

# awa life

**The Charm of the  
Inaka**

**Japanese Culture and  
Reading Corner: 入学式**

**April 2020**

**# 354**



**Awa Shoku: Farmer's  
Market Cooking  
Challenge!**

**Gairaigo Galore:  
カルテ**

**Farewell Messages**



**TOPIA**

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

April is a time of change in Japan. Whether it's the new school year, the new fiscal year, changes in personnel, or falling cherry blossoms just after a short time of bloom: changes in April are omnipresent. TOPIA and Awa Life have also changed, and besides co-workers leaving (check out the goodbye message in this issue), and new co-workers coming (check out the next issue for that), we would also like to introduce a new monthly column which is especially designed for the Japanese learners among you. Every month a small Japanese reading exercise and vocabulary dealing with an aspect of Japanese culture will be included, and this month's text will focus on school entrance ceremonies in Japan. Enjoy!

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

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# Contents

Pg. 2-3: The Charm of the Inaka

Pg. 3-4: Letter from SUKETO NAKAYOSHI

Pg. 4: Farewell Messages

Pg. 5: Japanese Culture and Reading Corner: 入学式

Pg. 5: Gairaigo Galore: カルテ

Pg. 6: Awa Shoku: Farmer's Market Cooking Challenge!

Pg. 7: Japanese Lesson

Pg. 8-9: Events and Memoranda

## *The Charm of the Inaka*

By: Bethany Johnson

If you, like me, did a lot of research about potential placements on JET, you probably read a lot of disconcerting stories of people landing on islands with limited ferry access, or deep in the mountains with a perilous hour-long commute to the nearest grocery store. The famed inaka. JET is a lottery of risk, but the majority of people tend to aim for urban or semi-urban placements.

I was the latter, personally. I come from a small city in Canada and prefer the slower pace, yet convenience, of the semi-urban.

When I received the fated email placing me in Sanagouchi village, I'll admit I was a little panicked. First, a village?

How deep in the countryside would I be? Second, would I, a Canadian, survive the heat of southern Japan? And third... importantly, would I be forced to drive?

But in the end, these were all worries I could've dismissed. I am only a twenty minute drive from the city, and yes, I was forced to get a car, but the learning curve between driving in Japan and in Canada wasn't as steep as I was expecting.

Driving here is actually pretty fun. And the heat I was so stressed about? Being tucked deep in the mountains with rushing rivers that cool the air, it's much more bearable than the summer I spent in Tokyo.

All in all, I'm pretty thankful I was not placed in a city. The line between the city and the countryside

is a fairly bold one, and as a city girl, I couldn't have been more unprepared for the slow, gentle beauty of life here in the inaka. As the token foreigner, I do draw attention, but not in a negative way, like I'd imagined. The people in my village are warm and welcoming. True, some of them do panic at the sight of me, the "face of

English", but most of them attempt to talk to me or interact with me in some fashion. (But when they learn I can speak Japanese, their relief is palpable.)

People often ask me what I like most about living in the countryside and I tell them, the people. Easily, the people. Most of my positive experiences are thanks to the kind and thoughtful efforts and gestures of the people I interact with.



## The Charm of the Inaka

For example, being invited to try rice planting or orange-picking; being randomly given a bag of shiitake or sudachi while I'm walking down the street; being mothered by the wonderful ladies who work at the local market; walking through the town hall and being greeted warmly by strangers and friends alike; being thanked for taking care of someone's son or daughter at school. Too many things to list! I'm glad I'm not merely known as "the foreigner" or "the English teacher," but as a genuine member of the community.



Another positive of the countryside is the nature. I love walking in the mountains and forests of the village, to the extent the people have started expecting to see me walking around, "It's weirder if we don't see you," they tell me. Alas.

But really, there's something healing in the views

here; verdant mountains, terraced with rice fields and citrus groves, stretching onward and up. My city back home is in the prairies; just flat. Living in Sanagouchi, I've learned and experienced more about plants and fruit and agriculture than I ever

would have learned in Alberta. I've been given these opportunities simply because strangers want to get to know me, or impart Japanese culture to me.

The inaka does have its downsides. It's inconvenient, driving can be scary on perilous, narrow roads, and it can be isolating or mentally taxing having to speak Japanese all the time. But the good, for me, far outweighs the bad. I feel like coming here and challenging myself, learning new things everyday and seeking new opportunities, has given me a new heart for the ordinary things in life, and taught me new ways of finding beauty.

## Letter from SUKETO NAKAYOSHI

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

I'm sure many of you have been feeling uneasy due to the spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). Let's make sure to practice preventative measures such as hand-washing and gargling, and build up a healthy, disease-resistant body. For this, boosting your immune system is most important! Let me introduce some ways you can help boost your immune system.

- 1.) Proper Exercise: Get your blood flowing and force your body's temperature to rise.
- 2.) Raise your Body's Temperature: Raising your body's temperature by 1°C will also raise your immunity by 5 or 6-fold. I recommend taking a bath to raise your body's temperature.
- 3.) Sleep: A lack of sleep is one cause of immune deficiency, so make sure to get some proper rest.
- 4.) Laughter: Stress is another cause of immune deficiency. Laughter is a great way to invigorate

your immune cells.

5.) Eating Habits: Having a healthy intestinal environment is important. Eat foods containing good bacteria (yogurt, cheese, natto, soy sauce, miso, etc.), and foods with protein, a main component of immune cells (meat, fish, milk, tofu and other soybean products, etc.). Eating foods that contain trace amounts of nutritional minerals needed for your body (foods containing calcium, iron, manganese: milk, small fish, spinach, liver, ginger, basket clams, etc.) are also a good way to further boost your immune system. Boost your immune system so that you can live a healthy and happy life.

### Soy Milk Miso Soup:

#### Ingredients (For 1 person) & Preparation:

Cut bacon (8g) into 1cm strips. Dice a (25g) onion. Cut a carrot (10g) into quarter slices. Dice

## Letter from SUKETO NAKAYOSHI

a sweet potato (30g) into 1cm cubes. Cut shimeji (10g) and broccoli (12g) into small pieces.

### How to Cook:

1.) Add the bacon, onion, carrots, sweet potatoes, and shimeji to a pot. Add enough water to submerge the ingredients (60cc) and 1.5g of consommé to the pot.

2.) Once the ingredients have become soft, add 60g of soy milk and cook. (After you add the soy milk it may boil over more easily, so make sure to keep an eye on the heat level).

3.) Add softened, parboiled broccoli and 3g of miso, and adjust to taste.



## Farewell Messages - I Look Forward to Seeing You Again

By: MiaoMiao Liu

When I began to write on the final page of my planner, it made me realize how my time in Tokushima had passed by in the blink of an eye. Whilst experiencing the four seasons and both sunrises and sunsets, I fell in love with this place.

When I think back on this past year, a number of unforgettable memories come to mind. Practicing the Awa Odori with people from other countries and places, participating in sadou (tea ceremony) and kadou (flower arrangement) with the other American and German CIRS, visiting the Umeshu Matsuri in Misato, visiting western Tokushima with my Chinese friends and seeing the fireflies, introducing Tokushima's charm to visitors from Hunan and Taiwan, going with my boss, coworkers from the international division, and 6 middle schoolers to Hunan for a table tennis exchange event, inviting a friend to experience the Shikoku Pilgrimage, climbing Mt. Bizan by myself, and finally jogging around the Shinmachi River and enjoying the scenery of the seasons.

I'm very happy to have come to Tokushima and met everyone. From these kind, sincere, and amazing people, I learned when to be persistent, when to resign, when to be accepting, and what to cherish.

Just like one of my favorite singer's (Jian Li's), song "Station", "There will certainly be more encounters and goodbyes. Just like this train, you can't just freely stop.", I believe that life is a series of encounters and farewells. 9 years

ago, I left my parents to attend a university in Xi'an and started learning Japanese. 5 years ago, due to my love of Japanese, I parted ways with my teachers and friends in Xi'an to attend a graduate school in Beijing. 3 years ago, wanting a job where I could use Japanese, I parted ways again with my teachers and dear friends to start work in Hunan, a place 1,000 kilometers from my birthplace. Thanks to this, I had a once in a life time encounter with Tokushima, which has a friendship agreement with Hunan. My year as a CIR is almost over, and when I return to Hunan, I will continue my work on friendship relations with Japan. Although I have many lingering attachments, I believe that this farewell is connected with my next encounter. I look forward to seeing you all again.



(Pictured on the left: MiaoMiao Liu)



Starting from this month, we have created a corner to introduce Japanese culture and customs in simple Japanese. This corner is a way for everyone to practice their Japanese while also deepening their knowledge about Japanese. Our first topic is "school entrance ceremonies".



日本では、4月に新しい仕事や生活が始まります。そして、学校も4月から始まります。4月には入学式があります。入学式で、新しい1年生を迎えます。先生や生徒が1年生をお祝いします。家族も来ます。入学式は、だいたい体育館であります。入学式では、国歌や校歌を歌います。拍手をするとき以外は静かです。1年生は、列になって入場します。みんなとても緊張します。担任の先生が1年生の名前を呼びます。1年生は、1人ずつ「はい」と元気に返事をして立ちます。家族はそれを見て、とても喜びます。それから、校長先生がお祝いの挨拶をします。入学式後は、新しい教室に入ります。そして、先生の話を聞きます。新しい友達と自己紹介をします。入学式は新しい学校生活の始まりです。みなさんも、新しいことをたくさん始めてくださいね。



### Vocabulary List

入学式 (entrance ceremony)	迎える (to welcome)	国歌 (national anthem)
校歌 (school anthem)	拍手 (to clap)	列になって (forming a line)
入場 (to come in)	担任の先生 (homeroom teacher)	校長先生 (principal)
学校生活 (school life)	自己紹介 (self-introduction)	
お祝いの挨拶 (speech at a ceremony)		

### Gairaigo Galore

カルテ (Karte; a personal file of a patient at the doctors)

By: Nico Bohnsack

With the spread of the new coronavirus, recently going to the doctors has become an even more important issue. In Japan, people who are covered by the National Health Insurance or Employees Health Insurance usually have to pay 30% of a doctor's bill. However, when you go to certain doctors' offices for the first time, the amount you have to pay on the spot will always be a little bit higher than at follow-up visits with the same treatment. The reason is a special fee for setting up your personal file at that specific office, a so called カルテ. The origin of the word is the German "Karte" which means the same as the English word "card" and which is used for cards in general. The Japanese カルテ, however, exclusively refers to the above mentioned kind of file at the doctors.



You will actually find many medical-related loanwords with German origins in the Japanese language. Since the Meiji Era (1868–1912) Japan imported lots of medical knowledge from Prussia/Germany.



As a result, many German words began to get used in medical Japanese. While there are some words with the same meaning in both languages, such as アレルギー (Allergie, allergy), words that changed meaning such as in the case of カルテ can be found as well.

Even today students of medicine often study German besides English in university and you would be surprised how many doctors in Japan still remember technical medical terms in German.

## Awa Shoku: Farmer's Market Cooking Challenge!

By: Lance Kita

With recent health-related events across the country (and world), many people are staying home and cooking. Last month, I received a bag of locally-grown fruits and vegetables, and had so much fun thinking of ways to cook them. Here are some tips and tricks I used:



### Romaine Lettuce (ロメインレタス)

This sturdy lettuce is a staple for Caesar salad, but I used seasonal strawberries, smoked cheese, and a balsamic-mustard dressing for a fantastic light lunch.

**TIP:** Use seasonal fruits and veggies in your cooking when you can.

### Curly Kale (カリノケール)

This kale variety is low on bitterness, and can be eaten raw. I chopped up the hardy leaves and made a garlicky chowder for cool evenings.

**TIP:** Hide veggies from your kids in a cream soup.

### Jerusalem Artichokes (Kikuimo 菊芋) and Rape Blossoms (Nanohana 菜の花)

The first one is very earthy, while the latter is quite bitter.

**TIP:** Earthiness and bitterness pair well with spice and/or oil. I made a Korean namul with the kikuimo (sesame oil, salt, and a touch of kochujang). The nanohana was added to mapo tofu (and would probably be good in curry too).

### Purple Sprouting Broccoli (スカーレットダンス)

Never had "Scarlet Dance" before, but I tried roasting the little purple mini-broccoli sticks in the toaster oven with olive oil, salt, pepper, and a splash of lemon. Absolutely crunchilumptious!

**TIP:** Don't be afraid to try a new ingredient!

### Daikon (大根) and Lemon (レモン)

What is a single person supposed to do with a whole daikon??

**TIP:** Make pickles! I used lemon, garlic, and a store-bought pickling liquid for a fast refrigerated pickle. It keeps longer and brightens up hanami picnics.

### Handa Somen (半田素麺) and Okra Powder (オクラパウダー) (???)

Tokushima recently developed freeze-dried okra powder to use excess harvest. Reconstitute to make a slimy, healthy tororo (とろろ) (usually made of grated mountain yam).

**TIP:** Noodle topping = fast lunch. Add dashi and ponzu to the okra, combine with sliced chikuwa 竹輪 (tube-shaped fishcake), and pour over the Handa somen noodles.

### Mandarin Orange (mikan みかん)

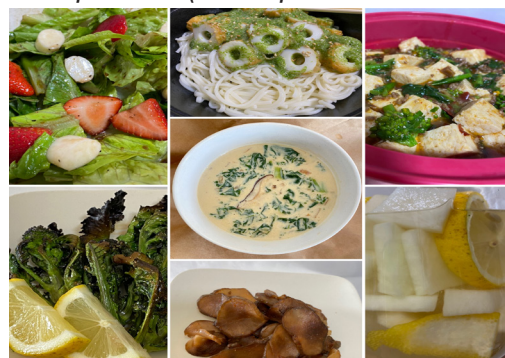
Ummmm... I just peeled and ate it.

**TIP:** Sometimes, simple is best! Lol

You should try your own Farmer's Market Cooking Challenge! Go to your local farmer's market (ファーマーズ・マーケット), chokusan-ichi (直産市), sanchoku-ichi (産直市), chokubaijo (直売所) or roadside station (michi no eki 道の駅) and pick up these five ingredients:

- 1) Something leafy
  - 2) Something dried
  - 3) A root vegetable
  - 4) A fruit
  - 5) An ingredient you've never seen/used before.
- Use the tips above and make a creative spring lunch/dinner. Stay safe, buy local, and enjoy cooking!

*\*\*Thank you to Sotani-san for the wonderful bag of local produce (the inspiration for this article).*



じ こ しょうかい  
自己紹介

This month, let's learn how to give a simple self introduction in Japanese.

Self Introduction:

1.) はじめまして。わたしは\* (自分の名前) です。

1.) Nice to meet you. My name is (your name).

\* When introducing yourself, [ わ た し ] is often omitted. You don't use [ さ ん ] when talking about yourself or your family members.

2.) (出身地) から来ました。

2.) I'm from (birth place).

3.) \* 今年 ( ) 月に来ました。

3.) I arrived this year in (month).

● 去年\* (Last year) / 20×× 年\* (in the year 20xx) ( Example : 2017 年 / 2018 年 )

● Please refer to the table at the bottom of the page for how to say what month ( 月 ) you arrived in.

4.) どうぞよろしくおねがいします。

4.) I'll be in your care. / I look forward to working with you.

◎ Let's practice self introductions.

<Example>

1) はじめまして。ホンです。

2) ベトナムから来ました。

3) 今年2月 / 去年10月 / 2017年8月に来ました。

4) どうぞよろしくおねがいします。



~ Months

いちがつ	にがつ	さんがつ	しがつ	ごがつ	ろくがつ	しちがつ	はちがつ	くがつ	じゅう	がつ	じゅういち	がつ	じゅうに	がつ
1月	2月	3月	4月	5月	6月	7月	8月	9月	10月	11月	12月			


◎ Little by little, try to remember the readings for all of the months.





# Events & Memoranda

## Tokushima Prefecture 2020 Japanese Speech Contest

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 18th, 2020 (Saturday), 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, or 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 Applications 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)  
Awa Bank Award, one person (Prize: 30,000 yen gift certificate)  
Tokushima Taisho Bank Award, one person (Prize: 30,000 yen gift certificate)  
Tokushima Chamber of Commerce and Industry Award, one person (Prize: 30,000 yen gift certificate)  
Tokushima City International Association Special Recognition Award, three people (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 27th, 2020 (Wednesday) Applications must be turned in by 5:00 PM.
10. ORGANIZED BY Tokushima Prefecture & Tokushima Prefectural International Exchange Association (TOPIA)
11. CO-ORGANIZER (Planned) Tokushima Regional Conference for Promotion of Student Exchange
12. SPONSORS (Planned) The Tokushima Prefectural Assembly's Federation of International Exchange Assembly Members  
Awa Bank  
Tokushima Taisho Bank  
Tokushima Chamber of Commerce and Industry  
Tokushima International Association (TIA)  
Otsuka Pharmaceuticals  
Nichia Corporation
13. WITH THE SUPPORT OF (Planned) NHK Tokushima, Shikoku Broadcasting, Tokushima Shimbun, Cable TV Tokushima, FM Tokushima, FM Bizan
14. 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

# Events & Memoranda

## Hana Haru Festa 2020 はな・はる・フェスタ 2020

Come and enjoy fantastic Awa Odori performances by famous groups both indoors and outdoors. This event is also jam packed with other fun activities such as a gourmet street lined with delicious Tokushima cuisine, stage events, a traditional culture experience corner, and more!

Detailed event information can be found on the official blog.

When: April 18th (Sat) & 19th (Sun)  
10:00 – 17:00

Where: Tokushima City, Aibahama Park,  
Shinmachi Boardwalk

Info: Hana Haru Festa Executive Committee  
(Tokushima Shinbunsha, Operations  
Department)

TEL: 088-655-7331

URL: <https://ameblo.jp/hanaharu-f/>



阿波おどり有名連の豪華競演を屋内外でたっぷり  
とご覧いただけるほか、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、楽しいイベントが目白  
押しです！

詳しいイベント情報は公式ブログで順次公開され  
ます。

日時：4月18日（土）・19日（日）  
10時00分～17時00分

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（徳島新聞社事業部）

TEL: 088-655-7331

URL: <https://ameblo.jp/hanaharu-f/>



### \*\*Disclaimer

Many events have been cancelled to prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). If you are planning to attend an event, it is your responsibility to confirm whether the event is still being held as planned.

## 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)