

Kikan Kochi



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KIKAN KOCHI

Think & Action Magazine,
Kochi. Summer 2016 No.61

Giant Interview
Social Activist
Makoto Yuasa



Special Features

Stay, Drink, Kochi's Best Inns 7

Serenity, sleep and stay enveloped
in the nature of the land.



Kenzo Nakajima

Born in 1959 in Kochi City. Lives and works from Misono Town in Kochi City. He is a Photographer for Tourism Posters and Various Advertisements. He lectures a Photography course and conducts overseas photography seminars. He is a graduate of the Photography Department of Osaka University of Arts. A member of the Japanese Advertising Photographer's Association (APA) and The Japanese Society for Arts and History of Photography.
http://blogs.yahoo.co.jp/japan_kenzo



Picture: Mt. Godaisan, Kochi City

Ken-chan's fanciful photo diary No.44

Chikurinji Pagoda

A new perspective down a new path
I find a new viewpoint for a picture
Of the pagoda I've known since my youth.
The sunset before the rainy season
Signals the repeating hope for both the sunny
And gloomy days to come.
With a 2000mm focal lens
Pointed towards the horizon
And with only 1 angle to capture the sun
Waiting for days to chase the few seconds of passage
The sun crosses by quickly through the viewfinder.
In truth, this captured moment
Was the first frame for an entire photoshoot.



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*This is the English Version of KIKAN KOCHI.
It is revised in order to shorten its length.
We do hope many people will read
this free online magazine.*

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Taking a relaxing moment in the baths, spacious tubs and the great trees seen through the wide-open glass windows. You can see the outside bath. Being environmentally friendly, the boilers that keep the waters warm use wood biomass chips as fuel.



The great green forests surround the wonderfully built Niyodogawa wood cottages as you listen to the wild birds sing. Walking to and from your cottage to the main building can be quite a stroll and with some sharp steps, so be sure to check with the staff if you need assistance.

Chapter 1 Niyodogawa Town

中津溪谷ゆの森

Nakatsu Keikoku – Yuno-Mori

Serenity, sleep and stay enveloped in the nature of the land.



“For us that live here it just the norm, but it has been said that the rice and tea made with the water from Niyodogawa River is superb.”An inn packed with stories as you listen and see the birds singing in their nest in the forest through the window.



A mere 7 rooms in a vast land.

Driving from Kochi on route 33, I travel towards Matsuyama for about one and a half hours. It's a spectacular drive whilst viewing the Niyodogawa River. Entering into Niyodogawa Town, I arrive at Nakatsu Keikoku Yuno-Mori. Located in the Nakatsu Valley, I hear the sound of the river as I walk. As I move towards the Inn surrounded by this natural environment, enclosed within a forest green blanket; I can hear the songs of the wild birds around me. This would be a fitting place for couples in their 40s or 50s to refresh and rejuvenate.

As I step into the large lobby I can view the wonderful unaffected landscape through large glass windows. To the right, I see the path towards the restaurant whilst opposite a sign points towards the open-air bath in the back. Quite popular with bath lovers, the



afternoon sees lively traffic to relax in the bath and have a bite at the restaurant. Yet, in such a big establishment, there are only 7 rooms, with 3 of those rooms special cottages made with the local wood from Niyodogawa Town. This exquisite and luxurious environment makes the perfect place to take the stress away.

A French Gourmet deep in the forests of Tosa.

The charm of being located in the valley is the varying seasonal sights which colour the landscape. From the fresh green and rich colours of spring, to the sounds and sun of summer, to the bright red leaves as they fall in the autumn, this place is popular



Surrounded by the forests,
Relax and enjoy great French food.

amongst many for its seasonal views. As Susumu Takemoto, a staff member of Yu-no-Mori, explains; “There is a charm of being located in the valley. Our customers arrive early for their check-ins. They lose track of time as they relax in the baths or even just relax in their own private rooms. Many come again just to taste the luxurious time they experience. Even taking a small step outside, a walk in the valley, the sounds of the river and the wild birds will bring you back to nature. I believe it is the biggest difference from a city inn.”

In the Guest-only restaurant, each seat is carefully placed with enough space to relax. There are 2 selections for the full course meals with a delicious French cuisine and specially crafted Japanese, with each dish using local ingredients as much as possible. The Japanese course uses the strength of Kochi’s freshest and finest seafood. To be able to taste an exquisite full course menu, surrounded by the greenery of the forest, is particularly rare yet is highly popular.

Susumu Takemoto tells me, “Most of the locals who live here don’t realise the fact that the river water is especially clear and referred to as the Niyodo Blue. Everything that uses the water turns out delicious and beautiful, from the cooked rice to the brewed tea, this land blesses us. Near the windows of the restaurant, amongst the green trees, we place boxes for wild birds to nest. Looking at the young birds exiting and entering their nest calms the soul. For those that live in this town it is just a part of their normal day, but for our customers there is nothing more luxurious. In addition, our staff members speak using the local honorific style of speech. This creates a transparent hospitality as we do our best with customer service. Our guests enjoy that hospitality and mention that they feel as if they have come home.” This homely atmosphere is truly emphasised by the minimal number of only 7 rooms. Perhaps there is a connection to the sense of security that the regular customers feel from the staff that recognises them.



The baths and restaurants are busy filled with bustling, happy guests passing throughout the day, but once it becomes dark, you can monopolise the lobby all to yourself. Enjoying the beautiful night sky, some are recommended to relax with a good book. Especially in winter with a great fireplace, the atmosphere would be cosy and relaxing.

They know the charm.

Using the local Niyodogawa wood, the 3 cottages each bring their unique warmth to the guests. Future weekends are all booked up in their reservation only system. It has been 15 years since this inn built these spacious twin rooms yet one can still smell the fragrance of the wood. One can sit and relax on the wide-open veranda or stare through the large glass windows enjoying their own private time.

Throughout the tour, Susumu repeatedly mentions, “This is our charm. Because we are located in the Nakatsu Valley, surrounded by nature. This is what separates us from the city.” Whilst resting in one of the rooms, I can see myself in this inn losing my sense of time. Further, the modesty of the staff, and the honesty and simplicity of the whole environment makes me really think, “This is a nice, relaxing place.”



Right: Mr. Hidehiko Inoue, General Manager; Left: Susumu Takemoto. In this cosy environment, they welcome you home.

Nakatsu Keikoku – Yuno-Mori

<http://www.yunomori.jp>

258-1 Nanokawa Niyodogawa Town, Agawa Gun, Kochi Prefecture

TEL: 0889-36-0680

Closed on Tuesdays (Following day on public holiday)

Starting from 13,600 (Per night/two meals)

Bath Operating Hours: 11:00 AM to 9:00 PM

Adults 650 JPY; 12 years younger 300 JPY

Restaurant: 11:30 AM to 7:30 PM (Last Order)



Chapter 2 Kochi City

高知ユースホステル酒の国共和国

Kochi Youth Hostel – Republic of Sake Land

Serenity, sleep and stay enveloped
in the nature of the land.



Japanese Sake Themed Youth Hostel,
Started by the lovable Tomio Kondo.
Everyone comes together to enjoy the warmth
as he shares his heart and experiences.
Enjoy and love local Sake.
This humble place in the middle of Kochi
connects to the world.

Son of a Sake Store owner and Brewer.

Interested to hear that over 30 percent of their guests are foreigners, I visit this comfortable lodge in Fukui Higashi, Kochi City. Opened in August 2003, Kochi Youth Hostel – Republic of Sake Land (酒の国共和国) is run by the enthusiastic and charming Sake lover, Tomio Kondou. My heart is filled with joy and awe as I interview Tomio.

Tomio is no stranger to Sake. Born into a family that has been selling sake for 3 generations in Kochi's Yamate region. He's played and made friends with many a brewer, supplier and regular customer since childhood. Later, he studied brewing at university and upon graduation went to work for the Ozeki Corporation, one of Japan's famous Sake breweries as part of their Nihon-shu section. Whilst working at Ozeki, he worked at their California brewing facility in the United States for 4 years, helping to develop sake. He shares his unique experiences of being situated in California.

“Thinking about it now, it was an invaluable experience. Our sales team could be work-



Wood used in every corner, from the Cafeteria, Stairs, Rooms etc. The building is built using traditional mortar, accentuating a Japanese atmosphere. The [Tosa, Land of Sake. A taste of Local Sake] has been running continuously every month.



ing in either the East or the West but our brewery was in the countryside. As such, our team members had to provide any explanation of the product on our own. I was somehow able to communicate in English whilst living there for 4 years. I did not feel any resistance as a foreigner there.”

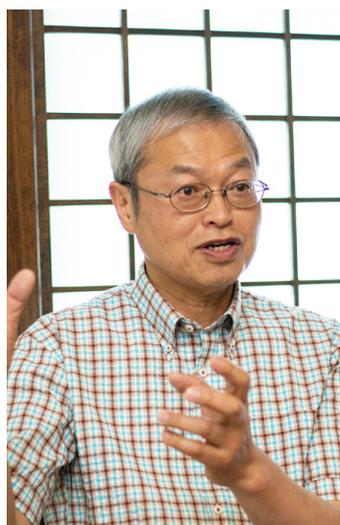
After working for more than 14 years at Ozeki, Tomio returned to his family’s business. He started to think on how to raise the awareness of Japanese Sake, create curiosity and of course to enliven the family business. His first idea was to start a monthly dinner event. This event would introduce people to the great sake that goes well with food and have Owners, Brewers and Presidents of local breweries as special guests. The [Tosa, Land of Sake. A taste of Local Sake] has been a successful venture with monthly dinners continuing to this day. At one of those events, Tomio’s life would be greatly changed.

“I was invited by a brewery that I was well acquainted with to visit some unique sake places/shops. It was a casual invitation by one their sales reps, ‘would you like to take a trip with me? I’ll guide you to unique sake shops around Shikoku.’ I was first guided to a Sake-store in Matsuyama. The storeowner and I got along well and he introduced me to someone running a youth hostel in Dogo. We would meet and drink quite often. As I would come along and stay at the hostel, I became more acquainted with the foreigners visiting and the idea of a youth hostel. To my memory there were youth hostels in Hitsuzan and Kochi Station areas of Kochi, but at that time they were no longer running. It was a common topic among us that someone should run a youth hostel in Kochi City.”

Each room, a display of wonderful quality.

Due to road expansion in Kochi city, the Store located at Yamate had to move. With this change of wind, Tomio’s idea of spreading the word and deepening the love of Sake and local breweries was given new impetus. He decided, “If I want to continue selling sake, I might as well start a youth hostel with Japanese Sake as a theme. I especially want to spread the word to the world.” As he prepared to move, the place was to be named, [Republic of Sake Land].

One can be impressed by Tomio’s network and ideas, yet the most impressive thing is the building itself. On the first floor the cafeteria and lounge are spacious and the wooden interior has an exquisite fragrance. On the second floor you will find the 10 unique rooms of various types, such as twin rooms, bunk-bed rooms and Japanese style rooms. Each room on each floor is a model room and displays unique styling using different types of wood in their presentation. Starting with Japanese cedar, Cypress, Sakura, Zelkova and others. Each room is built to show the strengths of each wood and where possible, to show the capabilities of a local architecture firm. He had even visited a Japanese firm in Nagano prefecture to install special wooden underfloor heating. Tomio was also a heavily in-



Tomio Kondou, owner and caretaker, fixated with the idea of a Japanese Sake themed lodge, his love and enthusiasm over flows.



Up: Lounge Area, with bookshelves filled with books and manga.
Down, Left: Fresh, clean rooms with many types of arrangements.



volved in the building process, putting in hours helping to build the cafeteria with wood and mortar in order to create a relaxing atmosphere in which to drink.

After opening the youth hostel for 13 years ago, Tomio shares his opinion on how the world, the surrounding environment and atmosphere have changed. “To start your own youth hostel, you have sign an agreement with the association. The Ministry of Education and Training, manage the rules of the association. Primarily it designates that youth hostels accommodate the education and growth of young people. 30 years ago, I would never get approval for a Sake themed youth hostel. They have since softened the regulations, and as long as I don’t conduct balls and large parties and ensure it is only for light drinking, it continues to be approved. When we had first finished asking for approval, the peak of Japanese sake consumption was only a third of what it was. There was a trend towards wine. I was told to keep my Japanese sake promotion at an inconspicuous level. Yet, nowadays there are more and more Japanese restaurants overseas. This is a big change. Foreigners are starting to be interested in Japanese sake. Because there are a lot of foreigners as guests of youth hostels, roughly two years ago, I was given the green light to heavily promote Japanese sake!” (laughs)

Experiencing the Local Atmosphere.

Amongst the guests, 30 percent are foreigners with most coming from the US. Backpackers, researchers and Buddhist pilgrims are amongst a variety of travellers coming to Kochi to stay and enjoy the taste of Japanese Sake.

“I will conduct a [Kikizake Classroom (sake tasting)], if there are any guests interested in Japanese sake. I will always prepare a variety of seasonal sake that is great at that time. As such, the bottles I have in store will always change. Compared to big retailers, we deal directly with the breweries and get the bottles in the best time. If there is a slight problem with the bottles, I will have a word with them. (laughs)

When there are foreign guests, I will ensure they taste rare sake that is not available overseas. After which, I will provide a glass that best suits their preference. After the tasting, if there is time within their schedule, I will tell them that I will guide them to the breweries. I tend to take them to Tsukasabotan or Nishioka Breweries in Kure. When we go to Tsukasabotan, I would take them to ‘Taishouken’ to eat lunch. Many guests really enjoy eating there.

About a quarter of our guests tend to look for dinner when they stay here. Nearby you can find the local Hirome Ichiba, and I will also introduce them to some great Izakaya. The one I really recommend is in the Mama Shopping Arcade. [Tosaben] is a great place with good food and their son speaks English really well. He holds accreditation as a Tosa-shu Advisor or local sake expert. Many of our guests have no problem enjoying a great night out there. It is truly a great experience for the guests to experience such an atmosphere.”

Tomio also provides booking services for guest’s requests, such as whale watching, rafting and other outdoor activities. If time permits, he can also conduct English guided study tours of breweries; providing fulfilling, cultural and informative experiences about Japanese Sake. Kochi Youth Hostel is also featured in the Lonely Planet guide-books. Many have spread the word about his hostel.

Just about time to travel.

“I have been invited to visit people many times,” mentions Tomio as we ask him about his future plans. He has met many experts in their own fields such as beer, wine, whisky lovers and all of them invite him to visit them.

With a few friends in Sydney, Australia, that run a Sake brewery, Tomio has expressed an idea of, “taking Japanese Sake made overseas.”

His vast network of friends, in Japan and overseas is ever growing. Tomio smiles and says, “Especially those that came to Japan, I gave them food and drink. (laughs) It’s time they returned the favour. I might consider taking a break from the hostel during our low period and go over and enjoy an exchange over there. When I first started the hostel I had several university friends come over and worry about what I was doing. They’ve made friends here. Some are now retired and come here to drink and spend time almost everyday.” (laugh)

A great hostel with great hospitality making the trip ever so worthwhile. Here foreigners and locals laugh and enjoy themselves as they share glasses of sake together. My experience of interviewing Tomio is that his youth hostel and the flavour of the local sake, is a breath of fresh air and will add youthfulness for many more great days to come.

Fridges stocked with Japanese Sake, Shochu and drinks from Kochi prefecture. Your eyes will glisten as the collection is also filled with famous Japanese brands.



Sake Tasting Classroom



Sake Brewery Field Trip
Photographs by / Kochi Youth Hostel - Republic of Sake Country



Kochi Youth Hostel-Republic of Sake Land

<http://www.kyh-sakenokuni.com/>

Fukui Higashi Town, Kochi City
TEL: 088-823-0858
Youth Hotel Member, 3,300 JPY/ Night, General Public 3,800 JPY/Night
Dinner: 1,100 JPY
Breakfast: 400 JPY

If available, private rooms or group private rooms are possible. Feel free to discuss during booking.



Chapter 3 Shimanto City

ホテル 星羅四万十
Hotel Seira Shimanto

Serenity, sleep and stay enveloped
in the nature of the land.



UP: The view from the Hotel Rooms.
LEFT: Daichi Hayashi, General Manager. His
OMOTENASHI accreditation proudly shines
on his lapel.

Through the words of the General Manager,
“Yesterday’s best is not enough for tomorrow.
We aim to be an ever-improving hotel
while keeping our core values.”
Seira Shimanto’s strengths are shining.

Fully OMOTENASHI accredited staff.

I travel to an impressive inn located alongside the Shimanto River in Nishitosa. From the hill, the view of the river and its surroundings is splendid. Not only is the hotel charming, but also the landscape around the hotel provides a perfect backdrop. The hotel known as “Shimanto’s Planetarium” and, on a dark night, Nishitosa’s catchphrase of “The Town of the Star Filled Sky”, truly comes to life as the stars light up the entire night. When booked ahead, specialist staff at the hotel will guide you through the vast night sky, taking you on a journey through each constellation for a beautiful and romantic night.

Just a 5 minute walk away, I find the Shimanto – Kawa no Eki [Canoe House]. A base camp for outdoor activities for many people to enjoy a great time on the river with canoes and also to rent bikes to trek the surrounding beautiful landscape. Just across the



river, you find the nicely decorated and recently opened (in April), highway road stop – Michi no Eki [Yotte Nishitosa]. A great place to find a treasure of great local delicacies, such as freshly salted grilled Ayu fish. The surrounding areas are all connected across the river by three fun bridges, the Nakahagechinka Bridge, the Nagaoichinka Bridge and the Iwamachinka Bridge. These bridges provide great crossing points popular with the cyclists that adventure around Nishitosa whilst being able to enjoy the river, the wind, and the sounds of the water and nature. And central to all these enjoyable activities is the Hotel Seira Shimanto.

I interview the General Manager, Mr Daichi Hayashi. “Of course the charm of the Shimanto River is wonderful, but we have more pride in our staff, in our service and in our local Hata area’s great cuisine. We want our guests to come and relax, taste the splendid ingredients and enjoy the Onsen baths. To put the icing on the cake, we hope you will also enjoy great moments with our staff as they talk and interact with you. Our staff members are also not highly strung and trained to be extra polite like hotels in the city; they have a simplistic and honest approach to life. But they always have a great work ethic and will work hard to make your stay the very best.”

Recently, one of Japan’s major travel companies, JTB, in cooperation with the govern-

ment introduced the [Japanese OMOTENASHI accreditation] catered towards hotels in Japan. Hotel Seira Shimanto is proud to have everyone working for them certified with at least Beginner Accreditation, with Team Leaders and Managers all having Intermediate Accreditation. Mr Daichi comments, “I encouraged all of them to get accreditation. In Japan, up until now there has not been any formal ‘Service’ accreditation. With this, I can encourage my staff to have pride in their work. It gives them a larger sense of responsibility. It’s a great incentive to work. It helps each staff member see their own progress and achieve something in their work.”

Mr Daichi then explains about the accreditation, “Advanced Accreditation requires our staff members to be gone for a long time in another prefecture on a study tour. It’s a bit difficult for our hotel. However, we aim for our hotel to find what other hotels do not have. We have many strong points that are highly valued by our guests. We work on consistently maintaining that. We also highly prioritise safety and comfort. We will improve those places where we must improve, Kaizen. As much as possible, we do our best to ensure our guests leave us with a simple, but happy, ‘Thank You’ as part of our days work.”



Restaurant Hoshi No Sato's [Shimanto Beef - Kaiseki] 6,480 JPY / person. Great taste and flavour for one person to savour.



This Shimanto Beef Steak is Superb!

On the day of the interview, I had ordered the [Shimanto Beef – Kaiseki]. If booked ahead, you can enjoy the meal at the restaurant without staying at the hotel. Although we had thought that the meal would be continuous meat dishes, I was pleasantly surprised to see many great local Shimanto ingredients. Chef, Teruaki Nonami, explains. “I aim for the flavour of the beef to be as fresh and as true as possible. I really consider this exquisite beef. I really recommend it. This kaiseki is delivered to you when each course is ready, to ensure the dish is always warm. Today’s selection starts with the Tamago-doufu (Egg Tofu), a Selection of Starters, then Catfish Sashimi, our local Salt Grilled Ayu, before a warm Chawanmushi (savoury steamed egg custard with chicken). After that selection, we then continue with the main course, Shimanto Beef Steak, Katsuo Tataki (Seared Katsuo), and Tempura. The main dishes are served with great local rice before finally closing with dessert. Because we are in Kochi, there is Katsuo Tataki.

Other than that, I design and build my courses based on the local Shimanto River ingredients and what is in season. The flavours are also not adjusted and are simply cooked, to ensure the ingredients stand out when our guests taste them.”

The vegetables are sourced from the local farmers and the rice taken from the Omiya Region of Shimanto City. Fresh Ayu and Catfish are caught from the Shimanto River. Finally the rare Shimanto Beef, bred right next to the Shimanto River and with a yearly herd of only 70 limited black wagyu cattle. The portions are so generous, that I joked with my cameraman about sharing the food. I am sure the taste of the food will be even more delicious when you are enjoying your time staying a night. The [Shimanto Beef – Premium Sirloin] costing 3,400 JPY/meal is also available and doesn’t require any prior booking.



Taking a moment to relax and think.

Over 80% of the Seira Shimanto's guests are from outside Shikoku and mainly come from Tokyo, Hyogo and Osaka prefectures. During the spring to autumn months, the Shimanto River is filled with families visiting for activities with their children, whereas from late autumn to winter, the guests are mainly couples over 50 years of age that are coming to relax. The Seira Shimanto has 14 cosy rooms and a great Onsen bath for their guests to relax and let time go by slowly whilst taking in the great view of the Shimanto River.

“Our guests either are looking for a great time with activities throughout the day on the River or are here to relax and slow down. Every guest has their way of enjoying things and we will do our best to ensure that our guests are fully enjoying themselves. Even if we do the same thing again, Yesterday's best is not enough for tomorrow. We need to keep evolving and improving as a hotel. We will keep the greatly valued and learn to improve.”

The spacious lounge truly was a great place to sit, relax, read a book or think, or maybe perhaps take in the spectacular view of the Shimanto River. Nothing complicated, just the simple and of fine quality. A place to forget your busy days and taste your special time.

Hotel Seira Shimanto

1100 Nishitosa Mochii, Shimanto City

TEL: 0880-52-2225

10,200 JPY / per person, per night two meals.

<http://www.seirashimanto.com/>

Onsen Bath

Operating times

Weekdays from 7:00 AM to 8:30 AM & 4PM to 9:30 PM

Saturday, Sundays and Public Holidays from 11:00 AM to 3:30 PM

Adults 800 JPY Elementary Students or younger 400 JPY

Restaurant Hoshi-no-Sato

Open from 11:30 AM to 2 PM (Last Order) and 6 PM to 8:15 PM (Last Order)

Must go places in Nishitosa

Spots to enjoy Nishitosa together.



Just a short 5 min walk from the Hotel Seira Shimanto. Here you can rent Canoes, book family Rafting experiences, Rent Bicycles and other activities. The Shimanto River's Basecamp to outdoor activities.

Photo courtesy of Shimanto – Kawa no Eki Canoe House

Shimanto – Kawa no Eki [Canoe House]
1111-11 Nishitosa Mochii
TEL: 0880-52-2121



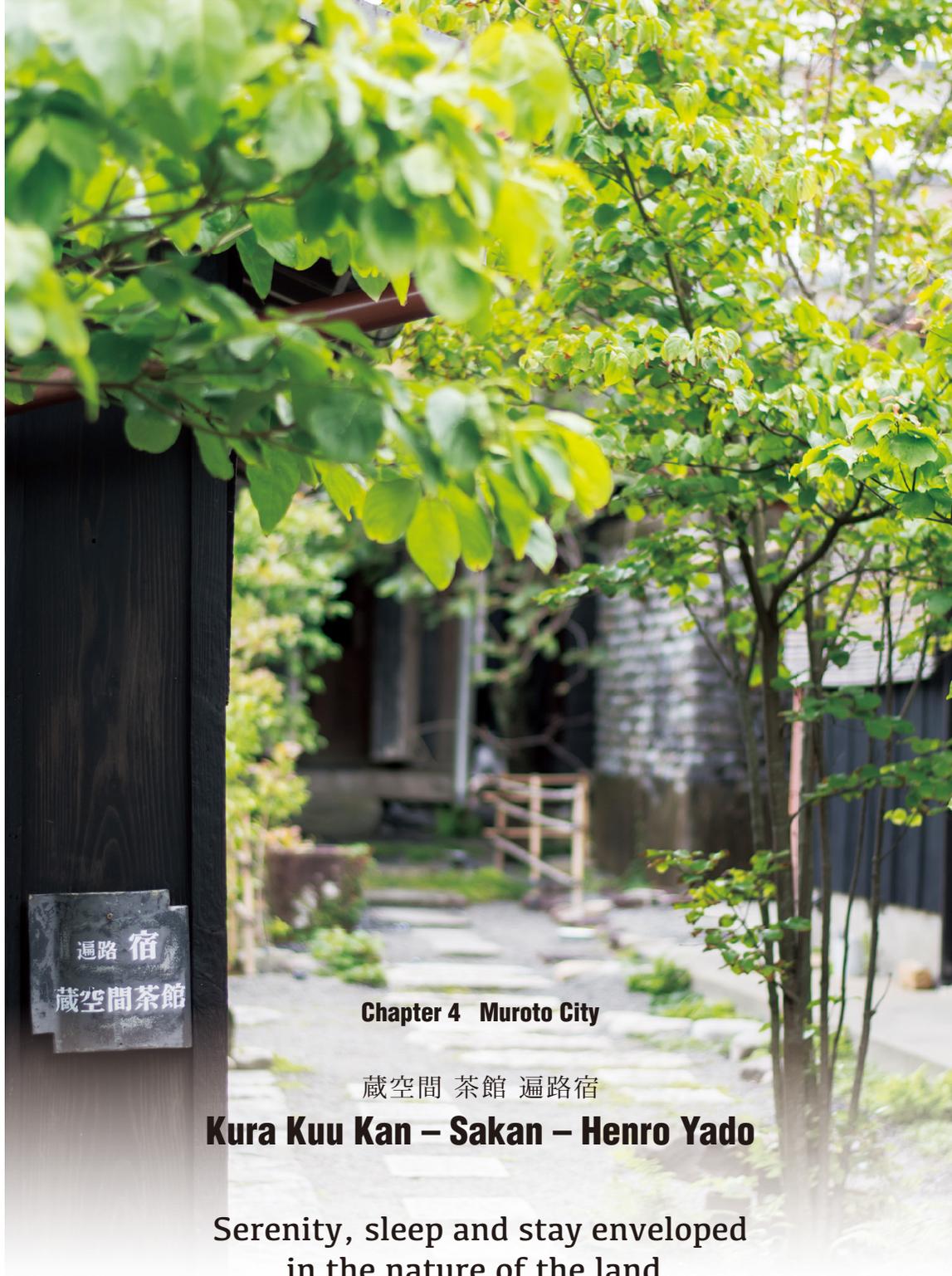
Opened in April 2016, Michi no Eki [Yotte Nishitosa], Opens daily from 8:30 AM to 6 PM. Only closed on New Years Eve and from December to March closed on Tuesday except Public Holidays.

UP: From the second floor you can enjoy a great landscape diorama of the Shimanto River.

DOWN: Michi no Eki Manager, Daisuke Hayashi. He displays fresh locally grown vegetables on the back of his Kei (light) truck.



Michi no Eki [Yotte Nishitosa]
2410-3 Ekawasaki, Nishitosa
TEL: 0880-52-1398



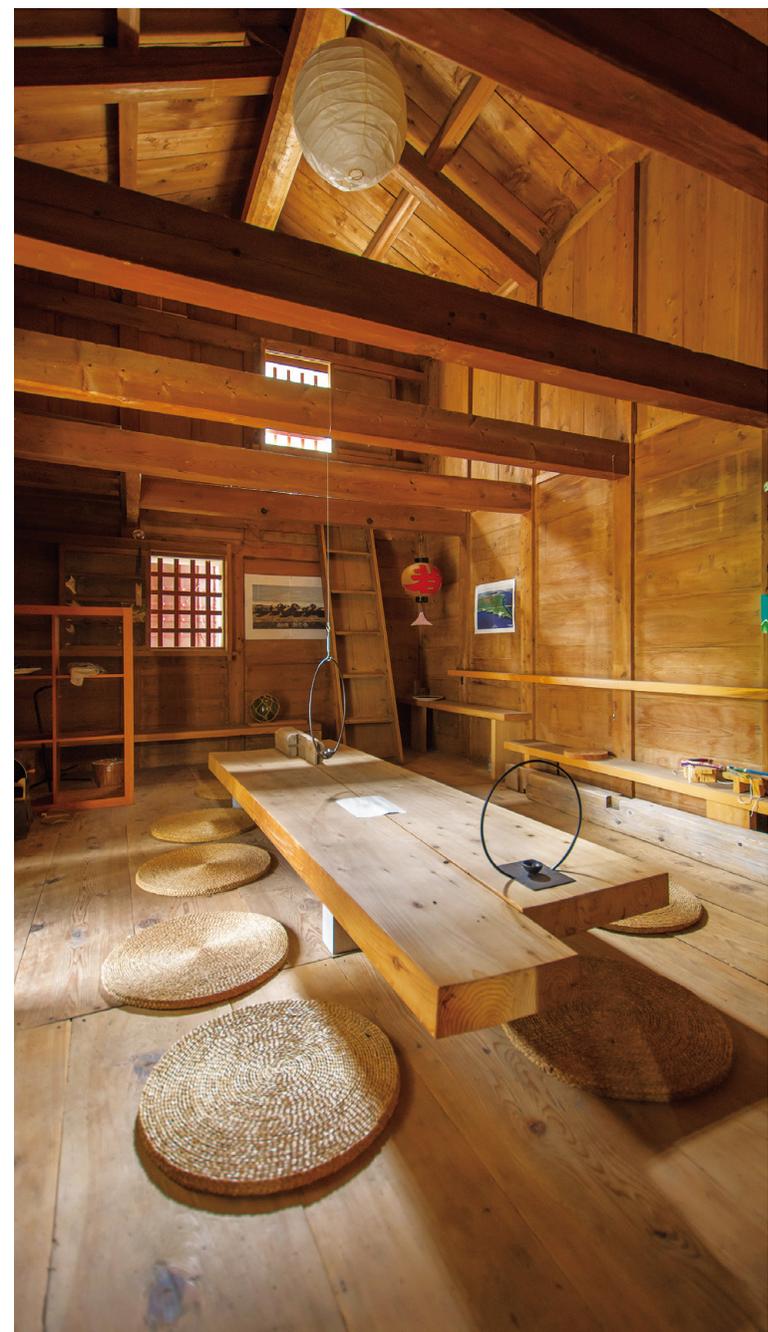
遍路宿
蔵空間茶館

Chapter 4 Muroto City

蔵空間 茶館 遍路宿

Kura Kuu Kan – Sakan – Henro Yado

Serenity, sleep and stay enveloped
in the nature of the land.



Organic Raisin Cake Set 800 JPY. A great
taste of the Binchou-tan Roaster Coffee.

A personal taste is in the atmo-
sphere that is Uniquely differ-
ent to the rich character of this
120 year old cellar.

A cafe and an inn for those on
the pilgrim's path to rest their
feet.

You find products that are vital
and key words to the lovely
locality.



Over 120 years of Energy.

I travel to the Kura Kuu Kan – Sakan (Kura Kuu Kan Tea House) to meet with Haruhide Ikeda. Located in the Kiragawa Town area and part of Japan's Groups of Traditional Buildings District of Muroto City, it is a focal point for many visitors and many words are associated with the area, such as Japanese sake cellars, Japanese style houses, Japanese Bincho-tan (White Charcoal), Henro Pilgrimage, Japanese Masonry and many others. As I interview Haruhide, I am fascinated by his endearing interest in the culture and his galleries and ideas utilising these traditional items. All these point are Key-words to his research into his town and Muroto City.

Haruhide spent his early childhood and primary school days in this quaint and unique Kiragawa Town. For his secondary school life he moved to Kochi City to pursue studies and even went to schools outside Kochi Prefecture for his tertiary education and working life. In 1999 at the age of 50 and wanting to return home to Kiragawa, Haruhide retired early. His previous position with an Interior Manufacturing company had him relocating many times for work. With such a busy lifestyle, he had a strong yearn to return and settle down in Kiragawa and take his child to the local school. Furthermore his family home has not been lived in for over 10 years and had quite a bit of damage. To continue life Haruhide had to have some income, and with his wife, he decided to develop on his love of coffee and start a Cafe.

“This cellar and its location were established in Meiji 30 or more than 120 years ago. We decided that we would try our best do what we can on our own to rejuvenate the place. The cellar had been left as storage for a long time, so we began by tidying it up. We then fumigated the cellars to erase the smell by burning dried grass. After fumigation we left the windows open to let the wind dry it out for about 3 months. Following



A popular item, [Sumi Ami], Charcoal Net, with the branch of a bincho-tan charcoal. Easily carry-able.



Left: A room from the inn. Pilgrims lie down and take a rest, and prepare for the next day.



Haruhide Ikeda, an impressive man who is proactive, always inventive and creative, his ability to enjoy is the strength of his love for Muroto and Kiragawa. He spends his days researching keywords to live life to the fullest.



that the both of us wiped up all the joists and fixed the mortar where possible, climbing up and down ladders. The cellar was built with thick walls; as such the space inside has a unique characteristic not found in houses. To make sure that the atmosphere is kept, we chose floorboards that match the building and worked on the landscape. We also selected tables and interior items that would match the firmly built structure. Buildings in this area have a unique trait. Their walls and surfaces are arranged with Mizu-Kiri-kawara or water draining roof tiles. It's unique and has both a specific purpose to regulate the water content and humidity of the buildings and is an aesthetic feature. A simple yet strong characteristic.”

The humble Binchou-tan used as fuel and now a part of their products.

Opened in 2001, the Kura Kuu Kan – Sakan boasts an organic and homemade menu with specialties such as local raisins and apples, handmade cakes, homemade curries and the Tosa Binchou-tan Hand Roasted Coffee, roasted in-house using locally sourced white charcoal. The couple enjoys music and has instruments placed all around the cafe, and at times might play them for guests.

Let's talk about next keyword; Tosa Binchou-tan. As you enter the cafe, right by the entrance you will find original products made using the local white charcoal for sale. “This Tosa Binchou-tan Charcoal is an integral part of this town's image and existence,” comments Haruhide. We add special value to our products, by designing and merging materials not common to cities such as charcoal, stone, and bamboo with metal and stainless steel. Interior goods are produced using local designs. A key part of these products is the utilising the charm of Tosa Binchou-tan. Working together with a local fisherman, they designed small bags knitted from fishing nets to carry Tosa Binchou-tan. [Sumi-Ami] Charcoal Net, [Sumi-Fuurin] Charcoal Bell and [Sumi-Makura] Charcoal Pillow are among more than 50 items that were produced and designed locally. From June to the end of summer, with the decreasing number of pilgrims passing by, Haruhide spends his time thinking and producing the next item. “It's not easy but I am not interested in already available items. If I just copied others there would be no originality. My mind is constantly thinking of ways to deliver things that are different. This town's Binchou-tan is popular and well known, but primarily as a fuel. I wanted to approach it from a different angle. For example, the Charcoal Pillow. I encase the



broken down, rounded off charcoal pieces using a fisherman's big-catch flag. If I just used cuts of cloth, it won't be interesting and the cloth for regular flags is weak. These big-catch flags are the best fit. I always want to see our customer's reactions when we put up a variety of products on our homepage. Mainly I hope to see reactions starting with our pilgrim guests, then people who visit from outside the prefecture. Both parties have different views and depending on the reaction, that becomes the start of my next project."

When asked on his financial situation now, Haruhide smiles with charm, "Returning home was great but I'm at a third of my original annual income. We barely make even on the cafe and with three jobs it's still not enough. I think I need at least five sources of income." Afterwards we discussed how he would be able to return to his original annual income by working within Muroto and the Kiragawa area. And so the new Keywords were born. Haruhide replies, "Well, I would have to more research to do 5 jobs then."

An inn to heal the walking pilgrim.

Next we have the keyword, Henro or pilgrimage. In 2008, Haruhide opened his pilgrimage inn. He wanted to let the pilgrims relax and enjoy themselves in an old building whilst also enjoying the surrounding buildings as



they walked through Kiragawa looking at architecture from the Meiji and Taisho Era. Many pilgrims have a deep and personal reason for walking this path and Haruhide committed to be a listener of the tales of these pilgrims. In recent years, the majority of the pilgrims are newly retired. He shares with the pilgrims the history of the towns' buildings, music and discusses with foreigners their stories. In turn the pilgrims either purchase some small goods or give advice and ideas to him. Pilgrims who walk the path impress Haruhide. "They walk on their own feet, a really admirable pilgrimage. When I share this with them, they open up and share honestly with me."

Throughout his experiences, Haruhide has learnt much about life. "When serving people, and serving pilgrims, I have to be mentally and emotionally stable. I need to have control over my health. I ensure that I eat well, sleep well and don't give myself too much stress. April is the peak of our busiest time, with at least 80 people. With just the two of us, we are making it work; however any more than that would be hard for us to manage. It took us time to understand our pace of 'lodgings', and now we keep it consistent. A normal inn would keep things open till past 8 PM, yet pilgrims are already resting by 8 PM. It would difficult for pilgrims and regular guests to sleep in the same area. We only serve pil-





Haruhide uses a part of his gardens to breakdown and prepare charcoal for the pillows. His landscaping skills are impressive. With all this done by hand including arranging the rocks and where to grow the moss.

grims. If there were any empty rooms, I would allow architecture research students to stay, or might consider if there were special circumstances. In the future, when my son returns and we are a family of 3, we will discuss any changes we might make.”

A place to pass on to the next generation.

I talk to Haruhide in the cafe. We tour the inn and walk the gardens. As we walk along, I notice the art in the places he uses, from the charcoal workshop to the beach in front of his house where he works on the stone. His trees, the benches, his signs, and on every single item you can see the art of Haruhide working diligently on them. Coffee roasted using Tosa Binchou-tan. Local Muroto and Kiragawa products. His Cafe. His Japanese styled, Pilgrimage Inn. By utilising every inch of these places, you can see Haruhide enjoying every single second, not just to earn money but to live and enjoy life. “To me this place, is not a place received from Ancestors to pass on in succession, rather I feel as a caretaker. I will pass this care to my son. Then further towards his son’s generation, constantly aware of passing it on. I believe the children understand that. ” It has been 15 years since Haruhide returned to his home of Kiragawa. There is potential in researching his keywords and building upon them and world trends. How it connects to the next 15 years will be new start line. I wish to stay in this historical and comfortable pilgrim’s inn, one day.



**Cafe and Space
Kura Kuu Kan-Sakan**

2234 kou Kiragawa Town, Muroto City
TEL: 0887-25-3700
Open from 12:30 PM to 4:30 PM
Closed on Wednesdays and Thursdays.
<http://www3.inforiyoma.or.jp/sakan/>

Henro Yado

Pilgrim's Inn
From 8,000 JPY/Person, 1 night 2 meals
From 5,500 JPY/ Person, Stay only
(General public may stay, prices may differ, please contact before)



Chapter 5 Mihara Village

農家食堂・民宿 NOKO

Farmhouse Cafeteria – Guesthouse NOKO

Serenity, sleep and stay enveloped
in the nature of the land.



In a scene covered with rice fields swaying in
the wind,
The sky filled with the stars,
The wonderful taste of Mihara rice as the
flavour expands within your mouth,
A unique farmhouse with warm hospitality.
Spending each precious moment with family,
in this pleasant abode
Happily chatting away the blissful moments.

Coming to love the task that was guesthouse that was not wanted.

In recent years, there has been an increase in farmhouse cafeterias and farm based guesthouses, each with their own unique take on ingredients, flavours and tastes in Kochi Prefecture. When experiencing local menus, and private communication with the couples that run these establishments, it is as if I am visiting my relatives. This time I visited “Guesthouse NOKO”, located in the Shitagiri Area of Mihara Village. They are quite well known within the prefecture for their stone hearth cooked rice utilising Mihara Rice. Their dishes are softly flavoured and served with the wonderful rice as well as the son’s handmade tofu, all served with the family made Doburoku (unrefined Japanese Sake).

In 2005, Sonoko Miyakawa, although not being able to drink, accompanied her husband to a sake brewing study group. After much trial and error, they completed their own Doburoku brand, [Gen Ryuu]. At that time, they wanted to make a place for the locals to meet and opened a farmhouse cafeteria. In 2008, with the experience they had built, they opened their guesthouse, [Doburoku Guesthouse]. Apart from running their guesthouse, the couple also opens the place for the locals to meet, take apart in [Sitagiri-Otome-Club] health events, and are active participants of their local chamber



Today's delights: Tofu and Mountain vegetables. Bean curd, Broken Fern, Mug wort, Carrots, Pumpkin and other Tempura. Takiawase dish (mixed bowl). Salad. Deep-friend Okra. Soaked Tofucurds. Knotweed marinated in Dashi. Everything plump and in season and great to eat.



of commerce by helping to conduct events to promote Mihara Village. Sonoko mentions with a smile, “For the land and for Mihara.” Her atmosphere radiates love and joy. “(laughs) Come to think if it, in the beginning I was against running a guesthouse. The people staying weren’t family or friends, rather complete strangers. We’re not an established hotel or ryokan, it’s just a normal house. I told my husband that it would be impossible, but he just kept on going. I put in a condition; I will only cook the food. He made a promise to me that no matter how busy he was, if we had customers that day, he would quickly come back home and serve them. Yet, when they started coming, I found that the people coming to stay were nice people and I felt at ease. I am glad that our guests understand what a farmhouse or guesthouse really is all about before they arrive.”

Would you like to try cooking rice on a Stone Hearth?

Mr. Miyagawa is in charge of Guesthouse NOKO’s outdoor experiences. If you wish to go fishing for shrimp or prawns in the nearby river, he will take you and teach you to fish using traditional methods, such as Shibatsuke. If you have young children, he will take

them Beetle Hunting in the local woods. Sonoko happily recalls her guests. “Children are really happy with these experiences. There is a family that comes here every year to fish for prawns and crabs. The children have grown so big. They have even learned to enjoy the bitter flavours. ‘So this is an adult’s taste in food!’ they say. It was so nice to hear the children tasting the prawns and shrimp then making such a cheer about it. (laugh)” You can also learn how to cook rice on the hearth or stone pots. It is quite difficult to cook anything less than 5 cups of rice, so we get the entire family to have fun. Having diner and Doburoku is truly something to be excited for when staying. With your hand made rice, you get to flavour all the great dishes. “We always provide one tofu dish. The vegetables on the menu change depending on what is best and in season. During the summer river crabs and shrimp are in season and in winter we have sweet potatoes and saltwater crabs, which is great. If we have the permission to fish Ayu, we’ll ask a local expert fisherman to share some and include it in the meal.” Of course, all this food is accompanied with the Gen Ryuu Doburoku. It is a clean doburoku that smoothly melts into your mouth. They named it Gen Ryuu because nearby their home there is source of a river. The name imagines clean waters used in the process of making the drink and its natural taste. In summer, you have it on the rocks with just 1 to 2 ice



Freshly cooked glistening Mihara Rice. The flavours explode with each mouthful.



cubes in a glass. The nice cooling sensation goes well down the throat. If you can't drink a lot of alcohol, they recommend mixing it with milk or soft drinks.

Entering a Doburoku Bath.

At Guesthouse NOKO, they have a [Doburoku Bath] where they pour some doburoku into the bath. Is this the reason for Sonoko's beautifully smooth skin?

"I've always thought some people might be against it, so I check with each guest about the bath. Most female guests would gladly take the offer. From personal experience, people with dry skin should definitely give it a try. I think the rice mould in the sake is great for the skin. On the other hand, those that have drunk quite a lot during the meals often say, 'Oh no thank you, no need to pour it in the bath, I've got plenty in my

stomach.' We appreciate them drinking it. I think people who have taken the bath have great skin the following day."

As I ask my final question about their joy of running a guesthouse, Sonoko says, "It's the encounters. I've never really learnt or studied cooking techniques. Sometimes I feel sorry for serving my food with just vegetables grown out the back of the house." (smiles) Even then, every year there are customers who keep coming. They become like relatives and family. There are customers who might have come once and then out of the blue visit again many years later. I can't help but lend an ear as the couple share their experiences, some about food that could only be eaten then, an experience that would only work in certain seasons. As they grow older, this could be harder for them to complete. Yet, we still wish to continue and increase the number of customers who love the experience of staying and who want to come back.

You can feel, see, hear and taste the four seasons, as Mihara's rice fields turn from green to gold. The night sky always filled with shining stars. Taking delight into each ingredient as it comes by its season. The greatest treasure and luxury of the trip is enjoying a great talk with the Farm Guesthouse owners whilst having a delectable glass of doburoku in hand. I definitely recommend visiting and staying in Mihara this summer or autumn months.



Farmhouse Cafeteria – Guesthouse NOKO

576 Shitagiri Mihara Village, Hata District
TEL: 0880-46-2149
6,500 JPY / per night two meals.
4,000 JPY/ per night two meals (4 years or older)
GEN RYUU Doburoku, 1,300 JPY
Afternoon Lunch 700 JPY
Mid-evening Lunch 2,000 JPY
*Meals, overnight stays all must be booked 3 days in advance.



**Professor, Department of
Modern Welfare, Hosei University
Social Activist**

Makoto Yuasa

Japan's poverty rate is rising according to the tri-annual Comprehensive Survey of Living Conditions.

Makoto Yuasa specifically identifies that 1 in 6 Japanese children are on the poverty line.

Providing a first national example of the child poverty rates in Okinawa,

Makoto asks the question; "How is it in your prefecture, city, or town?" and

gives lectures to share the information [Let's take action to know and understand.]

We hope you delve into this interview with Makoto Yuasa, keeping in mind an "Anti-Poverty" ideal.

Giant Interview 0044



Isn't it societal waste to leave the youth and let them turn into NEETS?

Profile: Makoto Yuasa

Born in Tokyo, 1969. Graduated from the Law Department of Tokyo University. In 2008 after developing the [New Year, Dispatched Village Chief] Program, which encapsulates the need for driven chiefs to work against poverty, Makoto moved on to work as an advisor to the cabinet from 2009 for 3 years. Following the position, he has moved onto various other roles such as, Leader for the Centre of Developmental Societal Studies for the Cabinet and the Leader for the Disaster Relief Volunteers. Now active in creating policies with the cooperation of the government, he is pushing for a society that cares for its people and further developing the Japanese society. He is currently a Professor in the Department of Modern Welfare at Hosei University. He also takes part in many roles, such as a Board Member of the Cities and Civilians Association of the Japan Federation of Bar Associations.

Literary Work: [ヒーローを待っていても世界は変わらない](lit. The world won't change by waiting for a Hero), Winner of the 8th Osaragijiro Rostrum Award. Other works are [反貧困](lit. Anti-poverty), winner of the 14th Peace and Cooperative Journalist Fund Award, and [貧困についてとことん考えてみた](lit. I started to think about poverty this way) and many other books.

Making opportunities to meet.

From my understanding, you have actively taken part in volunteer activities since your time at university. Could you share with us how this started?

“My brother is handicapped and disabled. From a young age, I saw university students come to my home to assist my brother as volunteers so my brother and I played and spent a lot of time with them. Thanks to that volunteering became a comfort to us and became an integral part of my daily life. I decided that I would do my best to return this great favour when I became a student. Once I entered university, I visited my local volunteer centre and told them, ‘I want to volunteer.’ I was then introduced to teaching children at an Orphanage. If at the time, I had been introduced to caring for the elderly, I would likely have gone towards that direction.”

I see. That opportunity was one of many crossroads.

“That’s right. I didn’t know much about what I could do, so it was simply following a proposed idea. Current volunteers primarily come to consult. Often they come with serious questions, ‘I want to volunteer, but can a half-baked person like me do it?’ or ‘I don’t have any particular skills, can I still volunteer?’”

For people, those who live similar lives tend to have similar perspectives. If they go to school together, they would come together with similar people and create a group. Inside that ground secluded from others, should there be any person different it is possible to not notice their existence. There won’t be any exchanges, until those within the group have a will to change their viewpoints. What would be a good opportunity for those people?

“In a best scenario it would be a challenge, however we can also use a trick. For example, at local festival [Hey the weather’s great and there’ll be many interesting stands. Why don’t we go with the children and enjoy it?] can be a simple invitation. If the invited person comes to the festival and sees a disabled person baking and selling cookies, it would be part of their normal life. Through simple ideas, many can realise and notice the disabled people close to them.”

I see. It is seeing something in a familiar place.

“It is not a simple task to easily change someone’s perspective and notice disabilities by meeting them. Everyone has his or her own work to do and they are busy. It is an important point to create a “stumble into situation”.

Wouldn't it be a personal decision if they wanted to make that extra step into noticing?

“There are two situations here. People that stumble into meeting yet ignore the situation

and those that stumble into meeting and start to take the steps to notice and realise about those around them.

Of course there are personality differences however the “surrounding” environment is a big factor. The environment includes both people and atmosphere.

Let’s say the information about child poverty appears frequently on the news, then it becomes a heated topic. Consequently, someone volunteers and brings their experience to their workplace. This becomes a topic that is close to their lives, and in turn creates a healthy public discussion. With such events and conversations happening close to their ears, when they “stumble” into situations it will be easier for them to notice.”

Would you say your current position could spark a healthy public discussion?

“I think it helps. I strive to create opportunities for people to ‘stumble’ into. Additionally, I would continue to update people with information to build and notice the atmosphere around them.”

Suddenly. Falling one by one.

What is your opinion about the current social difference and poverty rates since 2000? With the trend to Deregulation in the 21st century, there has been a large problem with the workforce, dispatch workers and even the ‘Internet Cafe Refugees.’ In addition, the suicide rate has been rising with over 30,000 suicides in 2011 alone.

“I can feel the times are getting harsher by the year. Not just in the last 15 years, but over the 25 years since the economic bubble broke. My original intent was to help the homeless people. Only helping a select few people to get back onto their feet. However with each year, more and more people would come to seek advice increasing the variety of people I was trying to assist. By no means did I intend to assist everyone, however the field became larger.

Just the other day several people came to seek advice, and these people work and live in ‘proper’ apartments. I even have times where I am perplexed by who would seek my advice. Perhaps I could compare it to birds suddenly falling out of the sky, when at first, I was just caring for birds that couldn’t fly... Including my time helping the homeless, I’ve been tackling this poverty question for about 10 years now”.

You had discussed about “a point for people to notice” and how it would help the discussion move ahead. How would one find such an occasion?

“I have experienced seeing those who have continued coming for 5 years, yet when we would approach them about the topic, they would flee from the discussion. On the other side, there are people who didn’t get much introduction after coming for 3 years but would suddenly be deeply interested. I still remember a time when I had met a self-proclaimed street artist. ‘This is my lifestyle and it matches me. Leave me alone’ was his constant reply.

For 30 years he was able to live like that. Yet, he became sick, and it was difficult for him to live on the streets for 4 years. So he moved in to a cheap apartment. When I had visited his place, ‘it’s been 30 years since I’ve slept on tatami. I made some miso soup today, my goodness it was delicious.’ His daily life had changed and he was happier.

I believe the environment can change people. Living on the streets for 30 years, could turn one into a fixed mind-set, ‘I’ll never leave these streets.’ Yet when they realise it is tough, they subdue it, and say ‘this matches my lifestyle, leave me alone.’ Yet once they move into a shelter or apartment, they realise. They won’t get wet when it rains and it is warm. They realise the crucial needs and change their mind-set. If they change the situation, something starts to change in their feelings. It’s really important to start the ball rolling with perseverance and discipline.”

We all have the right to choose to live happily. Yet, lofty words such as rescue, aid, providing self-reliance, support, don’t seem to communicate the right nuance. There should a keyword. What do you think?

“I wouldn’t use the word rescue or aid. Words such as ‘equals, meddling, wasteful’ are better suited. The hardest would be to understand ‘wasteful.’ In this generation with a declining and aging population, with less people being able to take responsibility, it is a societal waste to leave the youth and let them turn into NEETS (Young people not in education, employment or training)

It is the same with child poverty. In my experience, I met a child who studied really well in primary and junior high schools. This child received perfect scores in everything, was superb with the arts and received a minister’s prize. Yet, as the child came from a welfare dependent family and so couldn’t proceed onwards to university. One part of me simply felt pity, but there was also a sense of ‘how wasteful.’ This child if given the opportunity could give a great contribution to society. When I think about that situation, it is a great ‘waste’ of special talents and potential to society.”

Everyone is wanted.

I see. That is very interesting. Thanks to your activities, the government has begun seeking your advice, and you still continue with your local activities. Do you feel out of place whilst working with people inside the government? On the other side, what makes you tick? Please tell us your honest opinion.

“If I had to tell you, it will take forever. (Laugh) Unexpectedly, I was shocked to discover that there were really earnest people within the bureaucracy. Up until then all I could do was talk about their image, but once you get to know them, they were normal old men. In that manner, they were no different from those homeless. Until you know, it is just a fuzzy image. The hardest thing to overcome is the stiffness of bureaucracy, being unwilling to try new things. That is the biggest hurdle that made me out of place.”

So you felt some problems with their speed and openness to new things?

“In all regards, when they try to do new things, a slew of obstacles come forth. What takes time is their work trying to overcome each and every obstacle one by one.”

So your position would be persuade them and help them understand.

“That’s right. Just yesterday there was a cabinet meeting. There is always resistance. Those people think ‘if we start something strange and new who is going to take responsibility if the results don’t pan out.’ With such reasoning, it would seem quite natural for some resistance. (bitter smile) The irritation I need to overcome is the fact that I must continue even with this resistance.”

Do you still continue your work as a lecturer at Hosei University? What do you tell your students?

“I tell my students that I won’t teach them. Why? I want them to think and develop their skillsets. It is an important lesson, that is why I won’t teach them. I won’t teach them, ‘think of it this way.’ I wish for them to become people who can find the problems themselves, anguish over the problem and find a solution. In my lectures and tutorials, I still manage the process and workflow, but I make them think about the content of each step.”

Do you answer any requests from your students for projects?

“I try my best to fulfil their requests. Yet, as a teacher I hold influential power. If I proposed something most times, without question, they will do it. In truth, I want the students to gain the power to decide for themselves. It’s the 3rd year I have been trying this method.”

In your seminar today you discussed the issue of female poverty, male poverty and about the ideal society for our livelihoods. What is your ideal society?

“In truth, people consider their own wellbeing the most. The most important thing would be if that person would be able to feel and find approval. We all have our own troubles, and most people do not have extra time in life. A sense of people understanding my own worries and troubles. I think this is vital and connects to the ideal society.”

Having others approve and understand each other’s worries, right?

“It is similar to the story of the homeless. They do not look for connections with other people, and when we think about reaching out, we might consider a blatant refusal but it is far from the case. They might have built up a sense of doubt or suspicion because of someone, and won’t call out to anyone. Yet they do seek for others. At that time that someone reaches out to them, they open their hearts and share themselves. We each in our own need to consider each other and tell them how such practices can be brought into daily life and society; I think it would make it much easier to live.

In the instance of welfare families and supporting their children’s education, the best thing would be to visit the home. We might think they would refuse, but 90% of families gladly



This interview was conducted at SOLE Gender Equality Centre on June 4, 2016. In co-operation with SOLE Gender Equality Centre.



Conducted at the SOLE Gender Equality Centre.

According to the tri-annual Comprehensive Survey of Living Conditions, Japanese poverty rates have risen from 15.7% (18 year and younger 14.2%) in 2006, 16.0% (Children 15.7%) in 2009 to 16.1 % (Children 16.3%) in 2012, with the child poverty rate increasing severely.

Starting in Okinawa with the prefectural average of child poverty at 29.9%, Makoto started his seminar “How is the town you live in? Let’s take action to know and understand” to call out to the public about the poverty rates.

welcome the discussion. They sometimes consider that society has left them to the side and are ignored, yet are just simply happy that their existence is recognised. In short, it is really important to be pro-active in making the opportunities for people to know. I think there is more value in that action than just providing money.”

Hitch-hiking until Kochi.

Currently do you still conduct seminars around Japan?

“Since acquiring tenure, I have reduced it to about 100 times a year.”

Have you ever come to Kochi?

“Sure, about ten times already. I first went when I was in high school and travelled alone around Shikoku.”

How did you travel around?

“I mainly travelled by train. From Uwajima I rented a bicycle, travelled to the edge of Ashizuri Cape and continued towards Tosa Shimizu city. I returned the bicycle at a youth hostel there and continued on my journey hitch-hiking.”

Wow! You really travelled and enjoyed Kochi.

“I think it was because I was a high school student, that I did my best to hitch hike. In Kochi, I saw the Yosakoi festival. From there I travelled to Oboke towards Tokushima city for the Awa-Odori festival. It was really an enjoyable memory.”

Have you enjoyed Kochi’s great cuisine, since being an adult?

“This past 10 years, I have had plenty of chances to go for seminars. Most of the trips were just day trips. But I have had times where I would stop by Kochi Castle and Hirome-Ichiba for a great bite to eat.” (laughs)

Thank you so much today!

A Message from a Man Living in the 47th prefecture
Designing Your Way of Thinking

考え方を
デザインする

Makoto Umebara

Designer
Musashino Art University, Visiting Lecturer

Episode 15:

[Small Branch] Product

第15回「小枝」のプロダクト



Internal Marketing, the sign of GO

Small wooden branches are seen on the white board. They're actually attached by magnet fixed to branches freshly cut in Shimanto. I recommend selling them at the Michi no Eki [Shimanto Towa]. On a steel wall painted white, all these magnets are hung. Customers are curious to see them and find it refreshing to touch them, move them and, after picking them up and finding them interesting, will take one to the cash register to purchase. One piece is 300 Yen.

On the back you find a 2mm magnet. This small magnet is very strong and sticks well to the wall. Wouldn't it be nice for a tired employee working in an office in Tokyo, to come into a meeting room to feel relaxed when seeing a small branch, a piece of nature, attached to the wall?

I always try to be aware and keep conscious of the city whilst I do marketing. You might say intuition rather than marketing. More than intuition, I don't just use my brain. Yes, when an idea would come through my head, it would go into my body and finally it would come out as a resultant feeling. Inside my body, there is

a measure of what is [Right]. It's like, from when I was born in Kochi till this day, an intuition, a feeling, accumulated in my body. The flow and feeling of that intuition is like that of water when drinking. It flows and accumulates, goes through the body and pops out as an idea that is my marketing. I call it Internal Marketing. It's this idea from inside; I feel the sign to GO.

Possibility is inside Unpredictability

This time it is a collaborative work with the elderly people who make [Shimanto Hinoki Bath].

I had been visiting a wood workshop in the town of Nishitosa. In this workshop was a craftsman who was a retired post office officer. He was burning the "Shimanto Hinoki Furo" symbol into wood, surrounded by wooden owl clocks around his workspace. These clocks were covered in dust and probably had never seen a customer. This man has been attempting to make products from the local forests for years, yet it has not been going so well for him. "These aren't sold because they're not charm-



ing. Why do people not think these are charming?” When I visited a local inn, I see the clocks on the walls everywhere. It was the same with driftwood ornaments. “This isn’t good. Why are popular products made in the cities and not from the local forests?” That day was the start of this project.

The initial trial products were made of Royal Paulownia, Hinoki Cypress, Japanese Chinquapin, Chestnut and Japanese hackberry wood. I then asked, “Where is the hime-syara stewartia tree?” to which the reply was, “The tree stands at a high elevation, and I need to go deep into the forest before I can get it.” My first reply was almost “Then goes get it!” (Laugh) It was decided that, slowly but surely, we would plan to increase the variation of wood pieces.

Through this sort of discussion, I help by contacting the media and marketers and, hopefully, major retailers like XX Hands would find the products. Of course, I will have them place it all on a large wall. (Laugh) My vision of this product is making it big, although the worry about production not be able to keep up does not escape me. Potential lies in the unexpected. When does one decide that the result is a failure? Just because today was a failure, it might be that it will be a success next year.

The earth's energy the mother of life and invention

Everything basically starts with the primary industries. A primary industry works with the earth to cultivate the landscape. Why not sell the wood? I feel that even for those that are living in the forests, our reliance on fossil fuels to make electricity seems to remove our reliance on wood. The local areas have to use their own energy to liven things up or the marginal villages will remain marginal. Work with the power of the earth!

First, there needs to be an action to think, “There is wood. There are materials. The workshop is the forest.” With this in mind, I will be making a woodwork division to start selling products on the Shimanto Drama Website. (<http://shimanto-drama.jp>). Next, will be the debut for these magnets... they will be on sale in August. But I haven’t decided on a name for it yet! (Laugh)

Extra by Yukinori Dehara

デハラユキノリのおまけ〜



Episode 8. [Where to drink]

Where should one drink?

It should be obvious, either at home or at an establishment. Alas, it isn't that obvious in Kochi. When there are people around, you can find alcohol and if you find alcohol then a party has begun. It does not matter the place or the time, Hirome Ichiba and its stalls are always to be expected places; it is the custom for people in Kochi to enjoy drinking. Outdoors whilst flower viewing in spring, watching fireworks or making merry at Festivals, by the beach whilst having some Nihon-shu Sake and Sashimi, or having a barbecue right by the river with beer, or in the middle of the night sipping through an Atsukan or Hot Sake whilst fishing, you will find a cheerful gentleman drinking.

Establishments where you can drink from the afternoon are plenty to be found. The citizens of Kochi don't worry about those who drink, or those who look at them. It could be a matter of perspective but in the big cities people look harshly upon those who drink in the afternoon. "Why isn't that university student studying?" (Because of course, only University students are the only people available at this time of day.) "Why isn't that adult working?" (Not everyone is a business or salary man.); "We aren't paying into the pension funds for you to drink!" (Somehow, even people who have retired aren't accepted.) you receive judgment that is completely unreasonable.

It's a fair fact that if nobody worked and instead only drank in the afternoon our society would not operate, but this idea of no alcohol is a bit too harsh. Do you worry about public order? Honestly, I haven't seen a brawl or fight due to drinking in Kochi before. In this time, when the world is prone to strain and arguments, would you want to change the world of Kochi's "Freely drink everywhere tradition"? I want to see a world where at least once a week people can attend a party with friends and start drinking at 7 PM! An extraterritorial and marginal public service announcement on the rules of partying from Kochi people!



Yukinori Dehara

Born in 1974 eating bonitos in Kochi and raised with beer. Yearly consumption of beer = 300 Liters. Designed 「きの山さん」(Kinoyama-san) of popular Japanese candy, 「きのこの山」(Kinoko-no-yama), as well as various others for Nike, NEC, Tower Records Asics Europe etc. Creates about 300 figurines a year and is a Tourism Ambassador for Kochi Prefecture.



Kochi Central City Map

by KIKAN KOCHI



information

Currency ¥ Exchange

Kind of a currency handling

Shikoku Bank : USD, CAD, GBP, HHH, AUD, NZD, HKD, DKK, NOK, SEK, SGD, EUR, KRW
 Kochi Bank : USD
 Ehime Bank : USD
 Mizuho Bank : USD, CAD, GBP, AUD, EUR, SGD, HKD

International ATM Service

Japan Post Bank can use various cards

In Japan, there're more than 26,000 Japan Post Bank ATMs available in local Post Office, shopping center and station. You can draw Japanese Yen in cash by a card published abroad.

"VISA, VISA ELECTRON, PLUS, MasterCard, Maestro, Cirrus, American Express, Diners Club, JCB, China Unionpay, DISCOVER"

http://www.jp-bank.jp/en/ias/en_ias_index.html
 (link at International ATM Service-JAPAN POST BANK)

You can also use any of several Japan bank cards which have partnerships with Japan Post Bank.

http://www.jp-bank.jp/access/access_atmcd.html
 (link at Japan bank institution of partnership POST BANK)

Notice

Some Maestro cards with IC chips are temporarily unable to make withdrawals at all ATMs located in Japan.

Free Wi-fi Spot

How to use it

1. access "DoSPOT-FREE" on device
2. open browser
3. accept "use policy"
4. input your mail-address
5. receive a message
6. input "authentication code"
7. it's available!

Notice
 15 min / once, 4th / day
 Network: IEEE 802.11 a/b/g/n

Rental Car Shop

Requirements

1. Over 18 years old
2. Japanese Driver's License or
3. International Driving Permit (IDP)

Payment
 can be made by credit card or sometimes by cash

