

# awa life

August 2018

# 335

Goodbye  
Messages



**Awa Shoku:** A  
“Green” House  
and Green Plate  
with Goya

**Interview:**  
Nonki-ren  
Leader Mr.  
Masahito  
Kondo



**TOPIA**



**Awa Odori  
Performances in  
Tokushima**



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

August brings one of Tokushima's most lively dance festivals, the Awa Odori! Dancers and audiences dance to the two beat rhythm, and it is easily the highlight of the summer for local residents. Be sure to check out our Awa Odori map, so that you don't miss this lively event!

For all of those who like writing, please feel free to submit an article to us at any point in time about basically anything. There are a few limitations though, such as you can't write about religion, politics, commercial activities or businesses or anything that we deem inappropriate. But, other than that, we would be more than happy to receive articles about anything and everything including but not limited to, concerts, lectures, other events, culture, sports, community group information or anything cool that's happening in your local community.

We highly appreciate all of your articles and we love reading them. So if that writing bug of yours is buzzing about, grab a pen or a computer and write and send away! Please send all submissions to our email:

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

Your editors,  
Daralyn, Franzi, and Tom

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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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## *Interview: Nonki-ren Leader Masahito Kondo*

*By Kiyomi Fujii*

**A**wa Odori season is here. As you know, its Japan's largest hands-on dancing carnival! Now now, overseas residents of Tokushima, you shouldn't sit still, don't miss your chance to catch waves of happiness. Dancing fools are absolutely much happier than watching fools. (Common saying in Tokushima)

Well, Arasowaren's special dance team members have been practicing extensively. They have been putting their efforts in to becoming some of the best dancers around. Our special coaches are the dancers of the famous group "Nonki-ren".



We interviewed Masahito Kondo, the leader of the dance group, Nonki-ren. He is a person who holds true character and presence, a passion for Awa Odori, and a consistent policy for his activities. In all he does, he

keeps an open mind. Let us introduce you to this passionate, nifty Awa-man.

**F: Could you tell us about your dance history? When did you start dancing?**



K: I used to enjoy watching Awa Odori. When I was in the first year of high school, I saw sparkling and joyful looking dancers. That is when I decided to dance. I caught notice of Nonki-ren's dancers wanted advertisement, and decided to join. At that time, none of my family members or acquaintances were dancing, and I myself decided to jump in Nonki-ren by myself.

*(F: Being at the young age of 15, you devoted yourself to Awa Odori! It sounds like all of sudden, you were able to realize the special gift that you held.)*

**F: What are the characteristics of Nonki's dance?**

K: It's one of what they call, the three major styles of men's dance. Unlike the other two styles, such as, Gojahei's disciplined slow, low shuffle, and casting movements; and Aho-ren's grand stepping and jumping movements, in "Nonki-style", dancers straighten their back, look forward, dance merrily with a spring in their steps, and appeal like they are cheerfully communicating with their audience with eye contact. With this, we seek unity and harmony with the audience.

The men's dance depicts masculinity, as many of the earlier members were workmen. Women's dance features the expressive old style with "uki-ashi" (lifting steps), soft, and elegant turns.

Our team was established in 1925, which means that we are the oldest *ren*. We will celebrate our 100th anniversary in 2025 and plan to hold a celebratory performance.

**F: How does a famous group like Nonki-ren practice year-round?**

K: We practice dancing throughout the year. We work on individual technique and consistency during January and February. In the spring, each part practices separately, and a performance routine is created. Right now we are practicing almost every day. Each time we practice for about two hours at Taen Park in Itano Town, Aizumi-cho Residents Hall, and Okinosu Marine Terminal.

**F: Please tell us about the characteristics, attractive points, and anything about Awa Odori that you would like to point out to our global audience.**

K: Anyone can participate and enjoy. Despite language barriers, people are still able to communicate.



**F: You have been around the world and performed the Awa Odori. Could you tell us a little more about your experience?**

For Japanese people, there is a slight disconnect with dancing, as most prefer to watch quietly from afar. However, in foreign countries, people start to gather right away. They seem to be close to the dancers physically and emotionally. Also, they seem to feel the rhythm, and take it in well. People from all countries love to move to the beat and are great at dancing.

**F: Do you have any pointers for overseas residents when they learn the basics of Awa Odori?**

K: Mastering the basics of Awa Odori is connected to being able to share correct information about the dance. It doesn't end simply at watching and imitating. By playing the traditional instruments that have been passed on, and learning to wear the traditional clothing, you can experience the true Awa Odori and come to understand the heart of Japan. Then, when you return home to Japan, you can properly explain and teach the dance.

**F: Please give some words of encouragement to Arasowaren.**

K: We would like to continue to raise dance leaders worldwide to share the message of Japan and would like to developmentally expand the places that the dance is performed. Our hope is that the dancers will enjoy themselves and that the people watching will enjoy the performance to the extent that they will also want to dance as well.

## Goodbye Messages

*Franzi and Tom will be starting a new chapter of their lives. All of us at TOPIA send our best wishes, and hope to see them again.*

### By Tom Wehrmann

Almost exactly one year ago, I was contacted by the editors of Awa Life, who asked me to write an article to introduce myself since I would be an editor too from August. At that time, I was still in Berlin, busy writing my master thesis and also excited for my next adventure in Tokushima. So I wrote some sentences about spicy food, mountain climbing and my struggle with Japanese dialects. Now, it seems like I am again in that same situation, and have been requested to write a few parting words. Rather than writing about myself, I just want to share one of my travel highlights with you after being here for one year in Tokushima, especially the things I enjoyed, beside my experiences at work.



Two of my friends came from far away to visit me during Golden Week. Like most tourists, they wanted to see the whirlpools of Naruto and the Iya Valley, Tokushima's top attractions. Because the weather was sunny but not too hot, we decided to visit Naruto by train and rent a bike at the tourism association to cycle along the beach to our destination: the whirlpools. Most people think it is impossible to cross the bridges (like the Konaruto Bridge) which are connecting the islands, by bike, and they are right. Although it is not forbidden in the first place, there is no bike lane and the cars passing the bridge are really fast, so if you want to go in a big group, crossing the bridge could become

a game of life or death. So is there an alternative? Yes there is and it is even free! Little boats called watashifune operate at three different spots every hour to bring you safely to the other side. Once you are on the opposite riverside, there are two

ways to go to the whirlpool area: the Renaissance Beach and the Uchi no Umi area. Most people take the first option because it is the most direct and fastest route, and offers you a scenic view of the bridge connecting Tokushima Prefecture and Hyogo Prefecture, but since I suppose many of you Awa Life readers know that path already, I'd like to tell you a little more about the narrow and hidden trail along the Uchi no Umi Sea of Naruto. The trail is curvy and

sometimes also hilly (I fell once from my bike) but the view of small houses between the still water and the big green mountains, and some American looking areas with many vacation homes, really paid off with the longer cycling time. I would also highly recommend everyone to visit the Uchi no Umi Park, with its vast flower gardens, adventurous playgrounds and numerous sports facilities. This captivating trip is not too exhausting, so it is suitable for families as well.

Of course there must be many more hidden treasures in our prefecture and I feel after only one year, I was only able to see the tip of the iceberg. I would like to take the opportunity to thank all of my coworkers for helping me adapt to a Japanese working environment and of course our readers, who enjoy Awa Life, for your continuous support. Please support the new German CIRs coming in August.

### By Franziska Neugebauer

How quick have two years passed! I realized that my time in Tokushima has come to an end when I started packing my belongings to ship them back to Germany – two weeks before I had to leave... Time went by way too fast! But I can honestly say, I had a blast! Over time, I lived all around Japan in different places but Tokushima was definitely my favorite. Why? I think it was due to a mixture of great friends I was able to make, and the gorgeous

scenery and landscapes of this beautiful prefecture. I totally fell in love with this beautiful part of the world. Let me share my favorite spots in Tokushima with you: Naka with its lush green mountains, the Tairyu-ji Temple and the beautiful blue Naka River. The first time I went to Naka was actually because of work. I was attending a delegation of canoeists from Tokushima's partner state in Germany, Lower Saxony. I was so impressed by the tall mountains and the wild river winding its way through the valley

that it took my breath away. Since that first visit, I came to Naka many many times and showed all my friends visiting from Germany that beautiful area. If you have not been to Naka or the Tairyu-ji Temple yet, make sure to make your way there. In autumn, the area



is well known for autumn leaves and in spring the cherry blossoms around Kawaguchi Dam are a popular spot for Tokushima locals. Take a rafting tour along the Naka river or try out some kayaking. If you visit in winter, go to one of the hot springs in the area or try to find a frozen waterfall. In summer, taking the Tairyu-ji ropeway up the mountain will give you the opportunity to cool down a little bit at the mountain top area where you will be able to

see temple number 21 of the pilgrimage, the "Dragon Temple". If you walk a little further up to the Kobo Daishi statue, you can enjoy a fantastic view and on a clear day you can see Anan City, Tokushima City, and even as far as the Onaruto Bridge. I will definitely come

back one day to see that beautiful scenery once more. A big thank you to everyone who made my time in Tokushima memorable. I am not only taking great experiences back home, I also learned a lot about myself and what I am capable of doing. But most importantly I am taking back friends I made for life. The biggest thank you goes to my partner in crime and I am also waving over to Naruto! Bis bald!

## Letter from SUKETO NAKAYOSHI

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

A child's sleep in the evening is vital, as it is said that the secretion of growth hormones that are vital for a child's growth occur from 10PM-2AM. Also, if they are not able to receive a full night's rest, their mood will be unstable, and there will be a large impact on their health. Especially because it is hot and it is easy to become tired, it is important to put efforts in developing an environment where children can sleep well.

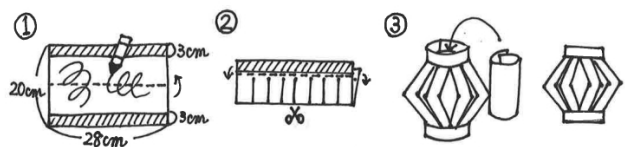
Points on Getting Your Child to Sleep:

- Have them be in bed by 9PM. (You can get them there by reading a picture book.)
- Dim the lights and make the room darker.
- Turn off the TV.
- Pat their back lightly. (You can also sing them lullabies at the same time.)

Putting your child to sleep can become an opportunity to have a relaxing time with your child. It is also helpful to build a better relationship between parent and child. When it is difficult to get your child to sleep, adjust the time that you wake up your child, and nap times to adjust their lifestyle rhythm.

\* \* \*

### Handmade Lantern



1) Prepare a 20cmx28cm piece of construction paper. Glue two strips of construction paper cut to 3cm, and paste it on the top and bottom. Draw a picture that you like in the main area, then make a horizontal fold in the middle.

2) With the paper folded in half, make eight cuts in the paper, then fold the part where you previously put the two strips of constructions paper.

3) Open up the paper you have previously folded in step two, then connect the two ends of the paper in order to form a cylinder. (At this time, you can also add a rolled piece of paper so that the lantern can keep its shape.)

\*Attach a piece of string to hang the lantern as an ornament. It will give you the atmosphere of a festival!

## Japanese Lesson

By Takako Yamada

## Comparative and Superlative Expressions of Adjectives

In this month's lesson, we will learn about comparative and superlative expressions of adjectives. Adjectives themselves do not change their forms in comparative and superlative expressions in Japanese. Instead, we use some fixed expressions. Be careful. The word order is quite different from that in English.

**Comparative expressions** Note: Words in ( ) can be omitted.(1) 「AはBより adjective です。」A is comparative adjective than B.

Ex: アメリカは日本より大きいです。(America is bigger than Japan.)

(2-Q) 「AとBとどちらが adjective ですか。」Which is comparative adjective, A or B?

Ex: 日本語と英語とどちらが難しいですか。(Which is more difficult, Japanese or English?)

(2-A) 「Aのほうが(Bより) adjective です。」A is comparative adjective (than B).

Ex: 日本語のほうが英語より難しいです。(Japanese is more difficult than English).

「どちらも adjective です。」Both are adjective.

Ex: どちらも難しいです。(Both are difficult.)

**Superlative expressions** Note: Words in ( ) can be omitted.(3-Q) 「〇〇(の中)で、なにが / だれが / どこが / いつが一番 adjective ですか。」Among 〇〇, what/who/where/when is superlative adjective?Ex: スポーツ(の中)で、なにが一番おもしろいですか。

(Among sports, what is the most interesting?)

(3-A) 「〇〇が 一番 adjective です。」〇〇 is superlative adjective.Ex: 野球が 一番おもしろいです。(Baseball is the most interesting.)

Now, let's practice. Put the following sentences into Japanese.

① Mt. Fuji is taller than Mt. Tsurugi.

② - Q Which is bigger, America or Japan?

② - A America is bigger (than Japan).

③ - Q Who is the tallest in your family?

③ - A I am (the tallest).

Answers: ① 富士山は剣山より高いです。 ② - Q アメリカと日本とどちらが大きいですか。 ② - A アメリカの方が大きいです。 ③ - Q 家族でだれが一番背が高いですか。 ③ - A 私が一番背が高いです。

## Awa Shoku: A "Green" House and Green Plate with Goya

By Lance Kita

I'll never get used to the intense heat of a Japanese summer, but a green curtain of **goya** (ゴーヤ) just might make things a little bit more bearable. The quick growing vines of the bitter melon (also called bitter gourd or balsam pear) can climb up netting and create an all-natural green wall in front of a window or sliding glass door that keeps the direct sunlight from roasting your room. Not only will this decrease your dependency on air conditioning, but also provides some privacy and natural ventilation.

Another of the benefits is that you get free vegetables! If you started your green curtain in late spring, you should have warty-skinned, cucumber-like fruit hanging off the vines by August. These bitter melons are low in calories, and rich in dietary fiber, vitamin C, and folates. They also contains many minerals, beta-carotene, and lutein. They're also quite bitter (duh!) if eaten raw. Here are some tips on how to prepare and cook them.



*Bitter melon gets a lot of its bitter from the white pith and seeds inside, which should be scraped out with a spoon.*

### Salt!

First, cut the ends off and slice the **goya** lengthwise down the middle. You'll find a white pith with lots of seeds in the center. Take a spoon and scrape out all of that stuff (many people say that the true bitterness comes from this). Next, slice the halves into thin C-shaped slices. Now comes the crucial part...throw a teaspoon or



*Salt your goya slices and squeeze out the bitter liquid after letting them sit for at least five minutes. Much mellow flavor.*

more of salt over the slices and massage for a few seconds. Let sit for a few minutes, and **SQUEEZE HARD**. You'll extract a lot of green water, which you should discard. Give the **goya** a light rinse and another squeeze. Voila! It should be less bitter (no matter what, there will be bitterness, but that is the allure of this gourd).

### Stir-fry!

Now is time to cook it. The best way is to make **goya champuru** (ゴーヤチャンプル), an Okinawan stir-fry (Okinawa is famous for eating **goya**). Bitter melon loves oil, so start with some sesame or vegetable oil.

Fry up some chopped pork luncheon meat (use corned beef or canned tuna if you don't like pork). Throw in the **goya** slices and stir-fry. Add some bonito flakes, black pepper, and a splash of soy sauce. Move everything to one side of the pan and scramble a beaten egg or two on the other side. When it's half-cooked, toss everything else together. Done! This is the perfect quick meal for a sweltering summer night with a bowl of rice.



*Goya champuru and spicy goya kimchee are some of the best ways to appreciate the bitter flavor of this veggie.*

### Spicy!

Spicy condiments will also complement the bitter flavor of this vegetable. Try stir-frying the **goya** slices in some **gochujang** (spicy-sweet Korean miso) or **doubanjiang** (spicy Chinese miso) and some soy sauce. Add some honey, brown sugar, or mirin to balance out the heat if you wish. Garnish with sesame seeds. You can also make kimchee with **goya** and some kimchee sauce from your local supermarket. Store these side dishes in the refrigerator for up to a week, and they'll add a punch to a plate of fried noodles, slices of cold chicken or pork, or your bento lunch.

So boost your summer stamina and blow away the heat fatigue with some bitter melon from your shady, eco-friendly green curtain!

# Events & Memoranda

## Rakugo in Easy to Understand Japanese やさしい日本語の落語会

Let's enjoy Japanese Rakugo together! Rakugo will be performed in an easy to understand manner, using easy Japanese.

Storyteller: Shichifuku Katsura

Program: "Chiritotechin" (There will be an explanation of Rakugo and a Q&A Corner)

When: August 25th (Sat)  
10:30-11:45 (Doors open at 10:00)

Where: TOPIA, Clement Plaza 6F

Apply: TOPIA, 088-656-3303/topia@topia.ne.jp

Participation is limited to the first 80 participants.

◆ This event will be cancelled if a storm warning is issued by 8:00 on the day of the event.

日本の文化「落語」をいっしょに楽しみましょう！  
やさしい日本語を使って、わかりやすく落語をしてくれます

落語家：桂七福さん

演目：『チリトテチン』（落語についての説明や質問コーナーもあります）

日時：8月25日（土）  
10:30～11:45（受付開始：10:00～）

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

申し込み：088-656-3303/topia@topia.ne.jp

定員：80名

◆朝8時の時点で暴風雨警報が出ている場合は中止となります。

## Awa Odori Performances in Tokushima 県内の阿波踊り大会



### Mima City Firework and Udatsumi no Machi Awa Odori

When: August 11 (Sat)  
Awa Odori: 17:00-20:00  
Firework: 20:00-  
Where: Miraizu Nishi Hiroba, Area around the roadside station Ailando Udatsumi

### Sadamitsu Summer Festival Awa Odori

When: August 15 (Wed) & 16 (Thu)  
19:00-22:00  
Where: Sadamitsu Shopping Arcade, etc.

### Miyoshi City - Ikeda Awa Odori

When: August 13 (Mon) - 16 (Thu)  
Where: 13th: Ikeda Sogo Taiikukan, 14th-16th: Around JR Awa Ikeda Station

### Higashi Miyoshi - Oasis Awa Odori Special Obon Performance

When: August 13 (Mon) - 16 (Thu)  
13:00-, 14:00-, 15:00-, 16:00-  
Where: Yoshinogawa Highway Oasis

### Kaiyo Town Awa Odori & Folk Songs

When: August 12 (Sun)  
19:30-21:00  
Where: Former Kaifu Junior High School Sports Ground

### Yoshinogawa City Awa Odori

When: August 14 (Tue) - 16 (Thu)  
19:00-22:00  
Where: In front of Kamojima station

### Kitajima Hyotan Awa Odori

When: August 14 (Tue)  
11:00-12:30  
Where: Kitajima Town Library - Sousei Hall

### Naruto City

**Naruto Senbatsu Awa Odori**  
When: August 8 (Wed)  
18:30-20:30  
Where: Naruto Bunka Kaikan

**Naruto City Awa Odori**  
When: August 9 (Thu) - 11 (Sat)  
19:00-22:00  
Where: JR Naruto Area

### Tokushima City Senbatsu Awa Odori Zenyasai Stage Performance

When: August 11 (Sat)  
11:00-, 15:00-, 19:00-  
Where: Asty Tokushima  
Fee: Admission fee

### Senbatsu Awa Odori

When: August 12 (Sun) - 15 (Wed)  
11:00-, 13:30-, 16:00-  
Where: Awa-Gin Hall  
Fee: Admission fee

### Tokushima City Awa Odori

When: August 12 (Sun) - 15 (Wed)  
Where:  
paid seats: Shiyakushomae, Aibahama, Konyamachi, Minamiuchimachi  
1.) 18:00-20:00 2.) 20:30-22:30  
Free for Ryogokuhoncho, Shinmachibashi, and Motomachi



# Events & Memoranda

## Let's dance with Niwaka-Ren にわか連で踊ろう

Experience Awa Odori and dance together with Niwaka-ren! You can join without any dance knowledge.

When: August 12th (Sun) - 15th (Wed)  
(Two times every day, please gather at 18:30 & 20:30)

Where: Tokushima City, Tokushima City Hall & Motomachi Dance Plaza

Fee: Free

Info: Awa Odori Executive Committee

Tel: 088-621-5298

本場徳島で阿波踊りを体験したい人は、にわか連で自由に踊れます。阿波踊りを全く知らなくても大丈夫。有名連の手ほどきを受けて、演舞場へレッツゴー！参加自由。

日時： 8月12日（日）～15日（水）

毎日2回開催 集合 18:30 & 20:30

場所： 徳島市 徳島市役所前、元町おどり広場

料金： 無料

問い合わせ： 阿波おどり実行委員会事務局

TEL： 088-621-5298

## Naruto Summer Fireworks Festival 鳴門市納涼花火大会



This year 10,000 rockets will light the sky, to celebrate the 100-year anniversary since holding the first Ninth Symphony concert in Asia.

今年は『第九』アジア初演100周年記念として、10,000発の花火が打ち上げられます♪ 有料観覧席あり。詳しくはお問合せください。

When: August 7th (Tue), 19:45-20:50  
\*In case of bad weather, the event will be postponed to August 31st (Fri).

Where: Naruto City, Naruto City Bunka Kaikan

Fee: Middle school and up 1000 yen;  
Elementary and below 500 yen

Info: Naruto City Uzushio Tourism Association

Tel: 088-684-1731

日時： 8月7日（火）19:45～20:50

※荒天の場合は8月31日（金）に順延

場所： 鳴門市 鳴門市文化会館

料金： 小学生以上 1,000円

3歳～小学生未満 500円

問い合わせ： 鳴門市うずしお観光協会

TEL： 088-684-1731

## Join Futsal & Awa Odori Organized by NPO 法人 AWA PROJECT

When: August 12th (Sun), 12:00-16:00  
TIA Awa Odori Meal Time: 16:00-17:30  
TIA Awa Odori Dance Kick Off: 18:00-

Where: Tokugin Tomoni Plaza Seishonen Center

Fee: Futsal: 3000 yen per team, 600 yen per person

Awa Odori: 1000 yen for Overseas

Residents, and 2,500 yen deposit for Happi Coat (2000 yen will be returned, 500 yen for cleaning fee)

Info: 2014nippon@gmail.com

Tel: 088-622-6066 (TIA/  
Tokushima International  
Association)



## 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)