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## AN IMPORTANT STAY IN SATOYAMA

Although the 2014 CLS Japan Institute's experience in Satoyama lasted just one day, it was a really interesting adventure for everyone. Why? For example, it was many students' first time visiting an onsen (Japanese hot-spring communal bath). Also, the young children whom we met in Satoyama were absolutely adorable. Even sleeping all together in the same room was fun! (Males and females were in separate buildings, of course.) Overall, I think it was a fantastic experience.

We CLS students were excited to experience Satoyama on June 20th and 21st. Having departed Himeji Dokkyo University at about 3:30 pm, we arrived at the exchange center in Satoyama after about an hour. There, we underwent a brief orientation. Then it was onsen time! After bathing, we returned to the exchange center for dinner, where we were served a fabulous buffet-style feast.

Saturday, we woke early and ate a buffet breakfast back at the exchange center. Afterwards, various activities alongside residents of Satoyama kept us very busy: making mochi (rice cakes), teaching basic English phrases to a group of young local children, repairing sliding doors, and making flower arrangements. When it was all over, I think we CLS students were exhausted! But given that our entire experience at Satoyama was a really rare opportunity, I am very grateful.

One thing that surprised me about the experience at Satoyama happened while interacting with the youngsters. Even though these were small children, I would sometimes find myself completely unable to understand what they were saying. It's probably just that my ability to speak Japanese is even lower than that of an ordinary Japanese kindergarten!

One thing I learned on the trip was the proper protocol for visiting an onsen. Before going to Satoyama, I had thought that getting in the bath in front of everyone would be really embarrassing. But as soon as I entered the bath, it was fine. The proper onsen behavior isn't difficult, so when I entered the bath, I soon came to enjoy it.

Because I learned a variety of things, I think the weekend at Satoyama was a very good experience.

Helen Rolfe

# SATOYAMA INTERVIEW WITH THE COMPANY PRESIDENT

Saturday, June 21, 2014 Outside of the Exchange Building, the Genshijinkai's President, Kunida, talks about Satoyama, the Genshijinkai, and the like:

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## **Q: How did the "Genshijinkai" (lit. "Primitive Man Organization") get its name?**

A: Well... You know... When the organization started up, this building [Exchange Building] wasn't built yet. And, originally, I worked the rice field. When we first started making charcoal/roasting charcoal... at the time, the people who gave a helping hand all gathered here in the center of the field at night to eat their meals. While everyone was drinking, I used to look behind me as I was building the fire, and once when I looked behind us I saw raccoon dogs and deer approaching us, you know, to get some food from us. Really, it was like living way back during the time of the caveman. "Don't we look like cavemen?" And the name "Genshijinkai" (Primitive Man Organization) has stuck since then.

## **Q: When the organization first assembled, how many people were there?**

A: At first, in the very beginning, there were about eighty households. And, about half of these households came on Saturday, Sunday, or their days off to come and offer their help with various things. Nevertheless, work like making charcoal is still really intensive. It's hard on the body. Because of that, the number of people who came gradually decreased one by one. At the beginning, there were about 40 people, and the help would take turns helping, but still, it's tiring for the body. Because of that, the number of people has gradually decreased. Now there are currently several of us working here, participating regularly, but there's also the NPO side of the Primitive Man Association. On their side, there are a lot of people. The original Primitive Man Association was made up of several people.

Q: Are you cooperating with other organizations?

A: Of course. The Genshijinkai's objective is to do our best in revitalizing the area. We want to work together with other groups in different areas that share the same objective.

## **Q: What does working in the Genshijinkai involve?**

A: One of the things the Genshijinkai does is that it makes unrefined sake. We also run a farmhouse restaurant. We can make meals. I also manage the public bus system. Typically, we take care of the mountain, and do things like cutting the grass and keeping it clean. So if you come here, there are plenty of jobs. And plenty of reasons to be tired.

## **Q: How's life in Satoyama?**

A: Well, when I was young, I lived in Tokyo. I went to university in Tokyo, but still the countryside appealed to me more. It's definitely fun to visit the city. But the countryside is better for living in the long term. It's nice to be woken up by the chirping of the birds.

## **Q: What has changed in the past 20 years?**

A: The years have passed. Of course, there has been the declining birthrate. The number of children has decreased and the number of seniors has increased. I'm also a senior, so I hope that more young kids come to the area. As I said, a goal of the Genshijinkai is to advance revitalization. Mizuta and Ohashi, who work the field growing vegetables, both live here, but they are not children of Manganji. They are from Kobe and Harima-cho. They came from far away to work here, and now they live here. The village population cannot sustain itself if things continue like this. If the number of children continues to decrease, and the number of elderly people continues to increase, then we cannot work or sustain our way of life. In order for this not to happen, we are trying to call in more young people.

## **Q: I want to talk more about population. What have you done in order to decrease the number of people leaving the city?**

A: We want to make the region appealing to young people. We want them to think, "Wow, I want to live here." But right now we're just grasping in the dark. We are planning events and such, hoping that young people will come. We're putting a lot of thought into it, but it's difficult.

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Even though the time we were at Satoyama was short, the CLS students found the experience at Satoyama enjoyable. Last year, when I studied in Fukushima Prefecture, the farmers from Fukushima Prefecture taught me about the various conditions of depopulating villages and the falling birthrates and increasing number of seniors. After hearing about the Genshijinkai's objective of revitalizing the area in order to protect Satoyama, I was very moved by the people's efforts.

# REFLECTION ON THE HIMEJI CITY WALKING TOUR

On June 14, I visited a number of places around Himeji on a city walking tour provided through the courtesy of the members of the Senba Josei Committee. Surrounded by magnificent natural beauty, Himeji is a city with a deep and enduring history, and thanks to the tour guide I learned more about Himeji.

With Himeji Castle at its center, the city is filled with artisans who build traditional Buddhist family shrines, brew sake, and dye fabric, continuing their craft in the same manner as they have performed in the past. These artisans are working hard to protect and pass down Japanese traditional craft making. I was delighted to be able to see a side of this work that most people are normally not privy to, and view how these crafts were made first hand. The experience was very informative.

Additionally, I learned about Himeji's ancient history. For example, I heard about Ikeda, the person who built Himeji Castle, Kuroda Kanbei, the Edo era poet's house, and the effect of World War II had on the city. As a result of the city walking tour, I was able to learn a great deal. In my opinion, Himeji is quite an amazing city.

Portia Stiger

## A GLIMPSE AT THE MAKING OF SAKE

On Saturday June 28, students of the CLS Program toured Nadakiku Sake Brewery. Before the tour, I had absolutely no idea how sake was made. It turned out to be a very complicated and time consuming process. First the rice has to be rinsed, and afterwards steamed. Following that, the rice needs time to ferment before it can finally be filtered and bottled. Surprisingly, all these steps occur in one large wooden warehouse. After the tour, we learned about the various types of sake, and the different batches made. It was all incredibly interesting.

The topic that was most interesting to me was that of the Master Brewer, called a Tōji. Out of all the people in the brewery, the Tōji is the most skillful sake maker. It sounds like a very difficult job. While the sake is being brewed, the Tōji's job is to check on it. However, they don't use tools. Instead, the Tōji relies on their eyes and ears alone to decide if the batch is complete. Usually, the Tōji is a man; however at Nadakiku, the Tōji is a woman. Because Japan is still a bit strict about gender roles, I was very happy to find out there was a woman in charge. Altogether, the tour was interesting as well as a lot of fun, and I'm very glad I went.

Mackenzie Tyler



## MT. SHOSHA

At the top of Mt. Shosha in Hyogo Prefecture is Engyō-ji, a temple complex of the Tendai Sect and a designated national treasure. Engyō-ji was established in the third year of the Kōhō era of the Heian period (966) by Shouku Shounin. At Engyō-ji, while viewing the beautiful scenery, you can eat the vegetarian cuisine of Buddhist monastics, practice zazen (seated meditation) and trace sutras.

Because Engyō-ji is located in a primeval forest, the atmosphere is calm and serene. It is said that whoever climbs Mt. Shosha will be purified in both body and spirit, and I think this is indeed the case. After climbing the mountain for an hour and finally standing in front of the Nio Gate, sniffing the faint aroma of incense wafting by on the breeze from one of the temples, I experienced just such a feeling of rejuvenation.

Mt. Shosha is about 6 kilometers to the northwest of Himeji Castle. To visit by means of public transportation, take the Shinki Bus bound for Shosha Ropeway from the bus stop at the north entrance to Himeji Station, and get off at the last stop. From there, the trip up the mountain by ropeway takes about four minutes. Alternately, to hike up takes around one hour. The fee at the main entrance to Engyō-ji is 500 yen, and after that there is no charge to enter the various buildings.

Lisa Wilcut

## DOCTOR YELLOW

Two years ago when I was in Tokyo I mostly rode the train but I never knew about what type of people worked at the train station or what jobs existed in the train station. For this reason, I learned a lot during the train station tour. I used to think all station personnel worked at the station platform, but this Friday I learned that there are different jobs at the station. For example, being able to see the customers at the station from the ticket counter and station gate made me understand the job of train station personnel. Of all the jobs in the station I would want to do the job of counting the money because I like math and money. However, the job of monitoring the bullet train also seemed interesting.

The best part of the train station tour was being able to see the bullet train called “Doctor Yellow.” I took a video of the “Doctor Yellow” train that I want to show to the other CLS students in order to give them the same luck that seeing the train is supposed to bring to those who see it. If possible, I would have wanted to go in to a bullet train, but I look forward to the next time I see a bullet train because I think I’ll be riding it on my way somewhere. Lastly, I want to tell my friends and family about being in the VIP room at the station! I think they will be surprised when I tell them that we were all treated like VIP guests.

Alexandra Estrella





## RAMEN THAT MAKES EVERYBODY SMILE

I would like to introduce a ramen shop called Kibou-ken. Perhaps you may recall, when CLS first began, I choose “ramen” as my CLS “keyword.” That is, of course, because ramen is my favorite Japanese dish. No matter where I go, whether it be Kyoto, Tokyo, Hong Kong, or New York, I always enjoy finding delicious ramen in new cities. That is why, when I first came to Himeji, I wanted to find a nearby ramen shop as quickly as possible. And during my first week here, I found Kibou-ken completely by accident.

## WAGASHI: THE ART OF MAKING SWEETS

On June 28th five members of the CLS Himeji program accompanied Suzuki sensei to a traditional Japanese confectionary store known as Amaneya. It was a very enjoyable and educational experience.

As an extreme lover of all things sweet I was excited to be selected to participate in the Wagashi (traditional Japanese sweets) event. At this event the owner of the establishment, Mori sensei, explained to us not only the method to making traditional sweets but also the history behind it. It was customary in the past for Japanese people to eat two meals a day, breakfast and dinner, but of course with such a wide span of time between meals the hardworking laborers of Japan would begin to feel the pangs of hunger. Snacks, or Okashi, became an important aspect of Japanese culture as snack time became a normal part of the Japanese daily routine. Wagashi derives its name from the word okashi and combines it with the word Wa which describes all things customarily Japanese. Wagashi gained a certain prestige as people began to add artistic elements to the common daily snack.

The sweet treat we learned to make that day is called mikan daifuku. Mikan daifuku is a small mandarin orange, which in this case was specially grown for the optimum taste, wrapped in sweet bean paste and mochi. It was a great experience to learn how to make the treat in addition to it being plain fun. The process of making it appeared easy at first but was actually harder to execute. The sweet yet sour taste of the orange blended nicely with the sweet and soft mochi to create a unique and subtle treat. The subtle flavors derived from nature provide the backbone of Japanese confectionary and also paints a nice representation of the culture it comes from.

I am very thankful to the owner of Amaneya for letting us experience something that we would normally not be able to experience in the United States. I hope in the future to try more of the wonderful desserts Mori sensei has to offer.

Naomi Hayes

The directions there are as follows: after exiting the hotel, turn left at the intersection, and keep walking until you see the ramen shop on your left. As it takes less than five minutes to get there, it is a very convenient location. Although Kibou-ken is quite small, it is comfortable and quiet, so you can take your time eating and chatting with friends. Kibou-ken apparently also has branches in Tokyo, Osaka, Kyoto etc., so there are plenty of opportunities to try their ramen.

In addition to various types of ramen, you can also order tsukemen, chahan, gyoza etc. Furthermore, if you want to eat a spicy ramen, Kibou-ken serves five different levels of spiciness to choose from. Since I don't handle spicy foods very well, I only ever order the mildest (level 1) level, but everyone can pick as they please.

Although I've only been to Kibou-ken twice so far, the ramen that I ate has been delicious. I look forward to returning here, as well as discovering new ramen shops in the area. If anyone has any suggestions for me, I'd be glad to hear them!

Anna Andriychuk

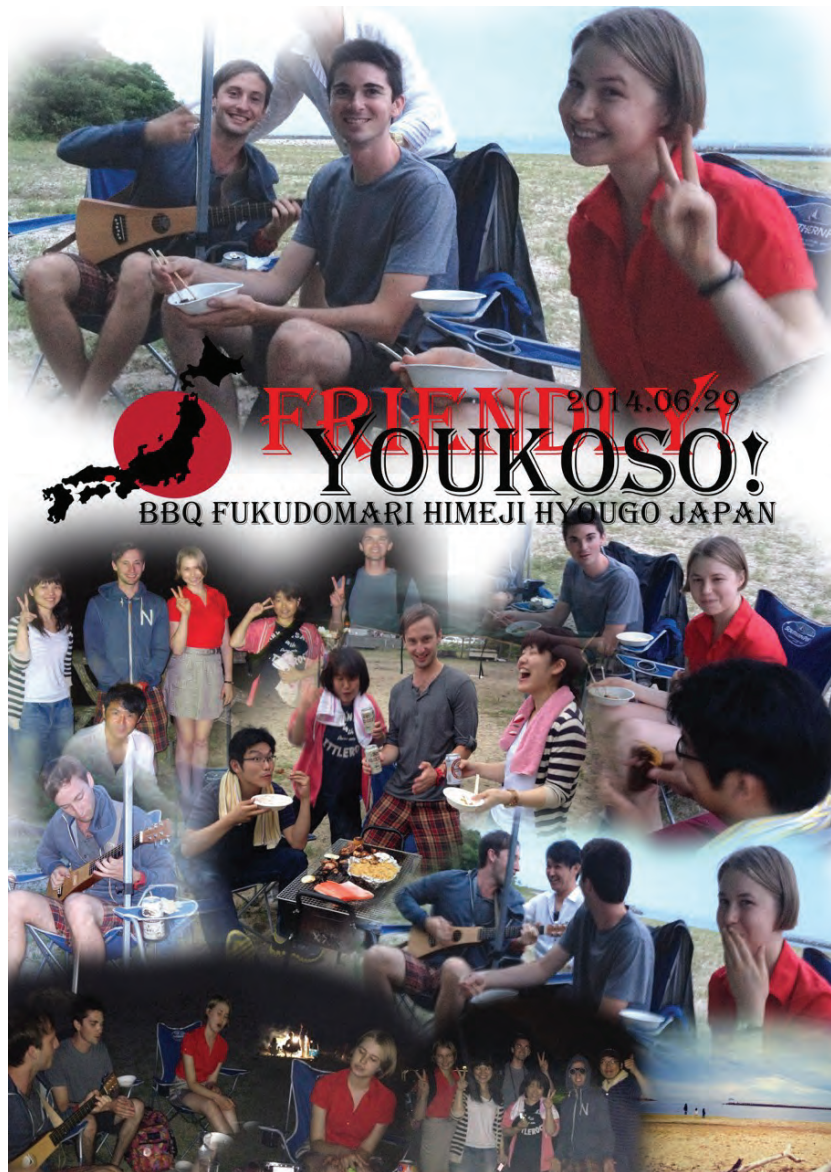


## A MEETING AT THE BEACH

Last Sunday, Nagahama-san, a watchmaker whom I met during the Himeji City Walking Tour, and his friends invited me to come to their barbeque on the beach. Thanks to the BBQ skills of Ono-san I was able to gobble up some great fish and meat. Kawabata Hitomi, who graduated from Dokkyo University's English Literature Department, brought an Okinawan Sanshin (similar to the Shamisen, but with a distinct Island sound). Listening to Nagahama-san accompany her with guitar with the sunset backdrop, I kanpai-ed the adorable Maki-san.

As the good times rolled on by, I took a moment and heeded nature's call behind the beach cliffs. In the distance, I could see the forms of two people walking up the beach. Squinting as they got closer, I realized with a start that it was Kyle Koslosky and Helen Rolfe! The only way to sum up such serendipity of this vississitude would be with the word "en", which can be translated as karmic association/relation. Seeing my new Japanese friends and my CLS comrades enjoy themselves together, to borrow a phrase from Nagahama-san, "God was really with us today."

Garrett Norris



## A CHANCE ENCOUNTER

One afternoon, A CLS friend, Helen, and I decided to make a trip to a beach in Himeji called Matogata. The sea breeze would be a nice relief from the afternoon heat, so we took the local train and before long arrived in the sleepy suburbs of Matogata.

There was a poster for directions to the beach, but as soon as we left the station we were as good as lost. In other words, the adventure had begun. After asking the local Lawson clerk for directions, after twenty minutes we finally arrived.

On the pier we talked to a friendly fisherman who happily showed us his humble catch of the day: a squid, seeped in its own black ink. For a foreigner who lives nowhere near the sea back home, however, it was fascinating.

We then made our way back to the beach, when the sound of footsteps neared closer and closer from behind.

There was a loud, "Whaaayy" kind of cry and we turned to find not a stranger, but Garrett of the CLS!

It turned out that Garrett was hanging out with some Japanese friends from Himeji, barbecuing on that very beach. Our fates certainly crossed that day. We were all introduced and Garrett's friends warmly welcomed us into their party. Although we spent hours chatting and singing anything from FleetWood Mac to Kyu Sakamoto, the chance meeting itself is a memory to keep..

Kyle Koslosky

# MIYUKI-DORI

It is no secret that this year's CLS Japan participants are regulars of a local shopping district here in Himeji called "Miyuki-dori." Miyuki-dori is convenient for its proximity to the train station and its abundance of great shops and eateries. However, while going out to eat, shopping, and spending quality time with language buddies along Miyuki-Dori, nobody seems to question where the name may have come from or what it means. So, when contemplating a topic for this week's presentation, I decided to find out more about the origin of the name "Miyuki-dori."

"Dori" means "road" in Japanese, so the connection between that part of the name and the function of the place is clear. However, "Miyuki" is not so obvious in meaning. With some research, I found that "Miyuki" is connected to the original purpose of the road when it was first established in 1903.

Miyuki-dori is a road that connects Himeji castle to the train station, running parallel to Otemae-dori. In 1903, military exercise was conducted for the Emperor Meiji including a parade review of troops. In preparation for this Imperial visit, a new road connecting the train station to the northern castle parade grounds was constructed. Because the new road was built for this purpose, it was named "Miyuki", which is another way to pronounce the Chinese characters meaning "Imperial visit". So, "Miyuki-dori" means "road of the Imperial visit." It was named to commemorate the occasion.

Since then, the function and facade of Miyuki-dori has changed dramatically over the decades. When Otemae-dori was converted to accommodate motor vehicle traffic, Miyuki-dori was made over into a shopping district in place of a commuter road. The Miyuki-dori we see today was built in the 1980s.

When I decided to look into the origin of the name "Miyuki-dori" I had no idea of the length of history behind the place. I hope from hearing my presentation, this year's CLS participants might think of Miyuki-dori a little differently next time they make a visit to eat, visit a cafe, or go shopping with language buddies along this popular destination.

Dervla McDonnell



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# THE TALE OF KUROTORI HANEI

## PART TWO

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For a while, Kurotori Hanei stared at the white bird, finally answering, "White Heron? What a ridiculous name!"

The White Heron cackled, "Of course, Lord Kurotori would find everything about Harima to be ridiculous."

"What! How do you know my name?"

"I wonder."

"Tell me!"

"It's a secret."

Prideful Lord Kurotori was irritated, but the calm Lord Hanei recognized that further argument was futile and tried changing the subject. "What sort of person is the king of Harima?"

"Hmm... Well, the king of Harima is all white, covered in feathers, and has fast wings."

"In other words, he's a lot like you."

"Hmm, I suppose one might say that."

"Will you introduce me to your king?"

"That is not necessary."

"Why not?"

"I wonder."

Lord Hanei could not continue this useless conversation and gave up. Lord Kurotori's angry tongue began to form a cruel sound, but the White Heron suddenly asked in a warm voice, "Are you searching for help, Lord Kurotori?"

Lord Kurotori's cold tongue melted, and Hanei simply grumbled, "Yes."

"I can help you, Lord!"

"Two cannot conquer Kozue."

"Well, I happen to have an acquaintance in possession of an army."

"Really? Do you think he will help me?"

"I have no doubts about it."

"Who is this acquaintance of yours?"

"He is called Lord Meadow."

TO BE CONTINUED...