



A monthly newsletter for the international residents of Tokushima Prefecture, produced by TOPIA, the Tokushima Prefectural International Exchange Association.

Make it rain in da club!

## ballin in the toke

Sarah Nelson

A sing-song voice rings out behind me, “Shoe chaaaaaange!” and that’s how I know Jason might head to the pitcher’s mound soon to relieve the starting pitcher.

I also know I might be going out there with him to interpret the coach’s instructions.

Sitting behind the dugout at JA Bank Tokushima Stadium as a volunteer interpreter has become a regular part of my weekend since the local baseball team, the Tokushima Indigo Socks, signed two new American players last March: Jason Norderum and Alex Cowart. Both are extremely enthusiastic about playing in a Japanese league, but neither speak the language, so the Socks asked around for bilingual volunteers to assist with communication between

The Tokushima Indigo Socks baseball team welcomes two new American players! (photos provided by Tokushima Indigo Socks)



*Alex at bat*

them and their coaches and fellow players during games. Baseball being the American Pastime, it never occurred to me to say “no”.

Volunteering gave me an opportunity to talk with Jason and Alex, and communication problems aside, they are loving every minute. “It was definitely a great decision,” said Alex, formerly in the American Association League and now an outfielder for IS. “I met and became friends with Eugene [a.k.a. Yuji Nerei, IS infielder]

and his friend Yoshi, a coach in the states. They told me about an opportunity to play in Japan, and I trusted their judgment so decided to go for it. Besides that, I was definitely excited to play in a Japanese league.”

It’s not hard to believe that foreign players would jump at the chance to play ball here, given the sport’s long history and level of fanfare that these days possibly rivals that of baseball in the United States. As anyone who has lived in this country for over a week can

# 263

June



Make it rain in da club!

# Awa Life

## editor's page

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Howdy Tokers,

I hope you are all keeping dry this rainy season, and enjoying the fireflies, the glowing *bosozoku* of the bug kingdom, that are said to be out and about lighting up the night at this time of year. But unlike biker gangs, they're much easier to catch and stick inside a jar for fun... :P

This month we have a fun interview from *moi* with a couple of very cool professional ball players new to the Toke, an account of Matt's journey to the famous shrines of Kumano, greetings from two new staff members at TOPIA, and more of our regular features that I'm sure you've come to love so well. Dig in, dear reader!

Best,  
Sarah

## awa life

is a monthly publication of the Tokushima Prefectural International Exchange Association (TOPIA).

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An electronic version of Awa Life is also available for download from the TOPIA homepage.



*Made first base--fist bump!*

tell you, baseball could easily be considered a Japanese Pastime as well, since Nippon Professional Baseball is arguably the highest quality professional circuit outside the states. They also tend to treat their players better: "American baseball doesn't have as much integrity between organizations and the players." Said Alex. "It's more cutthroat, and players get cut and traded at the drop of a hat. I got traded before my first game in the minor leagues in America, but Japan has more respect for players, they give you a contract and at least wait till the end of the season to trade and cut." Jason, formerly in the Atlantic League, now a pitcher for IS, shared the sentiment: "If they sign a guy here they hold onto him for the whole season, but in the states they go through 30 or 40 guys in one season. They'll cut you after two bad games."

While Japanese teams treat their players with respect, they also

demand the best from them. In true Japanese fashion, they've taken the sport and made it their own by aiming to master it the way Japanese school clubs master martial arts: endless practice.

"This is by far the most training I've ever done," said Jason.

"In the states practice may go for two or three hours and they generally let you do your own thing. Here, we have a full day, six hours. It's a wonder they have energy for the actual games."

When I asked about the differences between how baseball is played in Japan versus the states, Jason replied: "It's the same game, but it's not. In Japan, the fight you play with is more important than the actual play: if you came, fought, and tried, you still get respect at the end of it."

**"It's the same game, but it's not. In Japan, the fight you play with is more important than the actual play: if you came, fought, and tried, you still get respect at the end of it."**

So their future with Japanese b-ball looks rosy? It seems that way. Both players are eager to pursue the big leagues here, but would also love to stay with IS in the independent Shikoku Island League, given the opportunity. "I like Japan a lot, I plan on staying most of my career here," said Alex, and from Jason: "I'd like to continue my journey here, and I'm gonna keep playing baseball till someone takes the jersey away from me."



*Jason makes the pitch*



# on the road - kumano kodo

Matthew Lindsay

Matt goes on an adventure on the pilgrimage routes that lead to the Three Grand Shrines of Kumano

With its rich pilgrimage history and relatively unspoilt nature, the walking trails and shrines of the Kumano Kodo are a designated World Heritage Site.

Located on the Kii Peninsula in southwest *Honshu*, "the old road of Kumano" runs primarily through Wakayama Prefecture, though some of the trails extend as far as neighbouring Nara and Mie prefectures.

## In the beginning - Nachi-san

On the recommendation of a colleague I decided to tackle the Ogumotori-goe and Kogumotori-goe legs of the Nakahechi Trail. These two trails connect the Nachi Taisha Shrine with the Hongu Taisha Shrine, two of the three major shrines of Kumano, (the other being Hatayama Taisha Shrine). Just getting to the trailhead takes some time and effort, not to mention money. Traveling on public transport you'll need to take a JR express train from Wakayama to Kii-Katsuura (4940yen, 2hrs 45mins) or you'll be riding trains all day long. From Kii-Katsuura take a bus to Nachi Shrine, otherwise known as '*Nachi-san*' (600yen, 25mins).



*Off we go!*

## See out to sea - Funami Pass

Soon after passing the spectacular Nachi-no-taki waterfall, the bus reaches its terminal at the foot of Kumano Nachi Taisha Shrine and neighbouring Seiganto-ji Temple. From here begins a core component of the Kumano Kodo experience; namely steps. Once you've climbed to the shrine, make your way through to the temple and you'll find a path leading into the forest that marks the start (or end) of the Nakahechi Trail. After briefly ascending through forest the trail opens onto a highland

park area. Following the trail signs uphill through here, you'll soon enter the forest proper.

## Step by step - Dogiri Slope

Many of the landmarks along the Nakahechi Trail are the remains of teahouses that once lined the route. The first of these from Nachi Shrine is the Funami Teahouse remains at the Funami Pass. From here there is a spectacular view to be appreciated, stretching across the mountains of the Kii Peninsula all the way to the Pacific Ocean.





*The beautiful view of Hyakken-gura*

### **Nature abounds - view from Koguchi**

The Ogumotori leg of the Nakahechi Trail is clearly marked, with signposts every 500 metres indicating the way and the remaining distance to the small mountain village of Koguchi where an overnight stop is required.

The sounds of running water, the occasional frog croaking or bird singing allow one to feel immersed in untouched nature, though this reality is sometimes broken by the appearance of power poles and lines, and a road a short drop below the trail. At one point, the road becomes the trail before entering the forest once more for the final ascent to the Echizen Pass, from where there is a long steep descent on the Dogiri Slope to Koguchi. In Koguchi lodging is available at a *minshuku* guesthouse, called Momofuku ( 百福 ) or the Koguchi

Shizen-no-ie ( 小口自然の家 ), where it is also possible to camp.

### **'Unkai' sea of clouds - Hyakken-gura**

The calves will burn some more on the second leg of the trail, Kogumitori-goe. From Koguchi the trail ascends steeply at times to the panoramic vantage point of Hyakken-gura where the folds of mountains

stretch mesmerizingly as far as the eye can see. After this point the trail becomes gentler, eventually ending somewhat disappointingly by a busy road at the township of Ukegawa. From here it is another 3km by road to the Kumano Hongu Shrine. Alternatively if you'd rather soak your weary body

after the arduous 28km trek, the Kawayu Onsen is a kilometre nearer. You can actually dig your own hot spring pool by the river here, or if you're lucky, there may be one already waiting for you.

### **Riverside soak - Kawayu Onsen**

The trails of the Kumano Kodo are immaculately maintained. Along the way I encountered virtually next to no trash. Ironically the only real blight upon the landscape I came across was where some plastic encasing for saplings had been shredded to pieces, most likely by a typhoon that ravaged the area last year. With its aged Buddhist statues and moss-covered rocks interspersed with towering cedars, the old road of the Kumano Kodo has an aura of timelessness about it. You can almost imagine an ascetic sitting here in the forest meditating in yesteryear; such is the beauty and energy of these enchanting natural surrounds.

For detailed information see here: <http://www.tb-kumano.jp/en/kumano-kodo/>



*Time for a well-earned soak in the riverside hotspring*

# irene's recipe corner

Sweet desserts!

Irene Wachuga

Summer is here, accompanied by the rainy season. For those lazy afternoons, why not get busy and enjoy some treats? Good for dessert, or anytime you have a sugar craving.

Drop doughnuts are a very popular and totally easy to make snack. Most countries will have a version of this depending on egg/milk to flour ratio. In my country, it's called a "ngumu" meaning hard. In Okinawa, this must eat snack is called "sata andagi" meaning deep fried. Give it a try! It's great to take to a barbeque fest or picnic.

## Drop Doughnuts / Sata Andagi

### Ingredients

- All purpose flour 3 cups
- Sugar 1 cup
- Baking powder 2 tsp
- Salt ¼ tsp



Drop doughnuts

- Eggs 2
- Milk 1 cup
- Vanilla 1 tsp
- Cinnamon sugar [to taste]
- Oil for frying

### Cooking

1. In a deep skillet or fryer, heat oil to 180 degrees centigrade.
2. In a large bowl, sift the flour, baking powder and salt.
3. In a separate bowl, beat the eggs, add the sugar, milk and vanilla and mix in well.
4. Add the liquid ingredients

to the dry ones and combine to a smooth dough.

5. Drop by tablespoonfuls into the hot oil. Cook for about 3-5 minutes or until golden brown. Don't over crowd the pan.
6. Drain on paper towels.

**Note:** For drop doughnuts, roll in cinnamon sugar [½ cup sugar and 1 tsp cinnamon]. Usually I just add a little cinnamon to the flour before sifting.

- If you don't fancy cinnamon, just dust with powdered sugar after draining.
- You can reduce the sugar amount if it looks like too much, I usually do and substitute with a little honey.
- For lighter doughnuts, use fine flour (*hakurikikou*) or cake flour.
- For a denser version, skip the sifting as this aerates the mixture.
- Makes about 2- 3 dozen depending on size. Enjoy!



# staff aisatsu

Greetings from TOPIA's two new cohorts!

## Etsuko Nishibayashi

Nice to meet you! I am Etsuko Nishibayashi. Until this March, I had worked at a junior high school as a teacher for a long time. I am very happy to get a chance to work here at TOPIA and put myself in a place which is totally different from school. Working in TOPIA, I come in contact with many new people every day. The people are all friendly and positive. Surely I am learning a lot from them.

Our society is becoming more and more globalized. I

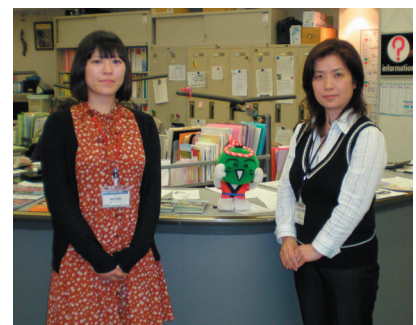
keenly realize the importance of international understanding. As a teacher I would like to promote international education and raise young people to be more global-minded. Of course I know I first have to improve myself, and you know what? I feel TOPIA is the best place to achieve my goal!

## Karin Shibata

Hello! After graduating from university I worked in the Tokushima prefectural government office for one year, then came to work here at TOPIA last April.

I don't have much confidence speaking English, but with the support of my coworkers I will try my best to be of assistance!

*Yoroshiku onegaishimasu!*

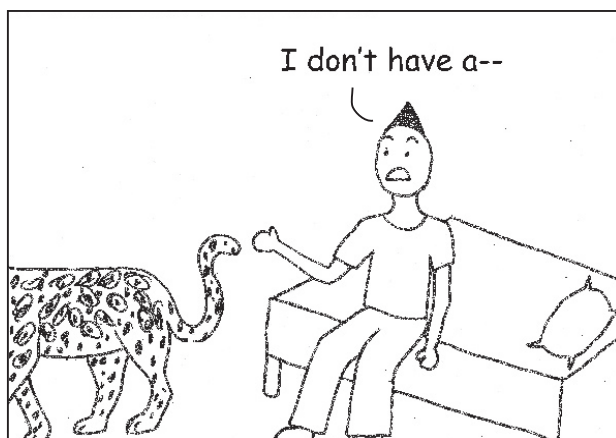
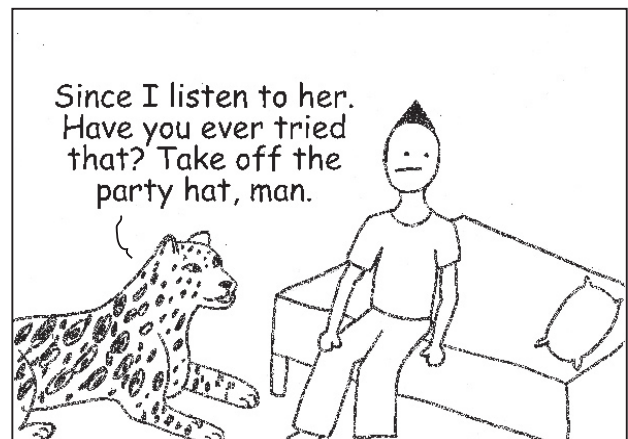
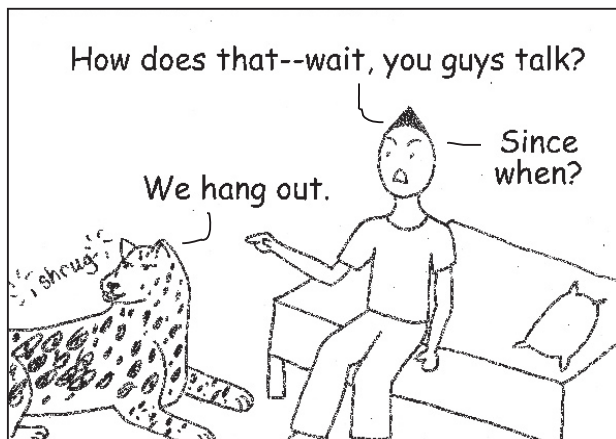
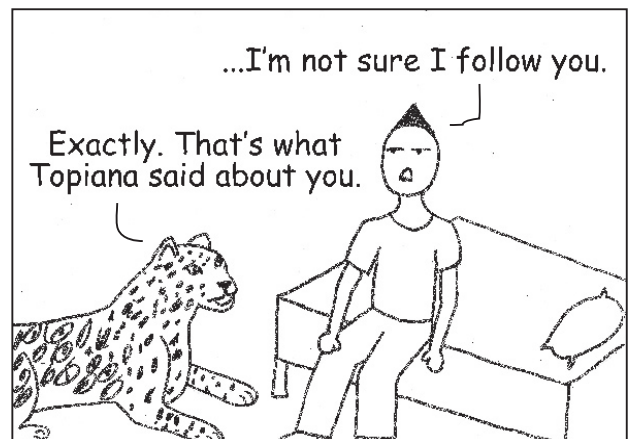
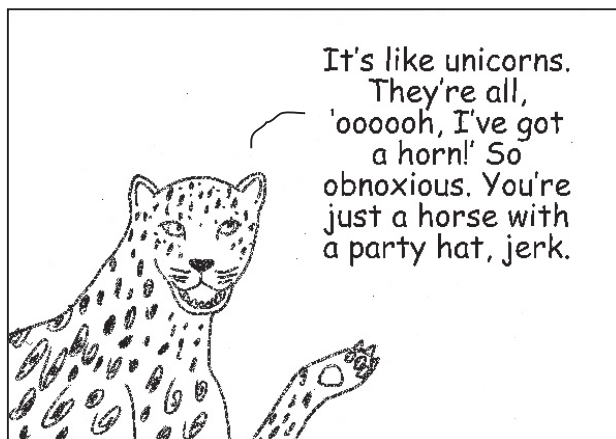
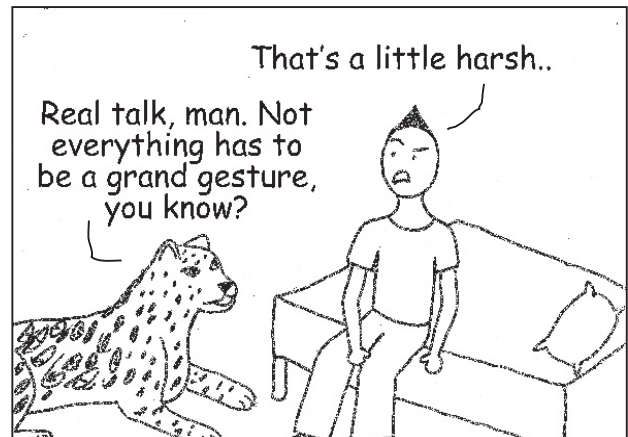
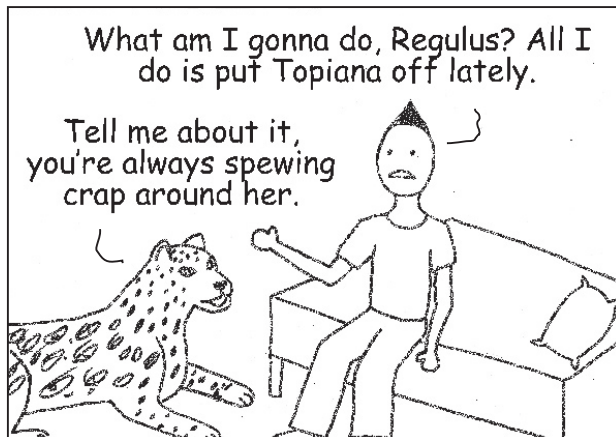


A big welcome to Nishibayashi-san, right, and Shibata-san, left!



# topizo at large

A comic by Sarah Nelson



Using “ga” as a conjunction: this month we will look at instances in which the particle *ga* is used.

(1) When what is expected from the first clause is not realized in the second.

かぜをひいたので、くすりの薬を飲んだが、あまりよくならない。

“Although I took some medicine for my cold, I’m not feeling much better.”

(2) When the first and second clauses are in contrast with each other. Here, *ga* helps to show the factual relationship between the two clauses.

ざっし雑誌はありますが、しんぶん新聞はありません。

“Although there are magazines, there aren’t any newspapers.”

(3) When the first clause acts as a light introductory remark for the second.

すみませんが、このへんにゆうびんきょく郵便局はありますか。

“Excuse me, but is there a post office nearby?”

たなか田中ですが、なかむら中村さんはいらっしゃいますか。

“My name is Tanaka, is Mr. Nakamura there?”

(4) When the facts of the first clause coexist with the facts of the second.

やまだ山田さんはちゅうごくご中国語が上手ですが、かんこくご韓国語も上手です。

“Mr. Yamada is good at Chinese, and he is good at Korean as well.”

(5) At the ends of sentences to express something contrary to fact.

むすこ息子がいしけん試験に受かるとよかったのだが。

“If only my son had passed the exam...”

(6) At the ends of sentences to make it appear as if the matter had come to a close in the first Clause. The second clause is left in a vague, unexpressed form.

きぶん気分が悪いので、そうたい早退したいんですが...

“I don’t feel well, so I would like to leave early...”

*ga* is used at the end of sentences (5) and (6) for a tone-down impression. Note that there are also a variety of other ways to use *ga* as a conjunction.

\* Reference: 『日本語ジャーナル』「 [ が ] の用法」





# letter from suketo hoikuen

Child care advice  
from our friends at  
Suketo Daycare!

Kazue Inoue

How was everyone's Golden Week last month? Did many of you go on trips with your families? June is the height of Japan's rainy season, and since there are fewer opportunities to play outside it's easy to get a little down.


For those of you with children that get antsy being cooped up inside all day, try taking them to a nearby daycare or childcare center (like Suketo Hoikuen!) or a similarly wide, public space for entertaining kiddies (for more locations, try asking at your local city office).

Also, rainy days are a great excuse to spend time together as parent and child. One fun, easy thing to do is read picture books to your children. Not only does this deepen your relationship with your child, but the drawings will spark their imagination and the narration will increase their vocabulary. This is a great activity for your child's development!

## This month's craft: Paper Plate Badminton

1. On the back of a paper plate, secure a strip of thick paper or plastic with tape to make a handle. Draw a fun picture on the other side, and you have a simple racket.
2. Take a small plastic bag and make fun drawings on it with

a magic marker. Put tissues or balled up newspaper inside, and twist tie it or knot it closed to make the badminton ball.

\*Make two paper plate rackets in step one to hit the ball back and forth with your child! 

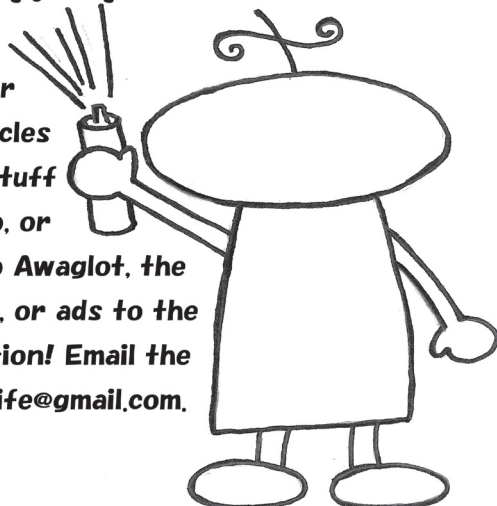
“Rainy days are a great excuse to spend time together as parent and child. One fun, easy thing to do is read picture books to your children.”



## WRITE FOR AWL LIFE!

SHOW TOKUSHIMA SOME LOVE...

**Yes, yes y' all!**  
**Put pen to paper**  
**and submit articles**  
**about the cool stuff**  
**you get up to, or**  
**submit pieces to Awaglot, the**  
**literary corner, or ads to the**  
**classifieds section! Email the**  
**editors at [awalife@gmail.com](mailto:awalife@gmail.com).**  
**Peace!**



To post an event of your own, send the details via email to the editors at [awalife@gmail.com](mailto:awalife@gmail.com).

## Masukawa Firefly Festival

### 増川ホタルまつり

It's the time of the season when fireflies come out in droves to illuminate the nighttime sky. Don't miss out on the opportunity to see this magical sight at this event featuring games for your kids and a bazaar with local foods and specialties!

**When:** June 16 (Sat), 15:00

**Where:** Higashi Miyoshi-cho, Masukawa Shogakkou, near Masukawa river valley

**Info:** Higashi Miyoshi-cho Industry Division

**TEL:** 0883-79-5345

**Cost:** Free!

6月中はホタルがよく出てくる季節で、輝く夜空を楽しむことができます。このまつりであめごつかみどり大会や農産物等、地元の特産品バザーなど、盛りだくさんのイベントがあります。是非起こしてください！

**日時:** 6月16日(土) 15:00

**場所:** 東みよし町 増川笑楽耕及び増川谷周辺

**問合せ:** 東みよし町産業課

**TEL:** 0883-79-5345

**入場料:** 無料！

## June Tokushima Vortis Home Game Schedule

Date	Time	Teams	Venue
June 1 (Fri)	19:00	Vortis vs. FC Machida Zelvia	Naruto Pocari Sweat Stadium
June 9 (Sat)	16:00	Vortis vs. Yokohama FC	Naruto Pocari Sweat Stadium
June 17 (Sun)	18:30	Vortis vs. Ehime FC	Naruto Pocari Sweat Stadium

\*Tickets range from 1500 - 3000 yen (2000 - 3500 yen at the door)

## Tokushima Japanese Speech Contest

The applications are in, and now it's time for speech contestants to gear up. Don't miss the contest on Monday, July 16 (holiday), from 13:30 to 16:30 at Awagin Hall, in the Main Conference Room on the 4FL.

## Japanese Lessons at Suketo Hoikuen (free)

### 助任保育園の日本語教室 (無料)

**When:** Every Thursday, 11:00 - 12:00

**Cost:** Free, and child care is also available!

**Info:** Call TOPIA at  
TEL 088-656-3303

**日時:** 毎週木曜日、11:00 ~ 12:00

**金額:** 託児付き (無料)

**問合せ:** トピアまで  
TEL 088-656-3303



# 31st Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 Performance

## 第31回ベートーヴェン「第九」交響曲演奏会

It is well known, that when talking about the Naruto "Symphony No. 9", it is an established theory that the Symphony No. 9 was first performed in Asia at Naruto's Bando Prisoner of War Camp. Therefore the city of Naruto decided to make June 1, the day of the first performance, the day of the Symphony No. 9 and every first Sunday in June around 500 choir members from inside and outside the prefecture gather to perform an internationally-flavored Symphony No. 9 that can only be seen in Naruto.

**When:** June 3 (Sun) 13:30

**Where:** Naruto Culture Center

**Info:** NPO "Sing the 9th Symphony" Office

**TEL:** 088-686-9999

**Cost:** Adults 2000 yen, students 500 yen  
(2500 at the door)

鳴門の「第九」といえば周知のとおり、鳴門市の板東俘虜収容所での演奏会がアジア初演の第九というのが定説となっています。そこで鳴門市では演奏された6月1日を第九の日と定め、6月の第1日曜日に、県内外から500余名の合唱団員が合流して国際色豊かに第九のふるさと鳴門ならではの演奏会を開催しています。

**日時:** 6月3日(日) 13:30

**場所:** 鳴門市文化会館

**問合せ:** NPO 法人鳴門「第九」を歌う会事務局

**TEL:** 088-686-9999

**入場料:** 一般 2,000 円※、高校生以下 500 円  
(当日券は一般 2,500 円)

## June Indigo Socks Home Game Schedule

Date	Time	Teams	Venue
June 6 (Wed)	17:00	IS vs. Ehime Mandarin Pirates	JA Bank Tokushima stadium
June 15 (Fri)	17:00	IS vs. Kagawa Olive Guyners	JA Bank Tokushima stadium
June 22 (Fri)	17:00	IS vs. Kagawa Olive Guyners	JA Bank Tokushima stadium
June 23 (Sat)	18:00	IS vs. Kochi Fighting Dogs	Aguri Anan Stadium

\*Tickets are 1000 yen at the venue, seating is unassigned

## International Awa Odori Competition

Any international resident or visitor to Tokushima who likes dancing can participate in this contest! The music must be Awa Odori music, but the dance can be virtually anything you want! You may do the traditional dance, or your own creative rendition, because it's all about having fun. Costumes are encouraged, and *happi* coats are available to borrow. Drinks, *uchiwa* fans, and head bands will also be provided. There will be a party at Jizouji temple after the contest, and entry is free! If you join the contest you will also have the opportunity to participate in the mandarin orange picking contest this November.

**Date and Time:** Sunday July 15, 2012, 18:15 - 19:00

**Location:** Komatsushima Station Park, Tanuki Hiroba

**Limit:** 30 participants, 10 from each respective country

**Awards:** 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners will be chosen, and all participants get a special prize

**Application:** Please call or email Ms. Murakami by **July 10th** at: 080-6399-7593 /  
komatsushimaitnl@yahoo.co.jp

Please include your name, telephone number, nationality, email address, and whether you will attend the party. Your personal data will only be used for this event.

## Provisional Certificate of Residence sent to foreign residents

In July, the foreign resident registration system will be eliminated and a certificate of residence will be created for foreign residents in the same way as for Japanese. Foreign residents who are eligible for the certificate of residence have been sent a 'provisional certificate of residence'. Please check that your address and all of your family members' names have been entered correctly and that your status of residence and period of stay are up to date.

If you have not yet received your provisional certificate of residence, or if there are any mistakes in the content that was mailed to you, please take your foreign resident registration card, your passport, and the provisional certificate of residence that was sent to you to the Residents Division (住民課) of your local city office, or contact 088-622-9065.

## Recruiting for Ashita-ren Awa Odori Troupe

The Awa Odori troupe Ashita-ren is looking for flute players and dancers to perform the male style of Awa Odori dance! They will perform on August 12 (Sun), and will accept up to 70 applicants, from June 28 to August 5. You can apply at Tokugin Tomoni Plaza, 1FL, from 9:00 to 18:00, every day except the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month. Participation fee is 2500 yen. You may also attend a practice session before deciding if you want to participate! Contact the Ashita-ren Committee at 088-625-6166, or visit the staff at the Tokushima Prefectural Citizens and Environmental Policy Division office in Tokugin Tomoni Plaza, 1FL.

## Learn Japanese Online for Free!

"Erin's Challenge! I Can Speak Japanese" is a free Japanese learning site on which you can have fun learning about Japanese language and culture. It has video, audio, and tons of other fun content, so join Erin and give it a try! This program is operated by the Japan Foundation Japanese-Language Institute in Urawa: <http://erin.ne.jp/>.

## Purple Hotline - Women's Shelter Network

The Purple Hotline is a free telephone counseling and consultation service provided by the All Japan Women's Shelter Network for women and children faced with problems due to the Tohoku disaster, or domestic violence and other types of abuse. These counselors can provide support and necessary information, so don't hesitate to call. English-speaking counselors are available Mondays through Thursdays from 13:00 to 19:00.

Dial 0120-941-826, and non-Japanese callers may press 1 for other language options including Chinese, Thai, English, Tagalog, Spanish, and Korean.

## 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.

Every day, 10:00 - 18:00

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

## 正しい知識で差別解消