

aWa life

Farewell Messages

April 2023

389

**Letter from
SUKETO NAKAYOSHI**



**A Visit to the Government of
Lower Saxony**

**Gairaigo Galore:
リハビリ**



TOPIA

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

Has everyone had the chance to enjoy the sakura (cherry blossoms) yet? I'm sure most everyone has heard of sakura, but have you heard of sakura mochi? If you haven't then you should definitely check out our Japanese Corner this month! You'll learn all about the different kinds of sakura mochi available in the Kanto and Kansai areas of Japan. (Though maybe you should read it after lunch as it may make you a bit hungry for some sweets!)

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:

Your editors,
Sydney and Nico

awalife@gmail.com

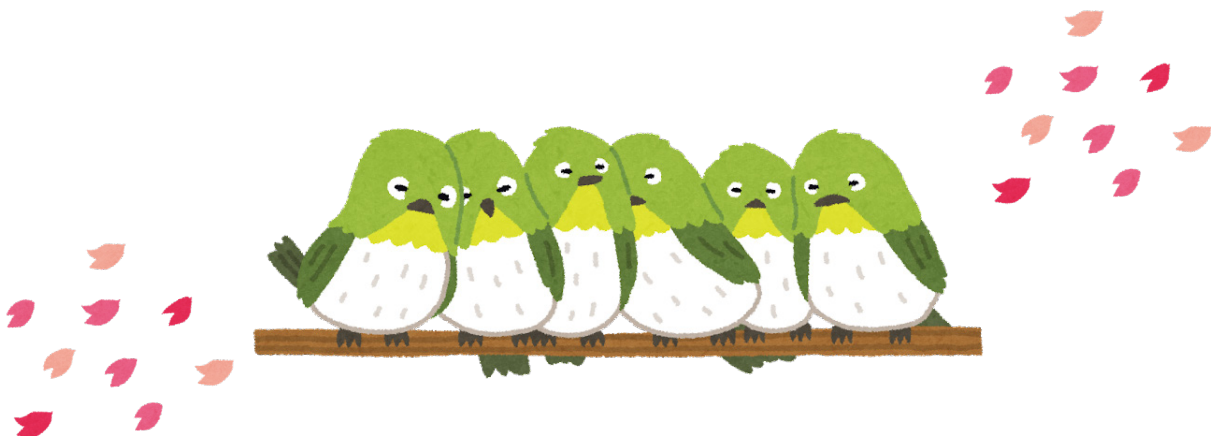
Tokushima Prefectural International Exchange Association (TOPIA)

1-61 Terashima Honcho Nishi, Tokushima City 770-0831 JAPAN, Clement Plaza 6F

Tel: 088-656-3303 Fax: 088-652-0616

<http://www.topia.ne.jp/>

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



Editors:

Sydney Bartig and Nico Bohnsack

Contributors This Month:

Rieko Akamatsu, Qing Liu, Fumie Imai, Kazue Inoue, Mari Kimoto, Mayumi Nishioka and Yoko Aoki

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Women's Activities: Learning from Germany - A Visit to the Government of Lower Saxony

By: Rieko Akamatsu, Representative of Shikoku Manabi Mirai Network Research Institute

In September of 2022, as a part of one of the projects for the 15th anniversary of the friendship relations between Tokushima and Lower Saxony, Germany, myself and 10 other members visited the city of Celle for a "Women's Business Leadership Tour".

We had a tour of and learned at the German Management Academy Lower Saxony (DMAN).

On the 5th and last day of our training, we traveled to Hannover, the capital of Lower Saxony, and visited the State Ministry of Social Welfare, Health,

and Equality. Up until now, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there were restrictions on entering the conference rooms, but I was told that for the first time in a while the rooms were nearly filled. No matter where you go, you can feel signs of the scars left by COVID-19, as well as signs of revival. The ministry we visited provides support for women, with its main objectives being to promote a balance between work and family life, support entrepreneurs, and to assist immigrants.

Germany ranks 10th in the world in regards to the Gender Gap Index, being in a completely different league than Japan which ranks 116. One of the reasons for this is the rapid progress it has made in the political field. However, the reality is not as simple for many women's daily lives. In spite

of their abilities, there is a reluctance for women to take on management roles, and the traditional thoughts of "men working and women staying at home" still have strong roots.

The principle of equal pay for equal work has yet to be established, and there are many women who work for low-wage, part-time jobs

while also engaging in caregiving, child rearing, house work, etc. This can then lead to poverty, a similar trend that can be seen in Japan. On the other hand, the lack of skilled personnel is being taken seriously, and companies are putting their efforts into human resource training. Moving forward, women are expected to take an active role in a diverse array of fields.

In Germany, education also plays an important



September - Lower Saxony, Germany

role. In particular, there have been efforts to provide role models for girls and to introduce a “Girl’s Day Program”. Girl’s Day (as well as Boy’s Day) allows for male and female students to try out and experience fields of study that are not typically chosen by their gender. However, it seems that there is a troubling issue of parents interfering in their child’s life when it is time to choose a career path.

I asked how many female education superintendents there were in Germany. By the way, women only make up a mere 7% of the principals in Japan. Surprisingly, the ratio of women superintendents in education is 50%. However, it is not as if this has produced any special outcome, and the challenges in regards to education still exist.

Our time at the ministry ended with a lecture about the state of the promotion of women’s

activities in Tokushima Prefecture and Japan by Sawako Hirata, the assistant to the division head of the Diversity Promotion Division at the Tokushima Prefectural Government.

It must have surely caused her complicated feelings to show just how far behind Japan is compared to the rest of the world. However, I feel proud that Tokushima, which has the highest number of female company presidents in Japan, has been taking initiatives such as this training and is truly taking the lead within Japan.



The author receiving a certificate of completion of the training.

Farewell Messages

Qing Liu, Multilingual Consultation Staff

5 years ago I came from my 996 (*1) in Shanghai to Japan and started my life in Tokushima. While drinking my morning coffee, I saw white and yellow butterflies fluttering about in the green garden and, just like them, the rhythm of my life suddenly changed.

Working at TOPIA allowed me to learn more about Tokushima. My job at TOPIA is to help travelers, study abroad students, those with a job, and other foreigners who come to the prefecture. This all allowed me to deepen my understanding of Tokushima.

And thus, my understanding of Japan also deepened.

Before, when I was speaking Japanese in China, I would just translate Japanese directly from Chinese, meaning I would use Japanese with a Chinese way of thinking and Chinese way of doing things. However, when I came to Tokushima, I felt that the Japanese people’s way of thinking and

expressions were so profound. I still occasionally make mistakes, but I’ve learned a lot.

I felt I had become used to Tokushima not only when I was able to understand Awa-ben (the local dialect), but also when I started not to wake up from large earthquakes. (Now I typically don’t wake up unless the earthquake is a magnitude 4 or higher.)



In my second year in Tokushima, I noticed that the precipitation levels had decreased since spring. Every morning when I would pass by the Akui River, I noticed that the once clear waters that seemed as if they would overflow the banks were gradually decreasing. Environmental problems are not just in Tokushima, but are a problem that must be solved by the entire world, and that

Farewell Messages

made me feel that the meaning of international exchange was even more significant.

At TOPIA, I've met many people from various countries, such as study abroad students, ALTs, technical interns, and even those who left their own country for love. I've always felt so impressed at their courage and love. In order to preserve their stories, in “雁过拔毛” (*2) style, I always ask them to write for Awa Seikatsu (the Chinese version of Awa Life). For their contributions I am extremely grateful.

It's time to say goodbye. To everyone I've met over these 5 years, to those in Arasowaren who I danced Awa Odori with, and to my friends at TOPIA I am extremely grateful.

*1 “996” means working from 9 AM to 9 PM 6 days a week.

*2 “雁过拔毛” translates to “wanting to pluck the feathers of the goose that passes in front of you.” The meaning is to not let any chances slip through your fingers.

Fumie Imai, CLAIR Tokushima Branch

It has been a lot of fun being able to work at the Tokushima Prefectural International Exchange Association. I was able to learn a lot about what Tokushima has to offer, such as the delicious food, beautiful scenery, Awa Odori dance, Awa-ben, the warmth of its people, and much more.

I'm moving outside of the prefecture, but I hope to continue brushing up on my English and telling people from around the world about the great

parts of Tokushima. In order to create a multi-cultural society where all people can live a comfortable life, I want to do whatever I can to help.



It was only a short time, but I want to thank everyone for everything.

Letter from SUKETO NAKAYOSHI

By: Kazue Inoue (Center for Early Childhood Education and Care SUKETO NAKAYOSHI)

In Japan we have a proverb “笑う門には福来る”. You all may have heard it before, but it means that happiness will naturally come to homes that are always bright and laughing. In fact, laughter has the following effects.

- ① Boosts immunity and resistance to germs
- ② Increases blood flow and brain activity
- ③ Reduces spikes in blood sugar
- ④ Reduces stress
- ⑤ Reduces allergic reactions

Of course, laughter also has a large effect on child rearing as well. It not only helps to make a child healthy, but also builds a good parent/child relationship that will increase children's motivation.

It's become the perfect season to go out and enjoy the beautiful sakura flowers of Japan's spring. On a nice day, take your child out to a

park or open space. Play a lot... laugh a lot... and have a spring filled with happiness.

<Rice Flour Apple Cakes - For 4 People>

- ① Add 60 g of apples cut into quarter-rounds and 12 g of raisins to a pot. Boil until the apples are soft and then let cool.
- ② Sift 72 g of rice flour, 2 g of baking powder, and 24 g of sugar.
- ③ Add 20 g of salad oil, 72 g of soft tofu, and 48 g of soy milk to the ingredients in ② and mix.
- ④ Add and stir in the cooled apples and raisins to ③.
- ⑤ Bake in an oven at 175 degrees for 17 - 20 minutes. Once done cooking you are finished.



Japanese Culture and Reading Corner: 桜餅

By: Mari Kimoto

みなさんは、桜餅を知っていますか？ 桜餅は、桜に ちなんだ 和菓子で 桜の葉で、餅で 包んでいます。スーパーや 和菓子屋さんで 買うことができます。3月の ひな祭りの時にも、食べられます。



桜餅には、関東と関西で 2種類あります。関東地方の 桜餅は、長命寺餅と呼ばれています。長命寺は、小麦粉などの生地を焼いた皮で餅を巻いてクレープのようになっています。関西地方の 桜餅 Kansai は、道明寺餅と呼ばれています。道明寺は、もち米を蒸して乾燥させて粗挽きにしたものです。見た目は、まんじゅうのようで、つぶつぶとした食感です。桜餅の葉は、塩漬けにしているため、甘みを引き立てます。餅の乾燥を防ぐ役割もします。私は長命寺餅を食べたことがないので、食べてみたいです。みなさんも桜の季節にぜひ桜餅を食べて日本の春の味覚を楽しんでください。

Vocabulary List

桜餅	Rice Cake Wrapped in a Cherry Leaf	蒸す	Steam	食感	Texture
ちなんだ	Connected To	甘み	Sweetness	塩漬け	Pickling in Salt
和菓子屋	Japanese Sweets Shop	引き立てる	Bring Out	防ぐ	Prevent
小麦粉	Wheat Flour	乾燥	Dry	役割	Role
生地	Material/Dough	粗挽き	Coarsely Ground		
もち米	Glutinous Rice	つぶつぶ	Grainy		



リハビリ (Rehabilitation)

Gairaigo Galore

By: Sydney Bartig

Last month I introduced the word ギプス, or cast in English. This month I'd like to continue the trend and introduce another medical (bone-breaking) related word! If you've read the title, then you'll see that this month's word is リハビリ. The direct translation of this word is "rehabilitation". Both in English and in Japanese it has many meanings. However, when I started using the word "rehabilitation" in English to explain my situation (I have to go to rehabilitation for my arm after finally getting my cast off), I felt a bit strange using the word.

No one corrected me, but I finally realized that "physical therapy" was closer to the word I wanted to use in English. While I know rehabilitation (or "rehab" as it is often called in English), my first thought was alcohol or drug-related rehabilitation. Even when searching online, it seems that the type of "rehabilitation" is often explained further in English (ie: wildlife rehabilitation, vocational rehabilitation, etc.).

*As an American I naturally can't speak for every English speaking country and nuances may vary depending on the country.

When I asked my Japanese friend what her first thought was when hearing the word リハビリ, she looked online and said that there are many types (like in English), but the first thing that came to her mind was physical therapy type rehabilitation (for broken bones, joints, etc.). Although the same word, it's always important to keep nuance and how people actually use the language in mind!



Introduction to The Club for Thinking about Multicultural Coexistence "Tomoni" in Tsurugi Town

By: Mayumi Nishioka, "Tomoni" Representative

About "Tomoni"

Do you know about "Tsurugi Town"? It is a town that is surrounded by and rich in nature, with western Japan's second highest mountain, Mt. Tsurugi, situated in the south, and the Shikoku Saburo Yoshino River flowing in the north. There are currently about 30 foreign residents living in our town, with the majority of them having come from the Philippines or China. In the fiscal year of 2017, the Tsurugi Town Board of Education applied for and was accepted for the "Promotion of Erasing Areas Without Japanese Classes for Areas with Foreign Residents/Local Japanese Education Startup Project" by the Agency for Cultural Affairs. "Tomoni" (Lit: Together), is a group of volunteers that support the goal of this project. We have established Japanese classes and are currently operating classes under the commission of the prefectural government. Our 6 members are those with teaching experience, civil servants, etc., but everyone is friends who are always laughing together. I'd like to introduce the activities of our "Tomoni" Japanese classes, which have now crossed their 7th year.

About the Japanese Classes

(Classes may be online via Zoom depending on the weather, COVID-19 situation, etc.)

Class Type	Date & Time	Location
In-person	Every Sunday 10 AM - 11:30 AM	Ono Community Center (Handa, Tsurugi Town)
Online	Every Sunday 10 AM - 11:30 AM	Online

* Events, etc. may be held at different times/locations.



Studying at the Ono Community Center

Student Information (12 Students)

We currently have 12 students who come

from Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, and the Philippines. They work a variety of jobs, such as managers of companies that dismantle and purchase and then sell automobiles, technical interns, and nursing home workers. Our classes include daily conversation practice, practice of hiragana/katakana, studies for the JLPT N3 and 4, etc. We value what our students want to learn and decide from there.

Cultural Experiences

(Examples from the fiscal year 2022. Other activities are planned to be held in the fiscal year 2023.)

June: Tanabata Matsuri (Ono Community Center)

Wishes were written on tanzaku strips of paper and hung on bamboo branches.

October: Park Golf - Students were taught by local masters about park golf at locations in Tsurugi Town.



Park Golf Experience

Final Words

At the Tanabata Matsuri in June, students used their 4 skills (reading, listening, speaking, and writing) to write their own wishes and create decorations. In October, through the park golf experience, while learning golf for the first time, they were able to have fun interactions with the local people. Moving forward, under the concept of "learning together, understanding each other, and enriching each other's lives", we hope to continue to aid the local foreign residents through Japanese language support.



Tanabata Matsuri

Contact Information:

TEL: 090-7782-9694 (Ms. Nishioka)

こんげつ かんたん じ こしょうかい にほんご べんきょう
 今月は 簡単な自己紹介の日本語を 勉強しましょう。

This month, let's learn how to give a simple self introduction in Japanese.

じ こしょうかい
 自己紹介 Self Introductions

1) はじめまして。 わたしは* (じぶん なまえ) じぶん なまえ
(自分の名前) です。
 (Nice to meet you. My name is (your name).)

* When introducing yourself, 「わたしは」 is often omitted. You don't use 「さん」 when talking about yourself or family members.

2) (しゅうしんち) しゅうしんち から きました。
(出身地)
 (I'm from (birth place).)

3) ことし* がつ* に きました。
(I arrived this year in (month).)

● きょねん* Last Year / 20xx ねん* (in the year 20xx) (Example: 2022 ねん / 2023 ねん)

● ~がつ* は さいご ひょう 最後の表 を見てください。 Please refer to the bottom chart for month information.

4) どうぞ よろしく おねがいします。
(I'll be in your care.)

はじめまして!

どうぞ
 よろしくおねがいします



◎ Let's practice self introductions.

< Example >

1) はじめまして。 ほん ほん です。
(日本)

2) ベトナム べとなむ から きました。
(ベトナム)

3) 今年 2月 / 去年 10月 / 2021年 8月 ことし にかつ きょねん じゅうがつ にせんにじゅういちねん はちがつ に きました。
(This year February / Last year October / 2021 August)

4) どうぞ よろしく おねがいします。

~がつ

いちがつ	にかつ	さんがつ	しがつ	ごがつ	ろくがつ	しちがつ	はちがつ	くがつ	じゅうがつ	じゅういちがつ	じゅうにかつ
1月	2月	3月	4月	5月	6月	7月	8月	9月	10月	11月	12月

◎ すこしずつ ~がつ を おぼえましょう。

◎ Little by little, try to remember the readings for all of the months.

~ねん 20xx (=2000 + xx) ⇒ 「にせん + xx」 ねん

< Example > 2023 (にせん にじゅうさん) ねん

Events & Memoranda

TOKUSHIMA PREFECTURE 2023 JAPANESE SPEECH CONTEST



1. **PURPOSE** True internationalization cannot be achieved without first coming in touch with other cultures and ways of life, fostering a sense of international awareness and gaining mutual understanding with people of the world to create a society in which we can all work and live together in harmony. This speech contest seeks to give a voice to the international residents of Tokushima Prefecture and engage them in a dialogue to further discourse on cross-cultural understanding and fostering multiculturalism.
2. **DATE & PLACE** July 23rd, 2023 (Sunday), 13:00 - 16:30
Awagin Hall (Tokushima Arts Foundation for Culture) Small Hall (5F)
3. **ELIGIBILITY** Only foreign residents whose native language is not Japanese are eligible to apply. (Additionally, foreign residents who have had over three years of compulsory education in Japan, or those who have previously won the Grand Prize or the Tokushima Prefectural Assembly's Chairman of the Federation of International Exchange Assembly Members Award, are not eligible to apply.)
4. **SELECTION** We are recruiting a wide-array of foreign residents. We will have all applicants submit a draft of their speech. After a screening of the speech drafts, we will select 10 applicants to participate in the actual contest.
5. **THEME** The topic is left to your discretion, but it should relate to the event's purpose of fostering cross-cultural understanding and multiculturalism. (Speeches must not include political or religious content, and must not criticize a particular person or group.)
6. **LENGTH** Speeches should be no more than 6 minutes in length.
7. **AWARDS**
 - Grand Prize, one person (Prize: 50,000 yen gift certificate)
 - The Tokushima Prefectural Assembly's Federation of International Exchange Assembly Members Chairman's Award, one person (Prize: 30,000 yen gift certificate)
 - Awa Bank Award, one person (Prize: 30,000 yen gift certificate)
 - Tokushima Taisho Bank Award, one person (Prize: 30,000 yen gift certificate)
 - Tokushima Chamber of Commerce and Industry Award, one person (Prize: 30,000 yen gift certificate)
 - Tokushima City International Association Special Recognition Award, three people (Prize: 10,000 yen gift certificate)
 - Special Effort Award, to be decided (Prize: 5,000 yen gift certificate)

*All participants will receive a participation award.
8. **HOW TO APPLY** Submit your application form and speech draft by email, FAX, or in-person (information written below). Your speech draft may be either handwritten or typed on a computer. You can download the application form from TOPIA's website.
9. **DEADLINE** May 25th, 2023 (Thursday) Applications must be turned in by 5:00 PM.
10. **ORGANIZED BY** Tokushima Prefecture &
Tokushima Prefectural International Exchange Association (TOPIA)
11. **CO-ORGANIZER (Planned)** Tokushima Regional Conference for Promotion of Student Exchange
12. **SPONSORS (Planned)** The Tokushima Prefectural Assembly's Federation of International Exchange Assembly Members, Awa Bank, Tokushima Taisho Bank, Tokushima Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Tokushima International Association (TIA), Otsuka Pharmaceuticals, Nichia Corporation
13. **WITH THE SUPPORT OF (Planned)** NHK Tokushima, Shikoku Broadcasting, Tokushima Shimbun, Cable TV Tokushima, FM Tokushima, FM Bizan
14. **WHERE TO APPLY** Tokushima Prefectural International Exchange Association (TOPIA)
Address : 〒770-0831
Tokushima City, Terashima Honcho Nishi, 1-61, Clement Plaza 6F
Website: <https://www.topia.ne.jp/>
Tel: 088-656-3303
Fax: 088-652-0616
Email: coordinator1@topia.ne.jp
Person in Charge: Kimura



Events & Memoranda



2023 TOPIA

Study Japanese **Online!**



Dates : May 2023 - February 15th, 2024

Time : Once per week for 1 hour

Number of Classes : 20 - 30

Teachers : Volunteer Teachers (Not specialist teachers)

Eligibility : Those living in Tokushima

Those not already studying Japanese at school, their company, a Japanese class, etc.

Necessary Items : Please download ZOOM on your computer, tablet, or phone.

It may be necessary to purchase a textbook. (Please consult with your teacher.)

Number of Spots : About 20 People

Cost : Completely Free

Application : Please see TOPIA's website: <https://www.topia.ne.jp/english/>



Enjoy talking with
volunteer teachers and
studying Japanese!



• **Inquiries** : Tokushima Prefectural International Exchange Association (TOPIA)

Contact : **Nomizu** - coordinator2@topia.ne.jp **Kobayashi** - tagengo1@topa.ne.jp

TEL : 088-656-3303



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)