



カメラに向かって満面の笑顔を見せる子供たち



市場にはカラフルな野菜が並ぶ



日本人留学生の藤田妃南さんと談笑する子供たち



首都スバにある公園の芝生でくつろぐ人々



フィジーは小国ながらラグビー強豪国だ

Happy Fijians' rich culture of helping others

フィジー のどかな生活 Story and photos by Fujii Tatsuya, Mainichi Shimbun staff photographer

「世界幸福度調査」1位の国

“Bula!” That is Fijian for “Hi!” and smiling people say it to me all the time as I stroll through the bright sunlit streets of Fiji.

Fiji is a country that lies more or less in the middle of the South Pacific. It comprises about 300 islands and has a land area roughly equal to that of the Japanese island of Shikoku. Its population numbers about 890,000, mostly of Fijian or Indian descent. Many people of Fijian descent are Christian. The main industries are tourism, for which Fiji's beautiful marine environment is the greatest resource, and agriculture revolving around products such as sugar. According to the World Bank, Fiji's GDP for the year 2017 was 5.061 billion U.S. dollars, which is about one thousandth the GDP of Japan. Yet, according to an American survey regarding subjective feel-

ings of happiness in various countries around the world, Fiji topped the list in 2018. It was, in fact, the third time in four years that Fiji ranked No. 1 in happiness. One of the reasons that Fijians feel so happy is the great importance they place on helping each other. “Kerekere” is the Fijian word for “mutual aid,” and mutual aid is central to Fijian culture. That is, helping each other is a way of life for families, communities and villages. The people of Fiji do not have a strong concept of ownership. They share food and household items — or rather, you might say that they “co-own” them. It is common not only for families, but for neighbors and acquaintances to share their meals.

話し好きな人が多く、語学留学にびったり

Viti Levu is Fiji's main island, where the capital city of Suva is located. On the west coast of the same island lies the city of

Lautoka. Felicia, who lives in Lautoka with a family of five, has been welcoming Japanese students as homestay guests for the past seven years. “Fiji has a rich culture, and we live by cherishing other people,” she says. In fact, her yard was full of other people's children playing happily together.

Taniguchi Hiroshi, 47, is the head of South Pacific Free Bird (based in Tokyo's Shinjuku Ward), which has maintained a language school in Fiji for 15 years. Taniguchi says he was drawn to Fiji by the way Fijians always help each other. “Fijians love to talk to people, so it's a great place to improve your English skills,” he adds. Fujita Hina, 17, a student and homestay guest in Fiji, agrees: “They treat me like one of their own children, and they're so kind. I was amazed at the way they help people without expecting anything in return.” Fujita is in the third year of her studies abroad and is presently preparing for college entrance exams.

On one weekday afternoon, families and students lolled about on the lawns of a park in Suva and let time drift by. I was envious of this luxury — the luxury of doing nothing in the bright sunlight and gentle breeze of this southern isle.

KEYWORDS

stroll through ~を散歩する

sunlit 太陽に照らされた(後出 sunlight は日光)
lie ~にある
South Pacific 南太平洋

comprise ~から成る
~descent ~系の
agriculture 農業
revolve around ~を中心

に展開する
GDP (= gross domestic product) 国内総生産
one thousandth 1000分の1

survey 調査
subjective feelings of happiness (ここでは)幸福度
mutual aid 相互扶助

ownership 所有権
household item 生活用品
co-own 共同所有する
acquaintance 知り合い

cherish 大事にする
(be) drawn to ~に引きつけられる
entrance exam 入試

loll about くつろぐ
lawn 芝生
drift by のんびり過ぎて行く
envious 羨ましい

luxury ぜいたく
gentle 優しい
breeze そよ風
isle 島

TRAVEL

フィジー

公用語は英語で、フィジー語とヒンディー語も使われる。ビチレブ島の北西部にナンディ国際空港があり、南東部に首都スバがある。この2都市を結ぶ南部の海岸沿いに主な観光リゾートがあるほか、島全体がリゾートホテルになっている小島も多い。ラグビーが盛んな国で、代表チームの愛称は「フライング・フィジアンズ」。今年のワールドカップでは1次リーグで敗退したが、10月24日現在の世界ランキングは11位。



多読チャレンジ

「相互扶助」を意味するフィジー語は？

[本文・500 words]