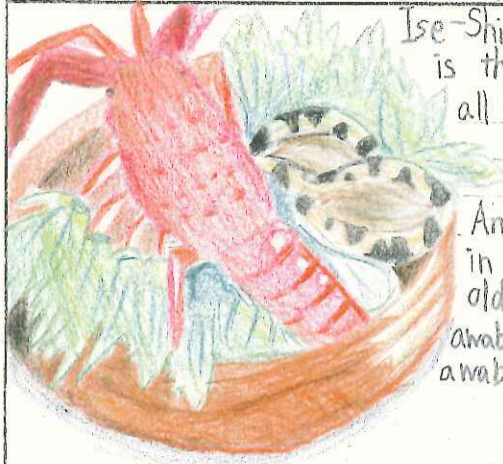


Nature in Shima

Toyohama Junior High School

Konishi Hikari

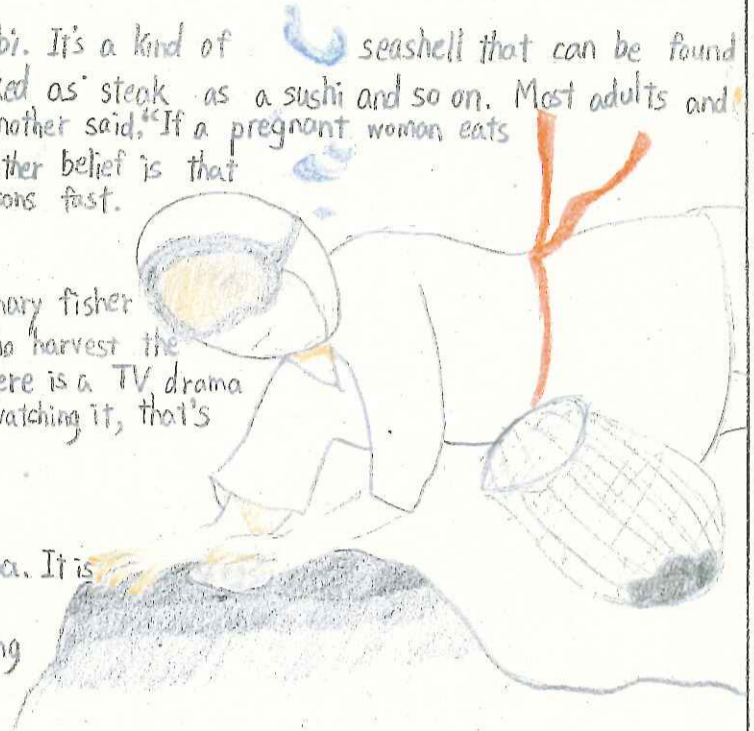


Ise-Shima. My hometown. A place where nature is bounty, fresh and captivating. Not to forget that it is the holiest place because of Ise Shrine. I grew up here. I know some good things that it offers to all visitors, nature lovers and curious travelers alike.

And of course. No one should miss the awabi. It's a kind of seashell that can be found in our bay and sea. It can be eaten raw, cooked as steak as a sushi and so on. Most adults and old people appreciate its unique taste. My grandmother said, "If a pregnant woman eats awabi, her baby's eyes will become bright and clear." Another belief is that awabi can aid in the healing process of injured persons fast.

Let me tell you the people who harvest awabis. They are not ordinary fisher folks. They are the brave and strong women divers, the Ama-san. They are the ones who harvest the seashells, seaweeds and other seafood. They literally dive deep into the ocean floor. There is a TV drama that shows the life and struggles of an Ama-san which has the same title. After watching it, that's when I learned about them. I also researched about Ama-san.

Ama-san wear a special cloth called tenugui. It is wrapped on their head like a bandana. It is believed that this rectangular cloth is used to prevent bad fate and drive away the devil tomokazuki. Tomokazuki lures Ama-san into dark places by imitating them and serving them awabi. When the unfortunate Ama-san falls into the trap, she can die.



The Ama-san is a symbol of strength and bravery, too. The sacrifice that they do and the dedication to their work, despite its dangers and risks, compel us to respect them and the products that they harvest, including awabis.

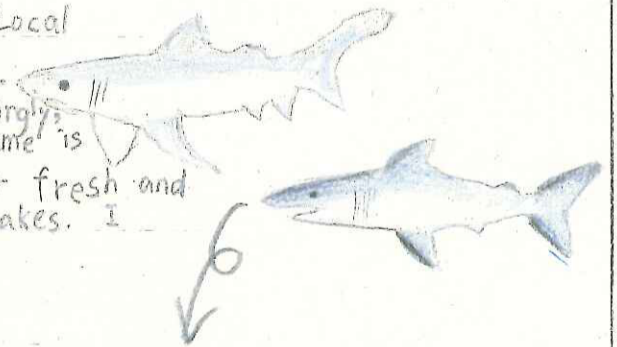


Allow me to introduce to you Ise-Shima. Why don't we start with our seafood? Have you ever eaten Ise Ebi? Lobsters are common in Japan but nothing compares to our very own Ise Ebi. They measure longer, from their antenna to their flippers. They are cultivated carefully so their beauty stays. They wave their antenna which has a shape that resembles the yoroi, a samurai wear. They symbolize strength and bravery like the armor which was used by soldiers in olden times.

Another thing that you have to try is the anori fugu. Its meat is transparent. The texture is tough, tight and rubbery. It doesn't have a bad smell. Our local fishermen cultivate anori fugu as they do with Ise Ebi. If you see a baby fugu, you will be amused because it looks really cute.

Shark. Shark is a seasonal food on our table. Local Ise-Shima people are used to eating samenotare.

The meat is cut thinly and flat then dried. Interestingly, its shape looks like a stage curtain. Thus the name is samenotare. People enjoy eating it as a dried fish or fresh and raw. It goes well with sake. It can also be a flavor of fish cakes. I prefer the sweet taste with mirin.



Ise-Shima is blessed with natural resources from land to sea. We owe it probably to the Gods of Ise Shrine and scientifically, to the Kuroshio Current. They bring us abundant marine life all-year round, season after season.

Come, see, taste and conquer Ise-Shima's delightful offering. You won't regret it. You will be pleased.



(テーマを選んだ理由)

私は来年の5月26日と27日に第42回先進国首脳会議が三重県志摩市で行われることをテレビで知りました。開催地の志摩市にはたくさん自然があり、志摩市はとても魅力的です。そんな志摩市のことを発信し、志摩市の素晴らしさを世界の人々に知ってもらえればと思います。また、志摩市の魅力を知ると共に、今の自然環境や環境問題についても理解していく機会にしてもらえればと思います。