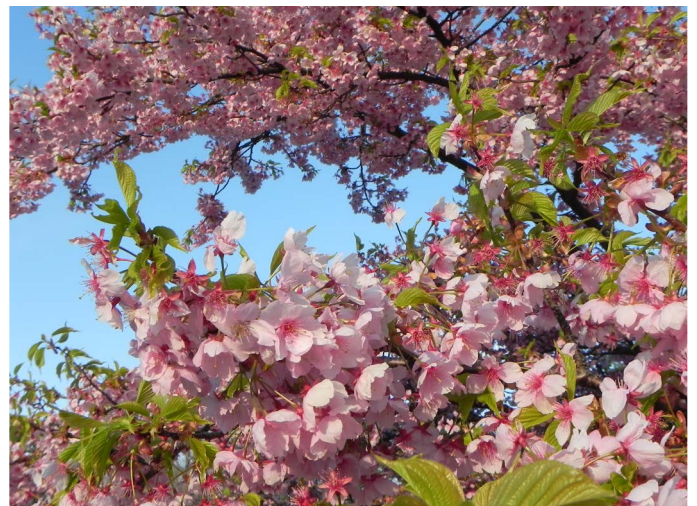


awa life

April 2017

321

**Spring
Motifs in
Japan**



**Awa Shoku: Rooting for
Aizumi's Carrots**

**TOPIA Staff
Farewell Messages**



TOPIA

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

Finally spring has arrived and flowers are starting to bloom everywhere! It is the time of flower viewing and of course cherry blossoms! So grab your picnic gear and partake in some *hanami* (cherry blossom viewing) to enjoy the warm sun and gain some new energy.

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

Your editors,
Daralyn and Franz

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

To our readers,

Thank you for submitting your surveys back to us. We appreciate your feedback and look forward to serving you better in the near future. We have taken a look at the data and had a meeting.

There was a large amount of requests to write restaurant reviews about specific restaurants, however we are unable to respond to this due to the fact that this correlates with commercial activities, which is one of the topics we are not allowed to write about. Also, starting from this month, Awa Life will be decreasing in page length from 12 pages to 10 pages. A majority wanted it to stay at its current length, but we promise to make use of those 10 pages well by writing about topics that you have asked us to write about.

On the other hand, we have some exciting news! Awa Life will be done in color twice a year! We look forward to sending you a beautifully colored edition of Awa Life during the next fiscal year.

Also, we would like to announce a brief hiatus from Awa Life for the May edition. The both of us will be on an extended absence due to other duties. We ask for your understanding at this time, and hope to be able to send you a nice June issue!

Yoroshiku Onegaishimasu! Thank you for your cooperation!

Editors:

Daralyn Yee and Franziska Neugebauer

Contributors This Month:

Kazue Inoue, Melissa Palsenbarg, Lance Kita, Yoko Koyama,
Shintaro Inoue, Seiko Mori, Dian Liu

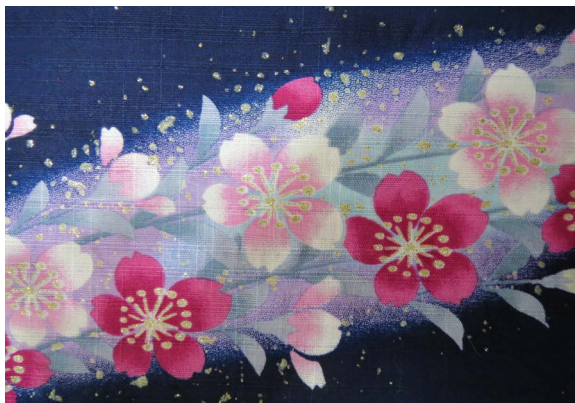
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Spring Motifs in Japan

By Melissa Palsenbarg

Spring is the season of flowers. They're everywhere and it's nice to see spots of color popping up after a long winter. Surprisingly, there aren't that many flowers in Japanese culture that make people automatically think of spring. Probably because the cherry blossom is so ubiquitous that it's the only floral marker people need to think of spring. But despite this, there are a few other flowers and plants that make the list of spring flowers.



Cherry Blossom/**Sakura** (桜)

It's almost impossible to think of spring in Japan without thinking of cherry blossoms (*sakura*). The *sakura* forecast is reported in all the newspapers, coffee shops come out with *sakura* flavored drinks and treats, and *hanami* parties are held in even the tiniest parks. *Sakura* are associated with new beginnings and they're iconic for the start of the new school year in April. *Sakura* are so popular

that they have become the unofficial flower of Japan and can be seen everywhere all year long. *Sakura* are iconic of the Japanese feeling of *mono no aware* (物の哀れ). This concept roughly means the awareness of the fleetingness and transience of life. The short life of the *sakura* encompasses this feeling perfectly. *Sakura* are very easy to identify, both in art and in real life. There are five petals on each blossom, and each petal has a notch at the end making each petal look like an elongated heart.

Weeping Willow/**Yanagi** (柳)

The sight and sound of a grove of weeping willows (*yanagi*) is a unique experience, and even as far back as the Heian period, classical poets wrote about the *yanagi*. It was used as a visual clue that the poem or story was set in spring, the time when the *yanagi* starts to regrow its leaves after winter. *Yanagi* also has a connection to ghost stories and ghostly lovers in Japan. The story takes several forms, but the basic story revolves around a young man (either a farmer or a low-ranking samurai depending on the version). He saves a willow tree from being cut down, and soon after meets and marries a young woman. They're very happy together and have a son together. Some years later, the man is startled by cries of agony coming from his wife. He rushes to her and she tells him that her tree is being cut

down and it's killing her. He's confused, until she elaborates that she is the spirit of the *yanagi* tree he saved from destruction so many years ago. As the *yanagi* tree is chopped down, the wife disappears.



Wisteria/**Fuji** (藤)

Wisteria (*fuji*) bloom from late April into May. The trees can take anywhere from 3-5 years to mature and bloom for the first time. The most stunning aspect of *fuji* in Japan is the tunnels that have been developed at gardens all over Japan. Seeing (and smelling!) these tunnels of hanging purple blossoms is an incredible sight. Kawachi Fujien in Kitakyushu is the most famous



wisteria tunnel in Japan. A little closer to home, Ishii is famous for cultivating wisteria. So much so that their town mascot is a wisteria person! Many temples and shrines all over town have wisteria on display. Jifukuji Temple (地福時) hosts a *fuji matsuri* every year from the middle of April to the beginning of May. It's not a full tunnel, but still an impressive sight.



Peony/**Botan** (牡丹)

The last flower on this list falls on the border between late spring and early summer. The peony (*botan*) naturally blooms around May, but cultivators have developed different breeds that will bloom during any season. The *botan* was imported to Japan from China during the Nara period. It's an auspicious motif and it's considered an appropriate offering at Buddhist temples. The *botan* is also known as "The King of Flowers" and it's often paired with "The King of the Beasts" the *shishi* (lion). *Botan* can be identified by their large blooms with petals that have ragged edges.

Enjoy the spring flowers and the warmer weather!

TOPIA Staff Farewell Messages

Finishing Work at TOPIA

By Seiko Mori

Time has passed by quickly and my one year working at TOPIA has come to an end. There were many aspects that were different from working at a middle school, but I am thankful that I was able to accomplish every task I have done due to the kind advice of the staff here. Also, I am glad to have had the opportunity to learn many valuable lessons that I could not have learned in the educational field from the many people I have met through TOPIA from around the world.

Through working in collaboration with TOPIA and the schools, I had the opportunity to send TOPIA registered teachers to educational organizations across the municipalities of this prefecture and actually was able to participate in the exchange events at the elementary and middle schools as well. I, along with the teachers, have been moved by being able to see the students learn in a lively manner through watching the presentations and musical and dance performances, and reading the heartwarming thank you letters and messages sent after the lectures.

TOPIA Staff Farewell Messages

Also in the same way with the middle school, high school, and university work experience and career learning program, I was able to receive a lot of energy from the sincere attitude held by those participating in the program. Within that, I also realized the direct effectiveness of this program in the "Tobitate Study Abroad Japan National Internship". I found that the practical studies was useful for the "Direct Study Abroad International Understanding Studies" portion of the program and realized again the effectiveness of the work done at TOPIA.

Also, after completing such duties such as planning, operations, and hosting of the International Understanding Forum, being an instructor for the Japanese courses, conducting the "One World" children's support program, preparing for the Japanese Language Speech

Contest, listening to Tokushima University's "International Understanding Theory" courses, and also guiding overseas visitors, I found each duty to be profound and I am thankful that I was able to have these opportunities that I could only gain at TOPIA.

Throughout this year, learning about the culture and customs of all of the people I have met from all over the world, and their strongly built way of living has broadened my horizons. There is a saying that says "The scales dropped from my eyes". In the same way, I have become able to see things that I hadn't seen before, and there is a clear difference in the depth of international understanding I had before and after working at TOPIA. I hope to be able to put the things that I have learned in to practice in the educational field. Thank you very much.

"There is no goodbye! Only see you later!"

By Shintaro Inoue

It seems like yesterday when I didn't know anything and broke out in to a sweat as I became flustered, but one year passed by in a blink of an eye, and the time has come for me to say good bye. This year, with everyone's support I was able to meet many people, learn, and smile all while on the job. I am full of gratitude.

Working at TOPIA was a new and fresh experience for me. Sometimes I had opportunities to guide tourists. I was happy to be able to show them around Tokushima where I was born and raised, and to be able to make small talk with them. Seeing their smile as they left made me feel energized and I was often left thinking "I'm glad I was able to help them. I want to keep on giving my best."

After I finished working at TOPIA for one year, I felt a close relation to foreign language and

cultures from around the world once again. I realized that if I assisted people wholeheartedly, I was able to convey my message. My experiences here have greatly developed my skills. Finally, I would like to use this opportunity to express my gratitude to all of the people that I am indebted to and the staff at TOPIA, and also for the fact that though it was a short period of one year, I was able to have the opportunity to have a pleasant experience on the job. I hope to see you all again. Thank you very much.



Thankful for Encounters and Parting Ways

By Dian Liu

This year, April, the month when the cherry blossoms bloom, has come. As the cherry blossoms fall, my two years as a CIR (Coordinator for International Relations) have come to a close. I am thankful for Tokushima that has been so warm and hospitable like a second home to me.

During these past 2 years, everyone in Tokushima has always been so patient and has supported me so kindly. 2 years ago when I first arrived in Tokushima, the rain continued to fall gently. I rode in the car with my new coworker and I, who had just left Tokushima Airport, was filled with nervousness and excitement. As I looked at the landscape outside, I imagined my new life in this

town that was about to begin. As I look back on it now, since that day, I always remember it clearly just like it was yesterday. It feels like I just greeted everyone with "Nice to meet you" and now it is time to tell everyone "Goodbye". 2 years is such a short period that went by in a blink of an eye.

When I first arrived, I didn't know much about Tokushima. However, through being involved in numerous jobs such as the translation of documents, meeting interpretation, attending to visitors, the publication of Awa Seikatsu, and much more as a CIR, slowly I was able to clearly see the lively image of Tokushima. Every day of these past 2 years I have been able to absorb various information about Tokushima like a sponge. As the days became closer to say goodbye to everyone in Tokushima, I realized how much I have come to love everyone deeply here. These years were longer than I thought. I will remember the uncountable memories that I have had in Tokushima, and I will recall each of them

as I move on in life.

I am thankful for each person I have met. Thank you to Tokushima and the people of Tokushima for being a part of my life. I will not forget this job or the experience. I also won't forget the days that I was nervous, or broke out in to laughter and am also thankful for everyone. The passion that everyone holds for their work and the strict attitude that was held has lit a fire in my heart and became a newfound energy to me. The determination and affection that all of you hold in your lives has impacted me and it made me think that I would like to fulfill my life further.

Lastly, I am thankful to part ways. Especially because we are parting ways, I have become able to better understand the importance of encounters with others and the value of each memory. Also, parting gives me a new opportunity to reunite with everyone again. I am looking forward to the day where I will be able to meet each and every one of you again.

Letter from SUKETO NAKAYOSHI

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

The cherry blossoms are starting to bloom and Japan's most beautiful season has arrived. I think a lot of families are starting a new part of their lives and are really busy during spring. When you are busy your body is more vulnerable, so please take care of your health.

This month I would like to introduce the good points of crafting toys:

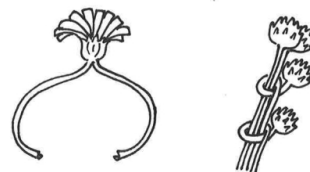
1. When using hands and fingers your child will not only become more skillful in doing so, but it is also connected to the stimulation of the brain.
2. Their creativity and ambition will grow.
3. Through working together and being taught, your child's communication and comprehension skills will develop.
4. Your child will acquire the ability to think and concentrate through having to fix their mistakes.
5. Your child can experience a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction.
6. Since it took much effort to craft the toy it will become more valuable.

Also crafting toys together with mum and dad itself will become a great memory for your child.

Create opportunities to play with your child to make great memories with them!

* * *

Play in Nature During Spring



How about going to a nearby park and playing with flowers on a sunny day?

- Take the stem of a dandelion and split it into two parts and put it around your wrist. If you tie the ends together you will have a wristwatch.
- Flowers with long stems like dandelion or white clover are great for crafting crowns or necklaces. Take two stems on the long end and use them as the center stem. Now, wrap one flower stem after the other around the two center ones and knit them together. In the end loop it and bind it together with a long grass stem.
- Tulip petals which have fallen off can be played with as a plate or little ship.

Japanese Lesson

By Yoko Koyama

さそ う とき じょうず ことわ とき
誘いを受ける時と、上手に断る時
Accepting/refusing an invitation

This month, we will be learning expressions for accepting or refusing an invitation politely. You have been invited to a place that you have always wanted to go to. Please choose the appropriate answer.

さそ う とき
<誘いを受ける時 When you accept an invitation >

A : Bさん、今週の土曜日、鳴門のうずしお、見に行くんですけど、よかったら一緒に行きませんか。

(I will go to see the whirlpools in Naruto on Saturday this week, would you like to go with me?)

B : ① はい、行きます。(Yes, I will go!)

② 一度見たいと思ってたんです。ぜひお願いします。

(I always wanted to see them, please allow me to join you.)

③ そうですか。行きましょう。(Is that so? Let's go.)



Answer: ② Explanation: You express your happiness well.

さそ ことわ とき
<誘いを断る時 When you refuse an invitation >

A : Bさん、今週の土曜日、鳴門のうずしお、見に行くんですけど、よかったら一緒に行きませんか。

(I will go to see the whirlpools in Naruto on Saturday this week, would you like to go with me?)

B : ① すみません、行けません。(I'm sorry, I can't go.)

② 行けません。約束があるんです。(I won't go. I already have plans.)

③ 行きたいんですが、その日は送別会があるんです。

(I would like to go but I have a farewell party that day.)

A : そうですか。残念ですね。(Is that so? That's too bad.)

Answer: ③ Explanation: You would like to go but you give a reason why you can't.

では、練習しましょう。Let's practice:

1) <誘いを受ける時 When you accept an invitation >

A : 今週の土曜日、剣山に登るんだけど、いっしょにどうですか。

(I want to climb Mt.Tsurugi this week Saturday, would you like to come with me?)

B : _____。ぜひ、お願いします。



2) <誘いを断る時 When you refuse an invitation >

A : 今週の土曜日、みんなで花見するんだけど、Bさんも参加しませんか。

(We are going to do a Hanami this week Saturday, would you like to join us?)

B : 花見ですか。_____んですが、_____んです。

A : そうですか。残念ですね。(Is that so? That is too bad.)



Answers:
1) 一度参りたいと思てたんです
2) 行きたい/参加したい・来週の試験の勉強をしなればならない

Awa Shoku: Rooting for Aizumi's Carrots

By Lance Kita

Aizumi Town (藍住町) is more than just the giant shopping center in its center. Just drive through the town and you'll see rows of plastic hothouses (*biniiru hausu* ビニールハウス) with their rounded roofs. As the weather gets warmer, peek through the vent holes or door flaps... chances are you'll see thin tufts of green growing in rows. Underneath those slender leaves is Aizumi's biggest crop, carrots (*ninjin* 人参).

Tokushima is the third largest carrot-producing prefecture in Japan, after Hokkaido and Chiba. Carrots love cool weather, and if you look at the three prefectures' geographical placement, you'll find that each area provides carrots at different seasons. Tokushima harvests in the spring and early summer, Hokkaido in the fall, and Chiba in winter. Most of Tokushima's carrots end up in supermarkets in the Kansai and Western Japan.

Because we live so close to a carrot-growing paradise, be sure to check out farmer's markets in the next couple of months for great deals on misshapen and odd-sized carrots. Sometimes, a huge bag of strangely-shaped roots can go for just a couple hundred yen. They're great for juicing or shredding.

You'll have access to carrots sold with the leaves on them. Double bonus! The leaves have an herbal green flavor like parsley, but don't toss them out. Make tempura with them, or mix into your scrambled eggs for more nutrition.

Also available are thin baby carrots. Lightly steamed or boiled, they make a simply elegant garnish to a piece of meat, or you can sauté them

in butter or olive oil until they get sweet, tender, and caramelized.

It seems funny to suggest how to use carrots, since they are one of the most common veggies around the world. In Asia, however, carrots and their cousins were seen as more medicinal (think ginseng) and don't show up in traditional dishes as much. Luckily, the sweet flavor of carrots and a texture that ranges from crisp to melty-soft lends

itself to a variety of traditional cooking methods.



Spring carrots have a high moisture and sugar content, perfect for eating raw

The easiest dish is *namasu* (膾). Shred carrots (and daikon if you like), sprinkle with a teaspoon of salt, and let sit for 10 minutes. Squeeze and drain all of the liquid. Add equal amounts of vinegar and sugar (more vinegar if you don't want it to sweeten) and stir. Garnish with sesame seeds. A Korean namul is almost easier. Just julienne or shred carrots, season with salt and sesame oil, mix and serve right away.



Ninjin Shiri-shiri (with some fishcake for variety)...simple Okinawan carrot cooking


My mother's side is from Okinawa, and they make something called *ninjin shiri-shiri* (にんじんしりしり). Shred carrots using the grater with the biggest holes (you want thick shreds for texture). Sauté in a hot pan with oil. Sprinkle some dashi powder and a splash of soy sauce. Pour a beaten egg or two over the carrots and mix well to scramble the eggs. Season with black pepper and serve. What an

easy dinner dish! So good with a hot bowl or rice (and a quick cook for your kids' bento lunches).

The veggie that is so close to home for many people is even closer than you think. As the weather warms up, enjoy carrots hot or cold and "root" for Aizumi's agriculture industry!

Events & Memoranda

Tokushima Prefecture 2017 Japanese Speech Contest - Apply Now!

1. PURPOSE True internationalization 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 23th, 2017 (Sunday), 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 (about 800 characters), 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)
The Tokushima Prefectural Assembly's Federation of International Exchange Assembly Members Chairman's Award --- one person (Prize: 30,000 yen gift certificate)
Runner Up Awards --- three 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 Submit your application form by mail or fax. Alternatively, you may submit your application in person.
9. DEADLINE May 29th, 2017 (Monday)
Applications must be turned in by 17:00.
10. WHERE TO APPLY Tokushima Prefectural International Exchange Association (TOPIA)
〒 770-0831 1-61 Terashima Honcho Nishi, Tokushima City,
Clement Plaza 6F
TEL: 088-656-3303 FAX: 088-652-0616

★ Please visit the TOPIA website to download the application form.

Events & Memoranda

Hana Haru Festa 2017 はな・はる・フェスタ 2017

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the festival. On this occasion, there will be special events as well as the popular Awa Odori dance and other traditional culture activities to experience.

When: April 15 (Sat) – 16 (Sun)

Where: Tokushima City, Aibahama park,
Shinmachi Boardwalk and other locations

Info: Hana Haru Festa Executive Committee

TEL: 088-655-7331

今年、第 20 回目を迎えて、特別イベントと共に、阿波おどり、又徳島のおいしいものが並ぶグルメストリートや、ステージイベント、伝統文化の体験コーナーなどがあります。

日時: 4 月 15 日 (土) ~ 16 日 (日)

場所: 徳島市 藍場浜公園、しんまちボード
ウォークほか

問い合わせ: はな・はる・フェスタ実行委員会
事務局

TEL: 088-655-7331



Kitajima Tulip Fair きたじまチューリップフェア

About 45,000 tulips of 60 different varieties will be on display at the 1,800 km² park. Mini events will be held during the flowering period.

When: April 1 (Sat) – the end of April
9:00 - 17:00

Where: Itano-gun, Kitajima-cho, Nakamura-aza,
Higaino (Kitajima Central Park)

Info: Kitajima Lifestyle Industry Division

TEL: 088-698-9806

この公園は 1800 平方メートルの圃場に約 60 種類 4 万 5 千本のチューリップが咲き並びます。期間中はミニイベントも行われる予定です。

日時: 4 月 1 日 (土) ~ 4 月下旬
9 時 ~ 17 時

場所: 板野郡北島町中村字日開野
(北島中央公園南正面)

問い合わせ: 北島町生活産業課

TEL: 088-698-9806

10th Spring Performance: Ono Sakura Nobutai 小野さくら野舞台第 10 回春の定期公演

There will be a performance of Awa Puppet Theatre and Fusuma no Karakuri by the Yorii-za. The event will take place in a tranquil location in the valley, surrounded by greenery.

When: April 9 (Sun)

Where: Myozai-gun, Kamiyama-cho, Jinryo-aza,
Moto-ono; Ono Tennou Shrine

Info: Kamiyama Town Tourism Association

TEL: 088-676-1118

寄井座による人形浄瑠璃・襖からくりの上演があります。新緑に囲まれた山あいの閑寂なロケーション。

日時: 4 月 9 日 (日)

場所: 名西郡神山町神領字本小野
小野天王神社境内

問い合わせ: 神山町観光協会

TEL: 088-676-1118

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)