

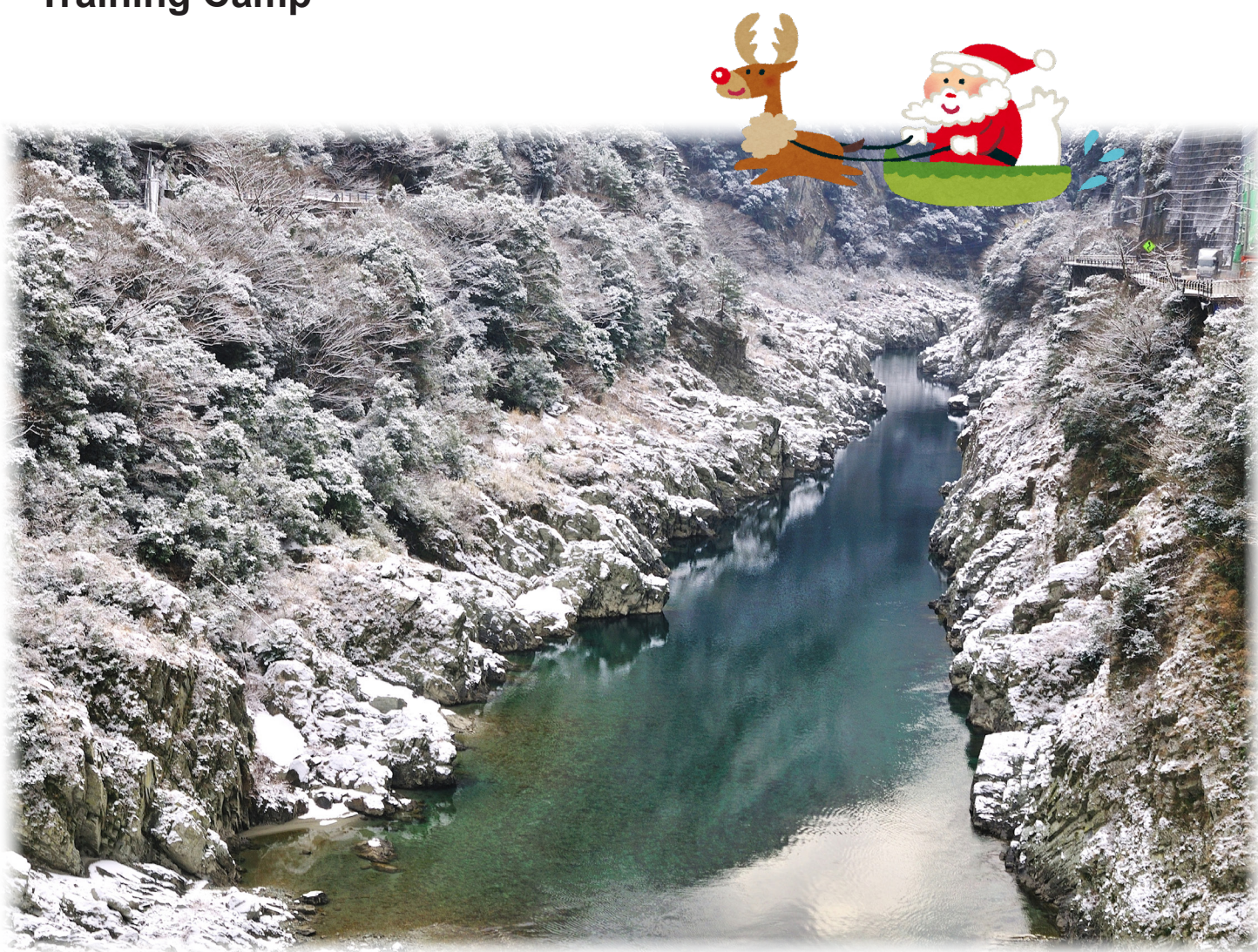
# awa life

**Georgian Rugby**  
Team Pre-game  
Training Camp

**Christmas** Around the  
**World**

December 2019

# 350



**Awa Shoku:** Sticking  
Together With **Mochi**

**Gairaigo Galore:**  
ゲレンデ



**TOPIA**

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

With December winter has finally arrived and we can hope for some snow in Tokushima. However, it's not just the weather, two of the main holidays celebrated in many countries around the world occur in winter: Christmas and New Year. In our 2018 December issue, people from all over the world introduced their way of celebrating New Year. This year, people from five countries will explain how Christmas is celebrated in their home countries. In this spirit, we wish everyone who is celebrating Christmas a wonderful holiday. Enjoy the last few days of the 2010s and have a great New Years celebration!

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,  
Sydney and Nico

### **Tokushima Prefectural International Exchange Association (TOPIA)**

1-61 Terashima Honcho Nishi, Tokushima City 770-0831 JAPAN, Clement Plaza 6F

Tel: 088-656-3303 Fax: 088-652-0616

<http://www.topia.ne.jp/>

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



---

#### *Editors:*

Sydney Bartig and Nico Bohnsack

#### *Contributors This Month:*

Chie Suzue, Omar Camacho, Miraku Miyachi, Emily Yocom, Lance Kita, Junko Nagamachi, and Uka Teki



# Contents

Pg. 2-4: Christmas Around the World

Pg. 4-5 Georgian Rugby Team Pre-game Training Camp

Pg. 5: Gairaigo Galore: ゲレンデ

Pg. 6: Awa Shoku: Sticking Together With Mochi

Pg. 7: Japanese Lesson

Pg. 8: The Autumn Awa Odori with Arasowaren

Pg. 8-9: Events and Memoranda



## Christmas Around the World

### *My Christmas in Japan*

By Chie Suzue

When I was a child we would start preparing for Christmas in early December and I remember eagerly awaiting Christmas day.

Our family would start by setting up our Christmas tree. Next, we would do something that is unique to Japanese Christmas. We would visit our favorite cake shop and order a Christmas cake so that it would be ready in time for the evening of Christmas Eve. I think that most families probably celebrate Christmas on Christmas Eve. My parents would go out and buy presents for my siblings and myself. Toys were so popular that parents would buy them very early, before they were sold out.

Just a little past noon on Christmas Eve we would then go pick up our Christmas cake and afterwards my mom would begin preparing dinner with the ingredients we bought earlier that day



### *Mexican Christmas*

By Omar Camacho

As Mexico is near the USA, we are very influenced by their culture and Christmas is one of those influences. At the middle or end of November, we start to decorate our houses with Christmas decorations such as a Christmas tree, Christmas lights, ornaments, Santa Claus images, Christmas socks, and so on as we await the

and I would help her. Different from a normal meal, dinner for Christmas Eve consisted of elaborately cooked dishes lining the table and as a child I always looked forward to it. My family always had Christmas cake and German stollen for dessert. My mother's friend loved to bake so she would always send us a stollen at Christmas!

On Christmas morning I would always wake up earlier than usual to receive presents. I remember always feeling so happy on Christmas. Now that I've become an adult, I tend to spend

Christmas Eve eating the limited, Christmas menu with a friend at a restaurant or drinking sake and eating delicious food at an izakaya. As for presents, I buy a present for myself (haha). This is my Christmas style!

arrival of Santa Claus in order to receive some toys and presents.

Sometimes we also organize gift exchange games with friends or family, and of course we have a big Christmas dinner (the famous thing to prepare for dinner is turkey). However, in Mexico we have something unique: a party called "Posada" where we celebrate Jesus Christ's birth because our main religion is Catholicism. For this party



we invite our friends and family members to come to our house to eat Mexican dishes, drink hot drinks such as “Ponche” (hot fruit juice), and the most important thing, hitting the “Piñatas”. Also, we have a role play simulating when people went to visit Jesus Christ for the first time where we sing, carry candles, and walk in



a small parade in front of our house. As with any good Mexican party, at the end we put on some

Latin music to dance to all night, drink alcoholic drinks, and enjoy time with our friends and family until our bodies can't take anymore.

This celebration is very important for us because we can stay with the people we love and we try to meet all of our family members that we haven't seen for a

long time. Christmas is definitely one of the most famous celebrations in Mexico.



### **Christmas in Germany**

*By Nico Bohnsack*

Christmas is certainly the most festive time in Germany. It is generally the time for families to come together. The Christmas season usually begins with the first of four Advent Sundays between the end of November and beginning of December.

One tradition, especially for children, is the Advent calendar. This is often a calendar with 24 doors hiding small pieces of chocolate. Children then open one door each day between December 1st and 24th. St. Nicholas Day (December 6th) is also a special day for children since parents often put presents into “Nicholas socks”, which children then discover in the morning after waking up.

German Christmas also would not be the same without self-made Christmas pastries or the large number of Christmas markets in most of the towns where people can enjoy Christmas sweets, other foods, hot wines, and the beautiful Christmas decorations in the towns.



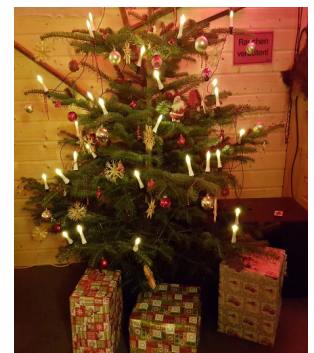
### **A Christmas in America**

*By Sydney Bartig*



Michigan, the state I'm from, tends to get a lot of snow in the winter so we are usually lucky enough to have a beautiful, snowy backdrop for Christmas. Christmas is easily one of the biggest holidays in America. Children and adults get time off from school/work and many

Houses and apartments get decorated as well, with one important element being the Christmas tree, usually a real fir. The most important day is then Christmas Eve, where families are usually together, exchanging presents, eating and drinking. Many families also go to church to join the Christmas Eve mass. Food on Christmas Eve can be pretty simple (such as sausages and potato salad), but can differ from family to family. The 1st and 2nd Christmas holidays (25th, 26th) are then usually the time for festive lunch meals. My family often eats a whole roasted duck or roulades with potato dumplings, gravy, and red cabbage. Eating is the main activity during the Christmas holidays and you will have likely gained weight when Christmas, one of the most loving festivities in Germany, is finally over.



families gather together to spend the holiday together. When it becomes December, many families will start decorating for Christmas.

They hang Christmas lights on their house, put out decorations featuring Santa Claus, reindeer, snowmen, etc. and of course put up their Christmas tree. My family still has ornaments from when my mom was a child. We always tend to

## Christmas Around the World

put our tree up right before Christmas, however, because our cats are mischievous and like to play with the ornaments.

On Christmas day most families will also make a big dinner. Turkey, mashed potatoes, vegetables, deserts, etc. are common Christmas dishes, although each family has their own traditions. My family actually always makes lasagna, although I'm not sure if there is a reason. Incidentally, my family also celebrates Christmas (dinner,



### Christmas in Vietnam

By Miraku Miyachi

In Vietnam we often use the word Nô-en (Noel) to talk about Christmas. When Christmas is around the corner, we can feel the exciting atmosphere everywhere, from shopping malls to restaurants, from boulevards to small streets, and through the seasonal songs like Jingle Bells and Silent Night. The bustling melody of bells and music makes listeners excited. Lots of decorations, hanging lights with Christmas symbols like bells, red-nose reindeer or Santa Claus figures, can be seen at many places. However, Christmas is not a national holiday. Some companies allow the staff who are Christian to take time off from their workplace on the morning of December 25th, however, the others have to work as normal. Even

presents, etc.) on Christmas Eve (the 24th). The reason for this is because when my uncle was a child he would get so excited for Christmas that he would make himself physically sick. Ever since then we moved Christmas festivities to the 24th.



knowing that we would be terribly tired the next day, we could not stand staying at home during Christmas Eve. We, the "non-Christians", would gather for a party, or went to a concert, disco, bar, or lined up to wait until it was our turn to eat a piece of Eucharist. Somehow, we felt it was so delicious that we joined the line again to get another piece of it. It was a kind of violation, but it has become a very sweet memory that I cannot ever forget.



## Georgian Rugby Team Pre-game Training Camp

By Emily Yocom

I must admit, when I first received my JET Program assignment and heard that I would be working in the Tokushima Prefectural Government's International Sports Exchange Office, I had no idea what to expect. It was only when I arrived in August to an office



so busy that more than half of the employees were out on business trips my first day that I realized what my duties would look like. My very

first day on the job was spent assisting athletes from Nepal as they trained for the Olympics. Once this was over, no sooner had I got settled in at my desk, I was handed a ticket to Canada. I would be heading back to North America only two weeks after my arrival in Japan to interpret at the World Masters Weightlifting Championships in Montreal. Through a very busy first few weeks, I soon learned

what it meant to be a CIR in the International Sports Exchange Office.

In early September, I was assigned to interpret for



rugby players from Georgia (the country, not the US state!) for their pre-Rugby World Cup training camp in Tokushima. Due to the efforts of the International Sports Exchange Office, this became a memorable event for the players, the local community, and myself. The athletes got to try their hand at indigo dyeing, taste sudachi and Naruto sea bream, and play beach volleyball in view of the Naruto Whirlpools. Local Tokushima residents got to meet with the players at events like rugby workshops, school visits, and an autograph signing. The Prefecture even held a "fan zone" event, where visitors could try Georgian foods cooked with Tokushima ingredients, and pick up some Georgian flag merchandise to cheer on the team with.



the Embassy of Georgia to Japan who came to support the team. One diplomat in particular taught me that wine is an important part of Georgian culture, and that it was actually invented in Georgia! I told him how surprised I was that I'd never heard this before, and said I'd like to try it someday. When the delegation geared up to head back to Tokyo, I was handed a long, skinny gift bag. It was Georgian wine! I thanked them profusely before seeing them off. I was touched by this thoughtfulness, and very grateful to experience a bit of Georgian culture in Tokushima.

I got a chance to really learn about Georgia when I was interpreting for a delegation from

Although the team's 10-day training camp seemed to end in the blink of an eye, I'm sure that the impact they had on the community - and on myself - will be everlasting. It didn't take me long to learn that intercultural exchange through sport is an important part of Tokushima Prefecture.

### ゲレンデ (Gelände; Ski Slope)

By Nico Bohnsack

Japan is a country with many mountains and skiing areas. How about you? Are you a mountain climbing or skiing enthusiast? To secure smooth conversations in that area it can be helpful to know some German words which are used as loanwords in Japanese. One of these words is ゲレンデ which has its origins in the German word "Gelände". The original word, however, simply means "area" or "terrain". The Japanese ゲレンデ exclusively means "ski slope". The German word for ski slope would be "Skipiste" or "Skigelände", in a broader sense. Here you can see a phenomenon which often happened when German words became part of the Japanese language: German words tend to be relatively long, but since this can be a problem in terms of pronunciation in Japanese the words tend to get integrated into Japanese in a shortened version while still keeping the meaning of the originally longer word. In this case, "Skigelände" became "Gelände".



There are a couple of originally German words used in the mountain climbing or skiing field and the reason for that is mainly one man: Theodor Edler von Lerch. Lerch was an Austrian skiing pioneer and major general who served as an exchange officer in the Imperial Japanese Army from 1910 till 1912. He accelerated both civil and military skiing in Japan and was the first person ever to climb Mount Fuji on skis. Other examples of related words would be ストック (Stock, ski stick), アイゼン (Eisen, climbing irons) or シュラフ (Schlaf, sleeping bag). All these words are short forms of the original German words "Skistock", "Steigeisen" and "Schlafsack".

### Gairaigo Galore



## Awa Shoku: Sticking Together With Mochi

By Lance Kita

Here we are, at the last month of the year (and of the decade), getting ready for 2020 to arrive. Japanese families take the end-of-year preparations very seriously, and there are symbolic meanings to every food, decoration, and ritual during the final days of the old year. One of the key foods during the Year's End (nenmatsu 年末) and New Year (Oshogatsu お正月 or nenshi 年始) holidays are glutinous rice cakes (mochi 餅). Certain kinds of rice are steamed and then pounded to form a sticky dough, which is then formed or cut into smaller pieces.

At year's end, pounding mochi is a family, if not neighborhood event. Growing up in a Nikkei community in Hawaii, my Scoutmaster gathered friends at his house, and all of the men would take turns swinging the heavy wooden mallet to pound out batch after batch of steamed rice, and when the blob was smooth and elastic, it would be dumped onto a table dusted with cornstarch, and the women would quickly pinch off balls and roll them with the palms of their hands to make round patties. Some would be wrapped around balls of sweet bean paste (anko 餡子), and with an American twist, sometimes filled with chocolate bar pieces or peanut butter. All of the mochi would be shared with the families who helped. Like the grains of rice in the stone mortar, the community must stick together to realize this tradition.

Besides the social symbolism, the round rice cakes themselves serve an important religious purpose during the Nenmatsu preparations. A display of kagami mochi 鏡餅 (literally "mirror mochi"), which consists of a large and medium round rice cake topped with a bitter orange (daidai 橙), is displayed in the tokonoma 床の間 alcove of the living room. A small one is displayed the household Shinto altar (kamidana 神棚). Kagami mochi help to greet the spirits of the New Year. Some people say the round

rice cakes are reminiscent of the mirror used by the Sun Goddess Amaterasu. Others say the mirror is one of the three Sacred Imperial Treasures, with the orange representing the sacred jewel, and a skewer of dried persimmons representing the sacred sword. The name of the orange is also a play on words with "generation after generation" symbolizing family lineage.



Mochi come in all shapes, sizes, and rices... from red heirloom rice blocks to round ones mixed with mugwort (speckled green).



Celebrate the New Year with rice cakes in a bowl of ozoni (left), or have a grilled rice cake in a sweet bowl of zenzai (right) on a cold winter night.



Rice cakes herald the new year, and this kagami mochi display represents something quite spiritual for the Japanese.

A lot of mochi is eaten during the New Year. The quintessential dish is ozoni お雑煮, a soup with rice cakes. Every region has a different style of ozoni, with different soups, mochi shapes, and added ingredients. In Tokushima, the base is often white miso soup, and vegetables like carrots, daikon, and Chinese cabbage are often added. The mochi is round, and sometimes grilled. Ozoni is eaten on the first day of Oshogatsu with other traditional foods. Mochi is also grilled or toasted (the toaster oven works really well here), and eaten with sugar, kinako きな粉 (roasted soybean powder), or both. You can also dip it in soy sauce and wrap it in a sheet of crisp nori (this is called isobe-yaki 磯辺焼き). One of my favorite ways to eat mochi in the colder months is in zenzai ぜんざい, which is a warm sweet bean soup topped with pieces of grilled mochi. Sooooo comforting with a cup of tea or a bowl of matcha.

You don't have to call your neighbors and find a giant wooden mallet to enjoy mochi. Both round and cut block mochi can be bought at any supermarket, and look for kagami mochi sets and bitter oranges with a leaf attached (the traditional way to decorate it) towards the end of December. Also, there is mochi made from brown rice and heritage red rice. Look for these at farmer's markets and roadside stations in mountainous areas like Kamiyama, Kamikatsu, or at the Tokushima Marche.

So I wish you a warm holiday greetings and hope that you'll find chewy happiness with a hot bowl of ozoni, zenzai, or just a nori-wrapped blob of isobeyaki. Yoi otoshi wo 良いお年を and see you in 2020!

## Difference Between 「楽しさ」 and 「楽しみ」

Today we're going to learn the difference between 「<sup>たの</sup>楽しさ」 and 「<sup>たの</sup>楽しみ」.

Let's read the following conversation.

A. ハイキング<sup>たの</sup>楽しみね。早く<sup>はや</sup>行きたいね。

I'm excited to go hiking. I really want to go right now.

B. そうね。おいしい<sup>もの</sup>物をたくさん<sup>も</sup>持って行きましょう。

Me too. Let's bring a lot of tasty food with us.

C. いいわね。<sup>たの</sup>楽しさが<sup>ばい</sup>倍になるわね。

That sounds good. It will make it more fun.



「<sup>たの</sup>楽しさ」 and 「<sup>たの</sup>楽しみ」 both appeared in the conversation.

You can use i-adjectives to express a variety of conditions.

There are predicate conjugations and noun modifier conjugations, but you can also add 「さ」 or 「み」 to the end of a word in order to make it into a noun. But what are the differences between 「さ」 and 「み」? First, let's think about how i-adjectives are classified. There are 3 different classifications of i-adjectives.

1. Attributive Adjectives (Express the characteristics of things) <sup>おお</sup>大きい・<sup>はや</sup>速い・<sup>あたら</sup>新しい・<sup>むずか</sup>難しい・<sup>せいけつ</sup>清潔な・<sup>せいかく</sup>正確な

2. Sensory Adjectives (Express a person's senses) <sup>いた</sup>痛い・<sup>あま</sup>甘い・<sup>にが</sup>苦い・<sup>すっぱい</sup>・<sup>から</sup>辛い

3. Emotive Adjectives (Express a person's emotions) <sup>たの</sup>楽しい・<sup>かな</sup>悲しい・<sup>くる</sup>苦しい・<sup>うれ</sup>うれしい

「さ」 Nouns – Can be created from most adjectives.

Used to express the degree of something as well as objectivity.

(例) <sup>はこ</sup>箱の<sup>おお</sup>大きさ、<sup>いえ</sup>家の<sup>せま</sup>狭さ、<sup>じこく</sup>時刻の<sup>せいかく</sup>正確さ



「み」 Nouns – A limited amount of adjectives can take this form.

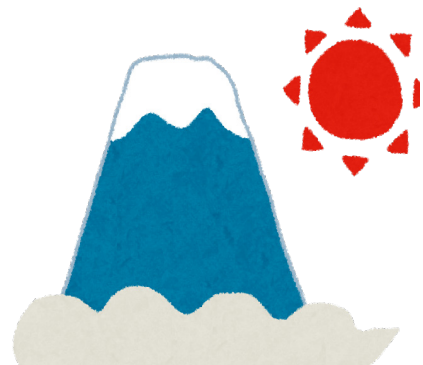
Used to express the feelings that are caused by events/affairs. They are highly subjective.

(例) <sup>れい</sup>仕事の<sup>しごと</sup>苦しみ、<sup>く</sup>お正月の<sup>しょうがつ</sup>楽しみ、<sup>たの</sup>心の<sup>こころ</sup>痛み

In short, 「さ」 is used for nouns expressing the limit/degree of something and 「み」 is used for nouns expressing people's emotions.

Practice Questions: In the parenthesis, write either 「み」 or 「さ」.

- ① <sup>ふ</sup>富士山の<sup>さん</sup>高 ( ) は、<sup>たか</sup>3776メートルです。
- ② <sup>あ</sup>あの<sup>た</sup>タレントは、<sup>した</sup>親し ( ) のある<sup>ひと</sup>人ね。
- ③ <sup>いぬ</sup>犬の<sup>し</sup>死は、<sup>かのじょ</sup>彼女に<sup>おお</sup>大きな<sup>かな</sup>悲し ( ) を与えた。
- ④ <sup>ほんば</sup>本場の<sup>きんち</sup>キムチの<sup>から</sup>辛 ( ) は、<sup>こん</sup>こんな<sup>もん</sup>モンじゃないよ。
- ⑤ <sup>がいこくご</sup>外国語を<sup>まな</sup>学ぶ<sup>むずか</sup>難し ( ) には、いろいろある。





## The Autumn Awa Odori with Arasowaren

By Uka Teki

From November 2nd to the 4th, the Autumn Awa Odori was held at Asty Tokushima. Over those 3 days, famous rens (dance groups) from around Tokushima put on marvelous performances. Our ren, Arasowaren, was also able to perform this time.

Our performance was on the morning of the 2nd, and lasted about 15 minutes. Everyone arrived early to rehearse and when it came time for the actual performance we were able to successfully perform.

In preparation for the event, starting from September we received strict training from the famous Nonkiren. Everyone earnestly practiced feeling the rhythm, dance formations, and how to match the instrument's beat. Among the female dancers, there were many who wore geta for the first time and found it challenging to move in them. It was

difficult for them to dance while standing on their toes as it is quite painful. However, thanks to the encouragement of our teachers, they were able to smile and practice in spite of the pain.



Our ren is composed of members from 12 countries and even if we couldn't always communicate with words, we were able to enjoy the Awa Odori as we strived towards the same goal. As a member of Arasowaren, I'm very glad I was able to dance in this event. I had to travel from Naruto to Tokushima City every time we had practice

and honestly it was quite tiring, but it was worth it. Our performance, and all the days I spent practicing with friends, has become a precious memory to me. I'm so grateful to our teachers and all of the people that supported us. I hope to practice and dance with Arasowaren again.

## Events & Memoranda

### German House Christmas Market 2019 ドイツ館のクリスマスマーケット 2019

Christmas markets are a tradition which mark the beginning of winter and Christmas season in Germany. Stalls selling foods and other goods line up on squares and streets in the cities. The German House Christmas Market is such a market, arranged in German House style. Besides selling Christmas goods and sweets, you can also look forward to small events such as concerts and workshops, so how about having an early Christmas celebration at the German House?

When: December 7th (Sat), 8th (Sun)  
10:00 – 17:00

Where: German House Naruto (big hall on the first floor and in front of the house)

Info: German House Naruto

TEL: 088-689-0099

URL: <http://doitsukan.com/info/>

クリスマスマーケットは、ドイツにおいて冬の風物詩とされる行事です。都市の広場や通りに露店が立ち並び、食品や雑貨の販売が賑わしく行われます。そんなクリスマスマーケットを、ドイツ館風にアレンジしたものが、「ドイツ館のクリスマスマーケット」です。クリスマス雑貨やお菓子の販売のほか、プチイベントとしてコンサートやワークショップも実施します。ひと足お先にドイツ館でクリスマスを楽しみましょう！

日時：12月7日（土）～8日（日）  
10：00～17：00

場所：鳴門市ドイツ館  
1階大ホールおよび館前広場

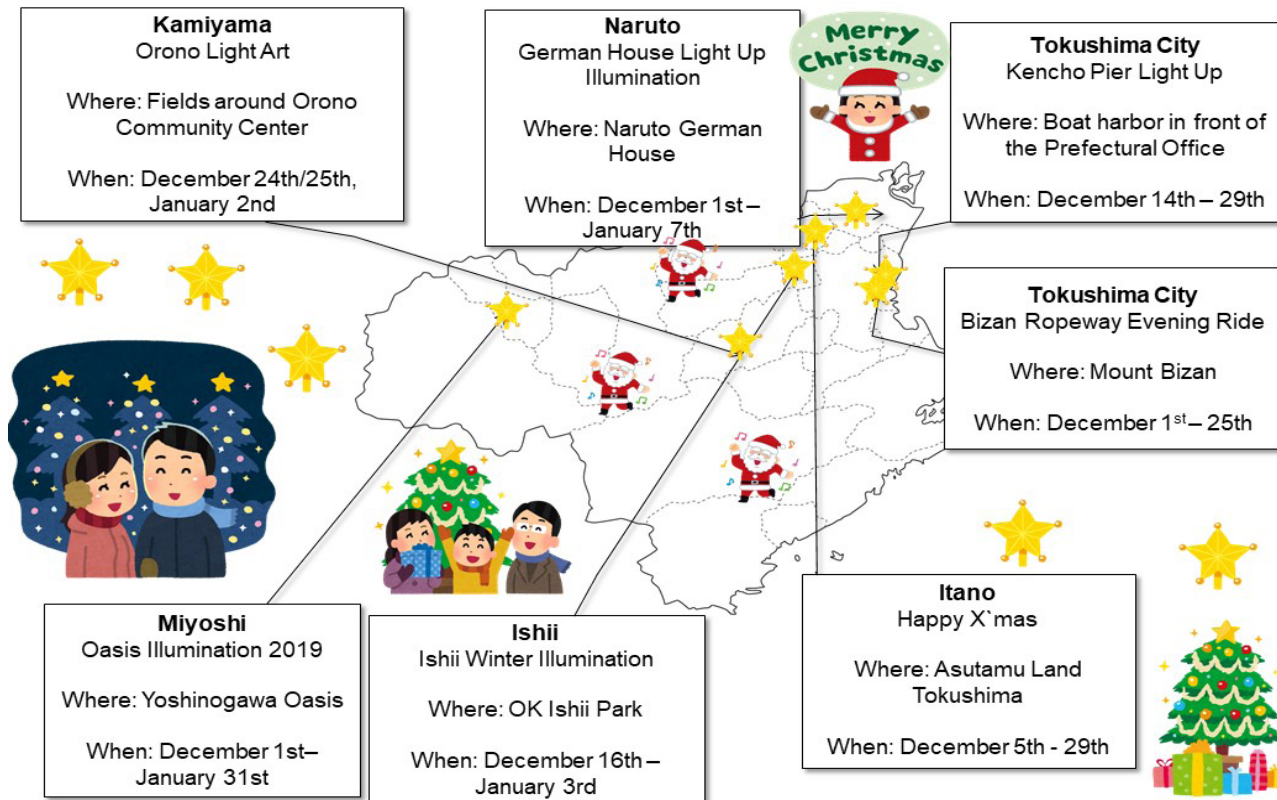
問い合わせ：鳴門市ドイツ館

TEL: 088-689-0099

URL: <http://doitsukan.com/info/>

# Events & Memoranda

## Tokushima Illumination Map 徳島イルミネーションマップ



## Shinmachi Countdown 新町カウントダウン

Let's celebrate the 2020 New Year's countdown again in Shinmachi! There will be many events. Come enjoy the countdown with your family or friends.

When: December 31st (Tue)  
Where: Tokushima City,  
Shinmachibashi East Park  
Fee: Free  
URL: <https://www.facebook.com/CountdownInTokushima/>

「今年もやります! 新町カウントダウン 2020!!」盛り上がるコンテンツが盛りだくさんです! 家族やカップル、友人と一緒に 2020 年のカウントダウンを楽しみましょう。

日時: 12 月 31 日 (火)  
場所: 徳島市新町橋東公園  
料金: 無料  
URL: <https://www.facebook.com/CountdownInTokushima>

**TOPIA will be closed from December 29, 2019 (Sun) - January 3, 2020 (Fri)**

## Counselling Service at TOPIA・トピアの相談窓口

TOPIA provides consultation on everyday life, education, labor, medical institutions, and disaster prevention; and information on sightseeing spots to overseas residents and visitors. When necessary, we will refer you to the appropriate organization that can assist with your needs. Counselling is available in English, Chinese, Vietnamese, 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: 088-656-3312 or 088-656-3313 (allows for three-way conversations with an interpreter)