

aWa life

Diwali - The Festival of
Lights

Dec. 2024

#409

Cross-cultural Event at
Asutamu Land

Foods of the Japanese
New Year

Welcome Greetings



TOPIA

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



Welcome to December! And perhaps more importantly, welcome to *kotatsu* season! Have you ever tried using a Japanese *kotatsu*? If not, I hope you get the chance to this winter. A *kotatsu* is a heated low table combined with a futon. Underneath the table surface is an electric heater. This way, when you sit (or lay) under the *kotatsu*, it keeps your legs warm and the heat contained under the futon. Just be careful not to fall asleep, or you may wake up a little *too* warm.

In other news, this is the last edition of Awa Life for the year of 2024! We hope you all have a wonderful and safe New Years holiday season, and that you come back feel rested and refreshed for January. See you in 2025!

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:

Your editors,
Riley and Lisa



awalife@gmail.com

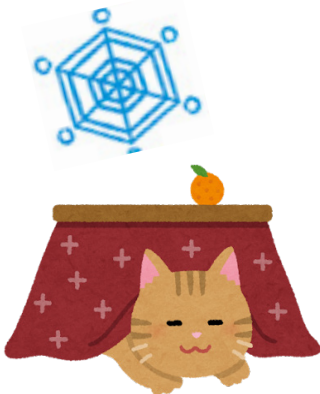
Tokushima Prefectural International Exchange Association (TOPIA)

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:

Riley Henke, Lisa Knitter

Contributors This Month:

Miyui Okamoto, Rishmita Siyal, Riley Henke, Ai Hattori, Mako Kobayashi, Michi Mori

Contents

- Pg. 2: Welcome Greetings
- Pg. 3: Diwali - The Festival of Lights
- Pg. 4-5: Foods of the Japanese New Year
- Pg. 5 Cross-Cultural Event at Asutamuland
- Pg. 6: Tokushima Culture and Reading Corner: 薬王寺 やくおうじ
- Pg. 6: Nihongo Know-It-All: First-person Pronouns Pt. 2
- Pg. 7: Japanese Lesson: 「～そうです」
- Pg. 8-9: Events and Memoranda



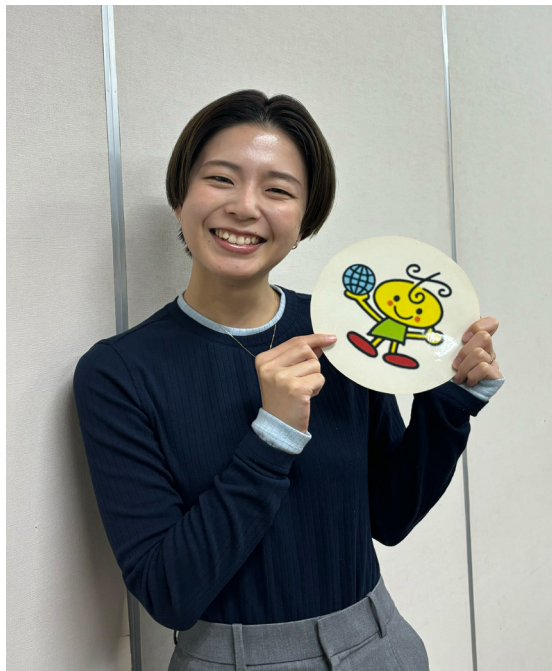
Welcome Greetings

By: Miyui Okamoto

Hello everyone! It's nice to meet you. My name is Miyui Okamoto, and I recently started working at TOPIA. I'm originally from Fukui Prefecture, but I moved to Tokushima in August of this year. Fukui is located in the Hokuriku region, right in the middle of Japan, and makes up part of the coast along the Sea of Japan. This means that our seafood, such as Echizen crab, is extra delicious! We also get a lot of snow each winter in Fukui, and shoveling it all is a constant battle. Just like Tokushima, Fukui is a peaceful place filled with beautiful nature, and although it's a little far, I hope you all will have the opportunity to visit someday.

At university, I majored in English, and studied abroad in the Czech Republic. During my time there, I was able to travel around the different countries of Europe, experience new cultures and

foods, and get to know the local people. Overall, it was an incredibly fulfilling experience, and from it



I gained a desire to share Japan's culture with the rest of the world. After graduating university, I worked at a Japanese sake brewery. I know Tokushima has good sake as well, so I look forward to tasting and comparing the different types!

Since I have only been in Tokushima for just a few months now, there are still many things I don't know about the area. If you have any recommendations for places to go, things to do, restaurants, etc. I would

love to hear them! Moving forward in this position, I hope to be able to support foreign residents of Tokushima so that they, too, can enjoy a pleasant "Awa life." Thank you all for reading, and I look forward to working with you all!

Diwali - The Festival of Lights

By: Rishmita Siyal, Tokushima City CIR

Diwali, a five-day festival celebrated in India, has always not just been a festival, but also an emotion. People all over India look forward to it so much that even one of the major parts, cleaning, also becomes fun. From helping our parents to prepare sweets and snacks from scratch for the whole family, to buying gifts to give not just to friends, but also to co-workers or even to people you do business with, that's the extent of the Diwali celebration. To most of us, the day after Diwali is considered to be a New Year, and hence a new beginning. With this hope and lights, not just in our houses and on the street, but also in our hearts.

Being in Japan, I missed my family incredibly during Diwali this year. But I did get a chance to share my joy of Diwali on 3rd of November, through workshops, games and a fun dance with the beautiful people I know, and I met for the first time. Being able to do that gave me a new sense of happiness and also pride. I look forward to having fun with everyone here and doing as much cultural exchange as possible while I unwrap more of this amazing culture here.

- Rishmita Siyal, Tokushima City CIR

Diwali Event Activities

By: Riley Henke



Rishmita CIR explaining the holiday traditions of Diwali



Diwali - the Festival of Lights



Lantern making workshop



Rangoli making workshop



Finished rangoli



Diya painting workshop

As a part of the Diwali event that Rishmita organized, there were various activities for participants to try out relating to the holiday. Here's a brief description of each of activity and their ties to Diwali.

Lecture: Rishmita CIR gave a presentation on the holiday of Diwali and how it is celebrated in India.

Lantern making: Since Diwali is the festival of light, lanterns are used as decorative items during the festival to symbolize the victory of light over darkness.

Rangoli art making: Rangoli is an art form in which materials such as rice powder or colored sand are used to make patterns on a floor or table. We created rangoli on paper using glue and sand.

Diya painting: Diya are small oil lamps that are lit during Diwali. Participants could paint their own diya to put a small candle in.

Game and snacks: Participants ate sweet and salty snacks from India (soan papdi and khatta meetha) and drank tea while playing a game similar to bingo called tambola or housie.

Dance: Rishmita, along with other volunteers from various countries, danced to both traditional and modern Indian music to celebrate the joyful holiday.

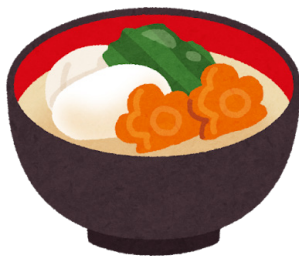
Foods of the Japanese New Year

By: Miyui Okamoto

What comes to mind when you hear the phrase “New Years in Japan”? For some, it may be *hatsumode*, the first shrine visit of the new year. For others, perhaps it's the bell that is rang at temples near midnight on New Years Eve, or the snowman-shaped *kagami mochi* eaten during the season. There is no lack of unique traditions and culture when it comes to Japanese New Year celebrations, but among them, the special dishes eaten during the New Year are indispensable to celebrating the holiday. This month, I would like to introduce some of the traditional Japanese New Year's food culture.



First is the soba (or buckwheat noodles) that is eaten on New Years Eve (or 大晦日, Ōmisoka), called 年越しそば (としこしそば). There are various theories about the origin of this New Year's Eve soba, but it is said to have started as “*Misoka* soba,” which was eaten by merchants at the end of each month during the Edo period (1603-1868). The long, thin soba noodles are said to represent longevity or a long lifespan, and because soba is more crisp than other noodles, it is eaten with the hope that the bad luck and hardships of the year will break off easily.



Next is the soup dish with rice cake and vegetables eaten on New Years Day, *ozoni*. Like

New Years Eve soba, the theories about the origin of *ozoni* are varied, but it is said to have originated in Kyoto during the Muromachi period (1333-1573). At the time, people used to eat *ozoni* stewed with water drawn on New Year's Day and cooked over the first fire of the year to wish for happiness throughout the year. *Ozoni* ingredients vary from region to region and from household to household: round or square rice cakes, soy sauce or miso flavored, and in some regions not only vegetables but also meat and fish are added. In Tokushima, round rice cakes and white miso usually make up the base, and ingredients such as carrots, daikon radish, fish paste, and yuzu are often added. But even within Tokushima itself, recipes vary widely. For example, in Iya, Miyoshi City, Iwa tofu is often used instead of rice cakes.



Next, I will introduce Japanese *osechi*. *Osechi* is not just one dish, but rather a collection of 10-20 dishes that are packed into a stacked box and eaten as part of Japan's New Years. The origin of *osechi* is said to be from “*sechiku*,” which was introduced from China during the Yayoi period (710-794). When the harvest was collected at the turn of the season, the crops would be cooked and offered up to the gods. This tradition eventually evolved into what we now call *osechi*. It is also said that the need for *osechi* arose because in the past, many stores were closed the first three days of the new year, which made it difficult to get fresh ingredients to cook with. For this reason, foods that can last for a few days before being eaten were purposefully used in *osechi*. It also gave the person who does the cooking in the home a few days break to rest in the New Year. Furthermore, each dish that makes up *osechi* has its own

Foods of the Japanese New Year

meaning. For example, black soybeans are eaten with the hope to be able to work diligently and with plenty of energy, and *datemaki*, an egg dish made of fish paste, has the meaning of academic success.



Lastly, I will introduce the seven herbs rice porridge that is eaten on January 7. The seven herbs porridge is a custom created by the fusion of Chinese and Japanese cultures. The seven herbs of spring (water dropwort, shepherd's purse, cudweed, chickweed, henbit, turnip, daikon

radish) are made into a porridge with the hope that they will keep one healthy throughout the year. The seven herbs porridge is also great for giving the stomach a break after eating too much during the New Year.

As you can see, traditional New Year's food culture is still deeply rooted in Japan today. The New Year's dishes that I have introduced today can be purchased at your local supermarket, so how about trying them out and participating in a traditional Japanese New Year this year?



Cross-cultural Event at Asutamu Land

By: Ai Hattori, JICA Tokushima Desk



On October 20, 2024, a cross-cultural exchange event was held at Asutamu Land in Tokushima! In this event, areas featuring classic children's games from three foreign countries were set up. The children participating were tasked with a mission: In order to play the games, they had to say "hello" to the staff member in the language corresponding with the country on the staff's badge. Armed with a stamp card and world map in one hand, these kids took on the challenge to use different languages to play. After the games, the next activity was

to make round badges of flags from countries all over the world. The event received positive feedback, with many saying they had "so much fun!" Thank you to all who participated, and I can't wait to see you all at the next event!



The Africa Booth



The Japan Booth



The Vietnam/China Booth

Tokushima Culture and Reading Corner: Yakuo-ji 薬王寺

By: Mako Kobayashi

四国地方では、「四国八十八カ所霊場」といって、歩きながら巡礼できるお寺がいくつもあります。徳島県では、二十三カ所の お寺があります。薬王寺は二十三番目の お寺で、徳島県での巡礼では、最後の お寺になります。

薬王寺への行き方は、徳島駅から JR 牟岐線に 乗り、「日和佐駅」で 降ります。日和佐駅で 降りたら、駅から 山側を見上げると 薬王寺の瑜祇塔という 塔を 見つけることができます。日和佐駅から、徒歩 5 分ほどで 薬王寺のふもとに 行くことができ、ふもとから 本堂に 上がっていくための 石段があります。この石段には、たくさん 1 円玉が 落ちていますが、これは、厄除け 祈願の 1 つとされています。



薬王寺は、厄除け 祈願のための お寺として、全国的に 有名で、年中多くの 人たちが お参りに 行きます。特に、お正月の 初詣には、全国から 15 万人もの人が 参拝します。

そして 事前予約をすれば、日本ならではの 精進料理や 写経体験を 楽しむことができます。また 3 月下旬から 4 月下旬の 桜と 一緒に 薬王寺の塔を 景色として 楽しむこともできます。

Vocabulary List

四国地方 Shikoku region 四国八十八カ所霊場 Shikoku 88 sacred sites 巡礼 pilgrimage
塔 tower 本堂 main temple building 厄除け warding off evil 祈願 prayer
年中 throughout the year 初詣 first shrine visit of the New Year 参拝 visit to
a shrine or temple 事前予約 advance reservation 精進料理 vegetarian cuisine
originally derived from the diet of Buddhist monks 写経 hand-copied sutras

First-person Pronouns Pt. 2

By: Riley Henke

Nihongo Know-it-all

For this month's Nihongo Know-it-All, we're picking up where we left off last month with first-person pronouns (FPP). This time, we'll be exploring some more options you may not hear as often in real life, or only hear in limited circumstances. As a review, there are a very large number of FPPs in Japanese, and they are used to "convey a variety of subtexts, including formality level, gender identity, social hierarchy, and psychological distance," according to a 2019 article from Tofugu (Nakamine, 2019).

自分 (じぶん) : 自分 can mean many things (myself; yourself; oneself), but it can also serve as a FPP. It shows humility and is relatively gender-neutral, but was traditionally used more often by men.

Your own name: Using your own name or nickname to refer to yourself is common for children, but some still use it into adulthood at home with family.

Your family/social role: For example, calling oneself お母さん when speaking to their children. This is used when talking to someone younger than you and is most often used with family. However, when talking to a young child outside of the family, you might use refer to yourself as お姉ちゃん、お兄ちゃん, etc. This is a kind way to apply the child's perspective to the interaction.

This covers the most commonly used FPPs, but I'll list a few not-so-common examples in case you'd like to do your own research (you might even hear some of these in anime or manga)!

わし, あたい, おいら, 吾輩 / 我輩 (わがはい), 余 (よ), 拙者 (せっしゃ)



「～そうです」

This month, let's focus on the difference between 「～そうです」 when it is connected to an adjective versus when it is connected to a verb. When connected to an adjective, 「〈い A-(~~い~~) / な A-(~~な~~)〉 そうです」 indicates that a person or thing (other than the speaker) appears to be a certain way, judging from its outward appearance. However, when connected to a verb, 「〈V ^{けい}ます形〉 そうです」 is used when the verb is not yet in that state but is expected to be soon. (Please be careful not to confuse these uses with 「〈V/A ^{ふつうけい}普通形〉 そうです」 which is used to convey information that the speaker has heard or read.)

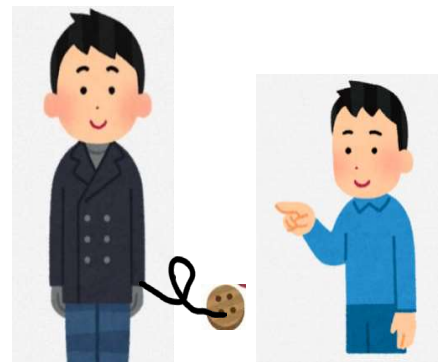
(A conversation between A さん and B さん)

A : B さん、そのコートあたたかそうですね。

B: はい。とてもあたたかいです。去年デパートで買いました。

A: いいですね。あっ、^{した}下のボタンが^と取れそうですよ。

B: あ、^{ほんとう}本^{ほん}当^{とう}だ。ありがとうございます。



In this example, A さん used 「あたたかそうです」「〈い A-~~い~~〉 そうです」 to express what they thought or their impression when looking at the coat that B さん is wearing. In the next example, 「ボタンが^と取れそうです」「〈V ます^{けい}形〉 そうです」 was used by A さん to express that the button was just about to come off of B さん's coat, but had not yet.

Additionally, 「〈V ます形〉 そうです」 can also be used to make predictions about the near future, such as in the sentence 「今夜は寒くなりそうです。」

Now, let's practice. Add 「そうです」 to the words in parenthesis and rewrite it on the blank.

- ① 今にも^{いま}雨が^{あめ}_____。(降ります)
- ② あっ、見てください。トラックから荷物^{にもつ}が_____よ。(落ちます)
- ③ 風^{かぜ}が強^{つよ}くて木の枝^きが^{えだ}_____。(折れます)
- ④ このりんごは_____。(甘^{あま}い)
- ⑤ あの二人^{ふたり}は_____ね。いいなあ。(幸^{しあわ}せな)
- ⑥ _____ね。いっしょに映画^{えいが}に行きませんか。(暇^{ひま}な)

Events & Memoranda

Christmas Lights at Asutamu Land あすたむらんど Happy Xmas 2024 イルミネーション

Come see the lights this holiday season at Asutamu Land! With 410,000 lights, this illumination spectacle is one of the largest in the prefecture. Special nighttime events will be held, and park hours will be extended. There will also be a special shuttle bus to and from Tokushima Station from December 21-25. Check the website for more details.

夜9時まで延長開園！イルミネーションは17時から点灯！県内最大級規模41万球のイルミネーション！夜間限定イベントもたくさん開催するよ♪子ども科学館などの施設も夜間開館し、イベント盛り沢山でお待ちしております。

Date and time: November 30-December 29 from 9:30-21:00 (Lights turn on at 17:00)

開催日時: 2024年11月30日(土)～12月29日(日)
9:30～21:00

Location: Asutamu Land Tokushima

開催場所: 板野町 あすたむらんど徳島

Inquiries: Asutamu Land Tokushima
Phone: 088-672-7111

お問い合わせ: 徳島県立あすたむらんど
Tel: 088-672-7111

Website: <https://asutamuland.jp/>

URL: <https://asutamuland.jp/>

Ikawa Ski Resort Kainayama Season Open 井川スキー場腕山オープン

The Ikawa Ski Resort Kainayama is opening for the 2024-2025 season starting December 17, 2024! Ikawa Ski Resort Kainayama is Tokushima Prefecture's only ski resort, so don't miss your chance this season. The resort also offers ski-wear and equipment rental, as well as lessons. There is also a store and a restaurant on the resort. We're looking forward to seeing you all on the slopes!

徳島唯一のスキー場「井川スキー場腕山」がいよいよ2024～2025シーズンオープンです♪ウェア等のレンタルや、スクール、売店、レストランも充実。みんなで滑りにきてください！

Location: Ikawa Ski Resort Kainayama, Miyoshi City

開催場所: 三好市 井川スキー場腕山

Date: Season is planned for December 17, 2024 - March 9, 2025

開催日: 2024年12月17日(火)12時～
2025年3月9日(日)予定

Time: Opens at 12pm (noon) on December 17

開催時間: 2024年12月17日12:00オープン

Inquiries: Ikawa Ski Resort Kainayama
Phone: 0883-78-3003 (during season)
0897-59-0331 (off-season)

お問い合わせ: 井川スキー場腕山
Tel: 0883-78-3003 (シーズン中)、0897-59-0331 (シーズン外)



Events & Memoranda

New Years Fireworks Festival in Komatsushima 年末「夢花火」in 小松島

This New Years Eve, approximately 1,000 fireworks will be shot into the night sky over Komatsushima Port, with a grand finale synchronized to music. Alongside the fireworks, there will also be a festival held with many stalls and food trucks. The festival will feature Awa Odori dance performances, a stamp rally, and a bingo tournament. Let's all have a fantastic New Years Eve together!

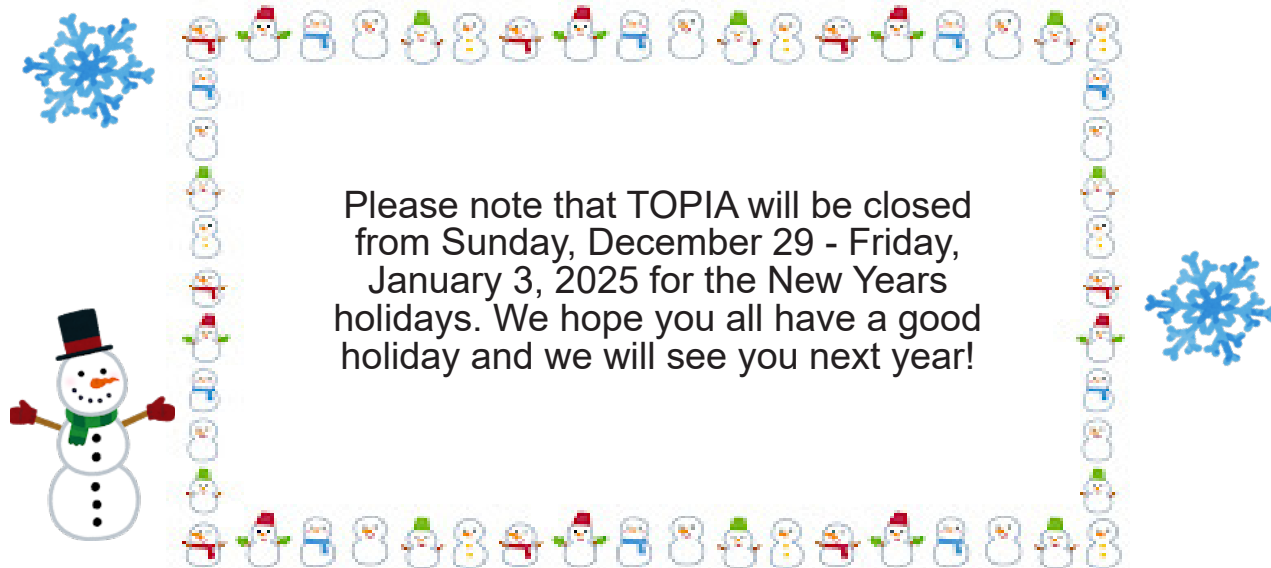
冬の小松島港に、夜空を彩る花火が約 1000 発打ち上げられます。フィナーレは音楽と花火のコラボ。幻想的な大晦日を演出します。会場周辺にはマルシェやキッチンカーが多数出店予定。阿波踊りやスタンプラリー、ビンゴゲーム大会なども実施しますのでみなさまお誘いあわせの上、ぜひご来場ください。

Location: Komatsushima Port Community Center “kocolo” 開催場所：小松島みなと交流センター kocolo

Date and Time: Tuesday December 31, 2024 開催日時：12月31日（火）16:00～20:30
16:00-20:30

Inquiries: “Yume” Fireworks Festival Committee お問い合わせ：年末「夢花火」実行委員会
Phone: 0885-32-3533 TEL：0885-32-3533

TOPIA Holiday Closure Notice 2024



Counseling 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)