

# aWa life

**Introducing Kaiyo's CIRs**

February 2023

# 387

**It Seems My Cat  
Has Siamese Blood**



**Introduction to Aizumi  
International Exchange  
Association**

**Gairaigo Galore:**  
ヒレ、ヘレ、ファイル



**TOPIA**

## Awa Life is a Monthly Publication of the Tokushima Prefectural International Exchange Association

While we had some very cold days and even snow in December and January, February probably won't be much different, so why not spend some time in your warm home and read a bit? The current and past Awa Life issues would certainly be some good reading material but there are also other English language options to know more about Tokushima. For example, did you know that there are two CIRs (Tony and Gwenafaye) working in Kaiyo-cho in the southern part of Tokushima? Check out their article on page 3 and scan the QR code for more information about Kaiyo and their approach to internationalization and English language education in the small southern community. There is also a great blog so you will surely have enough to read!

For all of those who like writing, please feel free to submit an article to us at any point in time about basically anything. There are a few limitations though, such as you can't write about religion, politics, commercial activities or businesses or anything that we deem inappropriate. But, other than that, we would be more than happy to receive articles about anything and everything including but not limited to concerts, lectures, other events, culture, sports, community group information or anything cool that's happening in your local community.

We highly appreciate all of your articles and we love reading them. So if that writing bug of yours is buzzing about, grab a pen or a computer and write and send away! Please send all submissions to our email:

[awalife@gmail.com](mailto:awalife@gmail.com)

Your editors,  
Sydney and Nico

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*Download a PDF file of awa life or view the online version by going to TOPIA's website!*



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## *It Seems My Cat Has Siamese Blood*

(Shikoku University International Exchange Association Award)

By: Kaho Komori (2nd year student at Kokura High School in Fukuoka)

I went to a Thai restaurant. The unusual figurines at the entrance made me a little hesitant to enter, but I was drawn in by the sound of Thai folk music, the image of elephants walking leisurely on the store's TV, and the Thai cityscape.

I have always had a strong love for Thailand. One of the reasons for this is a friend I had who lived there for 6 years. After meeting her in middle school, my interest in Thailand continued to grow. Listening to her talk about eating out at food stalls in Thailand or planting mangrove trees in the summer... for myself who had always lived in Japan, it was so refreshing to hear stories about a different environment and culture, and I found myself thinking "I want to go to Thailand!"

Just around that time, one of my favorite artists participated in a music event in Thailand, further strengthening my interest in the country. The members spoke Thai with the local people and, although I didn't understand what they were talking about at all, it left me feeling very cheerful. This may be due to the fact that a characteristic of the Thai language is that sentences often end with the vowel a, or contain a large number of geminate sounds.

When looking at Thailand's cityscape, you can definitely feel a sense of freedom and openness. The buildings, the tops of the food stalls, and

even the cars... everything is so colorful that just looking at them makes you feel like you're seeing an extraordinary scene. Even when I'm feeling down, passing by that street lifts my spirits. Since then, it has been my dream to ride in a tuk-tuk. Tuk-tuks are a 3-wheeled taxi often found in southeast Asia that are brightly colored, befitting of southern countries. Since they have no windows, you can thoroughly enjoy the openness and colorfulness of the Thai cityscape. Actually, after learning that their roots are in Japan, I've begun to feel a sense of kinship.

Speaking of kinship, the food I had at that restaurant, although it was my first time trying it, had a sense of familiarity to it.

My mom also went with me to the restaurant, and while listening to the music, she remarked on how, "Even in Thailand they have traditional music with a slow tempo, just like Japan's enka or the music you would hear in a Chinese restaurant." Maybe it's because we're the same Asian countries. Although different cultures, I felt that we weren't completely different.

While looking at the pictures on the wall of Thai folk clothes, fully enjoying the Thai cuisine, and listening to the waiter's bright "khàawp khun"





greeting, my mom and I left the restaurant extremely satisfied, feeling like we had gone on a mini trip to Thailand. Actually, encounters with other cultures come every week. When I was a first year in high school, my homeroom teacher recommended that I read newspapers in English. I started reading to familiarize myself with English words relating to current events, but now it has become one of my favorite things to do on the weekends, as I can learn about the life of a panda during a heatwave in Spain, or an incident that a couple in Massachusetts faced. When I read news about countries I have never been to, I feel as though I can see the different perspectives from that country. When I'm curious, I try to imagine and then look up what people from that country wear, what they eat, and how they spend their time.

Recently, an article about the rising prices of french fries in Belgium left an impression on me. It's embarrassing, but when I thought of Belgium, the only thing that came to mind was chocolate. However, when I looked it up, I was quite

## Introducing Kaiyo's CIRs

By: Tony Lu and Gwenafaye McCormick

Hello there, we're Gwenafaye and Tony, a couple of JET Programme CIRs based in Kaiyo. Gwenafaye is the new CIR on the block, having arrived at the beginning of August and hailing from the great state of Alabama in the U.S., whereas Tony, who comes from sunny Sydney, Australia, has been here since November last year.

We've recently noticed that there have been many articles in Awa Life featuring Kaiyo. We've really enjoyed hearing visitors' impressions of our home and what you all have found attractive about the town. We'd like to take the opportunity

surprised to learn that Belgium is the origin of french fries. That discovery made me feel closer to the country of Belgium.

Learning about other cultures is so exciting, and when I find some kind of connection to myself, it makes me feel so happy. I feel as if I get closer to countries that only yesterday felt so far away, and whose way of life I could have never imagined. I think that the first step to multicultural understanding is to have an interest in and want to know about cultures that you know nothing about.

As I write this essay, my desire to visit Thailand only grows stronger. I'm looking forward to actually visiting Thailand, enjoying things that can only be experienced there, and fostering a closer bond with Thailand.

\*Note about the title: In Japanese the word "shamu" is both the word for a Siamese cat and the old name of Thailand.

of this great space to formally introduce ourselves, and our roles in Kaiyo as a couple of its English-speaking representatives!



CIRs running the "Global Kaiyo" festival stand

For those who haven't yet made it to our neck of the woods, Kaiyo is a quiet coastal town tucked away in the deep south of Tokushima prefecture. Surrounded by calm seas and mountains, we have a number of internationally-known surfing beaches and so attract countless surfers throughout the year.

## Introducing Kaiyo's CIRs

However, like many other small countryside towns across Japan, Kaiyo also faces many unfortunate realities, such as a declining birthrate, an aging population, and sparse public transportation. Despite these challenges, the town definitely has big aspirations, eyeing revitalization in part through a plan to improve English education and foster global understanding.

The Kaiyo Board of Education set out full force towards this objective in 2019, and since then has introduced a number of enhancements and revisions to both the role of ALTs in the local school system and the actual delivery of English education. These adjustments have seen measurable improvements in student's overall English ability across elementary and junior high school.

Particularly in the last year with our arrival as the town's first few CIRs - Tony, Gwenafaye, and previously Sean - this objective has expanded beyond school grounds and into the Kaiyo community. Our efforts have been focused on

raising awareness of and fostering interest in foreign peoples and cultures through interaction, with one of our goals being to instill motivation to learn English through increased exposure, and opportunities to make use of their skills. With this and other goals in mind, we have pursued wide-reaching and community-focused initiatives such as English support for local businesses; the "Iki-Iki Salon", a communal gathering for the elderly where we present and discuss places in our home countries; and the Global Café, an English conversation class for adults.

We also operate a website, [globalkaiyo.com](http://globalkaiyo.com)! Here, we keep townsfolk updated on our activities and the various events we hold, while also promoting Kaiyo to non-Japanese speaking audiences. We also post articles about our adventures,

detailing our visits to different spots around town in both English and Japanese. Recently, we visited Namikiri Fudosen, a local temple that was featured in the cover photo of September's Awa Life! Through this series, we hope to both open up Kaiyo's attractions to an international audience, while showing our Japanese-speaking audience a foreign perspective on local spots.

Our most recent event, which you might have heard about, was the "Global Kaiyo" tour (read more via the QR code!), where junior and senior school students used their English aptitude to guide participating ALTs on a tour of their hometown. Fourteen students guided six Tokushima ALTs from four different countries around Kaiyo in July, making it the largest event involving students that we've held in town since the COVID-19 pandemic began.



*CIR's giving a presentation at the "Iki-Iki Salon"*

It turned out to be a great success, attracting prefectural media outlets, tourism agencies and even the mayor himself who swung by for a swing at the watermelons during the suikawari!

Moving forward, the Kaiyo Board of Education looks to create an environment where students and townspeople can naturally encounter foreign culture, languages, and people with hopes of establishing Kaiyo as a town where everyone has unfettered access to all the tools and resources one might find in an urban center. So if you're ever passing through or coming to Kaiyo, we encourage you to greet the local children in English!

We hope to keep you updated here in Awa Life about our ongoing work and events in Kaiyo, so watch this space!



## Japanese Culture and Reading Corner: 針供養

By: Mako Kobayashi

日本には、大切に 使った物に 感謝をする 行事が たくさんあります。そのなかのひとつに、針供養があります。

西日本では、12月8日、東日本では、2月8日に この針供養が 行われることが多いです。

針供養は、折れたり、曲がったり、錆びたりした 古い針を、こんにやくや 豆腐のような やわらかい物に 刺します。これは 古い針たちに 感謝を表し、休んでもらうことを 目的としています。

どうして やわらかい物に 針を 刺すのでしょうか。それは、いつも 固い 布ばかり 刺して使っていた 針に 最後は やわらかいところで 休んでもらいたいという 気持ちを 表しているのだそうです。そして 昔の 人たちは、毎日 使う物に、神さまがいると 信じていました。

この行事は、特定の神社や 洋服の 関係の 学校でも いまだに 行われています。みなさんの国 には、このような 裁縫についての 行事が ありますか。



## Vocabulary List

針	needle	供養	memorial service	行事	event	折る	fold
曲がる	bend	錆びる	rust	目的	aim	刺す	stick
固い	hard	布	cloth	裁縫	sewing		

ヒレ, ヘレ, フィレ (filet)

By: Nico Bohnsack

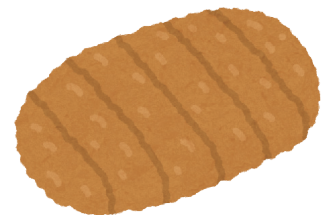
## Gairaigo Galore



This month's gairaigo probably sounds very familiar to the ones who love to eat tonkatsu, such as me. Usually, you have the choice between ロース (loin) and ヒレ (tenderloin). I usually choose the less fatty ヒレ. As some of you maybe know the word stems from the French "filet" and was just adjusted a little bit to the Japanese pronunciation.

However, many years ago, when I lived in Osaka and just started my new life in Japan, I went to a small tonkatsu place to get a nice pork fillet cutlet and was surprised that there was no ヒレ on the menu. I only had the choice between ロース and ヘレ. I was a bit disappointed but thought "Ok, let's give ヘレ a try! Overall, it sounds very similar." When my meal came I thought that it also looks and tastes very similar and after a little bit of research I found out that it's the same as ヒレ but an expression mainly used in the Kansai region. It's said to have a connection to the Kansai dialect which tends to pronounce い as え, such as in ええです instead of いいです. It's not that ヘレ is used everywhere in the Kansai region but when you visit the region the next time why not have a look at the menus of some stores to see which expression is used more often?

The word フィレ, by the way, is also used in some cases and is probably also the version closest to the French original. I made the experience that it is often used in expensive teppanyaki or steak restaurants to give it a more luxurious feeling.





## The Principle of "Glocalization"

By: Yoko Tomotaki (President of Aizumi International Exchange Association)

**A**s a commuter town in Tokushima City, Aizumi Town is remarkably increasing its population at a time when populations have been rapidly declining throughout the prefecture. Currently, as of January 2023, Aizumi Town's population count stands at 35,564 people and within that number, 330 people are foreign residents who come from 29 different countries. The largest of the foreign population are people from Vietnam at 137, then the second largest population comes from China with 57 people, then Indonesia with 51, then the Philippines with 20, 9 from Pakistan and so on.

Although foreign residents only account for 0.9 percent of the total population, I believe on how we think and consider this somewhat small figure can help lead to a town that can truly develop as an international society in the future.

Our dream to establish an International Exchange Association in Aizumi Town was able to come to life thanks to the hard work of my colleagues in October 2003. In 2002, we set up our first committee and our founding members were sent to various training programs inside and outside of the prefecture. Here they gathered information about what sort of activities international exchange groups perform and how we can implement them in our own association. Our goal of establishing Aizumi International Exchange Association (known as "I's") would be fully realised the following year. Twenty years have past since then, and I can fondly recall the passionate feelings that we had back then.

Aizumi's association's aim is to be a "glocal" society (global + local), by thinking globally and acting locally. With the main goal of creating a society where foreigners and local residents can understand each other's culture, help each other out, and live happily amongst each other. Around the world there are 196 different countries, and wherever you are from, I hope you have pride and love for your own country and that you are proud

to display your culture to everyone. Nowadays, there are a lot of unfortunate events happening around the world, and through mass media, we are able to get insight into these tragic events. However, instead of turning our eyes away from such realities, I think we would be better off thinking about what we can do to live peacefully together.



*Commemorative photo with board members of the association*

Here at the Aizumi International Exchange Association, we hold many events for foreigners living in Japan. Here you can learn Japanese and about Japanese culture, history, traditions and much more through exchanges with

Japanese people. In our Japanese language class, foreigners can participate in Japanese speeches and JICA experiences, go on study trips to learn about Japanese traditions and culture. We also host barbecues where you can make strong friendships and you can also experience the seasons through traditional Japanese holidays, like celebrating Doll's Festival, or even playing traditional Japanese games in the New Year.



*Participants listen to a profound speech*

However, COVID-19 has sadly prevented us from being able to hold any of these events for the past 3 years. Thankfully, we have been able to hold our Japanese class every Friday from 7PM to 8:30PM in the Exchange Room at the Aizumi Cultural Hall, led by a fabulous teacher and a volunteer, who both create classes that are always welcoming to all.

In fact, last October, students from our language class wanted to show how well they had been progressing with their Japanese studies and offered to make speeches for several of our board members. I was amazed at how well their Japanese had improved and how friendly and caring they were. I truly hope that one day the COVID-19 Pandemic will be over and that we will be able to once again hold events like we did in the past.

Everyone, are you able to use 「かします」 and 「かります」 correctly? Depending on the country, these have the same meaning. Some find the pronunciation hard because they are similar, and conversely, some find it easy.

What about when these 2 words are used together with 「～てください」 or 「～てもいいですか」?

Many of you probably find it more difficult, right?

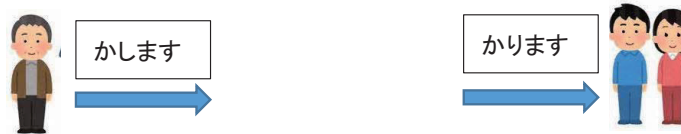
Today, let's practice and see why it becomes more difficult.



Read the following sentence.

おおやさんは わたしに 部屋を かします ⇔ わたしは おおやさんに 部屋を かります

From this sentence, we can understand the direction of 「かします」 and 「かります」.



Next, I want to rent a room and I ask using 「～てください」. How should I ask?

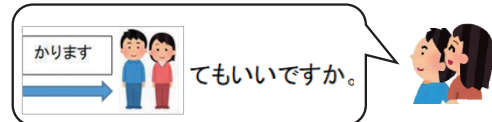
I want to rent a room, so I should use 「かります」, right? First, let's think about the meaning of 「～てください」. It's a way to ask someone for something. In this case, because the one you are asking and the one who will do the action is the landlord, you use 「かします」.

(おおやさん、わたしに) 部屋を かけてください。



What about 「～てもいいですか」? This is a way to seek permission. Who is doing the action? In this case it is you, so you use 「かります」.

(わたしは おおやさんに) 部屋を かりてもいいですか。



「かします」 and 「かります」 have a direction, and with 「～てください」 and 「～てもいいですか」 you have to think of who is doing the action. It becomes difficult to understand the direction and mistakes are made. Another unique feature of Japanese is that the person or thing being discussed (おおやさん・わたし) is recognized by both parties and left unspoken, making it more difficult.

【Questions】 Read and think about the ending of the sentences carefully, then choose whether to use 「かします」 or 「かります」.

- ① A: すみませんが、その本を( )ください。  
B: はい、どうぞ。
- ② A: すみませんが、そのペンを( )もいいですか。  
B: はい、どうぞ。
- ③ A: すみませんが、その消しゴムを( )もらいたいんですが…。  
B: はい、どうぞ。
- ④ A: すみませんが、この傘を( )ことができますか。  
B: はい、どうぞ。



# Events & Memoranda

## Shikoku Sake Matsuri 四国酒まつり

The “Shikoku Sake Matsuri” is a New Year event in Miyoshi City – a city known for local sake. Primarily featuring new brews of sake, guests can enjoy famous sake from across Shikoku at Shikoku’s largest sake event. ♪

Cancellations due to COVID-19 have continued, but this event is set to be held on February 25th! The HP will be updated with more details.

When: February 25th (Sat.)

Where: Miyoshi Ikeda General Gymnasium

Fee: Advance Tickets: 2,500 Yen

Day-of Tickets: 3,000 Yen

Inquiries: Awa Ikeda Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Tel: 0883-72-0143

Fax: 088-665-3683

URL: <http://www.shikoku-sakematuri.com/>

『四国酒まつり』は地酒の町・三好市を代表する新春のイベントで、新酒を中心に四国各地の銘酒が楽しめる四国最大の酒の祭りです♪

コロナウイルス感染症拡大防止のため中止が続いておりましたが、令和5年2月25日の開催が決定しました！！  
詳細は決まり次第、公式ホームページにて公開されます。



日時：2月25日（土）

場所：三好市池田総合体育館

料金：前売券 2500円 / 当日券 3000円

問い合わせ：阿波池田商工会議所

Tel：0883-72-0143

Fax：088-665-3683

URL： <http://www.shikoku-sakematuri.com/>

## 35th Big Hina Matsuri 第35回ビッグひな祭り

The first Big Hina Matsuri was held in the spring of 1988 and will now be celebrated for the 35th time. Hina dolls that are no longer used are gathered from families all around the country, given a memorial service, and then displayed at this festival. At the center of the festival, you can find an approximately 8-meter-high 100-step podium decorated with hina dolls. Approximately 30,000 hina dolls are beautifully displayed at this festival.

During the event there will be a variety of stage performances.

When: February 25th (Sat.) – March 31st (Fri.)  
9:00 - 16:00

Where: Hina Doll Museum

Fee: Adults: 300 Yen

Groups: 200 Yen (10 people or more)

Elementary Students: 100 Yen

Inquiries: Big Hina Matsuri Executive Committee  
TEL: 0885-42-4334

URL: <https://bighinamaturi.jp/>

昭和63年の春に始まったビッグひな祭りは、今回で35回目を迎えます。本祭では、全国より、家庭で飾られなくなった雛人形を集め、供養し、展示させていただいております。場内には、中央にそびえ立つ高さ約8m「百段のひな壇」をはじめ、約3万體もの雛人形が豪華絢爛に飾られています。

期間中は様々なステージプログラムをご用意しております。

日時：2月25日（土）～3月31日（金）  
9：00～16：00

場所：人形文化交流館

料金：大人 300円

団体 200円（10人以上）

小学生 100円

問い合わせ：ビッグひな祭り実行委員会

TEL: 0885-42-4334

URL: <https://bighinamaturi.jp/>

## Events &amp; Memoranda

Let's get to know the world!  
世界の国々を知ろう！

せかい くにに し  
世界の国々を知ろう！

アメリカ・韓国についてお話を聞いてみませんか？

ワン ワールド  
ONE WORLD こども支援事業

(オンライン【ZOOM】開催)



ベレス アンゼロ トマス バウティスタさん

アンゼロさんは、アメリカのシカゴ出身です。フィリピン系のコミュニティで活躍していました。中国に1年間留学をしていました。今は三好市で英語の先生をしています。アメリカをはじめ、いろいろな国の言葉や文化について聞いてみましょう。



天南 希南さん

希南さんは徳島市出身で、韓国に、つながりがあります。韓国に3年間留学をしていました。大学では、デザインについて学ばれました。今は韓国語の先生をしています。韓国の言葉や文化について、聞いてみましょう。

日時：3月5日(日) 13:30~14:45

対象：場所に関心のある皆様 (Zoomでのオンライン開催に参加可能です)

会場：無料

主催：徳島県国際交流協会 (TOPIA) (電話:088-856-3303)

申し込み: [coordinator@topia.na.jp](mailto:coordinator@topia.na.jp)

\*申し込み:メールにて、名前、年齢、職業、メールアドレス、電話番号を書いてお申し込みください。

締め切り:2/27(月) \*当日、Zoomリンクをメールアドレスに送ります。

詳しいことは、HPをご覧ください。



### Counselling Service at TOPIA・トピアの相談窓口

TOPIA provides consultation on everyday life, education, labor, medical institutions, and disaster prevention; and information on sightseeing spots to overseas residents and visitors. When necessary, we will refer you to the appropriate organization that can assist with your needs. Counselling is available in English, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Japanese. Please note that although every effort will be made, we may not be able to deal with all cases.

**Japanese, English, Chinese:** Everyday, 10:00 - 18:00 (closed during the New Year's holidays)

**Vietnamese:** Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, 10:00 - 14:00

Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays, 10:00 - 18:00 (closed during the New Year's holidays)