



awa life




Farewell messages
of leaving **TOPIA**
staff members

April 2015
297



JLPT
Experiences



Studying up on
the history of the
Shikoku Pilgrimage



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

Every article you send us is appreciated so please consider becoming a writer! A few rules will apply though so please look below to see what content we encourage you to write about and what kind of stuff we cannot publish.

You can totally submit articles about concerts, lectures, and other event information, cultural, sporting, and other community group information, etcetera.

BUT, the following will not be posted: Religious, political, or commercial activities, businesses searching for clients or employees, things the Awa Life editors deem inappropriate.

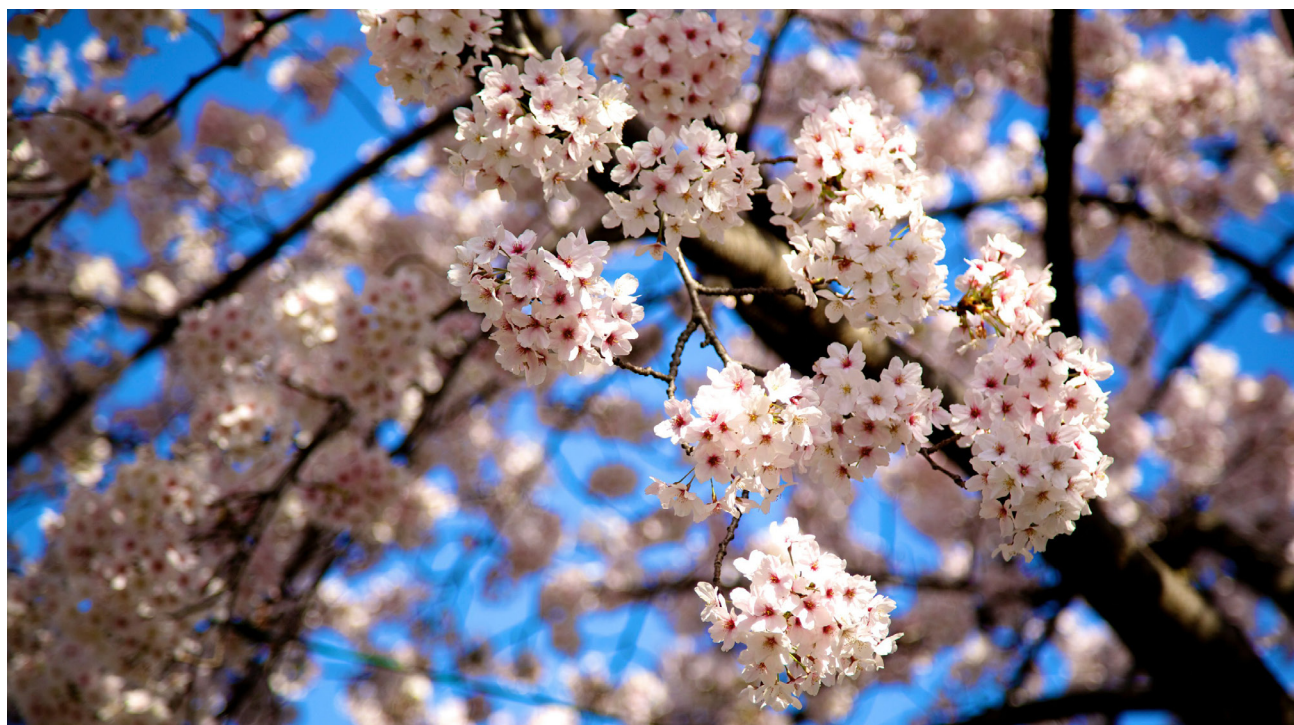
If you have something you would like to share with the Tokushima community, email the editors at:

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

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The Maeyama Ohenro Kōryū Salon – A Place to Learn About the History of the Shikoku Pilgrimage

By David C. Moreton

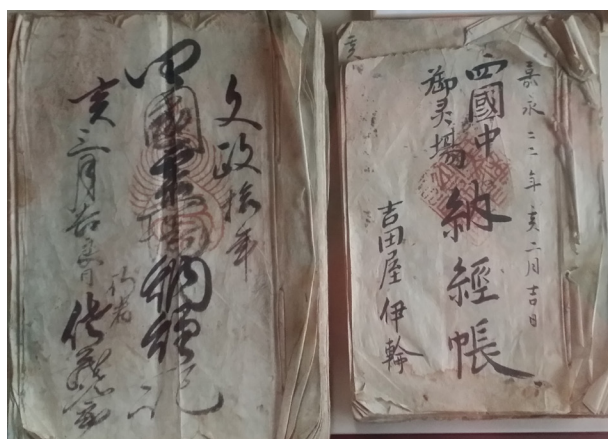
Throughout Japan there are countless museums and reference libraries where one can see historical and cultural artefacts, but do you know of such a place on Shikoku that focuses entirely on the Shikoku pilgrimage route? At some places there is a visitor center where one can listen to commentary from knowledgeable staff and/or view objects on display related to that site. However, in the case of the well-known and very popular eighty-eight temple Shikoku pilgrimage route, surprisingly there is no such facility near the starting point Temple 1, Ryōzenji. In fact, the place that I recommend visiting is near the end between Temple 87,

Nagaoji and Temple 88, Okuboji in Kagawa prefecture!

The Maeyama Ohenro Kōryū Salon (前山おへんろ交流サロン) (“a place where pilgrims interact”) opened in November 1999 and has a very large collection of *henro* (Shikoku pilgrimage) related goods. According to the staff more than 350 items and 150 books and other materials are on display and/or stored here. The oldest guidebook is from 1687, the

oldest stone path marker is from 1781 and there are many items from the 19th century. Admission is free and the facility is open from 9am to 4pm every day, but the last entry is at 3:30pm. Kenshi KASHIHARA (桎原憲史) who is the Assistant priest of Temple 75, Zentsūji, became the Director a couple of years ago. He and a handful of staff manage the facility, answer questions, and provide explanations about the displays.

Many pilgrims stop here on their way to Okuboji for some tea, to use the washroom, and/or perhaps to chat with other visitors. Across the street is a *michi-no-eki* (road station) where you can buy vegetables or have a meal at the café. Just inside the entrance



The Maeyama Ohenro Koryu Salon

there is a visitor guestbook, which gives a very accurate number of how many people have come here since it opened fifteen years ago. The total number of visitors is more than 200,000 people, of which approximately 30,000 are those who walked the pilgrimage. Last year 160 foreigners left their name, of which 128 were people who made the pilgrimage by foot. When a pilgrim arrives, a staff member will ask that person if he or she has finished or just about to finish the entire route by foot and if the pilgrim says, "Yes," the staff member will present a certificate entitled, "Shikoku 88 Temples Pilgrimage Henro Ambassador." Between 2004 and 2013 the number of foreigners who received this certificate increased ten times with a grand total of 630 during this ten-year period. The certificate, states in English, "We wish that the interaction with the people, the culture, and the nature of Shikoku enriches your life and that you will spread the Henro culture worldwide." While there is much to see here, let me point out some items of possible interest:



1. As you walk in the main door, you will see a map of the route that Kūkai took when he went

to China in 804 (red line) and when he returned to Japan in 806 (blue line). In 804, a storm blew his ship off course and that is why he landed so much further south than the point from which he departed from in 806.



2. In the main room there is a large topographical model of the island with little huts marking the places of each of the eighty-eight temples. If you press a button by the photo of the temple, that place will light up on the model. Behind the model there is a machine from which you can get some hot tea. Visitors are free to use the sofas and chairs.

3. Inside the exhibition rooms, there is a display about a priest called Gyōki Bosatsu (行基菩薩) (668-749) who performed various public work projects for the local people such as constructing roads, river embankments, and reservoirs. He also was the overseer of the building of the great Todaiji temple in Nara. It is said that he founded thirty of the eighty-eight temples.

4. There is a display panel about Mr. Mohei NAKATSUKASA, (中司茂兵衛) who completed the

pilgrimage 280 times between 1845 (age 22) to 1922 (age 78). He erected 240 stone markers along the entire pilgrimage route.

5. A large 1:40 model of the temple, Seiryūji (青龍寺) where

Kūkai studied at in China.

6. Maps of each of the 47 prefectures in Japan that have a small box attached to them containing *fuda* (name-slips) of pilgrims. There is also a world map with the title, "International" and in that box there are *fuda* from people from such countries as the United States, Australia, Switzerland, Brazil, and Korea.

7. Touch-panel computer screens that list the legends about Kōbō Daishi from around Japan. There are no tales about him from Okinawa, but there are three from Hokkaido and four from Kagoshima.

8. Pilgrimage books (*nōkyōchō*) including one which has red pages. This is from someone



The Maeyama Ohenro Koryu Salon

who made the pilgrimage over 300 times and used the same book over and over.

9. Wooden boxes that hold paper fuda as well as straw bales (*tawara*) that were stuffed full of fuda and hung in people's houses as a protective amulet.

10. A display about Emon Saburō (衛門三郎) from Ehime prefecture whose eight children died as a punishment against

Emon when he got angry with Kōbō Daishi and smashed his

begging bowl with a broom.

There is a lot to see and much to learn at the Ohenro Kōryū Salon, but it is very unfortunate



that it is in such an inconvenient location. The best way is to go

from Tokushima is by car, which will take about 75 min from the Tokushima bus/train station area. Take the expressway to Wakimachi and then head north on Route 193. The closest train station at which only the local train stops is the unmanned Zoda station that is 8km away.

(Website: <http://www.geocities.jp/sanukimaeyamanet/ohenro/>)

Letter from Suketo Hoikuen

By Kazue Inoue

Cute little flowers are coloring the park in spring colors all at once near our nursery school. The insects have come out of hiding and the children can see and feel the herald of spring all around.

Up to three years of age, the development of a child's brain is said to be heavily affected by how much the sensory system (five senses) is stimulated. The five senses include vision, hearing, smell, touch, and taste. With the weather warming up, the upcoming season would be perfect for taking your children outdoors to train their five senses. So, why not go enjoy the beautiful outdoor scenery, listen to the chirping birds, smell the flowers, feel the sand

between your fingers, or enjoy the taste of different foods.

Stimulating your five senses will lead to brain development. And as the head and heart are connected, developing the brain means it will also develop your feelings and emotions. As well, when you spend time with your child and experience various new things together, you can foster a deeper bond and it will help with emotional stability.

This Month's Craft Pen Watercolor

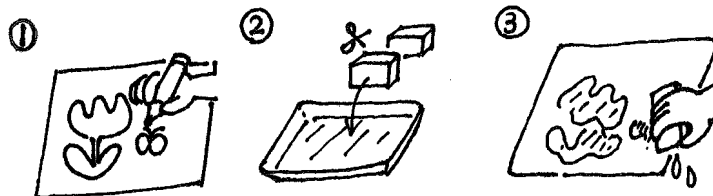
Materials

Felt tip marker (water-based)
Paper
Styrofoam tray
Sponge
Water

Scissor

Directions

- 1) Using a water-based felt tip marker, draw a picture on a piece of paper. (The brighter the color of the pen, the better the final product will be.)
- 2) Pour a small amount of water into a Styrofoam tray. Cut up sponges into sizes that fit your child's hands, then wet with water.
- 3) Sponge over your picture and allow the ink to bleed. You can see your picture and the color change before your eyes.



Japanese Lesson

By Sachiko Muramatsu

This month we will be learning how to relay information you heard from one person to another (third-person narrative).

Mr. Lao calls the Awa Office. Mr. Lao works for the Awa Office.

ラオ：もしもし、阿波事務所ですか。
ラオですが、きょうは事務所を休みます。

佐藤：ああ、ラオさん。どうしたんですか。

ラオ：風邪をひいて頭が痛いんです。
鈴木さんにも伝えてください。

佐藤：わかりました。お大事に。

佐藤：鈴木さん、いま、ラオさんから電話がありました。

ラオさんはきょう事務所を休むと言っていました。

鈴木：ああ、そうですか。



*Referring to the dialogue above, you can see that the form 「ラオさんは～と言っていました。」 is used to relay Mr. Lao's message to the others. Mr. Lao used the polite form, 「事務所を休みます」 but when you are relaying a message to someone else (third-person narrative), replace the 「～」 in the sentence 「～と言っていました」 with a sentence in the plain form 「事務所を休む」.

Let's practice changing the polite forms to the plain form with the third-person narrative 「～と言っていました」.

山田さん：あした会社を休みます。 (verb)

→ 山田さんはあした会社を休むと言っていました。

山田さん：わたしはあした忙しいです。 (i-adjective)

→ 山田さんはあした忙しいと言っていました。

山田さん：徳島中央公園の桜はきれいです。 (na-adjective)

→ 山田さんは徳島中央公園の桜はきれいだと言っていました。

山田さん：徳島は静かな町です。 (noun)

→ 山田さんは徳島は静かな町だと言っていました。

Practice Questions

Mr. Suzuki contacted Mr. Sato. Mr. Sato relayed the message to the rest of the office staff. Please change the word underlined in the sentences below to the plain form and fill in the () with your answer.

Japanese Lesson

Example

鈴木：あしたの会議は小会議室であります。→佐藤：あしたの会議は小会議室で（ある）と言っていました。

- (1) あしたの会議は2時から始まります。→あしたの会議は2時から（ ）と言っていました。
 (2) 会議の資料は多いです。→会議の資料は（ ）と言っていました。
 (3) 会議は4時に終わる予定です。→会議は4時に終わる（ ）と言っていました。
 (4) ラオさんはあしたの会議に出席できません。
 →ラオさんはあしたの会議に（ ）と言っていました。

Reference
 新日本語の基礎 II (スリーエーネット) (グループ)
 初級日本語文法と教える方のポイント (スリーエーネット) (グループ)
 (1) 始まる (2) 多い (3) 予定だ (4) 出席できない
 Answers

The Road to the JLPT: The History and the Changes to the JLPT

By Jonathan Le Roux

So, I failed the JLPT. Again. I have lost count as to how many times I have attempted it but I am always drawn to it for some reason, and now, even as I look back on my results that desire to attempt it once more has not at all diminished.

For anyone who has attempted the JLPT (Japanese Language Proficiency Test) you may nod your head in recognition of the hard work, frustrations and desires that come with this mammoth task. For those who haven't, perhaps I should explain myself as to why I keep with the studies and, if the editors at Awa Life are willing, expand it into a series of articles, starting with the history and purpose of the JLPT.

The JLPT is a standardised test that began in 1984. It was created by two organisations, the Japan Foundation and the Japan Educational Exchange Services, as a means to measure the language ability of students of Japanese around the world. In that year 7,000 students took the test, and 2013 saw over 650,000 attempt it. It has certainly grown since then, with the annual tests being written not only in Japan but in over 40 countries.

The test has also evolved with time. Originally, there were only four tiers of the test, from fourth level (beginner) through to first level (advanced). But in 2010, the new and current version of the test was implemented. There were three major changes to the test. The first was the introduction of a new tier, which

was slotted between the old third level and second levels. The reasoning for this was to allow a smoother transition between the two levels, as it was reported that the difficulty gap between the two was far too wide. The second change was an emphasis on testing communicative competence based on performing particular tasks while testing language and grammar knowledge. This is especially true in the way the tests are laid out, with listening questions related to work environments or reacting to daily life situations. The final change was modifying the first level to test more advanced abilities than it originally could provide. Thus, the levels are now referred to as N5-N1, with N standing for both "Nihongo" and "New". Overall, the differences between the tests are:

N5: The same as the original level 4

N4: The same as the original level 3.

N3: In between the original level 3 and level 2.

N2: The same as the original level 2.

N1: Slightly more advanced than level 1, but more or less the same passing rate.

How important is the JLPT though? Certification in the JLPT can open a lot of doors in Japan. Typically for foreigners, employment with a Japanese company requires N2, which is quite difficult to get. However, N1 opens far more doors: having N1 contributes 15 points to the government's Point-based immigration treatment for highly skilled foreigners. Essentially, it makes immigrating to Japan easier, especially in granting a longer period of stay as well as making it easier to own property. N1 is also essential to having a career in the medical field: it

is needed for foreign medical professional wishing to work in Japan. N1 can also allow foreign students entry into academia, particularly allowing students to enter senior high school without needing to take the national Japanese language exam. Depending on the university, N1 is also accepted in lieu of the Examination for Japanese University Admission for foreign students.

Clearly, there are a lot of perks to doing the JLPT, but to me the greatest benefit in taking the JLPT is twofold: firstly for cramming in words and expressions in daily life that I may never encounter normally. By studying and preparing for the test, the constant cramming allows one to absorb all kinds of vocabulary, which not only boosts your ability but also your confidence. The second reason is that the JLPT is a great means to measure my overall ability in high stress, highly

specialized situations, whether it be extracting vital information from a business setting, or examining an article on Japanese society. In our daily lives here in Japan it's easy to get stuck in a language rut, and by testing my metal against the fires of the JLPT, I can see where I need to improve, and take the steps from there to achieve it.

For those of you who have never taken the test, but are interested in taking it, the JLPT has a sample test you can try to measure your current pool of knowledge. You can find it at <http://www.jlpt.jp/e/samples/forlearners.html>. The next test date is July 5th, 2015. Will you be ready by then?

Next month, I'd like to continue by going into detail of the different components of the test, as well as recommending some good textbooks to use.

Good luck with your studies!

TOPIA Staff Goodbye Messages

By Fukumi Sai, Yui Fujiwara, Mio Morimoto

Farewell Message

By Fukumi Sai

Hello everyone. It feels like it was only yesterday that I arrived in Tokushima, but alas, a year has already flown by. While the beautiful blossoms bloom, I will have to bid everyone goodbye and this fills me with

great sadness.

My experience working for the Tokushima Prefectural Government as a Coordinator for International Relations (CIR) will be an experience that I will treasure forever. Thanks to my warm and friendly coworkers, I was able to enjoy my work life and everyday was a learning

experience for me. As a CIR I translated, interpreted and taught Chinese, and through work, I was able to experience a lot that I otherwise would not have been able to do in China. Also through international exchange events, participating in the Awa Dance and in the 88 Temple Pilgrimage walk, I

TOPIA Staff Goodbye Messages

was able to meet many people and have made many fond memories.

Though a year passed quickly, I had a fulfilling year full of challenges and new lessons learned. I will never forget this treasure island and the kindness of everyone. As the proverb goes “a meeting is a beginning of a parting,” saying goodbye is hard but I am forever grateful for all of the friendship that I have formed here in Tokushima. I would like to hold this memory close to heart and will promote Tokushima in China. I would

also like to continue being the bridge that connects Japan and China, and would like to do all that I can to help promote the friendly relations that Hunan Province and Tokushima Prefecture has. I would like to thank everyone from the bottom of my heart for everything throughout this past year. I am a firm believer in the words “goodbyes are not forever” and would like to bid you all a “let’s meet again” instead of “goodbye.” I look forward to seeing you somewhere again. If you do have the chance,

please do come and visit Hunan Province in China! Zai jian (再见 see you again)!



I Love TOPIA By Yui Fujiwara



Time went by so fast, I cannot believe it’s already time to say goodbye. I would like to begin by thanking everyone for all their support over the years.

When I first started working for TOPIA, I just wanted to do what I could to help the foreign community. But, I didn’t even know what to do or where

to begin, and so I was full of hesitation and worry. One thing I did know for certain was when I moved to Japan in my second year of middle school, TOPIA’s Japanese classes and all the staff there had helped me immensely, and this is a fond memory of mine to this very day. Because of this experience, I thought it was my turn to give back and help, so I tried to get in touch with many foreigners. When I was told that I was an important and necessary part of TOPIA, I was so happy I was brought to tears. As part of my work I visited schools to help translate for students who just moved from China. From this experience, it made me want to understand them more and I wanted to be there for them. The children reminded me of my young self, not knowing a

single word and pretending to be tough. There were tough times or times when I was discouraged, but more than anything, I wanted to relay as much information as I could and to have them realize the importance of living with two cultures.

Aside from the school visits, I also helped edit Awa Seikatsu (Chinese language newsletter), interpreted at monitor tours and at charter flight projects with Hunan Province, all of which made the job even more fulfilling. I no longer just want to help the foreign community, but I want them to like Japan and the people of Japan. Going through all these emotions and looking back at my past five years, I will treasure all these experiences and it is an indispensable part of my life.



TOPIA Staff Goodbye Messages

In life you have many encounters but will also have many goodbyes, and of course it's sad to say goodbye, but I will never forget all the experiences

that I have gained. To everyone at TOPIA and to those I met along the way, we laughed and cried together and every single moment is so important

to me, I honestly don't know how to feel. But, I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to you all. Thank you so much for everything! Let's meet again.

Interning at TOPIA

By Mio Morimoto

I started working at TOPIA a year ago in April and through the year, I was able to gain many valuable experiences, different from those when I was teaching in elementary school. First of all, my day to day work at TOPIA was very different. I was in charge of a wide variety of duties, such as providing tourist information, lending out and returning books from the TOPIA library, providing photocopying services, paperwork for the Japanese Lessons, and more, so it took me a while to get used to everything.

Secondly, I was in charge of the International Understanding Support Instructor Dispatch and Work Experience programs. Through the International Understanding Support Instructor Dispatch program, foreign residents will sign up to become an instructor and my job was to coordinate the school visits for the instructors. I was able to visit the schools with the instructors and had the chance to see what their international understanding classes were like. As for the Work Experience

programs aimed at junior high school, high school and university students, it was my duty to arrange various lectures for the students with the staff at TOPIA. It was a new experience for me working with different age groups as I normally only work with elementary school students. Through my involvement with the different programs at TOPIA, it made me realize how much support TOPIA provides to everyone and that they are truly an unsung hero.

Thirdly, I took part in the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Teachers Overseas Training Program in Ethiopia. Through this experience I learned about school life in Ethiopia, visited a coffee and honey farm, learned about the experiences of JICA participants and experienced first-hand what life is like in a developing country. I realized then that it is my duty to relay what I experienced to children and to work with them brainstorm ways in which we can improve the world and to eventually turn it into action. Fourth, I took the initiative and organized the International Understanding Support Forum. Takao

Hasui and the International Understanding Support Instructors spoke on the topic of multiculturalism. The event finished off with a networking event where cultural performances such as traditional dancing and a song from China, were held. Overall, there was much to take away from the event and it was a lot of fun as well.

Lastly, all of the staff I worked with were so kind and warm. Coming into a completely new workplace, I tried the best I could but there may have been parts where I may have fallen short. But, the staff supported me in any way they could and it is thanks to them that I was able to successfully finish off my year here. Looking back at all of these experiences, I am full of happy memories, ones that I will treasure for the rest of my life. Thank you so much for everything.



Events & Memoranda

Participate in the Japanese Speech Contest 2015

TOKUSHIMA PREFECTURE 2015 JAPANESE SPEECH CONTEST

1. PURPOSE True internationalisation 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 20th, 2015 (Monday/Holiday), 13:30 - 16:30
Awagin Hall (Tokushima Prefecture Kyodo Bunka Kaikan)
Small Hall (5F)
3. ELIGIBILITY Only foreign residents whose native language is not Japanese are eligible to apply. (However, foreign residents who have had over three years of compulsory education in Japan and 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 Application will be open to all foreign residents of Tokushima Prefecture that fulfil the eligibility requirements. We will ask all applicants to submit an outline of their speech (between 800 words), and after reviewing all of the applications, roughly 10 or so applicants will be chosen to proceed to the final 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.
6. LENGTH Speeches should be no more than 6 minutes in length.
7. AWARDS Grand Prize --- one person (Prize: 50,000 yen gift certificate)
Runner Up Awards --- two people (Prize: 30,000 yen gift certificate)
Special Awards --- to be decided (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 Please fill out the application form available at TOPIA and mail it to the above address or fax it to the above number. Alternatively, you may submit your application in person.
9. DEADLINE June 1st, 2015 (Monday)
Applications must be turned in by 17:00.
10. SPONSORED BY Tokushima Prefecture International Exchange Association (TOPIA)
11. CO-SPONSOR (TBA) Tokushima Regional Conference for Promotion of Student Exchange
12. WITH THE SUPPORT OF (TBA) Tokushima International Association (TIA)
Awa Bank
Tokushima Bank
13. ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FROM (TBA) NHK Broadcasting, Tokushima Bureau, JRT Shikoku Broadcasting, FM Bizan, FM Tokushima, Tokushima Newspaper
14. WHERE TO APPLY Tokushima Prefectural International Exchange Association. (TOPIA)
〒770-0831 Tokushima-shi, Terashima-honcho, Nishi, 1-61,
Tokushima Clement Plaza 6F
TEL: 088-656-3303 FAX: 088-652-0616
Application forms can be found online at:
<http://www.topia.ne.jp/english/docs/2015031600035/>



Events & Memoranda

Toastmaster 15th Anniversary 徳島トーストマスターズ 15 周年

Our meetings are normally, two hours long, but for our anniversary we will be offering various activities such as a one hour preview of our meetings so you can get a taste of what our meetings are like.

通常 2 時間余りの例会を 1 時間で行うなど、米国生まれのトーストマスターズの素晴らしさを地元徳島のトーストマスターたちと一緒に体験していただきます。

When: April 5 (Sun), 13:00 - 16:30

日時: 4 月 5 日 (日) 13 時 ~ 16 時半

Where: TOPIA Tokushima Prefectural
International Exchange Association
Clement Plaza 6F Terashima Honcho
Nishi 1-61 Tokushima City

場所: 徳島県国際交流協会 クレメントプラザ
6 階

参加費: 無料

URL: <http://tokushima-tmc.org>

Fee: Free

URL: <http://tokushima-tmc.org>

問い合わせ:

Contact Information:

岡本: 090-1170-9004, okyanok@mc.pikala.ne.jp

Okamoto: 090-1170-9004; okyanok@mc.pikala.ne.jp

田村: 090-1329-5668, panshikoku2008@nmt.ne.jp

Tamura: 090-1329-5668; panshikoku2008@nmt.ne.jp

Japanese-Language Proficiency Test (JLPT) 日本語能力試験

Test Information

試験について

Test Date: July 5 (Sun)

試験日: 7 月 5 日 (日)

Start Time: 12:30

試験開始時間: 12 時 30 分

Test Sites: Tests will be administered in 45 prefectures, including Tokushima

開催地: 日本全国 45 都道府県で開催される予定です (徳島も含む)

Application Information

申込み手続きについて

Application period: March 30 (Mon) - April 30 (Thu)

申込期間: 3 月 30 日 (月) - 4 月 30 日 (木)

Online application: Please submit by 17:00

インターネットの場合: 17:00 まで提出

Mailed application: Postmarked by April 30

郵便の場合: 4 月 30 日付け消印有効

Test Fee: 5,500 yen

受験料: 5,500 円

*Application Guide is available for 500 yen at bookstores nationwide.

*受験案内は 1 部 500 円で全国主要書店にて販売中。

For more information visit: info.jees-jlpt.jp

詳しくは: info.jees-jlpt.jp

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)