

## **Friendship through Food Diversity:**

### **Turkey and Kushimoto, Japan**

#### **National Institute of Technology, Wakayama College**

##### **Introduction**

A: Hello, everyone! We are from Wakayama Kosen. I am Kyoya, and I'm a fourth-year student in the Civil Engineering Department. I was the captain of our school soccer team.

B: I'm Natsune, and I'm in the third year in the department of biochemistry and applied chemistry. I'm into soft tennis at the moment.

C: I'm Asuka, and I'm in the same year and department as Natsune. I love cooking. Today, we will talk about the relationship between Turkey and Kushimoto, Wakayama and discuss diversity especially through foods.

##### **Kushimoto-cho and Turkey**

A: Well, Natsune, last week you told us a little about your hometown, Kushimoto-cho, which is on the southern coast of Wakayama Prefecture. Intriguingly, its friendship with Turkey has continued since the end of the Edo era.

C: (Well,) To tell the truth, Kyoya and I didn't know about Turkey at all, and since then we've been researching the country and its history and culture.

B: Oh, have you? That's interesting! Well, between Turkey and Japan there have been two historic events, and one of them is closely connected to Kushimoto.

In 1890, a Turkish warship named Ertuğrul was shipwrecked on the eastern coast of Kii Oshima island in Kushimoto. More than 500 officers and sailors lost their lives, and only 69 could be rescued. The rescue operation was entirely due to the selfless devotion of the inhabitants of the island.

C: Natsune, I know another historic story about Turkey and Japan. Since the rescue operation of the frigate Ertuğrul, the Turkish people have always been deeply grateful to Japan. Then, in 1985, during the Iran-Iraq War, all the foreigners in Iran had to be evacuated within 48 hours. Thanks to Turkish people's efforts, especially those of the pilots and cabin attendants, more than two hundred Japanese were able to return to Japan safely.

B: Yes, that's right. Well, in this way, the friendship between Turkey and Japan, especially in Kushimoto, has continued for more than a hundred years.

##### **Diversity and New Meals**

C: Even now I remember vividly when a Turkish woman ran as an Olympic torch bearer in Kushimoto at the beginning of the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. Thinking of that, she stands for the friendship between two countries. In addition, Turkey represents a mixture of Europe and Asia. Then, she was a kind of icon of diversity: of countries, culture, religion, and sexuality.

A: Yes, she really was. Well, speaking of “diversity”, I have already researched this topic. “Diversity” is concerned with people with different identities in society: from the promotion of women’s participation in the workforce to the inclusion of people with disabilities, senior citizens, and LGBT communities. It is crucial in this modern era to build diverse workplaces and societies.

But the concept of diversity is not known well in Japan. According to a survey, only 35 % of Japanese people know what “diversity” means.

B: As for me, talking about diversity reminds me of a meal a Turkish lady cooked for my family. When I was a child, a Turkish woman stayed at my home and she cooked “pilav,” which is a traditional meal in Turkey. Eating her authentic Turkish pilaf, I realized for the first time that there were a variety of “pirafu” around the world. This might also have been the first time for me to be aware of diversity in food.

A: Well, considering the friendship between Turkey and Kushimoto, Turkey has diverse foods and cooking styles. On the other hand, Kushimoto is rich in local specialties. Then, how about trying to create a new meal with foods of Turkey and Kushimoto? I think it is a good example of diversity. It covers not just ingredients, but also cooking styles, religious taboos, and nationalities, just to name a few.

### **Traditional Turkish Meals and Turkish Cultures**

C: A New meal? Sounds exciting! But before that, we need to learn about Turkey and its traditional meals. For example, some traditional Turkish meals and desserts are Kebab, Kofte, Dolma, Pilav, Dondurma, and Baklava. There are various dishes and cooking styles because the country is located between Europe and Asia.

B: Exactly. Well, Turkey has been part of the Byzantine and then the Ottoman Empire. Consequently, Christianity and Islam coexist in this country, as can be seen in places like Cappadocia and the Hagia Sofia. Thus, Turkish culture is a mixture of European and Asian ones. So too are Turkish meals and desserts. They come from diverse traditions and cultures.

A: Well, tasty new meals and desserts using ingredients and cooking methods from Turkey and Kushimoto—boy, that’s a good idea! I guess we can do it!

### **5. Combining Turkish and Kushimoto Cooking Styles**

A: (To the audience) In this way, we have tried to create new meals and desserts using Turkish and Japanese ways of cooking. And here are the results. One is a “Bulgur” pilav and the other is a Baklava.

C: Well, the first one is based on a Bulgur pilav. “Bulgur”, which is a national food of Turkey, is made of crushed and ground durum wheat. Also, we have sprinkled *hime hijiki*, a kind of seaweed

which is a speciality of Kushimoto, on it. Japanese sour citrus juice makes it even more delicious with the olive oil produced in Turkey. It tastes good and it isn't oily at all.

B: And the second one is a dessert based on Baklava. It is a traditional Turkish sweet using pistachios, and this Baklava is made with sweet potatoes named *Nantan-mitsuhime*, local to Kushimoto, instead of pistachios. This is so sweet and has a fine texture.

Thus, these dishes are cooked in European, Middle Eastern, and Japanese styles with Turkish and Kushimoto ingredients.

### **Religions and Diversity**

C: Well, as you know, Japan is a country based on Buddhism and Shintoism. On the other hand, about 90 % of Turkish people are Muslim, and they only eat "halal" food, which means "permitted" or "lawful" food. We have made a new meal and a new dessert, and they are "halal" in terms of the ingredients.

Food is closely connected to religion, and so are our new dishes. They are connected to diverse religions such as Islam, Christianity, and Shintoism. We hope our new dishes introduce to other people the friendship between Turkey and Japan and the significance of diversity.

A: Moreover, considering Turkey, we should never forget that we saved each other at the risk of our lives. The foods and religions we have mentioned show that Turkey is a gateway to Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. Our further contribution to the friendship helps us understand and appreciate foreign cultures more deeply.

### **Conclusion**

B: Today, we started with Japan's relationship with Turkey through the frigate Ertuğrul and ended up with diversity in foods. To become better engineers, we, Kosen students, should understand diversity and always be conscious of our relationship with other countries.

A: There are many people with different identities, and their inclusion is important to our societies. Also, friendships with other countries are crucial to understanding each other. We hope our creating tasty new meals and desserts will help develop our industries and culture in the long run. Thank you.