



Always engrossed in life!

In this issue of Mimitaro, we interviewed Mr. Serge Maumary a mathematician, and his wife Mrs. Junko Ishizuka.



Mr. Maumary:

I was born in 1938, and spent my early childhood in Switzerland during wartime. Although Switzerland did not

take part in World War II, it was threatened by Germany, and all citizens worked together to protect the country. My father was assigned to guard the border, and he came home once a week carrying a gun. Children's play mostly involved playing war saying, "Germans and Japanese are devils!" In the midst of all this, what I recall of my mother is holding a frying pan and singing while she cooked.

Switzerland is a multicultural country where four languages are spoken domestically, and French and German are taught together in school. After secondary school, only students who wanted to go on to higher education entered high school; most students either went to vocational high school or found a job. I started working at a machine factory when I was 15, from 7am until late at night. However, I became interested in mathematics, and after work I bought math books of Paris La Sorbonne University, and for three years, I studied by myself. Eventually, I could no longer resist the urge to study at a university, so I asked the factory manager for a leave of absence, promising to return to the factory if I fail the high school entrance exam. I attended a preparatory school for a year and passed the exam for high school at the age of 19. After graduating in one year with the help of a scholarship, I entered the university I had been longing for.

Beside university studies, I started a variety of activities, such as ski mountaineering and rowing, playing the clarinet at Conservatorium, and also joined the Student Gesellschaft Helvetia (student union), by admission rite of drinking 15 mugs of beer, and accidentally waking up on the steps of the cathedral!

After my Ph.D. in 1968, I continued my research at various math institutes in Europe and USA. At the age of 35, I became a professor at University of Lausanne. In 1990, while in Kyoto for the first International Congress of Mathematics in Asia, I stopped by a noodle shop, where I met my wife, who had come for lunch with an office group. Two years later, we married and lived in Lausanne, blessed with our child Azusa, who is now a ballerina in Tokyo. 17 years ago, we came to Japan when I became honorary professor. Currently I am a research guest at the Research Institute for Mathematical Sciences in Kyoto University, working from home since the Covid-19 pandemic.

My daily routine is waking up at 6am., working on my computer in the morning and at night, and in the evening, I practice the clarinet in the apartment meeting room. Three times a week, early in the morning, I go rowing on the Seta River. On Mondays, I ride my bicycle to the Japanese language class, and enjoy talking with my teacher. I am thankful that there is a Japanese language class because my Japanese doesn't improve only at home. I also have the opportunity to participate in the Otsu Jazz Festival and music chamber in Kyoto with my clarinet. The key to living abroad is having opportunities to join new events. My life is easy going, thanks to my wife, who cares for everything outside mathematics.

Mrs. Ishizuka: I know it was a difficult decision for my husband to come to Japan, but I am very grateful that he listened to my wishes. I wanted him to be able to spend his life in Japan, as he had in Switzerland, so we decided to live in Otsu, closer to nature with Lake Biwa, and Seta River for him to go rowing, like Lake Lemman in his hometown. We are naturally very different, coming from different countries and having an age difference of 28 years. I think we live well together by not forcing ourselves to understand everything about each other, and by not imposing our own culture. It is important to respect each other by keeping a little distance and accepting our differences. Let's take care of our health and enjoy our life together forever.

Supporting your Work-Life Balance

To enable employees to continue working while raising children, there are systems that provide postnatal and childcare leave, as well as support upon returning to work. There are conditions regarding employment status and enrolled insurance that must be met in order to use these systems.



★ Systems available to those insured by employment insurance (social insurance)

Childcare Leave System (*Ikuji Kyugyo Seido*)

A leave system to take care of a child under 1 year of age. Childcare leave up to the age of 1 year may be taken in 2 installments. When the father and mother both take childcare leave, or if the admission to a nursery school has not been available, childcare leave can be extended. Please apply for the leave to the employer in writing, at least 1 month before the planned starting date of the leave.

If certain conditions are met, “Childcare Leave Benefits” (*Ikuji Kyugyo Kyufukin*) can be paid during the period of leave. The amount paid is 67% of the daily wage at the start of the leave up to 180 days, and 50% thereafter.

Paternity Childcare Leave System (*Shuseiji Ikuji Kyugyo (Sango Papa Ikukyu) Seido*)

The system is primarily designed for men to take leave to care for their child after birth. The father may take 4 weeks of leave within 8 weeks of their child’s birth, and it may be taken in 2 installments. Please apply for the leave to the employer in writing, 2 weeks before the planned starting date of the leave. If certain conditions are met, “Birth/ Childcare Leave Benefits” (*Shuseiji Ikuji Kyugyo Kyufukin*) will be paid. The amount paid is 67% of the daily wage at the start of the leave × the number of days of leave (28 days maximum).

→For more information, contact the Hello Work office with jurisdiction over the location of your workplace.

Pension and health insurance premiums are exempted or reduced for a certain period before and after childbirth

(From January 2024)

- When a member of the social insurance system takes maternity leave/ childcare leave, the health insurance premiums and employee pension premiums during the leave are exempted. →For more information, contact the pension office
- Those who are National Pension Category 1 insured persons, and the date of delivery of the child is on or after February 1st 2019, will be exempted from paying National Pension Insurance premiums for 4 months before and after the birth.
→For more information, contact the pension office or the municipal office
- National Health Insurance insured persons are eligible for a reduction in insurance premiums for up to 4 month, from a month prior to childbirth. (For those who gave birth on or after November 1st 2023)
→For more information, contact the municipal office

★ Available systems established by the Labor Standards Law after returning to work

※Each program has age restrictions for children and required working hours, so please check with your employer.

Childcare hours (*Ikuji Jikan*) Regardless of employment status, female workers who work full-time may request at least 30 minutes of childcare hour twice a day, in addition to rest periods, while the child is under 1 year old. Childcare hour may be taken during working hours, at the beginning or at the end of the working day.

Shortening of working hours, exemption from overtime work / late-night work Parents regardless of gender who take care of a child may also request reduced working hours (6 hours in principle), and exemption from overtime, and late-night work (from 10 p.m. to 5 a.m.) to care for their child.

Nursing-care leave for children (*Kango Kyuka*) Regardless of employment status, employees who take care of a child before elementary school age can take nursing-care leave when their child is ill or injured, or for their vaccinations or medical examinations. Employees can take up to five days of leave for one child before elementary school age, and up to 10 days for 2 or more children per year, on an hourly basis in addition to annual paid leave.

※Whether the leave is paid or unpaid depends on the system of the workplace.

→ For consultation, contact Shiga Labor Bureau, Employment Environment / Equal Opportunity Office

TEL: 077-523-1190

Starting elementary school Q & A



Congratulations on entering elementary school! From April, a new school life has started. There are various procedures to be done at the beginning of the school year. Check the school's handouts carefully and ask the school if you have any questions.

Q Is there a place where they can look after my child after school?

A There are after school children's club (*Hokago Jido Kurabu*) (*The naming may differ).

After school children's club offers a safe place to stay and play for the child whose guardian are unable to care for them at home after school due to work, illness, nursing care, or other circumstances. There are public and private children's club, and some days are also available during long vacations. Conditions of use and fees differs between each club so for more information please contact the municipal office.

Q Tell me about the payments of school expenses, etc.

A In public elementary and junior high schools, textbooks and tuition are free during the compulsory education period, but there are fees for school lunch, textbook, PTA membership, etc., which will be withdrawn by bank account transfer. There is a support system called the "Financial Aid for Educational Expenses System" (*Shugaku enjo seido*) for families in need of financial assistance. Those who are in need may apply for it through their school.

Q I'm worried about injuries at school, will there be any compensation, etc.?

A If your child is injured while under the supervision of a school or other facility (during childcare, classes, extracurricular activities, breaks, commuting to and from school, etc.), from kindergarten/ nursery school to high school, you can receive medical expenses and compensation from the "Injury and Accident Mutual Aid Benefits System (Japan Sport Council)." Information will be provided by the school at the beginning of the school year. The premium for the guardians is only a few hundred yen annually.

Q Tell me about school lunch (*Kyushoku*).

A School lunches are provided in public schools. Please inform the school if your child has any food allergies or if religious considerations are necessary. Guardian should prepare a *Kyushoku set* including chopsticks and a cup. Children have school lunch duty. The lunch aprons used on duty needs to be washed and ironed and brought back to school the following week.



Q Tell me about going to and from school.

A Many schools have a set route from home to school. In some schools, children go to and from school in groups by route, while in others they go to school individually, with parents and community members watching over them along the way to ensure their safety.

Q What kind of school events are there in the 1st semester?

A In general, after the entrance and opening ceremony in April, there are medical checkups and physical measurements and spring excursions. In addition, with the aim of nurturing children through cooperation between home and school, there are home visits, class observation, and parent-teacher conferences.

In June, swimming classes will begin in PE, so it will be necessary to carefully check on your child's health condition at home. 1st semester will end in late July, and report cards will be given to the child. Summer vacation is until late August. There will be homework on subjects and also research assignment (*jiyuu kenkyu*) etc., so it is necessary to plan ahead on doing homework.

Q How do guardians interact with the school?

A In elementary school, there are PTA (Parents Teacher Association) or parents association. The main purpose is for guardians and teachers to cooperate with each other in activities to ensure the well-being of children attending the school. An admission fee to support the activity will be required. Activities and management methods vary from school to school, so please check the information provided at the time of enrollment.

Mimitaro Information

★ Cycling in Spring♪

Here are websites with many cycling information such as bicycle rental stores and cycling maps in Shiga!

+(Plus) Cycle Shiga

Biwako Isshu

Wa no Kuni Biwako



★ Flowers in May and June

- Suisen no Oka (*Daffodil*) (Early to late May)

Biwako Valley 1547-1Kido Otsu

- Kakitsubata Gunseichi (*Rabbitear iris*)

(Late May to Early June)

Fukashimizu Imazu-cho Takashima

- Poppy Garden (Mid-May to Early June)

Michi no Eki Aito Marguerite Station

184-1 Imoto-cho Higashiomi

- Hasu no Mieru Oka (*Lotus*) (Mid-June to Mid-August)

Kusatsu City Aquatic Botanical Park Mizunomori

1091Oroshimo-cho Kusatsu

- Hachiman Shrine

Fuji Matsuri (*Wisteria*) (May 5th)

523 Zaishi Kora-cho

★ Shigaraki Sakkaichi (artists fair)

May 2nd (Thu), May 3rd (Fri), May 4th (Sat), May 5th (Sun)

Artists will be exhibiting and selling their own pottery items.

Shiga Prefectural Ceramic Cultural Park Taiyo no Hiroba
2188-7 Chokushi Shigaraki-cho Koka

★ Misaki Shrine Fire Festival

May 4th (Sat) Evening Fire festival for the commemoration of ancestors. Taiko drums will echo in the darkness and large torches will light up.

Misaki Shrine 1072 Kawara Aisho-cho

★ Hira Genki-mura

Camping, stargazing, and athletic activities are available. (Reservations required except for athletic activities.)

1769-3 Kitakomatsu Otsu

TEL 077-596-0710



Next issue of Mimitaro is scheduled in July



Mimitaro News



★ DO NOT tolerate violence by a spouse or a dating partner!

Don't worry alone, consult immediately #8008

DV Soudan+Plus <https://soudanplus.jp>

24hours, consultation in multiple language available.

◇ Serious psychological damage will also be covered by the protection order. (From April 1st 2024)



★ Ninshin SOS Shiga (Pregnancy SOS)

If you are worried about an unexpected pregnancy, consult by phone, email, or LINE

TEL 090-8810-2499



★ Protect yourself from disasters!

This site provides disaster information in multiple languages. Make sure to check it out!

https://www.bousai.go.jp/kyoiku/gensai/pdf/poster_A3.pdf



★ Orizuru-kai

Support for traffic accident orphans

The program provides scholarships, new enrollment benefits, and other benefits as well as recreational activities during the summer vacation to children living in the prefecture (from age 0 to March of the school year in which they reach 18) who have lost a parent or a guardian in a traffic accident.

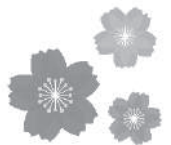
 Orizuru-kai Foundation office

(within Shiga Prefecture Road Maintenance Division)

TEL 077-528-3682

★ Time to apply for scholarships

In addition to Japan Student Services Organization (JASSO), there are also scholarships offered by universities, private companies, foundations, and local governments. Please check the information.



(JASSO)

Corrections and Apologies

In the article on page 3 of Mimitaro No.150, there was an error in the dates of the following organizations. We apologize for the error and make the following correction.
Tabunka Kyosei Shien Center SHIPS Correct: Saturday
Kanchan no Chisana Ie Correct: 10 times a year

Shiga Foreign Residents Information Center

(within Shiga Intercultural Association for Globalization)

Multilingual support is available. TEL 077-523-5646

FAX 077-510-0601 email: mimitaro@s-i-a.or.jp