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CIR's Corner

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Hello everyone! "CIR's Corner" is my monthly article about international exchange and cultures around the world. I will introduce a variety of interesting international topics.

This Month's Topic: Gresham, Oregon



A delegation of 10 people, including Mayor Travis Stovall, visited Ebetsu from our sister city of Gresham, Oregon. The delegation stayed in Ebetsu from Thursday, October 12 until Monday, October 16. In addition, I will accompany a group of junior high school students to Gresham from the 30th of this month. How familiar are you with the city of Gresham? This month, I am going to tell you a bit about our sister city.

Gresham is located in the state of Oregon on the west coast of the United States, and is the fourth largest city in the state. It is located just east of Portland, Sapporo's sister city. The Columbia River and Mount Hood are nearby, which bless the city with natural beauty. Gresham is not far from my hometown, Seattle; although it takes only around 3 hours to get there by car, I have never been. The population is around 110,000, resembling the size of Ebetsu. Even though the climate of Gresham resembles that of Ebetsu as well, there is little snow in the winter.

The land was originally home to the Clackamas tribe, who built villages of plank houses along the river and fished salmon. In 1851, pioneer brothers Jackson and James Powell, joined by their families in covered wagons, settled in the area. In 1884, the newly opened post office in the settlement was named after US Postmaster General Walter Q. Gresham. Then, the city of Gresham was incorporated on February 11, 1905.



Gresham Carnegie Library – National Register of Historic Places

Ebetsu and Gresham became sister cities on May 20, 1977, and it is all thanks to a second generation Japanese American and Gresham resident named Henry Kato. In 1975, Mr. Kato visited Sapporo and Ebetsu as an interpreter for the sister cities of Portland and Sapporo. At that time, he noticed the similarities between the Portland-Gresham relationship and the Sapporo-Ebetsu relationship. He also discovered many things in common between Gresham and Ebetsu. Therefore, he felt that Gresham and Ebetsu should become sister cities as



well. A proposal was formally made, and after repeated discussions, visits, and meetings, the sister-city agreement was signed on May 20, 1977.



Downtown Gresham

Gresham is home to *Tsuru Island*, a Japanese garden. During the 40th sister city anniversary festivities, the mayors of both cities planted two cherry blossom trees in a space called “Ebetsu Plaza.”



The Gresham Delegation

I talked much with the Gresham delegation while they were here, and what I found interesting was hearing about how diverse the city of Gresham is. Mayor Travis Stovall is not only the first Black mayor of Gresham, but also across the state of Oregon. There aren't many female city council presidents here in Japan, but Gresham City Council President Sue Piazza is a woman. Councilor Eddy Morales is a Mexican American as well as a member of the LGBTQ+ community. He talked passionately about his work encouraging young people of color to vote. I feel that through this sister city relationship, Ebetsu citizens can engage with varying viewpoints, and these interactions will lead to fresh ideas and new development for Ebetsu.

In next month's issue, I'll report on my trip to Gresham, so don't miss it! ★

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Thanksgiving Recipe: Pumpkin Pie



November 23 is American Thanksgiving, so this month, I'm sharing a recipe for pumpkin pie. You can make it with Japanese *kabocha*, so give it a try!

Ingredients (makes one 18 cm pie)

- 200 g *kabocha* pumpkin (measured after removing seeds and skin and puréeing)
- 75 g sugar (reduce to 50 g for a less sweet pie)
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp nutmeg
- 1/4 tsp ginger
- 1/8 tsp cloves
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1 egg
- 150 ml cream (plus extra whipped cream for topping)
- 2 pie sheets, thawed
- extra flour for rolling the pie sheets

Double if you like
a spicy pie!



Directions

1. Cut the pumpkin into 5 cm pieces. Cover bowl with plastic wrap and microwave until soft (6-7 minutes at 600 W). Remove skin and purée. When cool, add sugar, cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger, cloves, salt, and egg and mix well. Pour in the cream and mix until smooth.
2. Bring the pie sheets to room temperature. Stack the two pie sheets on top of each other. Sprinkle some flour and roll the pie sheets out together until you have one round pie sheet that is larger than the pie dish. Gently place the pie sheet in the pie dish and cut off the excess. Use your fingers to form a decorative fluted edge. Poke the bottom of the pie sheet with a fork.
3. Pour the pie filling into the pie dish, and bake in the oven at 220°C for 10 minutes. Reduce heat to 180°C and continue to bake for 30 minutes or until firm. Cool completely in the refrigerator before eating.

※Recipe adapted from “Libby’s Famous Pumpkin Pie” and S&B Foods.

Pictures: Wikimedia Commons, Ebetsu Lifelong Learning Div.