

People in Town

Sung, Web-Shin 宋文心



“My hobby is to watch Hollywood action movies....”

Miss Sung is a bright young lady who came to Chigasaki in September, last year, from a small town called Hong ch'un in Ping-ton Prefecture. She graduated from a local high school in 2005 and came here to homestay at her aunt's house in Honson, Chigasaki. Her intent is to go a special language school in Yokohama for two years and master Japanese. The school's name is Yokohama International Education Academy, and it's located near Sakuragi-cho station. The school starts from April and she understands most of the students there are either Chinese or Taiwanese.

Since she came to Chigasaki, she has attended the free Japanese classes operated by volunteer groups and the IAC's Thursday class is one of four classes she participates in every week. She is so determined in studying Japanese.

Miss Sung's hobby is to watch Hollywood action movies and history movies though she also likes Japanese animation dramas. “The Last Samurai” was one of her favorite movies. She also likes to watch basketball, tennis, and baseball. In regards to Japanese food, she likes Sashimi or raw fish, and Wasabi, a Japanese horseradish.

Her dream is to do some traveling work in the future and move around the world making use of her knowledge of Mandarin, English and Japanese.

While living in Chigasaki, she has made some friends but most of them are young Asian people, unlike other exchange students going to high school here and studying Japanese surrounded by many Japanese students all the time. But she isn't so lonely because she has an eight year-old cousin who keeps her busy all the time.

After coming over to Japan, she was surprised to see the packed trains during rush hour and the loud voice of young people's conversations on the train.

She says people here are kind and she finds the city calm. It also has a nice beach where she can look over a vast ocean just like she did at her home in Hong ch'un. Her home is in the most southern area of Taiwan, and there is just a road between her home and the sea.

Confucius says.....

Shall I teach you what it is to know? When you know something, recognize that you know it; but when you do not know something, recognize that you do not know it,--- that is knowledge.

Eboshi, my favorite restaurant in Nango

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From the outside, Eboshi is nothing special to look at. It's a simple, lightweight building that reminds me of the old seaside kiosks back in Australia. What, however, did catch my attention was the on going hive of activity behind the restaurant and the piles of empty crates suggesting regular deliveries and hinting at freshness.

When we entered, I couldn't help but notice how busy it was, even at 12 o'clock, a moderately early lunchtime. The décor inside was very simple and consisted mainly of various specials and menus plastered wherever there was room with the odd bit of ocean paraphernalia. And once seated, there was a pile of loose, hand-written menus to sift through. Of course, they were all in Japanese, no English here. Seating was also Japanese style, on a tatami mat floor, so those with extra long legs or ample frames may be spatially challenged! The menus themselves consisted of everything from soups and tempura to cooked shellfish and of course sashimi. The range of seafood was broad too, from all kinds of shellfish such as oysters, abalone and scallops to many different kinds of fish such as bonito, sardines, flounder, tuna and so on, something for the more culinary conservative and adventurous alike. We chose the sardine ball soup, garlic oysters, garlic scallops and the flounder and bonito sashimi. If you're a garlic lover, then try the garlic oysters, oysters cooked with a fresh garlic topping then eaten with a squeeze of lemon juice to give it that extra bight. But be warned, it will mean that talking at close quarters is off limits for the rest of the day! The sushi was fresh and delicious, garnished with seaweed, spring onions and of course, my favorite, wasabi. As for the sardine ball soup, the sardine balls were served in a light broth consisting of seaweed and mushrooms, a good way to begin the meal.

Overall, the setting was very relaxed and had a homely feel to it, while the food was fresh and varied. A good place to go to experience some local delicacies, but only if you are a lover of seafood.

Eboshi is located in Nango on the south-east corner of Teppo-dōri and Hidari Fuji-dōri opposite the Hamami Daira apartments. (Craig Gaunt)

A Good Little Thing

A Story about Cherry Flowers

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On a day in early January, a lady entered a restaurant in a large store in the city to have lunch by herself. She was holding a bouquet of cherry flowers she bought a little earlier. The early cherry is called Keiwo-zakura from Yamagata Prefecture and it was not usual to see them around here. A young waitress welcomed her, looked at the bouquet and said how beautiful the flowers were. She also loved cherry flowers so they chatted about it for a while.

After finishing lunch, the lady ordered *MACCHA*, a powdered green tea. A little later she was amazed to notice that the cup the young waitress brought to her had a design of beautiful cherry flowers with small branches on it.

When the lady was leaving the restaurant, she asked a woman at the register if she could see the young waitress. She wanted to show her appreciation for the waitress's thoughtfulness even though she was not sure if the waitress brought that cup because of their earlier conversation.

Unfortunately, the waitress had gone somewhere and she could just ask the woman to send her thanks to the waitress.

When she visited the restaurant a few days later again, she was told by a staff member that the above story was brought up with the manager there and then on to the managers' meeting of their company which operates quite a few restaurants in Japan, from Sapporo to Nagasaki, and also in overseas locations like Taiwan, Singapore and Hong-Kong. Their president took this matter up as a thing to be praised and to encourage all their staff and employees.

What surprised the lady furthermore was that the young waitress was a new employee at the restaurant, and in fact the restaurant uses three different types of teacups when they serve *MACCHA*.

The question remains, however, if the young waitress brought that teacup with the cherry flower design to the guest intentionally or not!



SAKURA and the Japanese

SAKURA or cherry blossom is the most beloved flower of the Japanese and it's a symbol of the national character.

SAKURA and Japanese lyricism have been closely connected from ancient times;

it has been sung about in the classical Japanese poems of the Heian Period (794-1185).

A cherry tree is a wild plant growing naturally and is typical to Japan. But it is not that Japanese feel affection to cherry blossoms because of its origin in Japan. It's because of their delicate beauty and gracefulness that stimulate the Japanese sense of beauty that no other flowers have.

The cherry blossom leaves its life to the mercy of nature, ready to abandon its life at any time, while its color will never show pride in its showiness, and you will never tire of the fragrance. Their fragrance in the air is volatile and goes up just like the breath of life. In the fragrance, there seems to exist a spiritual quality.

The custom in Japan is to do Hanami or flower-viewing with family, work colleagues, or friends when cherry blossoms get in full bloom in March or April, and its popular to enjoy *SAKURA* in the evening especially in the cities. In the spring night sky, the beauty of the blooming flowers shows up strikingly.

Today, cherry trees as a symbol of peace have been sent to overseas countries from Japan and its light pink flowers are in bloom in the spring attracting many people all over. One of the most representative cases is those at the Potomac River in Washington D.C., and there also are cherry trees at a place where the Berlin Wall used to exist.

