

awa life

What's the Deal with the DMV?

June 2025

#415

How to Beat the Rainy Season Blues

Arasowaren Performs at Expo 2025!

Nihongo Know-it-all:
イヤークーム

Photo: Ōkawara Plateau, Sanagochi Village, Tokushima Prefecture



TOPIA

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

Welcome to June! In Japan, June signals the start of summer with the rainy season. For many this will mean more time spent indoors this month. But rest assured that it won't be long before the season has passed and we can all get back out into the sunshine! In the meantime, I hope you all can find an interesting show to watch, book to read, game to play, etc. to enjoy your extra time indoors.

There are no national holidays in June, but it is the season for hydrangeas to bloom and for fireflies to come out! Check out the events pages for more information on where you can enjoy them.

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:

awalife@gmail.com

Your editors,
Riley and Lisa

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What's the Deal with the DMV?

By: Gwenafaye McCormick, Kaiyo CIR

Hi, Awa Life readers! I'm the CIR down in Kaiyo, Gwenafaye McCormick. You may remember reading about Kaiyo in Tony's articles last year. We have covered a few different things about our lovely home in our articles, but with one glaring omission: Kaiyo's representative vehicle, the DMV!

If you live in Tokushima, you might have seen the DMV advertised before - a cute, snub-nosed little vehicle trundling along train tracks, set against the backdrop of a bevy of fluttering DMV flags or a bright blue ocean. Even if not, you might know it from popular YouTuber Tom Scott's video profiling its history and purpose, which, as of writing, has 1.4 million views. Regardless, since its debut in December 2021, the town of Kaiyo has gone all-in on advertising the Dual Mode Vehicle (DMV), a mini-bus with built-in metal train wheels that can deploy to allow the vehicle to function as a train.

But to see this one-of-a-kind commercial vehicle in person, you'll have to come down to the very southern tip of Tokushima prefecture, since it only operates as far north as the Awa-Kainan Culture Village. However, the trip is well worth it to experience our beautiful little rural town - nestled in nature, between the gorgeous blue ocean and rolling green mountains, Kaiyo is a gem of the Tokushima countryside.

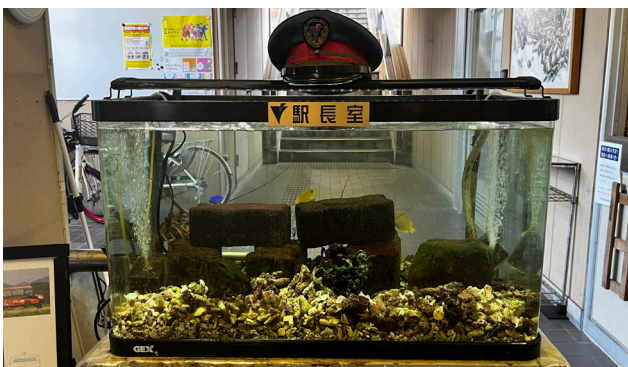


The DMV's route runs through the heart of town; first as a bus from Awa Kainan Culture Village station, then as a train from Awa Kainan station. The mode change takes just 15 seconds before you're riding past fields and over the picturesque Kaifu River. Crossing the Kaifu Ohashi bridge, one side of the DMV's large windows are filled with a lush mountain view, and the other shows off how the clear river runs into the ocean. Further down the track, after passing through the deep mountains that cradle Kaiyo, you can see more of the ocean-filled skyline and glittering coast - especially once you reach Shishikui station. The DMV changes back to bus mode after crossing the border into Kochi prefecture, in Toyo, and then makes a small loop back to the Michi no Eki and onsen in Shishikui. On weekends and holidays, the DMV goes further south - through picturesque Cape Muroto all the way to the Umi no Eki Seaside Station in Toromu - completing one round trip down and back a day.

What's the Deal with the DMV?

Apart from this weekend and holiday schedule, the DMV functions as a normal part of Kaiyo and Toyo's public transportation, filling the role of both bus and train. The JR Shikoku runs to Kaiyo's Awa Kainan station, but the line terminates here – the Asa Coast Railway takes over, then, and between Kaiyo and Toyo, the DMV is the only “train” that operates! The DMV is a main part of the connective tissue between the prefectures, and its three different designs work to showcase that connection.

The green DMV, the “Sudachi Breeze” colorway, is heavily inspired by the crisp Tokushima fruit and features our prefecture's representative bird, the white egret (shirasagi), catching a gust of citrus-flavored wind. These parts of Tokushima and Kochi are both known for their stunning ocean and great surfing, which is represented in the blue “Ride the Wave Into the Future” colorway. The side of this DMV is covered by a magnificent wave, with the “station master” of Shishikui, an ise ebi spiny lobster, hanging ten! Lastly, the Kochi representative DMV, the red colorway, is focused on “Asa Coast Restoration.” Its intense color is the backdrop for the silhouette of the legend Sakamoto Ryoma, a samurai who worked to abolish the feudal system and advocated for a democratic Japan, basking in the sun.



Shishikui's “station master” ise ebi lobsters. They're hiding in this photo, but if you come see them in real life they may just come out to say hi!

According to Ohtani Naoyoshi, the Chief of General Affairs, in his interview with Tom Scott, the DMV was an effort by the Asa Coast Railway to maintain transportation accessibility in the region. Due in part to population decline, fewer

people were taking the train, although tourist traffic was slowly increasing. To keep this region connected and to reduce costs, the company introduced the DMV. As a compact and flexible vehicle, the lower maintenance costs and dual functionality – which also cuts transfer time for commuters – made the DMV an appealing solution to a variety of problems. Plus, its further functionality as a tourist attraction didn't hurt!



The DMV has its fair share of fans – on a clear day and most holidays, you can always spot transportation enthusiasts set up at Awa Kainan station with cameras, ready to capture each moment of the vehicle's mode change. And there's plenty of cute merch on sale at the Shishikui Michi no Eki, from canvas bags to plush toys. The Asa Coast Railway has also produced a DMV Guidebook, profiling local businesses and tourist spots along the DMV's route, an English version of which we helped produce! The guidebook is available on their website, in print, or on our website at globalkaiyo.com under the Translation Support tab.

The DMV is very simple to ride, you can make a reservation online on the Asa Coast Railway website, or simply walk up to the DMV at one of its stops and pay the driver directly. This latter option is only available when the DMV is not booked up, however, so if you want to assure yourself a seat, we recommend buying a ticket online in advance.

So, if you're looking for summer plans, or have been interested in the deep south of Tokushima but haven't made it down yet, why not come ride the DMV, see the beautiful ocean, and enjoy the Japanese coastal countryside? Kaiyo is waiting for you!

How to Beat the Rainy Season Blues

By: Riley Henke

The yearly rainy season- or 梅雨 (つゆ) - in Japan begins in June and lasts until early to mid-July. As the name suggests, during the rainy season it rains quite often and quite a lot. The humidity is naturally very high during this season, which presents some unique challenges.

One of the biggest challenges the rainy season brings is mold. Humidity can build up quick in your home, so it's important to take preventative measures before it becomes an issue. Ventilating your home is one of the most important things you can do to prevent mold. If you are home and there are a rare few hours of sunshine, try to open at least two windows to get the air circulating. You can also improve ventilation by running a floor fan with the windows open. If you have a wall-mounted air conditioning unit, check your remote control for a button that says 換気 (かんき) or 送風 (そうふう), as these settings will circulate the air in your home.

If ventilation is not enough to combat humidity in your home, there are other dehumidifying options. Many wall-mounted AC units have a "dehumidify" option labeled 除湿 (じょしつ). If moisture is still an issue, you may consider buying a separate dehumidifier or 除湿機 (じょしつき). Other dehumidifying products

include 湿気取り (しつけとり) or 除湿剤 (じょしつざい) which come in small containers that can be placed around your home. As they absorb moisture, they will fill with water and need to be replaced occasionally. These can work well for small areas like closets or drawers. Lastly, you will likely need to wipe down the inside of windows and doors during the rainy season regularly as they will quickly build condensation.

As the temperature and humidity rise during the rainy season, so do cases of food poisoning. It's important to be extra careful with food hygiene during the summer months in Japan. Start by washing your hands thoroughly before preparing food or eating. Be sure to refrigerate foods quickly, and when cooking, thoroughly heat foods to kill bacteria. As for bento lunches, avoid adding foods with high moisture content and dairy products. Additionally, do not put the lid on your bento while the food is still warm, as this can create condensation inside the box and lead to bacteria.

While the rainy season can feel like a constant battle, I hope this article was helpful in helping you consider how to best prepare for it. Let's all gear up and get through this together!



Arasowaren Performs at Expo 2025!

By: Julie Brousseau

(On May 3, 2025, Arasowaren, a dance troupe of foreign residents in Tokushima Prefecture organized by TOPIA, performed Tokushima's traditional Awa Odori dance at the Osaka Kansai Expo 2025 venue. The dancers, consisting of 28 people from 14 countries, came together and danced under the ideal of "a peaceful world without conflict" that can overcome differences in nationality, race, religion, etc. The following is an article written by Julie, a member of the group.)

When I first saw the announcement last November that TOPIA was looking for people to dance Awa Odori at the Osaka Expo, I knew right away I HAD to apply. I was already



familiar with Awa Odori, having first performed at ASTY in 2019 and participated in the August festival several times, both as a dancer and as a taiko player. However, this was a once-in-a-

Arasowaren Performs at Expo 2025!

lifetime opportunity to represent my beloved Tokushima on an international stage, and I simply couldn't miss it.

We started practicing in January 2025. We were 28 members from 14 different countries, with different levels of experience, and all had one thing in common: we wanted to show the world how fun it is to dance Awa Odori. We trained for several weeks under the gentle guidance of our teachers and with the musical accompaniment from Awa Odori Hozon Kyoukai members. I have to admit that at times it was tough and a little confusing, but overall we worked hard and had fun together.

Then, May 3rd came around. THE day. We departed from Tokushima City at 6:30AM, high on caffeine and excitement, and made our way to the Expo.

This year was my first time performing the "women's dance", so when it came time to change into our costumes, I had no idea what half the pieces in my costume bag were meant for. Fortunately, teachers and experienced members helped newbies like me put everything on, and once I finally looked at myself in the mirror, I instantly fell in love with what I saw. Of course, I thought I looked very pretty in those clothes, but it wasn't just that. I was now wearing THE symbol of Tokushima and I felt such a strong wave of pride and excitement at being able to show the world my second home's fabulous culture.

And so, we headed out in full costumes to visit the Expo. As we were walking around, so many people stopped us to ask questions and take pictures, posing with their hands in the air and such beautiful smiles on their faces.

Then, it was time for our performances. As we arrived, we could see a row of cameras, some from well-known newspapers and TV channels, all ready to capture our image. So many people

from various ages and ethnicities were crowding around the stage, looking at us with bright eyes. It was absolutely nerve-wracking. My heart was beating in my chest and my palms were sweating. But, as the music started, I remembered our teacher's words, "Everybody smile, let's have fun!" And so, that's what I did.

I was especially honored to perform one of the slow parts alongside five other dancers. As its name says, the slow part requires the dancers to move around slower than usual and to take poses for a few seconds at a time. It was particularly challenging, trying to look graceful and confident while trying to balance all my weight on my toes without falling on my face. Yet, it was also thrilling to feel the gaze of so many people directed specifically at us. Despite my worries, we successfully completed the song and were rewarded by the thundering applause of the spectators.



Finally, time came for our last and biggest performance: the Grand Finale. 700 dancers and musicians, in addition to thousands of audience members, all dancing together in one gigantic circle. That became the perfect embodiment of the day's slogan: "One World Through Dance." In those few minutes, I really felt connected to everyone, a part of something bigger. No need to have the same culture or speak the same language. We moved together, felt the rhythm of the music in our bones, and experienced joy at sharing this experience with other human beings.

This day became one of my cherished memories, and I am grateful for all involved with the organization of this event, especially TOPIA and Arasowaren, for giving us the chance to live such an amazing experience.

Why don't you come and join us next time? "Sekai wa hitotsu! Arasowaren!" (The World is One! No fighting.)

Tokushima Culture and Reading Corner: 美郷のほたる

By: Yoshiko Bando

みなさんは、ほたるという美しい虫を見たことがありますか。この時期、美しい川沿いに現れ、ピカピカと光を放つ虫です。吉野川市美郷町には、「美郷ほたる館」があり、ほたるの生態について知ることができます。ほたるは5月下旬から6月中旬の夜8時から9時が見頃となっています。しかし人間が川や自然を汚したり、ほたるの見学マナーが悪いせいでほたるの数が減っています。一年のうちでほたるに会えるのはほんのわずかな時期です。みなさんも自然を大切に、見学マナーを守ってほたるの光にいやされてみませんか。



Vocabulary List

ほたる : Firefly	時期 : Time; season; period	川沿い : Riverside
現れ (る) : To appear	放つ : To emit (light)	生態 : Ecology
上旬 : First third of a month	下旬 : Last third of a month	見頃 : Best time to see
守って : To protect/follow (rules)	汚す : To pollute/contaminate	減って : Decreasing

イヤークワーム

By: Lisa Knitter

Nihongo Know-it-all

Have you ever wondered how to describe the feeling of a song being stuck in your head in Japanese? After asking some Japanese coworkers, they said that one would just describe the situation in a brief phrase like 音楽が頭から離れない (“the music won’t get out of one’s head”) or 耳に残る (“to linger in one’s ears”). However, you may occasionally see this phenomenon of a song repeating over and over in your head referred to as イヤークワーム.



The term イヤークワーム, or in English “earworm,” for a piece of music that is stuck in your head is actually a literal translation of the German word “Ohrwurm” with the same meaning. “Ohrwurm” (“Ohr” = ear, “wurm” = worm) was originally the German name of an insect called earwig in English. It was first used in relation to music by German composer Paul Lincke (1866-1946) who explained the term as referring to “a popular song, since it pierces into one’s hearing and can hardly be dispelled from there”. Based on this, it came to be used for catchy tunes that one cannot get out of one’s head. The term spread and eventually found its way into English, and subsequently Japanese.

Various research is currently being done worldwide to learn more about this phenomenon, including research into the causes (such as what type of song is more likely to get stuck in someone’s head) as well as if there are any surefire ways to get a song out of one’s head. According to research done at the Osaka Prefectural Kozu High School, most people polled did not have a favorable impression of the イヤークワーム phenomenon, saying that it frequently occurs at time where they’re trying to concentrate, such as during an exam (研究班番号 32 音楽班、イヤークワームってなに?, 2022).

「コ・ソ・ア①」

This month, we're going to study the 「コ・ソ・ア」 words that we use in conversation to describe things that are in front of one's eyes. You can also use these words to describe something that is not directly in front of one's eyes, such as when telling a story or in writing, but we will study this usage in next month's Japanese Lesson.

Now, which of the words in parenthesis should be used in the following conversation?

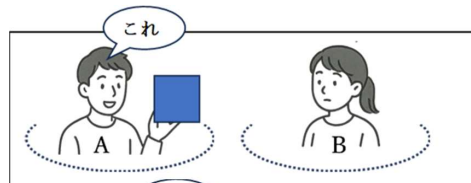
A: 机に置いてあったメガネ、知らない？

B: (ここ・そこ・あそこ) にあるじゃない。あなたの頭の上に。

The correct answer is 「そこ」. When describing objects near the listener, we use 「ソ」 words.

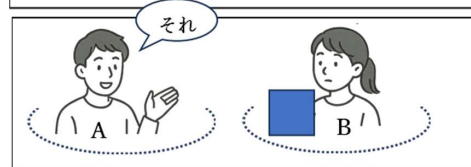
コ

話し手 (A) の近くにあるとき



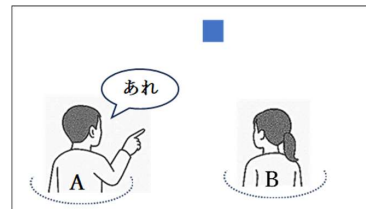
ソ

聞き手 (B) の近くにあるとき



ア

話し手 (A) と聞き手 (B) の両方から遠いとき



* 「コ」 words include 「これ、この+N、ここ(place)」, 「ソ」 words include 「それ、その+N、そこ(place)」, and 「ア」 words include 「あれ、あの+N、あそこ(place)」.

Let's practice! Select the correct 「コ・ソ・ア」 word to fit in the following sentences.

- ねえ、(この・その・あの) 靴賣おうかな？ サイズもちょうどいいし、似合う？
- (この・その・あの) 人、向こうの道路で自転車で乗ってる人、田中さんじゃない？
- 鈴木さん、(これ・それ・あれ) いいねえ！どこで買ったの？
- 「書類のコピーができたら、(ここ・そこ・あそこ) に持って来てください。」
- A: 「わたしの机の横に置いてあったゴミ箱がないんだけど...、知らない？」
B: 「あ、(ここ・そこ・あそこ) にあったゴミ箱だったら、掃除の人が
(ここ・そこ・あそこ) に持って行ったよ、あの棚の横だけど、見える？」

Events & Memoranda

Chomeiji Temple Hydrangea Festival 潮明寺 紫陽祭

The hydrangeas that adorn the Chomeiji temple grounds in early summer are especially beautiful, giving the temple its nickname of "Ajisai-dera" (temple of hydrangeas). This year, too, we will hold the Hydrangea Festival as the flowers are in bloom. On June 14, there will be a free hands-on ikebana class (for grade school students) and a Japanese musical instrument performance. The next day, 17 handmade goods stores will set up shop for festival-goers to peruse.

Date: June 14 (Sat.) and 15 (Sun.), 2025

Location: Chomeiji Temple, Naruto City,
Narutocho, Tosadomariura Takasuna-22

Inquiries:

Chomeiji Temple [潮明寺ホームページ](#)

Phone: 088-687-0836

潮明寺は、四季折々の自然に包まれた、静寂と気品をたたえる寺院です。なかでも初夏、境内を彩る紫陽花はひととき美しく、その風情ゆえに「あじさい寺」の名でも親しまれています。

今年も紫陽花の見頃に合わせて、紫陽祭を開催します。14日に、参加無料の生け花体験教室（小学生対象）と和楽器演奏を行います。15日にハンドメイドショップ17店舗が出店します。どうぞお越しください。

開催期間：2025年6月14日（土）・15日（日）

開催場所：潮明寺
鳴門市鳴門町土佐泊浦高砂 22

お問い合わせ：

潮明寺 Tel：088-687-0836

URL：[潮明寺ホームページ](#)

Kurokawadani Firefly Festival 2025 黒川谷ほたるまつり 2025 年

Join us again this year for the Firefly Festival in mid-June where the fireflies roam. On the day of the festival, there will be stalls, food trucks, live music, a raffle, and much more for adults and children alike to enjoy. Come join and see the fantastic fireflies!

Date and Time: Sat. June 14, 16:00-20:00

Location: Miyoshi City, Yamashiro-cho, Yorihiro
Hotaru no Sato Park (Firefly Park)

Inquiries: Firefly Festival Executive Committee
Phone: 070-2392-4154

毎年6月の中旬に源氏ボタルが飛びかうホタルの里で、ほたるまつりを開催！当日は夜店やキッチンカー、音楽ライブ、豪華抽選会など大人も子供も楽しめる催しが盛り沢山。ぜひ初夏の里山に幻想的なホタルを見に行きませんか？

開催日時：2025年6月14日（土）16:00～20:00

開催場所：三好市山城町頼広 ホタルの里公園

お問い合わせ：ほたるまつり実行委員会
Tel：070-2392-4154



Events & Memoranda

India's Dance and Yoga Event インドのダンスとヨガイベント

Dance and yoga which anyone can do! Let's dance freely to fun Indian music and then relax our bodies with yoga!

誰でもできるダンスとヨガ体験！楽しいインドの音楽で自由に踊って、インド由来のヨガで体を伸ばしてみませんか？

Date: Sat. June 21, 10:00-12:00

Location: Okinosu Indoor Park, Tokushima City

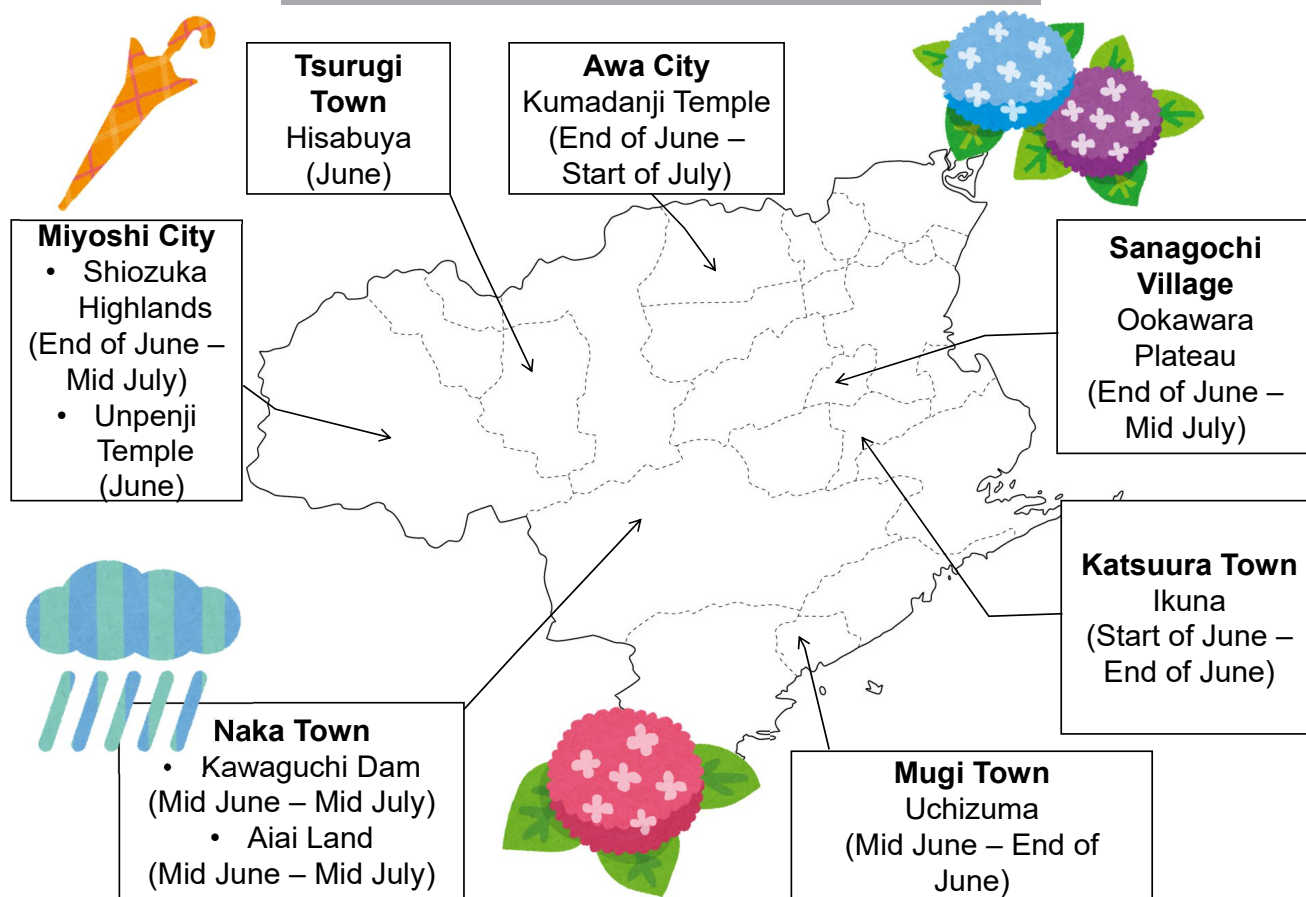
For more info or to register, please contact TIA at 088-622-6066 or website www.tia81.com

開催日時：6月21日（土）10:00～12:00

開催場所：おきのすインドアパーク 徳島市

申込みもしくはお問い合わせ：徳島市国際交流協会
TEL: 088-622-6066 HP: www.tia81.com

Tokushima Hydrangea Map 2025 徳島あじさい案内図 2025 年



Consultation 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. Consultation 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)