

# awa life

December 2017

# 328



**Making Iya Soba**  
in Iya Valley

**From Urban to Rural:** The  
Becoming of a  
Mikan Farmer

**Awa Shoku: "Tea"**  
is for Tokushima



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

Christmas is a magical holiday season that brings with it joy, love, and heartwarming thoughts. Winter is the time of the year to enjoy building snowman or simply shooting snowballs at everyone. Maybe there will be snow in Tokushima too this year? Even without snow you can enjoy the frosty time by eating a hotpot with your friends. We at Awa Life and TOPIA wish you and your family a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. May this joyful season greet you with health and happiness.

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,  
Daralyn, Franzi, and Tom

### **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/>

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*Editors:*

Daralyn Yee, Franziska Neugebauer and Tom Wehrmann

*Contributors This Month:*

Kazue Inoue, Lance Kita, Karen Lee, Sho Ishikawa, Toshiko Yamamizo, Junko Kimura

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## *Journey to the West: Making Iya Soba in Iya Valley*

By Karen Lee

As a resident of Miyoshi (dubbed the Wild West of Tokushima by yours truly), I often drive past restaurants advertising *teuchi soba* (手打ちそば), or handmade *soba*, on my way to work. For newcomers to the Japanese food scene, *soba* are noodles made from buckwheat, which gives them a characteristic grayish-brown color when cooked (interestingly enough, *yaki soba*, a popular street food and perhaps the most well-known 'soba' dish, is actually not made from buckwheat but from wheat flour). *Soba* can be served multiple ways, including in broth (*kitsune soba*, *tsukimi soba*), or with shredded *nori* seaweed and a salty dipping sauce (*zaru soba*). Out west, the local specialty is *Iya soba*, whose noodles are thicker and shorter than regular *soba*, and some places even hold workshops teaching participants how to make *soba* from scratch. After some googling



*The workshop space.*

and a phone call, I found myself driving through the mountains of western Tokushima on a Sunday morning to go make *soba*. During college, many of my housemates in the co-op I lived in liked making pasta from scratch, but I had never tried making Asian noodles before.

The workshop I went to was located deep in the mountains on a narrow, winding road, as many of the roads are out west (drive carefully!). A few times when I met a car coming from the opposite direction one of us was forced to back up until we found a space in the road wide enough for us to pass each other. There were

also multiple times when I had to pull over to an almost nonexistent shoulder to let cars pass me; I had thought I was going at a reasonable speed, but I had apparently been driving too slowly by local standards. The workshop space itself was

## Journey to the West: Making Iya Soba in Iya Valley

brightly lit and spacious, with two long metal tables, a sink and stove area, and a corner piled with lacquer bowls and *zaru* (draining baskets for *soba* made of bamboo or plastic). I was the only participant in the workshop, and after putting on an apron and a bandanna, I was instructed by an *obaa-chan* to start grinding the dark triangular buckwheat kernels into flour using a stone mill.



*Stone mill with buckwheat kernels.*

We then sifted the flour into a paper funnel and mixed the dark flour with regular flour and water to make a dough. After kneading the dough, we flattened it out by shaping it around a long rolling pin to ensure that it was uniformly thin. The last step was to fold and cut the dough into strips of noodles.



*Cutting the dough into noodles.*

What had been only a handful of kernels at the beginning yielded more than 5 servings of

noodles, and the whole process took less than an hour.

The workshop turned out not only to be a *soba*-making workshop, but also a restaurant. After boiling my *soba* in hot water for 30 seconds, I joined a tour group from Kagawa for lunch, where the *soba* was served with fresh fruit, *tempura*, and what I later realized was deer jerky.



*Lunch with fresh soba!*

The owner of the shop is 70 years old and has been teaching customers how to make *soba* for 15 years. While we ate, she told us about her experiences growing up in Iya Valley and how she wants to maintain the *soba*-making tradition by teaching it to others. After my stomach was full, I decided to drive an hour further into the valley to visit the *Oku iya niju kazurabashi* (奥祖谷二重かずら橋 double vine bridges), which I highly recommend seeing over (or in addition to) the *Iya-no-kazurabashi*. The area is less touristy and more peaceful, and there's also a *yaen* (野猿), an old cable car that hanging over a small river that you can manually operate by pulling on the cables.

If you're looking to explore some of Tokushima's natural beauty, come out west on a day trip, or stay for the weekend! We have beautiful mountains (to look at or climb), relaxing *onsens*, and hidden spots where you can just sit and marvel at your surroundings.

## From Urban to Rural: The Becoming of a Mikan Farmer

By Sho Ishikawa

Last year, my wife and I came here to Katsuura from Tokyo to become mikan farmers. Katsuura is next to Tokushima City. It's about 30 minutes from Tokushima Station by car. Katsuura is famous for *mikan* (satsuma orange) farming. For the last year and a half, while we have tended to our *mikan* fields, we have been repairing the first floor of our house by ourselves and turning it into a guesthouse. At last, we finished it this past summer!



### - About our move -

Last year in March, we came to Katsuura and took over some *mikan* fields and a good old-fashioned Japanese house. Before moving, we hadn't known about Tokushima at all until we met with some recruiters for *mikan* farmers in Tokyo. We had never learned about farming before, but we were intuitively interested in the recruitment. When we first visited Katsuura, we soon took a liking to the house's beautiful view. Then, we discovered that there are many opportunities here that we couldn't have in Tokyo, like living in wonderful nature. Before long, we decided to move to Katsuura.

### - About my work and life in Katsuura -

My wife and I work together as *mikan* farmers.

Our work and life are sometimes hard but mostly happy because we can always see the rich nature while working. The tweeting of birds, the sounds of the flowing river, the wind from the mountains, the green of the *mikan* trees, and so on. All the nature around us is so wonderful that it makes us content. One of our hopes for our work is to run not only one business but also some side businesses, because having more businesses leads to more opportunities to meet with various kinds of people and make good memories. For example, we would like to try agritourism and processing industries for *mikan*. In our area, there are many chances to create small side businesses. This is also one of the reasons we decided to move.



### - About our guesthouse -

Our guesthouse is on a mountain surrounded by *mikan* fields. You can have traditional Japanese farming experiences here, such as *mikan* picking from the middle of November to the end of December. Picking *mikan* directly from the tree on the green mountains is a wonderful job such as you've never experienced before.

Making a bonfire and doing BBQ with a *shichirin* (a Japanese clay cooking stove) on the mountain is also nice.

Of course, there are a lot of experiences in other

seasons and other spots that you should visit around Katsuura. For example, camping by the Katsuura River in the summer and experiencing the Shikoku 88 pilgrimage by taking a short



trip from Katsuura to Jigen-ji (a temple where you can train in the cave) are very nice. We want to take guests anywhere

they want to visit.

If you want to know more about Tokushima's nature and culture, please visit Katsuura. You will find many interesting spots!



## Letter from SUKETO NAKAYOSHI

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

In recent years, the decrease of children's athletic abilities has become a serious problem. Places where children can play safely have decreased and the time children spend inside the house has increased, with the wide spread of games and smartphones as one possible reason. Recent studies came to the conclusion, that children who play outside have higher athletic abilities. You can say that it is essential for children to play a lot outside these days. Here are five benefits for children who play outside.

- ① Gives children a chance to use all five senses: This keeps the brain active.
- ② Helps children gain physical strength: Prevents them from catching a cold.
- ③ Gives them a full night of rest: Resets one's biological clock and sets a steady daily life pattern.
- ④ Strengthens social skills: Teaches children to play by the rules and how to interact with others.
- ⑤ Ability to concentrate improves: When the frontal lobe of the brain is activated, learning ability improves as concentration levels increase. Let's get our children to play outside, especially the younger ones.

\* \* \*

### Handmade Toys: Paper plane shooter



1. Tape two chopsticks, 1cm from the upper part, together with plastic tape and put a rubber band between the chopsticks.
2. Roll a thick paper around the chopsticks and create a handle. Stick two thick folded papers, cut in to 5mm x 5cm thin strips as shown in the picture, and fix them well with tape.
3. Fold the paper which is standing out of the lower part of the chopsticks to the back. When you pull the rubberband to this part, your paper plane shooter will be ready.

\* Place a paper plane on the shooter and adjust the rubberband to the lower part. If you press the thick paper up, the rubberband becomes loose and shoots the paper plane in the air. (Check online about how to build a paper plane.)

# Japanese Lesson

By Toshiko Yamamizo

いらひひょうげん べんきょう  
依頼表現の勉強  
Learning about Making Requests

When you ask a favor from a stranger or your superiors, what words do you use to ask them? In this lesson, you will learn how to make a request politely with 「～V ていただけませんか」 and 「～V (さ) せていただけませんか」 and will be able to express your requests politely in Japanese.

しゃ うけつけ  
(A社の受付で)

田中さん： すみません。N社の田中というのですが、営業部の鈴木さんにお目にかかりたいんですが…田中が来たと伝えていただけませんか。

受付係： 少々お待ちください。  
…お待たせいたしました。申し訳ございませんが、ただ今、会議中で、あと10分程で終わる予定とのことです。

田中さん： そうですか。では、ここで待たせていただけませんか。

受付係： はい、どうぞ。あちらの椅子におかけになってお待ちください。



「伝えていただけませんか」 used in the conversation originates from the sentence pattern 「V て形 (Verb-te form) + いただけませんか」. Using 「いただく」, which is the potential form of 「いたたく」, this expression is used to politely request something.

Also, 「待たせていただけませんか」 is formulated with the sentence pattern 「V (causative verb) te-form + いただけませんか」. This is an expression used when politely making a request in regards to an action you would like to do.



**Practice:**

例文： チケットの予約の仕方がわかりません。〔予約の仕方を→ 〕  
〔予約の仕方を教えていただけませんか。〕

： 熱があるので、今日は会社を休みたいです。〔今日は会社→ 〕  
〔今日は会社を休ませていただけませんか。〕

1. 阿波おどりが会館へ行きたいんですが、道がわかりません。〔道を→ 〕
2. 写真を撮ってほしいです。(わたしを撮ってほしい) 〔写真を→ 〕
3. 写真を撮りたいです。(あなたを撮りたい) 〔写真を→ 〕
4. コピー機がこわれています。 〔コピー機を→ 〕
5. 会議があるので、この部屋を使いたいです。 〔この部屋を→ 〕
6. その説明をしたいです。(わたしがしたい) 〔その説明を→ 〕



Answers: 1. 教えていただけませんか。(以下「していただけませんか」を省略) 2. 撮って 3. 撮らせて 4. 見て/なおして 5. 使わせて 6. させて

## Awa Shoku: “Tea” is for Tokushima

By Lance Kita

A bunch of sticks and leaves in a cup may not sound appetizing, but it’s what makes tea in Tokushima special. Two unique teas, two totally different approaches to making it...one starts in the heat of summer, the other in the dead of winter.

After the rainy season, the tea harvest for **Awa bancha** (阿波晩茶) begins under the summer sun in the mountainous areas of Kamikatsu Town (上勝町) and Aioi in Naka Town (那賀町相生). Unlike most Japanese tea whose young leaves are prized for *shincha* (新茶) in the spring, the mature leaves and small twigs are yanked from the bush in July. Normally, tea leaves are steamed, massaged and rolled between hands, and then dried before the green color oxidizes. *Awa bancha*’s hardy leaves are crushed gently under a corrugated rolling tool that requires the coordinated timing of two people. However, the unusual nature of *Awa bancha* shows itself before the drying step...the tea leaves are fermented in leaf-lined barrels and weighed down so no air gets trapped. After a month, the leaves are then dried in the sun for a few days.

The result is a fermented tea with some not-so-tealike properties. Not bitter? The fermentation breaks down tea catechin compounds and reduces theanine while producing lactic acid, which means a wonderfully tart flavor with no astringent aftertaste.

Also means less caffeine, so less bitterness and easier to drink at night. Along with the lactic acid, a couple of other amino acids from the process rounds out the overall flavor. These properties also make *Awa bancha* one of the most foolproof teas to brew. Just pour hot or cold water over a

handful of leaves and let it sit. Even after a night of steeping, the taste does not change or develop a tannin overtone. (Personally, I put a good pinch of leaves in my coffee mug and add hot water to it throughout the day as I drink it in my office.)

Further down south in the Shishikui region of Kaiyo Town (海陽町穴喰), the tea farmers use the bitter cold of winter to harvest a not-so-bitter tea. The harvest of **kancha** (寒茶, literally “cold weather tea”) starts after the New Year and continues until early March. Mature leaves are picked, steamed and dried. By waiting until the dead of winter, the plants have cut off water to the leaves, and the flavor compounds of the leaves are more concentrated. The tea bushes are also left to their own devices in this rugged mountain terrain, often planted along the walls of the terraced fields and relying on nothing but what nature brings them.

The *kancha* tea also has less tannin and caffeine, with a pleasant sweet flavor that is reminiscent of herbal tea. Hard to believe that something that was picked from a semi-wild plant can produce a gentle drink. It’s also a rarity, since only about twenty farmers pick *kancha*, so the annual yield is very small and localized.

*Kancha* can be found at markets and local product shops in the southern part of the prefecture.

*Awa bancha* can be purchased in Kamikatsu and Naka Towns, and is being distributed to other farmer markets and gift shops throughout the prefecture. As we head into winter, try these unique Tokushima teas and enjoy their warmth and health benefits.



*Brewing whole tea leaves isn't the only unusual feature of Awa Bancha (left) and Shishikui Kancha (right).*



*Awa bancha is one of the most foolproof teas to brew.*

# Events & Memoranda

TOPIA will be closed from December 29, 2017 (Fri) - January 3, 2018 (Wed)

## 2017 International Understanding Forum 平成29年度 国際理解支援フォーラム

日時：平成30年1月21日（日） 13時～16時30分

場所：（公財）徳島県国際交流協会 会議室（徳島駅ビル クレメントプラザ6階）

内容：第1部

青木 弓夫 氏 による講話「半世紀にわたる世界の国々との関わりの中で～人口減少社会における外国人の受け入れと異文化理解～」  
（NPO 法人和食文化とおもてなし促進機構 [ 食材や藍染めを発信 ] 理事長並びに  
ドルドイ・ジャパン [ キルギスの商業機構 ] 社長）

第2部

協会登録在住外国人講師による国際理解プレゼンテーション  
車 載貞（チャゼジョン）氏 [ 韓国 ]  
Aparna Matala （アパルナ マタレ）氏 [ インド ]

第3部

意見交換 交流会

料金：入場無料

\* ティーパーティーでご歓談のひとつときを。ふるってご参加ください。



## Family Sports Carnival 2017 ファミスポカーニバル 2017

Family Sports Carnival 2017 will be held in Tokushima where you can do sports together with your family, and try some unusual sports that you have never tried before. We hope to convey the amusement and attractiveness of sports at this event. This time you will have the chance to take a physical strength assesment, and join a curolling contest. There will also be a dodgeball tournament for elementary students with Tokushima's own Indigo Socks, and comedians from Yoshimoto.

When: December 3rd (Sun) 9:30-15:00

Where: Naruto Otsuka Sports Park

Fee: Free

Tel: 088-621-2112

徳島県では家族で一緒に体を動かし遊んだり、触れる機会の少ないスポーツなどを体験することで、スポーツの楽しさ・魅力を伝えることを目的に「ファミスポカーニバル」を開催しています。今年度は、インディゴソックスやよしもと芸人等と小学生によるドッジボール大会や体力測定会、カローリング大会も開催いたします。

日時：12月3日（日）

9:30～15:00

場所：鳴門・大塚スポーツパーク

参加料：無料

TEL：088-621-2112



## Santa Clause is coming to...Shinmachi River! 川からサンタがやってくる

Santa Clause is coming to Tokushima by boat and will distribute a total of 3000 presents to children.

When: December 23rd (Sat)–25th (Mon)

18:00-21:00

Where: Tokushima City Hyotanajima Cruise  
(Many rounds)

イベント期間中、川から船に乗ったサンタクロースが子供達に約3000袋のプレゼントを持ってやってきます！

日時：12月23日（土・祝）～25日（月）

18:00～21:00

場所：徳島市ひょうたん島一周

# Events & Memoranda



## Shinmachi Countdown 新町カウントダウン

Let's celebrate the New Year's countdown again in Shinmachi! There will be many live performances, a ramen eating contest and many other events. Please join us with your family or friends.

When: December 31st (Sun)

Where: Tokushima City,  
Shinmachibashi East Park

Fee: Free

「今年もやります！新町カウントダウン2018！！」徳島で活躍しているアーティストのライブやラーメン早食い大会など、盛り上がるコンテンツが盛りだくさんです！家族やカップル、友人と一緒に2017年のカウントダウンを楽しみましょう。

日時：12月31日（日）

場所：徳島市新町橋東公園

料金：無料

\* URL: <https://www.facebook.com/CountdownInTokushima/>

## Illumination Events イルミネーションイベント

Winter time in Japan is also illumination time. Because there are so many of these events taking place in Tokushima, we made a short list of four really beautiful light-ups that you shouldn't miss in this cold season!

冬と言えばイルミネーションですね。イルミネーションに関するイベントがたくさん開催されるため、短いイベントリストを作ってみました。この4つのイベントをぜひお楽しみください！

What	Where	When	Further Information
Anan Luminous Town Project	Ushikijoushi Park, City of Lights Station, JR Anan Station	2017/12/23 (Sat) - 25 (Mon)	TEL: 0884-22-2301 <a href="http://www.anancci.or.jp/altp">www.anancci.or.jp/altp</a>
German House Naruto Illumination	German House Naruto	2017/12/1 (Fri) - 2018/1/8 (Mon)	TEL: 088-689-0099 <a href="http://www.doitsukan.com">www.doitsukan.com</a>
Ishii Winter Illumination	OK Ishii Park	2017/12/11 (Mon) - 2018/1/3 (Wed)	TEL: 088-674-1292 <a href="http://www.tsci.or.jp/ishii">www.tsci.or.jp/ishii</a>
Takagai Ishizumi Light-Up	Yoshinogawa City Misato	2017/12/16 (Sat) and 17 (Sun)	TEL: 0883-43-2888 <a href="http://www.tcu.or.jp/misato/hotaru">www.tcu.or.jp/misato/hotaru</a>



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

TOPIA offers a counselling and advisory service to all foreign residents to help with issues involving accidents, working conditions, housing, visas, international marriage, and more. Counselling is available in English and Japanese. Please note that although every effort will be made, we may not be able to deal with all cases.

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

Tel: 088-656-3303 or 088-656-3320 (allows three-way conversations with an interpreter)