

# HIMEJI CIR NEWSLETTER

I have had a very busy March this year that I have hardly had any time to keep on top of this newsletter!

I hope everyone gets a chance to see the cherry blossoms this year and with that I bring you the March edition of the Himeji CIR Newsletter.

## Contents



What is a CIR?  
(p.1)



Updates from  
Himeji City  
(p.3)



Monthly  
reflections  
(p.2)



Japanese Word  
of the Month  
(p.5)



Foreigner in  
Japan Spotlight  
(p.6)



## About Me

Hello! My name is Cessan Smith and I am the fifth Coordinator for International Relations (CIR) in Himeji City. I was born in Scotland but lived in Australia for seven years.  
よろしくお願いします！

## What is a CIR?

A Coordinator for International Relations (CIR) is a position on the JET Programme that involves providing international expertise in a local government office. My everyday work involves translation, interpreting as well as holding cultural exchange events in Himeji.



## Monthly Reflections



We had guests from Wales visit us in last month, and after their long day in Himeji, I knew just what they needed: a cup o' tea. In the UK, we usually have a cup of builder's tea, the standard style of tea Brits enjoy during the afternoon. There is an unspoken yet diligently practiced system to making this classic beverage. Before making the tea, data must be collected from the rest of the group. Sugar? Yes or no, Milk? Yes or no (depending on the household, other options may be available), Teabag left in or out? Yes or no. The next step is to boil the kettle and put the teabag in the cup. Everyone has their own preferred brand of tea (dismissing all other varieties as drain water) but the bog standard is black tea usually marketed as 'everyday tea'. Second, put in boiling water. If your visitor prefers milky tea, then usually less water is put in the cup, if they like strong tea more water is added. Wait 2~4mins. Add milk and serve with your choice of biscuits (mine is chocolate digestives). Shamelessly dip biscuit in tea in front of guests. Make sure to remember this whenever you have guests over from the UK!

## Spring Events in Himeji



### Osaka Expo Special Event: Takada Kenzo Exhibition

In celebration of the Osaka Expo, an exhibition on the life and works of Himeji-born fashion designer Kenzo Takada will be on display at the Himeji City Museum of Art from **Saturday 12th April to Monday 21st July** with adult entry at 1500 yen. Takada was known for his groundbreaking designs that challenged cultural borders, gender and other societal preconceptions.



## Spring Events in Himeji

### Mount Shosha New Green Festival

During Golden Week (**Saturday 3rd~Monday 5th May**), Mount Shosha will be celebrating the new green leaves of spring with a special opening of Engyoji temple's designated cultural properties, and a stamp rally event. Entry costs 500 yen for middle school students and older.





## Japanese Word of the Month

# ソメイヨシノ

ソメイヨシノ (somei-yoshino) is the most common species of cherry blossom in Japan. Other varieties include the 山桜 (yamazakura, 'mountain cherry blossom') which grows naturally in the wild and the 枝垂桜 (shidare-zakura) the weeping cherry blossom tree. All three of these varieties can be found in the 1,000 cherry blossom trees that surround Himeji Castle.



# Foreigner in Japan Spotlight

## Anna Yukari Miyoshi

My name is Yukari and I'm from Austria! I live in the northern part of Tochigi Prefecture, in a city called Nasushiobara where I work as a CIR. Since Nasushiobara is an official partner city of Linz (third largest city in Austria AND my hometown!), I'm in charge of any correspondence with Austria by translating emails and interpreting online meetings most of the time.



Toteyaki (pancake wrap) is a speciality in Shiobara.



### What is your favourite food?

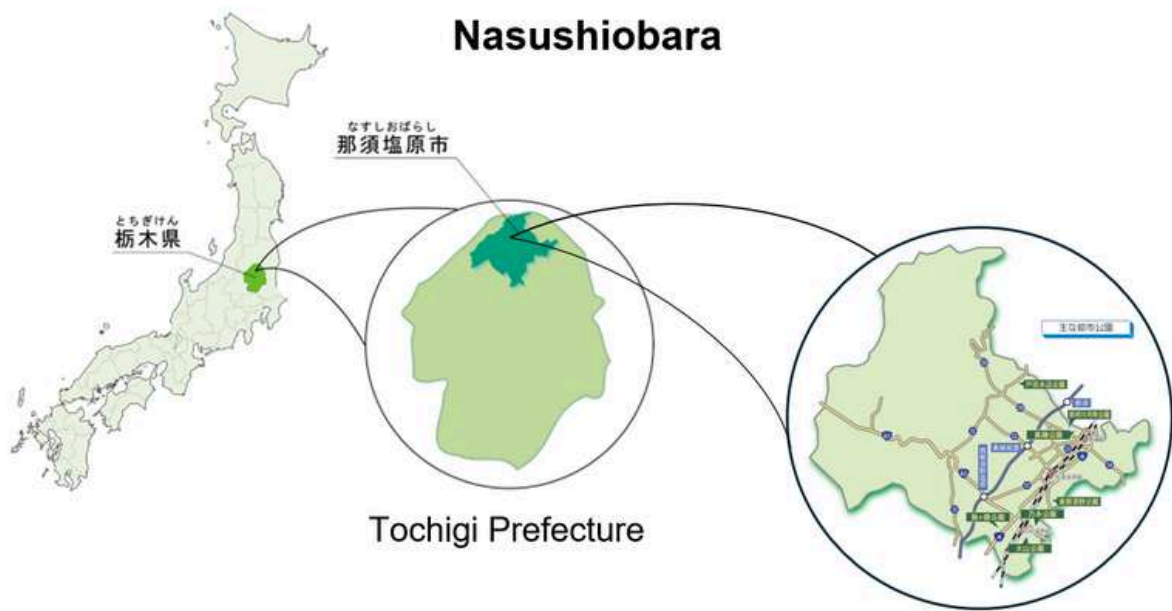
I love any kind of Donburi, be it Kaisendon, Oyakodon or Gyudon.



Bern Yau CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

### What is your least favourite food?

Probably, fried cartilage if it's Japanese cuisine. If it's vegetables or herbs, celery or coriander are my enemy.



I also offer seminars and workshops to the public to introduce Austrian culture in various ways such as group-talk sessions, quizzes, cooking and crafting classes. In cases where Austrian guests come to Nasushiobara, I accompany them throughout their visit to offer them support in language and culture. The same goes for the mayor of Nasushiobara if he visits the Austrian embassy.

Moreover, the CIR of Nasushiobara publishes a Newsletter too! Every three months, it captures the exchange activities that Nasushiobara City had with Austria and introduces Austrian culture matching the season as well.



## What is your favourite place in Himeji?



Engyoji Temple

This might be a very lame answer but for me, it has to be the Himeji castle. Though, I must be honest, I have never been anywhere else in Himeji...but going down the street from Himeji station to the castle, watching the beautiful white building slowly coming closer was a very pretty walk. Next time I visit Himeji, I would like to go to the temple shoshazan engyoji (書寫山圓教寺) to spend some time in nature and enjoy a nice view.

## Why did you want to move to Japan?



Momijidani Ōtsuribashi in Nasushiobara

To answer this question, I have to go back to my identity being half-Japanese and half-Austrian. I grew up learning and studying the Japanese language by my mother since I was very little. When I was in high school, I realised my strongest suit was Japanese, so I decided to study it at university and even ended up study a year abroad. The reason why I wanted to work in Japan, is to see the country from a third perspective as I have already experienced Japan as a tourist and as a student before – but also because I knew I could let my strengths thrive in Japan better than anywhere else with my knowledge of the language and the culture of Japan and Austria/Europe.



## Story Time: Driving in Japan



### Yuppo no Sato in Shiobara - biggest footbath in Japan

First, I never thought I would ever have to drive in Japan since I have lived in cities with good infrastructure so far, what made me naïve about settling down in the countryside. And you know, I like biking so I thought I would bike to anywhere no matter how far – I don't need a car. Well, Nasushiobara proved me wrong – in the hard way. Also, people in Nasushiobara don't realise how strong and cold the wind is in this area, but one thing I can tell you now is that I had a very hard time going anywhere by bike. And it was not fun, it was pure agony. Furthermore, drivers in Tochigi prefecture don't stop for pedestrians (don't ask me why) that makes my blood boil every time.



## Story Time: Driving in Japan



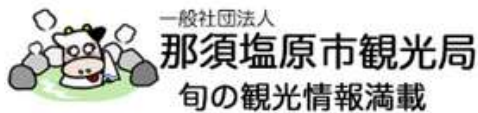
Senbonmatsu Farm Park

Long story short, half a year later, I got a car.

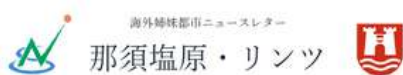
As someone who is not very keen of driving AND who only knows driving on the RIGHT side, I never thought it would come this far. Learning how to drive on the left side on my own was an experience I must say, but me driving on the left side and carrying friends in the car? That was just terrifying. I was worried for their lives but surely, they were too – especially when I didn't know where to turn and made the move last minute. And mayyybe I might have missed a few red lights. Maybe. Maybe not. I blame it on the Japanese crossings and traffic lights that can be confusing sometimes. Nevertheless, my chaotic driving and the wonderful time in my car made our bond of friendship stronger, I guess. ♥

## Visit Naushiobara

Naushiobara City is most famous for its nature, (cow) farms and milk, as it is the biggest milk producer in honshu, the main island of Japan. We are especially proud of our milk products (such as cheese and cheesecakes) and local vegetables which are sold at the michi no eki (roadside stations). If you ever come to Naushiobara, don't forget to stop by at one of many hot springs we have in the areas of Shiobara and Itamuro. Nasushiobara is a perfect destination for a day trip from Tokyo or for a weekend, offering various places to visit. If you're looking for a ski resort close to Tokyo - you can put Nasushiobara on your list as well.



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Local Food  
in Nasushiobara

