

Introduction of Mr. Rio Imamura

By Prof. Hiroki Yamamoto

Let me first introduce myself. My name is Hiroki Yamamoto, one of the teachers who belong to the Department of English. This particular event of English Lecture Series is our original program intended to provide our students with rich opportunities to expand their socio-cultural perspectives needed for internationally-minded men and women, as well as to learn the language skills by using English as a means of global communication.

This afternoon, I'm greatly honored to introduce Mr. Rio Imamura, who is a speaker for today's English lecture. Now, he is a Kitakyushu citizen. Before moving back to his hometown, he had been in the U.S. He spent his first ten years in New York City as a representative of a Japanese electronics firm and another 20 years in San Diego, California, working for a semiconductor manufacturing plant up until his retirement in 1995. While living in the city bordering with Mexico, he was elected as an honorary chair of the Saturday School for the children whose parents were working for Japanese companies in the areas of southern California. He also sat on the Advisory Board of the Japanese Studies Institute at San Diego State University.

After his return home to Kitakyushu City in the late 90s, he cofounded the Kitakyushu Toastmasters, the organization whose members are very interested in learning how to make and deliver speeches and communicating with each other in English. He also is working for this organization as a leader and the president for the district. I don't know how old he is. Maybe he is my age or one or two years older than I. He is very active not only in Japan but abroad as well. He often travels overseas to promote Toastmaster's Spirits and build friendship with a lot of people. If you have a free time, I recommend you to visit his blog which includes interesting reports on his visits to the different countries.

The topic of Mr. Imamura's talk today is about Miss Clara Breed. She had worked as a librarian at San Diego Public Library during and after the Pacific War which ended in 1945. This was the desperate and ruthless warfare with the U.S. which lasted about five years. Do you know that during this war, there were the internment camps in the different remote and desolate Western parts of the United States? At that time, quite innocent Japanese-American citizens were regarded as spies or enemies against the U.S. and forced to leave their beloved homes and neighborhood and forced into these internment camps. Unexceptionally, young Japanese-American boys and girls as well had to go there with their parents. Miss Breed helped these young people to get books to read even in the camps. Mr. Imamura's talk is based on the fact about this American woman who felt strongly sympathetic to these young Japanese kids and supported them with her every possible effort. O.K. Mr. Imamura, please.