



# HELLO, FRIENDS !!

Shimane Hello Friends

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Hello, everyone. Welcome to the world of “HELLO, FRIENDS!!”.

We had another turbulent year in 2021. Thanks to the vaccines and thorough anti-infection measures, however, the entry ban has finally been lifted. That was the case until only a few days ago. I just want the international students who are still waiting in their home countries to come and see the scenery of Izumo with their own eyes and taste real Japanese food on their own tongues and feel the air flowing through the campus on their own skins, soon.

## 1 . Let's meet today's guest !!



Today's guest is WANG MEI san from China. She is now in her 2nd year of the Master's course and belongs to the Department of Pathology, Functional Pathology Unit. Due to the pandemic, she couldn't come to Japan for almost one year, half the period of the Master's course. Even so, thanks to the support from people around her, she almost completed her thesis in time and now is aiming for the next step.

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

After working as a physician specializing in cardiology for 10 years in China, I found myself wanting to be immersed in a research environment, when I learned about the double degree program conducted by Ningxia Medical University and Shimane University. It first felt like “too much” because simply returning to academia was enough for me, never mind studying abroad. Then my curiosity comes. “Why not? It would be a tremendous chance!!” So, I applied for the program. The screening was through interviews and luckily, I was shortlisted. Just imagine how nervous I was among the other interviewees who looked much younger and more suitable. It was as if I was Harry Potter wearing the sorting hat waiting for the decision. I encouraged myself and pretended to be fully confident during the interviews and finally made it. I wouldn't be able to forget this life-changing experience. One of the interviewers was my current professor, Nabika sensei. He picked me as his student partly because one of his research topics was regarding high blood pressure and it was exactly my field. And then, the journey to Izumo almost ended up with just a dream, because of the outbreak of COVID-19 and the following entry ban.

I spent time doing experiments in Ningxia until finally the day came. At that time, GOJ allowed foreigners' entry for a very limited period of time. I cannot thank enough all the people who helped me successfully come to Japan. Also it's really a shame that I'm the only one who was able to enter Japan among the four successful applicants.

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

After two weeks of quarantine in the hotel in Osaka, I was finally released and took the bus bound for Izumo. All the way, I couldn't stop imagining what kind of city Izumo was. As the bus approached the final destination, farmlands started to dominate the landscapes gradually. I was excited to see cattle grazing peacefully in greenery. It made me feel like I was back in my childhood hometown. I closed my eyes in the sunshine to feel the blue sky, white clouds, and rice fields outside the bus windows. It was really a comfortable and quiet moment. Some magical power might have worked. I felt my body freed from any pressure of the fast-paced city life.

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

It amazes me how hard Japanese people work. Customers and guests are treated with great hospitality. In my case as a non-native, whether they are shop clerks or public officials, they will try to explain clearly and write down the detailed procedures to ensure that I can understand fully. On campus, my professor and staff members are really hard workers and they won't finish working until late at night without having a meal. Sometimes I wonder if they don't feel hungry. At hospital, I saw a doctor twice and both times I witnessed how hard and diligently the doctors treated patients, even far beyond lunch time. I wondered again if they didn't feel hungry. So the love and enthusiasm of Japanese people toward their jobs surprises and kind of awes me.

- When Tokyo won the bid for hosting the Olympics and Paralympics, the phrase "Omotenashi" spread around the world. It means "hospitality". Your experiences embody it well, I think.



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

My favorite Japanese food is grilled eel. I first ate it at a sushi restaurant. It grabbed my heart in an instant. Since then, eel has become my "must" when dining at a sushi bar. Then I started becoming interested in cooking grilled eel by myself. I was happy to find raw eel at a supermarket one day and they cleaned the guts on the spot for free. With some simple seasonings, I was able to reproduce the grilled eel in my dormitory. I shared it with my friends and they were surprised at the very taste they are used to. Then I headed for the next step. My parents, who live in a rural area in China, would often cook eel and amino acid-added pork with some Chinese miso and sugar. It's a traditional dish popular in the area.



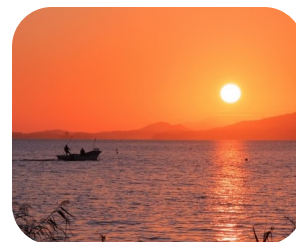
With the flavors of the meat and eel blending together, the eel & pork fusion has given joy and energy to the locals for generations. This time, a complicated technique was unnecessary too. Now, I can say I made it. I can't wait to share the dish full of the fond memories with my parents and hear how they like it.

- Eel and pork at the same time?! That's unbelievable because each of them can be a main ingredient itself. It must be really tasty and powerful.

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

My favorite place is probably a little different from the ones others would name. It's not a famous sightseeing spot but really memorable for me. After settling in Japan, I thought it would be better to be prepared for going anywhere by car even if I don't own one. My friend from China let me know how to change my Chinese license into a Japanese one. The testing site is conveniently located and just taking the "Ichibata" Line brought me close to the site. It was never an easy path to get the license. I had to learn some difficult Japanese words and a long time had passed since I last drove a car in China.

Each time I failed my attempt and went back home disappointed, the sceneries outside the Ichibata train, especially Lake Shinji-ko, healed my heart and encouraged me not to give up. It glowed brightly against the backdrop of the sunset and I can still easily project the view just by closing my eyes. Anyway, I finally passed it and now cherish my hard-earned driver's license. This experience made me understand the meaning of persistence and it is of great significance to me.



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

I've been working in cardiology for more than ten years in Shanghai and basic research is a new field for me. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19, my arrival in Shimane was delayed for nearly one year and the time for studying here is very limited. Supported by my department and lots of friends, however, I overcame the obstacle to achieve substantial results from my experiment. Now, I have set my eyes on 4 more years as a Ph.D. student of a graduated school in Tokyo. I hope in my future career I can use what I have learned here to combine basic research with clinical practice and treat patients effectively with lesser pain. I think this is the fascination of scientific research.

**- Wow, you are a genuine scientist and researcher as well as a physician at the forefront!!  
Actually, it's a bit of a pity that you will leave Shimane to study in Tokyo next year.  
Anyway, I'm sure your outstanding adaptability will let you develop your future path unlimitedly.**

Thank you, Wang san. As she said, she has been in Japan for only 10 months and she hardly visits our Gakumuka Academic Affairs Division. But, I knew what she is like through e-mail exchanges about her class attendances before she came to Japan. She had always been positive even without any foresight of possibility of coming to Japan. Maybe this attitude is the key to success in doing anything. This time also gave me a lot of surprises which I hadn't imagined the student got through, and it made me happy that they enjoy life here to the fullest.



*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 try this Japanese recipe !!

### Kurikinton (栗きんとん)

*mashed sweet potatoes with sweetened chestnuts*



“Osechi” is the traditional meal only prepared for New Year. It consists of dishes made from ingredients which are said to bring luck. One of the dishes is called “Kurikinton”. “Kuri” means chestnuts. Dried & peeled chestnuts are called “Kachi-guri” and the pronunciation of “Kachi” is the same as the Japanese word for “winning”. Meanwhile “Kinton” in “Kurikinton” means a golden dumpling. So, some believe that if they have Kurikinton on New Year’s Day, they will be lucky with games and money in the year. Whether you believe it or not, just try and enjoy this super delicious sweet recipe.

### Ingredients



- Kuri-no-kanro-ni (栗の甘露煮 : candied chestnuts ) ..... 1 pack (about 10 chestnuts and syrup)
- Sweet potato (middle size) .....300g (1 piece)
- Sugar ..... 45g
- Salt ..... a little
- Honey ..... 10 g

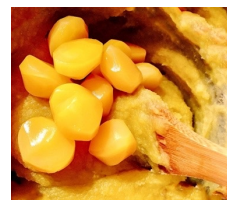


栗の甘露煮  
Kuri-no-kanro-ni

### How to make



- ① Peel the sweet potato and cut it into round slices. Put them in water for about 10 min to remove the bitter taste.
- ② Mix the sugar, salt, syrup, and honey in another container.
- ③ Change the water of ① and boil it for about 15 min. until it becomes soft enough for a skewer to get through smoothly.
- ④ Drain the water and mash the sweet potato.
- ⑤ Put ② and ④ in a pot and cook it over low heat to make it creamy.
- ⑥ Put all the chestnuts but 3 or 4 pieces for decoration in ⑤ and mix well.



- ⑦ Move ⑥ into a container and put the leftover chestnuts on the top.

If you have a sweet tooth, I bet you will love it!!

### 3 . Shopping & Gourmet spots



*Gotsu-shi-jiba-sangyou-shinkou-center,  
meaning "local industries promotion center in Gotsu-city"*

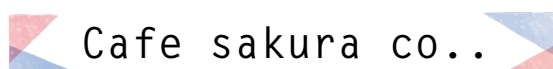
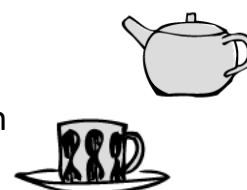
The western part of Shimane is called Iwami, and Gotsu-city is located there. There are some traditional industries handed down through generations in Iwami and this center features products from such industries so that visitors can browse or purchase. You will be surprised to see a vast number of potteries made using the "Iwami-yaki (firing)" method. At one corner of the floor, drinks and sweets are also sold, and there was something that caught my attention. It's organic mulberry leaf Matcha (powdered green tea). The price was affordable compared to Matcha made from normal tea leaves. I got it, and now enjoy home-made Matcha bread using the powder from time to time. Incidentally, Shimane University helped the local mulberry leaf producers' association discover useful substances contained in mulberry leaves.

**Address** 〒695-0016 I-405, Kakushi-cho, Gotsu-shi  
(江津市嘉久志町イ 405番地)

**Access** By car: 1 min from Gotsu IC on Sanin Expressway  
By train: 20 min on foot from JR "Gotsu (江津)" station

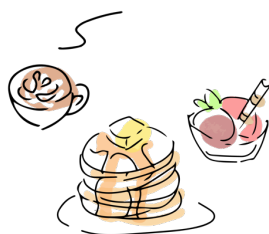
**Map** <https://shimane-jibasan.com/access/index.html>

**Contact** TEL : (0855) 52-0600 **Admission** Free



*sakura means cherry blossoms*

Next to "GOTSU JIBASAN" is this cafe. Who could imagine there is such a fashionable cafe in such a (little bit) remote area? Many kinds of herbs will welcome you just outside the entrance. It was not only the appearance that impressed me. Their coffee is also surprisingly great. On the day of my visit, I took a seat at around 11:00 am before the lunchtime started and witnessed the local people coming in one after another, and almost all the tables were occupied soon. Even if you are not a coffee lover, other drinks and sweets such as pancakes or lunch menus will never let you down. When I went out of the cafe, I thought I would definitely come back someday.



**Location** Next to GOTSU JIBASAN

**Tel** 0855-52-7740

**Time** 9:30 - 18:00

**Closed** Tuesdays

**For more** <https://tabelog.com/shimane/A3203/A320304/32004205/>



## 4 . Let's learn about a seasonal event around this time.

### Toshikoshi Soba



Due to the pandemic, most of you had to stay in Japan on last New Year's Eve, right? Then, you must have noticed piles of packs of Soba buckwheat noodles and Dashi (Japanese soup stock) for them on the shelves at supermarkets around the end of the year. Those are called "Toshikoshi (meaning entering a New Year) Soba".

We have a custom of eating the noodles on New Year's Eve. Why? There are various theories, and it is said that the custom had already begun in the Edo period. Even now, we think Soba is a food to bring luck because it is thin and long. The "thin" leads to the idea of cutting misfortunes and calamities. The "long" leads to the images of longevity and bonds.



The toppings on the noodles depend on the areas and individuals. The major ones include salty-sweet boiled herrings and deep-fried tempura prawns. You can also easily find these already- cooked toppings at supermarkets. Why don't you try this traditional Japanese custom on the upcoming New Year's Eve?



**"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](mailto: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*.