

# aWa life

**2023 Tokushima Prefecture  
Japanese Speech Contest**

September 2023

# 394

**Japanese Culture and  
Reading Corner: 靈山寺**



**Finishing My Short-Term  
Cambodia Japanese Partners  
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**Gairaigo Galore:  
クレーム**



**TOPIA**

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

Did everyone enjoy the Awa Odori last month? Unfortunately, the Tokushima City Awa Odori had a lot of rain on the third day and was cancelled on the fourth, but everyone still danced and had a lot of fun! Hopefully you had a good time too.

Starting from August we have a new editor for Awa Life, Rasmus! He'll be taking over for Nico as the German CIR at TOPIA and the Tokushima Prefectural Office. Look forward to reading his introduction message in the upcoming Awa Life issue!

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 Rasmus

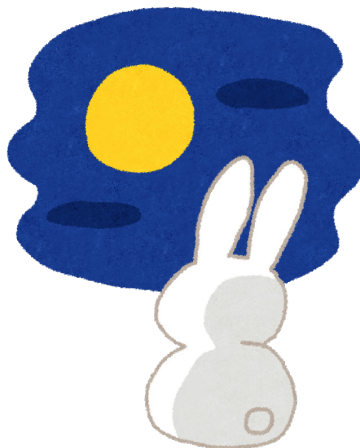
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*Download a PDF file of awa life or view the online version by going to TOPIA's website!*



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## 2023 Tokushima Prefecture Japanese Speech Contest

On July 23rd (Sun.), Tokushima Prefecture and the Tokushima Prefectural International Exchange Association held the 2023 Japanese Speech Contest for Foreign Residents for the 34th time at the Awa Gin Hall (Tokushima Arts Foundation for Culture).



After a preliminary judging, 14 participants from 7 different countries were chosen from among 20 applicants. They passionately presented on their ideas and opinions regarding cross-cultural understanding, differences between their country and Japan, things they have felt from their daily life in Japan, etc.

With the easing of the COVID-19 pandemic, we were able to hold the contest without restrictions on guests, and including presenters, judges, guests, etc. approximately 140 people participated. We were also able to hold our Exchange Party after the contest for the first time in 4 years, where presenters and guests were

able to enjoy themselves.



The Grand Prize winner was Jennifer Shiue, an assistant language teacher from the USA with roots in Taiwan. The winner of the Tokushima Prefectural Assembly's Federation of International Exchange Assembly Members Chairman's Award was ARIS SEPTIAWAN, a technical intern trainee from Indonesia.

We've already posted about the contest on TOPIA's website, and we will upload a video sometime soon, so definitely take a look. (Once the video streaming date has been decided, we will post it on TOPIA's website.)

Check out the next page for a translation of the Grand Prize winner's speech!



## You Can Define Your Own Culture

By: Jennifer Shiue (Grand Prize Winner)

Let me start by briefly introducing myself. My name is Jennifer, and I'm a Taiwanese American who is currently working as an English teacher at Tokushima Municipal High School. It's my second year living in Japan.

When you hear the word "culture", what comes to mind? The first thing that pops into your mind is probably differences in ways of thinking and customs depending on the country or area. However, what I'd like to talk about today is our "personal attitudes and views" towards culture.

Please allow me to talk about my grandfather's story as an example.

My grandfather was born in Taiwan in 1928. At that time, Taiwan was a colony of Japan, so he received Japanese education. When my grandfather was just about to enter high school, he was unable to continue his education because World War II broke out and he was drafted into the navy. He was then sent from Taiwan to the Koza District of Kanagawa, Japan, where he worked in an aircraft factory making fighter planes for aircraft carriers.

Following the war, my grandfather returned to Taiwan and finished his high school and college education. He then made use of his essentially native-level Japanese language skills that he had gained from his Japanese education during the colonial period, as well as his experiences interacting with Japanese people during his time working at the aircraft factory. He started a trading business with Japan, becoming quite an accomplished businessman.

During the war and colonial period, countless people's lives and livelihoods have been changed. Not all of them were able to transform those life encounters into personal treasures. When my grandfather was young, he was unable to attend school or be with his family like a normal high school student, but he accepted the situation around him and, while still keeping his own language and culture, he learned Japanese and the Japanese way of thinking. My grandfather turned his circumstances into his own treasure and created his own identity.

The key factor that ultimately decides if you are

able to accept other cultures, is "your attitude". No matter what happens or whom you meet, if you try to observe, think about, and understand with an open mind, your own world will expand

and your way of thinking may even change. With the rapid progression of globalization, even if we don't physically go abroad, our lives will always be affected by internationalization. What changes are taking place in your life? How are you dealing with those changes?

How you feel about or face the things happening around you depends on your values and way of thinking. That way of thinking is then tied to your actions. At first glance, everyone's individual behavior may seem like a personal thing, but when you look at the group as a whole, people's behavior is culture itself. In other words, culture is something that each one of us can decide for ourselves.

My grandfather passed away eight years ago, but the influence he left on me will never disappear. For example, when I first came to Japan last year and had to deal with things like phone and banking procedures that were totally different from my country, I acted under the saying of "when in Rome, do as the Romans do". Now that I'm in Japan, I respect the Japanese way of doing things, and try to objectively understand the merits of the way things are done, which has changed my way of thinking a bit. Thanks to the fact that my ancestors created their own culture with a good attitude and open mind, I, who watched them do so, have inherited that attitude and am able to create my own unique culture here in Japan. Don't you think this is a positive cycle of culture?

Ultimately, it is you who decides what culture you want to adopt, whether that be your local culture or one from abroad. Everyone is able to understand and respect each other; isn't that what a true multicultural society is? This way, I believe we can pass on the positive cycle of culture to the next generation.



# Finishing My Short-Term Cambodia Japanese Partners Dispatch

By: Mako Kobayashi

From June 13th – 22nd, a total of five people, including three from TOPIA, were dispatched to Cambodia by the Japanese Partners Project of the Japan Foundation (JF).

since conducted cultural exchange projects with Cambodia, having served as the host town for Cambodian athletes for the Tokyo Olympics.



*Short-term Dispatch Team Members  
(Japan Foundation Phnom Penh Office)*

Each year, this dispatch program sends Japanese nationals to work as local Japanese teachers, or as partners, for Japanese learners. The volunteers work to support local Japanese learners by using Japanese to teach them about Japanese culture and the language. The goal of the project is to increase the number of Japan/Japanese fans through actual exchange projects, as well as to share the experiences gained back in Japan.



*Making Uchiwa Fans Used for the Awa Odori  
(Prey Veng Friendship School – Middle & High School)*

During our time in Cambodia, we visited a variety of schools, including Phnom Penh University and the Royal University of Economics, which both have Japanese departments and courses; the Prey Veng Friendship School, which was established thanks to the support of many Japanese citizens and companies who believed in the necessity of education following the 1970's civil war that ravaged Cambodia; and the Atsu Elementary School in Atsu Village that was established by the parents of Atsuhito Nakata who was killed in 1993 while working as a volunteer from the UN during the Cambodian general elections. The activities we held at these schools were discussed, planned, and prepared by the members of our group at our pre-training that was held in May.



*Chatting Stands Showing what Makes Tokushima Special  
(Royal University of Phnom Penh – Japanese Department )*

Additionally, this project has both short-term and long-term programs, and we were dispatched as the fourth short-term team to Cambodia. This is due to the fact that Tokushima has long

During our discussions, we decided that, as a group from Tokushima, we would include not only Japanese culture in our activities, but also Tokushima culture. Our main activities included 'chatting stands' that showcased the unique parts of Tokushima, Tokushima's Awa Odori, making uchiwa fans that are used during the Awa Odori, nagashi somen (noodles that flow down a bamboo chute) that used Tokushima's famous Handa somen, etc. Additionally, we interacted with

the local children in a variety of ways, including singing Japanese songs and playing Cambodian hand games together.



*Nagashi Somen Using Handa Somen  
(Royal University of Law and Economics –  
Japanese Course)*

Our other activities included round-table discussions with specified skill workers who had worked in Japan, visiting the homes of locals, exploring the archaeological site of the World Heritage Site Sambor Prei Kuk, visits to organizations that send out specified skill workers, and a courtesy call to the Japanese Embassy in the capital of Phnom Penh.



*Awa Odori Lecture  
(Atsu Elementary School)*

Through this project, we were able to observe classes at educational institutions and hear from locals involved in Japanese education about the current state of Japanese education in Cambodia and the trends of Japanese learners. Personally, the honest and innocent faces of the students left

a huge impression on me. When I watched the students making the uchiwa fans and writing and decorating them with Japanese words that they had learned, it made me feel that I wanted them to develop an interest in Japan, and to definitely come here to study one day in the future.

Foreigners from a variety of countries, including Cambodia, come to Japan for a myriad of reasons. Now that the COVID-19 pandemic has calmed down, the number of foreigners visiting Japan for sightseeing purposes has been increasing rapidly, as was the case pre-pandemic, and mid and long-term residents, including permanent residents, who are here to study or work have increased to a record high of three million. With the realization of a multicultural society where foreigners and Japanese citizens understand one another being an urgent task, this participation in the Japanese Partners project made me once again realize how, through TOPIA, I want to help create a place that is comfortable to live for everyone, and to continue to create opportunities for everyone to come together.

[Irodori]



The Japan foundation publishes “Irodori”, Japanese teaching materials for those living in Japan. It’s great for both Japanese learners and those who support them, so please make use them.

Tokushima Culture & Reading Corner: 靈山寺

By: Mako Kobayashi

徳島県や香川県などがある四国には 有名なお寺が 88カ所あります。その88カ所の お寺を お参りする旅を「四国遍路」とよびます。そして、遍路を行う人を「お遍路さん」とよびます。四国遍路の 一番初めのお寺が 徳島県鳴門市にある 靈山寺です。このお寺から 88カ所の お参りの旅を 始める人が 多いです。

靈山寺の 見所は 2つあります。1つめは、お遍路さんを迎える 大きな仁王門です。この仁王門には、大きくて、たくましい金剛力士像が 左右に設置されています。2つめは、本堂にある灯籠です。灯籠は 天井から 吊り下げられており、ぼんやりと光る灯籠は とても幻想的な光景で とても美しいです。遍路に 挑戦してみたい人は、まず靈山寺に行って、お寺の美しさや周りの自然を感じてみて下さい。



Vocabulary List

有名	Famous	本堂	Main Temple Building	光景	Sight/Scene
お寺	Temple	灯籠	Hanging Lantern	挑戦する	To Challenge
遍路	Pilgrimage	天井	Ceiling	自然	Nature
お参り	Temple/Shrine Visit	幻想的	Wondrous		

クレーム (Complaint)

Gairaigo Galore



By: Sydney Bartig

For this month's gairaigo we have yet another case of wasei-eigo! For those of you who have been reading the gairaigo column each month, I'm sure you're sick of all these difficult to remember wasei-eigo words! Unfortunately, all you can do when studying Japanese is remember the meaning of these words so you don't actually use them wrong by using them in the context of the English meaning.



This month's word is “クレーム”, and the meaning is completely different than the original English word “claim”. While in English you can use this word to assert something or to state that someone owns/has the rights to something such in the way of, “claim to know something”, “claim to the throne”, etc., but if you try using this directly in Japanese, you'll probably get some funny looks.

In Japanese, クレーム is used when someone is making a complaint about something, also used for complaints where they are seeking some form of compensation. It can be used in ways such as “クレームの電話”, which would translate to something like “complaint calls”. Hopefully you won't need to use this word much in your daily life, but if you ever happen to need it, make sure to remember the word クレーム!

あ  
会えてうれしい

【Conversation (At the Tokushima Airport)】



- A : 乾杯！ようこそ、徳島へ。
- B : 乾杯！急に連絡して、すみません。忙しかったです。
- A : ぜんぜん。また会えて、うれしいです。飛行機はどうでしたか。
- B : 途中で揺れて、心配しましたが、無事に着いて、ほっとしました。
- A : 飛行機から海は見えましたか
- B : 窓側の席じゃなかったんです。景色が見られなくて、残念でした。

※Notes 乾杯=(Cheers!) Said while holding a drink 揺れる=Shaking, Unstable 無事に=Safely, Without Incident 窓側=Window Side (Seat)

The underlined words are “words expressing feelings”. The verbs (indicated with dotted lines) that are used to express the cause/reason of these feelings often take the 「<て形> (te form) ～て/ <ない形> (nai form) ～なくて」.

Example: 会えて (Cause/Reason) , うれしい (Feeling)

## 【Practice Questions】

Choose the appropriate phrase from the box, change it to the correct form, and write it in the parenthesis.

家の鍵をなくしました・家族に会えません・息子からメールが来ました  
事故のニュースを聞きました・旅行に行けません

- 例：( 事故のニュースを聞いて )、びっくりしました。
- ① ( )、安心しました。
- ② ( )、さびしいです。
- ③ ( )、残念です。
- ④ ( )、困りました。

Answers: ①息子からメールが来て ②家族に会えなくて ③旅行に行けなくて ④家の鍵をなくして



# Events & Memoranda

## 2023 Term 2 TOPIA Japanese Classes Schedule

Time: 10:30-12:00 Location: Meeting rooms at TOPIA (or online via Zoom) Fee: Free

Textbook: We will be using the "Minna no Nihongo I" or the "Minna no Nihongo II" (2<sup>nd</sup> edition) textbooks (2,750 yen for the book and audio CD). Please prepare the textbooks on your own. Additionally, there will be themed lessons on various topics such as seasons and life in Tokushima.

DAY	TEACHER	LEVEL	CLASS DESCRIPTION	START DATE
TUE	Ms.Tamaki	Elementary 2・3	We will study various forms and expressions such as potential, volitional, imperative, prohibitive, conditional, reasoning, passive, causative, and honorific expressions. Text: Minna no Nihongo II from Chapter 26~50	September 19 (25 times)
WED	Volunteers	Group Lesson	This is a flexible group study class split up into 3 different groups. *For parents of young children, a childcare worker will be on hand to look after your child during the lesson. <i>(Please make a reservation in advance.)</i>	October 4 (20 times)
THU	Ms. Yamada	Beginners	We will take the first step towards learning basic expressions. Text: Minna no Nihongo I from Chapter 1~13	October 5 (20 times)
FRI	Ms. Aoki	Elementary 1	We will study a variety of verb conjugations such as te form, nai form, and dictionary form. Text: Minna no Nihongo I from Chapter 14~25	October 6 (20 times)
SUN	JTM	Elementary 3	We will study various forms and expressions such as reasoning, passive, causative, and honorific expressions. Text: Minna no Nihongo II from Chapter 39~50	October 1 (20 times)
	Volunteers	Group Lesson	This is a flexible group study class split up into 3 different groups.	

\* Please register for Group Lessons at least a day before the class. (If you do not sign up in advance and show up on the day of the class, we may not be able to find a group for you to study with.) Additionally, as the number of groups are limited, we may not be able to find a group that suits your level.

\* If you are unable to attend class, please call and let us know.

\* The Volunteer Classes on Wednesday and Sunday will be cancelled if no students show up within the first 30 minutes.

TUE	Ms. Kimura Others	Special Beginners Class	A class for those who cannot read or write hiragana or katakana. We will study the basics, such as the Japanese alphabet, greetings, numbers, and items. We will also be learning about Tokushima.	You may join at any time.
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\*Classes may be cancelled if there is a typhoon, heavy rain, heavy snow, etc.

TOPIA will also post on their Facebook page by 8:30 AM if classes are cancelled, so please take a look.



TOPIA TEL: 088-656-3303 Email: [topia@topia.ne.jp](mailto:topia@topia.ne.jp)

Japanese classes are also available at the Anan International Association, Aizumi Town International Exchange Association, Yoshinogawa International Exchange Association, Mima no Sato, Minami Multicultural Coexistence Network "Harmony", the Club for Thinking about Multicultural Coexistence "Tomoni" in Tsurugi Town, Awa International Exchange Association, and the NPO "Attakaiyou" in Kaiyo Town. Website: <https://www.topia.ne.jp/english/>



# Events & Memoranda

## Sue Don's Station Stops Vol.2 -Station Buildings & Gourmet Locations Near Stations- [Naruto German House] すえドンの各駅停車 Vol.2 - 駅舎と駅近グルメ - 【鳴門市ドイツ館】

A pencil art exhibition will be held of Yasumasa Sue's (AKA: 'Sue Don) works. Yasumasa is a pencil artist who is active in Tokushima Prefecture.

Following in the footsteps of last year's popular exhibition, railway fan Sue Don's pieces will also feature illustrations of station buildings and gourmet cuisines that can be found near the stations.

We hope you enjoy the beautiful world of these pencil drawings, made possible through precise and delicate techniques.

When: September 1st (Fri.) – October 1st (Sun.)  
9:30 – 17:00 (Last admission is at 16:30)

\*The German House is closed on  
September 25th (Mon.)

Where: Naruto German House, 2nd Floor  
Exhibition Room

Fee: Adults: 400 Yen,  
Children (Elementary/Junior High Schoolers):  
100 Yen

Inquiries: Naruto German House  
TEL: 088-689-0099  
URL: <https://doitsukan.com/>

県内で活躍中の鉛筆画家 “すえドン” こと、須恵泰正さんによる鉛筆画展です。

好評を博した昨年の展示に続き、鉄道ファンのすえドンが描く駅舎と駅の近くで食べたグルメイラストの作品も展示します。

繊細かつ精密なタッチで描かれた、美しい鉛筆画の世界をぜひご堪能ください。

日時：9月1日（金）～ 10月1日（日）  
9：30～17：00（入館は16：30まで）  
※9/25（月）は休館日

場所：鳴門市ドイツ館 2階企画展示室

料金：大人 400円 小人（小中学生）100円

お問い合わせ：鳴門市ドイツ館

TEL：088-689-0099

URL：<https://doitsukan.com/>

## 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)