

aWa life

Japanese Culture and
Reading Corner: あじさい

June 2022

380

Welcome Messages



My Wonderful Life in
Japan as an Exchange
Student

Gairaigo Galore:
バイク



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

It's now June, which is typically known as the start of the rainy season in Japan. For those of us who ride a bike or walk to work or school, the rain can make this a bit of a pain. Make sure to get a good umbrella and a raincoat to make your life easier! Luckily the rain also brings about beautiful hydrangea flowers, which you can learn more about in this month's Japanese Reading Corner. We also have a map of hydrangea spots you can enjoy in Tokushima!

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:

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Welcome Messages

Mari Kimoto, Long-Term Work Experience Trainee

Nice to meet you, everyone! My name is Mari Kimoto, and I will be joining TOPIA as a long-term work experience trainee. I am interested in various things such as foreign dramas, movies, songs, and food.

The world is in the midst of a crisis as we continue to deal with the spread of COVID-19 and the current war, and as discrimination becomes more and more prevalent, I feel these issues hit too close to home. I have been thinking of what I can do to help, and I've decided I would like to shift my focus to the rest of the world and deepen my international understanding.

What surprised me when I first came to TOPIA was how internationally diverse it is. During my time here, I would like to learn more about multicultural understanding and coexistence, gain valuable experience, and teach children the many great things about foreign countries and Japan. I look forward to working with you!



Thanh, Multilingual Consultation Staff (Vietnamese)

Nice to meet you! My name is Thanh, and I am a 3rd year intercultural studies student at Shikoku University. My hometown is Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

After coming to Japan, I studied Japanese for two years in Okayama City, then I moved to Tokushima City to begin my university studies. My first impression of Tokushima was that it had a lot of rivers and a long coastline, and as someone who loves to swim, I was very excited to live here.

My hobby is cooking, and I enjoy making not only Vietnamese food, but also food from various

other countries. Recently, I have been interested in Japanese cuisine, so I have looked up many recipes and cooked dishes such as okonomiyaki, tonjiru, udon, and sushi. Thankfully, they all turned out great the first time I made them! For me, cooking is a very effective method to reduce stress. Whenever I'm feeling down, eating a delicious



home-cooked meal not only makes me feel better, but also helps me regain my self-confidence and motivation. I'm hoping to learn more Japanese recipes and cooking techniques from Japanese people.

Nong Thi Hoa, Multilingual Consultation Staff (Vietnamese)

Hello, it's nice to meet you. My name is Nong Thi Hoa, and starting from April 2022 I have been working as a Vietnamese Multilingual Staff member here at TOPIA. After graduating from high school in Vietnam, in October 2015 I came to Japan to study abroad. For 3 and a half years I studied at a Japanese language school and specialty school in Hyogo.

In order to continue my studies, I moved to Tokushima in April of 2019 and entered Shikoku University. I used to be the type that was always late to school, but after living in Japan for a long time, I've learned how important it is to be on time and to work diligently.

Fumie Imai, CLAIR Tokushima Branch Temporary Staff Member

Nice to meet you! My name is Fumie Imai, and I began working here in April.

I have always loved foreign countries, having visited many of them, and I love to spend my time abroad enjoying the local atmosphere. A few years ago, I got to experience a year-long working holiday in New Zealand, and it completely changed my worldview. I believe that interacting with people around the world can expand your own perception of the world as it is.

I started living in Tokushima recently, and I think it is a very comfortable place to live, with lots of nature and kind people. There are plenty of opportunities to enjoy sight-seeing, such as Mt. Bizan, the Hyotanajima Cruise, the Naruto Whirlpools, and the Oboke & Koboke. Just walking around the city, you will come across many things that make you think of the famous



I hope to experience new things at TOPIA and improve myself through this invaluable experience. I hope that with my 6 years of experience in Japan I can be of support to the Vietnamese people who visit TOPIA.



Awa Odori dance.

During my time abroad, I actually met someone who said they had been to Tokushima while they were travelling in Japan, and apparently Tokushima is world famous for certain activities, such as rafting. I think it is quite the charming place!



I would like to assist those who may not usually have the opportunity to engage in international exchange in order to help them expand their worldview. Let's take the first step together! I'm looking forward to working with you!

My Wonderful Life in Japan as an Exchange Student

By: Erica Vina Nafisa

Hello, my name is Erica Vina Nafisa, and I'm from Indonesia. I had the opportunity to study in Japan for approximately 5 months through the Asia Kakehashi Project Program. The Asia Kakehashi Project Program is an exchange program for high school students to visit Japan in order to bridge the understanding of Japanese culture with other Asian countries.

I arrived in Japan on October 1st, 2021, and after that I had to quarantine and attend orientation at the hotel in Narita for 2 weeks. After quarantine, we went to our respective placements, and my placement was in Tokushima.

In Tokushima, I lived with a host family, and I had two host families. From October-December I was with my first host family. I had a father, mother, and brother. They were very kind to me. Sometimes I was invited to visit various places in Tokushima and Kyoto. I was introduced to Japanese culture such as being invited to a temple, and they told me many things about Japan. I learned a lot about Japanese culture from them. They also introduced me to some Japanese food. This was a memorable experience for me.

Next, I lived with my second host family. I lived with my grandfather, grandmother, mother, uncle, and sister. They were also very kind. They introduced me to Japanese New Year culture, for example making mochi, eating soba on New Year's Eve, hitting the bell at the beginning of the year at the temple, eating "osechi" and "ozoni", taking "omikujii", buying "omamori", getting an "otoshidama", and playing a traditional game. This is a moment that I will never forget. Every day they also taught me to use Japanese.

There are so many differences between Japan and Indonesia, especially in regards to culture. In Indonesia, because most of the population is Muslim, the New Year's celebration is not as lively as in Japan, but we usually celebrate it by grilling, setting off fireworks, and gathering with family and friends.



I also learned to live in a place with many differences, especially about my religion. I wear a "hijab" all the time, even at school. In my religion we are not allowed to eat pork and drink alcoholic beverages, but I didn't experience many difficulties here because

of the differences that exist in me, because everyone, especially my family, school friends, and teachers didn't mind about my "hijab". They really valued my religion. Even my friends were interested in wearing a hijab. They once asked me to bring a hijab for them and they wanted to wear it. It really touched me and made me happy because they were very kind.



The thing that made me comfortable was school - school was very fun. I studied at Joto High



School 2nd grade. At school I had many good friends, they always helped me in any way, and they always invited me to talk about anything. They also taught me a lot of things about school, lessons, and of course Japanese. We also often played together or went to places to play together; they were always nice to me. The teachers were also kind, they treated me like their own student.

Sometimes they gave me English books so that I could take lessons well.

I had a lot of wonderful experiences here that I will never forget, and experiences that I will not get anywhere else. My life in Japan would have been lacking without friends, teachers, family, and good people around me.



Enjoy Speaking Japanese Online (Zoom)!

Are you interested in studying Japanese online (via Zoom)? Then make sure to check out TOPIA's website for more information regarding completely free, online Japanese classes!



When: June 2022 ~ March 2023

Class Length: Approximately 1 Hour

Number of Classes: 20~30

Fee: Free

Eligibility: Those who aren't currently studying at a Japanese class, school, or at work

Number of Spots: About 20 people

Applications can be sent via email to Nomizu at coordinator2@topia.ne.jp, or via Google Forms. If you are sending your application by email, please refer to TOPIA's homepage for a list of the questions you need to submit!

Google Forms



Introduction to the Tokushima Nepal Friendship Association

By: Yasutaka Taniguchi, President

The Tokushima Nepal Friendship Association was established in February 1996 by volunteers in Tokushima who wanted to send electrical lights to Bhujung Village, a mountainous village located in central Nepal. Thanks to donations and subsidies from many companies, organizations, and individuals; support from universities; and cooperation from the villagers, a small hydroelectric plant (80 kw/h) was built in December 1999. Additionally, in commemoration of the 10 year anniversary of the completion of the power plant, we have worked to support mountain villages by installing ropeways that can be used to transport agricultural produce. With the support of Tokushima's citizens, we have also conducted various projects in Nepal and Tokushima, including gifting unneeded fire trucks and ambulances, inviting Nepalese youth to Tokushima for homestays, raising money for relief after the earthquake in Nepal, and planning trips and hikes to the Himalayas in order to deepen relationships between people.



Along with our sister organization the Nepal Tokushima (Japan) Friendship Association, a photo exhibition showcasing past activities was held in the capital Kathmandu in 2019 to commemorate the 20 year anniversary of the completion of the small hydroelectric plant in Bhujung Village. We suggested sending them some of our many photo panels, but instead we ended up sending the data and they printed out the photos. When our association was founded, the only way of communication was international calls or fax, and I really feel the flow of time. After the photo exhibition ended, the pictures were

gifted to Bhujung Village, and a portion of them are planned to be displayed in a museum that is currently being built there.



One of the winning pictures

Along with the photo exhibition, a drawing contest was held with the theme of "what Nepalese children think of the friendship with Japan". At that time, children who were here for homestays (who have now grown into wonderful adolescents) helped with setting up and operating the contest.

Due to the friendship bonds between Tokushima and Nepal, Tokushima was appointed as a host town for Nepal for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, and in spite of the COVID-19 crisis, the Nepal swim team came for their pre-game training camp in 2021. An image of the memorial ceremony in Bhujung Village was used as a portion of the design for the commemorative stamps that were produced.

Although Bhujung Village didn't have electricity, now road construction has progressed, and as the village with the largest amount of Gurung people, it is visited by many people in Nepal. They also now have an internet connection, and there is a simultaneous broadcast of the village on Japanese TV, and you can always see how the village is doing via social media.

The world is in a state of unrest along with the COVID-19 pandemic, but we would like to continue deepening our bonds of friendship with Nepal, focusing on people-to-people interactions.

Japanese Culture and Reading Corner: あじさい

By: Mari Kimoto

みなさんは、あじさいの花を見たことがありますか。日本では、6月の梅雨を迎える頃、色とりどりのあじさいの花が街を彩ります。日に日に色を変えるあじさいを愛めるのは、梅雨ならではの楽しみの一つです。雨に濡れる姿も美しく、晴れ間に明るく咲く姿もきれいです。あじさいは日本が原産地で50以上のたくさんの種類があります。日本からアメリカやヨーロッパに渡ったあじさいは、土壌の関係でピンクの花が咲き、東洋バラと呼ばれているものもあります。あじさいの花言葉は、小さい花がたくさん集まって咲いていることから一家団欒という意味です。また、色の違いによって花言葉の意味は変わるので調べてみてください。梅雨の季節ですが、みなさんあじさいを見て楽しんでください。※徳島のあじさいスポットは、pg. 9を見てください。



Vocabulary List

梅雨	Rainy Season	愛でる	To Love/Appreciate	花言葉	Flower Language
迎える	To Enter (A Phase)	晴れ間	Break of Clear Weather	一家団欒	Happy Family
色とりどり	Various Colors	原産地	Place of Origin		Get-together
街	Town	土壌	Soil		
日に日に	Day by Day	東洋	The East		

Gairaigo Galore



バイク (motorcycle)

By: Sydney Bartig

If you've been following this column for a while now, then you've probably noticed that there are many words in katakana whose meaning can be quite misleading! This month I'd like to introduce the seemingly simple gairaigo: バイク. For native speakers, or even those with just a little English knowledge, you'll of course think of "bike" immediately. While it's not completely wrong... it's probably not the bike you're thinking of.

When バイク is used in Japanese, it is used to refer to motorbikes or motorcycles, not the type of bike with a bell that you would see someone casually riding throughout the city. If you want to refer to that type of bike, then you would need to use the word 自転車.

じてんしゃ
自転車

However, interesting enough, if you want to use the word マウンテンバイク, then it refers exactly to a mountain bike. Similarly, バイクトレール is simply translated to a bicycle trail. A bit confusing, right?

Japanese Lesson

By: Fusa Tamaki

ね and よ

Have you heard 「よ」, 「ね」, 「よね」 and other sounds being used at the end of sentences during your conversations? These are known as “ending particles”, and they are used to express emotions. There are ending particles that are typically used by men, as well as ones that are typically used by women. However, it is slowly changing so that they are used regardless of gender. Out of the many ending particles, today let’s study 「よ」 and 「ね」. Let’s begin by reading the below conversations.

例1 A: 「今日の会議は、3時からですね。」

B: 「はい。今資料をコピーしています」

例2 A: 「今日の会議は、3時からですよ。」

B: 「えっ! じゃ、急いで資料をコピーします!」



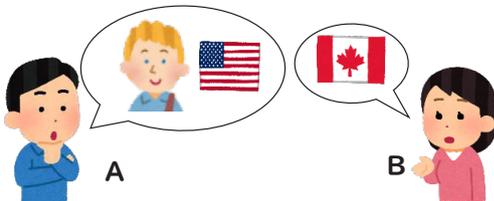
In example 1, 「ね」 is used in such a way that A is confirming with B that the meeting does in fact start at 3. In example 2, 「～よ」 is used in such a way that A is letting B know that the meeting starts at 3. 「よ」 and 「ね」 can have many others meanings, but for today let’s practice using them as with how they are in the examples.

「ね」 ... The speaker confirms with the listener that they share the same feeling.

「よ」 ... The speaker conveys new information to the listener.

【問題】 次の会話は、「よ」・「ね」のどちらがいいでしょうか。

- ① A: ジョンさんは、アメリカ人ですか。
- B: いいえ、カナダ人です(よ・ね)。



- ③ A: これ、おいしいです(よ・ね)。どうぞ。
- B: ありがとうございます。いただきます。



- ② A: ムニラさん、日本語が上手ですね。
- B: ほんとうに上手です(よ・ね)。



- ④ A: これ、からいです(よ・ね)。
- B: そうです(よ・ね)。

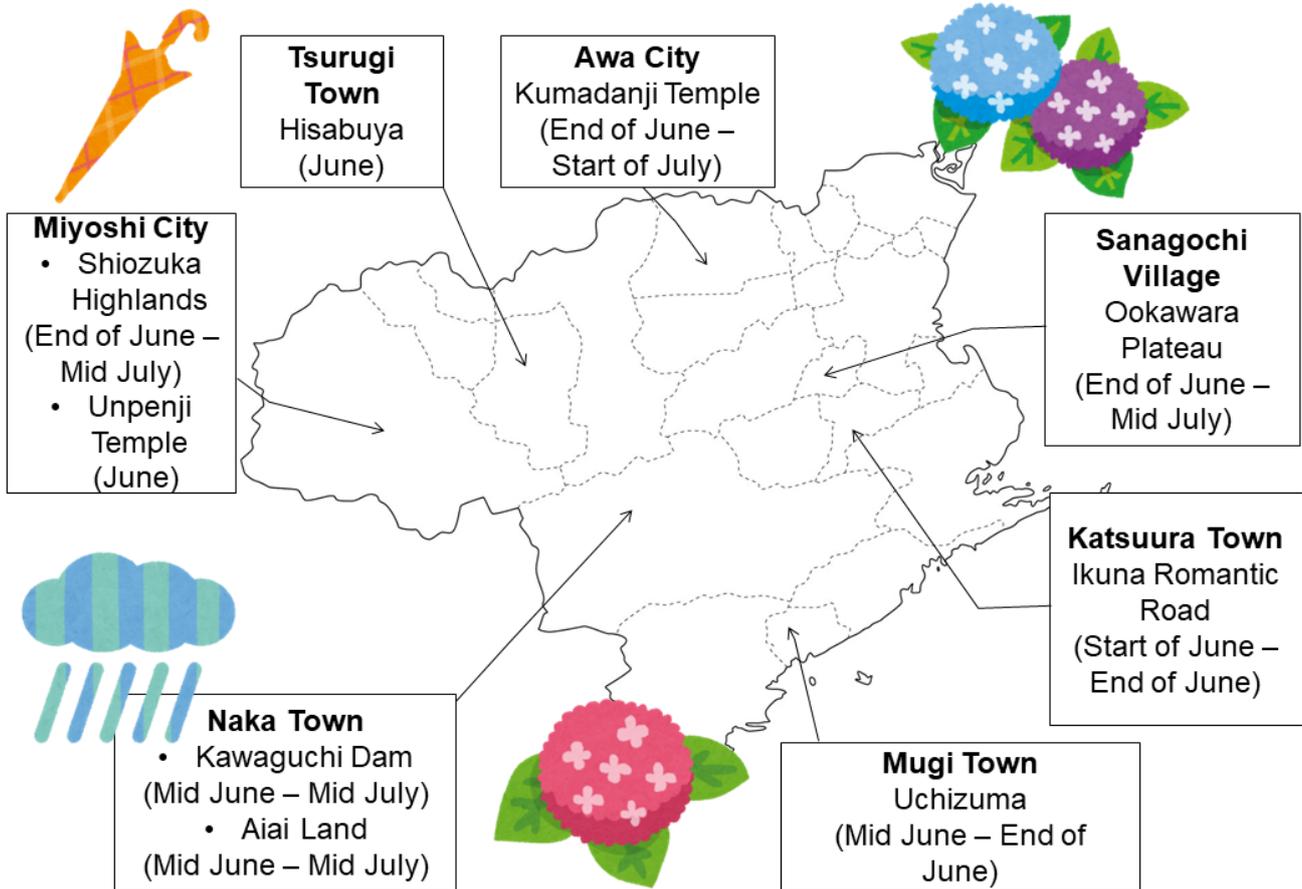


- ⑤ A: すみません、トピアはどこですか。
- B: あのビルの6階です(よ・ね)。



Events & Memoranda

Tokushima Hydrangea Map 2022 徳島県あじさい案内図 2022



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.

Japanese, English, Chinese: Everyday, 10:00 - 18:00 (closed during the New Year's holidays)

Vietnamese: Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, 10:00 - 14:00

Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays, 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)