

# awa life

The Tokushima AJET  
Musical

Feb. 2025

#411

China's New Slang  
and Buzzwords 2024

From Tokushima to the  
World!

Nihongo Know-it-all:  
Japanese  
Onomatopoeias

Oasahiko Shrine, Naruto, Tokushima



TOPIA

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



Happy February, everyone! We hope that your year is off to a good start. In February we have two national Japanese holidays to look forward to, and of course the unofficial holidays of *Setsubun* and Valentine's Day. The two public holidays are National Foundation Day on February 11, and the Emperor's Birthday, which is currently celebrated on February 23.

Have you ever celebrated *Setsubun*? *Setsubun* is held on the day before the start of Spring according to the lunar calendar every year. To celebrate *Setsubun*, roasted beans are thrown to ward off evil spirits that bring disaster, misfortune and bad health, while people shout 「鬼は外、福は内」 (*Oni ha soto! Fuku ha uchi*), which means "Demons out! Fortune in!" Another popular custom is eating eho-maki sushi rolls. One is supposed to eat the roll without talking, while facing the lucky direction of the year.



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. Additionally, please keep articles around ~300-500 words (if writing in English), or ~1000 characters (if writing in Japanese). If you have any questions or want to check if your topic will work, feel free to reach out to us before you start writing.

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,  
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## *The Tokushima AJET Musical*

By: Robin Kelly

The weather won't be getting warmer for a while yet, but the Tokushima AJET Musical team has been hard at work! This year, we'll be performing "The Cinderella Musical" at various venues across the prefecture (information is listed on the events section of this Awa Life edition).

Hi, my name is Robin and I've taken on the roles of director and producer for the 2025 musical. It is a huge undertaking, even larger than I expected, so I'm very thankful to everyone participating in this project. We're a group of ALTs and residents in the prefecture that have volunteered to put on Tokushima's yearly English musical, a highly anticipated event for many. Our goal is to inspire English language

learning through a fun performance and to provide entertainment. The first production took place in 1995 and we're glad to make this the musical's 29th year running (minus some years due to the

coronavirus). We hope to knock audiences' socks off.

Leading up to this point, we had many things to do like decide the theme, prepare and host auditions, decide our performers, reserve rehearsal and performance venues, prepare a poster, and so much more. While I can't comment too much on the behind the scenes from this year, I can tell you about my experience with the musical from last year.



I love performing in front of others and, during high school, I was a part of show choir groups that competed in the United States. Show choir involves singing and dancing on stage (think Glee but better). So, you can imagine my surprise when I discovered Tokushima

prefecture had an event like this! It was over a year ago by now, but I still remember how nervous I was auditioning for a role. Even though I knew almost everyone in the room, my nerves still

## The Tokushima AJET Musical

got the better of me and my voice cracked while trying to sing. When the roles were announced, I was so ecstatic to find out I'd be playing Pearl, the daughter of Mr. Krabs.



We tried taking components of *SpongeBob SquarePants: The Broadway Musical*, simplifying and making it our own for a more digestible performance for people living in Tokushima. It felt more like a cultural

exchange than previous shows because the show seems to be more well known abroad, especially in North America. Something we had to consider was that even though many Japanese people (mostly students) recognize *SpongeBob SquarePants*



as a cartoon character, they might not know too much about the storylines that take place. Some things had to be cut or changed due to time and budget restraints, but I think it allowed us to be creative with the project. I was taken aback by how much could be accomplished in such a short period of time. Once our rehearsals started up in January, they ran every weekend through February until our performances in March. We sang, danced, acted, and made many of our own props for the show. After hours of rehearsing and crafting props, it was finally time to show our efforts on stage. While we'd be considered an amateur theater group, there is still respect and professionalism. However, no matter how much you practice, things don't always go according to

plan. I specifically remember one instance where one of the actors looked at me (Pearl) right in the eyes and said "Thank you, Robin" on stage. We both froze for a moment. I ended up saying "Who is Robin?" and I could hear everyone backstage dying of laughter. Thankfully the actor was able to pull through and make it work. I still feel bad about the incident and have since apologized many times for not knowing what to do in that situation. Thinking about it still makes me laugh and it is now one of my favorite memories from the 2024 musical.

And lastly, there is such an overwhelming feeling of pride and gratefulness after the final performance when we can reflect on everything our team was able to do. We put a lot of effort in and I think it shows. It was such a great experience getting to know and work with so many ALTs and community members on a project such as this. You can find recordings of our previous musicals uploaded on YouTube by searching "Tokushima AJET Musical". If you can, please come watch one of our performances! We appreciate any and all support, as we wouldn't be able to keep doing this without the community.

Thank you!

-Robin Kelly, Yoshinogawa City ALT



## China's New Slang and Buzzwords of 2024

Translated by: Qin Yao and Lisa Knitter

As one year ends and a new one begins, we cannot help but look back and reflect on everything that has happened – not only in our personal lives, but also on events and trends in our communities. Around the world many countries publish lists of the most popular words of the year, which often are newly coined words that reflect the trends and culture in that region. Today, we would like to share some of China's buzzwords of 2024.

### ① city 不 city ( city bu city )

It may be a city, but is it a CITY city? This phrase means “Is it urban?” or “Is it modern?” The origin is a short video posted by an American influencer in which he asks, “Is Shanghai urban?” (上海 city 不 city?) in a mix of English and Chinese. The trending of “city 不 city” reflects the growing acceptance and popularity of “China Travel” among foreigners.



### ② 班味儿 ( bān wèi er )

This word's popularity was sparked by an online article titled, “Once you start working, your vibes will change dramatically.” “Bān wèi er” is a term often used by office workers to make fun of themselves for having an overall atmosphere of fatigue or being worn out due to work. In this rapidly developing and ever-changing era, the workplace is full of chances and challenges. The

expression “bān wèi er” is a symbolic portrayal of the fatigue, expectations, and hard work of the modern office worker.

### ③ 銀髮力量 ( yín fā lì liàng )

The direct translation is “The power of grey hair,” alluding to the influence of elderly persons in various areas of society. Nowadays, many elderly people take part in volunteering and cultural activities, thus putting an effort into the development of society that cannot be ignored.



### ④ 小孩哥 / 小孩姐 ( xiǎo hái gē/xiǎo hái jiě )

These words refer to children that have an outstanding talent in a certain area. Despite their young age they have an extraordinary ability, so much so that adults feel that the children are much more amazing than themselves. Therefore the word 小孩 (child) followed by the respectful 哥 (older brother) or 姐 (older sister) is used to refer to them. An eleven-year-old “older brother” has built a rocket and a fourteen-year-old “older sister” has broken an Olympic record. Both are very remarkable and had a widespread influence on society. Today, society increasingly values the development of children's individuality and the cultivation of their overall qualities, and children have many opportunities to fulfill their potential and receive much support and recognition.

## From Tokushima to the World!

### Launch of Regular International Flights at Tokushima Airport

By: Tokushima Prefectural Office Tourism Policy Division, Tourism, Sports, and Culture Department

Have you tried out the new international flights from Tokushima Awaodori Airport? Since November 16 of last year, Hong Kong's Greater Bay Airlines is operating regular flights between Tokushima and Hong Kong on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays. Additionally, as of December 26 of last year, Eastar Jet of South Korea is operating flights every Tuesday,

Thursday and Saturday between Tokushima and Seoul. Thanks to these direct flights, it is now possible to reach Hong Kong in about 4 hours and Seoul in about 2 hours from Tokushima.

To celebrate the opening day of each flight, commemorative ceremonies were held at the airport. Sudachi-kun and other mascot characters,

## From Tokushima to the World!

tourism businesses and industry workers in the prefecture, and preschoolers all greeted the passengers arriving from Hong Kong and Seoul, who were delighted by the warm welcome.



Welcoming the arriving passengers to Tokushima

It seems that for the majority of those using the direct flights, it is their first visit to Tokushima. When we spoke to those who had just arrived, they were filled with anticipation, saying things such as, “I have been to large cities like Tokyo and Osaka, but it’s my first time in the countryside. I’m really looking forward to it,” and, “It’s my first time on Shikoku. I heard that Tokushima’s ramen and seafood are delicious, so I definitely want to try it.”

There were also some repeat visitors who had been here before. When asked what they liked about Tokushima, answers included, “The food is delicious,” “I liked the ramen,” and, “The scenery is very beautiful. I’m excited to be back.”



Flight from Hong Kong arriving at Awaodori Airport

On the other hand, many of the passengers departing Tokushima for Hong Kong and Seoul expressed opinions such as, “Now that I can take international flights from a nearby airport, travel has gotten easier and more convenient.” Others commented, “I can now travel overseas more

easily than before,” or, “By taking a connecting flight from Hong Kong or Seoul I can go to many different countries, which is great.”

Even before the new flights began operating, Hong Kong has accounted for the highest number of people among the foreign visitors to Tokushima Prefecture, while South Korea’s most popular overseas travel destination is Japan. In recent years, it appears the enthusiasm for travel to small cities is only rising. The direct connection to the two regions is expected to further increase travel and deepen the relationship and exchanges between Tokushima and Hong Kong/South Korea in the future.



Flight from Seoul arriving at Awaodori Airport

We hope that you all, too, will make use of the flights to Hong Kong and South Korea. Don’t forget to invite your family and friends along as well!

Flight schedule:

Tokushima - Hong Kong (Monday, Wednesday, Saturday)

16:20 Tokushima - 20:05 Hong Kong

10:50 Hong Kong - 15:20 Tokushima

Tokushima - Seoul (Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday)

13:05 Tokushima - 14:50 Seoul

10:40 Seoul - 12:15 Tokushima



*Tokushima Culture and Reading Corner:* 蒲生田岬 かもだみさき

By: Yukari Nagata

安南市椿町に位置する蒲生田岬は、四国で最も東にある岬です。そのシンボルである「蒲生田灯台」は、大正13年（1924年）に建てられました。晴れの日、この灯台から大鳴門橋や淡路島、和歌山県までも見ることができ、どこまでも美しい海の景色が広がります。この辺りは四国で最初に朝日が昇る場所と言われており、季節によっては「だるま朝日」を見られることもあります。

岬の入口には、波と風をモチーフにしたハート型のモニュメントが立っており、「波の詩」と呼ばれています。恋愛成就のパワースポットとしても近年注目されているようです。また周辺地域は、SUP（サップ：スタンド・アップ・パドルボード）に適した海岸が多くあり、体験型の観光が盛んに行われています。海の景色やSUPを楽しみに、訪れてみてはいかがですか？



写真：だるま朝日 しゃしん あさひ

**Vocabulary List**

岬 cape/coast みさき 大正 Taishō era たいしょう 位置する is located いち だるま朝日 Daruma-shaped sun あさひ  
 恋愛成就 romantic fulfillment れんあいじょうじゆ 注目する to pay attention ちゆうもく 周辺地域 surrounding areas しゅうへんちいき  
 体験型 hands-on/experience-oriented たいけんがた

**Japanese Onomatopoeias**

**Nihongo Know-it-all**

By: Riley Henke



If you live in Japan, or have watched/listened to Japanese media, you almost certainly have already heard what this month's Nihongo Know-it-all is about. This month, we're talking onomatopoeias! Onomatopoeias are used frequently in Japanese, and they are unique in terms of the scope of what they can express. For example, 擬声語, which describe animal or human sounds (a cat says にゃー), are similar to onomatopoeias found in English. However, in Japanese you also have 擬態語, which describe the condition or state of things. For example, the word イライラ is a sound assigned to describe the feeling of anger or irritation, or わくわく, which is the "sound" of being excited or thrilled.



Such as the examples from before, Japanese onomatopoeias can be used to describe things with audible sounds such as heavy rain (ザーザー) and light footsteps (パタパタ), or inaudible concepts or feelings. These words help the listener to conjure a more vivid mental image. For example, based on auditory cues alone one can see why the word ねばねば describes something wet or sticky, while the word 力サカサ describes a dry, rough surface. In this way, onomatopoeia can help incorporate tactile experiences into our language.

Some examples of other commonly used onomatopoeia include:



ドキドキ : heart-pounding      キラキラ : sparkling      ふわふわ : soft, fluffy      ぺこぺこ : hungry  
 コンコン : knocking on a door      ゴロゴロ : lazing around      ギリギリ : just barely, to the last moment

「～のに」と「～ても」の違いについて考えましょう

Imagine you went to a famous restaurant. It was expensive, but the food wasn't good.

このレストランは、<sup>たか</sup>高いのに、おいしくありませんでした。

(The restaurant is expensive, but the food wasn't even very good.)

Now, imagine you have a cold. You take some medicine, but don't feel any better.

<sup>くすり</sup>薬を飲んだのに、<sup>なお</sup>治りません。

(Even though I took medicine, I still don't feel any better.)

Such as in these examples, 「～のに」 is often used when the speaker is surprised and/or disappointed by an unexpected outcome. One could use 「～ても」 to describe this situation and say 「<sup>くすり</sup>薬を飲んでも、<sup>なお</sup>治りません」 (Even if I took medicine, it wouldn't help). However, if 「～ても」 is used here then the sentence becomes one where speaker is simply discussing an outcome that has already been decided.

Like this, 「～ても」 is often used when discussing hypothetical matters.

Imagine you are involved in club activities. It's hard work, so your parents tell you to quit.

<sup>おや</sup>親に<sup>はんたい</sup>反対されても、<sup>ぶかつどう</sup>部活動<sup>つづ</sup>を続けたい。

(Even if my parents disagree, I still want to continue club activities.)

In this case, 「～ても」 cannot be replaced with 「～のに」. This is because 「～のに」 cannot be used with hypothetical conditions.

Similarly, when used in the form of 「<sup>ぎもんし</sup>疑問詞＋～ても」 it indicates that under any condition, the result will be as stated. In such a case, 「～ても」 cannot be replaced with 「～のに」.

どんなに<sup>せつめい</sup>説明しても、<sup>しゃちょう</sup>社長はわかってくれない。

(No matter how much I try to explain, the president just doesn't understand.)

Let's Practice! Insert 「ても」 or 「のに」 into each of the sentences below.

- ① いくら<sup>おぼ</sup>覚え (            ), すぐ<sup>わす</sup>忘れてしまう。
- ② たくさん<sup>た</sup>食べた (            ), もう<sup>なか</sup>お腹がすきました。
- ③ たとえ<sup>いそが</sup>忙しく (            ), <sup>やす</sup>休みません。
- ④ <sup>はな</sup>話すのはじょうずな (            ), <sup>かんじ</sup>漢字は<sup>ぜんぜん</sup>全然書けない。
- ⑤ あした<sup>あめ</sup>雨が降っ (            ), 出かけます。



# Events & Memoranda

## 37th Big Hina Matsuri 第37回ビッグひな祭り | 阿波勝浦

The first Big Hina Matsuri was held in the spring of 1988 and will now be celebrated for the 37th time. Hina dolls that are no longer used are gathered from families all around the country, given a memorial service, and then displayed at this festival. At the center of the festival, you can find an approximately 8-meter-high 100-step podium decorated with hina dolls. Approximately 30,000 hina dolls are beautifully displayed at this festival.

昭和63年の春に始まったビッグひな祭りは、今回で37回目を迎えます。本祭では、全国より、家庭で飾られなくなった雛人形を集め、供養し、展示させていただいております。場内には、中央にそびえ立つ高さ約8m「百段のひな壇」をはじめ、約3万體もの雛人形が豪華絢爛に飾られています。

Location: Katsuura Doll Cultural Exchange Center

開催場所： 勝浦町 人形文化交流館

When: February 22 (Sat.) – April 6 (Sun.), 2025  
9:00 - 16:00

開催期間： 2025年2月22日～4月6日  
9:00～16:00

Admission: Adults: 400 Yen  
Groups: 300 Yen (10 people or more)  
Elementary Students: 100 Yen

料金： 大人 400円  
団体 300円（10人以上）  
子供 100円

Inquiries: Big Hina Matsuri Executive Committee  
TEL: 0885-42-4334

お問い合わせ：ビッグひな祭り実行委員会  
Tel：0885-42-4334

## 医療通訳ボランティア研修

徳島県に暮らす8,300人を超える外国人は約90の国や地域から来ており、過去最高人数となりました。彼らが抱える問題は多岐にわたり、その中でも医療に関わる問題は避けて通ることができません。今回の研修では、講師の講話やワークショップを通じて、医療通訳の際に多言語で円滑に情報提供できるよう、語学ボランティアの育成・活動促進を図ることを目指します。（語学研修ではありません）

日時：令和7年3月8日（土） 10:00～15:00（1時間休憩含む）

会場：オンライン会議システム「Zoom」による開催

講師：一般社団法人全国医療通訳者協会 代表理事 森田 直美 氏

対象：TOPIA 語学ボランティア、医療従事者、「医療通訳」に興味がある方等

※研修は日本語で行います

参加費：無料

定員：30名（先着順）

申込締め切り日：2月28日（金）

お申し込み・お問い合わせ 公益財団法人 徳島県国際交流協会

Tel: (088) 656-3303

申込先メールアドレス：coordinator1@topia.ne.jp

氏名、電話番号、メールアドレス、通訳言語、通訳実績（経験の有無）を入力の上、メールにてお申し込みください。

## Events &amp; Memoranda

AJET Presents the 29th English Musical  
 県内の学校で活躍するALT（外国語指導助手）が出演します

シンデレラ  
**The Cinderella**  
 Musical

英語を  
 復習しよう！

Free Admission  
 入場無料

開場は開演の30分前を予定  
 座席は先着順

3月2日(日) 15:00-16:30 石井町中央公民館 Ishii Central Community Center	3月9日(日) 15:00-16:30 北島町創世ホール Kitajima Town Sousei Hall	主催：AJET徳島 お問合せ：ケリー・ロビン 070-4179-0494 tokushimajetmusical@gmail.com
3月8日(土) 15:00-16:30 四国大学・音楽ホール Shikoku University Music Hall	3月20日(木) 14:00-15:30 東みよし町役場 Higashi Miyoshi Town Hall	

In AJET's theatrical reproduction of the fairytale of Cinderella, we meet our main character as she accompanies her horrible stepmother and stepsisters as they go shopping. It is here that she meets a mysterious man. Although it is love at first sight, she doesn't realize he is the crown prince. Upon learning that the queen and king are planning to hold a grand ball, Cinderella seeks to attend herself. But will her horrible stepmother allow her? How will she overcome the obstacles in her path? Will she find her own happy ending? Come watch Tokushima AJET's twist on a classic tale!

徳島 AJET が上演するミュージカル、「シンデレラ」では、主人公のシンデレラが意地悪な継母と義姉たちの買い物に同行するシーンに幕を開ける。ここで彼女はミステリアスな男性と出会い、一目ぼれする。しかし、シンデレラは彼が王子様だとは気づかない。王様と女王様が盛大な舞踏会を催すと聞き、シンデレラは参加すると決心する。とはいえ、意地悪な継母は許してくれるのだろうか？シンデレラはどうやって障害を乗り越えるのか？果たしてハッピーエンドをみつけられるのか？徳島 AJET のオリジナル脚本を使った「シンデレラ」ミュージカルを皆様ぜひ見に来てください！

### Consulation 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)