



Learning Japanese at Izakaya

In this issue of Mimitaro, we interviewed Ms. Adeline Wall, living in Otsu



I came to Japan from France 14 years ago. When I was a university student, I became interested in Japanese language after watching anime videos, and through interactions with Japanese students at the Franco-Japanese Association, I felt the urge to visit Japan.

After completing my doctoral course in Environment and ecology, I became a researcher at the Center for Ecological Research at Kyoto University, and studied the Testate amoebae living in the sediments of Lake Biwa. Before the end of my two-year research period, I met and married my Japanese husband. Now I have three children, a fifth grader and second grader twins in elementary school.

After childbirth, I had been away from my own research because of childcare. If I had given birth while working, I would have been able to continue working after taking a childcare leave, but in my case, the birth coincided with the time I was looking for my next job, and it became difficult for me to find jobs due to childcare. Recently, parenting has gotten a little easier, so I started working as a researcher assistant at Ryukoku University since last year. Although I work in a laboratory outside of my field of expertise, I still learn a lot just by being in the lab, and I feel like I am back in my student days. I am very fulfilled with my work and raising my children, but I would like to get back to my own research if I have a chance.

Since I have experienced childbirth and child rearing only in Japan, I cannot make any comparisons. My friends in France were surprised on my decision to give birth without epidural injection with my first child, saying, “That sounds painful!” but since “Japanese people do it too,” I gave it a try and I was fine. The hardest part was raising the child. Both of our parents were far away, and my husband came home late and I had no one to turn to for help, so I had to do almost everything by myself with my husband’s help. I went shopping with the twins in the stroller and pulling my older son’s hand, and I’m actually proud of myself for overcoming those days. We decided to raise our children in Japan, so we are raising them in Japanese, and I am relieved that they are getting along well with their friends.

I would like to help them learn French someday when they are ready to learn it. Japanese schools are good in all aspects, but I feel there are too many detailed rules and regulations. There are so many opportunities for parents to visit the school and so many handouts to read which is too much for a working mother to handle. Positive aspects are the cleaning time and home economics. Children can learn basic skills such as cooking and sewing a button, and my son is now able to do simple cooking. I want to help my children with their studies at home, but my husband is in charge of Japanese, and even though I’m from a science and mathematics field, I don’t understand the Japanese-style division which is a little frustrating.

Back when I first arrived in Japan, I was troubled by the fact that I could not speak Japanese well even though I was in Japan, because Japanese people around me tend to speak in English with me. Then, at an *Izakaya* (Japanese style pub) near the station, I saw a signboard with an English menu which inspired me and thought, “This is it!” and I started going to that *Izakaya*. There, I can talk with ordinary non-English speaking Japanese people in everyday Japanese. For the most part, the conversation starts by “Where are you from? What are you doing?” My Kansai dialect improved as I tried my best to communicate with them with a dictionary in my hand. I met my husband at the counter of the *Izakaya* and became popular in the area as a “French woman who appears at night.” Later, when I started raising my children at home, the only people I got to talk to were my husband, my children, school teachers and doctors and I felt very lonely. For 2 nights a week, I started working at an Italian restaurant, and it is almost 7 years but I still enjoy the encounters and Japanese conversation with many different people. In the relaxing atmosphere, Japanese people are good at switching from work mode to party mode, and even if they get drunk, they can say a single word of “I’m sorry!” and everything is fine. It is easy to talk with people of the same nationality, but please try to talk with Japanese people as well, there are many interesting people here.

With the spirit of “you’ll never know unless you try,” ever since I left my home country alone, now that I am a world citizen, I was able to encounter variety of interesting experiences. Now I am excited to open the door to the world and learn and discover new things through multidisciplinary researches around the world.

Senior High Schools and other schools in Shiga Prefecture



Compulsory education in Japan is until junior high school, so it is up to you to decide whether or not to continue on to senior high school. Going on to senior high school opens the door to universities and technical colleges, and increases your future career options. However, unlike junior high school, depending on grades and attendance, if you cannot earn the required credits, you may not be able to move on to the next grade or graduate.




Senior high schools offer the following, depending on the form of study:

Full-time system Like junior high school, there are classes in the morning and classes after lunch. 3 years system.


Part-time system Students study at specific times during the daytime or in the evening. Graduate in 4 or 3years.

Correspondence system Students study the text mainly at home and submit reports. There will be days to go to school for interview guidance. Graduate in 4 or 3years.

Introduction of senior high schools and other schools in Shiga Prefecture

- For information on Shiga Prefectural Senior High School → <https://www.pref.shiga.lg.jp/edu/school/tokusyoku/104806.html>
Yume no Sekkeizu (In Japanese/ Portuguese/ Spanish/ Chinese/ Tagalog) 
- For information on private senior high schools in Shiga prefecture → <https://shiga-shigaku.com/school> 
- Shiga Prefecture's Technical School (Techno College)
Vocational training schools for acquiring the knowledge and skills necessary for employment.
They provide short-term courses lasting from 6 months to 1 year and regular 2-year courses. <https://www.pref.shiga.lg.jp/kougi/> 
- Specialized training schools, etc. Students can receive practical vocational education and specialized technical education. Schools with higher education programs that allow students to enter with a junior high school diploma
→ Otsu Medical Association Practical Nursing Specialized Training School <https://otsu.shiga.med.or.jp/kango/entry/exam.php>
Koyodai Minakuchi Vocational School <https://nagara-gakuen.jp/>

Introduction of support programs for tuition and other educational expenses

High School Tuition Support Fund (*Kotogakkotou Shugaku Shienkin*): A national program that provides support for senior high school tuition regardless of the school type, national, public or private. (No repayment required) Applications are submitted through the school and instead of paying directly to the guardians, the school will receive it and will be used to cover the tuition costs. 

Eligibility: Households whose guardian's annual income is less than 9.1 million yen can apply.

High School Supplemental Scholarship Fund: Supports are provided for educational expenses other than tuition. (No repayment required) Eligibility: Households on welfare (*Seikatsu-hogo*) and tax-exempt households (*Hikazei-setai*) with senior high school students may apply.

Scholarship system: Financial support is available for students who have difficulties in paying their school fees. For "Shiga Prefecture Scholarship" and "Educational subsidies for part-time and correspondence systems for senior high schools in Shiga," consult with the senior high school or Shiga Prefectural Educational Bureau, General Education Division (077-528-4587). Consultation on support for living loan (Education Support Loan) is also available at the Shiga Prefecture Council of Social Welfare (077-567-3903).

The selection process for public senior high schools in Shiga Prefecture will change to a new system starting with students scheduled to enroll in April 2026!

The previous four selection methods were "Referral selection," "Referral selection in sports, culture and arts," "Special selection," and "General selection." Under the new system, in order to reduce the burden on examinees, there will be two types of examinations, the "General selection" and the "School-specific selection," and examinees will be able to apply for both at the same time. All applicants (full-time/part-time system) will take the academic achievement test (5 subjects: Japanese, Mathematics, Social Studies, Science, and Foreign Language (English)) in late February.

In addition, the application system will be changed to an online application system.

For details, please ask the school or check the website of Shiga Prefectural Board of Education.

<https://www.pref.shiga.lg.jp/file/attachment/5455963.pdf> 

Are you facing any of these problems?

After graduating from junior high school, you will have more opportunities to choose for yourself, such as whether to study or to work, and many other various things. You will have a social life outside of home and school, and your relationships will expand. Along with more freedom comes more self-responsibility. To help you take care of yourself, here are some places to consult when you have problems.

☆ Can senior high school student work part-time?

Those who have turned 15 and have reached March 31st are permitted to work. As long as the senior high school which they are enrolled in permits part-time work, senior high school students may work too. Since they are minors under the age of 18 and still inexperienced to work in society, they are protected by the law as follows.

- When applying for a job, you will be required to present a parental consent form, proof of age, and residence card.
 - ※ Those who have the status of residence of “Dependent” or “Student,” are allowed to work up to 28 hours per week if the “Application for permission to engage in activities other than those permitted by status of residence” is applied at the Immigration Services Bureau. Please note that if you work more than 28 hours per week, your status of residence may not be renewed.
- Restrictions or prohibitions on dangerous or hazardous work are included in the job description.
- Regarding working hours, restrictions on late-night work and overtime and holiday work, working under variable working hours system is also prohibited.
 - ※ Be sure to confirm the contents when you sign employment contracts, as there are some exploitative part-time jobs (*Black Baito*) that employ workers under poor conditions, including unfair labor contracts, nonpayment of wages, abuse of authority, and sexual harassment.
 - ※ Illegal part-time jobs (*Yami Baito*), in which the worker receives payment for criminal acts, have been spreading through SNS and other platforms. Never apply for a job casually because of the “high income.” By providing your ID, family information, etc., you will be trapped in a criminal organization. Be cautious not to provide any personal, private information about yourself unnecessarily.

Work-related counseling, including bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, termination of employment, etc.

- ☆ Shiga Labor Bureau, Employment Environment and Equal Opportunity Office Tel 077-523-1190
- ☆ Labor Standards Advice Hotline (Multilingual) https://www.check-roudou.mhlw.go.jp/soudan/foreigner_eng.html
- ☆ About illegal part-time jobs Police Department, General Advisory Center #9110



☆ Do you know about “Dating DV”?

Violence that occurs between couples is called “Dating DV.” Violence can be physical, emotional, sexual, or financial. Making someone obey, making fun of them, or ignoring them are also forms of DV. Even in close relationships, be respectful of your own and your partner’s feelings.

- Cabinet Office “To create better relationships between people” (*Hito to hito tono yoriyoi kankei wo tsukuru tameni*)

Written in easy to understand Manga. https://www.gender.go.jp/policy/no_violence/violence_research/yobou/pdf/yobou_kyozai_24_01.pdf

- MEXT/ *Monbukagakusho* “Safety education on life” (*Inochi no Anzen Kyoiku*)

Learn to value life and respect yourself and others through developmentally appropriate videos for early childhood through senior high school students.



https://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/danjo/anzen/index2.html



Counseling on problems with partners

- ☆ Dating DV 110 <https://ddv110.org/> Consult by phone or Chat
Mon to Sat 7:00pm-9:00pm (Excluding year-end and New Year holidays) Tel 050-3204-0404
- ☆ Ninshin SOS Shiga (Shiga Prefecture Parenting Support Division/ *Shiga-ken Kosodate Shien-ka*)
Counseling on unexpected pregnancy. Mon/Wed/Fri 6:00pm-8:00pm, Sun 2:00pm-4:00pm Tel 090-8810-2499



Mimitaro Information

Happy New Year!

Best wishes for 2025

Year of the Snake Mimitaro



◆ Flowers in early spring

- Dai-ichi Nagisa Park

From January to February, about 12,000 early-blooming rapeseed blossoms named “Kanzaki Hanana” will bloom.

Imahama-cho Moriyama-shi



- Nagahama Bonbai Exhibition

About 90 pots of cherry bonsai will be on display.

Jan 10th (Fri) - Mar 10th (Mon)

Keiunkan 2-5 Minato-cho Nagahama-shi

◆ Setsubun Festival Feb 3rd (Mon)

On Setsubun, marking the end of the season, events such as Mamemaki (bean-throwing) are held to drive evil spirits away and bring good fortune into the new year.

Zensui-ji 3518 Iwane Konan-shi

Tachiki Shrine 4 chome 1-3 Kusatsu Kusatsu-shi

Minakuchi Shrine 3-14 Miyanomae

Minakuchi-cho Koka-shi

Taga Taisha 604 Taga Taga-cho Inukamigun



◆ “Hikari ni tsutsumare, hikari de asobu”

(play with light and be illuminated) HIKARIUM

Until mid Feb 5:30pm - 8:30pm

English Garden Rosa & Berry Tawada

605-10 Tawada Maibara-shi

◆ BIWAKO MARATHON 2025

March 9th (Sun) 8:20am start

Start/ Ojiyama Track and field stadium

Goal/ Karasuma Hantou

Cheer on the 7,000 runners!

◆ Sagicho Festival

Floats from each town are paraded through the city and lit up at night Mar 15th (Sat), 16th (Sun)

Himure Hachimangu 257 Miyauchi-cho Omihachiman-shi

Shiga Foreign Residents Information Center

(within Shiga Intercultural Association for Globalization)

Tel 077-523-5646 Fax 077-510-0601

email : mimitaro@s-i-a.or.jp



Mimitaro News



◆ Information on Osaka, Kansai EXPO 2025

Each child between the ages of 4 and senior high school in Shiga Prefecture is entitled to one free admission to the EXPO, which will be held at Yumeshima, Osaka, from April 13 to October 13!

If the child is not visiting the EXPO on an educational trip from the school (field trip, school excursion, etc.) → Free admission to the EXPO upon application from an individual or family.

Please apply from the official website.



<https://www.expo-shiga.com/>

◆ Free HIV/AIDS Consultation and Testing

- Tests can be taken anonymously.

- Tests for syphilis is also available.

- Please check the website for day and time

<https://www.pref.shiga.lg.jp/ippan/kenkouiryohukushi/yakuzi/15267.html>

- Venue: Public health centers

(Otsu-shi/ Kusatsu/ Koga/ Higashiomi/ Hikone/ Nagahama/ Takashima)

- Reservations are required by phone.

- Test results may not be available on the same day. (it may take 2 to 3 weeks)

INQ Health centers in the prefecture (In Japanese only)
Shiga Foreign Residents Information Center
(for other languages) TEL: 077-523-5646

◆ Revision of Road Traffic Law Concerning Bicycles

As of November 1, 2024, riding a bicycle while using a cell phone or under the influence of alcohol will be subject to penalties.

Riding a bicycle while using a cell phone

Violation: Up to 6 months imprisonment or a fine of up to 100,000 yen

Riding a bicycle under the influence of alcohol

Violation: Up to 3 years imprisonment or a fine of up to 500,000 yen

◆ Period to file for final tax returns (*kakutei-shinkoku*) Feb 17th (Mon) to Mar 17th (Mon)

If you need a correction for deduction due to payment of high medical expenses or housing loans, business income earners, and those who have income from multiple companies, please file for final tax returns at the tax office.

Next issue of Mimitaro is scheduled in April