country in the end.

Thank you, SINTAYEHU-san. I'm happy he seems to be enjoying the life in Japan together with his family. Meanwhile I'm worried about the situation in his country, Ethiopia. I cannot help but hope the turmoil will be ceased as soon as possible.

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 try this Japanese recipe !!



Kinako Mochi / きなこもち



I'm sure you have heard the word "Mochi(もち・餅)". It's pounded rice or rice cake and we Japanese traditionally eat it during the New Year Holidays. Today, I'd like to introduce a very easy but really tasty mochi recipe.

Mochi used to be made in each household at around the end of December but nowadays you can get a pack of pre-cut mochi pieces at any supermarket all year round. Likewise, "Kinako (きなこ・黄な粉)" or roasted soybean flour, which is the other of the main ingredients, can be easily found anywhere and anytime.

Ingredients (for 3persons)

- Mochi ... 3pieces
- Kinako... 2 tablespoons
- Sugar... 1 tablespoon
- Salt... a pinch
- Hot water... to boil the mochi



How to make

- 1 Boil water in a pot. The water should be enough to cover the mochi pieces.
- 2 After boiling, put the mochi in the pot, turn off the heat and wait for 8 min.
- 3 While waiting, mix the kinako, sugar, and salt in a bowl.
- 4 Take the mochi out of the pot and coat them with the mix of 3.
- 5 Enjoy the kinako mochi while they are still soft.
(Mochi hardens when cooled.)



+ Be careful!!

Mochi is very sticky when cooked. If they are eaten half-chewed, it may stick to your throat. Every year, around the New Year Holidays, we hear news about some people, especially the elderly, who choked on mochi and were carried to the hospital by ambulance. Younger children are also vulnerable. So please avoid giving mochi to small kids who haven't grown full teeth yet or tend to swallow quickly.

3 Let's learn seasonal Japanese words



♡ Oosoji / おおそうじ

You may have heard the word “Oosoji” meaning “House cleaning”, around the end of the year, and some of your departments may set aside one day for doing the cleaning. The custom dates back to the Edo period, when it was called “Susuharai” meaning “Dusting off” and people made it a rule to do it on exactly Dec.13. They dusted off all over their houses on the day to be prepared for welcoming spirits of the New Year well before the beginning of the year.



♡ Tondosan / とんどさん



You may have seen a big bonfire on around Jan.15. This is called “Tondosan” in Izumo. People make it to burn their New Year's ornaments and send spirits of the New Year off to the sky with the smoke of the fire. It is said that eating Mochi baked with the fire keeps you away from diseases throughout the year.

4 Events & Sightseeing



❄️ Swan-watching in Yasugi-City ❄️

About 1,000 swans spend the winter in the Nogi Plain in Yasugi City every year from early November to the middle of March. The area is rice fields and seems to provide plenty of food for them even after the harvesting of rice. There is a facility called “出雲織のき白鳥の里 (Izumo-ori Noki Hakuchou no Sato)” at a corner of the area where you can enjoy the swan-watching close up or buy local specialties.

➤ Access



By car : 10 mins by car from Yasugi I.C. on San' in Expressway



By JR : “Yasugi”station

→ Yellow bus (観光ループ, kankou(sightseeing) loop)

→ “Izumo-ori Noki Hakuchou no Sato”



Bus time schedule:



At the stop of “Yasugi station” to go

<https://www.navitime.co.jp/diagram/bus/00612654/00092791/0/>



At the stop of “Izumoori Noki Hakuchou no Sato” to return

<https://www.navitime.co.jp/diagram/bus/00612614/00092791/0/>



Hakuchou / 白鳥

If you go by JR, you need to be an early bird because the return bus ends its final service at 1:26pm (as of October, 2020).

➤ To know more → <https://www.kankou-shimane.com/en/?p=7081>

Shimane Hana no Sato (しまね花の郷)

Maybe many of you know at least its name but haven't been there because it's so close!! We call such a situation "Todai moto kurashi", which literally means that the lighthouse does not shine on its base. This is the metaphor to mean that people often know little of what is happening under their very noses. I've been to "Shimane Hana no Sato" twice and I strongly believe it's worth a visit if you love viewing flowers.

- Address: 〒693-0037 1101-1 Nishishinmachi, Izumo-city 出雲市西新町二丁目1101-1
- Entrance fee: ¥200/adult, ¥100/child (high schooler or younger), free(preschooler)
- Open: 9:30-16:30(Dec.-Feb.), 9:30-17:00(Mar.-Nov.)



Even though you are not interested in flowers, if you are into photography, why don't you visit there because they are now offering a good opportunity to demonstrate your photo skills. Here are the details:

Theme (Choose ① or ②)

① Flower(s)&Scenery

A photo of flower(s) and / or scenery taken in "Shimane Hana no Sato"

② Flower(s) & Person(s)

A photo of plant(s) and person(s) taken in "Shimane Hana no Sato"

Photo size

Color Print of 254mm × 305mm or 254mm × 366mm

Digital photo is acceptable. Composite photo is not acceptable.

How to apply

Put "Application form" on the back of your photo and send it to them by post or bring it directly.

Prizes

Top (JPY 30,000)~Final (Flower pot and annual passport)

Notes

- 1 Plural applications are OK.
- 2 The photo should be taken this year and still unpublished.
- 3 You need the model's (or parent's if the model is minor) authorization.
- 4 You need to pay the entrance fee to take the photo.
- 5 The deadline is Jan.10,2021 (must be postmarked by Jan.10,2021).

★ To know more and download the application form:

<https://www.shimanehananosato.com/wp/wpcontent/uploads/8444c3c49668a56c20a368eaa6769785.pdf>

★ To see the past awarded photos:

<https://www.shimane-hananosato.com/contest/contest>

If you need help with translation, please feel free to contact us 😊



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*.

