

Weather in Japan ～ Chilly Cherry-blossom Season ～

Japan has four seasons. According both to the general consensus and to meteorological concepts, March, April and May are regarded as spring; June, July and August are the summer months; September, October and November comprise autumn; and December, January and February are the months of winter.

In March, the days begin to get warmer and nature starts coming back to life. March is the last month in the school year and commencement ceremonies are held all across the country. April, on the other hand, is the starting month for new academic and fiscal years, and enrollment or new semester start-up ceremonies are held in schools and companies. It is also a significant turning point for business people. Welcoming ceremonies for newly hired people are held, and a general personnel shuffle usually takes place in this month.

Cherry blossoms reach full bloom in April. The weather, however, is quite changeable at this time of the year. Sometimes the weather will suddenly turn cold again, just when the cherry blossoms are at their best. This is called *hana-bie* (chilly cherry-blossom season). You can often hear the TV weather reporters reminding viewers, "Don't forget to dress warmly when you go out for cherry-blossom viewing."

There is another expression to describe the weather at this time: *natane-zuyu*. This term refers to a long spell of light, and chilly rain in early spring when the blossoms of the colza (*natane/nanohana*) are in full bloom. Sometimes there is a *kisetsu-hazure-no-yuki* (an unseasonable snowfall) and *kan-no-modori* (a return of cold weather), making one shiver with cold.

Although warm spring days are actually just around the corner, one sometimes feels there is still a long wait before spring truly arrives. It is at this time of the year that one must be especially careful not to catch a cold.

にほん きしやう

日本の気象

はなび

～ 『花冷え』ほか ～

日本には四季があります。社会通念・気象学では、春は3月・4月・5月、夏は6月・7月・8月、秋は9月・10月・11月、冬は12月・1月・2月です。

3月は寒い冬からしだいに暖かくなり、自然が息を吹き返す季節です。日本では3月が年度がわりとされ卒業式、4月には入学式・始業式、入社式、人事異動など節目の時期でもあります。

4月、桜の花も満開なのに『花冷え』といって一時的に寒くなることもあり、天気予報で、「お花見に出かける時は、厚着をしてお出かけください」などと言っているのを、よく耳にします。『菜種梅雨(なたねづゆ)』といって、ちょうど菜の花が咲く頃に冷たい小雨が降り続いたり、『季節外れの雪』や『寒の戻り』などで、震えあがったりします。

春がそこまで来ているのを感じながらも、まだまだ春は遠い思いを抱くこともあります。油断して風邪を引かないように気を付けてください。