# all life

明けまして おめでとうございます! January 2016 # 306





The Furisode Kimono & Japanese New Year's Customs





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

Happy New Year everyone!! We hope you had a great holiday with your friends and family. We are sitting here flabbergasted that it is 2016 already, a full year has gone by since we revamped Awa Life and adopted a new design. Thank you all so much for reading Awa Life and we sincerely hope you enjoy everything about it and keep reading (and we certainly wouldn't mind if you became a fervent reader either)!

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.

Every single article is highly appreciated 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!

Your editors, Till and Jen

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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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\*There was a mistake in the events section in the printed paper version of the December issue of Awa Life. The admission fee for the "Exhibition: Things that Connect Germany and Japan" was listed as free, but it is 400 yen for adults and 100 yen for elementary to middle school aged children. We apologize for the mistake and for any confusion.

Awa Life 12 月号のイベント「ドイツと日本を結ぶもの」におきまして、内容の記載に誤りがございました。ニュースレターをご購読いただいております皆さまに、謹んでお詫び申し上げますと共に、以下のとおり訂正いたします。

(誤)入場料:無料

(正) 大人 400 円、小・中学生 100 円

誤った情報を記載・配信してしまいましたことを心よりお詫び申し上げます。

## The Furisode Kimono By Melissa Palsenbarg

The second Monday of every January is a holiday in Japan called seijin no hi (成人の日). The seijin-shiki (成人式) run by local communities, celebrates all the young men and women who reached the age of majority (20 years old) during the previous year. It's very common on this day for young women to wear a kimono. But this is no ordinary kimono. It's called a furisode (ふりそで or 振袖).

#### What is a furisode?

A *furisode* is the most formal kimono worn by young, unmarried women. They are characterized by their incredibly long sleeves, and even take their name from that feature. *Furi* (振) means to swing, and *sode* (袖) means sleeve. Traditionally, every girl and unmarried woman would wear long sleeves. When they would get

married, they would hem up their sleeves to an appropriate length. Nowadays however, the most common places to see a *furisode* are on a young girl celebrating *shichi-go-san*, on a young woman celebrating her *seijin-shiki*, or on a maiko.

#### How are they created?

Furisode are the most striking, eye-catching, colorful, and expensive kimono you can find. Each one is handmade and can take several hundred hours and multiple craftsman to complete. There are several techniques that can be used, and a *furisode* can be created using a combination of any of these techniques.

Shibori: This is Japanese tie-dyeing. Small dots of fabric are twisted and wrapped with cotton thread. When the fabric is dipped into the dye, these

#### TOPIA

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The Furisode Kimono

multiple days. It's not a cheap

option, but it is cheaper than buying a furisode which can cost

between 250,000 ven to 600,000

yen or even higher (and that's just

About a year ahead of time, the girl will choose her furisode and

it will be set aside in the shop for

her. Furisode are one of a kind,

and it would be dreadful if they

rented out one to one customer who spilled soy sauce on it, just

before another girl was due to

wear it. This also explains why

the rental costs are so high. Each

for the kimono. *Obi* not included).

dots will remain white. Each dot is handtied, and there can be thousands of them on one kimono. A kimono completely covered with *shibori* can end up being a treasured family heirloom.

Yuzen: Yuzen is a dying technique that treats the dye like paint. A rice paste is used to outline all the designs and patterns, then the artist paints on the dye (as opposed to dipping the entire piece of fabric into a vat of dye). Once the paste is removed, the white

lines left between the colored sections are very striking. This is the most common method used today on furisode.

Embroidery: Embroidery can take two forms. Design elements and outlines can be embroidered in metallic threads to draw attention to it. Also, full designs can be completely embodied, usually with silk threads. These threads have a unique property as they will change color depending on the angle of the light hitting them.

Gold leaf: the craftsmen will usually use a stencil when applying gold-leaf. A paste will be applied through the stencil, and the gold leaf will be applied once the stencil is removed.

What is the process for choosing a *furisode*?

The process will start anywhere up to two years before a young woman is scheduled to celebrate her *seijin-shiki*. Her parents will start receiving flyers and catalogs in the mail advertising the latest *furisode* and the latest styles. These catalogues will also list the price for renting the kimono and for buying the kimono. Renting a *furisode* can cost anywhere from 100,000 yen to 250,000 yen for a standard package. Photo packages are additional (up to 60,000 yen). Undergarments or different accessories will also cost extra, as will renting the *furisode* over



furisode can only be rented out once per season.

If a girl rents from a shop or studio, they will have professional dressers to get her dressed. If a girl has an heirloom *furisode*, they will often hire the local hair stylist to dress them and do their hair at the same time. It is impossible for a girl to dress herself in *furisode*. The *obi* knots that are appropriate for a *furisode* are big, fluffy, and cannot be tied by yourself. You definitely need somebody to tie it for you.

Once a girl is dressed, professional photos are always obligatory. They don't have to be done on that day and can be completed up to several months in advance (for an extra charge of course).

On the actual day, participants will get up very, very early, get dressed, get their hair done, and attend a ceremony celebrating their entrance into adulthood, and afterwards they will either hang out with friends or family, go to a special event, go shopping, or whatever they wish while dressed in their gorgeous, luxurious, furisode.

If you are interested in attending, there are several sites around Tokushima that are hosting seijin-shiki celebrations.

The details can be found at: http://www.pref.tokushima.jp/docs/2014120500133/files/seijinjiki.pdf



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## An Ohenro Experience By Lance Toyoshima



On Saturday, October 24, 2015, I had the wonderful opportunity to participate in the Shikoku pilgrimage visit to the Kakurinji temple. The temple is the 20th temple in the famous Shikoku pilgrimage route, which consists of 88 temples in total. The trip was a truly unique experience, and something that not many tourists are able to do. The guides were extremely knowledgeable, and provided us with information in Japanese, English, and Chinese. We were also provided with the appropriate pilgrim clothing, hat, and walking stick, all of which are important items which help identify oneself as a pilgrim.

The hike was quite strenuous, but frequent stops and a slow pace make it easily manageable for most people. On the way up we were greeted by a really nice local woman; who gave us each a tangerine. Once we arrived to the temple, we were instructed on the correct procedure to offer the incense, write down our wish, and make our prayer and offering. The support and guidance were invaluable, and the staff and all participants were friendly and very pleasant. The temple itself

is in a serene and beautiful setting, and the nature that surrounds the temple and its environs is simply spectacular.

One of the staff even performed songs for us during our lunch break. He skillfully played the shaku hachi flute and provided fun entertainment while we ate the lunches that we brought with us. The tour group provided us with drinks and apples to snack on as well. After lunch we viewed more beautiful scenery as we descended down another trail to the base of the mountain. Near the bottom; we were greeted by local volunteers who offered us snacks, exquisite sakura tea, and even a bag of mikan (tangerines) to take home with us. It was such a nice ending to a truly special day, and an experience that I would highly recommend to anyone interested in Japan and its unique culture. I hope to complete another such trip next month and would like to thank the wonderful staff and volunteers for a great time.



### Letter from SUKETO NAKAYOSHI

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

appy New Year! I really hope that this year will be a good year for everyone. This month, I wanted to give a few pointers on what to look for when buying new shoes for your children.

Material: A soft breathable material that absorbs moisture and is easy to wash.

Toes: Make sure that there is enough width and height so that their toes can wiggle about freely. To prevent children from tripping, try and choose shoes that have a toe that is slightly curved upwards. (Make sure there is about 5 mm to 1 cm of wiggle room)

Sole: A well-cushioned sole that has support for the arch

Instep: Choose a shoe with adjustable shoe strings or a zipper to secure your foot in the shoe. Heel: To ensure that their feet are secured and to provide proper support when walking, choose a pair that has enough height so that it fits snuggly

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Suketo

around their ankles.

Children's bones are still soft and if the size of the shoe is too small, it may distort the shape of the feet. If the size of the shoe is too big, it may fall off your child's feet easily and it will prevent your child from walking properly, thereby delaying the growth of the arches of their feet or will cause them to tire out easily.

I hope that these tips will be useful when buying a pair of shoes.

\* \* This Month's Craft \* \*
Milk Carton Spinning Top

#### Materials

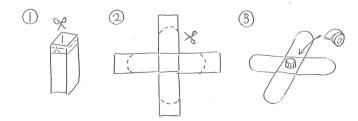
- 1000 ml milk carton
- Scissors
- Plastic bottle cap
- Tape
- Oil-based markers (optional)

#### **Directions**

- 1) Cut open all sides of the 1000 ml milk carton.
- 2) Cut off the tips of each side of the milk carton (refer to the picture).
- 3) On the very bottom of the milk carton, in the center, tape on a plastic bottle cap.

#### How to Play

Grab the plastic bottle cap with your fingers and spin the milk carton like a spinning top. If you decorate the 4 sides of the carton with an oil based marker and use different colors, when you spin the top, the colors will blend together to make a new color.



#### Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers: Connecting Japan to the World By Yuki Kubo

## Celebrating 50 Years of the Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers

Since the Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV) program was inaugurated in 1965, volunteers have been lending their technical skills and contributing to youth development around the world for 50 years. Approximately 40,000 volunteers have been dispatched to 88 countries to date. Tokushima Prefecture has sent out 254 volunteers to 60 different countries and

currently there are 12 volunteers working in 12 countries, including Costa Rica (Central America), Morocco (Africa) and Bangladesh (Asia).

#### What is the JOCV?

The Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV)

is a program run by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) as part of the national Official Development Assistance (ODA) efforts. In 1965, after the dust had settled from the war, five young volunteers departed Japan for Laos. They became the very first Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers, who are now known as the diplomats of grassroots cooperation. Individuals between the ages of 20 to 39 may apply and each volunteer term is generally two

years long.

There are over 120 different types of jobs available with the JOCV, all in various fields such as, education, health and medicine, sports, agriculture, industry and social welfare. For







#### Japan Overseas Coorperation Volunteers

example, you can teach science or math, or use your knowledge as a certified public health nurse or general nurse to give health guidance. You don't necessarily have to have certain skills or certifications for some jobs.

Volunteers are sent to work at government organizations, local gov-ernment offices, schools

or NGOs. Volunteers will work alongside their coworkers or will be partnered with their "counterpart" to work towards finding solutions to various problems.

There are three goals for JOCV: (1) to contribute to the socio-economic development

or reconstruction of developing countries and regions, (2) to strengthen friendship and mutual understanding between developing countries and Japan, and (3) to cultivate global perspectives and give back to Japanese society the fruits of volunteer experience.

#### Long-lasting Skills Gained from the Experience

There's one thing that a majority of the volunteers voice upon return: "I went to volunteer and to offer my help but I also learned so much from this experience. I was able to rediscover all the great things Japan has to offer and I appreciate it much more now." By leaving Japan, they were able to look at their home country from a different

perspective. This just might be one of the added perks of this experience.

In recent years, there seems to be a trend of young people not wanting to leave Japan. You don't have to want to change the world, as long as you have even the slightest

motivation to do something, then why not take the plunge? We've worked hard for the past 50 years and here's to another 50 years! I really do hope for the continuation of this program we can raise awareness about the Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers program.



明けましておめでとうございます (akemashite omedetougozaimasu)! Happy New Year everyone! So, did you all enjoy ringing in the New Year in Japan, if you were around for it that is? Perhaps some of you even got to experience a New Year's celebration that's different from that of your home country.

Did any of you eat some ozoni (お雑煮) or osechi ryori (おせち料理)? Or go watch hatsu hinode (初日の出: first sunrise of the year) or go for hatsumode (初 詣: first shrine or temple visit of the year)?

There are lots of different New Year's customs such as the decorations that you might see around the city or in front of businesses and homes. I was recently asked what

these decorations are for, so I would like to tell you a little bit more about them.

New Year was originally celebrated in Japan to welcome in the *toshigamisama* (年 神 様). *Toshigamisama* refers to the spirits of your ancestors and is also known as a Shinto god that

will bestow health and prosperity (especially in terms of harvest) upon your family for the year. And to welcome them in, people will put out several New Year's decorations. The three most common decorations are the kadomatsu (門松), shimekazari (しめ飾り) and kagamimochi (鏡餅).

The *kadomatsu*, which literally means entrance pine, is as the name suggests, put by the entrance as a marker, so that the god does



#### New Year's Customs

not get lost and so they can find their destination right away.



By putting the *shime-kazari* by the entrance of your home, it is said that it will help keep out bad spirits to prevent bad luck or calamities from happening.

Kagamimochi is put out as an offering to the toshiqamisama.

Furthermore, the materials used to make the decorations are all chosen for a reason as well.



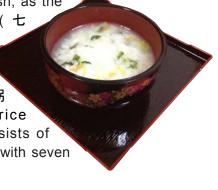
For example, let's take a look at the *shimekazari*. The white paper used in the decoration, called the *shide* (紙垂) is used to show that the *toshigamisama* is visiting their home. The green leaves, called the *urajiro* (裹白), represent prosperity of the family. The idea is that instead of the old leaves falling, new leaves are beginning to sprout. The leaves are also painted white on the back to show that the husband and wife are faithful to each other and because the leaves are symmetrically placed, it represents the good relationship between the couple. Furthermore, the yellow fruit in the middle

is the bitter orange or *daidai* ( 橙 ) in Japanese and as the fruit will keep growing on the tree for four to five years, it represents the continuation of the family over generations to come.

The decorations are packed away on January 7th in many areas; however, the *kagamimochi* is put away on January 11th.

And traditionally on January 7th, the *nana-kusagayu* (七草粥), a healthy rice porridge dish, is eaten on this day. This dish is eaten for several reasons including, giving your stomach rest after all the food and drinks consumed during the New Year's celebrations and also to wish for your health and for a peaceful life for the year





There are many traditional customs in Japan and everything involved, including the decorations, all have a significance or meaning behind them.

Photos courtesy of TOPIA's instructional materials: A Year in Tokushima (Events Edition)

## International Understanding Support Forum By Naoko Miyamoto

As the world becomes more and more globalized, especially in economics, we will be required to spend more time with those with different norms and values. Approximately 5,000 foreign nationals from 70 different countries live in Tokushima alone. In order to think more critically about what we can do to help create a more inclusive multicultural community, TOPIA held the International Understanding Forum on Sunday, December 6th.

Mr. Ryuzo Goto kicked off the event with his lecture about his experience living abroad when he worked for Honda Engineering. He spoke of how Honda's philosophy of respecting everyone' culture, equality for all, trusting each other and working together can also be applied to international understanding. He emphasized that we can enjoy each other's company more, regardless of cutture, if we all just treated each other with respect.

#### International Understanding Support Forum

Following Mr. Goto's lecture, Joel Baxter from Canada and Irene Wachuga from Kenya, both registered as a volunteer International Understanding Support Instructor, spoke about their own home country and about their life here in Tokushima.

The event rounded off with a networking and socializing event where the participants and the lecturers had the chance to mix and mingle and find out more about each other's culture.

Furthermore, Natalia Doroganova and her friends performed Russia's folk dance along to Kalinka (Russian song).

Here at TOPIA, we hope to continue doing what we can to help contribute to the progress of international understanding and multiculturalism.



## How Germany and Japan Are Connected By Robert Telschig

Many of you know that the exchange between Japan and Germany has been one of the strongest bonds on an institutional level in Tokushima Prefecture. This relationship has been ongoing since 1861 when the Prussian empire signed a trade agreement with Japan. To commemorate this event, many events where held in Japan and Germany in 2011, many of them even in Naruto City and Tokushima prefecture itself.

Last year, the German House was approached by the National Museum of Japanese History in Sakura, Chiba, and with two other museums in both Nagasaki and Yokohama, the historians from those four houses were able to craft an interesting and unique exhibition on 150 years of exchange between Japan and Germany.

After passing through the other cities, it will finally come to Tokushima. Opening on December 9th, the exhibition will be presented on two floors. Spread over the event hall and the upper floor of the German House, this exhibition will feature a general look through the relationship between the two countries and its people, with a special focus on the local history of the Bando POW camp. Recently acquired photographs that are not part of the usual exhibition show the life of the POWs and give us a better understanding of what it must have been like to be in Tokushima 100 years ago. So come on over to the German House, as a



special nighttime illumination will light up the building and its surrounding during the exhibition as well and should not be missed by anyone. On the third weekend of December, there will even be Christmas market inspired by German Christmas markets.

Exhibition schedule: December 9th till January 24th, from 9:30 till 16:30 (till 20:00 on Fridays and Saturdays)

Entrance fee: 400 yen for adults, 100 yen for children (elementary to middle school students)

Contact: 088-689-0099

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## Japanese Lesson By Michi Mori

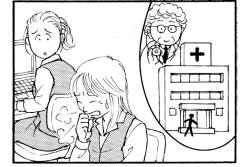
This month we will be learning how to give suggestions or advice by using "~∨たらどうですか" and "~∨た/~∨ないほうがいいです."

A:風邪をひいたのかなあ。頭が痛くて・・・。

B:家に帰ったらどうですか。
<sub>びょういん</sub>
<sub>かっ</sub>
熱があるなら病院へ行ったほうがいいですよ。

A:でもまだ仕事が残っているんです。

A: そうですね。



Ms. A has come down with a cold. Ms. B gives Ms. A some advice and suggestions. She suggests Ms. A goes home, "家に帰ったらどうですか." Furthermore, she strongly urges her to go to the hospital, "病院へ行ったほうがいいですよ." Ms. A is still adamant on not taking time off work so Ms. B advises her to take it easy, "無理をしないほうがいいですよ" and even suggests the following, "別の人にお願いしたらどうですか."

As you can see from the example above, "Vたらどうですか" is used when the speaker is suggesting something that he or she thinks is a good idea. By using the following sentence structure, "Vた/Vないほうがいいです," you can add more force behind your words or it is used when your suggestion goes against the wishes of the listener. As this sentence structure makes the suggestion sound forceful, be careful how you use it. This structure cannot be used when talking to those who are in a higher position than you as it would sound rude.

#### **Exercise**

The following is a conversation between A and B. Choose the correct sentence structure and change the ending of the verb to match the structure and write your answer in the ( ).

① A: 12 月 31 日のコンサートのチケット、B席しかありませんでした。

 $B: \mathsf{Lon}$ 次にチケットを買うときは、もっと $\mathsf{P}$ く( )ほうがいいですよ。

② A: 今月中にアメリカの友達にこの荷物を届けたいんだけど、間に合うかなあ。

B: 航空便で( )どうかなあ。間に合うと思うよ。

③ A:このケーキ食べてもいい。

B: それ、5日前のだから ( ) ほうがいいよ。

④ A: 今度のクリスマスパーティー、出席しますか。

B: 予定があったので欠席で出したんだけど、その日、行けるようになったんだよね。

A: じゃあ、「出席する」って( ) どうですか。

がいに行きます 送ります 食べます 連絡します

#### References

日本語表現文型(ナツメ社)日本語表現文型ドリル(J リサーチ) みんなの日本語(スリーエーネットワーク) Image courtesy of 絵で導入絵で練習(凡人社)

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## **Events & Memoranda**

#### Mima Japan's No. 1 Dondo-Yaki 美馬 日本一のどんど焼き

Dondon-yaki is a traditional Japanese custom that has been carried on since the ancient times. This traditional event will be taking place in Mima again this year! To kick off the new year positively, the local community will gather around a big fire and wish for safety and health and for prosperity at this event.

When: January 11 (Mon), from 9:30 Where: In front of the AMEMBO Office

Mima-cho, Mima City

TEL: 0883-55-2105

日本古来より全国に伝わる伝承行事である「どん ど焼き」を、今年も美馬市で開催いたします!新 年をスタートするにあたり、地域の人々が一同に 集まり、一つの火を囲み、一年間の健康・無病息 災・五穀豊穣を願う場です。

日時:1月11日(月・祝) 9:30~

場所: AMEMBO 事務所前

美馬市美馬町 TEL: 0883-55-2105

#### Taisan-ji Temple Mochi-Carrying Competition 大山寺の力餅

This event takes place every year at Taisan-ji Temple. Men, women, children and toddlers will carry rice cakes totalling 143 kg, 70 kg, 57 kg and 17 kg, respectively, and will compete to see who can carry it the farthest in this thrilling competition.

When: January 17 (Sun) Where: Taisan-ii Temple

4 Aza Oyama, Kanyake, Kamiita-cho, Itano-gun

TEL: 088-694-5525

正月の初会式の行事として毎年1月第3日曜日に 大山寺境内で行われます。男143kg・女70kg・ 小学生57kg・幼児17kgの餅をかつぎ、歩いた距離を競います。見物する方も力が入り、思わず歓 声を上げてしまう程の名物行事です。

日時:1月17日(日) 場所:大山寺境内

板野郡上板町神宅字大山 4

TEL: 088-694-5525

## Shinmachi River Polar Bear Swim 新町川寒中水泳大会

The polar bear swim in the Shinmachi River is an annual New Year's event that happens in January. There will be several performances such as traditional swimming and Awa Dance, and more!

When: January 24 (Sun), from 9:00 Where: Around the Shinmachi Bridge area

TEL: 090-3783-2084

新町川では毎年1月に新春恒例の有志による寒中水泳大会が行われています。川の中で、「古式泳法」や「阿波おどり」などが披露されます。

日時:1月24日(日) 9:00~ 場所:徳島市新町橋周辺

TEL: 090-3783-2084

#### 12th Snowball Fighting Shikoku Championships 第 12 回 雪合戦四国大会

Registration for the competition is now over but come out and watch an intense game of snowball fighting unfold before your very eyes!

When: January 30-31 (Sat-Sun)
Where: Iyashi no Onsen-kyo Grand

28 Sugeoi, Higashi-Iya, Miyoshi City

TEL: 0883-72-7620

参加申込みは既に終わっていますが、是非とも熱い雪合戦を見にに来てください!

日時:1月30日-31日(土・日) 場所:いやしの温泉郷グランド 三好市東祖谷菅生28

— 对 印 未 祖 音 自 TEL: 0883-72-7620

## **Events & Memoranda**

#### Volunteer Japanese Teacher Training 日本語支援ボランティア スキルアップ講座

心の声をきこう・つながろう
~「また来たい」「続けよう」と思える日本語教室づくりのために~
対話や行動・体験を重視した日本語活動って!

【日時等】 2月6日(土) 13:00~16:30 TOPIA 会議室にて

【プログラム】 第一部 講演:矢部 まゆみ先生

(横浜国立大学非常勤講師/横浜市日本語コーディネート業務アドバイザー)

第二部 発表:元木 佳江先生(TOPIA日本語講師)及びサポーター

第三部 ワークショップ及び意見交換

【受講料】 無料 【詳細】 TOPIA ホームページをご覧ください。 【主催・お問い合わせ先】(公財)徳島県国際交流協会 担当:野水

## Medical Interpreting Seminar 医療通訳研修

徳島県に暮らす外国人の方は約5,000人であり、その国籍も様々です。国際化が進むにつれ、在住外国人の抱える問題も多岐にわたっています。その中でも、医療に関わる問題は避けて通ることができません。

医療については、時には急を要し命に関わることもありますし、日本語でのコミュニケーションが難しい患者にとってはストレスがたまってしまいます。診療を円滑に推進し、患者のストレスを少しでも解消していくためには、語学ボランティアの方々の支援が必要となる場合があります。当協会では毎年、外部の講師を招き、語学ボランティアスキルアップのための研修を開催しております。

昨年度は災害に特化した研修を行いました。今年度は医療通訳研修を行います。講師の講話、そしてワークショップを通じて、医療通訳の際に多言語でを円滑に情報提供できるよう、語学ボランティアの育成・活動促進を図ることを目指します。(ただし、語学研修ではありません)

講師:村松紀子氏医療通訳研究会 (MEDINT) 代表

日時:2月21日(日)13:30~16:30 場所:徳島県国際交流協会 会議室

参加費:無料

参加予定人数:30名

内容:講話・ワークショップ

お申し込み:

〒 770-0831 徳島市寺島本町西 1-61 クレメントプラザ 6 階 公益財団法人 徳島県国際交流協会

「医療通訳研修」担当宛 TEL:088-656-3303

FAX: 088-652-0616

Email: coordinator1@topia.ne.jp

★ 2 月 15 日 (月) までに氏名、住所、電話番号、 Email、言語、を記載の上お申し込み下さい。

#### 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)