

## 6 Ginkgo in Sobue

<祖父江町の銀杏>



A : Oh, What an awful smell! Where does it come from?

B : It comes from ginkgo fruits. Look at that tree.

A : The tree with a lot of yellow fruits?

B : Yeah. When they are ripe, they turn yellow, and give off a bad smell.

A : Hmm Look! A lot of ginkgo fruits have fallen off onto the ground.

B : Don't touch them with your bare hands.

A : Why?

B : Because some people are allergic to them and will develop a rash.

A : You can't eat them, can you?

B : Yes, we can. After they ripen fully, we get rid of the yellow parts and there are white seeds inside. We wash them, dry them in the sun, and ...

A : So you eat the white seeds?

B : No, we don't. They are nut shells. We can eat only the inside. It's soft and emerald green.

A : How does it taste?

B : I think it's delicious. I like it very much. We have a number of ginkgo trees in our town. Most of them are older than 100 years old. People are proud that our town produces the largest amount of ginkgo nuts in Japan. Would you like to try some?

A : OK, I will.

B : Why don't you come to my house and I'll show you how to cook them.

# Ginkgo

It is not clear when ginkgo was introduced to Japan. It is said that ginkgo came from China with the introduction of Buddhism into Japan, but this is not definite. There are many big ginkgo trees in Sobue Town, and most of them have been there for more than 100 years.

The wind called *Ibuki-oroshi*\* (伊吹おろし) blows hard in this area. Ginkgo trees were planted around the shrines, temples, and residences so that they could protect them. That's why they are called "*yashiki ginnan* (屋敷銀杏:house ginkgo)." The leaves of ginkgo turn yellow at the end of autumn. We can enjoy beautiful scenery everywhere in this town.

Sobue is the first town in Japan where they were planted in order to produce and sell them. About 100 years ago, three men, who came from Yamazaki area in Sobue, went to sell their ginkgos in Nagoya, and they were able to sell them at a high price, about six or seven times more than usual. This is the beginning of ginkgo history in Sobue. Growing ginkgo for food has been improved many times.

There are several kinds of ginkgos in Sobue. They are *Kinbei* (金兵衛), *Kyuji* (久寿・久治), and *Tokuro* (籐九郎). *Kinbei* is an early –ripening variety and is sold in July and August. *Kyuji* is not so bitter and tastes good. It is easy to remove the husk of *Tokuro* ginkgo because its husk is thinner than the others. It is also bigger than other ginkgos and it keeps longer. We can eat them even at the end of the winter.

We have many ways of eating ginkgo: *chawan-mushi* (茶碗蒸し), *ginnan-okowa*, and *ginnan-gohan*, for example. There are some restaurants which serve us *ginnan-kaiseki*. We'll show you how to cook *ginnan-gohan* later.

They say that the fruits of ginkgo are good for our health, especially to stop coughing and to recover from fatigue. The leaves of ginkgo are also said to be good for our health. Look at the chart below.

The main ingredient of ginkgo and chestnut		
	Ginkgo	Chestnut
Protein	4.7g	2.7g
Lipid	1.7g	0.3g
Carbohydrate	34.7g	35.9g
Vitamin A	160 IU	26 IU
Vitamin B	23mg	22mg



## *Ibuki-oroshi*

There is a mountain called *Ibuki-yama* (伊吹山) to the northwest of Sobue town. *Ibuki-oroshi* is the strong wind from the mountain and it is cold and windy.

# ***Preparation for the Forwarding of Ginkgos***



1 the ripe ginkgos



5 dry the ginkgos



2 wash the ginkgos



6 sprinkle the ginkgos with powder



3 remove the yellow parts of ginkgo



7 put the ginkgos into each box



4 put the ginkgos into water in order to clean and distinguish good ones from bad ones.



8 the nuts of ginkgo

# EXERCISES

## 1 COMPREHENSION CHECK

文の内容に即して、以下の設問に英語で答えなさい。

- (1) Can we eat the yellow parts of the ginkgo?
- (2) Which part of the ginkgo can we eat?
- (3) How old are most of the ginkgo trees in Sobue?
- (4) Why are they called “*yashiki-ginnan*”?
- (5) When can we eat Kinbei?

## 2 USEFUL EXPRESSIONS

文中の表現を参考にして、次の日本語を英語にしなさい。

- (1) 一緒にパーティーへ来ない?  
(            )(            ) you come to the party with us?
- (2) 彼女は英語上達のために英国へ行った。  
She went to England (            )(            ) to improve her English.
- (3) よく眠れるように明かりを消しなさい。  
Switch the light off (            )(            ) we can sleep well.
- (4) 悪い習慣をやめるのは難しい。  
It is difficult to (            )(            )(            ) a bad habit.