

# awa life

**Singles' Day in China**

**Interview with  
Rasheed Abdul**

November 2020

# 361



**Awa Shoku:  
Holy Mackerel!**

**Letter from  
SUKETO NAKAYOSHI**

**Gairaigo Galore:  
ジビエ**



**TOPIA**



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

We hope you all enjoy the peak of the fall foliage season and the two public holidays November has to offer: Culture Day ( 文化の日 ) and Labor Thanksgiving Day ( 勤労感謝の日 ). In many countries, the International Worker's Day on May 1st is a public holiday. However, in Japan, Mayday is usually only celebrated by labor unions and such and is not a public holiday. Instead, Japan introduced the Labor Thanksgiving Day on November 23rd which has its roots in an ancient harvest festival. School children sometimes prepare cards or gifts for police officers and others. We wish you all a happy Labor Thanksgiving Day and hope you get a good rest from your daily duties.

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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## *Singles' Day in China*

By: Qing Liu

In China, November 11th is known as "Singles' Day".

The ratio of single men to women born in the 1970s is over 2:1, which has become a serious issue. In 2020, there will be 30 million ~ 35 million bachelors who are unable to find a wife.

There are a myriad of theories about the origin of Singles' Day, but the widely accepted explanation is that it originated in the dorms of Nanjing University. 4 male students would hold nightly talks, primarily about how they wanted to escape being single. The 4 students then decided that they would celebrate "Guang Gunjie" (One's Day) on November 11th.

Afterwards, this became a fun part of college culture at not just Nanjing University, but universities across China. As a number of students bid farewell to the university campus, this holiday steadily began to enter society. It also gained popularity thanks to the internet and media, and the Singles' Day culture eventually took formation.

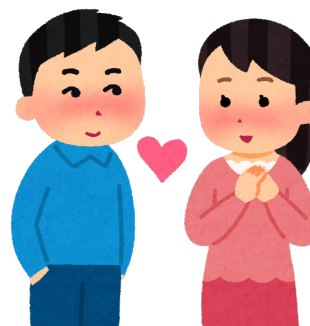
Nowadays, the number of people who get married on Singles' Day is increasing. However, it's also a day for single men and women to join in on parties in the hopes of finding a partner, and it is

also called "Tuo Guang".

At the same time, many large companies have used this as a reason to conduct sales. On Singles' Day in 2019, Alibaba's online sales reached 268.4 billion yuan.

As for marriage and singleness, there is a famous line from Qian Zhongshu's (1910 – 1998) novel "Fortress Besieged" that goes "Those inside the fortress wish to escape. Those outside the fortress wish to enter. Marriage, work, and human desires are largely the same." At that period in time (the 19th century), when the easiest path to love was to ask a girl if you "could please borrow a book", it seems that the secrets to love had already been discovered.

The sales on November 11th allow those both inside and outside of the fortress to enjoy a festive atmosphere.



## Letter from SUKETO NAKAYOSHI

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

As we get further into autumn and it starts to get darker earlier, there are probably more people who are spending time at home. During these kinds of times, why don't all of the parents out there spend time with their children and enjoy some picture books together? Picture books are not only a way for children to improve their vocabulary, but they help to foster children's expressiveness and imaginative power. Furthermore, they aid in improving a child's curiosity, ability to think, and ability to concentrate. Having their beloved mother or father read to them is also a great opportunity for children to feel the warmth and love of their family.

For children of the 0-1 age group, I recommended picture books that focus on foods, animals, vehicles, etc. Pop-up books and other books that they are able to interact with are also good choices. For children age 2-3, they tend to enjoy books that are based on everyday life, those with repetition, legends, simple stories, etc.

How to spark a child's interest in picture books:

1. Place picture books in a location where children can always see and read them whenever they want.
2. Read to your children whenever they ask you to do so.
3. When there is a picture book that they especially seem to like, read it to them multiple times.
4. Do not have excessive expectations when it comes to children learning new words, numbers, manners, etc.

Autumn is the best time for reading, so find a good book and enjoy the time together with your child.

\*\*\*\*\*

### Homemade Sweets (Sweet Potato Mochi)

*Ingredients* (For 16 pieces):

1 Sweet Potato (200 g)

- 1 ~ 2 Tablespoons of Sugar
- 1 Teaspoon of Sesame Oil
- 1 Cup of Refined Rice Flour
- 1/2 ~ 1 Cup of Lukewarm Water
- Oil as Needed



#### *Instructions:*

1. Peel the skin off of the sweet potato. Cut into 2 cm pieces and soak in salted water.
2. Boil the sweet potato in water until it softens. Drain the water and shake over the flame to remove the moisture. While it's still hot, add the sugar and sesame oil. Quickly mash and mix together.
3. Add the refined rice flour to the lukewarm water and knead until it is as soft as your earlobes. Add to the sweet potatoes and mix.
4. Mold into a round shape with a radius of 5-6 cm and then flatten into dango. Boil until it floats to the surface. Remove from the boiling water and place in cool water.
5. Oil the frying pan and set to medium heat. Line up the dango (which should have the moisture removed) and grill them. Once they have grill marks on them, turn the heat to low and finish cooking.

\*They are especially delicious when you add some tare sauce (boil down 1 and a 1/2 tablespoons of soy sauce and 1 tablespoon of sugar in a pot).



## Interview with Rasheed Abdul: Pakistan Native

By: Kayo Miyoshi, Qing Liu & Sydney Bartig

The other day we met with Rasheed Abdul who came to Japan all the way from Pakistan. We took this opportunity to ask him about his life and his impressions of Japan.



Rasheed came to Japan last year in December for work. The first thing that surprised him about Japan was how, even though he had arrived at the Kansai International Airport, there weren't many people who could understand English. He was shocked as he had heard that Japanese people study English in school. In Pakistan, those who attend school learn English, so they are all able to understand and converse in English.

The national language of Pakistan is actually Urdu. The pronunciation is similar to Hindi, but the writing is different. The writing is similar to Arabic, but the pronunciation is different.

Before he arrived, the only real image he had of Japan was that of old samurai movies. However, after arriving he realized Japan was indeed a developed country. In Pakistan, tickets are sold by a living person, and in Japan they are sold by a machine. Even if you want to buy something simple like water, you often buy it from a vending machine. The huge bridge connecting to Tokushima was also a shock. He was quite troubled as he didn't understand anything about Japan, and there were few people who were able to help him out.

Before studying Japanese, he thought of Japanese, Chinese, and Korean as all being quite similar. However, after he began to study

Japanese he realized how, even though Japanese is one language, it has three different writing systems to learn: hiragana, katakana, and kanji.

While the Japanese language proved troubling, he also had issues with food. In Tokushima, it is much more difficult to find Halal food. With all of these troubles, he felt quite lonely.

However, he enjoys going to the mosque every Friday. In Tokushima, there is only a single mosque. Believers from Indonesia, Malaysia, Turkey, Egypt, Bangladesh, etc. all gather there. Everyone is on good terms and they pray together, as well as sometimes eat meals together. (Married couples will bring food from home for these feasts.)

When children are 12 years old, they begin to participate in the month of Ramadan. Eating and drinking (even water) are prohibited. However, Rasheed is already used to this and it isn't particularly an issue. During Ramadan in Pakistan, schools and businesses shorten their hours. During this time, everyone takes time to relax or spend time with their families. In Islam families, brothers all live in the same house alongside the grandfather and grandmother. Men are allowed to marry up to 4 women, so families are often quite large.



At the end of the interview, Rasheed stated that, "I want to see my family again. The most difficult part of being in Japan is being separated from them."

By: Kayo Miyoshi



11月3日は“文化の日”【平和を愛し、文化をすすめる】日で、日本の祝日です。日本の学校では“文化祭”が開かれます。“祭”は“おまつり”ですが、学校の行事です。学校祭や学園祭、オープンスクールとも呼ばれます。生活や学習の成果を発表します。中学校や高校では、コンサートやダンス、劇などを体育館で行い、教室で模擬店やお化け屋敷などを開きます。保護者や新入生に学校の特色や校風を知ってもらう目的もあります。「芸術の秋」、「食欲の秋」や「スポーツの秋」と呼ばれますが、みなさまも徳島の秋を楽しんでください。



## Vocabulary List

文化祭	School Festival	お化け屋敷	Haunted House
文化の日	Culture Day	保護者	Parent/Guardian
祝日	National Holiday	新入生	New Pupils
行事	Event	特色や校風	(School) Features/Atmosphere
成果を発表	Showcase their Achievements	目的	Purpose/Goal
劇	Play	食欲	Appetite
模擬店	Refreshment Booth		

## Gairaigo Galore



ジビエ (gibier; game meat)

By: Nico Bohnsack

Have you ever eaten game meat in Japan? While Japan is best known for seafood due to its oceanic environment, about 73 percent of Japan is covered with (often wooded) mountains. These mountains are habitats for lots of wild animals, such as deer, wild boars, bears, etc. Some of these wild animals are used for consumption, and often the number of restaurants serving game meat will increase as you enter mountainous areas. By the way, Tokushima also has a lot to offer in terms of game meat. Game meat in Japan is usually deer or wild boar, but other animals, such as bears, rabbits or wild birds, occasionally find their way onto the plate as well. Game meat is called ジビエ (jibie) in Japan which stems from the French word “gibier” of the same meaning.



Japan doesn't have a long tradition of eating and selling game meat commercially, and in the past this kind of meat was mainly consumed by hunters and their families. However, small-scale consumption in other parts of the population began during the Meiji Era due to Western influences. From the 1990s, various kinds of game meat were imported from France since game meat cuisine already had a long tradition in France and other European countries and was seen as a specialty. This is why the word “gibier” became part of the Japanese language. After that, and also due to problems with population overabundance, the local game meat cuisine industry developed rapidly and is now present in almost every part of Japan.

## Awa Shoku: Holy Mackerel!

By: Lance Kita

As autumn chills down, my tastes in seafood warms up. Fish fatten up for the upcoming winter, and so any fish caught now has a higher fat content and richer flavor. The king of oily fall fish is definitely mackerel (saba 鯖), and Japan is one of the top catchers of saba in the world. Mackerel migrates along the Pacific Ocean side, and is caught during the autumn here in Tokushima.



*Saba can be easily recognized by the silver-blue striped pattern on its dorsal side.*

Mackerel fall into a category unique to Japanese classification called “blue fish” (aozakana 青魚), a third group after the usual red-meat fish (like tuna) and white-meat fish (like cod). Blue fish include mackerel, horse mackerel (aji 鰯), saury (sanma 秋刀魚), Pacific herring (nishin 鯵), and sardines (iwashi 鰯). The kanji for mackerel is made up of two characters, “fish” 魚 on the left and “blue” 青 on the right, so it could be said that saba is the king of blue fish as well, and it is one of the largest among them.

Saba loses its freshness quickly due to the high fat content, but it responds very well to curing and marinating. Sushi restaurants will usually cure mackerel in salt overnight to draw out the moisture, then marinate it in vinegar to preserve it. This method is called shimesaba めさば, and will sometimes involve sandwiching the fish filets between sheets of konbu 昆布 seaweed to boost the umami (kobujime 昆布締め). This can be sliced and served on little blocks of rice in classic nigiri-sushi 握り寿司 style, but Western Japan loves to eat the shimesaba using the whole fillet pressed over a long rectangular block of sushi rice, then sliced into bite-sized pieces. This is called saba-zushi 鯖寿司, and is often seared on top, which crisps up the skin and releases the fragrant oils.

As for home cooking, there really are two

major ways to enjoy this fatty fish: grilling and simmering.

Grilling is the simplest method, especially salt-grilling (shioyaki 塩焼き). If you're not used to the fishy smell, splash some sake over the filets, and pat dry after about 5 minutes. Sprinkle salt on both sides and grill over open flames or high heat until the skin is bubbly, crispy, and roasted. Serve with a little soy sauce, a squirt of sudachi, and maybe some grated daikon to cut through the oiliness. The fish flakes off the bone easily and the fat keeps it moist.

Simmering (nitsuke 煮付け) is a classic Japanese method, where the saba filets are covered in a cooking liquid (soy sauce, mirin cooking wine, sugar, ginger and water) and simmered until the fish is tender. The key is to let it cool down naturally, which will cause the flavors to permeate the flesh. Saba is also popular simmered with miso (miso-ni 味噌煮) and is a regular offering on most set meal menus. There is nothing more comforting on a chilly evening than a warm dish of reheated saba and a hot bowl of rice.



*Saba simmered in miso warms you up on an autumn evening.*

Too busy to cook? Recently, there has been a rising popularity in canned saba (saba-kan サバ缶), and the packing liquid is either nitsuke or miso-ni, so just open the can, heat in a microwave-safe bowl, and enjoy! These have been cooked so long that even the bones are edible (chew well). I often add the canned fish to eggs before scrambling and serve over rice with some of the cooking liquid for a quick donburi 丼 (rice bowl).

Sushi or simple, mackerel is not only versatile, but tasty and rich and perfect for cool autumn nights (or days, it's great for lunch too). Enjoy!



## Using 「おめでとう」 &amp; 「おめでとうございます」.

Words of encouragement, whether you're the one giving them or are on the receiving end, always make one happy. This time, I've made a list of occasions when you can use these words.

記念日のお祝い・・・「○○○おめでとうございます」

\*\* 「お」 or 「ご」 are added before the word.



しょうがつ 正月には・・・「しんねん あ 新年明けましておめでとうございます」



## Phrases to Express Congratulations &amp; Joy



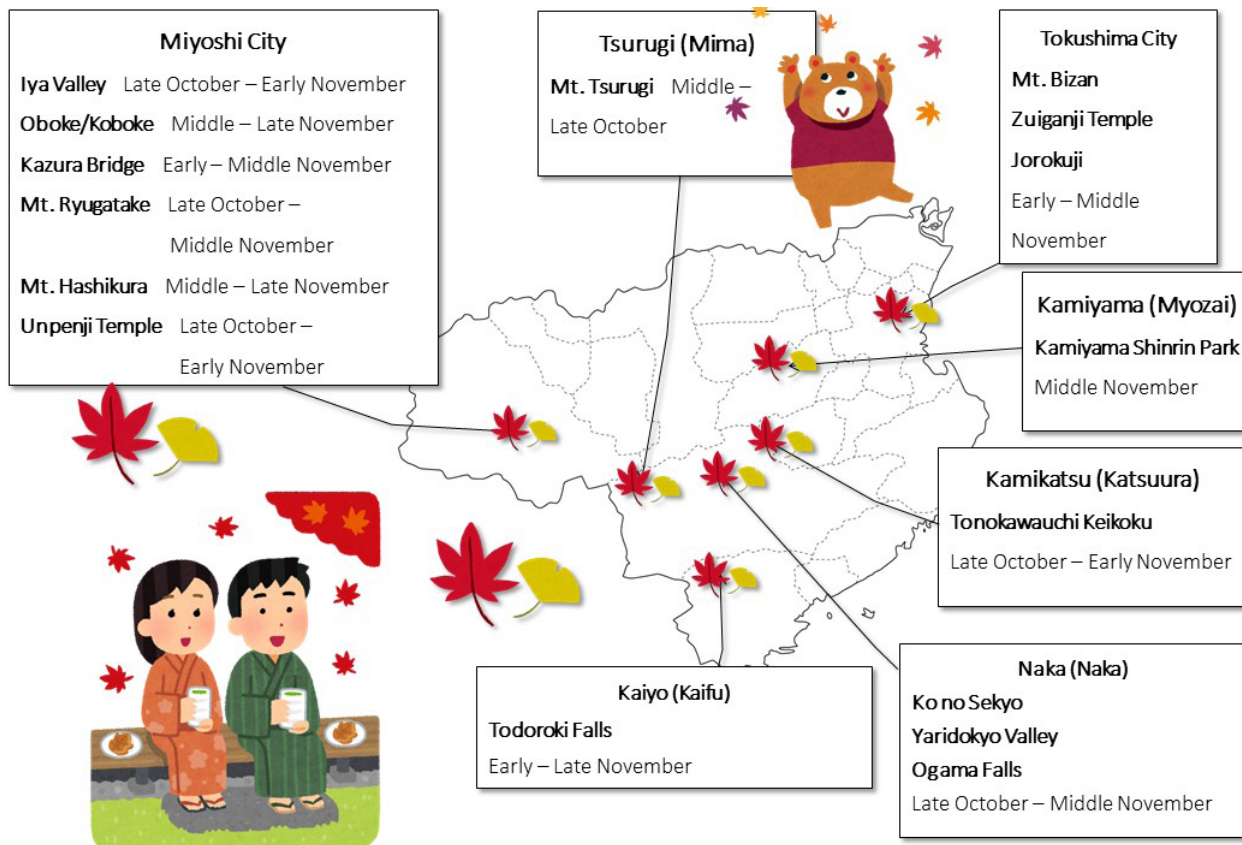
やったね！うまく行ってよかったね！  
 よかったです。本当にいい知らせ（ニュース）ですね。  
 自分のことのようにうれしいです。  
 心よりお祝い（お慶び）申し上げます。





# Events & Memoranda

## Tokushima Fall Foliage Map 徳島紅葉マップ



## Autumn in Unpenji Temple 秋の雲辺寺



The end of October marks the start for the best time to see the autumn leaves at Unpenji Temple. Along with limited edition autumn seal stamps and omamori (charms), the limited time “Café Rupō Unpenji” will also be open!

Make sure to come fully experience the season at Unpenji Temple!

When: 7:20 – 17:00 (Ropeway Hours of Operation)  
Where: Unpenji Temple  
Info: Unpenji Temple  
TEL: 088-374-0066  
Café Rupō Unpenji: October 15th – November 23rd  
Kanonji City, Kagawa Prefecture (Ropeway/Cafe)  
TEL: 087-54-4968

例年 10 月下旬頃～が紅葉の見頃の雲辺寺。  
季節限定の紅葉の御朱印 & お守りの頒布に合わせ、2020 年秋は、期間限定で「カフェルポ UNPENJI」も OPEN いたします☆

これからの季節、ぜひ雲辺寺へお出かけしてみたい♪

日時: 7:20 ~ 17:00 (ロープウェイ運行)  
場所: 雲辺寺  
問い合わせ: 雲辺寺  
TEL: 088-374-0066  
カフェルポ UNPENJI: 10 月 15 日 ~ 11 月 23 日  
カフェ & ロープウェイ (香川県観音寺市)  
TEL: 087-54-4968

# Events & Memoranda

## Picture Book: "Yusanbako Traditional Lunch Boxes of Tokushima, Japan" Publication Anniversary Event 絵本「遊山箱もって」英語版 出版記念イベント

### Contents:

- An original Ningyo Joruri performance: "Yusanbako Sagete"

This is the first time to have Osuru and Oyumi star in a performance about yusanbako. (Script by Martin Holman)

- The author will read a line from the book, and then Martin Holman will read that line in English. (Comparison between the Japanese and English)

- Book signing by the author Junyo Yamasaki.

### 内容:

- 新作人形浄瑠璃「遊山箱さげて」上演。

お鶴とお弓が、遊山箱をさげて演じるのは初めてです（脚本・マーティン氏）

- 著者が日本語を一文読んだ後、マーティン氏がその英文を読みます。（日本語と英語の違いがわかります。）

- やまさきじゅんよ作営本のサイン会

When: November 29th (Sun.)

11:45 AM – 12:30 PM

\*The regularly scheduled performance, Keisei Awa no Naruto by Naruto-Za, will be performed from 11:00 AM – 11:30 AM.

Where: Awa Jurobe Yashiki

日時: 11月29日(日)

11:45 ~ 12:30

\* (11:00 ~ 11:30 は鳴門座の「傾城阿波の鳴門」が上演されます)

場所: 阿波十郎兵衛屋敷

## Free Bus "Awa Tokushima"!! 無料バス「アワーとくしま」運行!!



For a limited time, the free bus "Awa Tokushima" (reservation required) will run between Nishi Awa (Kazurabashi Yumebutai) and Naruto (Naruto Park).

にし阿波（かずら橋夢舞台）と鳴門（鳴門公園）を結ぶフリーバス「アワーとくしま」（事前予約制）を期間限定で運行します。

Days of Operation: November 1st (Sun.),

3rd (Tue.), 7th (Sat.), 8th (Sun.),

14th (Sat.), 15th (Sun.),

21st (Sat), 22nd (Sun.),

23rd (Mon.)

運転日: 11月1日(日)、3日(火)、7日(土)、

8日(日)、14日(土)、15日(日)、

21日(土)、22日(日)、23日(月)

TEL: 088-372-2171

URL: <https://yonkoh.co.jp/freebus-ourtokushima>

TEL: 088-372-2171

URL: <https://yonkoh.co.jp/freebus-ourtokushima>

\* Reservations are required and must be made by 4:00 PM on the day prior.

\* 完全予約制で運行いたします。ご予約は前日の16:00まで。

## 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)